

MAGIC SEEN *Lite*

Issue 7



JUSTIN WILLMAN MAGIC FOR HUMANS

REVIEWS | MASTERCLASS | IAN BRENNAN | BEN HART LIVE

ROGER NICOT'S SOZA

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THE TEAM

Editor: Mark Leveridge
Deputy Editor: Graham Hey
Design Editor: Phil Shaw

Advertisement Enquiries:
Mark Leveridge
markleveridge@magicseen.co.uk
Website Design:

www.magicdp.co.uk
Circulation: Sarah Logan
Circulation Assistants:
Frankie Shaw, Edward Shaw,
Jessica Preece

Contributors:
Ian Brennan, Wolfgang Moser

Reviewers: Mark Leveridge,
Paul Preager, Stuart Bowie,
Chris Payne, Bob Gill, Phil Shaw
Magicseen's management board
consists of: Graham Hey,
Mark Leveridge & Phil Shaw

General enquiries and comments:
grahamhey@magicseen.co.uk

Thanks to: Justin Willman,
Kris Sheppard

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Published by MSUK Publications



We are delighted to welcome all and sundry to our latest free taster issue of **Magicseen**, which we hope you will really enjoy.

Issue 7 is based on the main full issue released in May (#92) and we include here from that edition the full article on our cover star Justin Willman, who reveals just what it takes to get a show accepted on TV!

We are also delighted to present the first of a three part mini series from Ian Brennan called A Little Bit Of Business. In this opening episode Ian looks at the various ways to get bookings for your show.

From the Masterclass we offer you The Jumping Egg, which is a quick, surprising effect with which to open a stand up show, and in the News section we print a report on Vanishing Inc's amazing online ShareMagic event.

You will also find in this issue an account of Ben Hart's live show Wonder (seen just before the tour was shut down thanks to COVID-19) as well as a goodly selection of the latest product reviews.

Of course, this can only ever give you a feel for what Magicseen is really all about, and to get the full on experience you need to sign up for a printed copy or digital subscription. That way you can look forward every two months to the unabridged version crashing onto your doormat or arriving with a ping in your Inbox. Why stint on your personal magical pleasure?

Mark Leveridge

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**PREDICT THE TIME AND THEN
MAKE TIME DISAPPEAR**



TIMELESS

BY LIAM MONTIER

VANISHING INC.



JUSTIN WILLMAN

MAGIC FOR HUMANS

Presenter of numerous TV shows including The Tonight Show, Ellen and star of Magic for Humans on Netflix, Justin Willman talks to Kris Sheppard about failure – and how it usually comes before success.

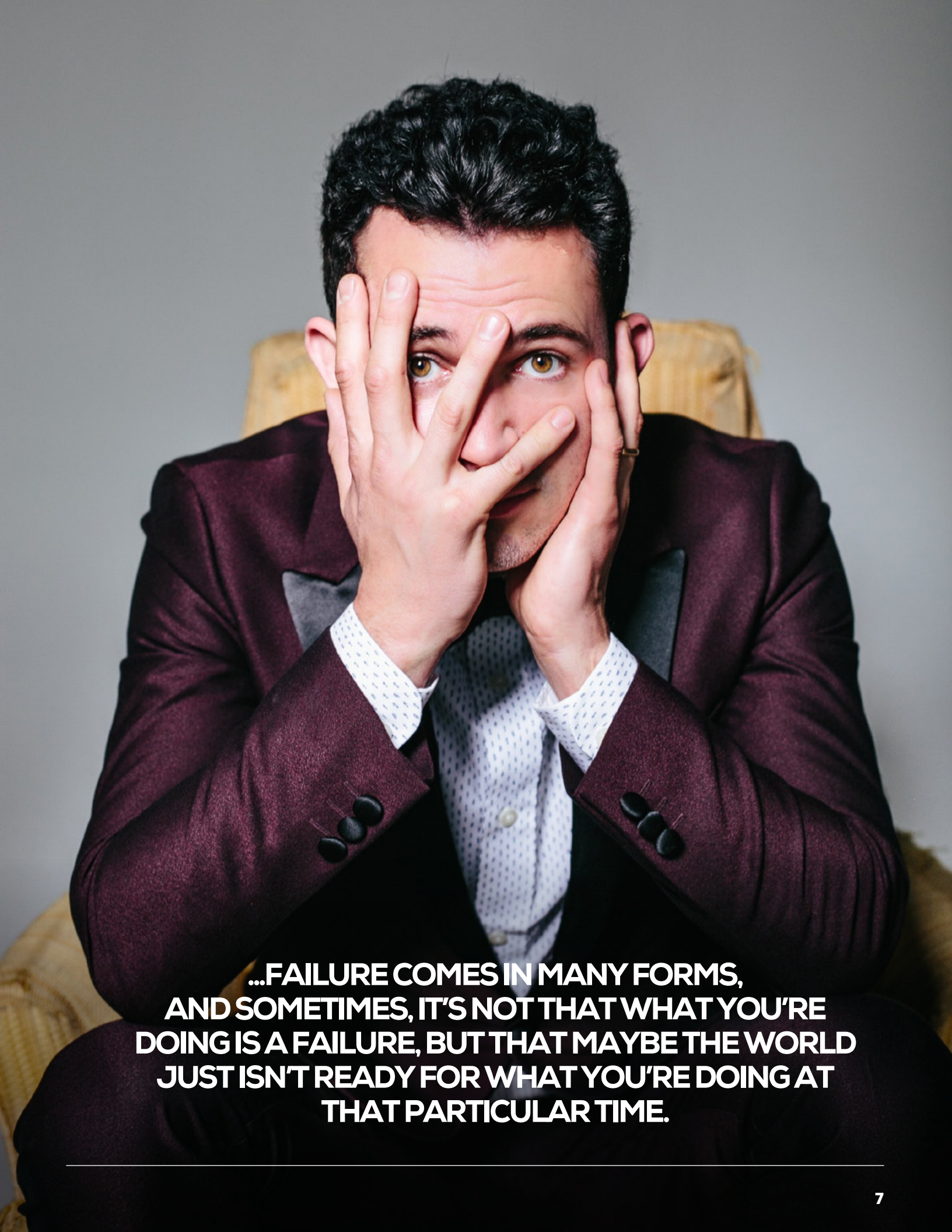
KS: Let's start off by asking you if you have an inspirational quote you live by?

JW: Wow! OK, Movie Director James Cameron has a quote which I love: "If you set your goals ridiculously high and it's a failure - you will fail above everyone else's success." It's interesting that my favourite success quotes involve failure!

KS: It's a common theme in interviews - that failure isn't always the end of things, in many ways, it's the beginning...

JW: Yes, failure comes in many forms, and sometimes, it's not that what you're doing is a failure, but that maybe the world just isn't ready for what you're doing at that particular time.



A man with dark, curly hair is wearing a maroon suit jacket over a white shirt with a small pattern. He is sitting in a chair with a light-colored backrest. He has both hands pressed against his face, with his fingers spread, covering his eyes and nose. Only his eyes are visible through the gaps between his fingers. He has a serious expression.

**...FAILURE COMES IN MANY FORMS,
AND SOMETIMES, IT'S NOT THAT WHAT YOU'RE
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JUST ISN'T READY FOR WHAT YOU'RE DOING AT
THAT PARTICULAR TIME.**



"IF YOU SET YOUR GOALS RIDICULOUSLY HIGH AND IT'S A FAILURE - YOU WILL FAIL ABOVE EVERYONE ELSE'S SUCCESS."

JAMES CAMERON

KS: Can you tell us about a time when you 'reached for the stars' and it didn't work out, but maybe some good still came from it?

JW: Yeah, over the last decade and more, I've been living in LA, gigging my comedy magic act, but all the time I've been pitching my ideas to TV companies and most, no, all my ideas were turned down, which you could say is a failure... and also most auditions - 99% or more, I didn't get, and then occasionally, if you're really lucky you get one. I auditioned to host 'Cup Cake Wars' on the Food Channel and I thought my audition was not good, I managed to get

it. But all of those auditions, all of those pitch meetings, and all of those things where you put yourself forward for something where you put your pride on the line... well, all those people remember you, and even though they might not have liked your concept or idea, they may have liked you - and that's stored in the back of their minds. Many people who turned me down for one particular thing have moved on to somewhere else and then hired me for a different project which they thought I was more suited to.

I think you need to be able handle the 'No's', keep going and learn something from it.

KS: Tell us about pitching an idea, what does it entail?

JW: OK, I started doing this comedy and magic variety show at a comic book store in LA - the show was called 'Sleight of Mouth'. A lot of people use it to try out new ideas and see if they take off. It gives you a chance to showcase an idea and hopefully someone influential will see it. I'd previously done a show called Magic Meltdown, which I'd hoped would turn into a TV magic show, but it became a web-show and then stopped... you could say it was a failure, but I loved it, and created a lot of content which would be used later... anyway, I started doing the show every Friday, and my manager kept inviting TV execs and anyone he could think of to the show in the hope it would get commissioned, but it didn't - not for the first

year and a half, or even two years. Then finally Comedy Central came to see the show – and the show was then ready – it hadn't been honed previously, and Comedy Central is where I'd envisaged it being broadcast. They'd seen my previous show, and they said, all that content, and then the Sleight of Mouth stuff together – well, they'd seen enough to give me a pilot show which would become a series if people liked it. A week after they'd seen the show, we had a formal pitch meeting where we discussed the format and how it could make a series.

That was the first time I'd ever gotten a yes – and that wasn't a yes to a series, that was a yes, they would pay for a pilot to see what it would look like.

KS: So, your Meltdown videos weren't a failure, they provided a stepping stone for you further down the line.

JW: Exactly. I didn't make them just to be a TV series, I just wanted to make something I could be proud of. And if it becomes something else later, or gets you somewhere, than that's just the icing on the cake.

KS: Could you tell us about performing magic for a TV audience?

JW: Yeah... it's a unique animal, and there are nerves that come in to play because you're on TV and you can't necessarily plan for them – and they can affect sleight of hand! It's really hard to do technically difficult stuff reliably, when you've got the jitters and your hands are shaking. So, I'd concentrate on routines I'd done a thousand times before. On The Rachael Ray show – a

cooking show where I was a regular guest and it was my first TV stuff - I'd adapt tricks I already did, only with food etc, but on the Ellen Show, it was all about the trick, as they'd had lots of magicians on before, so they wanted a trick that was new to them, and that Ellen would like. You have to remember that you're there because someone has taken a leap of faith on you, and you have to try and nail it for you AND for them. Then everyone's happy and they invite you back!

KS: What's been your biggest professional challenge so far?

JW: Letting go of doing bookings and stuff, it's hard not to micro- manage things. You have to learn to trust the people who are working for you, let them do what they do. It's a big challenge, and a long process to get the team around you that you trust. But it's really worth it when you see the time you've saved!

KS: What's one of the best things you've achieved in business?

JW: The fact that I've tried to develop a brand, making yourself different to anyone out there. And after a year in LA getting gigs, making people aware that the best costs more, and it's worth it. I couldn't do that at first obviously, but educating your buyers why you're worth it, and the entertainment is a very important part of their event. Justin was taking to Kris Sheppard

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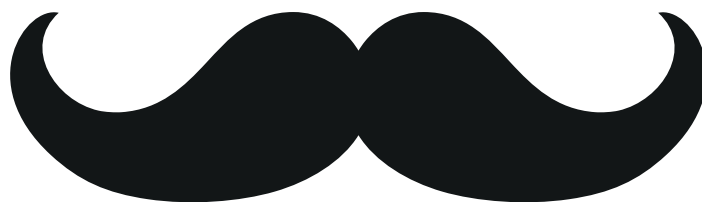
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WONDER BEN HART

**The Redgrave Theatre, Clifton College, Bristol
Tuesday 10th March 2020
Reviewed by Mark Leveridge**

Despite the fact that he is only 29 years of age, Ben Hart has already achieved much in his fledgling magic career with many appearances on TV, including Killer Magic, Ben Hart's Life Hacks and Britain's Got Talent, as well as played a consultancy role in many more theatre, film and TV productions. He is clearly a magic enthusiast in every sense and his latest stage show, Wonder, is a terrific showcase for his talents.

The Redgrave Theatre in Bristol is an ideal venue for an intimate show as it seats 300 and has a good sized stage area. No doubt because of his TV work, Ben was able to sell out his March date (an additional performance in April at the same venue is also sold out), Bristol being part of a 65 date tour. (The coronavirus will now have put paid to all those original dates, no doubt)

For a one man show to be a success, the spectators need to like the performer, and the Bristol audience absolutely loved him, as was evidenced by the very strong and prolonged ovation at the end of the show, an ovation that almost turned into a complete standing ovation. If it wasn't for the fact that the seat spaces in the theatre are a bit tight and therefore do not make it easy to jump up, I suspect he would have had more of the audience on their feet!

Ben's stage personality is very appealing. He's a good actor and at various points in his show he manages to convincingly convey charm, humour, pathos, anger (!) and sincerity without overdoing it. His interaction with the audience is also good, and he uses a number of opportunities to come out into the audience or to use spectators on stage which helps to break down barriers and make him and his magic feel personal and accessible.

The magic itself mainly comprises of versions of timeless classics. In a magically packed programme we were treated to the Egg On Fan, the Linking Finger Rings, Snowstorm In China, the Atomic Glass Penetration, the Torn and Restored Tissue Paper, the Indian Rice Bowls, the Diminishing Cards, the Haunted Matchbox, the Gypsy Thread, the Egg Bag done with a tot glass of whiskey and many more. Ben creates clear routines that are magically strong and where the magic itself is never clouded by overblown or unnecessarily lengthy presentations. He gets through a satisfyingly large number of tricks in a relaxed yet well paced style, which the audience were impressed by if the comments I overheard from the lay people sitting around me are anything to go by (and they are!).

The stage set is minimalist with the few props or tables required being wheeled on and off as required by a stage helper. The same guy also brought on a camera at



BEN'S STAGE PERSONALITY IS VERY APPEALING. HE'S A GOOD ACTOR AND AT VARIOUS POINTS IN HIS SHOW HE MANAGES TO CONVINCINGLY CONVEY CHARM, HUMOUR, PATHOS, ANGER (!) AND SINCERITY WITHOUT OVERDOING IT.

certain points to project Ben's effects onto a large screen suspended above the stage. This enabled Ben to perform close up magic such as the classic paper pieces on knife routine and the coins through table. I liked the fact that the camera was only brought on when needed and was not projecting the entire show to the screen, as that can be unnecessarily distracting.

In amongst the classic magic Ben also included some other strong, more unusual effects. He vanished a signed silk and moments later it was found inside a peach, he had a word freely chosen by a spectator appear on a piece of paper which she cracked open a walnut herself to find inside, and a borrowed credit card vanished and was found sealed inside the layers of a signed card that was removed from a sealed envelope in a zipped up wallet. Ben clearly likes the 'object-to-impossible-place' plot and the audience reacted especially strongly to these particular routines.

This is a terrific one man show that is full of excellent, strong magic and presented by a performer whose impish sense of humour and likeable stage personality really shine through. It was a genuine pleasure to spend an evening watching it.

'A LITTLE BIT OF BUSINESS'

Ian Brennan A.I.M.C.



Before we get into the details of this column here's a little bit about me. My name is Ian Brennan and I am a performing magician.

If you don't recognise my name, don't worry, I'm still pretty unknown in the magic world. For the past three years I have co-hosted the UK's largest magic podcast (the Magician's Advice Podcast), I have created a range of my own effects which I have published, along with a collection of essays, in my first book: A Voyage To Better Magic.

My real world experience comes from performing in a range of different environments. My favoured is my one man show, next would be walk around magic at weddings and parties, and I also perform children's magic for birthdays and schools.

(As I write this column we are currently in lockdown here in the UK which means, like so many magicians and performers out there, all of those things have now vanished.)

Over the course of three issues we are going to have a look at the business side of magic, specifically

- How to get bookings.
- How to create a contract for you and your client.
- How to make the most of your social media presence and websites.

In this column we'll look at the first topic:
How to get bookings.

Here are a range of methods you can consider, with their pros and cons, so that when life gets back to normal you can fill your diary.

GOOGLE ADVERTISING

This is often the first thing that pops into people's heads when they think of getting bookings. Advertising on Google works and fills the diaries of many top magicians. How? The short explanation is that you pay Google to show your page above others when someone is searching for your service. If you use your budget wisely this can be a great way to secure leads to your website.

Pros ✓

You can be very specific and filter your audience by location, age, gender, interests and even by household income.

Cons ✗

Can quickly cost a lot of money for no return.

This is not something to take a punt on, you need to research what you are doing.

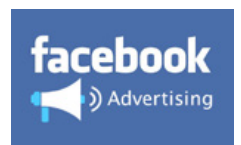
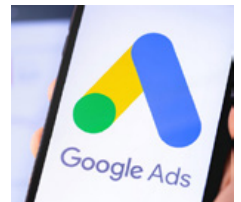
FACEBOOK ADVERTISING

Similar to Google Advertising, but instead of bringing people to your website this brings them to your Facebook page.

Pros ✓

You can target your audience like google Ads.

Facebook videos and images are easy to share. A well created video can be shared a few times and rack up



over a thousand views before you know it. Add a bit of Facebook advertising and you can be certain of exposure.

Cons X

Facebook images and videos are easy to share – and Facebook is riddled with negative people who feel it is their job to make snarky comments and play keyboard warriors. Be prepared that someone might write negative things on even the nicest videos.

WEDDING FAYRES

Magicians are a very popular form of entertainment at weddings here in the UK. One of the best places to get the bookings for weddings is at wedding fayres. These are showcases of wedding suppliers where couples explore venues and see multiple suppliers at the same time.



Pros ✓

Talking to people face to face makes for an easier sales pitch.

You can meet a lot of potential clients in a short space of time.

Couples will either be booking for that location or another one close by meaning a tighter patch of gigs.

Cons X

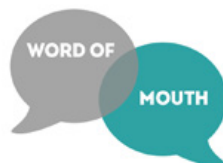
Wedding fayres are becoming much less popular, with lower turnouts year on year.

WORD OF MOUTH REFERRALS FROM BOOKERS AND FROM COLLEAGUES

When someone recommends you to a potential booker.

Pros ✓

Word of mouth referrals are very strong and often lead to a secure booking.



Cons X

Word of mouth referrals are much rarer and harder to initiate.

COLD CALLING / LETTERS.

Much less popular these days but you could send out an email or physical letter to venues or potential clients.

Pros ✓

If you complete enough phone calls or send enough letters there is a chance some will land successfully.



Cons X

It is tricky to make your email or letter stand out and not just be classed as trash.

POUNDING THE STREETS

Looking for a residency? Then hit the streets and walk into restaurants. Choose a time that's not too busy, ask to speak with the manager and deliver your pitch.



Remember, in these situations it is all about what you can do to help them: What are you bringing to make their life easier?

Pros ✓

You get to see the places in person, get a feel for the location and clientele first hand.

You can showcase your talents direct to the booker showing them how you would be an asset to their space.

You can check first hand things like parking and transport links.

Cons X

Unlike a wedding fayre where all the couples come to you, here you have to visit each place in person. Make sure you're wearing comfy shoes!

AGENTS

Grab an agent to do the leg work and advertising for you. You will end up taking home less of the money but it might be worth it.



The percentage an agent takes will go towards their wages, advertising, and other things. In my experience agents have asked for anything from 10% to 50%.

The booking agent gets to decide the terms of the bookings but the power of choice is ultimately in your hands – if they are requesting too high of a percentage simply say “no” and go and work somewhere else.

Pros ✓

Less effort expended in finding bookings.

Potentially a better quality of life with more practice time.

Cons X

Less money in your pocket after the show.

IN SUMMARY:

There's no golden ticket here. With all of these ideas above ask yourself the question “Where would my bookers be searching for me?” Ultimately, wherever your clients are is where you want to be.

For me, my solo show is advertised locally on Facebook; my weddings through wedding fayres and referrals; while my children's shows come from word of mouth referrals. Be prepared to experiment with a range of things and find out what works for you.

That's all for now. Until next time.



SHAREMAGIC LIVE

A Massive Success!

On Sunday, April 5, Vanishing Inc. hosted ShareMagic: Live, the first-ever international online magic convention. With more than 30,000 magicians tuning in from around the globe and over a dozen performers, this exclusive free session was the biggest magic event in history.

“When we were first planning ShareMagic: Live, we anticipated that maybe a few hundred magicians might join,” said Vanishing Inc. Co-founder Andi Gladwin. “Even in our wildest dreams, we could have never imagined the impact ShareMagic: Live would have and are so grateful to everyone that helped us create something truly special at a time we could all use it most.”

Developed by Vanishing Inc. as a way of giving back to the magic community, ShareMagic: Live was a more than 5-hour extravaganza featuring a world-class lineup of professional magicians. Viewers were treated to a variety of special lecturers covering topics ranging from magic tricks to magic theory and improving your social media presence. Presenters included Dani DaOrtiz, Jeff McBride, Harapan Ong, Morgan & West, Harrison Greenbaum, Caroline Ravn, Jim Krenz and Vanishing Inc. Co-founders Andi Gladwin and Joshua Jay. Daniel Garcia also lectured and provided what many believe to be the standout moment of the event when he used an innovative optical illusion to make surprise guest David Blaine appear.

ShareMagic: Live also featured an exclusive interview with Justin Willman, who offered an in-depth look at the creative process behind his Netflix show Magic For Humans and his touring stage show. To the delight of everyone in attendance, Dynamo also joined the broadcast as a surprise guest to share a positive update

on his health and discuss his latest television special Beyond Belief.

SHAREMAGIC: LIVE BY THE NUMBERS:

- Number of People Viewing: 30,000+ throughout the day (combined across all streaming platforms)
- Countries Represented: 60+
- Continents Represented: Six (all except Antarctica)
- Live Comments per Minute: 126
- Total Viewing Time: Two years and 303 days combined across all viewers
- Post-Event Feedback: Nearly 950 independent pieces of positive feedback received across all channels (website, social media, email) within 12 hours of the event

During ShareMagic: Live, Vanishing Inc. also announced their new ShareMagic video series. Billed as “TED Talks for Magic,” these special videos feature “exceptional magicians telling exceptional stories” designed to inspire magicians to think critically about their magic. Videos from a variety of professional magicians will be posted regularly to view for free at sharemagic.org.

“We are so humbled by the overwhelming support and feedback we received for ShareMagic: Live,” added Vanishing Inc. Co-founder Joshua Jay. “The world needs magic more than ever during these unsettling times and we are truly honoured to have provided a platform for 1,000s of magicians from around the world to come watch and learn magic.”

Among those viewers was legendary magician David Copperfield, who called Jay after the event to share his gratitude and praise with the entire Vanishing Inc. team.

For those who missed the event or would like to watch their favourite moments again, ShareMagic: Live is available to download for FREE at vanishingincmagic.com



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IN THE PHONE BOX

*Our editor goes in to a traditional British phone box with 40p and calls someone of interest. Most of the time, no one can be bothered to talk to him, but now and again he strikes it lucky. This month, he's struck pure GOLD, as the phone is answered at the other end by the fabulous **Anna Torv** – the psychologist from the hit Netflix show **MINDHUNTER!!!***

Set in 1977 – in the early days of criminal psychology and criminal profiling at the Federal Bureau of Investigation – *Mindhunter* revolves around FBI agents Holden Ford (Jonathan Groff) and Bill Tench (Holt McCallany), along with psychologist Wendy Carr (Anna Torv), who interview imprisoned serial killers in order to understand how they think with the hope of applying this knowledge to solving ongoing cases.

MS: (Magicseen): Hello Anna!

AT: Hello.

MS: We never knew you were a fan of magic!

AT: (laughs) I'm not - where did you get that from?

MS: Our researcher. Or should I say, our ex-researcher!

AT: (laughs)

MS: So not interested in magic at all?

AT: Not really... sorry.

MS: You have an Australian accent...

AT: That's because I'm from Australia.

MS: Oh, that could be why, then. Have you heard of Dynamo?

AT: Yes, he's pretty well known, but I haven't seen his shows. That's the trouble when you're an actor, you never really get to see much TV.

MS: Apart from when you're 'resting'.

AT: That's it, look on the bright side! (laughs)

MS: I'm from Magicseen magazine by the way.

AT: I thought we were supposed to be talking about MINDHUNTER?

MS: I don't watch it.

AT: It's a great show.

MS: Any magicians in it?

AT: No, I don't think so. Wait though, I once saw a magician at a party, and he was very good from what I can remember.

MS: Was it me?

AT: No.

MS: How do you know?

AT: He was French.

MS: Oh. Well, it's been lovely talking to you. We'll tell all our readers how great MINDHUNTER is!

AT: Great, thank you.

Check out MINDHUNTER on Netflix. It's frikkin great!

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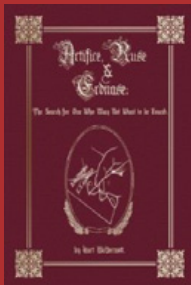


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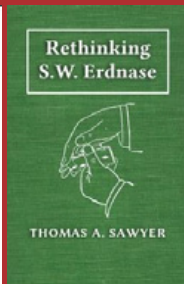
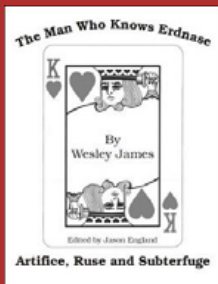
Erdnase's classic in a clean digital format, and Christian Scherer's German translation.



Artifice, Ruse & Erdnase

<https://www.lybrary.com/151122.html>

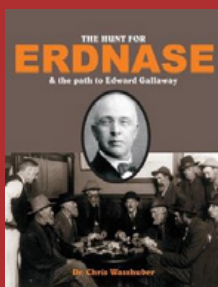
Hurt McDermott's excellent overview of candidates up to 2012. Considered the best book of its kind.



Wesley James and Thomas A. Sawyer with their takes on particular candidates.

<https://www.lybrary.com/240441.html>

<https://www.lybrary.com/923281.html>



The Hunt for Erdnase & the path to Edward Gallaway

<https://www.lybrary.com/673843.html>

Chris Wasshuber's research into the identity of Erdnase.

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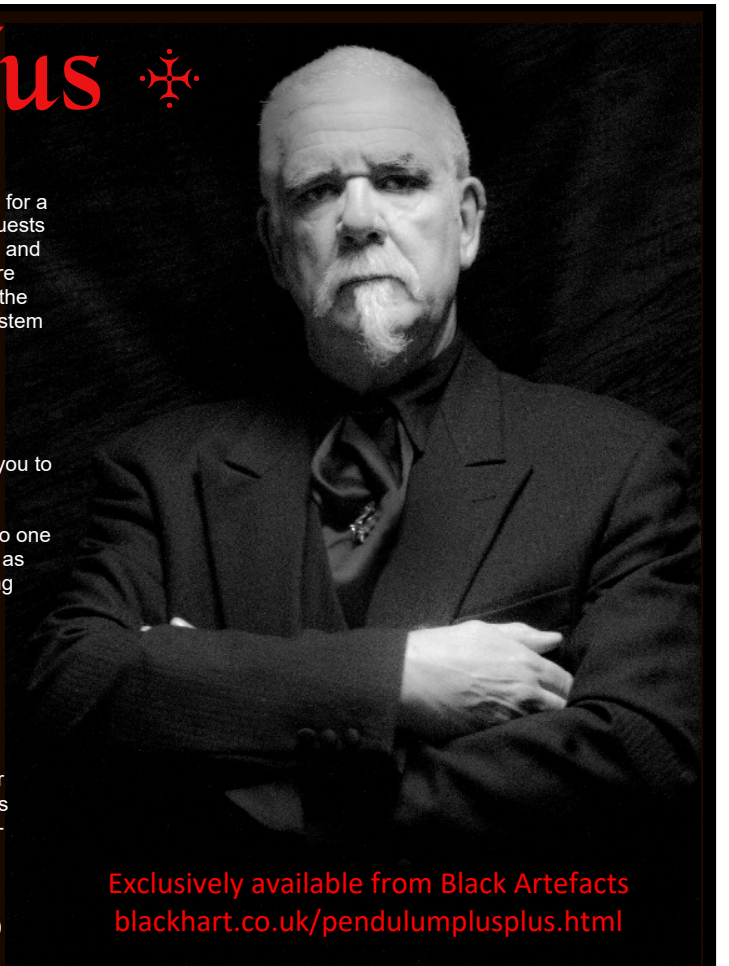
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THE JUMPING EGG

WOLFGANG
MOSER

The idea of changing a ball into an egg is already used by some magicians (e.g. Jay Sankey's "Bouncing Baby" from Sankey Unleashed). Usually the effect is accomplished by a simple fake transfer. In order to do this both hands must be empty, and the glass needs to stand nearby on a table. I was looking for a method where I could hold the glass in my hands to cover the palmed egg and thus eliminate the table. I use this as an opener to my act as it is quick and magical.

EFFECT:

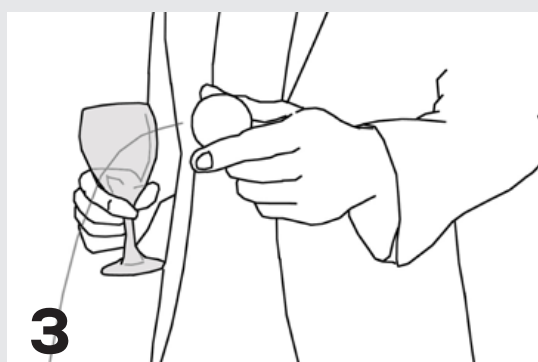
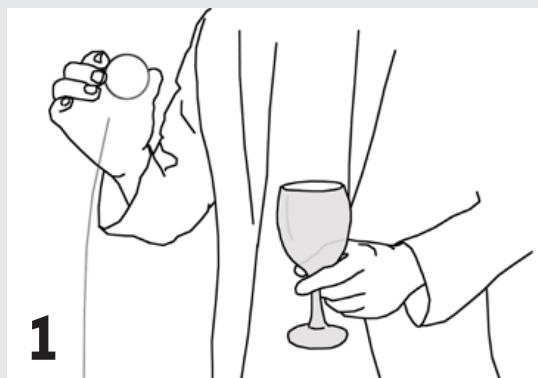
The magician walks on stage with a rubber ball and a wine glass. While greeting the audience he bounces the ball on the floor several times. Suddenly he cracks the ball open on the glass, and it turns out to be a real egg. Reality cannot be trusted, and the show can begin...

REQUIREMENTS:

You will need a wine glass with a stem, a raw white egg and a white rubber ball. The ball should be about the same diameter as the egg. I use a silicon manipulation ball, 4.5 cm in diameter. Have a handkerchief or paper towel in your right pocket.

WORKING:

1. Walk on stage with the glass in your left hand, and the ball visible in your right. The egg is hidden in a loose fingerpalm in your left hand, this being covered by the glass. Fig. 1.
2. Welcome the audience and start to talk about reality. At the same time, bounce the ball on the floor a couple of times without calling much attention to it.
3. On the final bounce, give the ball some extra momentum so that it jumps a bit higher than before. This gives you enough time, while the ball is in the air, to transfer the glass from your left hand to your right. Fig. 2.
4. The fingers of the left hand are now free to catch the ball. Fig. 3. Here you have to be very careful, because you also have an egg palmed in this hand.
5. You are now going to crack open the ball on the glass. In this action you will switch the ball for the egg. In order to do this, turn your body to the left, so that the right side of your body is facing the audience.
6. At the same moment, your right hand moves the glass forward and as soon as the glass covers the left hand, the ball is let go so that it rolls into the right finger palm. Fig. 4. This action only takes a split second and is covered by the movement of the entire body and the hands moving forward.
7. The left hand immediately moves up to show the egg. Hold the egg with the butt end to the audience, so it still looks like the ball. Fig. 5. For the audience nothing has changed.
8. Now bring attention to the "ball" in your hand by bringing it up to eye level. To change the ball into an egg visibly, wave your hand very slowly back and forth. During this action, simply turn the egg 90 degrees. This creates the illusion that the shape is changing from a ball to the shape of an egg.
9. Let this image sink in for a couple of seconds, and then crack it open into the glass to reveal it is a real egg.
10. While the audience is applauding, the right hand reaches into your pocket for the handkerchief/paper towel to clean your fingers and secretly leaves the ball there to tidy up.





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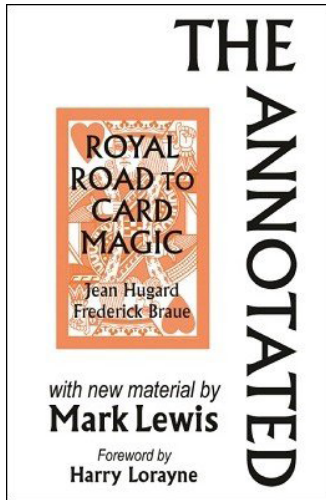


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THE REVIEWS

WE TAKE A LOOK AT **WHAT'S HOT** AND **WHAT'S NOT**



THE ANNOTATED ROYAL ROAD TO CARD MAGIC

(download)

Mark Lewis

Available from www.lybrary.com

Price: £12.00

First published in 1949, this legendary book is still considered the standard beginner's textbook

on card magic. You can start the book knowing nothing about card magic but by the end you have become an expert. Of course, a lot of things have evolved in card magic over the last 70 years including new sleights, counts and flourishes. Older moves have been revised, refined and improved. Even when I first picked up the 'Royal Road' it was nearing 20 years after its publication date and I thought some of its contents felt a little old school then.

Whilst it still serves as a fine introduction to the basics of card magic with its well organised contents, Mark Lewis has given it a long overdue update with the addition of many of his own ideas, variations and improvements and these are accompanied by new clear photographs. Hugard and Braue's original text remains intact but interspersed amongst the pages are the insertion of annotations adding clearer explanations where needed,

additional ideas, advice and general comments about the routines.

The tricks and sleights aren't in any way changed but have been modernised bringing it more up to date and clarifying the original text. Not every page or every trick has had the treatment and the annotations are there as and when Lewis felt they were needed. So it's quite a personal approach, very much in the style and based on the skills and experience of Mark Lewis himself.

This new downloadable version of the classic from Lybrary.com is so low priced as to be a 'no brainer', especially for the amount of work that it must have taken.

Besides the annotations Mark Lewis has added an appendix, which originally was planned to become his very own book on card magic. It remained unfinished so he has added it to his annotations, thus, you get

two e-books in one. It proves useful in following the RRTCM as the routines and sleights add a further volume in a similar style.

Whether you want to refresh your memory of a classic text or see how one person's additions to the famous book read, you can't go wrong at this price level. Card legend Harry Lorayne wrote in his foreword to the book, "His annotations, updates, wonderfully clear photos, new ideas, and more, make this an absolute must have. I knew Jean Hugard and Fred Braue personally. I know that they'd be very pleased with what he's accomplished here." You can't say fairer than that. **PP**

WHAT'S HOT: useful revisions and additions to update this classic textbook. Mark Lewis's own beginner's guide to card magic included adding many modern day sleights and routines
WHAT'S NOT: Download only
RATING: 80%



ENLARGE

SansMinds Creative Lab

Available from any Murphy's retailer or dealers contact www.murphysmagic.com

Price: £24.50

SansMinds doesn't like to be restricted to standard card effects so are always creating slightly off-beat type ones, these often involving tearing corners off cards. I don't think this effect has ever been done before, so to some degree it is unique but only because it doesn't make a lot of sense.

A chosen card has a corner torn off and placed on the top of the card box. The spectator's phone is borrowed and a picture is taken looking down at the card box which is then expanded on screen to a larger size. The phone is placed over the top of the card box and when removed the torn corner is seen to have enlarged to match the expanded picture on the screen.

If you think this is worth pursuing, you will need your arts and craft kit for the inevitable 'do it yourself' gimmick making session. Fortunately, this won't require engineering skills, just a little cutting, sticking, and taping and takes 10 - 15 minutes. There's nothing difficult here and it's not a mechanical gimmick that will

wear out or fail. The method is oddly practical for SansMinds, requires a low skill level and has a visual impact. Apart from a card force there are no other card skills needed.

Despite its visual surprise, the trick itself has no rationale. I know we do a lot of pointless things in magic but finding a card seems to have a point, producing a dove is the magical creation of life, etc, etc. But enlarging a torn corner of a card has even less sense than most, other than because someone has worked out a method for doing it! Surreal weirdness is the best reason, so if that's your bag this could be for you.

You receive a DVD with all the

well made materials required, good instruction on how to make the gimmick and perform it with plenty of trailers for more SansMinds tricks! Best of all they are always very excited about it! SansMinds products are created by twenty-somethings aimed at twenty-somethings, similar to pop songs, here today and gone tomorrow with plenty more similar ones coming along after! **PP**

WHAT'S HOT: unique effect. Easy to do. Using a phone to create the magic gives it a 'modern day' feel. All materials included.
WHAT'S NOT: the gimmick will need to be made up although it's very simple. Magically lacks much reason. File under, why would you want to do this?
RATING: 45%



REVOLVE

Nicholas Lawrence

Available from any Murphy's retailer or dealers contact www.murphysmagic.com

Price: £39.00

Revolve is a development of Nicholas Lawrence's original effect Evolve. Making up Evolve required a lot of DIY and in this

new version that work has been done and the gimmick refined. The gimmick now comes ready to go out of the packet.

The effect is that a blue Bicycle card, folded into quarters, visibly changes colour in mid air as it is dropped from your hand. The card can then be unfolded and handed out for inspection.

The method is very ingenious. Once fitted the gimmick and folded card can sit on a table ready for use and look entirely normal. When lifted ready to perform you need to watch the back quarter but this is not a problem. And generally angles are not an issue.

The card changing in mid-air is a 'wow' moment and the gimmick can easily be stolen to allow the card to be handed out. The lifting and dropping prior to the change are not difficult to do.

The instructions, which run for about fifty minutes, give you five different ways to handle the change and Lawrence teaches one colour transposition effect using two folded cards. There are also a number of suggestions about how the gimmick might be used which need development. There is an also a step by step

guide to making a replacement gimmick should you need one. The video concludes with a discussion about how to put the effect into the hands of a spectator.

For me this product falls into the category of a really good method looking for an equally good application. I think it needs a rationale for why the card is folded into quarters and also something which puts the colour change into a context. Given the effectiveness of the gimmick I'm sure that will come but it is not there yet. **SB**

WHAT'S HOT: well made, effective gimmick that creates a very visual colour transformation

WHAT'S NOT: Still looking for an application that matches the effectiveness of the method

RATING: 65%



CINEMENTAL

Nikolas Mavresis

Available from any Murphy's retailer or dealers contact www.murphysmagic.com

Price: £30.00

This is a really brilliant close up mental effect that uses a pack of cards featuring graphics of well known film titles and in which the performer appears to divine the names of movies either selected or freely dealt to by spectators. The methodology used is totally practical and well within the scope of anyone who performs for real people, and the routines themselves are extremely fooling. What's not to like?

Answer - well, nothing really! I had watched the entertaining online dem before opening the product, but it was only on the 41 minute instructional video that I got to actually see a proper

full performance of the routine without cut aways, reaction shots or other distractions. And I was fooled.

Although capable of a number of variations, the basic two stage routine is as follows. The performer displays a set of cards which depict loads of film titles and every one is seen to be different. Placing the cards face down in a pile, the magician looks away and invites a spectator to cut off a portion of the pack and to look at the face card of the cut away top portion and to remember that film title. The spectator is then requested to shuffle the cards thus completely losing the selection amongst the other movies.

Without any fishing for clues or questions, a few moments later the performer starts to describe a film, eventually arriving at a movie title. It is the chosen film cut to! Reassembling the pack, the cards are given to a second spectator.

The magician writes a film title secretly on a blank card and places it sight unseen in full view. The spectator is now asked to

deal the cards one at a time face up onto the table in a pile and to stop at any time. Unbelievably, the prediction matches the card stopped at.

It is this second phase that tends to fool magicians in particular because they assume that some sort of stop control is being used, but it absolutely is not. The spectator can stop dealing at any time and it will match the prediction exactly. Honestly!

The method is super sneaky and very subtle. There's no sleight of hand, no multiple outs and it is easy to do. You can't repeat the effect for any of the same spectators (a relevant point for strolling magicians working for moving spectators), but there is no real re-set so you can carry it around ready to go at a moment's notice.

The cards are nicely designed and printed on Bicycle size standard card stock by the USPC. A lot of thought has obviously gone into the design of these cards, not only to make them interesting to look at, but also to hide the method.

Although there is a fair bit of card counting and dealing involved in the routine, I think this will work well commercially where you are entertaining small groups of people. It's not really big enough for working at large dinner function tables, but restaurants or pubs would be fine.

I really like this. It's fooling, clever yet practical in method, and the video tutorial explains in good detail not only the main two phase routine but also a number of add ons and other extra tips and ideas. All in all, for the walkabout mentalist or mental magician, this is a great trick to have available. **ML**

WHAT'S HOT: excellent, fooling method, interesting well designed props and plot, practical for commercial magicians working for small groups

WHAT'S NOT: can't be repeated for the same spectators, not suitable for bigger tables or groups, quite a bit of dealing and counting to be gone through each performance

Rating: 85%



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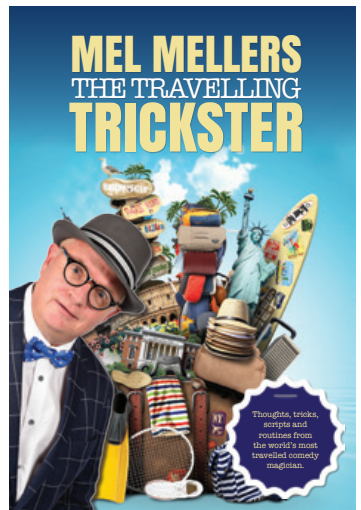
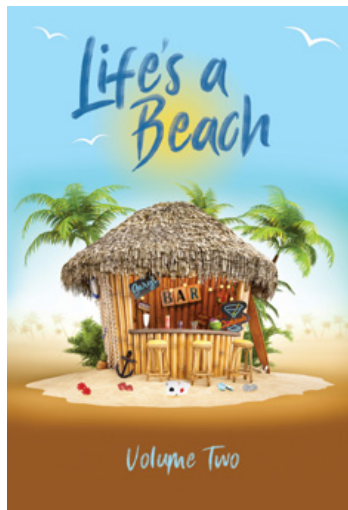
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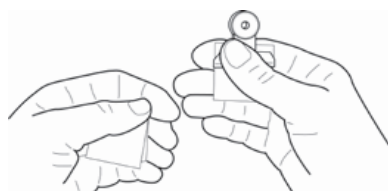
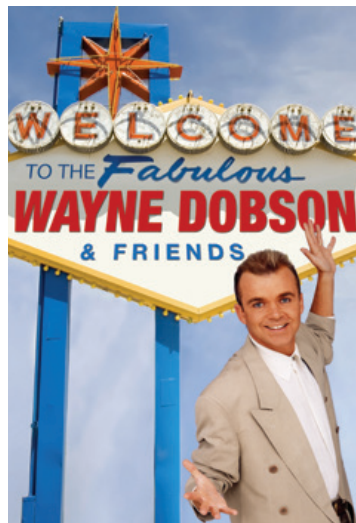


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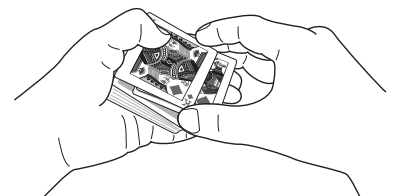


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ESP TEST KIT

Steve Cook

Available from any
www.alakazam.co.uk

Price: £34.99

In an age where electronic devices in mentalism seem to be the fashion it is refreshing to see an effect that feels like it is

achieved with modern technology but actually uses a method that is so sneaky it will make you smile when you learn its secret. Well that is what Steve Cook has achieved with his ESP Test Kit.

A spectator is asked to place five ESP cards into separate envelopes and place one of the five into a pocket. Without touching the envelopes you are able to start to reveal each symbol even predicting ahead of time which symbol would be placed in the spectator's pocket. Then at the end, should you want to, you can give the spectator the ability of reading your mind.

When you read the blurb for this

effect it reads 'The ESP Test Kit is a professional routine that is easy for even the absolute beginner to perform!' While this is true, there are a few simple things you will need to remember and you will need to practise over and over so the procedure becomes second nature. Even Dave Loosley says in the video tutorial 'This is quite difficult to do the first time!'

Once mastered though you can perform this as whatever genre use choose (Mentalism, Remote Viewing, Psychometry or Precognition, etc)

You are supplied with 5 ESP cards, 5 custom made numbered envelopes (plus spares) and

a real leather wallet designed specifically for this effect. The ESP symbol cards are printed on rigid plastic so will last a lifetime. It would have been nice if the envelopes were made from tyvek so they lasted a lifetime too but with care they will last a long time.

This is another solid release from Steve Cook and the team at Alakazam. Recommended! **PS**

WHAT'S HOT: Sneaky method that makes you look like a real mindreader.

WHAT'S NOT: Not quite as easy to do as the advertising blurb makes out.

RATING: 80%



FOOD TO GO 2.0

George Iglesias

Available from any Murphy's retailer or dealers contact
www.murphysmagic.com

Price: £45.00

There seems to be a slight trend at the moment for releasing updated versions of tricks and then putting a 2.0 in the title, and here's another! The original Food To Go was released 10 years ago and the effect itself has been performed commercially by inventor George Iglesias for about 12 years. It is a practical, magical and totally commercial production device that is based on U.F. Grant's Temple Screen which was released back in the 1940's.

The basic idea is that a flat hinged series of illustrated panels are opened to reveal three fast food options such as a chicken wrap, a burger and fries, and a salad. The panels are opened and closed to display both sides and then one

of the foods is chosen e.g. burger and fries. Folding the panels into a triangle, the performer reaches inside and produces a real burger and a container of fries which can be given away to a spectator to eat! When the panels are opened up again it reveals the picture of the burger and fries has now disappeared leaving a white silhouette of the picture shape for a little kicker ending.

The panels each measure about 22cm x 35cm and are securely hinged together with black sticky paper (Fablon, for example). The concept is that there are really five panels but thanks to a carefully choreographed handling and the judicious use of magnets, the panels can be opened in a number of different ways to reveal the desired surfaces while at the same time concealing the necessary load bag.

When I first examined the prop I noted that the food graphics

had prices in US\$ on them, and I initially thought this would limit where the trick could be used. However, on the 47 minute online instructional video, George explains how you can customise the panels to feature literally any graphics that you can produce with your home printer.

He gives you a link where you will find two further sets of prepared graphics, one featuring pictures of electronic goods which results in you producing a set of large headphones, the other showing snack foods where you end up producing a tub of Pringles and a Snickers bar, but you could equally just design your own.

He explains how to attach your new graphics either permanently or even temporarily, thus making it possible to ring the changes and create unique pictures to suit specific shows. Trade show magicians will immediately appreciate how incredibly useful this could be.

Because George has been performing this effect for so many years, he is very slick at it and makes it look easy. When you first start to try and get to grips with it, you may get a bit confused, but don't give up. George explains in various ways and from different viewpoints the moves so if you concentrate and follow with the

props in hand you will gradually get up to speed. But you do need to be prepared to work on it.

There are four different handlings explained, and all of them have their strengths. Although the prop is really designed for platform/stage use, the angles in a couple of the methods are well covered and so you could even work this virtually surrounded thanks to the clever operation of the panels.

The prop feels very robust and I would assess that it will last for almost countless performances. Even if the hinges start to wear, you can easily repair them making this a prop that is ideal for busy performers. All in all, I think this is a great item. **ML**

WHAT'S HOT: well conceived and constructed prop that facilitates an impossible looking production of 'lumpy' objects from flat panel boards. Highly customisable

WHAT'S NOT: handling may feel a bit daunting at first and you may need to change the graphics immediately on the panels if you don't want to produce fast food or you are working outside the US

RATING: 90%



GUMBELIEVABLE

SansMinds

Gimmicks, DVD instructions, 28 mins

Available from any Murphy's retailer or dealers contact www.murphysmagic.com

Price: £34.00

Losing what was left of my hair, along with my voice, were unintended consequences of handling this effect. How could SansMinds have known I'd previously pledged to our Editor that if another item for review came through my letterbox containing white pliant rubber and lodestones, I'd tear at my scalp and screech in frustration?

A touch of hyperbole, perhaps. This comes as a virtually built gimmick by SansMinds standards – you have to complete the prep, which is as easy as pie. You have to provide the gum, which as a consumable is not able to be

included. However, here's the first 'but' - this particular make of gum seems not to be available in the UK, so you may have to shop around that interweb you hear about to track it down.

The alternative would be to remake the gimmick to fit a more readily available make of gum, which is not an insurmountable challenge, as the filmed instructions take you through this very clearly, but it is frustrating and puts this back firmly in the DIY category SansMinds normally occupy.

This is very much a piece of social magic, either to use amongst friends, or on social media. Workers are unlikely to find a place for it. It is, though, a very visual quickie in which you take out a pack of gum, the kind with an outer sleeve and the gum pieces in a blister pack inside. Sliding off the cardboard sleeve, you place it in your pocket and

hold the blister pack of gum in your hand. Visibly, with no cover, it changes to the full pack of gum inside the sleeve. A wave and it changes back to the blister pack, whereupon the cover is found on the assisting spectator's shoulder. Replacing the strip inside the cover you pocket it and get on with your day.

Over the period of half an hour the ubiquitous Jason Yu makes his appearance on the explanatory DVD to guide you safe and sound through everything. You get a live performance, how to prepare the gimmick, and he takes you through the handling. There is a bonus element in which one piece of gum magically drops out of the clear plastic blister pack, which is a cute addition that makes entire sense within the sequence of events. He also shows you how to clean up so that the pack of gum can be left with the spectator – although this comes at a cost, since it is impossible to peel off

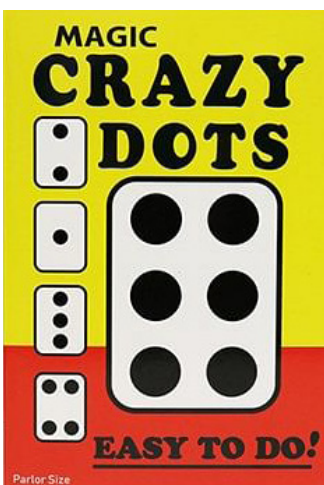
the gimmick without creating a lot of noise.

It's highly visual, and looks great on camera. You have to watch your angles for sure – you cannot have anyone behind you, or even at the sides, so it is best for a small group or one-to-one. As the trailer reveals, the handling looks just a little cosy. The bit where the pack ends up on their shoulder is bold and will not work without a degree of audience management that would look positively military. There's also a bit of in-and-out of your pocket that starts to make this a little too much messing around for such a visual moment. It all seems to question whether this is worth the asking price. Yet another release from the proliferant SansMinds that would have been better served as a download or as part of a multi-effect DVD offering. **BG**

WHAT'S HOT: looks great on camera. Visual, instant changes with a magical payoff. The extra bit where the gum pops out of the pack magically is nifty.

WHAT'S NOT: angly, noisy if you want to end clean, lots of traffic to and from your pocket. You may not find a matching gum, in which case you'll have to remake the whole thing. This makes it expensive for what it is.

RATING: 35%



CRAZY DOTS

Available from any Murphy's retailer or dealers contact www.murphysmagic.com

Price: £20.00 stage size, or £12.00 parlour size

This is an effect which has been around for a long time, though none the worse for that. One of my fellow reviewers, a sage with a long memory, recalls the same trick featuring in Harry Stanley's Unique Magic catalogue under the name Pop-Eye-Pips circa 1950/60

You get a metal 'card' painted in brilliant white with a number of black dots on each side.

In rapid succession each side of the card is shown to the audience revealing in turn a single black dot on one side, four dots on the other side, then one dot has become three, and four now six.

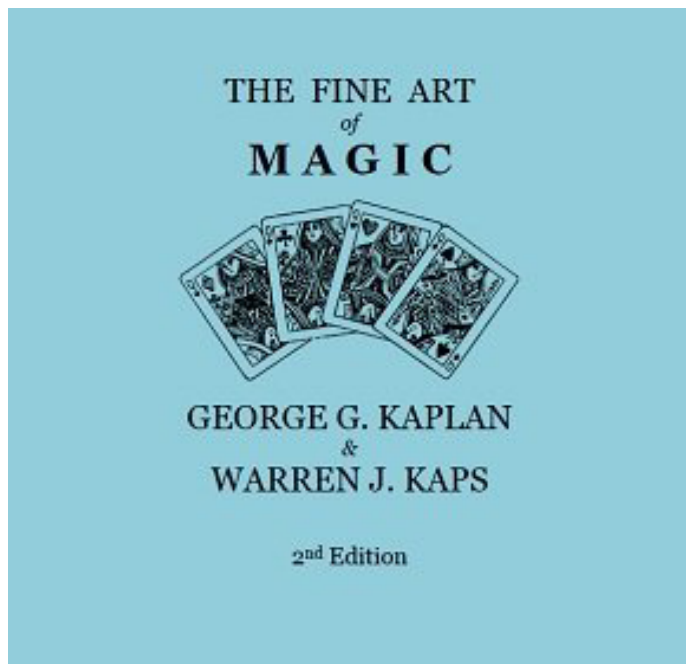
Apparently revealing the secret, the performer explains how by covering dots the effect is created, then confounds the explanation by turning the card again to show there really are six dots on one side and three on the other.

To compound the audience's confusion the card is turned one final time showing that there are now eight spots.

Did you follow all of that? No? Don't worry. The effect is very visual and an audience will easily follow the overall effect. It may not be the strongest piece of magic in the world but in the right hands this is a funny fast piece of entertaining magic that can be used in a parlour or stage setting. It is ideal as a fun interval in a longer act or as a piece for the compere.

You need to become fluent in handling the card but it is not difficult to do by following the downloadable pdf instructions. **SB**

WHAT'S HOT: well made, easy to learn, puzzling and funny
What's Not: nothing
RATING: 70%



THE FINE ART OF MAGIC

George G. Kaplan, edited by Jean Hugard;

2nd edition edited and revised by Warren J. Kaps
370pp., hb & pdf, 7¼" x 10½" b+w
line drawings by Francis Rigney & Tony Dunn

Available from: www.lybrary.com.

Price: £75.00 hardcover;
£55.00 pdf; £90.00 pdf & hardcover;

This is a welcome reprint of the original Kaplan book from 1948, with editing, updating and extra content from Warren Kaps.

The original never quite attained the lofty heights of modern classic status, particularly when you place it next to books of that era such as 'Stars of Magic', 'Greater Magic' and 'Royal Road To Card Magic'. Not that it was without its fans; Juan Tamariz in his foreword waxes lyrical about the original, calling it "the [book] I've learnt and performed the most from. Absolutely wonderful!" So it has the feel of an overlooked gem, and that is borne out by close study.

Even from this distance of 70 years, the first edition has the feel – both in terms of its content and style – more contemporary than those books, which is a

little surprising given that it was ghost written by Jean Hugard, who watched Kaplan perform the routines and moves, then wrote it up. The line drawings of Frances Rigney were very much of their time and have been preserved in this second edition, with additional drawings by the excellent Tony Dunn.

Slightly strangely, given that it has been brought to life by online bookshop www.lybrary.com, it is larger than the first edition, and has been laid out to become more readable on good quality paper. So it's not just a reprint, but a rewrite. You have the choice of acquiring it in book form or as a pdf, or both.

For the editor/updater Warren J. Kaps this was clearly both a love letter to Kaplan's memory as well as a labour of love. Kaplan's family gave Kaps full access to his unpublished notebooks, in which the author had kept notes about errors and additions. What Kaps has done is frame the original in a contemporary context, with the benefit of subsequent versions published or placed on the market.

Sometimes this is done within the main text, often it is in the form of afterthoughts citing a whole list of relevant references, but all in all it

was some 15 years in the making. In addition Kaps has added some new material, although his rationale in doing so is hard to figure as the new stuff is rather random.

All of which means that this second edition is a slightly different book to the first, and 30 pages longer. Whether this updating of the book is valuable to you depends upon your perspective. If the contents interest you, then certainly it serves you well. If you are more of a collector, bibliophile or purist then possibly less so.

A good half of the book concentrates on card routines and sleights. One way this book differed from its contemporary volumes was that it did not set out to be a primer, but offered a highly selective coverage of techniques and routines, which is perhaps why it feels more modern to these eyes.

The chapters cover The Corner Short & Breather Crimp, Card Sleights, Close-up Card Tricks, Platform Card Tricks, Mindreading with Cards, Mind Reading Tricks, Coin Tricks, Platform Tricks, a miscellany and Amusement Area, with some theoretical Concluding Observations.

Perhaps the most notable modernisation is the addition of the Breather Crimp to the original's sole focus on the Corner Short, a device that clearly appealed greatly to Kaplan. This choice of addition typifies the interventions Kaps makes, as they are ever-so-slightly random.

These two devices comprise the bulk of the book's use of technique although there is a brief section that selects one each of a control, a force, a false cut, a peek, and card marking. If we take one as an exemplar: the Gambler's False Cut. This is essentially a well-explained Erdnase procedure, appended to which is a long reading list ('Card College', for example) giving references to a wealth of congruent false cuts. In this sense the additions perform a service

of sorts, but leave the reader to do the research. And if you have the works referenced, you are unlikely to benefit from having this pointed out to you. As I said: a labour of love, this.

The rest of the book is largely given over to routines, starting with 15 close-up card routines, and this is where the book shines (and in Tamariz's flowery introduction the reason he rates the original so highly). The material is well chosen.

I am a fan of the Clock Trick, which has been revisited many times in many ways over the years. Kaplan's is a valuable take on the original, and well worth your attention. Time and again across the book's routines you get the sense that Kaplan did, as he claimed, actually perform this stuff as it is redolent of real-world attention. His Card In Shoe has had something of a renaissance in recent times, not least by Mac King in his stellar lecture, but this might be the original outing for a very modern-seeming effect. If you don't ever do it, this might change your mind.

This gives way to eight platform card routines, of which a Cards Across routine using giant cards and envelopes stood out for me. It shows once again Kaplan's smart handling of gimmicks and excellent sense of routining. As a reminder of the date of this book's first appearance, his T&R Card seems a period piece when held against the more recent offerings in this space.

In a complete change of focus the next 90 pages offer mindreading routines, rather in the magic/mentalism mould. All the classic mental plots are represented, with on the whole good solid stuff, with a couple of stand-outs. 'The Bombay Mystery' was cited by Max Maven as the best card trick ever. It is an ingenious gimmicked deck that allows a super-clean mindreading piece with cards, although its manufacture is well within the reach of all but the most ham-fisted.

The platform mentalism is uniformly sound. An Improved Sealed Message Reading is as it sounds, and very well thought through. Some of the items betray their age. The Spirit Slates & Magazine Test is good but old school propmy mentalism that reminded me of something Roy Johnson did so well.

The coin trick collection was workmanlike, especially given that this appeared a few years before Bobo. The opening Kaplan Coin Switch is every inch the subsequent Bobo Switch. His Stack Of Quarters is worthy of your time, as is his work on Vernon's Expansion Of Texture. Then it's back to his stamping ground, the platform.

This is good stuff, even today, so in 1948 it must have been every inch the revelation attested to in Tamariz's drooling introduction. Here are seven classics of general magic with a well developed Bill in Lemon, which benefits from Kaps' little bibliographic references, Gypsy Thread, and a truly old fashioned Nest of Boxes: the years rolled back. Kaps adds a section of bar betchas, for no good reason that I could recognise.

The book closes with a miscellany of theoretical observations in their Concluding Observations, which was a bit of a hotch-potch. So a worthy reproduction of a classic book that will yield several treasures, and the Kaps updated references will send you in interesting directions. And all at a good asking price for a pleasing production. **BG**

WHAT'S HOT: worthwhile reproduction and update of an original that's expensive second-hand; nicely produced; some interesting material that thanks to Kaps' efforts is still relevant today; good asking price; one or two real finds

WHAT'S NOT: A bit of a mish-mash; some of the additional material doesn't add much. Some of the material is very much of is time

RATING: 66%



RETRAUX

Jon Billett

Available from:
www.kaymarmagic.com

Price: £24.99

Retraux by Jon Billett is a three phase mentalism routine using a set of polaroid style cards featuring TV shows from the 80s and 90s.

Phase one: You introduce a bag as a 'timecapsule' and place it to one side for later. The cards are introduced and a spectator is asked to take the cards and look through them one by one until they settle on a TV show they either know or would like to watch. They hide the picture out of sight from you. Without any fishing you are able to reveal which show they have chosen.

Phase two: Another spectator is asked to cut the cards and remove a couple of photos

from where the cards were cut. Immediately you are able to reveal both TV shows chosen at random.

Phase three: The cards are shuffled and handed to a spectator who deals them into a pile on the table stopping at any point. The cards dealt are redealt into three piles representing the three TV channels which were available back in the 80s. The top card of each pile is turned over showing which three shows would be on each TV channel. They turn out to be your favourite shows. However, nobody believes you until you empty the contents of the bag which was introduced right at the start. It contains three pieces of TV show merchandise which match the three shows dealt to at random.

You are supplied with a set of full colour printed cards which have been made to look like polaroid photographs, a drawstring bag and three pieces of merchandise which are used for the final reveal.

The cards are printed on 400gsm card so are a really good thickness. They are a little difficult to handle and shuffle at first due to the paper stock. Each card features a different TV show, however, there are no name references printed on the cards so anyone younger than a certain age may not know what some of these shows are. This also applies to anyone overseas who may wish to perform it. I would have liked to see the names of each

TV show printed on each card at the bottom so even if a spectator hadn't seen or didn't know any of the shows, they could still participate successfully.

There is a bit of memorisation required before you can start performing Retraux but it's not too difficult to learn once you are familiar with the TV shows. The main method is similar to Screen Test by Steve Dimmer so if you are familiar with this then you will know what I mean.

What I like about Retraux is that the effect can be whatever length suits your performance requirements. So if you only have a quick minute to perform then you could simply just perform phase one and not mention the 'timecapsule' bag. Or if you wish to perform the whole three phases then you have a solid 7-8 minute routine at your disposal.

The more I play around with Retraux the more I like it. My teenage years were in the 80s so the images on the cards bring back many memories from my youth. Whether you are old enough to remember these shows or not I would recommend picking up a copy of this and giving it a go. **PS**

WHAT'S HOT: Solid multiphase mentalism routine

WHAT'S NOT: Younger spectators or anyone from overseas may not be familiar with many of the TV shows featured.

RATING: 75%

COMEDY CORNER

Here's some more one liners to cheer you up a little in these dark days...

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"I did a gig in the U.S. once for the homeless. I said 'It's nice to see so many bums on seats.'" - **Jimmy Carr**

"It's not that I'm afraid to die, I just don't want to be there when it happens." - **Woody Allen**

"I'm on a whiskey diet...I've lost three days already." - **Tommy Cooper**

"What's a couple?' I asked my mum. She said, 'Two or three'. Which probably explains why her marriage collapsed" - **Josie Long**

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