

# MAGIC

SEEN

*Lite*

ISSUE 14

**BUYER'S  
REMORSE**

LETTERS  
REVIEWS  
MASTERCLASS



THE UNBELIEVABLE SKILLS OF  
**BEN EARL**

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We are lucky to have a performer of the quality of Ben Earl operating in the UK, and even luckier that he was able to take the time to chat to us about himself and his fledgling magic business Studio 52. Anyone who has witnessed his card and coin work is likely to be a fan, and it's a pleasure to have him on the Magicseen cover.

All magicians are caught at some point by what they consider to be a 'bad' magic purchase, but sometimes it's not necessarily the product itself that is entirely to blame, but it is as much about the purchaser's frustrated expectations. In Buyer's Remorse we take a look at the business of mail order purchasing and suggest ways to avoid disappointment.

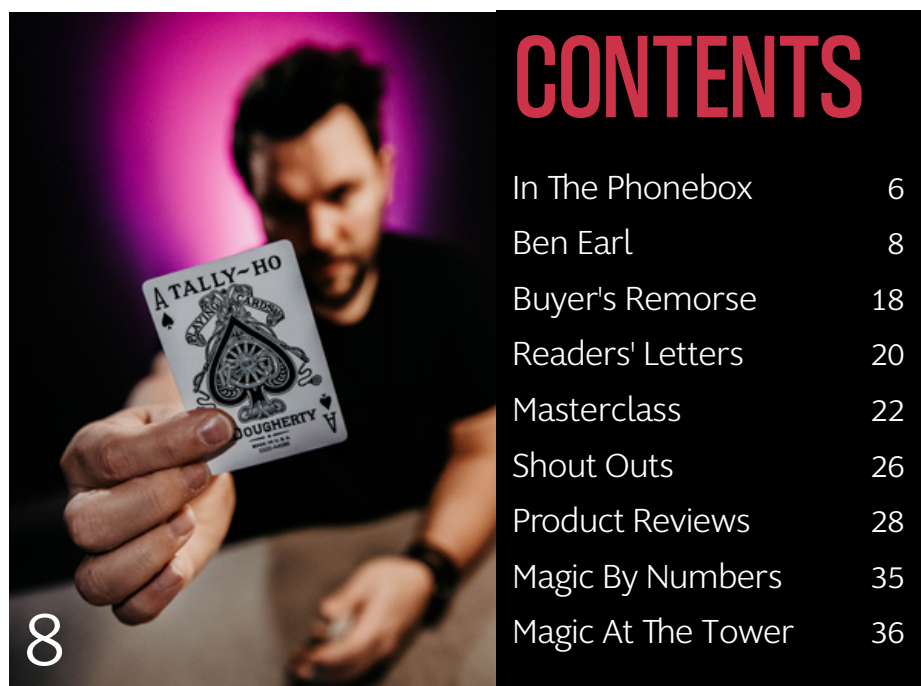
We get letters.....but we continue publishing anyway! Actually, we love to hear from our readers about anything magical and in this edition of Lite we offer you the latest collection of comments that we have received.

So what else have we selected from issue 99 to be included in this latest taster

edition? Well, we offer you the tale of Brian Johnson and his highly unusual run of gigs at the Tower Of London, from the Masterclass you can learn Dave Loosley's coin effect Uniquely Surrounded, there are some fascinating magic facts based on numbers, and of course we've put together a collection of some of the product reviews to give you a heads up on the latest releases.

We hope you enjoy this latest sampling of what Magicseen has to offer, and if you do, and would more of the same, then why not consider taking out a 6 month, 1 year or 2 year download or printed copy sub? That way you will receive the big full issue every two months and therefore will not miss out on all the great content that we slave over producing for your reading pleasure! To ensure our endeavours are not wasted, go to <https://www.magicseen.com/product/magicseen-subscription/> and sign up today.

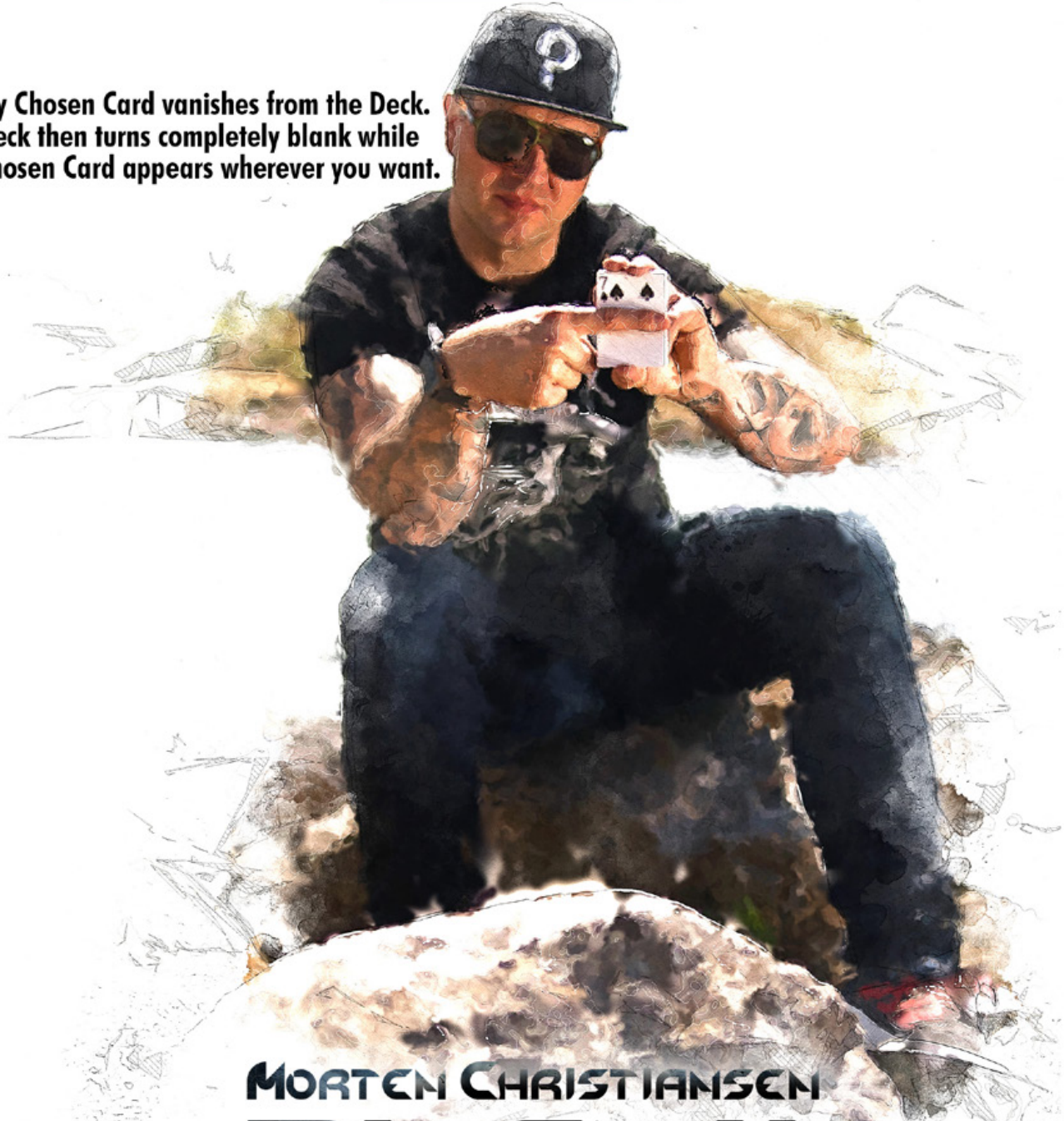
**Mark Leveridge**



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# IN THE PHONEBOX LAETITIA CASTA



Yes, in the fine tradition of tracking down celebrities and asking them questions about magic - whether they like it or not - this issue we've excelled ourselves and blagged a phone call with Laetitia Casta!

The sensational actress has been in several award winning movies including the brilliant 'A Faithful Man' ( French: L'Homme fidèle) which is a 2018 French romantic comedy-drama film directed by Louis Garrel. It stars Laetitia Casta, Lily-Rose Depp, Joseph Engel and Louis Garrel. Watch it now! Anyhow, this is what happened when our glamorous editor Mark Leveridge asked the questions (in English).



**MS:** Hello Laetitia, bonjour etc...  
**LC:** Bonjour!  
**MS:** We're massive fans of you here at Magicseen. We LOVE French movies - they're so beautifully made and don't rely on special effects like that rubbish in Hollywood!  
**MS:** (Laughs) Well Hollywood makes some very nice movies too...  
**MS:** That's true. I love Godzilla v Kong  
**LC:** Oh...  
**MS:** So do you like magic, or not?  
**LC:** I am not a massive fan, but I can see the entertainment in it. I'm one of those people who can get frustrated by it, as I want to know the secret. And it's not cool to ask what that secret is, so... you know, it's frustrating sometimes...  
**MS:** You have to enjoy it for what it is...

**LC:** Oh yes, I totally agree with that. Some of the spectacles... those huge magic shows are spectacular. And there's something kind of comforting about live shows, and how magic is still really popular. The showmen and women... if they can make the magic magical, then that is real success.  
**MS:** Very well put! Have you ever done any magic?  
**LC:** I think every child has. I must have done. Most children pretend to do magic, without any props at all, but some connect more with it. I remember having a box of tricks and was so disappointed when there was just some pieces of plastic, rope and things like that. It looked so unmagical. But that's where the magician comes in and can create magic from it...

## f FACEBOOK NEWS

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY TO GRAEME AND ANNA SHAW ON 9 YEARS OF WEDDED BLISS!



Graeme attempting to get his leg over...

## MAX RECOVERING WELL!

Here's a post from the sensational Jonathan Pendragon - an update on the health of the iconic Max Maven...



## MAC KING MOVES

After 22 glorious years at Hurrah's in Las Vegas, comedy magic star Mac King is moving homes. The Excalibur announces, "Comedy and Magic are coming to The Castle. We're excited to welcome Mac King to Excalibur!" Tickets are on sale now!



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# BEN EARL

## The Man With A Vision

Known around the world as a magician who possess mesmerising sleight of hand skills, there's much more to Ben Earl than a series of Olympic-standard card moves! Magicseen throws a few questions at the single-minded, modest magician and creator who reveals why he turned down a second series of his Channel4 TV Show and why the last 'magic' item he bought was the sponge bananas. Welcome to the mysterious world of the brilliant Ben Earl...

### **Tell us a bit about your background and where you are now?**

I was born in Sussex and grew up playing lots of different sports—basketball, squash, swimming and Judo were the main ones. At 19 years old, I headed to University to study Psychology—therefore, practice and study have always been a part of my life. I loved Psychology as a subject, but while studying I quickly realised that I didn't want to be a psychologist or almost anything associated with academia, so I felt lost. For a couple of years I had no idea what I was doing.

I've always been interested in art, photography, drawing, philosophy and design, so I was considering a career in either graphic design or something in film, but nothing felt right. I'd been practising magic since I was 12 but it hadn't occurred to me that it was something I could do for a living—it was just a hobby.

I was 23 when I did my first proper gig. After that I never looked back. I've

performed abroad, on stage, on TV, in theatres and at every terrible, washed-out venue you can imagine. I've now started my own magic company called Studio52 and I've never been happier. Oh, and somewhere in that mix I managed to get married, have three children and recently I got a cat... his name is Jasper.

### **Let's go back to your TV series for Channel4 – how did that come about, and what was the idea behind it? How do you feel about it now – looking back?**

The TV series came about after I had made a successful appearance on the very first pilot episode of Penn & Teller 'Fool Us'. I was approached by Channel 4 and a series was discussed. I was more interested in doing creative things and having fun than being famous, so for me it was a creative opportunity to play. We did some amazing things and most of what was seen on screen was not close to my intention or concept. It was a 'square peg, round hole' situation. I was trying to make a creative concept show and

they were trying to make a commercial spectacle. However, I had plenty of fun and I wouldn't change a single thing. It taught me a tremendous amount about what I didn't want to do with my life and the types of people I didn't want to be around. I only look back at it with positive feelings and gratitude—I was very lucky to have such an opportunity.

I declined the offer of a second series and instead decided to start building my own things with which I had full creative control. Without that experience many things would not exist today—including my children and Studio52—and for that I will be forever grateful.

### **How have you changed as a person since then – anything you wish you'd done differently?**

If I'm not wiser and uglier every year, I'm doing something wrong! No, I don't wish I'd done anything differently. It was precisely what I needed to get clarity about the direction of my life. Back then I spent a huge amount of time listening





It taught me a tremendous amount about what I didn't want to do with my life and the types of people I didn't want to be around.



Sleight of hand  
is just a tool, and  
great magic is about  
selecting the best  
tools for the jobs

to and associating with the wrong type of people—I don't do that any more. If you are not a good person, I'm not interested—regardless of your talents or professional success. To me, the most impressive achievement is the ability to be a good person—it's not something that happens by accident—it takes work. It's very easy to be selfish, a bully or an asshole. To become more than that, takes empathy, patience and a level of self-control that I respect tremendously.

So, the main way I've changed is to be much more careful with the people I allow into my life and the type of work I am willing to do. I don't mind what anyone else does, I wish everyone well, but selfishly, I want to find meaningful

relationships, fulfilling work and a happy life. This focus has had a large impact on the quality of my magic and an even bigger one on the overall quality of my personal life. Maybe that's just part of growing up?

**Magicians know you for your incredible sleight of hand work – has that been a passion for you, and how necessary are those great skills to be a magician?**

Ah that's kind... although people only see the bits I'm good at! There's much more I'm bad at.

Sleight of hand skills are not necessary to be a magician, but they are extremely helpful—they create more methodological

options and situational flexibility. When used effectively, they can allow a magician to perform with much more creative freedom—increasing the potential power of the magic moment.

However, the better I have become and the more skill I have acquired, the more I look for ways to minimise or remove sleight of hand wherever possible—to use it more efficiently. Sleight of hand is just a tool, and great magic is about selecting the best tools for the jobs. If the best tool is a self-working principle, then I will use that instead. I want to have as many options as possible, so I practise my sleight of hand skills in order to have the option when they are called upon. Most of the best effects I have ever created use very little or no sleight of hand whatsoever.

Either way, it's fun to practise sleight of hand. It can become a meditative process; a hidden, personal ritual of movement, timing, pressure and flow. It can form an intuitive conversation between your hands and your mind, a dialogue between objects and ideas. At a certain point, practised manipulation begins to feel physically pleasurable—becoming a secret language that only other experienced practitioners can appreciate or understand. The fact that this hidden tool—one we use for deception—is so pleasurable to practise, is a marvellous coincidence.

**Any particular things you've struggled with – that stand out in your mind?**

The Pressure Fan! I couldn't get it for years, until one day it clicked after Henri White gave me a couple of great tips. I've never needed to do a pressure fan, it just frustrated me that I couldn't do one! The move isn't described properly or accurately anywhere. I've also really struggled with the LePaul Spread. Again, I don't need to do the move for anything... but it looks pretty. Erdnase said it best, *"Like acquiring many other feats, a perfect understanding of the exact manner in which it is performed will avoid the principal difficulties. Practice will soon do the rest."*

I like struggling with most things—it usually means I have a lot to learn. I like the challenge of struggling and then finding a way through. It's very rewarding. The biggest recent struggle

We must each find our own way and be open to new ways which may come. Know yourself, know your material, get as much experience as possible.... and question everything.

has been building Studio52 through a pandemic. 90% of our existence has been in this time. We had only been operating for about 4 months before lockdown hit. It has presented numerous challenges and difficulties, but they are just part of the game. The ability to pivot, survive and grow has been thanks to my amazing team and the incredible support from the magic community—something for which I am grateful every day.

**It's great having the skills practised until they are second nature – but isn't performing down to having the right personality, and being able to cope with the pressures of performing in front of an audience?**

A sportsman needs technical skills, tactical skills and physical fitness. None of these elements can be removed or can be said to be more or less important. If you want to play at the highest level you need them all. The same can be said for a magician, it all depends on what you want to achieve and to what level you want to play the game.

Most magicians lean more heavily on one aspect of their skillset than another—it depends on what they are good at and what the situation calls for. Performing is a spectrum of complex skills, all of which are influenced and informed by each other; your ability to bring those skills to bear when you need them is what counts. Regardless of what type of performer you are, the key is learning how to perform at your best. This is where experience comes in—it is the guiding force for answering all the questions and smoothing out the rough edges.



There are no final answers. All the rules can change if the conditions or the performer change. Some performers go to the audience, others bring an audience to them. Some performers focus on general entertainment and others focus on the art. Some are successful, some are not. There are many dimensions for what constitutes success as a 'performer', including factors such as nerves, hard work, taking risks and a healthy dose of luck—but everyone must find their way through the maze.

There is someone possibly reading this now who will blow the world away, and yet they do everything differently, break all the rules and create a new paradigm. We must each find our own way and be

open to new ways which may come. Know yourself, know your material, get as much experience as possible.... and question everything.

**When you're performing live do you ever 'just do the easiest move' - as opposed to more complicated moves?**

Easy or hard moves don't matter to me, it's about the right move or the right approach—the difficulty of a move is a side note. I am always looking for the most deceptive procedure and the most elegant way of achieving it. If that requires a technically demanding sequence that needs months of practice, then so be it. If a self-working principle that can be performed immediately is the right choice, then it's a winner. The



entirety of my decision-making and attempted execution rests on the question of ‘What is the best thing to do?’.

There is a natural bias to assume that harder moves are somehow ‘better’—this is not the case at all. The technical difficulty of a move has no bearing on its general practicality or efficiency. It all comes down to what the performer values, and to what level of effort they are willing to put in. Of course, there is no sense in making things harder than they need to be, but by the same score, there is no point in making something easy and sacrificing deceptiveness. It’s all about judgment. Often ego can cloud one’s ability to see things objectively, so clear objective thinking is crucial.

No matter which way you look at it, the hardest move to make... is knowing the right move to make.

**Which magicians have influenced you the most, and has there been one book or DVD which has changed your way of thinking?**

Ricky Jay and David Blaine had the biggest influence on me growing up. Ricky Jay represented mystery, study and someone who seemed to exist as a magician outside of the normal way of operating. He seemed to do his own thing—I always admired that. His skills, presentation, showmanship and interests seemed to create a larger than life character that reached beyond the stage. He painted amazing pictures in the mind of an audience of historical events and nefarious characters through magic history that he was able to bring back to life and pull people into his world. He was a scholar, historian, pioneer and a true

showman. He was a Titan of magic and I was devastated by his passing—I still am.

David Blaine influenced me almost instantaneously. He represented a reaction against cliché and the common tropes of magic that he was able to present with a deep, calm confidence that seemed to come from another planet. I loved that. He cared about creating a spectacle and story that would outlive him. Like Houdini, he is one of the very few magicians who will still be mentioned in 100 years. His bravery and willingness to do things that nobody else will, separate him from the common herd and make him truly great. I am very honoured to have spent time with him in both the UK and US—although my wife gets annoyed when he calls at 3am to discuss something that can definitely wait.

Both Ricky Jay and David Blaine are enigmatic, intense and powerful performers who treat magic with respect and a level of commitment which is inspiring. I respect that greatly and live in constant admiration of it.

Expert Card Technique and The Expert at the Card Table were huge influences on me—for different reasons. Expert Card Technique by Hugard and Braue opened my eyes to advanced technique, history, psychology and routines. To this day, if you can do everything in that book, you are one of the best in the world. The Expert at the Card Table by S. W. Erdnase is a fascinating read. Festooned with poetic prose, creative technical engineering and a philosophy towards ‘artistic handling’ that was inspirational to my young mind. It is a mysterious and enigmatic book that gives up new secrets

every time I read it. However, the book is also completely mad and has total nonsense on every page—that’s why I love it.

**What was your first ever professional gig – tell us about it – and how did it go? And what did you learn from it?**

My first gig was when I was 17. It was a wedding reception and I was absolutely terrible. The magic choices were bad, my ideas back then were beyond awful and I borrowed a suit from my dad—I would have looked ridiculous. My first proper ‘professional’ gig was about six years later at a restaurant called Chiquito’s, and it wasn’t much better—I hated every second of it. I felt out of place and embarrassed. The worst part was that I recognised someone there that I went to school with, so I spent most of the time hiding in the toilet until they had gone. I left early and never asked for my fee. Professional? Nope.

It’s utterly hilarious if I look back and remember how I felt about magic and the choices I made. But, it’s all part of the game. These days people have so much choice and influence available to them that I wonder if that would have been good or bad for me. On the one hand it is a tremendous source, on the other hand it can be paralysing. Every one of us can only deal with the opportunities and access that we have in front of us. I feel I made the best of mine—although there were plenty of dodgy choices along the way!

**What are the hardest types of gigs for you personally?**

I haven’t ‘gigged’ for about four years or so. I did it full time for almost eight years and then I’d had enough. For me there was no real challenge and the work became very boring. I found that most of my job was constantly travelling, and the ‘gig’ itself required very little of what I had to offer. The worst part for me, was that it was an extremely solitary existence.

If I think back to when I was ‘gigging’, the hardest events for me were always giant, multi-magician gigs—multiple performers at an event with hundreds of people. At those events magic becomes a momentary, hit-and-run transaction which makes little or no impact on the event or the spectators. The work was essentially easy, but completely vapid.

So, for the last three or four years I've concentrated on writing, teaching and building new community based interactions with my team at Studio52. I occasionally perform, but in small quiet ways away from commercial intervention or public advertising. These days I actively limit my performances so that I only ever do what I want to.

**Your company Studio52, what is it about?**

I started Studio52 in an attempt to do the magic that I wanted and build something that could be bigger than me. I wanted to create a company that actively did the things I felt were missing from magic. So far we have published four books, started a podcast and delivered over 450 hours of online content—including multiple courses, lectures and interviews with the best magicians in the world. However, the most important thing we have done so far is begin to build new, meaningful communities of people focused on going deeper into magic and doing so together.

We care about substance over style and constantly look for authentic expression and engagement. The overall goal is to build a company that can do things differently. We operate from pure passion and an obsession with quality and community. We are still in our infancy, but so far, myself, Henri White, Darren Lovell and Sarah Stott are very proud of what we have built.

We have magic books, online magic training courses and technical downloads for sale, but ultimately it's everything we do around those items which defines us. #DAVEISTHEBEST #DMSGANG #PIGEONKING

**What's the toughest hurdle you've had to overcome as a performer?**

The toughest and most rewarding thing I've done happened last year, in the very first lockdown. Studio52 started 52 days straight of live broadcasts on Instagram, in which I interviewed the biggest and best names in magic, including; David Williamson, Chris Kenner, Bill Malone, Dynamo, Piff, Chris Ramsay, Steve Forte, Larry Fong, Uri Geller, David Blaine, David Copperfield and many more!

52 days straight. Over 100hrs of content ending with a 24hr broadcast for charity.

# QUICK FIRE QUESTIONS...



**Tell us the top 3 fav effects/products you've released and why you are proud of them...**

1. The Shift Vols. 1–3: Each volume contains powerful effects, efficient technique and highly specialist theory. The Shift was also the product which launched Studio52.
2. This is Not a Box: A publication I released in 2015. It was the first time I publicly expressed much deeper feelings about my philosophy of magic—and it includes killer effects.
3. Inside Out: This is my latest book. It is the most honest and personal I have been in a published work. I am especially proud of the way the illustration, photography and writing style have combined to create a much more personal and dreamlike reading experience.

**Fav TV series/show?**

Tough call, but I would say The Office (US), Breaking Bad, Rick and Morty and The Mandalorian. These are the shows I have watched on repeat over the last couple of years.

**Last item you bought?**

Sponge Bananas. That's not a joke.

It's the only magic thing my son has ever enjoyed.

**Tell us 3 things about yourself that people probably won't know...**

1. I can contact juggle
2. I am a Taoist
3. I used to work for a strip club in Ibiza, drive a Ferrari and have long hair... with a ponytail. Yup! Utter douche!

**Fav packet trick?**

I don't like any of them, but if I had to, I'd pick Alex Elmsley's original 'Ghost Card Trick'.

**Last three books you read?**

The Peregrine by J. A. Baker, Why Orwell Matters by Christopher Hitchens and The Mezzanine by Nicholson Baker.

**Thing that annoys you most about the magic world?**

Negative, pessimistic and disparaging attitudes toward magic and other magicians—just do your thing and let others do theirs. Bullying is also something that annoys me greatly—an utterly pointless and pathetic behaviour enacted by the weak, insecure and discontented.



It was an extremely difficult time and we wanted to create a comforting space for everyone. Thousands of people from all over the world coming together for these live events (which we intentionally didn't record). The crazy part was I had never streamed live on Instagram before, I had never interviewed anyone and all I had was my phone, my attic and a terrible lamp. Also, my wife was heavily pregnant with our third child and the company was struggling. Yet we pulled it off, and created something that people still talk about today!

No one had seen that type of conversational exchange between magicians before; we created something special that resonated with everyone. As a performer I had to be able to deal with whatever came my way; card magic, coin magic, theory, anecdotes, random guests, drinking, technical problems etc. You name it I had to deal with it every single night, with whatever happened... and 'live'.

Every day we were working on ways to improve the format, the delivery and my interactions online. No matter what, we made sure that we were there every single night at 8pm with a new guest or a fun thing to do. It was a great time for us as a team and in that time I learned a huge amount as a performer, speaker and interviewer.

It's the story of my life, I am always throwing myself in at the deep end so I have no choice but to sink or swim. I like the challenge of feeling out of my comfort zone where I am forced to adapt and overcome obstacles. It makes me feel alive. Almost every single project I have ever done starts with me being completely out of my depth.

### **What are you working on at the moment?**

At Studio52 I am working on hosting a special guest lecture and jam session with a very famous, world-class magician. Secondly, a live event for either the end of the year or next year. I am also working on a very cool project for the public.

In terms of magic routines; I have been working on a super clean, impromptu handling of A.C.A.A.N. However, the most interesting part is that I've finally found a way of presenting the effect so that it stops becoming a puzzle and becomes something very magical.

I have also been working on a unique way of performing a colour change—not just the technique, but a way of framing the change itself so that it feels much larger than a 'move'. I have always had 'issues' with colour changes in general, and so this is my attempt to solve many of the problems that I see with them.

### **If you could host a night at the London Palladium, who would the guests be, and why?**

The show would open with Red Bastard; he is an amazing clown who transforms any environment he performs in. It would be great to see him work a large crowd and see what madness he creates. Then I'd have David Fincher sitting in an armchair under a spotlight talking about film theory—listening to him talk about film is mesmerising and he has a fascinating insight into the human condition. Mike Tyson would then walk on, pick up Fincher, and dump him off stage—Fincher flying through the air like a ragdoll before clattering into some disused lighting rigs. Tyson would tell stories for 15 minutes about the craziest moments in his life, before

introducing Daniel Kitson and punching the microphone into the back row. Kitson would do his one-man show—which would be hilarious and brilliant. The night would finish with David Gilmour playing improvised solo guitar pieces on a stage designed by Es Devlin.

After the show David Blaine would do a close-up show in the lobby, but no card tricks, just the disturbing stuff—like swallowing hedgehogs and sewing his head to the ceiling. Donald Trump and Kanye West would Tweet about the show and I'd retire knowing I had completed showbiz.

### **How ambitious are you and is there anything else you'd like to achieve?**

A specific, short to medium-term ambition I have, is to build brand new forms of live events that are not only more useful than the current convention format, but have the ability to inspire and build new forms of meaningful community. I have several ideas, but the current pandemic has made it impossible to put them into practice. As soon as we have the chance to try, we will.

I would say I have a healthy amount of ambition. I just like to work hard on building/making/creating things that I enjoy, and then seeing what happens. Where things then go and what happens as a result is not for me to decide. I have goals, but I am not overly attached to any of them. I like the freedom to improvise, pivot and find myself in unexpected places. However, I suppose that most of my goals—as varied as they may be—now fall under the Studio52 umbrella; so perhaps the main ambition is to make Studio52 more successful at doing those things with every passing year.

What constitutes 'success' for me, is doing work that I enjoy, surrounding myself with good people and making others' lives better if I possibly can. If I can look back on my life having achieved these things, then I would consider my life to have been tremendously successful. I use this perspective as a guiding principle for everything that I do—including my personal life.

[www.studio52magic.com](http://www.studio52magic.com)



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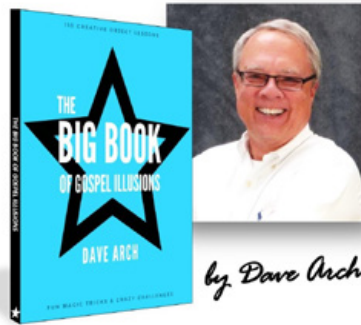
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*Jamie Doyle*



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# BUYER'S REMORSE

HOW TO AVOID MAKING BAD MAGIC PURCHASES

Mark Leveridge

You know what it's like. You receive an email from your favourite magic dealer and get intrigued by the latest miracle that they are offering. You click through to the online dem and watch the video. You are totally fooled. Suddenly, you just know that this is going to be the trick that will elevate your act to the next level, because with an effect as seemingly smooth, clean and magical as this in your repertoire, your status as a top magician is just waiting to be confirmed. What could possibly go wrong?

You wait with excited anticipation for the new purchase to arrive. When it comes you are a little surprised how small the postal package is, but this momentary disappointment soon fades as you rush to your magic room with your parcel.

Ripping the package open you are greeted with a small seal again bag. Inside you can see a small piece of paper bearing the url of the online video instructions and a single playing card. You bow open the padded mail bag to just check that there's nothing else accidentally left inside, but all you find are some publicity sheets for more similar miracles.

Powering up the computer, you type in the url of the instructions and watch the 8 minutes of video. Is this really how that great effect you saw demmed is done, you wonder? Have they accidentally sent you the wrong trick, inadvertently mailing you a cheaper, less impressive version? Nope, it's definitely the trick as

advertised. Oh no, not again, you think, how disappointing, I thought this was going to be so much more impressive. With a resigned 'tut', you chuck the plastic bag with its sparse contents into your desk drawer where it will reside until the next club Bring And Buy night.

Most of us have probably been there, building up our hopes only to see them dashed time and again by reality. Each time it happens we resign to be more careful in the future, yet at some point the sequence will almost certainly be repeated. Buyer's remorse (BR) seems to be only a temporary state, not a permanent fix for our desire to purchase something great.

Of course, not all purchases are like this. Sometimes we are impressed more by something than we thought we might be, or we buy an item that really does fit the bill and which ends up in our act. But there are almost certainly as many,

if not more, disappointments than good surprises, so let's look at why this is and what we can do about it.

## WHO'S TO BLAME?

The assumption by most disappointed purchasers is usually that the trick is not as good as they thought it was going to be. So in their eyes, the fault lies entirely with the trick's inadequacies and has nothing to do with the magician who has bought it. However, I would suggest that often the customer is as much to blame for the feelings of disappointment as the product is.

You see, as magicians, when we are fooled it is easy to make the assumption that the method must be something almost other-worldly! That it will be done by an intriguing, new, clever gimmick and/or handling that will have us gasp in awe when its secret is revealed. But the truth is, magic creators are far better at coming

up with twists on well known principles than they are at devising something newly unique.

Virtually all the latest effects will be based entirely, or at least in greater part, on what has come before, and the chances are you will already have the necessary knowledge in your head. It's just that you didn't recognise the way the known principle had been changed or adapted. The secret's not everything, of course, but sometimes it is hard not to be disappointed when we have built something up in our mind to fantastic levels, only to discover that the entire effect is done with a flap card (again!).

## WHAT TO DO

So, the first thing to do to avoid BR is to try not to build a trick up in your mind too much when you are fooled by the video dem. Just remind yourself that there has to be a method (it's not real magic, you know!) and that provided the explanation reveals a practical solution to the effect you saw, there's no reason to feel let down. Self delusion often has more to answer for than the failings of the trick itself.

## EVERY PICTURE TELLS A STORY

In the old days, publicity for tricks came via the printed word, usually accompanied by line drawings, in catalogues and printed fliers. With relatively limited space to describe what happens in the effect, and not wanting to tip the method completely to the customer before purchase, advert copy writers often were slightly economical with the truth or were inclined to leave out certain important facts which helped to create the illusion in the reader's mind that the effect was better than it really was.

Nowadays, with virtually all products available to view via online video, you'd assume that since the camera doesn't lie, the customer is getting a fairer picture of the capabilities of any given item. But this is sometimes not the case. As the sophistication of video dems increases, so the footage has become sometimes tailored, through cut aways or selectively angled viewing, to lead the purchaser to get a not totally honest view of what

the trick is capable of, and this ends up creating disappointment in the customer when the truth is realised.

## WHAT TO LOOK OUT FOR

When you watch video dems, try not to turn off your critical faculties. You have the benefit of being able to view the dem as many times as you want, so once you have got the idea of what the effect is supposed to be, watch the dem again with the sole purpose of seeing if there are any suspicious cut aways at key moments during the filming. It's not that I am suggesting you try to work out exactly how every trick is done before you purchase it, but rather I am recommending that you try to prevent yourself from being needlessly duped by a smooth video presentation that seeks to hide important facts about a trick's practicality.

Some manufacturers of magic product regularly seem to rely on selective video editing to cast a wonderful sheen over their effects. Even if you purchase your magic from a supplier who you trust, don't forget that when they are selling third party merchandise, they will be providing you with the same dem video footage as supplied by the manufacturer, so the above suggestion still applies.

## READ THE SMALL PRINT

The other thing you should do is read the advertising blurb (i.e don't just watch the video) because sometimes it will contain extra background information about the product which might be important to you e.g. whether it needs a re-set, what type of show it is suitable for, what the performance angles are like etc. Just watching the video dem will probably not provide these insights and you might go ahead and buy something that is simply not suitable for what you had in mind. Read the written text and you will be better informed.

By the way, don't necessarily believe all the quotes about the product that you read, even from well known performers. The creator may be a friend of theirs for all you know so is bound to say nice things! Even customer reviews and online chat room posts are a waste of time for similar reasons, so don't be swayed by what others think, keep a clear

idea in your mind about what you want and need, and then try to work out for yourself whether the product will fulfil those aims.

## AND IT'S LIVE!

Another good way to reduce, although not necessarily remove entirely, the danger of BR, is to attend a magic convention (once they are on again) and ask for a live dem of any item you are especially interested in. This enables you see an unedited version of the trick and if necessary to ask the dealer specific questions to do with the product that might be important to you. If the convention lasts long enough, you can even give yourself a little time after you have experienced the dem to go away and think about whether you really do want to invest in the product. Certainly it is better to do that than to impulse buy on first sight.

## IT'S A FAIR COP

In the final analysis, most dealers are not out to trick you out of your money. The magic marketplace is relatively small, and bad news travels fast. Any dealer who systematically tries to con money out of customers will soon lose credibility, and most are simply trying to encourage you to spend your money with them in exchange for some nice magic.

It is your duty to buy responsibly, and if you dive rashly into purchases without due thought and attention, then really you only have yourself to blame for the subsequent BR. Follow the guidelines above and, while you may still get caught out occasionally, hopefully you will make less unsatisfactory purchases.

*For honest, impartial comments on marketed magic, don't forget to read the Magicseen Product Reviews section in each issue. The review team comprises of experienced magicians who will give you their unbiased opinions on the latest releases, and although this shouldn't replace your own evaluation of products, you can trust the reviews to point out the strengths and highlight any weaknesses that effects may have.*

# Readers' Letters

If you have anything you would like to tell us, whether it's about the magazine or anything magic related, please email: [letters@magicseen.co.uk](mailto:letters@magicseen.co.uk)



## MICHAEL MURRAY

Michael Murray has to be one of the world's most underrated performers and thinkers. So glad you featured him in Magicseen. And he sounds like a nice guy too. Nice one Michael!  
**L.T.** via email

## MORE MURRAY

Dear Magicseen, I was delighted to see you feature Michael Murray on your front cover. When you launched almost twenty years ago, I was sceptical of your aim to feature the best of British and Europe. These guys and girls deserve to be featured in a quality publication to reach a bigger audience. Murray is such a clever guy and the article was really interesting. Thanks!  
**Neal Driscoll**, Edinburgh.

*(We received lots of mail about Michael Murray, and it's always great to feature a major British talent - Ed).*



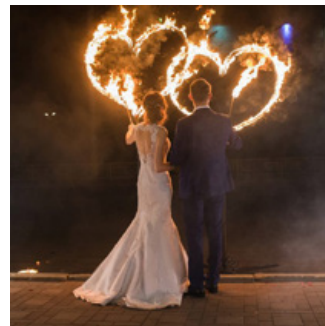
## ZOOM WILL BE A THING OF THE PAST

Dear Magicseen I know a lot of magicians have been raving about Zoom and all the possibilities, but they never seem to point out the negatives. Not that I'm a doom-merchant or anything, but from my own experiences of Zoom, there are lots of issues. Firstly, connection issues – how many times have we been on Zoom calls and people can't access it, or have a problematic signal where people 'freeze', or no sound, or etc. If you're doing a 'paid for' show, what do you do if the person whose birthday it is (for example) keeps freezing because of a poor signal? You can't do the show

without them.... Do you wait until the signal gets better? How do you fill in the time?

It can rapidly descend into chaos, apologies and before you know it, the show has been a disaster. Anyone else had such troubles? I think that now lockdown (in the UK) is easing, performers will suddenly realise that Zoom is OK as a last resort, but there's no atmosphere, no real interaction (think of those annoying overlaps/time delays) and ultimately no comparison with a live show. The picture is not that clear either. I've been in meetings where people are holding up objects, and they can't be identified – and these are much larger than a playing card. I suppose the good thing for magicians is that the audience can't detect things like double cards, dodgy shuffling and all that stuff!

But believe me, Zoom is not going to be the big thing people think it is for live performance. In a few year's time, we'll wonder how we got away with it!  
**F.W** via email



## WEDDING ATTENDANCES LOW - WILL PRICES FOLLOW SUIT?

With limited numbers of people attending weddings, are magicians expected to lower their prices? I

have just started getting bookings/enquiries again and normally I charge £400.00 for wedding magic. However, this is usually for maybe 100 guests, possibly ten tables. And magic in the bar area pre-meal.

Last week, I was discussing a booking with a groom, and he asked why the fee was the same when only 20/25 people would be attending his wedding instead of the planned 150 guests when he first booked the venue two years earlier. It's a difficult question to answer and I did give him a discount.

I mentioned the fact that I was still putting in the same amount of time as a professional, and that fewer guests would get more magic. Although, you can do 'too much' magic for a smaller number of guests, so in a way, the groom had a point. Have other magicians had the same dilemma? It really is a difficult one. Help!

**Mark H.** via email

## THE RABBIT HAS TO GO!

During lockdown, I've spent quite a lot of time on Facebook and other social media platforms, and I've noticed one thing about magicians – they are obsessed with putting rabbits on their business cards and promo material. Am I the only person who thinks that the rabbit is



corny and out-dated? Surely that reference is only for children's entertainers – and how many of them even use real-live rabbits these days anyway? No, I think it gives totally the wrong impression – it's like magic is stuck in the past and is still trading on images from the 1940s. Similarly, women are always seen as the "assistant" when in fact they are just as capable as men at performing their own acts. The magic (and probably that of the general public) world seems obsessed with old imagery, when most magicians are performing really cutting-edge magic these days. My heart sinks every time I see a rabbit!

**Disappointed**, via email.



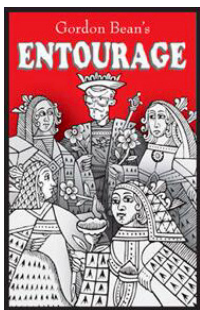
## PACKET TRICK HELP!

Dear Magicseen,  
I am doing a routine in my act where I use seven cards, and I am looking to carry on the theme – so I'm looking for any packet tricks that use six or seven cards. I'm hoping you guys might be able to recommend a few? Here's hoping!

**Jon Westhall**, via email

Hi Jon,  
we've done a bit of research – in between eating lots of biscuits and suggest these:

Only *The Lonely* by Lou Gallo, using four kings and two queens is a good one (It's in the "The Collected Almanac" by Richard Kaufman). Phil Goldstein's "Very Good Hand" uses six normal cards and is an easy, very strong effect. You'll find it in Jerry Mentzer's booklet **PACKET TRICKS** or in his **CARD CAVALCADE IV**. Plus



*"Gypsies Curse", and the classic "Entourage" are certainly worth checking out for starters... and we're pretty sure guys such as John Bannon, Cameron Francis, Paul Gordon, and the late, great Aldo Colombini (and more) will have come up with some crackers!*



## SPRAY AWAY

Dear Magicseen,  
I have just seen the marketing/promotional material for Spray Away by Gusavo Raley, who created 'Cocktail', one of my favourite effects for stand up. I see all the dealers – or most of them – are calling this hilarious and a 'great gag' for magicians. I'm not sure that those accolades fit this product entirely. This is just a version of the Vanishing Bottle. Yes, it's a new little gimmick to actually have spray, but that doesn't make the trick hilarious. The routine is what could make this hilarious if you give it to David Williamson. The emphasis always seems to be on the effect rather than how it's put across. Yes, it's good, but I guess I've been around magic too long!

**F.H.** via email

*Ed says: Haha, yes Cocktail is a favourite in the Magicseen office, and we like this new version of the vanishing bottle. As for the routine... yes, that's where the real magic begins!*



# THE BIG SIX!

This issue we ask the brilliant Graeme Shaw to give us 6 numbers which are significant in his life, and why?

9

I started (like most) with a Paul Daniels magic set at 9 years old.



4

I got married on the 4th June.

8

My son Sebastian was born on the 8th July.

16

My son was born in 2016, and David Copperfield was born 16th September.



20

Won the UK Family Entertainer of Year in 2020 (I don't like to mention it...!!)

21

Hopefully magic work will get back to normal! (referring to the UK lockdown date being eased, June 21st).

# Uniquely Surrounded

by Dave Loosley

## Effect:

A 1p coin is placed on to the table and is then surrounded and covered by five £1 coins. The magician claims that he can reach under the table and remove the 1p coin through the table. Reaching under the table he produces the 1p coin. Before the spectators can claim that the magician just has two 1p coins, the performer moves the other surrounding £1 coins to reveal there is no longer a 1p coin on top of the table.

## Requirements:

1. A Coin Unique (£1,1p). This is a gimmicked coin commonly found in magic shops which comprises of a 1p coin that can magnetically lock inside a £1 coin.
2. One extra 1p coin.
3. Four regular £1 coins.

## Set-Up:

Un-nest the 1p from the £1 shell and have it on the centre of the table. Have the four regular £1 coins lined up below the 1p, and place the shell £1 in the middle of the row. Finger palm the extra 1p coin in the left hand. Fig.1.

## Working:

Indicate the coins and explain that

you are going to cover the 1p with the five £1 coins.

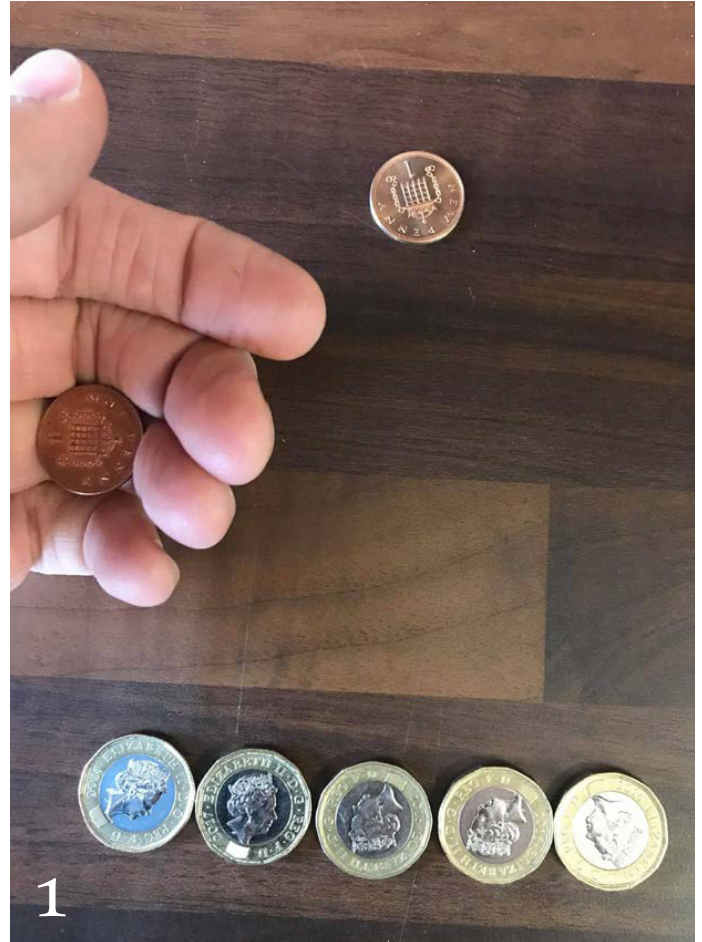
Pick up the shell and place it so that it overlaps the back edge of the 1p leaving most of the coin still visible. Then place three of the regular £1 coins similarly on the other three 'sides' of the 1p. Fig.2.

Finally, lay the last £1 on top of the arrangement so that the 1p is now concealed under the pile. Fig.3.

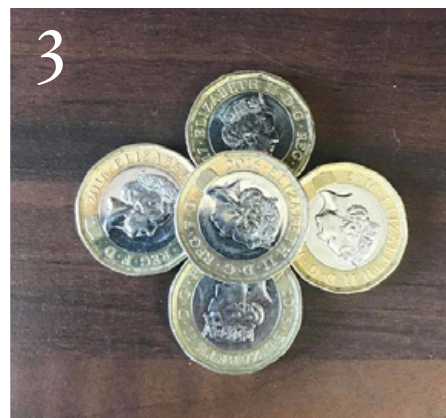
Explain that you will now try to remove the 1p by extracting it through the table.

Take your left hand, that still has the extra 1p finger palmed, below the table top and after a moment or so, bring it back out with the palmed 1p now held at the fingertips. Drop the coin on the table.

The audience will be suspicious that this is just another 1p coin. However, to dispel this notion, you reach forward and push the pile of £1 coins forward in order to collapse the pile. This action will cause the shell to slide over the



1p which will immediately lock inside and thus 'disappear', and your fingers can then continue to spread the £1 coins widely, flipping them over to reveal that there is no 1p hidden underneath.





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## Recent Additions To E-Club Pro Select



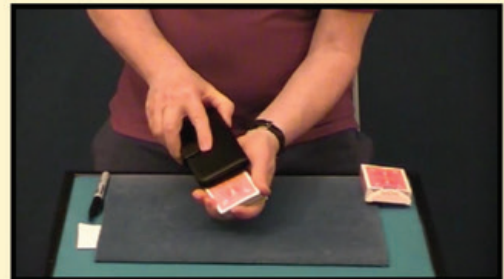
**Straight Through** - a coin is marked with a spectator's initials and a purse is placed across the mouth of a glass. Slapping the coin down onto the purse causes the signed coin to penetrate it and visibly appear in the glass below.

**The Utility Switch Envelope** - this video explains exactly how to make this wonderful switch pay envelope and shows the basic technique for using it. Switch cards, coins, bank notes, billets etc with an envelope that can be shown openly inside and out.



**Silk On Rope** - a knot is tied in a piece of rope and as it is formed a 12" silk instantly appears threaded through the knot. This version allows the rope to be freely shown or even examined prior to the magic, making it possible to use this at any point in a routine.

**Phone Card** - a freely selected signed card ends up inside the pocket of an ungimmicked mobile phone case. This modern version of card to wallet requires no palming and can be done with any phone case that has an internal pocket.



*Each of the above download routines costs **£7.00** and they are part of the current selection of 10 effects extracted from the E-Club Pro vaults. For dems go to the link at the page top.*



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# DEALER SHOUTOUTS

## CARL DE ROME

What a year it has been, but it looks like England is starting to wake up and entertainment is coming back. Pubs are re opening, theatres are starting to open again and magicians are starting to get back into performing once more. So I am back with Magicseen and great news for you, my HEAT is now back on the market yet again.

It is the hot foil in the hand trick, also known as Hypno Heat or as I perform it, THE SEX TEST. HEAT is used by top magicians from all over the world including, just ordered from Las Vegas, headlining magician Xavia Mortimer. HEAT is actually one of the few tricks that can be performed over and over again. In fact, the more times it is performed, the better it gets.

Trust me, people will talk about HEAT, and remember you for it. If you have never tried HEAT, why not order a bottle and see for yourself? I even offer a 14 day full money back guarantee, even if you simply decide it is not for you.

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[www.cdrmagic.com/heat](http://www.cdrmagic.com/heat).

## BLACK ARTEFACT'S PENTAGRAM CHANGE BAG

Yes, it's a change bag. However this is a change bag that has been specially designed by Black Artefacts and manufactured to our own specifications with the bizarre magician in mind. These bags have the following features - 17 cm wide by 20 cm deep – rich black velvet material – fully lined – drawstring top – large silver pentagram embroidered in real silk thread - easy to use - exclusive to Black Artefacts. Comes with a booklet with hints and tip on using it. Keep your Runes or Tarot cards in the bag ready for some truly mind-blowing effects.

Cost: £17.00 from Black Artefacts [www.blackhart.co.uk/changebag.html](http://www.blackhart.co.uk/changebag.html)

## MISSION MAGIC

Mission Magic are delighted to release 35 short gospel magic videos by our good friend Dynamic Dan aka Daniel Wood. This is a new idea for church and youth workers - hi-res comedy magic videos to play in any church service and kids clubs. These fun videos are the easy way to add a sprinkling of magic to any message. Watch the watermarked preview video and then buy and download the High Res video.

Performance rights are included for gospel and kids magicians who want to use any of Dan's original routines and material in their own shows. "These videos are perfect for children, and from my experience, the adults can't help but love them too!" Amy Hayes, Pioneer Evangelist, Church Army. "Dynamic Dan is a wonderful resource to liven up any session with younger people. Full of energy and God's message." Lowlah B, Tilehurst Methodist Church.

The full range of Dynamic Dan's videos is available at [www.missionmagic.co.uk](http://www.missionmagic.co.uk).

Here are some special 'extra' announcements from a few of our regular advertisers



## CARD-SHARK

We are hoping you are all well and will survive the next four weeks of Covid restrictions in the UK.

At Card-Shark, we are aware that with Brexit, shipping between the EU and the UK may give you a headache. We are doing our best to make this as easy as possible for you, logistically as well as financially. If you already have purchased from us, you are aware that you would have seen Euro prices that were easily converted to British Pounds during your PayPal payment. However, these prices contain our German VAT. With Brexit this means you would be paying twice this VAT, as the import tax to the UK for goods from the outside equals your VAT.

Our Dollar prices are without VAT and therefore lower. We changed our system so that all British customers, from now on, will order automatically in US Dollars. PayPal will again convert the payment in British Pounds automatically and easily for you. This change will insure you will not pay VAT twice on any purchases.

Also, just to see if anyone is reading this, we are offering FREE SHIPPING to the UK until July 4th (Is that a holiday in the UK?) You have to enter the PROMO CODE:

"I READ IT" to benefit from the FREE SHIPPING!

Please see our full page ads in this issue or go to the following links.

"Beat the Devil" by Arsenio Puro, with Henry Evans, allows you to openly shuffle the deck, even let the viewer shuffle and handle the deck. Show the viewer that if you take random cards from the deck and let him guess the values, it is totally impossible to know the cards in advance. BUT once you empower him, he'll be able to find the cards you name, in the fairest way possible. <http://www.card-shark.de/ad/btd>

"Blank Thoughts" by Morten Christiansen = A freely chosen card disappears from the deck. The deck will then be completely blank but the chosen card will appear wherever you want.

That sounds crazy, but check out the trailer...there is no switch. <http://www.card-shark.de/ad/bt>

Until we are able to see you at a Convention near you; please visit our weekly YouTube Channel "Card-Shark International". Stay Safe and Stay Healthy!



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# WHAT'S HOT WHAT'S NOT

WE TAKE A LOOK AT SOME OF THE LATEST PRODUCTS ON THE MARKET



## THE BON BON BOX

**George Iglesias**

Available from any Murphy's retailer or dealers contact [www.murphysmagic.com](http://www.murphysmagic.com)

**Price: £40.00**

The magician pulls off the lid of a chocolate box to reveal that the tray inside, which has places for 10 chocolates, is completely empty. The lid is replaced and after a magical snap of the fingers, the lid is removed again to reveal the box is now full of sweets. The box can be handed to a spectator and the chocolates can all be removed and eaten because they are genuine confectionery.

George Iglesias has taken the basic concept of a Dove Pan and built it into a chocolate box. So, in terms of difficulty, if you can open and shut a box, you can do the trick. The principle behind the load is solid enough, and it's nice that the appearing chocolates are genuine. If you want, you can open the box and show it is full of chocolates, tip them all out, shut and then open the box a second time, and a second layer of confectionery will be inside.

There are two versions of the Bon Bon Box that you can buy. One is a red non-specific looking box that you can use to produce any brand of chocolates. Or, if you prefer a

chocolate that most audiences will readily recognise, the gold box has been designed to resemble the Ferrero Rocher brand and would be used to produce those sweets specifically.

The instructions come as a 15 minute online video in which George explains how the gimmick loads and works. Rather strangely he repeats everything with the two boxes even though they are designed in exactly the same way and are used identically. It felt totally unnecessary to repeat the explanation - in fact video instructions at all are overkill for something as straightforward as this.

Simple and effective though this is, I feel there are one or two things that you need to consider and be aware of. First, you might want to think in advance about how you are going to use this effect. The magic is over in seconds, so exactly how you frame a presentation to create a meaningful context for the effect will need some thought dependent on what type of show you envisage using it in.

The second thing is that although

the principle of the load is sound, some stickers used on the lid to mask the gimmicks are hopeless and constantly unstick themselves making the removal and replacing of the lid awkward. There is also a quite noticeable 'click' when the lid is placed on prior to the production. In a very quiet performance environment this might indicate to the audience that something fishy is going on inside the box, even though they won't know exactly what it is. The conclusion they may immediately be drawn to, however, is that the box is special, which might reduce the impact of the magic.

So, it's a nice easy-to-do quick visual effect and if you can think of a suitable context in your stand up or children's show to frame the magic, it might well be something a bit different to include in your act. **ML**

**WHAT'S HOT:** very simple operation of the box, a clear moment of visual magic

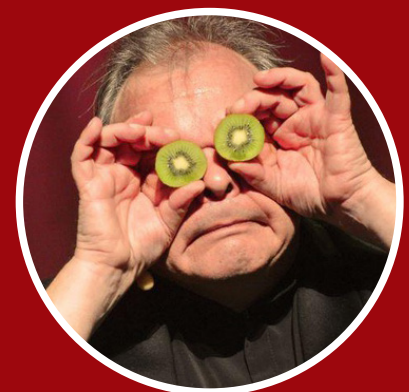
**WHAT'S NOT:** effect needs framing, some small issues with the box's operation and construction

**RATING:** 60%

## SHED 7 WITH GAETAN BLOOM

If there was a nuclear war and you had time to grab 7 items before going into your bunker, what would you take?

**Gaetan says:** *I would invite friend and family members into my bunker as they are the most important and they can help me to carry my favourite magic books and props :-)*





## DANIEL GARCIA - MASTERCLASS

Available from  
[www.vanishingincmagic.com](http://www.vanishingincmagic.com)  
**Price: £60.00 for the four sessions**

Putting the 'ass' in 'Masterclass'. Not my words but those of Daniel Garcia! And actually, I disagree entirely with him. This was my first encounter with Garcia, having heard many times of his work. He is an intelligent, creative, emotive and full-of-life person. 'Bouncy' is the word that springs to mind! In these four online sessions, each well over an hour long, Garcia bounces joyfully with high energy through a medium he admits he's not totally comfortable with.

Having reviewed a few of these Masterclass formats from Vanishing Inc, this one was different in that Garcia had several participants who were live at the time (as in they were there when it was broadcast live, not that they are now deceased!) and who could join him periodically by the magic of Zoom. This allowed him to bounce off of their reactions and also take questions as he went along. For a performer who works improv such as him, this worked well.

Session one is card magic. After a shaky start getting comfortable with the new medium, we reach our first effect a full 20 minutes in! And was it worth the wait? I think so. A Top Change is taught, which has a retention of vision quality to it. We then learn an Ambitious

Card handling using the move and also a visually stunning Ambitious move of the selected card visibly rising to the top of the deck.

A card transposition follows: the card magically going from the card box and changing to another selection. Then there's a sandwich card effect, a novel routine of cards apparently adhering to static and a 2 card monte. All strong, visually stunning and fun to practise.

Session two is non-card magic. Here was another helping of powerful, many impromptu, performance pieces. A dollar bill turns visually into a playing card. In an instant. Looks brilliant. A bill turns into an origami paper-folded dollar-bill finger ring. A borrowed mobile phone penetrates into an inflated balloon (and recorded on the phone's video throughout). The balloon is burst at the finish to get the phone out and, in a second routine, the balloon itself is restored. Stunning!

A drinking straw penetrates a bill twice, the first straight through the folded bill, the second a la Mised (Wenk); no preparation and a fun method. A chewing gum wrapper is repeatedly tipped over via (apparent) kinetic energy; again, clever thinking and looks like it would be great fun to do. We learn a coin bending routine which also teaches a clean vanish of a coin from both hands. A rubber band link and unlink finishes this section off.

With the lack of paper money, especially here in the UK, some of these routines would need to be performed with some other paper product. The plastic currency we now have wouldn't make the bill magic possible. But the magic taught is strong, so it would be good to think of other presentational hooks to perform these routines albeit without paper money. But how to devise such routines? Read on...

As someone who makes their living being creative, Session Three was of most interest to me. At the end of the first two sessions, Garcia asks his participants to undertake some simple creative assignments. We return to these in this session as he walks, talks and brainstorms through four participant's answers/results from the assignments. These techniques are about how to foster and make a habit of being creative to devise original and unique performance frames which fit you.

The theory and philosophy Garcia offers and embodies in his own work is expanded upon in this brainstorming session. A highlight was how to create the situation where someone may see something the magician has on them, albeit in a different context, which prompts them to ask about it and unwittingly leads them straight into the magic effect you had planned. I really enjoyed his thinking here. The participants on the screen and Garcia weave a creative brainstorm through many concepts such as how to create a narrative, how to develop your personal stories for your own magic performances, how to work toward authenticity. It was an inspiring session.

The final session is the now standard Q&A with participants and the talent.

Hand on heart, when the first session started, I found myself

thinking that I wouldn't really enjoy this as Garcia speaks quickly, was open about how this wasn't the ideal format for him talking to a camera with limited reaction and interaction and I thought the next five or so hours in his company would be a chore. How wrong I was. Once he got going, I quickly became a fan. His creativity is staggering, his methods almost as fun as the magic effect itself. And he has the chops for sure! It was a pleasure to watch him fool you with his magic and then show you the methods from different angles and seeing what he gets away with!

And that might be the only negative to his highly polished magic; angles. Almost all of his work requires you to be clearly aware of audience angles. Whilst Garcia is clearly an experienced pro and can manage his audience effectively, you would need to give thought to how his methods may work for you in your performing situations. **JF**

**WHAT'S HOT:** an incredible collection of powerful magic, with fun methods, theory, philosophy, creative homework all taught by a generous and passionate performer

**WHAT'S NOT:** Many of the effects will require practice to get smooth and would also need careful audience management re angles

**RATING:** 80%

**JOE MOGAR**  
**Knives and Coins**  
[www.joemogar.com](http://www.joemogar.com)



## MELERO RINGS

**Ernesto Melero**

Available from  
[www.vanishingincmagic.com](http://www.vanishingincmagic.com)  
**Price: £39.00**

This set of five inch rings comprises, one single, a double and key. They look very good, highly polished with no obvious weld marks. They are slightly thicker and heavier than comparable sets, have a lovely feel and handle well.

The difference between this set and others is an adaptation to the key which makes it possible to let go of the key and display a chain of four held lightly only at both ends. This display makes handling the rings look very natural and may disarm anyone who is familiar with a normal key. This is not a locking ring and nothing is added to the key so there are no additional gimmicks to worry about. You can perform all the normal rings move without hindrance.

In addition to the rings there are about forty-eight minutes of instruction, broken into a full performance and three routines. You get the Basic Handling, an Advanced Routine and the Close Up Handling. Some of the same moves are used in each routine so once you have learnt one, the others are easier to master.

After a short spoken introduction, the majority of the moves are explained using video and on-screen text. This works extremely well. Each move is very clearly

filmed from the performer's perspective with the key finger positions being circled on the screen in blue. For clarity, some sections are repeated and short sections of a performance intercut to show how the move should look. It is one of the best teaching videos I've seen in a long time. In a short additional video George Luck from Vanishing Inc teaches how to perform a very visual two ring unlink.

What distinguishes these rings from others is the option to release the key to display a linked chain. This move does have restrictions on the angles. Vertically the rings need to be held at about the spectator's eye line and more or less straight on. Anyone more than about thirty degrees to right or left would see the secret.

If you already perform a ring routine this set offers the option to incorporate the display and there are some very elegant moves which you could add to any routine. If you don't already perform with the rings the instructions are a good way to start learning. The Basic Routine is short but does provide a foundation for development. **SB**

**WHAT'S HOT:** a very nice set of rings, reasonably priced and excellent instructions

**WHAT'S NOT:** the display is angle sensitive, so has to be performed in the right conditions

**RATING:** 81%



## TEAR DROP (DOWNLOAD)

**Nicholas Lawrence**

Available from  
[www.nicholaspresents.com/](http://www.nicholaspresents.com/)  
**Price: £10.00 (approx)**

When you purchase this routine you receive access to a 16 minute online video on which Nicholas Lawrence performs and explains this nice card idea. The effect is that a card is selected (let's say it is the 3S) and signed and then the corner is torn off and left in view. The top card of the deck is then turned face up to reveal a QD. The torn selection is placed face down on top of the face up QD, the torn corner of the chosen card enabling you to see the QD index below it clearly.

Now for the magic moment. With a single upward riffle of the front deck edge, the visible QD index corner instantly changes to the 3S! The 3S corner is used to slide the card out from below the torn top card to show it is indeed the signed selection. Turning over the face down ripped card shows that it has changed to the QD, and when the torn corner is slid in place it is an exact match.

So, this is essentially a combination of a torn and restored card and an instant transposition, as the signed selection has its corner ripped off and ends up restored after it has changed places with the QD.

You need to prepare a gimmicked card, but this is extremely easy to do. Nicholas explains clearly on the video the process and after one viewing you will be able to quickly make

up the fake. This gizmo will enable you to visibly change the QD to the signed selection with literally just an upward riffle of the front end of the deck. It does have a slight knack to it, but is otherwise pretty easy. The rest of the effect is also straightforward with minimal card handling required, so just about everyone should have no problem in performing the trick.

The signed card can be given away at the end of the trick, and the gimmick can be reset in front of people virtually instantly making it possible to repeat the effect immediately for another group. Although slightly delicate, with careful handling the fake card should be serviceable for a good number of performances before it needs replacing.

As the deck is normal apart from the one gimmicked card, you can palm the fake away if you wish to leave the deck either examinable, or more likely, so that it is free to use for further regular deck effects. Nicholas also suggests that you can use Tear Drop as the finale to an Ambitious Card routine as it would be possible to present such an effect with the gimmick already in the deck. **ML**

**WHAT'S HOT:** effective, straightforward card magic achieved with minimal card handling and a clever yet simple to make and use gimmick

**WHAT'S NOT:** the need to ditch the gimmick if you want to continue to use the deck afterwards

**RATING:** 75%



## CAPPED

**Sam Sieracki**

Available from any Murphy's retailer or dealers contact [www.murphysmagic.com](http://www.murphysmagic.com)

**Price: £32.00**

What you get with Capped is a replica Sharpie cap. The plastic of the cap bulges in the centre as if a coin were forced inside. I first

came across the coin from pen cap in the 1989 book Williamson's Wonders where it was one option in the explanation of Striking Vanish. The difference with this effect is that the coin does not vanish but apparently travels inside the pen cap before being shaken out.

In a six minute video Sieracki demonstrates two close up

handlings, three social media presentations and a way of apparently pulling a coin from your phone. These are all very brief moments.

In the social media versions the gimmick is on view the whole time and it replies on "lighting and perspective" to remain unseen. There is no advice on how this might be achieved. You will have to experiment to get the conditions right.

The gimmick is only used in one of the two close up presentations, which may be just as well as the gimmick does not bear more than a passing inspection. The plastic is a different material to a regular Sharpie cap and looks wet or oily.

Williamson's Striking Vanish

is not credited in the video but someone has added a one line text acknowledgement on the video page. **SB**

**WHAT'S HOT:** probably of most use if you want something very quick for social media

**WHAT'S NOT:** a very expensive limited effect and a poor looking gimmick

**RATING:** 30%



## WELL TRAVELLED (DOWNLOAD)

**Cameron Francis**

Available from [www.bigblindmedia.com](http://www.bigblindmedia.com)

**Price: £9.99**

Cameron Francis' shenanigans with Aces and Kings produces a modular three phase sequence of multiple transpositions, possibly too many in one go for a spectator to contend with. Inspired by Dai Vernon's Travellers and Jerry Sadowitz's The More Things Change it's

nice linked together although the three routines can also be separated and performed on their own.

In phase one the Kings are shown and placed face down on the table. Three cards are selected which are turned over and revealed to be... three Kings. What are the four other cards on the table? Turned over they are revealed to now be the Aces! The Aces are cut into the deck whereupon they trap the fourth and final King.

In phase two, the deck is placed aside and the magician shows three of his pockets empty. Three of the Kings are placed into the three pockets. The last King is traded for one of the Aces on the table. The Ace is tapped against the three pockets. The cards on the table are now shown to be the four Kings and the other three Aces are found in the pockets! The Aces can also be signed.

In phase three the magician displays the four Kings and asks the spectator to select one, say

the KD, which is placed into the magician's pocket. With a click of the fingers, the KD jumps back to the packet. This is repeated once again. The last time, the KD goes into the magician's pocket and the other three Kings are placed in the spectator's hand. Instantly, the other three Kings jump into the magician's pockets and the spectator is left holding one card: the KD.

It's a lot of magic with mainly the four Kings. The skill level is comfortably intermediate and even aspiring entry level, so there is nothing knuckle busting here. The hard part will be creating a rationale as to why the cards engage in this constant jumping around rather than because you like to show off your card skills. This will be a fun little set to learn and perform as it seamlessly links the three routines together.

My only worry would be that the theme of each one is similar and it becomes too much of the same thing when joined together and a lot for the spectators to

follow. That said, it's all down to the performer's personality and presentation. Whilst the skill level is accessible, the presentation may be the challenge. **PP**

**WHAT'S HOT:** a mini set of three routines joined together to make a short card magic 'set'. Accessible skill level required. No fake cards required. Sensible price

**WHAT'S NOT:** all three routines have a 'transposition' theme making the magic a little repetitive.

**RATING:** 65%



## NEXUS WALLET

**Javier Fuenmayor**

Available from any Murphy's retailer or dealers contact [www.murphymagic.com](http://www.murphymagic.com)

**Price: £95.00**

Just when you thought it was safe to venture out again . . . another wallet hits the market! This minimalist style utility wallet is aimed at the younger magician who doesn't necessarily wear a jacket or more formal attire and keeps a wallet in a jeans or hoodie pocket. Measuring 11.5cm (4.5 inches) x 7.5cm (3 inches) with a zip pocket down one side, it's what I might use as a holiday wallet but younger people often use as their everyday wallet.

I've not seen a wallet looking like this before although to be fair I don't scrutinise the wallet market often. It has a see through ID card compartment on the outside along with some credit card slots on both sides, with a zippered access to the inside pocket, rather than the more usual folding style. Despite its size and appearance, it's been designed with enough pockets and places for plenty of plastic cards, ID card, bills, coins, lipstick, etc, so can be used as your regular wallet.

It has multiple uses with a peak wallet function as a major design feature. The see through ID compartment is also designed to perform a variety of appearances, vanishes and transpositions. A more unusual example, unique to the Nexus wallet, includes a visual transposition of a spectator's ID card held between their hands and your ID that was inside your wallet (adaptable to a UK driver's

licence). This is a great effect.

The zippered inside compartment allows you to produce multiple objects—from borrowed rings to signed playing cards, coins, or even a Sharpie. An optional removable money clip also allows you to hold cash or business cards on the outside of the wallet and brings the 'out to lunch' principle into use.

So how does this ground-up designed wallet match up to its intended uses? Peek wallets seem abundant these days although I'm not familiar with all of them by any means but a major part of its design is to peak a business card on which the spectator has written a number, drawing, word, etc after it has been placed inside the ID slot.

The peek function is well designed into the wallet, easy to use but has an angle issue on the left side which will always need to be considered and will need cover depending on where your spectators are placed. Removing a business card from the other side of the wallet during the peak covers it naturally. The peak can be gained by placing the wallet on to the table, on to a spectator's hand, into a pocket, or by taking a business card from its other side plus other variations, so it's a well-motivated move and a versatile function.

Be aware that the card/ring/etc to wallet is ideally a back pocket load, in fact the wallet seems to need a tight pocket fit to support the wallet when loading. The card to wallet function includes having a signed card found inside a bill in the zip pocket as well as

paperclipped inside a bill and inside a sealed envelope. Ring, coin or key inside envelope is also a possibility and all these options work fine. There's a nice gag where you can remove a Sharpie from the wallet which is obviously too long to fit inside.

The wallet will also switch items like a bill or card, secretly steal or vanish a ring (handy for Ringflight) or a card. The 3 hour 50 minute downloadable video explains all of the possibilities (35 sections) including, I'm pleased to say, many live performances demonstrating several of the complete routines in real life. There is too much unnecessary over explaining on the video but there are no end of uses and you would probably find new ones as you became familiar with the prop.

I'm pleased to say it seems to do everything very well. The size works well for jeans/trouser size pockets which is what it is intended for and will be lost in the corner of a larger jacket pocket.

The more I learnt about its uses the more I liked it.

If you don't already wear jeans, hoodie and a baseball cap and are willing to dress down a bit, this opens up many options for the mentalist as well as the general strolling magician . . . and apparently, you will never have to buy another wallet again! **PP**

**WHAT'S HOT** a well made minimalist styled wallet for the casually dressed magician. Versatile peek function; 'Card/ring/coin to wallet' routines have many options to explore. Numerous other functions and tricks are also possible. Optional money clip included plus an extra gimmick for the unique ID card transposition

**WHAT'S NOT:** unusual looking wallet; care is needed with the angles when using the peak. Not suitable for loading items into the more usual jacket pocket. You may have to invest in some jeans and baseball caps, but tattoos are optional

**RATING:** 80%

## f FACEBOOK NEWS

### TALES OF THE UNEXPECTED!



Janette Page posts: This Tales of The Unexpected TV show (screen-grab) was from the episode where my dad, Patrick Page, was Magical Consultant. It included many magic effects including 'Easy Money'. Running for 30 mins approx and starred the brilliant Derek Jacobi. Yes, Pat Page was the consultant on many TV shows, and was, in our humble opinion at Magicseen, a magic genius.



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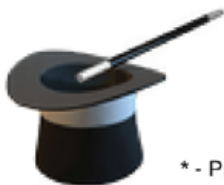


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# MAGIC BY NUMB3RS

Compiled by Mark Leveridge



**1** The number of tricks Paul Gordon knows that don't use cards.



**70**

The approximate number of women who are included in the Magic Circle's 1500 membership tally



**300**

The number of local 'rings' that make up the IBM organisation



**34**

The number of tricks performed in 1 minute by Avery Chin in Malaysia, November 2020



**365**

The sum of the values of all the cards in a deck



**10,000,000**

The approximate number of spectators who saw Siegfried and Roy's show at the Mirage Casino in Las Vegas since 1990



# MAGIC AT THE TOWER

Brian Johnson AKA Tony Quenten



From Children's Parties, Restaurants, Promotions, Variety Clubs, Theatres and Carnivals, over the years I have been involved in all areas of 'magic' entertainment. I have now settled on the Bizarre area and have been in this area for over 5 years now performing at such venues as Thorpe Park 'Fright Nights' and

The Museum of Witchcraft and Magic plus the odd private Paranormal Evening. When performing at certain venues I consider that my role is not just to entertain but also to somehow promote the venue within the effects used.

Mid 2019 I received an email from the Daily Programme Manager (Mr C. Gidlow) of HM Royal Palace The Tower of London. It appeared that for some time he had considered using a 'walk round' magician to enhance the visitors enjoyment but due to specific issues within the Tower the idea was always put to one side. The Tower does not have the facilities people might think. It gets extremely over crowded and busy, up to 10,000 visitors on most days, of which 80% are from overseas.

He requested we meet to discuss any ideas that may open the doors for such an

endeavour, an endeavour that had never been tried at the Tower before.

A date was arranged for myself to attend the Tower where I would meet Mr Gidlow and also the Programme Producer Ms P. Bowmen.

I arrived at the security building just outside the Tower grounds to be issued with a security pass and where I would be met by Mr G. We walked from security to the cafe on the sidewalk over-looking the River Thames and Tower Bridge. At the sight of Tower Bridge and the actual Tower of London, it suddenly hit me just exactly what I might be taking on.

Naturally I had given a lot of thought to this venture before the meeting. The one thing I would explain to Mr G was that a basic magic show with the usual effects would not be suitable and not

what he would be looking for. The Tower is a museum, an iconic world famous building. Any effect would have to link in with the Tower's history and that would take time to work out.

I had been talking for a few minutes and what Mr G did next I will remember till the day I die. He raised his right hand in the sign to 'Stop'. His next words I remember with clarity, the tone and expression in his voice. "You are music to my ears". Internally I was ecstatic, on the outside I politely smiled and said it was nice of him to say so. We then proceeded on a private tour of the Tower.

He wasn't exaggerating when he said there were certain issues. As we toured around he explained in detail the complex issues the Tower had to deal with. We went up and down every staircase, through every internal Tower, we walked the courtyards. It became very apparent that there was little space available, even within the courtyards, bearing in mind crowd flow and of course the odd march pass by soldiers who didn't stop for anybody or anything.

The meeting ended with myself being introduced to the Programme Producer, Ms Bowmen to whom I was asked to repeat what I'd discussed earlier with Mr G. The meeting ended with me being informed, they will be in touch. Now, if you are in entertainment and a manager or producer say they will be in touch, holding your breathe is not recommended.

A week later I received an email from the Security offices based at Hampton Court. They had been requested to perform a security check on me by Mr G. It was now apparent Mr G was interested on what I may be able to come up with, otherwise the security check would not be needed. I was asked to supply information on my status, past employment details along with passport and birth certificates. On completion I was contacted again to return to the Tower for a second meet.

It was here that it was agreed I would return for further meets and visits to allow me to get a proper feel of the Tower and to perform research and take photos. It was here that I suggested the idea of linking and performing appropriate effects while giving a talk on the history



of certain areas within the grounds to the tourists. This was accepted with open arms. It was exactly an approach that took their interest.

Over the next 6 months I visited the Tower a few times, always picking up my security pass on each visit. I watched and studied crowd flow, the internal security, the movements of the soldiers and any talks the Yeoman Guards performed. I repeatedly visited every nook and cranny, I studied history books and documentaries. I looked around the souvenir shops to find items I could use in performance that were Tower related. There I found a key ring with replicas of the Queen's keys that I could use for a prediction. The tourist would freely choose a key and that would be the key I had on a photo in a gothic style locket around my neck. I was delighted to find that all the guide books, no matter what language, had the same illustrations on the same numbered pages. A Book Test for sure. I also picked up a small figurine of a Yeomen, but at this stage was unsure how I could use it.

I put together a number of effects developed strictly for the Tower. The overall rule was that most should be visual so as to get over language barriers. The scripts I would use to explain the history were naturally in English (nothing I could do about that). During the entire process I became aware I was becoming a little tourist guide.

In total I came up with 13 Tower specific

I put together a number of effects developed strictly for the Tower. The overall rule was that most should be visual so as to get over language barriers.

effects, 2 Monarchy specific effects, 4 raven specific effects and 7 general effects and 9 scripts.

My dress would be a long Gothic style coat in black to blend in with the surroundings. I thought this was a good idea. How wrong I was. We will return to this later.

After 6 months of research and developing effects it was time for the final meeting where it would be decided to continue or halt this new venture. The date would be 8th January 2020. I remember the evening prior, looking over the walls towards the White Tower. Thinking. "What am I doing?"

The meeting took place. I had prepared a 28 page dossier detailing the entire proposal. It contained photos of where performances would take place and



I looked like an eccentric Londoner having a day out in the Tower...

where not. Areas I would retreat to in poor weather. The scripts fully written. The specific effects and what they would demonstrate for each area.

The next day I received an email. “We were very impressed with the selection you brought in and how much thought you’d put into linking the act to the Tower. It certainly had us wowed”.

It was a GO. The day was arranged for me to walk out onto the biggest stage I will ever tread.

The day arrived. I was allocated an office in the main building.

What is the saying .... The best laid plans .... It looked good on paper.

First of all the long black coat. It was naturally different from the Tower’s normal staff uniform. To the tourists I looked like an eccentric Londoner having a day out in the Tower. The tourists have all been warned about pickpockets and touts in London. Due to space and location, in many areas you could not use busker tactics to gather a crowd. It was a straight forward approach. Tourists were on their guard thinking I was trying to sell them something and they would move off quickly. For those that stopped, I got the feeling they were never relaxed. As for the scripts linked with effects, I found the effect was being lost in the script and

the script being lost in the effect. While performing inside the White Tower I was quickly approached by security. It was now that I learnt each area of the Tower had its own management and they didn’t always tell each other what they were up to. I have to say the incident hit my confidence and it would be a few days before I would return to the White Tower.

At the end of two days I wrote a ‘no punches pulled’ report to the management team. Detailing all the shortfalls along with my proposals of change. For example, I was to change the coat to a more regal style. I would have a badge that specified I was ‘Entertainer of Mystery’ performing in the Tower. I would change the timing of scripts in relation to the effects.

Following a meeting it was clear that the management had come to trust me and my professionalism. They indicated I had a free rein to adapt as necessary and that I had permission to remove barriers and signs to one side if it would give me a position of advantage for performing. Naturally putting everything back in place when finished.

It all started to fall into place. I was now being filmed by tourists and selfies were non stop. According to management this was an endorsement that I had been accepted. It was now a success.

Now there was talk of me being sent to Hampton Court Palace to see what I could do there. There was also talk of having my own table within a corner of the White Tower and talk of having a meeting with the restaurant management to allow me to perform there.

The scripts were reduced to 5. Princes in the Tower (Bloody Tower) / Royal Astronomer (White Tower) / John Gerrard (Cradle Tower) Witchcraft Markings Constable House) / Traitors Gate Popular effects. Mobile Phone Photo (Photo a tourist took changes to show their ‘will’ had been taken by the Tower) The Ravens Mark (a silhouette of a Ravens claw would appear on the skin of a spectator.) Three Card Monte (using cards showing the Tower and a Raven.) Wrist Restraint escape and Twisting Arm illusion (Performed in the Dungeon) The Keel (a ‘hands on’ medieval instrument (for a spectator to use) to identify the

portal from where the spirits of the Princes enter our world) PK Touch Routine (using the small Yeoman figure from the gift shop. To demonstrate that witchcraft exists within the walls of the Tower) Rope Thru Neck (following a talk on hangings at Traitors Gates)

Here goes another talk, take a deep breathe “Hi Guys, and welcome to the Dungeon where you were bound and tortured” The mobile cameras would light up and filming proceeded.

The new venture was a rolling success.....What could possibly go wrong !

LOCKDOWN! At the end of March 2020, due to Covid, the Tower closed its gates. On reopening a few weeks later there were restrictions in place. This of course prevented me from returning at this time. The Tower’s producer emailed me with the message they will begin from where we left off when things pass. Then the second and third closures. At the time of writing this (March 2021) the Tower remains closed. Revenue of over £100 million had been lost and redundancies within the Tower had occurred. A new internal structure was being put in place.. To my dismay Mr Gidlow, the instigator of ‘Magic At The Tower’ (a pet name he began to call it) took voluntary redundancy. He had been replaced by another manager. When the Tower reopens it will be some time before they have the internal systems moving swiftly again. My return will be the last thing on their minds. Ms B says I will be kept in the loop for when it all starts to return to normal. However, there is a new manager and as we are all aware, new managers have their own ideas, and will want to make their own mark. Will he carry on from where Mr Gidlow left off, with this new project that was proving successful or not?

My suitcase with all my effects and gear in is still locked away in the Tower along with the Crown Jewels (I love saying that), so at some point I will have to revisit the Tower.

But will it be to continue as Entertainer of Mystery or to just pick up my gear?...

...Watch this space.

# WIN CARD-SHARK'S 'BEAT THE DEVIL'

ANOTHER GREAT COMPETITION FROM MAGICSEEN

We are delighted that Card-Shark have offered the chance for two lucky winners to each receive their amazing Beat The Devil routine. Beat the Devil allows you to openly shuffle the deck, even let the spectator shuffle and handle the cards. You then show the spectator that it is impossible for him to know cards in advance, when you separate random cards from the pack and let him guess the values. He certainly will fail to know the cards upfront. But once you empower him, he will be able to find the cards you name for him, in the fairest way possible!

To stand a chance to receive Beat The Devil, you need to email the correct answer to the question below to [markleveridge@magicseen.co.uk](mailto:markleveridge@magicseen.co.uk) no later than Saturday 31st July 2021. All correct answers will then be placed into a draw from which two prize winners will be selected at random. Here's the question.

BEAT THE DEVIL IS BASED ON A SPECIAL MARKED DECK CREATED BY HENRY EVANS. WHAT IS THE NAME OF THAT DECK?

For more information on Beat The Devil go to [www.card-shark.de](http://www.card-shark.de)

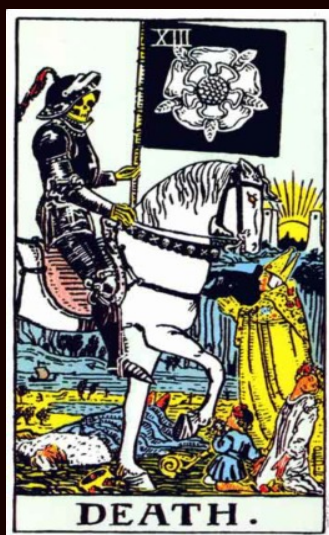


OUR TWO PRIZE WINNERS FROM ISSUE 98 WERE

Chris Jonah from Gloucester and Jon Gadd from Verwood, both of whom have now received the John Bannon Move Zero DVD box set courtesy of Big Blind Media ([www.bigblindmedia.com](http://www.bigblindmedia.com)).

## Curse of the Black Death

*Plague and Pestilence only available from Black Artefacts*



A set of Tarot cards are shown, strung together with black ribbon. The cards are handed to a volunteer and you tell a macabre story of how The Black Death came to Europe and of how a King and his courtiers tried to outwit The Angel of Death. The volunteer chooses a Tarot card (no force) to represent the only survivor from the court. This chosen Tarot is mixed back into the pack and they are again threaded onto the black ribbon.

The volunteer holds the cards and you hold the ribbon. Suddenly The Angel of Death strikes and you pull on the ribbon, snatching the cards from the grasp of the volunteer. However one soul (card) is left in the volunteers hands. It is the one chosen by them to survive! Everything can be examined afterwards, you are left completely clean.

There is a free choice of Tarot, and it can be different every time. You receive 10 Tarot picture cards, a length of black ribbon and full script and instructions by The Black Hart. Cost: just £15.00

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*"How could you go wrong with a guy who's last name is Monti?" ... Criss Angel*

*"Joe's is the Best I've seen" ... Pete Biro*

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