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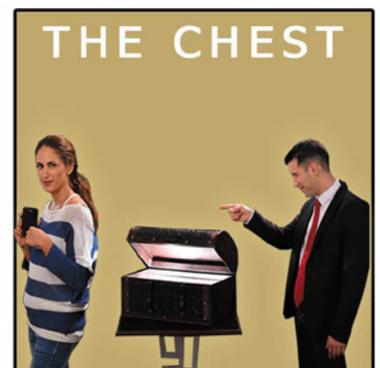
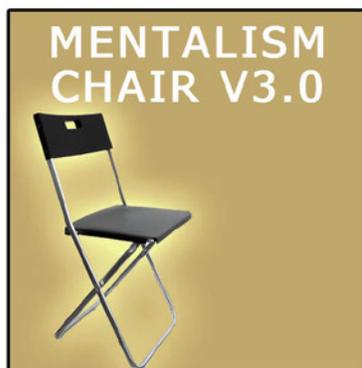
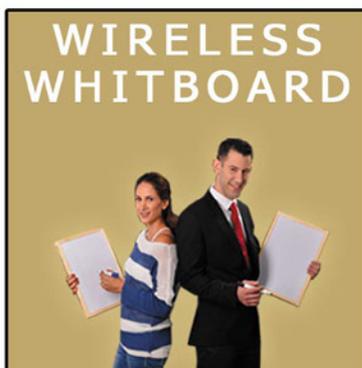


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THE TEAM

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

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

Website Design:
www.magicdp.co.uk

Circulation: Sarah Logan
Circulation Assistants:
Frankie Shaw, Edward Shaw,
Jessica Preece

Contributors:
Matthew Wright, Jeramy Neugin

Reviewers: Mark Leveridge,
Paul Preager, Stuart Bowie,
Chris Payne, Bob Gill, Phil Shaw

Magicseen's management board
consists of: Graham Hey,
Mark Leveridge & Phil Shaw

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

Thanks to: Matthew Wright

SUBSCRIPTIONS

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TIt's amazing to think we have already reached issue 8 of the free-to-everyone version of Magicseen. It hardly seems five minutes since we were discussing the possibility at Magicseen Towers, yet here we are 16 months later with another selection of the articles from the main magazine (issue 93 July 2020).

So what have we chosen to tickle your tastebuds this time, I hear you ask (really must visit my audiologist about those voices!). Well, we thought you would love to read our article on cover star Matthew Wright, the man who has exported his unique form of magical mayhem to his venue in the Costa del Sol. Very tricky time for him and his business currently, but he explains how he has been managing through all the chaos.

Matthew's problems have been caused, of course, by COVID-19, and we include in this issue an article in which we try to imagine magic life after the coronavirus - what will change, what will revert to the pre-virus norm? Fancy a laugh? OK, try The Convention, a comedy piece that I suspect may ring a few bells at magic clubs up and down the country! And if you want to play with a new idea, check out Jeramy Neugin's Streamlined Out Of This World which is a neat variation on the Paul Curry classic routine.

Added to this we have a chat with actress Madison Thompson In The Phonebox and a selection from the Product Review pages in which our experts aim to help you to spend your money wisely.

So, all in all, a fine taster of the full bodied wine that is the main edition Magicseen, an independent UK magazine that has been proving the doubters wrong every two months since 2005! Why not join the merry band of readers who refuse to leave us alone by taking out a printed copy or download subscription today. You might as well, there's not much else magical happening right now!

Mark Leveridge

WHAT'S INSIDE THIS ISSUE

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WHAT IF THE MAIL



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MATTHEW WRIGHT

LOCKED-DOWN, BUT NOT OUT!



Former FISM Winner and Magicseen cover star Matthew Wright is also the owner of the Chamber of Secrets theatre in Torremolinos on the Costa del Sol. During this time of Lockdown throughout Europe and beyond, we thought the time was right to see how he's handling the situation and what the future holds for his award-winning magic theatre.

Graham Hey asks the questions.

The Chamber of Secrets is an all-inclusive drinks show aimed at tourists with ages ranging from infants to pensioners. It's a family friendly show aimed at adults. Matthew tells me that the show is three "halves"...a comedy section, a mental magic and dangerous stunts section and finally a general illusion and sleight of hand section. His wife is a partner in the show and sings as well as performing many tricks herself.

The show has gained massive acclaim but now thanks to lockdown Matthew has taken a version of his show online. Says Matthew 'I have tried to recreate the same



**'I HAVE TRIED
TO RECREATE
THE SAME
ATMOSPHERE
AND FEELING
OF THE SHOW
ONLINE IN
MY 'WEB OF
SECRETS'
SHOW.**



AS FAR AS THE THEATRE GOES, THIS YEAR HAS BEEN NON-EXISTENT. WE CLOSE IN NOVEMBER AND USUALLY OPEN UP AGAIN IN MARCH/ APRIL. OBVIOUSLY, THIS YEAR THAT JUST HASN'T BEEN POSSIBLE.

atmosphere and feeling of the show online in my 'Web of Secrets' show. My wife hasn't been able to take part as she is looking after our daughter so I'm running everything myself. I have tried to make it more like a "mini tv show" that is made especially for you. I have a lot of graphics and music playing - which gives it much more of a production feel. As a photographer I already owned a lot of camera and lighting equipment and my time running my online magic outlet show put me one step ahead.'

Matthew's previous shows were mainly for the public who bought tickets. 'But due to the virus I have been performing mostly for magic clubs who sell tickets to the public and then I give a lecture on the show afterwards. It works out great for everyone and I really think this online zoom-style lecture could be a great way to do things even after lockdown. It's very rare that a club get to see the lecture magician perform a real-life show and then lecture on it afterwards. This is a great opportunity and something I think everyone will be doing soon.'

I ask Matthew about how lockdown has affected his schedules. Has he had to cancel anything he was really looking forward to? 'As far as the theatre goes, this year has been non-existent. We close in November and usually open up again in March/April. Obviously, this year that just hasn't been possible.'





'I saw lockdown coming before most I suspect. I was doing a lecture tour in Italy through March (where the European outbreak originated and which was the first country to introduce a lockdown). I was travelling from city to city and as the days went by you could see the atmosphere changing. Some small towns had been locked down but nobody ever suspected it would spread the way it did. At first everyone was laughing and joking about it...then they started to socially distance a bit and then the full lockdown came. The prime minister announced lockdown at 9pm and I was booked on a flight within half an hour.'

Matthew says the rent on the theatre had to be paid, but the owner has been very understanding. 'Our landlady agreed to accept 50% - which was very helpful.

'The government gave us no financial help at all... not a single penny. Our staff are seasonal anyway so we weren't employing anyone at the time of lockdown.'

Has anything you've done in your online shows worked better than you thought it would? Some of the effects I have put into the show have really taken me by surprise,' says Matthew, 'I think the biggest interactions I get are from my three shell game routine which I was surprised about. I used to love performing it on the bar but haven't done the routine for a few years, so it was great to dust it off. I think it will go back into my main show when we reopen.

'I have found a new love of app-based magic. Many of the effects that I do require audience interaction so it was a challenge trying to get those same effects to play in a virtual world and the apps have helped tremendously in creating new methods to achieve the effects I was already performing.'

Have you also put your mind to developing new effects? 'I always have new effects that I am working on and bringing to market. With the factories closing and the uncertainty around that, some projects were put on hold but now things are opening up again we are full steam ahead with those and I have some incredible new things coming out in the next year!'

What are your thoughts now on the rest of the year? 'Most of our trade is July, August and September so if we can salvage those months then we will have come out of this without it being too much of a disaster... but if something else happens and these months aren't full of tourists here in Spain, then I think us and many, many, other tourist businesses will struggle. Luckily, I have other things going on... so we will be able to survive... but unfortunately many won't.



LIFE IS TREMENDOUS RIGHT NOW. I HAVE A GREAT WORK LIFE BALANCE. I HAVE A WONDERFUL FAMILY AND LIVE IN A BEAUTIFUL HOUSE IN THE SUN...

'I have a lecture tour planned in November with Harry Robson... we are touring the country on Harry's farewell tour, so if any clubs want to book us this may well be the last time you get to see me and Harry together.'

How has lockdown gone in Spain? 'Spanish lockdown seemed to be much stricter and much more adhered to here than in the UK. The police were patrolling the streets and handing out fines very early on so you got the message pretty quickly. We literally weren't allowed to leave the house other than to go alone to the supermarket, pharmacy or walk the dog (within 50 metres of the house).'

It seems like a distant memory now, but looking back, how was Blackpool for you? Says Matthew, 'Blackpool is always bitter sweet for me. I have the greatest memories of my weekends at Blackpool meeting up with old friends and partying the nights away... but since becoming a dealer that has all changed. For me it's a long weekend of hard work... like doing a 4-day trade show. It's nice to see all the people you know and meet new friends, but you just don't have the time to chat as you would like. I don't see any

lectures... and by the time I have packed away and eaten I am too tired to go to the shows, so just head off to bed. I do miss the carefree weekend away with friends...and maybe one year I might give the dealers a miss and just enjoy the weekend for a change.'

How do you feel now about things generally? 'Life is tremendous right now. I have a great work life balance. I have a wonderful family and live in a beautiful house in the sun. I enjoy working hard and I relish challenges so am always looking to improve in something... whether that be the show, my magic in general, my photography or my filming and editing skills. I'm never bored... my little 2-year old princess makes sure of that!'

QUICKIES

What's your philosophy on life?

If you work hard all you need is a little bit of luck.

What's your best-selling effect in the last couple of years?

All my effects have a pretty steady sales point really. They do quite well... but nothing has ever really been that massive hit everyone is looking for. I do have a couple coming soon though that I think could be huge... but I think that about them all lol.

Take a look at the promo for Matthew's fabulous online show:
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THE CONVENTION

The third Sunday in July was agreed at the committee meeting as the date for the annual one day convention. Actually, it was always the third Sunday in July, and had been since 1938 when the first event was set at that date to coincide with the start of the annual holiday period for the workers at the Car Reclamation And Processing factory where the convention was staged. The fact that the factory had long since closed and that the one day event had for the last 20 years taken place in the function room of the Little Handmedown Cricket and Bowls club, was not seen as a good reason for changing it.

And more to the point, the fact that the Greater Thrumington Sale and Exchange Bonanza Extravaganza now took place on the same day no more than 20 miles away was also not seen as a good enough reason to move the date - after all they were there first, and the Extravaganza was clashing with their date, not the other way round.

Harry Dollop ticked the entry on his Agenda sheet marked 'Convention Date' and took a deep breath before embarking on the next item, 'Convention Events'. "Everyone I have spoken to on the committee over the last few days seems agreed that we should start at 10am sharp with the official opening speech from our President, and this should be immediately followed at 11.35am by the lecture on 'Unusual Uses For The Thumbtip' by our very own Gerry Trout.

"After a two hour break for lunch and a 10 minute visit to the dealers (or dealer, if Willy The Balloon Man can't make it), we will move on to the annual Troublewit Competition. After a break for a cup of tea we'll finish with the Gala Showette, featuring our very own Amazing Shambles, who will perform the first 90 minutes of their 6 hour touring show entitled 'The Leaping About And Pointing To Loud

Music Show'. And that just about wraps it up for another year."

It seemed churlish to point out that this format was the same one which had been used at the convention the previous year, and the year before that. In fact, always! But as Harry could be relied upon to say, and almost undoubtedly would, 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it.'

But the number of convention registrants had been steadily dropping. From its heady heights of 120 people it had fallen now to around 40, 35 of whom were committee members, helpers, and catering staff. If only a few of the 1500 who attended the Extravaganza could be tempted down again, it would make all the difference.

"May I make a suggestion?" Phil Rookie, newly elected committee member, had spoken for the first time at the meeting and took everyone somewhat by surprise as normally noone would dare to interrupt Harry Dollop's unstoppable march through his Agenda. Phil wasn't to know that, of course. Harry fixed him with one of his stern 'over the glasses' stares.

"Must you do so now? We're only on point 5 of the Agenda and the pubs close at 10.30pm you know."

Unperturbed, Phil did continue. "Well, yes, I think it is appropriate to make my comments now. Has it ever occurred to anyone that if we want to attract more people we ought to perhaps shake things up a bit? You know, maybe do away with the Troublewit Competition and replace it with something a bit more exciting."

So many people had tried to tamper with Harry's convention timetable in the past, that the rest of the committee members knew it was a non-starter, and so they sat back and waited for the inevitable reply.



"The convention line up was instigated by our first President, the Right Honourable Sidney Trumpet QC, back in 1938, and there is no doubt that his inspired choice is as relevant today as it was back then. Who are we to tamper with so much tradition? It is part of the success of our long running event that things should remain exactly as they are so that people who come will know what to expect and can feel comfortable with the line up. Change is very unsettling. Break with tradition and you are on the slippery slope to disaster."

Change for the sake of it was not necessarily a good thing, but surely something should be done to arrest the decline in the attendance figures.

"Have you ever actually tried altering any of the running order."

All the other committee members squirmed in their seats. Most of them remembered Bernard Fixit who just like Phil had dared to suggest an alteration to the convention programme. He was removed from the committee for allegedly selling svengali decks in the clubroom to members, and shortly after he left the club altogether when an unsubstantiated rumour had circulated that he had made up for his own use one of the ideas from Gerry Trout's 'Bizarre Things To Do With A Swami Gimmick' lecture which had been featured at the convention three years previously. Was Phil about to suffer the same fate?

"No, there has never been any need to. As I always say, 'If it ain't broke, don't fix it'. Now, please, can we get on?"

'Getting on' was what the committee now did. They approved the convention budget of £12.50, agreed that the caterers from last year should be invited to attend as always, and re-appointed Fred as PRO, which essentially meant he would put up his uniquely designed crayon poster advertising the convention in the window of the local village post office.

Everything was thus done and dusted for another year. The fourteen public shows done by the members each year to earn enough money to cover the loss made by the convention was already arranged (same as last year, actually), and so the committee retired to the pub satisfied with another job well done. And who knows - with the top line up of acts this year perhaps they would break the attendance barrier of 50!



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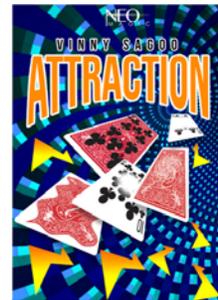


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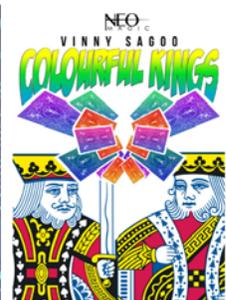
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COVID-19 AND MAGIC - WHAT NEXT?

By Mark Leveridge

There have been lots of general articles ruminating on the worldwide pandemic and its impact on our everyday lives, and naturally some of them have been written by magicians reflecting in particular on the impact that the virus has had on our art. With so much already expressed, we are all probably getting a little tired of the subject, and so the temptation to ignore it and concentrate on other subjects in Magicseen is a tempting one.

However, I guess that our publication, which after all has been affected directly by the situation too, should at least acknowledge in some way an event as large as this, but rather than wallow in all the downsides, I thought we could perhaps try to see whether there any positives or good lessons that can be learned from the experience. The first thing to say about this is that there are many people, and some may be readers of this magazine, who have been affected personally in tragic or extremely worrying ways by the pandemic. Anyone who has even half a heart must feel sorry for those who have suffered directly the consequences of this virus, and the support for the emergency services who have grappled to deal with it all shows that every one of us understands the gravity of the situation.

TO LAUGH AT SOME OF THE ABSURDITIES THAT THE VARIOUS LEVELS OF LOCKDOWN HAVE THROWN UP IS THE WAY WE ALL COPE WITH THE SITUATION, BUT IT DOESN'T MEAN WE DON'T HAVE EMPATHY FOR THOSE DIRECTLY AFFECTED.

Yet, despite the huge numbers of fatalities that can be traced directly back to the coronavirus, for the vast majority of us this period has been similar to an enforced unwanted holiday. This means that it is easy to moan or make fun of the situation when the only real inconvenience is that you can't buy the tinned fruit you normally have or that you now look like an ageing hippy because you haven't been able to get your hair cut for weeks. To laugh at some of the absurdities that the various levels of lockdown have thrown up is the way we all cope with the situation, but it doesn't mean we don't have empathy for those directly affected.

So, that all said, let's consider whether there are any ways in which magic will be changed as a result of 2020, because you'd have to say that there might be. For instance, all those who perform commercially have had every booking either cancelled or at best put back several months or even to the same time next year. In the short term this could result in two scenarios.

Autumn 2020 through into 2021 might see some performers having a lot less availability because so many of their bookings (or tours for those who had one or more originally scheduled and then moved) have taken up dates over the next 12 months. As a result, when new events start to be planned and bookers are looking for magicians, the available pool of performers may be different, as it will be made up of those who had dates cancelled completely as well as those who are just free anyway.

After an enforced period in which public gatherings were not allowed, once restrictions are lifted sufficiently to allow indoor parties and celebrations, there could be quite a surge in the need for entertainers. People who were not allowed to arrange special anniversary or birthday parties, for instance, may still want to do so even though the exact date has long gone. There will probably be a real desire to have fun and mix again with friends and family members, and so we magicians should look out for a potential flood of opportunities.

Some magic dealers and lecturers have used this period to try out new ways to engage with the magic world too. We may be starting to get a bit of Zoom fatigue right now since this has been one of the only ways to have any sort of interaction with others, but once things settle down again, you can see that some Zoom events may continue and become the accepted way to deliver some magic content.

You can certainly see the possibility that some clubroom lectures may become virtual in this way. I'm sure not all will, because having someone present their material live is more satisfying in many ways, but it could be that overseas lecturers, for instance, could make a live 'appearance' at a magic society in a far more economical way than the club having to pay for the travel and accommodation expenses normally associated with a visiting speaker. With so many people now familiar with Zoom style conferencing, this might become an accepted way to proceed in some cases.

Online communication generally in the magic world has inevitably increased during the period of lockdown. Virtual conventions in which 'registrants' can access either streaming live content or pre-recorded appearances, may be a solution for some clubs or event organisers who want to put on an occasion but who are reluctant to take the risk of organising something that may not get sufficient support.

Vanishing Inc's ShareMagic was a great example of what can be achieved, and as the technical aspects of delivering this type of content improve, so will the desire of many magicians to participate. Again, I don't see this as completely replacing a Blackpool convention or a FISM, but for smaller, more niche events, if magicians get used to the delivery of convention content online, this could be a sensible way forward. It was only a few short years ago that no one could have imagined that most of our magic purchases would be accessed and ordered online, so I don't see much of a barrier now to some events going the same way too.

A bit more of a stretch, perhaps, although not totally off the wall, would be performers using Zoom as a means to entertain at gigs. I can certainly see this being possible, practical and desirable to some bookers who are putting on a small event such as a dinner party or a select business function. You perform live but you just don't have to travel! The levels of sophistication of the performance filming would have to be improved - doing a commercial gig in your kitchen with your wife in the background getting the evening meal ready wouldn't do! - but as with anything new, those who take the task seriously and professionally will, I am sure, carve a new performance niche for themselves.

I've seen some comments in which people have advanced the theory that spectators will not want to interact with close up magicians any more in these new 'social distancing' times. While I can see that for some of the more paranoid or vulnerable people in society this might be an issue, I don't imagine that this will be a permanent feeling for most people.

COVID-19 will not suddenly just go away, and even in the relative long term, certainly until a vaccine becomes generally available, we will have to learn to live with it. We've co-existed with other deadly diseases for centuries, and this one may be another to add to the list. The risks involved will reduce without entirely disappearing, but personally I suspect that from our perspective as performers it will not signal the complete end of live entertainment.

So, think positively, consider new opportunities that may now present themselves, and in time we may look back on this period as one which caused interesting changes in direction rather than one that saw the demise of the art we love.



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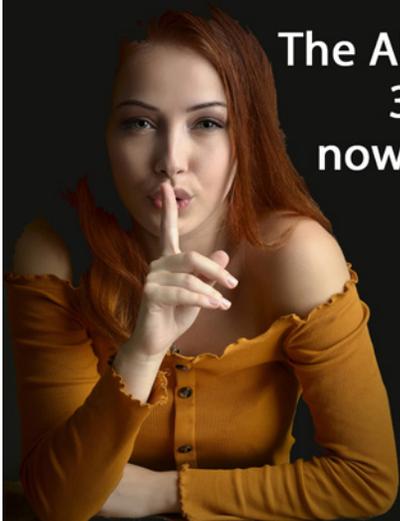
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IN THE PHONE BOX

If you're a fan of *Ozark* on Netflix starring Jason Bateman and Laura Linney, then you might already be aware of the brilliant acting talents of **Madison Thompson** who plays Erin Pierce in season 3.

For those who don't know, 'In The Phonebox' is where we send our editor into one of those old-fashioned red telephone boxes and ask him to call someone of interest. Sometimes they're interested in magic, sometimes not. But whatever, it's usually a little bit of fun!

MS: (Magicseen): Hello Madison!

MT: Hello. Is it Magicseen magazine?

MS: That's correct, we happen to be one of the top 10,000 best selling magazines in the UK. And welcome!

MT: (Laughs) That's quite an introduction. Am I right in thinking it's a magazine for magicians?

MS: You are correct. Do you like magic, Madison?

MT: As a matter of fact, I do. I once did my own magic show...

MS: How did it go?

MT: It was just for my family in the holidays. They loved it, although I'm not sure how good it actually was. Families tend to tell you it was great, as they don't want to upset you.

MS: What sort of things did you do?

MT: I did a couple of things with a false thumb. It's probably nothing to you I guess, but to a young girl seeing the reaction was pretty awesome. I also had a magic cube, which made things appear, also I did some card tricks. I was, and am, quite good at concentrating on things, so I probably spent quite a bit of time getting it right. I like a challenge. A few of my friends would have liked to have done some tricks but they didn't have the patience. If someone asks to learn a trick, for some reason they think

it will take sixty seconds and it's ready to go. I learned that something which may look really simple takes time to get right.

MS: What about magic on TV?

MT: I've seen lots of magic, but not in the last couple of years as work has really taken off and I don't seem to have the time. I've seen quite a few episodes of Penn & Teller: Fool Us.

MS: Criss Angel or David Copperfield?

MT: Can I say both? I've seen lots more Criss Angel than David Copperfield and I've seen them both do amazing things. OK, I'm going for David Copperfield as he's been a star for, forever.

MS: How did you find *Ozark*?

MT: This has been my first "major" breakthrough, so I did feel pressured and a little intimidated, but the cast and crew were the best, and I've made lots of new friends. It was hard work, but definitely worth it.

MS: Thanks Madison.

MT: Thanks Magicseen.

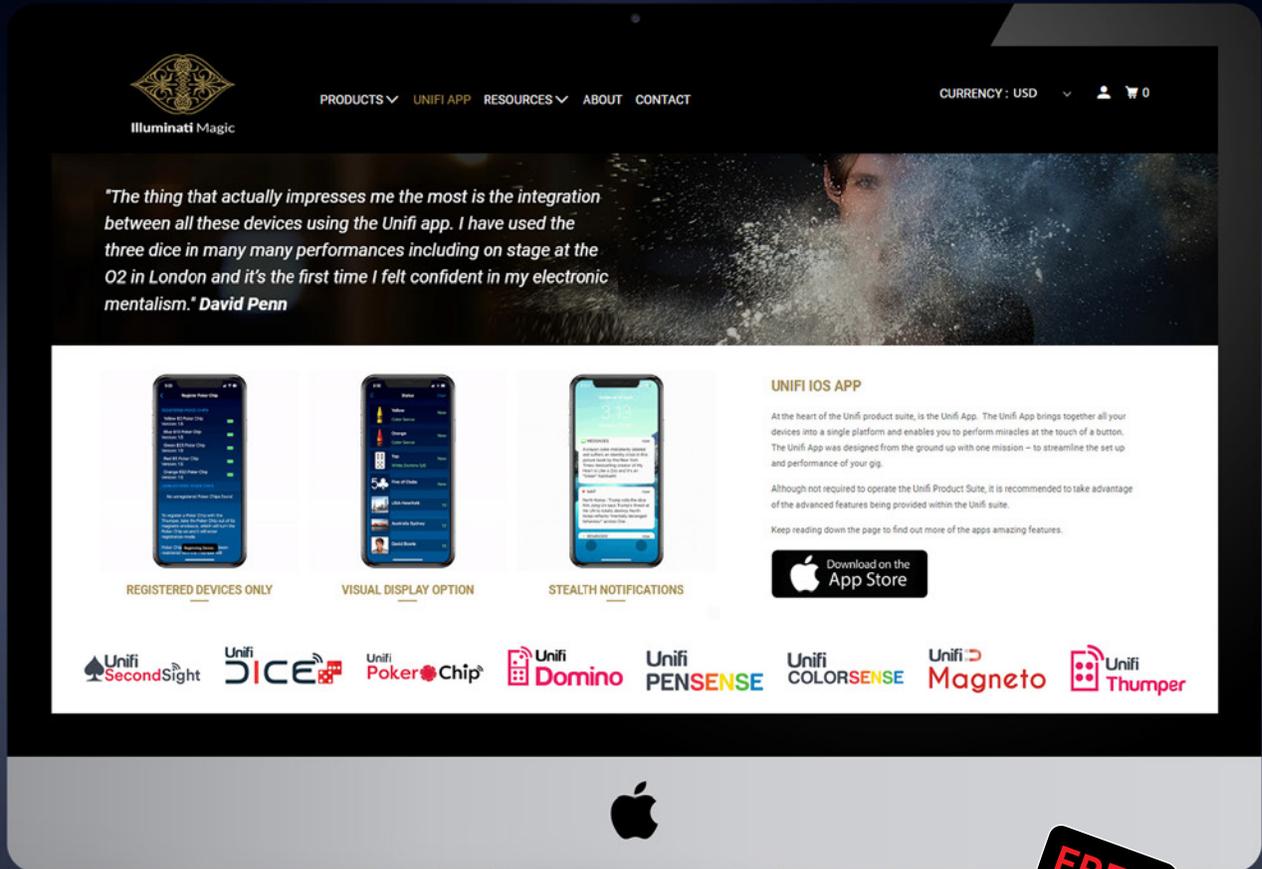
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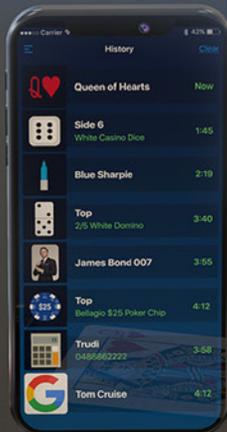
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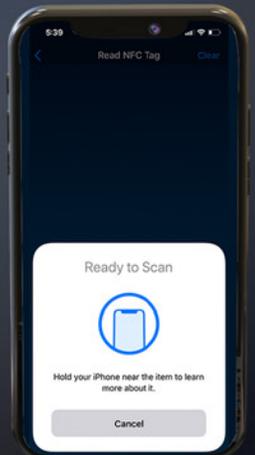
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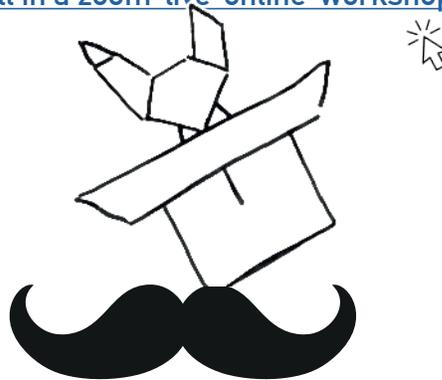
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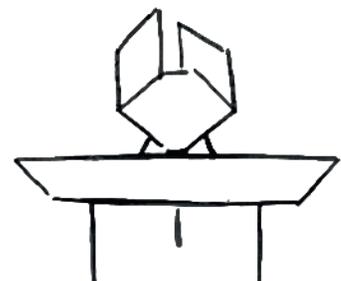
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JERAMY
NEUGIN

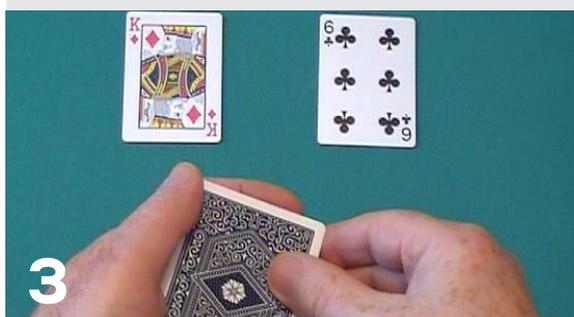
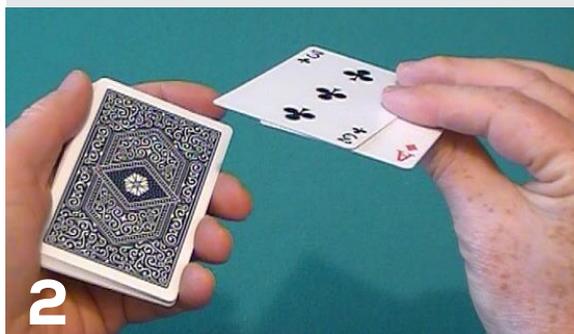
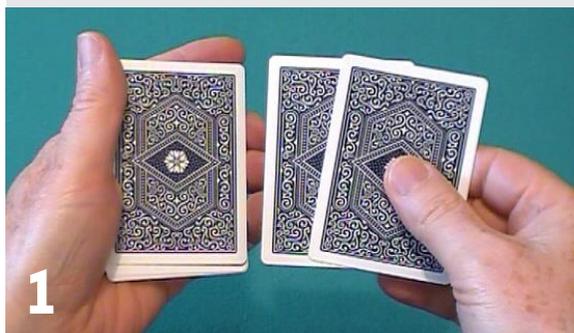
The performer removes ten pairs of cards from a deck and shows that each pair consists of one red and one black card. Setting a red and black card face up on the table as marker cards, the performer takes a pair of cards at a time face down and invites a spectator to guess which card is black, and then with the next pair which card is red. The selections are placed under the relevant marker card. This continues until there are five cards face down under the red marker card and five under the black. On turning them over, it is seen that the spectator has guessed correctly, as all the red cards are together and so are all the black.

EDITOR'S NOTE:

In this cut down version of the Paul Curry classic effect, a displacement of a card is required at one point, and to conceal this moment I have added a little bit of handling to Jeramy's suggestion and altered the set up slightly too.

WORKING:

1. Take a deck and spread the card faces towards you. You are going to remove 22 cards from the deck one at a time and place them in a face down pile on the table.
2. So, firstly, pull out any black card and place it face down on the table. Now extract a red card and drop that on top. Next, take another red card, and add that to the pile. Now pull out two black cards, one at a time, and place them on the pile. Now add two red cards singly and continue until you have a pile of 22 cards. The final card, which ends up on top, will be a single red card.
3. This only takes a matter of seconds and as you are collecting the cards you explain that you are removing a particular selection of cards from the deck in order to try a special experiment. The order of the face down pile should be: red/black, black/red, red/black, black/red, red/black, black/red, red/black, black/red, red/black, black/red, red/black, black/red, red/black.
4. Once the 22 card pile is assembled, put the deck to one side and pick up the pile itself face down in the left hand. Thumb off the top two cards in a spread without changing their order, Fig.1, and raise the faces towards the spectators to show that the cards comprise of a red and black pair. Fig.2.
5. Lower the cards face down again and drop them onto the table. Thumb off the next two and show their faces before dropping them face down on top of the first tabled pair. Continue for all 11 pairs of cards.
6. As you do this you explain that you have removed red and black pairs of cards, and that the values don't matter, it's just the colours.
7. Scoop up the pile and hold it again in the left hand face down. You now explain that you will use two of the cards as marker cards. As you speak drag the bottom black card off the pile with your right fingers and toss it face up onto the table. Immediately then deal the top red card of the pile face up onto the table next to it. Fig.3.
8. This casual action now corrects the colour sequence of the pile so that every pair of cards starting from the top will alternate in a same colour sequence. As you are dealing out these two cards you explain that you will ask a spectator to guess with each pair of cards which card is red or black, and their choice will be recorded by being placed on the correct coloured marker card.
9. Push off the top two cards face down and hold them



widely spread. Ask the spectator to say which card she thinks is the black one. Drop the one she selects on top of the black face up marker card, and ditch the other card to one side, but in view, to start a discard pile.

10. Push off the next two cards and ask her to indicate the one she thinks might be the red card. Drop her choice onto the face up red marker card and add the other card to the discard pile. Continue with the remaining eight pairs of cards, alternating between black and red until you end up with five face down cards beneath each marker card.
11. At this point, pick up the discard pile and flip it face up, casually spreading it for a moment as you emphasise that this is the random selection of discarded colours. Although this pile has all the colours alternating, this is not noticed when you spread them briefly, it just looks like a random mixture and will contrast well with the revelation you are about to make.
12. Place the discard pile back on top of the balance of the deck. Remind the spectators of the random way that the choices of red and black were made and now turn the face down cards slowly face up to reveal all the red cards are under the red marker card, and the black are all with the black marker.



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THE REVIEWS

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



AMAZEWANDS

From the Vanishing Inc
AmazeKids range

Available from any Murphy's
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www.murphysmagic.com
Price: £25.00

This is a very nicely made set of five nesting wands manufactured in bright red, yellow, blue, green and traditional black colours with which you can do the classic bits of kid show business originally devised by Bev Bergeron. The wands are constructed from

hard wearing polypropylene that is made with a non-fading coloured resin, and the white ends are added with baked on scratch resistant paint. The outer red wand (the biggest in the set), measures 40cm long and has a diameter of approximately 2.5cm. What makes this set a bit different is that the innermost wand (the black with white tips one) is actually a Breakaway Wand. This solves a problem inherent in previous versions of this gag, and that is the lack of a 'punch' ending. The Breakaway Wand provides a surprising conclusion

as after it has been produced, it promptly breaks, creating an extra final laugh.

The instructions for this come as a 15 minute downloadable online video in which Danny Orleans goes through many variations of ways in which to use the prop. This includes sequences if you want to perform it with just yourself involved, as well as ideas for presenting it with one, two or more children helpers.

If you purchase this set from Vanishing Inc, you can also get a free set of extra downloadable instructions in which Danny details three different ways to use the wands if you are performing online via a Zoom type connection. During the current pandemic some magicians have been entertaining in this way, although it is hard to imagine that this is particularly commonplace, but the suggestions Danny makes would make it possible.

The wands look and handle very

nicely. The Breakaway Wand does not slip out of the green wand quite as readily as all the other wands do from their previous wand - even on the video you can see Danny giving the green wand a shake to loosen the black wand so that it can be extracted, but this is not too much of an issue. It certainly doesn't get stuck, it seems that the green wand is just fractionally too small in diameter thus creating a slight airlock.

If you are looking for a really easy yet fun sequence to add to your children's show that uses bright, quality props and which can be presented in a number of different ways, this would make an excellent choice. **ML**

WHAT'S HOT: durable, brightly coloured props with the benefit of an additional little surprise ending. Very good value.

WHAT'S NOT: Breakaway wand needs a little extra 'help' to be extracted.

RATING: 85%



PICASSO PRO

Lloyd Barnes/Craig Filicetti

Available from the iOS App Store
or Google Play Store
Price: £25.00

The Picasso Pro app has taken Craig Filicetti's brilliant Color Match routine and made it portable so you will always have it on you ready to go whenever you

get asked to perform something.

Here's the basic effect. A prediction is placed on the table (or it could be emailed). A spectator is asked to go to a website which allows you to colour in a drawing. This image can be whatever you, the performer, choose (e.g stickman). At the bottom of the web page are colours which can be selected. The spectator is asked to keep their phone so no one can see it and choose a colour. You instruct them to colour in part of the drawing (shirt, shoes, etc). This is repeated for all the colours. The spectator's colour selections are completely free choices, no forces. The spectator shows everyone their coloured in drawing. The prediction from

the start is shown to match their drawing exactly.

The app does all the hard work for you so all you have to do is concentrate on the performance. You can perform Picasso Pro face-to-face with someone or even via video call in a different country.

There are lots of settings within the app for you to customise to your needs. I do think a few things are lacking to make it even better but these may be added in future updates. Without giving away the method too much, smart watch owners will be pleased to know that the app is compatible with most models.

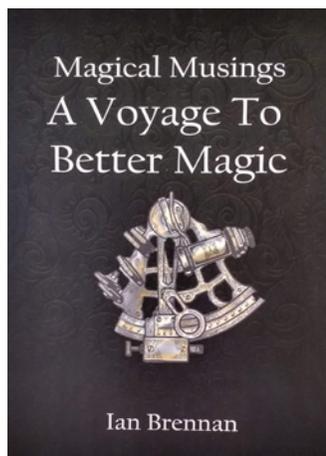
I have been using the iOS version (also available on Android) of the

app on an iPhone 11 and had no issues, but there have been lots of teething problems reported online by other users. Until all the issues are sorted there is a problem with the reliability which will stop many performers from using it in a professional setting. Once it is working 100% then it will be an amazing app.

I have always loved the original Color Match but could not really justify the price. The Picasso Pro app now offers the same routine at a fraction of the cost of the original. **PS**

WHAT'S HOT: Brilliant routine, get great reactions.

WHAT'S NOT: Reliability issues may put some people off for now
RATING: 75%



A VOYAGE TO BETTER MAGIC

The Magical Musings of Ian Brennan

Available directly from the author - ianbrennanmagic@live.co.uk
Price: £15.00 + P&P

Ian Brennan is a regular columnist for the Magic Circular and is currently providing a three part series for Magicseen on magic marketing. He is also involved with Phil Taylor on the Magicians Advice Podcast. These outlets have provided a soapbox for Ian to express his ideas about magic and this 184 page hard backed book collects and expands upon some of those thoughts as well as presents 10 of his own magic routines.

Since the book is divided almost exactly into two equal sections, we'll look at the two parts independently. First of all let's consider part 1, which comprises of 14 essays offering advice and opinion on a range of magical topics. The great thing about giving opinions is that they are just exactly that - opinions! They don't have to be categorically right, they just have to express the writer's take on the subject. However, if the opinions expressed are clearly coming from someone who has no real idea about what they are talking about to anyone in the know, then the points of view retain little merit.

Fortunately, Ian does know what he is talking about, and his performing experience is reflected in his suggestions and

advice. You may not always agree with his viewpoint (as he accepts himself) but at the very least his opinions should set you thinking and considering what you currently do and whether improvements could be made.

The topics Ian talks about include finding your own performing character and how to make that memorable to others, creating the right image from the way you handle both yourself and your props, the importance of writing scripts for routines, the impact of opening lines, how to practise properly, methods for garnering applause at the right moments and more. The advice is solid without ever being revolutionary, and will be of particular help to those who have limited magical experience.

Part 2 of the book gives details of a somewhat eclectic line up of effects. Designed for stage/platform and sometimes close up, the routines are usually a bit different from the norm and should all be well within the technical abilities of most readers. Strangely Ian confesses that some of the routines he has never performed while others he uses regularly - I suppose it makes a change from those who always claim that everything they publish comes straight from their front line show!

To be honest, I wasn't particularly struck by any of the routines, although I did appreciate Take A Seat, which is a very solid, clean method for the classic chair prediction, and for close up, Out Of This Chaos is an interesting twist on the Paul Curry classic. However, although you get Ian's scripts, I kept feeling that the explanations were a little bit glossed over. For instance, he provides no explanation for Out Of This World which would prevent a neophyte from trying out the nice variation mentioned above.

I believe this book is self published, and it does look and feel a bit like that. The layout and proofreading need a bit of attention and the book's hardback

binding is so tight that it's actually quite hard to prise the book apart to read the pages fully and I found it uncomfortable to hold the book open for long periods. Which is a shame.

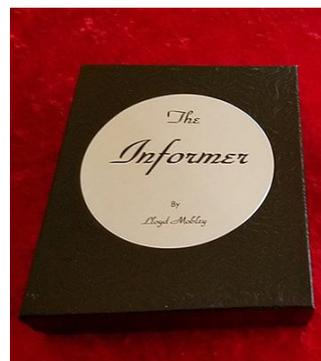
However, at the price asked this book is good value, especially if you absorb and learn from the advice in part 1, which in my view is the stronger part of the publication. I enjoy Ian's magazine articles and if you read this book, I

suspect you will also be attracted to his other writings too as they are interesting and contain some good advice. **ML**

WHAT'S HOT: good solid advice that will especially benefit those who are fresh to magic.

WHAT'S NOT: the magic routines in part 2 are a bit mixed in quality and you may struggle to find much you want to use. The book's tight binding is also a slight issue.

RATING: 55%



THE INFORMER IMPRESSION PAD

Lloyd Mobley

Available from any Murphy's retailer or dealers contact www.murphysmagic.com
Price: £56.00

The idea of using magnetism, rather than applied pressure, for an impression pad is not new. I have used Paralabs excellent product for several years. This pad employs the same impression material as Parapad and, apart from being a little smaller, is identical in almost every respect, even down to using an extra back cover, cut short to aid the flipping and peeking of the impression.

The succinct video has Lloyd Mobley demonstrating the components of the pad and supplied gimmicked marker. He suggests a couple of handlings, how to replenish the paper and how to gimmick any suitable felt tip using the extra supplied magnet. The marker included is bigger than the Paralabs pen and arguably out of proportion for such a small pad. The advantage,

however, is that the helper is obliged to write in larger, more legible letters. The large writing is particularly useful as, unlike the Parapad, the impression material does not quite cover the very top and bottom of the writing area.

The impression obtained is identical in quality to Parapad, which means it is adequate in most lighting conditions. It does not, however, justify the advertising blurb that it is "12x more sensitive than any other pad on the market".

The smaller format fits well with momentarily attaching an individual Post-it note, which the spectator writes on, peels off and keeps. This makes the pad a forgettable "in transit" object and unlikely to be recalled.

This is a highly practical and well thought through product, a little cheaper than Parapad and has better instructions on gimmicking your own pens when the supplied one dries up. Purchasers can decide on whether they want to pay a little more to support the older Parapad with its "reporters notebook" shape, slimmer supplied pen and fractionally better impression coverage. **CP**

WHAT'S HOT: natural and well constructed. Ready to use with prepared pen. Clear image, no reliance on pressure. Instructions on how to gimmick suitable pens. Good value.

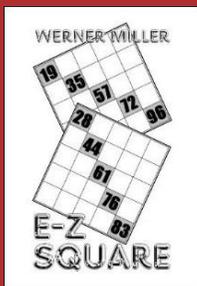
WHAT'S NOT: not original. No credits. Small margins around the impression area.

RATING: 75%

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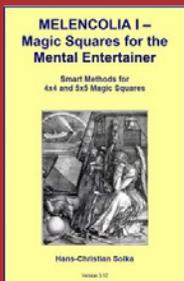
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CARPENTER COINS

Jack Carpenter

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

Price: £60.00

Jack Carpenter, creative card magician and author, has

routined the classic coin trick Copper, Silver, Brass. In a very nicely present box you get a good quality set comprising a facsimile Chinese coin, a real Mexican centavos and a gimmicked Kennedy half dollar. In the accompanying twenty three minute video Jack Carpenter first performs his three stage routine and then explains it in detail.

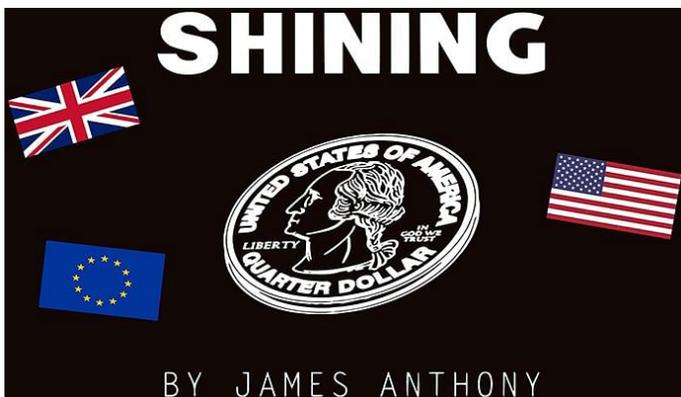
Thanks to the gimmick the routine is simplicity to do but looks inexplicably amazing. One after another a single coin is placed into the pocket and with no apparent moves reappears in the performer's hand. Twice, two coins held in one hand swap places with the third in the opposite hand before finally a single coin is placed in the pocket, a magic gesture and the remaining two have vanished. All three coins are shown to have jumped into your pocket and can be left on the table and examined, though you will have to provide one extra regular Kennedy half to do this final display.

There are no coin sleights involved. Once you get used to handling the gimmicked coin the routine is easy to perform. The whole thing can be performed in

the hands so is perfect for close up in small groups or walkabout, especially as there are almost no angle problems to worry about. It is the perfect routine if you have a group who constantly burn your hands and cannot be misdirected. There is no significant reset and the props take up very little pocket space. **SB**

WHAT'S HOT: well made set with a good quality durable gimmicked coin. Easily carried and usable in many situations

WHAT'S NOT: nothing
RATING: 80%



SHINING

James Anthony

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

Price: £37.00

When I espied the trailer for this, featuring the ever-zestful proprietor of Magic World, I quite liked the effect it achieved, and was pretty sure I had an inkling about its modus operandi. When I opened the package, I quickly had to face facts that I'd had no clue at all. For example, there's not a magnet to be seen. Hey, in card tricks these days, that alone is a blessing worthy of celebration. There are actually two gimmicks

in play, working together as a team to produce a near self-working effect. Oh yes, the effect. They sign a coin and a selected card. The signed card is lost in the deck. The coin is then inserted into the body of the deck, creating a gap in the cards where the coin rests. The performer squeezes the deck and the gap disappears. The effect produced is that the coin has somehow been absorbed into the cards, which are now neatly squared. Intriguing, but no big deal.

But wait. The magicmeister runs through the cards face down explaining the coin has 'found their chosen card'. Sure as eggs

are eggs, the coin has landed atop one card... but when the spectator is invited to inspect further, the coin is actually melted into the body of the playing card. They can reach out and touch the melted coin. When the card is turned over it is their signed selection.

To finish, the performer takes up the card containing the coin and yanks the signed coin right through their card. Both signed items are dropped on the table for the spectator to examine to their dear little heart's content. As I said, it is all but self-working thanks to the gimmicks employed, and it resets in a matter of seconds ready for repeating at the next table.

The gimmicks are really well made. No, I mean really. A lot of thought has gone into this set. The card gimmick could have been a bunch of cards glued together in a block, which would have been crude and handled in an ungainly manner. Instead they have been hand-manufactured to look and feel like... a stack of separate cards.

Likewise the coin has been well made to do just this job. It is

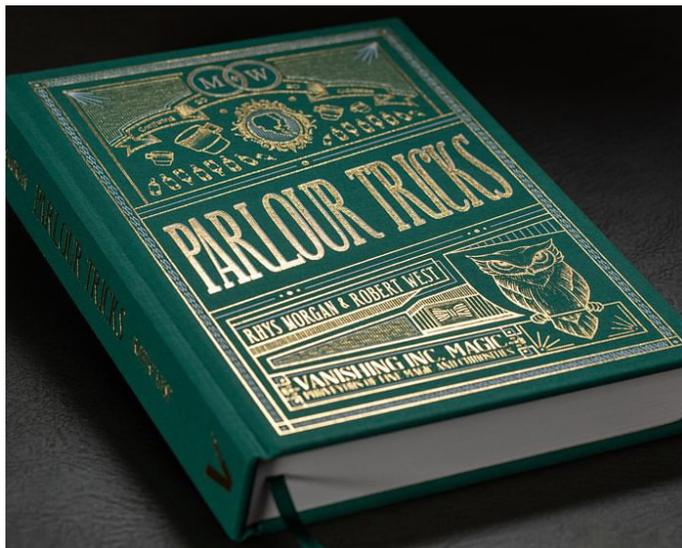
not a standard coin gimmick. It comes in three types of coinage: US (50 cent), EU (50 cent) and UK (10p). You have to do the slightest bit of DIY once to set it up but it will take you less time than it would to toss the coin in the air and catch it in your hand.

The sequence is well explained on the film, and there are some nice additional thoughts as well as bonuses, including one really visual piece where the coin jumps onto (and into) the card, with a nod to David Williamson along the way.

So you get nice props and a routine in which quite a lot of small magic happens. I grew to like it, and I'm sure you will too. **BG**

WHAT'S HOT: nicely made gimmicks, good routine renders sleights all but banished, and a lot of action takes place in this quick effect.

WHAT'S HOT: it's by no means a show-stopper, more of a 'wow, fancy that' type of thing. The 'absorption' of the coin into the deck requires some deft pointing, to make them realise what has taken place magically.
RATING: 75%



PARLOUR TRICKS

Rhys Morgan and Robert West

356 pages, hardbacked, with colour photo illustrations
Available from any Murphy's retailer or dealers contact www.murphysmagic.com
Price: £50.00

Morgan and West are a very popular magic double act beloved by magicians and lay people alike. Their stylised performing persona as 'time travelling' Victorian magicians has created a memorable and highly effective marketing tool for their touring stage shows, and their schedule has taken them from village halls to upmarket theatres, and everywhere in between.

The chemistry and understanding between the two performers is immediately apparent when you watch them work. The slick verbal interplay between them and the delightful way that they play off each other's stage character for the audience's amusement, is a great example of what can be achieved through constant practice, performance and creative thinking.

This major book is closely based on their Parlour Tricks stage show. It is written as if you are at their show and are experiencing each of the magic routines in the order that they appear in the live event, and the book even has an interval between halves! In great detail you are taken through

the performance, working and thinking behind each of their signature effects and it makes for a truly fascinating read.

The book starts with their brilliant version of the Multiplying Bottles called The Restarting Bottle. Next comes Mirror Mirror, which is a short bit of fun which will set them up for a trick later in the show. From there they move into A Moment Of Impossibility which not only creates an amazingly strong effect, but which also sends the assisting spectator back to their seat with a memorable and personalised impossible object as a memento.

The Impossible Ring On Ribbon is next and is a clever re-working of a classic card effect, and this is followed by Intra-Sensory Perception, which is a terrific example of how you can take a potentially quite boring mental routine and turn it into a masterpiece of baffling and amusing entertainment.

The Instant Costume Change completes the situation set up in Mirror Mirror earlier and the half finishes with Knowing The Unknowable, which is a really different way of taking the book test premise and expanding it into a logical yet amazing feature routine.

The second part of the book (show) begins with their now well known and marketed effect

Thought Of Card Across, and this is followed by a fabulously scripted comedy routine called Nobody Trusts Magicians using three cups, some water, and a very funny sequence of interplay between the performers and the audience.

Next up is a very different take on the Linking Rings which blends the very essence of the classic effect and with the Thumb Tie in another strong and amusing effect. The 40 Digit Hyperbrain Act moves into the realms of apparent impressive mental agility from Robert West in which he recalls huge numbers previously supplied in the interval by the audience, and in which he appears to do impossible mental calculations. The act finishes with a funny and surprising escape routine called The Miraculous Escape Of Mr. West.

Every single one of these routines has been painstakingly constructed to achieve the strongest effect with the most direct and practical method. The detailed scripting of both the patter and the working of the tricks is thoroughly revealed in the book, and it is clear to see that this is an act that has been worked countless times and has been fine tuned and improved in response to audience reactions.

So the actual stage routines are great, but you do have to understand that they are very much created for a double act, and more specifically for the Morgan and West characters. Some of the methods can really only be done by a two person act, and much of the comedy comes from the banter between the two of them. They say at the start of the book that most of the effects can be changed to suit a one man/woman act, but I'm not convinced that this is entirely true, because much of the strength of the magic relies on having two on stage performers.

However, what makes this book in my view an absolutely essential buy is the background thinking that is revealed behind the magic. The book is brim full of wonderful

observations about magic and performance, is replete with brilliant advice on how to create great routines that are uniquely different, and is a treasure trove of excellent insights and advice on everything from staging, to lighting and sound, to scripting and more.

As a text book on how to present stage magic in the best possible way, this publication is hard to beat. All the information imparted clearly comes directly from their practical experience, and there is nothing here that is just untried theory masquerading as real world advice. Even if you don't do stage magic, there are still masses of ideas that are relevant to the type of magic that you do perform.

This is one of the best books of its type that I have ever read. Consume it all with your eyes and mind open and you will gain so much from what Morgan and West have to say. The true value of this book is not really to be had from the tricks themselves, but from the thinking that has gone on behind them, and that is totally worth £50 to anyone who wants to improve their magic. **ML**

WHAT'S HOT: great in depth advice on all aspects of magic performance from two highly experienced and creative performers.

WHAT'S NOT: most of the routines are best suited for a two person act and so some severe pruning or alterations would be required in some cases in order to make them genuinely useable.

RATING: 90%

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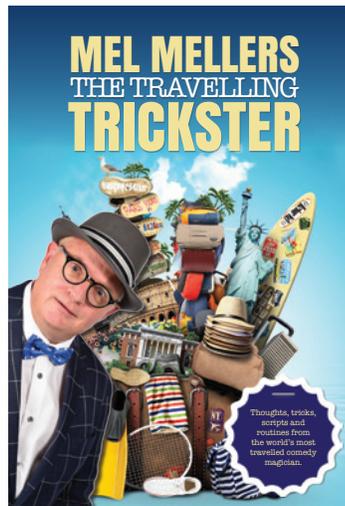
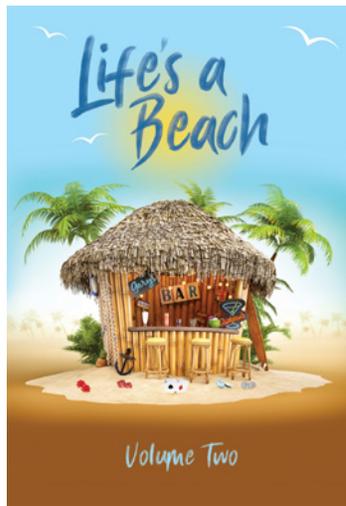
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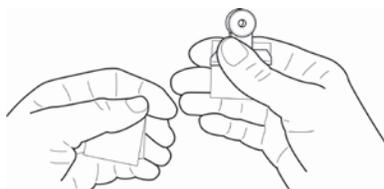
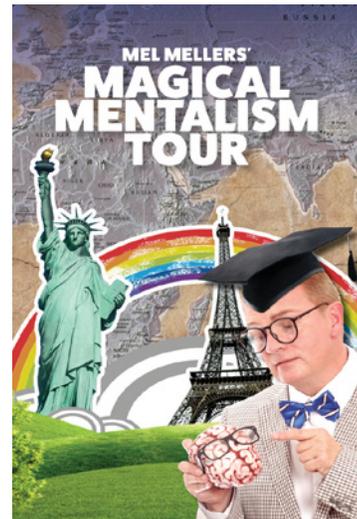
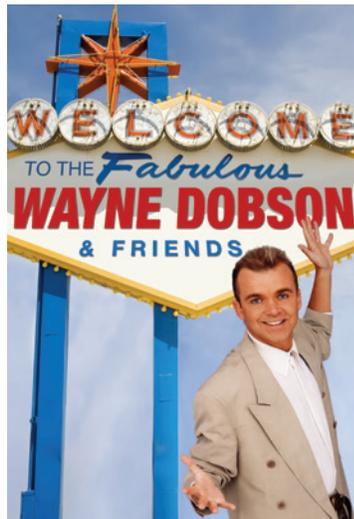
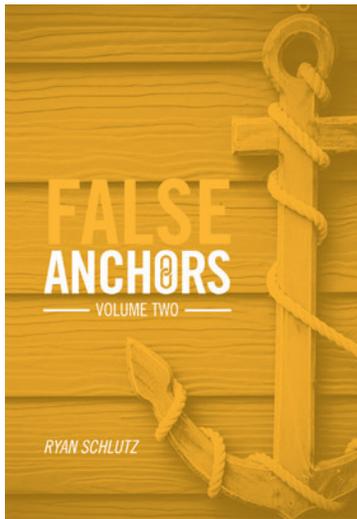
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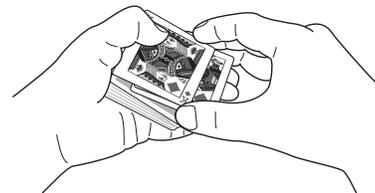


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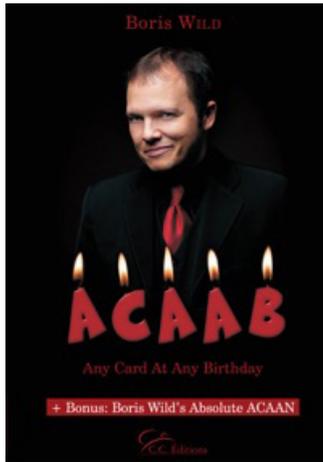
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ACAAB - ANY CARD AT ANY BIRTHDAY

Boris Wild

Available from
www.borismwild.com

Price: £25.00

In this elegantly crafted routine Boris Wild has added a strong emotional hook to the ACAAN plot. Three spectators are chosen at random. From a pocket the performer takes a card box clearly marked as a prediction and one spectator checks that otherwise the pocket is empty before the box is replaced. From that point on the prediction is never touched again until the revelation.

A second spectator chooses a significant birthday which is written on a business card and displayed by the spectator, the third names any card which is removed from a deck and also displayed. With a clearly empty hand the prediction box is taken from the pocket and can be handed to a spectator to open and to count to the selected number and turn over the selected card.

From a spectator's perspective this has got to be the cleanest of effects. It absolutely meets the maxim that an effect should be capable of a simple description. "The magician showed a prediction which was kept in an empty pocket. A birthday was chosen and a card named. The other helper took the prediction and counted out the number and found the chosen card." All the choices are entirely free, there are no apparent 'moves' or manipulation of cards, the prediction box is clearly shown at the start and isolated and it is a spectator who opens the box and does the counting.

From a magician's perspective this is also one of the cleanest methods possible. There are no stooges, no difficult sleights, no complicated memory work, no

equivoque, and no gimmicked cards. The work to put the chosen card in the correct place is not difficult to master, happens in plain sight and is entirely covered by natural actions and timed misdirection.

The fifty page e-book is very well produced. You get a full and detailed explanation of the routine and the necessary moves. There are no sleights as such but you will need to learn and become fluid in the process for handling the deck while removing the named card for display. The process is meticulously described and fully illustrated with black and white photographs.

For added clarity key information is highlighted in separate text boxes. You will also need to use a method of counting cards which, once understood, is not difficult and made very much easier by the construction of the special decks. I found that reading the instructions while also following the order of the decks, set out clearly on page 51, made everything straightforward.

ACAAB is designed as a piece ideally suitable for a parlour show or possibly with some

camera help, on a larger stage. With care it can be reset quickly. To implicitly justify using your pockets it is recommended that you perform this effect without a table or other surface nearby which means it could be performed when strolling.

The routine runs for about five or six minutes and requires space in three pockets which might be a limiting factor. As an added bonus you also get Wild's ACAAN. This uses exactly the same method with a simple addition to allow for numbers greater than 31.

With an e-book there is no accompanying video however, if you want to see a performance, search YouTube where you can find Boris Wild performing the effect at the 4F's convention and on stage for a live audience. What you see is exactly what is taught in the book. **SB**

WHAT'S HOT: one of the best effects I've reviewed in a long time. ACAAB is a very clean practical routine with a big impact and an ingenious method. All the details have been superbly thought out. A real-world worker.

WHAT'S NOT: absolute nothing.
RATING: 90%



MODERN Z WALLET PRO

Patrick Kun/Kelvin Chow

Available from
www.patrickkun.com

Price: \$45.00 (approx £36.00)

Completely sold at the Blackpool Magic Convention back in February the second batch of Patrick Kun's Modern Z Wallet Pro is now available to buy.

With so many Z Wallets on the market I was intrigued to see

what makes this different to the others.

Crafted by Kelvin Chow (Quiver) the wallet measures 100mm x 85mm making it slightly larger than a standard poker sized playing card. As is standard, the wallet consists of two sides which can be used to switch/change a playing card (or any other flat object that fits into the compartments). Inside each side of the wallet is a window compartment and on the opposite side an Out To Lunch style holder. This is a great addition and unlike some other wallets with Out To Lunch built in it is a generous size so will house UK business cards easily.

Both sides of the wallet are magnetised so they stay closed,

however, if you only want one you can remove the magnets on one side so only one stays locked. I found it worked better for me to just have the one side magnetised. This avoids a spectator accidentally opening the wrong side of the wallet.

What's nice about the Modern Z Wallet Pro is that the sides have been shortened. This not only makes the wallet look thinner but hides the fact it opens on both sides. Each side of the wallet has been cleverly marked too so its easy to keep track of which side is which.

Instructions are provided via Patrick's website where he talks about the wallet and teaches several tricks. There are so many effects using a Z Wallet available

that you will have no shortage of uses for this wallet.

I would also highly recommend buying a Rainbow Gimmick by Higer to go inside the wallet. This opens up so many more possibilities.

There isn't really anything not to like about this wallet. If you are in need of a new Z Wallet or would just like to own one of the best on the market then I'd recommend checking out the Modern Z Wallet Pro. **PS**

WHAT'S HOT: Well thought out improvement on the standard Z Wallet.

WHAT'S NOT: Nothing really.
RATING: 90%



THE BLACKART PROJECT

Will Tsai

2 DVD set, material samples, Vol 1, 50 mins, Vol 2, 36mins
Available from any Murphy's retailer or dealers contact www.murphysmagic.com

Price: £74.00

Will Tsai's achievement in America's Got Talent had magicians reaching for their copy of 'The Too Impossible Theory'. What he presented was a succession of eye- and brain-melting visual magical effects that almost looked too good to be true, but which in reality harnessed the power of Black Art.

Tsai attempts to bring what he has learnt about using the power of this essentially optical approach to the magic world in this set of two short DVDs. Sad to say, he doesn't quite pull it off, and in fact it's not even a brave attempt.

Don't get me wrong. As an originator, routiner and performer Will Tsai has taken the application of black art to the next level with creative ways to perform CGI-like effects with completely no cover. But as a teaching exercise, I fear this falls short.

You get two DVDs, the second of which runs to just... 36 minutes. Why two? I have no idea as both would have fitted on a single DVD with room to spare. He could perhaps have used that room to provide some actual teaching. You also receive some

material samples, to exemplify the principles and techniques you are shown on screen. Presumably you can use these as swatches to go to your local haberdashery and seek out the materials you need.

The treatment of the whole project looks bitty and thrown together. Much of it is demonstrated with subtitles to music. Tsai appears a few times to add some comments, but what you are effectively watching is the whole thing in a strange form of pantomime.

That's the teaching format, though. Many of the techniques and applications are clever in the extreme, and generally work a treat. This really is eye-popping stuff. If this principle, or the effects it can produce, attract you, then this is a no-brainer, since the alternative sources on this neglected principle (especially in close-up conditions) are almost non-existent.

He does not only cover black art, but he also shows how other colours can be likewise camouflaged to hide in full sight, particularly white as applied to playing cards.

He covers three broad topics. On DVD 1 you get to explore the Disguised Object principle, followed by the Clothing Vertical application. On DVD 2 he spends all of 36 minutes exploring (or rather skating on the surface, I fear) of Stage Magic.

The Disguised Object application

of black art allows for some astonishing visual effects – the Invisible Pen, Small to Large Coin Transpo, Card to Anything, which is a flash change (well, they all are really) of a card to a mini cube.

The Clothing Vertical principle uses your black (usually) clothing to produce, vanish, and change objects visually. The pick of the set for me was the Bill to Origami card restoration where a bill is instantly made into a piece of origami as it is dropped onto the table. In similar vein is the card restoration against a phone, where the torn-off corner is visibly restored. Admit it, it looks amazing.

Stage applications are a confection. This is more platform work than stage. Some of the effects he produces are quite elaborate too. How about a card whose corner grows and fills in visibly? Card Under Glass is almost hyper-quick. A card vanishes and reappears under a drinking glass.

All the effects have this kinetic aspect to them, whether it's a floating card case, a rolling cola can which changes as it comes to a halt across the table, a pretty effect in which a Rubik's Cube dissolves into flower petals, or another torn corner effect (he's obsessed with this plot) where the torn-off corner walks across the table and visibly restores onto a card. The importance of the principle to stage illusions gets nary a mention. Presumably it's outside of Tsai's sphere of experience, but it's a pretty large omission.

Tsai does take you backstage to show his lighting system, and you can see how he creates the right environment within which to demonstrate these visual miracles. And that's the nub of the thing for me; you have to create your physical environment, from your dress, to the lighting, to the angles. He must have been a living nightmare for the production crew at AGT.

For most of this material you need a third party to bring about the mechanics involved, whether that's an assistant, a line and pulley or remote control. There is a lot of DIY involved to make your environment right for these stunts. Only you can decide whether the effort expended merits the quickie effects you can produce.

It's such a shame as this all feels a little rushed, bitty. It's not even like a lecture, thanks to the disembodied nature of the focus on the mat-action. These by no means feel like complete routines, and they are all of a muchness - visual, quick, in-the-blink-of-an-eye type stuff that could get tiresome pretty quickly in repetition. And the asking price is an exercise in daylight robbery.

Perhaps one day Tsai will put his name to the definitive exploration of the topic he has come to own, and gain some lustre to his deserved legacy in the field, perhaps in conjunction with an illusion builder like Paul Osborne. For now, this will have to suffice. **BG**

WHAT'S HOT: the effects you can produce can be jaw-dropping, highly visual, with lots of movement. It acts as an interesting introduction to the topic, in a field that is so thinly represented in teaching materials.

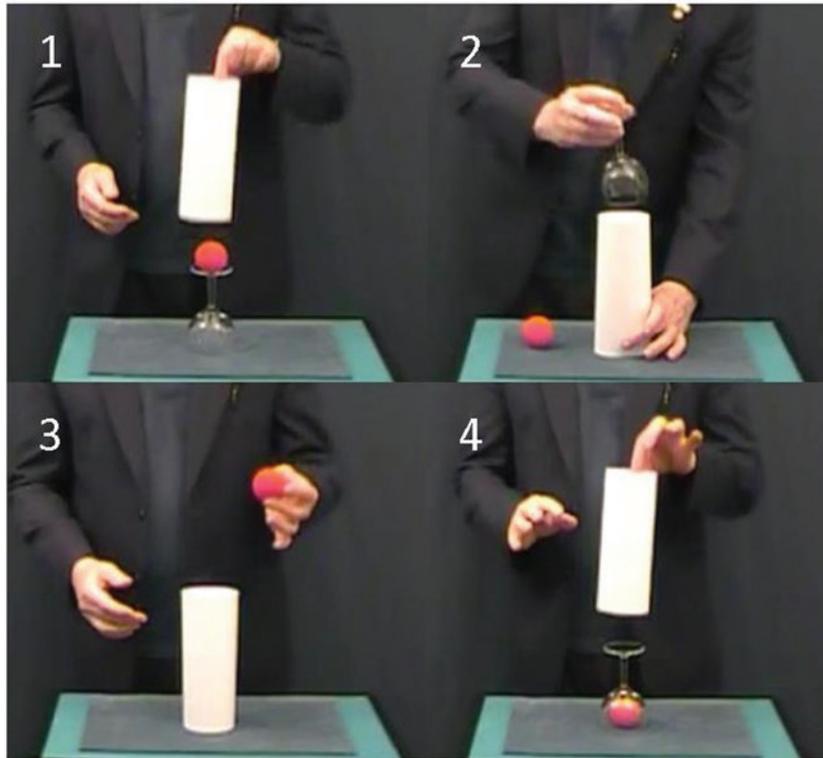
WHAT'S NOT: where do you want me to start? The whole thing has a thrown-together feel. Don't for one minute think you're getting a lecture that explains the effects he did on AGT. It's a lot of work to make this material happen. An exorbitant price for a part-delivered project.

RATING: 45% (I'm being generous because there is so little out here on the topic, so even a trace of lead seems like gold)

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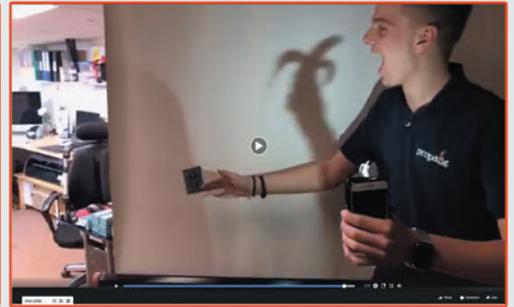
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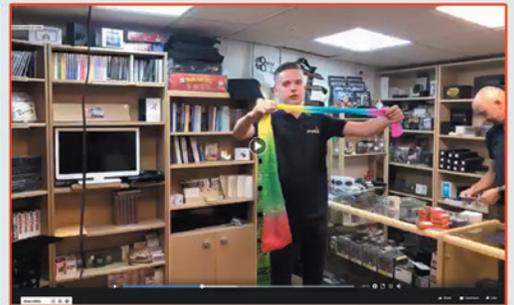
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