

MAGIC SEEN *Lite*

Issue No. 1

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STREBLER
MAN OF STEEL

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FRANKENSTEIN
MAGIC
BURNOUT

Henry Harrius
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A WORD FROM THE EDITOR

Welcome to **Magicseen Lite! We'll admit that we are excited to be able to offer you the chance to experience some of what Magicseen is all about with this special version of the May 2019 issue.**

Magicseen Lite is a digital only edition and can be downloaded completely free! Inside you will find some of the contents from our latest issue (#86 May 2019), providing you with a teaser and a

taster of what we included in the regular full version.

So, inside you will find our feature article on cover star Henry Harrius, a whizz if ever there was with Rubik's Cube magic, and we also get up close and personal with Morgan Strebler, who has a very individual approach to his magic life.

Dominic Reyes provides a thought provoking article on how to prevent yourself suffering from magic burnout, we include one of the routines from the Masterclass trick section and a

selection of some of the many product reviews from the May edition too.

Add to this interesting adverts from some of the more important magic suppliers from around the world, and we hope you'll agree with us when we contend that this is an interesting mix. Our intention is to provide a Lite version a month after each future issue is released, so if you like this one, look out for the next on the 1st August.

Of course, if you want the full fat version of Magicseen as

opposed to the semi-skimmed, we are happy to invite you to subscribe (details inside), as then you will not only receive every two months the full edition, but also get it a month before the Lite version hits the streets. Subscribers also get 20% off every book order they make with Magicseen too. But the choice is yours.

Either way, welcome to the Magicseen fold!

Mark Leveridge

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HENRY HARRIUS

HENRY HARRIUS



FROM DREAMS TO REALITY...

TRENDS COME AND GO IN MAGIC. VERY FEW ENDURE. NOT SINCE THE CARDISTRY BOOM IN THE MID-2000S HAS THE MAGIC WORLD SEEN A TREND AS POPULAR AS RUBIK'S CUBE MAGIC. MAGICIANS AROUND THE WORLD HAVE FOUND AN AFFINITY WITH THE WORLD'S BESTSELLING PUZZLE TOY. AMONGST THOSE MAGICIANS, THERE ARE A HANDFUL WHO ARE LEADING THE CHARGE - DEVELOPING NEW ALGORITHMS, CREATING INGENUOUS GIMMICKS, AND PUSHING THE BOUNDARIES OF WHAT WE THOUGHT TO BE POSSIBLE WITH THE FAMOUS CUBE. STANDING HEAD AND SHOULDERS ABOVE THE REST IS HENRY HARRIUS. HE HAS DEFINED A GENRE OF MAGIC WHICH SHOWS NO SIGN OF SLOWING DOWN. MAGICSEEN CHATS TO HENRY!

Born in New Zealand, his parents moved back to their native Hong Kong when he was two years old. Henry grew up and still lives in the bustling metropolis which rises out of the South China Sea.

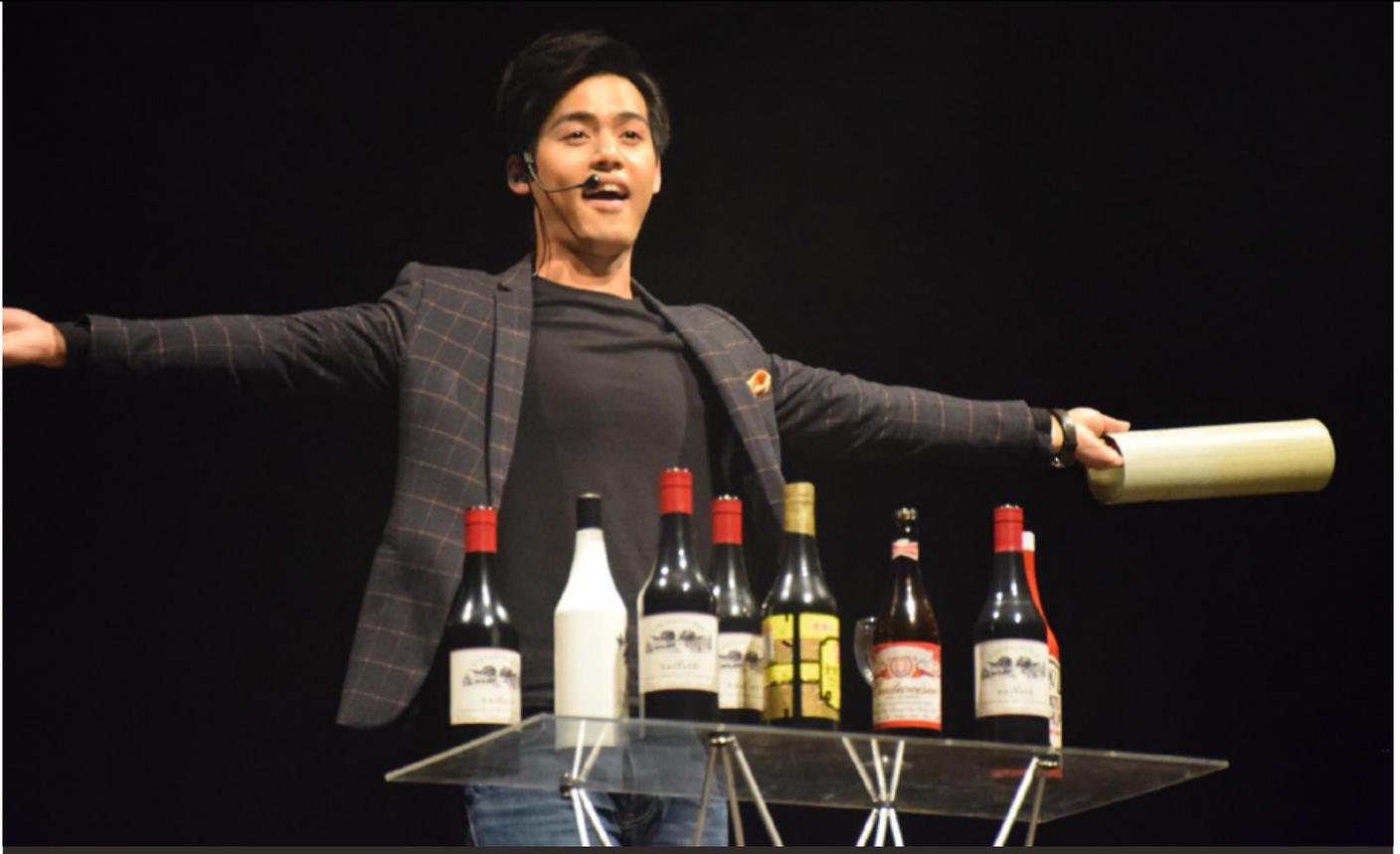
As we sit down to talk, Henry is relaxed, bearing a warm smile.

"Henry Harrius is not actually my real name. It's my performance name. My surname is actually 'Chan', so my birth name is 'Chan Henry Ling Yan'. I made up 'Harrius' years ago because I wanted something that was easy for others to remember. It's very common to do this in Asia."

Before talking about magic, we are curious to find out about Henry's other interests, as we've heard he's a man of many talents! "I love music. I sing and I play the guitar. I've not had lessons - I'm self-taught - but I really enjoy the process of learning and practising."



**MAGIC IS LIKE MY LIFE.
MAGIC IS ME AND I AM
THE MAGIC. SOME DAYS,
I FEEL LIKE IF YOU TOOK
MAGIC AWAY FROM
ME, THERE WOULD BE
NOTHING LEFT.**



My older brother (Levin Chan) is actually a professional flautist in Hang Zhou, China. He's absolutely fantastic and is well known amongst his peers. I'm not as good as him, so perhaps that's why I focused on magic", Henry laughs.

If you follow Henry on social media, it won't take you long to realise that he's busy. Really busy. Quizzing him about his schedule, I was hardly surprised to learn that the next few weeks include trips to three continents, multiple private shows, a magic convention and two TV appearances.

We ask how he is able to maintain such a gruelling schedule and remain so relaxed. "Magic is like my life. Magic is me and I am the magic. Some days, I feel like if you took magic away from me, there would be nothing left. That's a good thing and a bad thing and sometimes I just have to remind myself that it's important to explore other areas of life too. But I love what I do so it doesn't feel like work."

As we discuss some of his most recent trips, to China and Russia, I am reminded of how modest Henry is. He's always the first to pay someone else a compliment and he effusively talks about the talents of his friends around the world. This combination of humility and gentle confidence is seldom seen in the

MAGIC BECAME A VEHICLE FOR ME. IT HELPED ME COME OUT OF MY SHELL. I BECAME LESS NERVOUS AROUND OTHER PEOPLE. IT GAVE ME A REASON TO TALK TO STRANGERS, AND TO LOOK AT THEM IN THE EYE.

magic world. In this case, it was born out of a shy childhood.

"I was an introverted child. I didn't have much confidence and speaking to strangers made me really nervous."

Then came along one TV special that would change Henry's life forever.

"David Copperfield's TV specials in the 1990s changed everything for me. It was because of him that I discovered magic. My Mum and Auntie bought me books and magic sets and like so many kids in that position, I became besotted by it all."

Henry continues, "Magic became a vehicle for me. It helped me come out of my shell. I became less nervous around other people. It gave me a reason to talk to strangers, and to look at them in the eye. I often wonder how

I would have turned out if it hadn't been for magic!"

Who was the first magician you saw live that really made an impact on you? Instantly, Henry responds, "Tamariz. Seeing Juan Tamariz's performance at FISM 2009, in Beijing, was life changing for me. I was young but I was completely attentive. In the time I spent with him, I remember being in a state of constant disbelief. Juan showed us what magic is. It's like he was whispering in my ear: "Henry, do not forget this feeling: the first time you witness real magic". I'm forever grateful for that experience and I have been lucky enough to spend some time with him since. For any magicians out there who have not seen Tamariz live. I suggest you do everything within your reach to make sure that you do. It should be a pilgrimage for every magician on earth!"



...I SPENT 3 YEARS, PUSHING MYSELF HARDER THAN I EVER HAD. TRYING, FAILING, AND TRYING AGAIN. YOU KNOW WHAT? I STILL CAN'T BELIEVE I ACTUALLY DID IT

Fast forward fifteen years and the shy, introverted young magician had become a well-established performer in Hong Kong. But Henry had his sights set higher. His constant determination to better himself was taking him all over Asia, performing for a smorgasbord of prestigious clients. It was not until 2013, though, that he began to make waves in the magic world. In quick succession, he won two large regional competitions: The Hong Kong Close-up Magic Open Contest and the Asian Close-up Magic Association contest. Then came FISM.

“Winning in FISM changed my life.” Henry pauses. “It was a landmark achievement in my life. I spent 3 years, pushing myself harder than I ever had. Trying, failing, and trying again. You know what? I still can’t believe I actually did it. I stepped onto the stage in Rimini in front of the best magicians in the world, many of them my heroes. I got to show the world my original creations and my act. Even now, that whole experience feels like a dream.”

However, the build up to FISM wasn’t as glamorous as one may presume. Smiling, and shaking his head, Henry sighs and explains, “It certainly wasn’t all plain sailing! In the days leading up to FISM there were three huge challenges that I had to overcome. Firstly, the week before I was due to fly to Italy, there was a problem with my passport. Suddenly, everything I had worked for felt like it was crumbling around me. I almost gave up. I thought I’d never make it to Italy after all. But at the last minute, I got a call to tell me that I would be able to fly! I was elated. It was a huge relief... but there were more problems to come.”

As Henry recounts the events, he reassures me that it’s all true. “When I got to the arrivals hall in Italy, I was informed that my easel had been lost in transit. It was a disaster. My entire act relied on this one prop and now... I didn’t have it.”

(You can see Henry’s FISM act online)

“I’d made it this far, so I was not going to give up easily. So, the search began to find a replacement easel. Trust me, it’s the sort of item that’s not easy to find in a foreign city! But we hit lucky. We found a restaurant near the convention centre with an easel that was perfect. The owner allowed me to test it out but as I was doing so, he accidentally stepped on the Rubik’s mosaic. It was completely destroyed.”

Laughing harder, Henry says. “Anyway, long story short, in the nick of time, we managed to fix it and my performance went better than I could have hoped.”

FISM 2015 was a year lauded for its remarkable line up of talent. Henry finished on the podium, taking third place in the Parlour category and receiving rave reviews from the thousands of magicians in attendance. Overnight, his Rubik’s Cube magic had become legendary. Little did he know the impact he would go on to have.

“You know, it’s funny looking back. I don’t really see myself as a “cube magician”. I want people to think I can do amazing things



I’VE ALWAYS FELT THAT IN HONG KONG, MAGIC IS NOT RESPECTED AS AN ART. CULTURALLY, I THINK PEOPLE ARE MORE SKEPTICAL THAN THEY ARE IN, SAY, AMERICA. FOR THAT REASON, QUALITY COUNTS.

with anything. I have a real passion for so many branches of magic: cards, coins, even mentalism.”

Riding the back of his success at FISM, Henry was soon being offered scores of high-end corporate events and TV appearances across the eastern hemisphere. Before long, some of the world’s largest brands, including Tiffany, Adidas and Ted Baker were all seeking out Henry’s unique skill sets. All withstanding, being a professional magician in Hong Kong was not easy.

“I’ve always felt that in Hong Kong, magic is not respected as an art. Culturally, I think people are more skeptical than they are in, say, America. For that reason, quality counts.”

Henry is the most in-demand professional magician in Hong Kong, but he explains why complacency mustn’t set in. “Hong Kong is a large city with plenty of opportunities but amongst magicians there is a lot of competition. Of the 100 or so working magicians in Hong Kong, probably only 20 are able to make it their full-time living. Clients have such high standards that it really is a case of survival of the fittest. That can

be brutal, but it has also created a thriving community of highly skilled magicians.”

Winter 2016 was a penny drop moment for me. We were aware of Henry, especially in light of his FISM performance, but we had not met him. Out of the blue, we received an email about a project he was working on: “Rubik’s Dream”.

In the Magicseen inbox was a YouTube link. We clicked it, and we watched. Then we watched it again. And again. And again.

Henry had created a gimmick that was so far ahead of anything that had preceded it that we were knocked for six. It took us back to opening a magic set as a child. Everything about it filled us with wonder and excitement. Rubik’s Dream was the first in a line of products that had set a new precedent for Cube magic gimmicks. These gaffs are hyper-realistic, expertly made and designed with professional magicians in mind- complete with full routines. In many ways, they are the ideal magic products.

Having never had the opportunity to ask, we were intrigued to find out what had attracted Henry to cube magic in the first place.



I THINK THAT CUBE MAGIC APPEALS TO MAGICIANS BECAUSE IT COMBINES EVERYTHING THAT WE ARE ALREADY FAMILIAR WITH. A RUBIK'S CUBE IS SIMILAR TO A PACK OF CARDS.

QUICKFIRE QUESTIONS

Favourite band?

Ummm.... there are too many!

Favourite food?

Rice.

Last movie you watched?

Antman 2!

What three things do you always carry with you?

1. My wallet
2. My iPhone
3. My keys (a special version of the key master)

If you could have dinner with any person from history, who would it be?

David Copperfield and Juan Tamariz.

“There are many reasons. I had seen Usui Takamiz, Garrett Thomas and Karl Hein. They laid the foundations for all of this, so I owe an enormous debt to them.”

Thinking for a few moments, he continues, “I think that cube magic appeals to magicians because it combines everything that we are already familiar with. A Rubik's Cube is similar to a pack of cards. It's colourful. It has many possibilities. It can be shuffled. It can even be false shuffled! It also has parallels with coin magic too. You can put a shell onto it! For laymen, I think they also enjoy the fact it's a familiar object but also, it breaks the stereotype of a magician. You don't typically associate a magician with a Rubik's Cube.”

Henry pauses, chuckles, and quips, “well... maybe you do nowadays. Cube magic seems to be more popular than card magic on social media at the moment!”

Henry is most well-known for creating The “Rubik's Nightmare” plot. The premise is simple: you match the outcome of a freely mixed up Rubik's Cube before solving the cube as you toss it into the air. I ask where

the inspiration for the routine came from. “Many years ago, there was a Japanese master (unknown) who invented an ungimmicked cube toss solve. He taught it to Shoot Ogawa. Shoot Ogawa then taught this to a Singaporean magician, Jeremy Pei. Michael Lam then learned it from Jeremy, and he tried to create his own version. Later on, Michael showed me his version. So, it was Michael who introduced me to cube magic.” Henry jokingly takes a deep breath...

“After seeing Michael's solve, I was hooked. I kept playing with variations to try and make it better. Eventually, I developed my own version, in which all sides are shown, yet when you toss the cube into the air, it solves itself. From there, it was my mentor, Alex Ng, who pushed me to create a routine with a cube.”

Knowing the controversy surrounding the origins of the “Rubik's Nightmare” routine, I ask Henry for his point of view. In a dejected tone, he responds, “It is a fairly upsetting series of events. The abridged version is that another magician decided to publish my routine without my permission. This hurt me, and I am told it even had repercussions at FISM Asia, where it was presumed that my act was not original. Frankly, I don't like to think about it anymore, but the story does have a more positive ending I suppose. I ended up using the circumstances as my motivation to take my routine to FISM 2015. Winning a prize there was a dream come true and validated the routine as mine. In fact, that is why I decided to call my brand of products “Rubik's Dream”. If you work hard for what you believe in, your dreams can come true!”

The Rubik's Dream line of products are exquisite. Not only have Henry and his team created a revolutionary set of cube gimmicks that have redefined an entire genre of magic, but they have also manufactured some of the finest magic gimmicks ever produced. At the time of writing, Henry has just released the Venom Cube which is the latest evolution of the matching cube plot. It is being hailed by magicians across the world as the perfect method for a routine that so many others have attempted. What is even more exciting is that Henry is not slowing down. We ask what the future has in store, both for him, and for the Rubik's Dream brand.

“The most exciting things are still to come”, he grins, and we laugh. And we believe him...

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MASTER CLASS

2 OUT OF 3 WILL

Simon Caine

(Extracted, with permission, from Abstractions, the lecture notes of Simon Caine.

See a review in issue 85, p.48)

The performer explains that he and the participant are about to play three rounds of Which Hand?, but that he is confident that he will be able to influence the outcome, even offering the participant a prize should they win.

A small ball of rolled up paper is hidden in either of the performer's hands, and three times the participant tries to find the object. Regardless of the participant's choices, they are left with indisputable proof that the performer knew what would happen all along.

SET-UP

You need to prepare two 'outs'. Take a business card and write on the blank back the following: "Congratulations on winning all three rounds. I KNEW you couldn't be influenced! ;)" Place this card into an otherwise empty wallet.

Now tear out a small sheet of paper from a notebook, and write (including the quotation marks): "I will win two games out of three!" Screw this up into a small ball, and place this into a pocket. This is the small object you will be playing the games of Which Hand? with.

WORKING

1 After you introduce yourself to the group, place the not-quite-empty wallet on the table and explain the game.

2 "I'd like to play a little game with one of you, but fair warning, I will be trying to influence you. In fact, I think I know exactly what will happen, so if you win, you get a prize. Sound good? Excellent, so it's very simple: I'm going to hide a ball of paper in one of my hands,

and you get to guess where it is. If you get it right, you win, if not, I win. We'll play the best of three."

3 Take out the ball of paper, place it behind your back, and play the game. Whatever happens from here onwards you are covered, so you can really wring as much out of the game as possible with some fun pseudo-influence statements: "Totally free choice, just choose whichever hand feels **right** to you". (If they won the previous round) "Don't worry, I **left** you win that one." "Ok, just one game **left**." Hopefully you get the idea. Most of the group should pick up on these very obvious statements, and they get a bit of a laugh seeing if the participant 'falls' for them or not.

4 It's worth mentioning at this point, that although the participant can technically lose the game, it's very important not to frame this as a serious confrontational challenge, especially if this effect is your first interaction with a group. It should be kept light and fun. You can also involve the group by asking other people which hand they would

choose, which can generate some interesting moments. You have a great deal of space to have fun during each round, covered as you are by your outs.

5 At the conclusion there are only four outcomes to the game: You win all three games: in this case, you have no need for either prediction, the outcome speaks for itself because you stated at the outset that you would influence them.

You win two games: open up the paper ball, and read what you have written on it aloud yourself. "I (the performer) will win two games out of three."

You win one game: in other words, the participant wins two out of three.

Remind the participant that they get a prize for winning, and offer them the paper ball, stating, "This is for you, and there is something on there for you to say." The participant will read the prediction as if it refers to them, "I (the participant) will win two games out of three."

You lose all three games: Remind the participant that they get a prize, and suggest that they can have whatever they want from inside your wallet. Gesture for them to open it, and of course the only thing they will find is your prediction. The wording on the prediction often gets a laugh, since at this point the participant feels like they got one over on you by resisting your influence, but you now prove that you knew they would do that.

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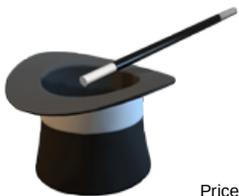
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MORGAN MAN OF STEEL! STREBLER

For more than the last decade, Morgan Strebler has been touring the world with his illusion show, and he has performed in Las Vegas for eight years. From largescale illusion shows to mind-boggling PsychoKinetic close-up magic on TV shows around the globe, he really is a one-man magic Tsunami! Graham Hey asks the questions

We meet for a coffee at the Blackpool Convention, where the instantly likeable fellow begins by telling me that he grew up as an only child in a small Midwest community of about 17,000 population. “My dad was an entrepreneur and my mother worked in a state government position,” says Morgan. “I loved the outdoors, swimming, fishing, biking... the things that most kids enjoy. But, I always was very creative and absolutely fascinated by magic, entertaining, and performing!”

You started performing very young – what sort of stuff did you do at first? And who were the magicians that first inspired you? “In the early stages of my career evolution, I utilised the simple props typically contained in a beginner’s magic kit.” He tells me that seeing his first live magic performance left an indelible impression on his mind and sealed his decision to be a professional magician. Says Morgan, “I was so fortunate to witness the artistry of the legendary Harry Blackstone, Jr. His iconic floating light bulb went right past my face. I was totally hooked... and mesmerised!

“Several years later, I witnessed David Cooperfield’s iconic artistry in Las Vegas. His performance ensured big illusions would always be a key part of my repertoire.

Shortly after seeing his show, I met my first magic mentor, Jeanie Williams. She had a huge number of stage props and illusions, and she let me use them all! More importantly, she taught me how to present them on stage with seamless choreography, classic techniques, and body language. And, her mantra stuck with me... ‘Always entertain your audience!’”

But Morgan’s career has been much more than skillful magic expertise – he is acknowledged as a brilliant marketing man. I ask him if he always had a flair for marketing and publicity? He laughs, “I learned early on, ‘Know what you know and know what you don’t know... and don’t ever mix up the two!’ Keeping that truism in mind helped me avoid many potholes in life - and motivated me to expand my knowledge in as many areas as possible. I also soon realised great talent never seen, enjoyed, and appreciated is wasted. So, I learned about publicity and marketing as much as possible through several mentors on the subjects.”

So what were your strengths as a young performer? And more importantly, what made you different? “As a young performer, I was very fortunate to possess supreme confidence, a strong work ethic, and a boundless desire to learn and grow. These are rare traits to have at an early age. They were instilled in me by Jean Williams and were

absolutely invaluable in helping me hone my craft.

“I was a ‘sponge’, and she filled me with all the finer points of magic and performance. She also taught me to think outside the box and question the norm. In my early 20’s, my second mentor, Franz Harary, came into my life. As an international superstar, Franz used a ‘no holds barred’ approach to teach me everything he knew about illusions, including nuances and techniques very few ever see. To this day, I do Franz’s show when he can’t!”

So, were you an illusionist from the start? “Yes, during my early years as a professional magician, I actually was a large-scale illusionist! To this day, I still perform them and have a custom, multi-million-dollar show filling two tractor trailers. I got into mentalism and unusual, cutting-edge magic when the bottom fell out of illusion shows in Las Vegas. I will always love and be interested in all kinds of magic... and continue to push the envelope by exclusively creating new and exciting areas of the art form.”

I hear you’ve also been doing acting, as well as your magic? “Yes, in recent years, I have acted in several small movie roles and thoroughly enjoyed each gig. Honestly, I would like to do more acting going forward. It is a different way for me to channel my pent-up creativity!”

**I LEARNED EARLY ON, 'KNOW
WHAT YOU KNOW AND KNOW
WHAT YOU DON'T KNOW... AND
DON'T EVER MIX UP THE TWO!'**



QUICKIES WITH MORGAN

What are the key things you need to succeed in the magic world?

Never take "NO" for an answer! And, don't let anyone say you're not good enough to make it in this business! As a kid from a small Midwest farm town, I'm living proof an ordinary guy with a dream, willing to work hard, and refusing to give up can make it.

Off the top of your head, which performers have been inspirational to you?

Wow, there are so many! But, to name a few... David Copperfield, Franz Harary, Peter Turner, and Michael Murray.

Is there an area you'd like to move into which excites you?

This may be a shocker! I would love to give comedy magic a go!!!

Do you still have the booking agency?

No, but I have a great manager, Dan Hodgkinson!

Last great magic you saw live?

Peter Turner was phenomenal at Blackpool in the Ruskin Hotel!

If you had a different occupation, what would it be?

I would want to be a veterinarian. I love and adore animals!

When did you start performing in casinos and nightclubs in Las Vegas? "I started performing there in 2003. Longer term performance engagements included four years at the Bellagio, two years at Caesar's Palace, and another two in a variety show at the Hard Rock."

So where did bending steel come in to this – you created a big impact in this area... Morgan continues once he gets a moment as magic fans stop to say hello as we chat. "Years ago, I met an agent who gave me the following advice, 'If you want to work in Vegas, you gotta have something different from every other magician!' I went home, did some serious soul-searching, and began bending forks in a bunch of different and crazy ways. Gradually, one particular design/technique levitated above the others!" Thousands of hours of practice and refinement later, Morgan finally reaped the reward from the huge investment of his time, talent, and creativity. "The shock and awe of spectators around the world validated I had truly earned the title of the world's greatest psycho-kinetic (PK) metal bender!"

"However, my greatest personal satisfaction and pride came when Uri Geller, the celebrated illusionist, mentalist, and fabled metal bender, said, 'Morgan Strebler is an amazingly skilled performer, his acts look like they are straight out of The Matrix. Morgan is charismatic and uses his talents in a most convincing manner, he is a master in combining his personality with his acts. If you want to be astonished and entertained book him now! He will blow your minds! He bends cutlery better than I do!'"

Have you always been a confident person? "Yes, to a certain extent. But, obviously, my confidence has grown over the years with maturity, experience, and success. On stage, I'm in a zone. It is a zone supported by focus, passion for the art, and desire to entertain my audience. In real life, I'm very goofy and play a lot of jokes on friends and family!"

You conceived a multi-million-dollar illusion show – was that for Vegas? Who were the financial backers? "Yes, my large-scale, custom-made illusion show was built in Las Vegas for Vegas. But, it was also designed for both domestic and international tours in bigger venues and arenas. Always supportive in so many ways, my Dad funded the construction of my illusion shows."

Many people remember all the publicity regarding you and Criss Angel - and your challenge. How did that come about and how was everything resolved? "I didn't like

the fact Criss was constantly using camera tricks and doing stuff no one could perform live. I felt like it was deceptive to viewers and detrimental to the integrity of magic. So, I challenged him. Our feud reached its peak when I got the cover of a magazine entitled, The Man Criss Angel Fears. It went back and forth for a while. Finally, I apologised after realising it's his career, and I was being petty." You have to like Morgan, as he says it how it is, even if it's not in his favour. It's refreshing to interview someone who 'wears their heart on their sleeve', and Morgan reveals that he has bipolar disorder, OCD, and generalised anxiety disorder.

Morgan is constantly travelling both domestically and internationally and his last two tours have taken him to London, Amsterdam, Rome, Paris, Milan, Sydney and New Zealand. "Being away from my family is hard. I am always wishing they were there to see and experience what I do. I've been working globally for the past ten years. And sometimes, I'm on the road up to eight months a year."

What are you working on at the moment? "I'm currently working on a new TV series scheduled to air next year. I've got a new type of show percolating in my head and may seek out another permanent venue in the coming months... maybe back in Las Vegas. That would also allow me to spend more time with my family. My sons won't be young forever."

You've had an amazing career, but are you happy with the way it's worked out so far? He laughs, "I'm very happy with it! Sure, over the years I've made some mistakes. But, they've helped to shape me into the person I am today. And, my career has given me memories, professional relationships, and personal satisfaction beyond my wildest dreams as a kid!"

So how has the magic and entertainment industry changed over the years? "The amount of progress made in our industry is nothing short of mind-boggling! The creativity and talent of this new generation of magicians is amazing.

"Since the industry is constantly evolving, every magic professional must evolve and adapt and grow... or one day be left behind. I think all of these changes are driven by the entertainment appetites and preferences of a bigger and more sophisticated group of magic fans. And, per my personal experience, the next generation of young, technologically-savvy magic fans will be the largest and most demanding ever!"



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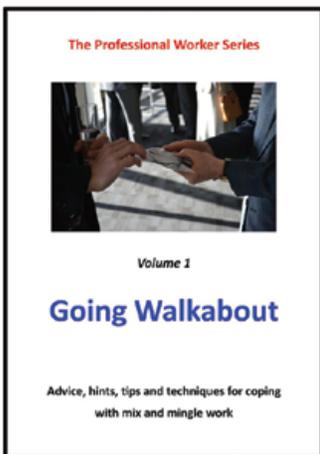
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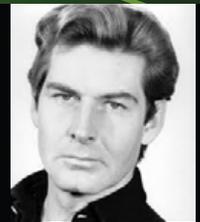
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Says Shawn, "I could have listed so many other great magicians and their attributes but the list would never end. Some of the names may not be known to all Magicseen readers, but I had the opportunity to meet all of them and they each gave me the same gift, their time."



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'HEAT is the best, it's going into my new show' - Luke Jermay

"This is SO MUCH fun to perform. I've been using HEAT at the IVY during drinks and it gets an unbelievable reaction. BE WARNED: As the spectator starts freaking out, the whole room stops to watch. This starts off a close-up effect, but very quickly turns into a 'stage' effect", as it grabs everyone's attention! This is a great closer to any walk-around session!" - Dominic Reyes

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PUTTING OUT THE FIRES

How To Prevent Magic Burnout

BY DOMINIC REYES



WE'VE ALL SEEN IT HAPPEN...

You introduce a friend to the fascinating world of magic tricks, and they get HOOKED. Suddenly, they're pulling out a deck of cards everywhere you go. They're practising their double lifts on the bus, perfecting their coin vanishes at work, and busting out their favourite tricks on everyone they meet.

'There's no rush,' you tell them. 'You'll burn out!' But they don't seem to notice. They carry on practising magic fanatically... until a few months down the line, they quit.

This is a common—and worrying—occurrence that happens ALL the time.

People are introduced to the hobby and fall in love at first sight. They stock up on all the equipment they need, and get going. But it all becomes too much for them, and life gets in the way.

In fact, statistics from our research at the Merchant of Magic have shown that almost

70% of total beginners drift away from learning magic within 6 months of ordering their first proper magic trick, book or DVD. The remaining magicians tend to stay studying magic long term (5 years+).

So the question becomes: how do we keep ourselves interested in magic for the first 6 months and beyond without getting 'burnt out'?

Here are four of the most common mistakes that lead to this problem, and the steps you can take to prevent them from happening to you (or someone you know).

MISTAKE NO. 1 Getting too caught up in the big picture

Something that can be overwhelming for new magicians (and cause them to quit) is becoming too obsessed with perfecting their sleight of hand. They might watch a performance by a great card mechanic like Richard Turner, and allow themselves to think 'I'll never be that good'.

Some magicians are SO good at what they do that it can be intimidating for new magicians; they're struggling to make ONE card vanish while other magicians are making TWENTY cards vanish.

I know that this is something I personally found difficult. I would look at all the complex sleights and moves and get frustrated that I was still stuck on more basic ones. Your brain tempts you into thinking you'll never be good enough—so you should just give up.

The key to avoiding this magic burnout is taking it one step at a time.

If you want to be able to vanish ten cards at once, don't make that your initial goal. Make your initial goal vanishing ONE card—something much more achievable. Once you've got one card down, bump your goal up to TWO cards. Then, make your next goal THREE cards, and so on until you hit your goal of ten.

Breaking your goals down into manageable steps is a great practice for not only magic, but

THERE'S NO QUICKER WAY TO GET BORED WITH DOING MAGIC THAN PERFORMING TO THE SAME CROWD EVERY TIME. IT'S GOING TO TAKE THE EXCITEMENT OUT OF MAGIC FOR BOTH YOU AND THE AUDIENCE.

life as a whole. It will help you avoid becoming overwhelmed by the 'bigger picture' and focus on making incremental progress.

MISTAKE NO.2

Learning too many magic tricks without perfecting the ones you know

This is another HUGE mistake, and the solution will not only prevent you getting burnt out, but save you a whole bunch of money on magic too. You see, when somebody first gets into magic, they might learn a simple card trick. Once they've finished learning it, they try another one. And another one. Before you know it, they start buying tricks. They see something that looks cool, so they buy it. Before it's even arrived in the mail, they buy another one.

They learn tricks after trick, but they don't ever stop to PERFECT them. So eventually they end up with a whole pile of magic tricks they don't really know how to do. They have so much magic that they forget how each trick works.

Guess how this makes them feel?

Overwhelmed.

Yep, that key word again. It leads to magic burnout every time..

It can be really tempting to buy trick after trick, but the best thing to do would be to focus on ONE trick at a time and master each one. Once (and only once) you've truly mastered each trick can you move onto the next. This will stop you getting swamped with tricks you don't actually need.

Another way to combat this mistake is make sure that you incorporate these tricks into routines that you perform consistently. The more you perform a group of tricks, the more natural they will feel, and you'll master them much faster. Plus, you'll be WAY less likely to forget them.

MISTAKE NO.3

Practice 'binges'

Here's another common mistake we see beginner magicians make a lot. When they discover a new technique or trick, they think

they need to master it straight away. So they might spend a few hours at a time JUST practising one single sleight.

This is basically asking for magic burnout to hit you!

If you practise in 'binges' you'll eventually get tired of doing so, and you'll gradually drift away from magic as a result.

The simple solution is to break your practice sessions up into 'little and often' — maybe 30 minutes a day as a starting point.

MISTAKE NO.4

Performing to the same audience... day in, day out

There's no quicker way to get bored with doing magic than performing to the same crowd EVERY time. It's going to take the excitement out of magic for both you and the audience.

This is unavoidable when you start out learning magic when you only have close friends and family to try your material out on, but as you progress—you really need to start mixing up your audiences.

Performing for new audiences is going to help keep you feeling excited and motivated about your magic as you never know what's in store or the reactions you might get. Each night is a new night to impress and amaze—you get to experience that 'WOW' moment a spectator has when they see great magic for the first time. And that's a great feeling.

SO, IN CONCLUSION:

- Don't stress about perfecting your magic right away. Break your goals down into manageable steps and tackle them one by one.
- Focus on choosing ONE trick and mastering it before you move onto the next one.
- Practise 'little and often' rather than in huge chunks.
- Vary your audiences to keep things exciting.

To read further blogs such as this one on a wide variety of topics from Merchant Of Magic, go to <http://blog.magicshop.co.uk>



SHAWN FARQUHAR LECTURE

Bradford Magic Circle

We know how brilliant Shawn Farquhar is at performing, but how is he at lecturing? Well, there was a decent turn-out in Bradford for a Friday night lecture where Shawn demonstrated and revealed some brilliant effects for people of differing skill levels.

He performed his sensational ACAAN from a shuffled deck – a truly brilliant effect and was honest in his opinion of how long it would take members to master. It was an amazingly devious method. Another effect which had maximum impact was his DVD revelation. He showed a 'blank' DVD disc and placed it into a DVD box. He then showed a selection of Movie cards and a spectator was asked to call stop wherever they wished. A genuinely free choice. The spectator stopped on the movie Star Wars – he opened the DVD box – and now the DVD disc was printed with the Star Wars label! This devilishly clever, but simple method would be a great marketed item – but guess what – Shawn just gave the idea away. This perhaps summed up the evening.

A great selection of fabulous effects where selling them was not the priority – in fact Shawn hardly brought any items with him, yet he quite happily shared his ideas and thoughts with the appreciative members. He has such an enthusiastic demeanor and his explanations and tips were fabulous - from easy, cool forces to sleights and quirky production effects all contributed to make a genuine five-star experience!

A fabulous evening was had by all!
Graham Hey



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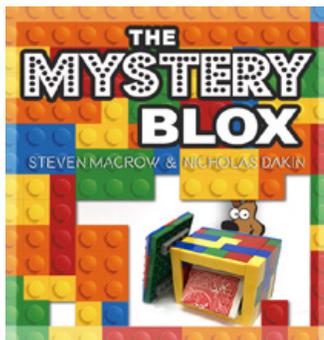
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WE TAKE A LOOK AT

WHAT'S HOT

and what's not!



THE MYSTERY BLOX

Steven Macrow and Nicholas Dakin

Available from:
www.propdog.co.uk
Price: £49.99

Many years ago I bought a John Kennedy Mystery Box, the original wooden box inside which a folded signed card appeared to magically arrive. The box was cleverly gimmicked and examinable at the end of the trick and I used it in my close up work for a few years.

Since that time there have been several attempts to improve and/or change the original concept, including a number of clever transparent box versions. But now, PropDog are offering yet another variant, this time featuring a box made from Lego bricks!

The advantage of constructing the box from Lego is twofold. Firstly, Lego bricks are universally recognised, as anyone who has children will at some stage no doubt have boxes full of the bricks at home. So the bricks are automatically above suspicion.

The second plus point is that the box is constructed in front of the spectators as the four pre-created sides are openly clipped into the base and the lid is then placed on. When a folded playing card then appears inside moments later, it seems all the more impossible because of the fact that the box was constructed in full view.

The 30 minute online instructional video shows Dave Bonsall from PropDog demonstrating the effect and then carefully going through everything you need to do to construct your box from the loose pieces that he supplies. One of the box sides, where the gimmick is sited, is already made for you, as is the special lid. So your first one-off task is to make up the other three sides of the box. Once these are put together you will only have to clip them into the base each time you perform.

You are also supplied with extra raw materials to make additional gimmicks. On the video Dave explains how this is done in great detail and although you may not need this straight away, in the fullness of time it may be necessary to construct a new gimmick if the original gets damaged or dirty.

Dave also goes through a standard routine to use the box with - the ability to do a Mercury Fold of the signed card would be necessary if you want to do the cleanest effect.

Although the entire box is not examinable, the fact that it is put together very openly in front of the spectators and can be clearly shown to be empty right up until

the lid is placed on, more than makes up for it. At the end of the trick you can break the box down into its six pieces again which is not only disarming, but which also makes it practical to drop into a pocket. For this reason, the routine will work in walkabout or at tables as there is no reset and it is easy to carry around.

A lot of thought has gone into the design and manufacture of The Mystery Blox and I think that if you are looking for a highly portable and novel version of the John

Kennedy original, this will serve the purpose very well. **ML**

WHAT'S HOT: innocent looking, novel prop that works well and is extremely practical for working performers
WHAT'S NOT: if you can't or don't want to risk a Mercury Fold you will need to routine the effect so that you can fold the card more easily, such as behind your back
RATING: 80%



CONNECT THE DOTS

Jamie Daws

Available from:
www.jamiedaws.co.uk
Price: £40

Connect the Dots is a collection of 10 brilliant routines from the mind of Jamie Daws.

I love Jamie's thinking. There really are some great routines in this 100 page soft-backed book. I'm not sure I would perform every effect but I'm going to give the majority of them my full attention.

The effects range from a Sharpie suspension, DIY peek envelope,

PK touch, PK Whisper and PIN revelation to name just a few.

QR codes are printed at the start of each effect should you wish to watch Jamie perform.

The book is nicely designed although I did find it a little hard to read at times as most of the text is written in capital letters. Hidden clues within the book allow you access to two extra routines if you 'Connect The Dots' should you be clever enough to figure them out.

This may not be the largest of books but it's definitely full of gold and worth every penny of its cover price. You won't be disappointed! **PS**

WHAT'S HOT: Collection of brilliant effects to get stuck into.
WHAT'S NOT: A little hard to read due to being typeset in capital letters
RATING: 85%



AMAZECUPS

Danny Orleans

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

Price: £18.00

AmazeCups comprises of three gold coloured plastic cups measuring 6cm high and 5cm in diameter. The stacked cups can be shown one at a time to be genuinely empty, and then moments later one of the cups can be shown to contain coins, or confetti, or rice, or salt, or...well, basically anything that will fit inside. The method is simple in concept and the gimmick supplied is totally invisible at the conclusion of the trick, even though nothing needs to be stolen away. However, you do have to create some cover with your hand at the outset of the trick, and so if you have small hands, you may find you have some difficulty using this prop.

This effect is part of Vanishing Inc's AmazeKids range, which I assume from the name contains effects suitable for children's shows. The limited plot for this set of cups (basically there is only one brief trick you can do with them - show the cups empty and produce the contents) means that it would be hard to make any sort of routine of interest to a kid show audience out of it. In which case, I'm not altogether sure who this trick will appeal to and where it might be used.

On the packaging it states that AmazeCups is 'great for close-up, platform or stage'. Well, it's certainly not suitable for commercial close up, although you could present it in a close up show if you have somewhere to store the stack of cups out of sight before you begin. For platform and especially stage I would think that the cups are rather small and the

amount of substance that can be produced from them is too little to be visible, or to look in any way impressive from a distance.

When I first looked at and handled the cups I thought perhaps this was a trick designed for child magicians just starting out. The plastic cups themselves remind one of the sort of cups supplied for the cups and balls in mass marketed magic sets. But as I mentioned above, you need an adult sized hand in order to work the effect, and a child's hand would be too small, so unfortunately I don't think the trick is even suitable for this purpose.

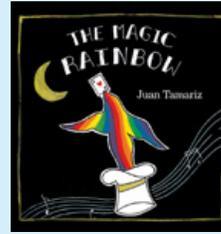
The instructions come in the form of a 5 minute online video in which Danny Orleans painstakingly goes through the very simple handling. You may not think that a 5 minute video is that much, but actually it's really way more than is needed. Half a page of A4 written instructions with a single line drawing would have given as much as Danny's slightly laboured explanation, to be honest.

So, to sum up, there's nothing wrong with this in that the method is practical, the gimmick is well made, and the instructions explain everything that you need to know. The trouble is, I feel that this is a principle looking for a better trick, as the one supplied is massively underwhelming, and it is hard to imagine anyone performing this anywhere in earnest. I suspect that if you buy this it will be one of those novelties that will find a place in the back of your magic cupboard next to the pile of other purchases that also seemed like a good idea at the time. **ML**

WHAT'S HOT: cups are well made and allow you to perform the effect without sleight of hand

WHAT'S HOT: the plot is one dimensional and not that interesting, the video is total overkill, and the price is quite high for the use that it is likely to be to you

RATING: 38%



THE MAGIC RAINBOW

Juan Tamariz

Hard back with dustjacket, 594 pages

Available from YFD

Price £125

Juan Tamariz is an extraordinary artiste. If you have only seen short video clips of him being manic and playing his invisible violin you may have classified him as "zany". If you have experienced a live performance it is likely that you were transported to that elevated state that he terms "The Magic Rainbow".

He is a national star in Spain and highly regarded in the magic world but only parts of his thinking on presentation and plot construction has been available in English (notably *The Five Points In Magic* and *The Magic Way*). We have had to wait a long time for his magnum opus to be beautifully translated by Rafael Benatar.

Juan's language and imagery are highly poetic and metaphorical and this could be a barrier to Anglo Saxon, no nonsense readers! Rest assured though that while some sections do fly and soar, giving insight to the author's visionary inner world, the majority of the book presents complex ideas methodically and in a clear, well structured manner.

Starting with a detailed analysis of the experience of magic he moves on to explore the deep appeal of classic plots, proposing that they link to universal human longings. This theme is explored in an appendix with suggested symbolism for well known card magic.

At the heart of the book is the spectator's experience of magic, the initial starbust impact of

the effect followed by a long and ever widening tail of vivid memory carried afterwards – a phenomenon he calls "The Comet Effect". The book sets out how that memory can be enhanced, describing how the recording and transfer of experiences into long term memory can be influenced, including erasure and creation of false memories.

The "curve of interest" is a diagram plotting the level of audience interest as time unfolds, the aim being to build interest steadily to the magical climax followed by an enjoyable resolution. All aspects are explored, from simple things that interfere (unnecessary process, poor visibility), through to presentational techniques that elevate the curve. It is typical of the thoroughness of the book that under the topic of "Pauses", their length, nature and impact are discussed in detail at each stage of a trick's presentation – including before, during and after the climax.

The dangers and opportunities of comedy in magic are explored in detail, in particular the impact on the curve of interest. Similar consideration is given to the role of drama and storytelling. The final substantial section describes the thinking that goes into constructing a magic act of different lengths. Interwoven throughout the book are shorter essays and observations that are all intriguing and inspiring.

This book will give you an insight into the thinking of one of magic's greatest living artistes, open whole new ways of seeing our art and also give some very practical pointers to improving performance. **CP**

WHAT'S HOT: a clear and thorough exposition of many aspects of the art of performing magic from one of our greatest living performers. Beautifully translated. Many new and exciting ideas

WHAT'S NOT: some soaring metaphorical passages may jar with less poetic readers

RATING: 95%



EL HILO

Javi Benitez

Available from:
www.ellusionist.com

Price: £40.00

The Gypsy Thread is a wonderful piece of close up magic 'theatre' and in the right hands it can create both a strong magic effect and a memorable magic moment for the spectators. You only have to watch the late Eugene Burger and his masterful presentation to see how this simple effect can be built up into a minor miracle.

Spanish magician Javi Benitez has taken this classic of close up and by dint of some changes in presentational emphasis and a careful choreographing of the moves, created a version in which the impression is given that a spectator does everything!

A spectator rips the thread into lots of small pieces and lays them all out over the table. This enables everyone to see that the length of thread has been completely destroyed. The helper then collects the pieces up and rolls them into a ball which is placed in full view on the table. Showing his hands genuinely empty (and they really are), the performer picks up the ball and teases out one end of the thread package. The spectator takes this and when he pulls, the thread is seen to be completely restored.

Performed exactly as Javi suggests, this is a very strong handling, but he then has added a further embellishment, in which the magician balls up the thread again and holding it between his finger and thumb, crushes it so

that the thread visibly disintegrates completely into a white dusty powder which pours over the table top.

So, plus point first. Javi has worked out the handling very carefully and has created a presentation that will convince the spectators that the performer plays no substantial part in making the trick work. The audience will 'remember' that a spectator broke the thread, rolled it up into a ball, and then pulled it back open to reveal the restoration. This is very good. If you watch any of the video dems of Javi performing the trick, you will see how convincing this is.

The extra ending with the thread turning to dust I didn't like at all. To me it felt like an unnecessary distraction from the audience being allowed to enjoy the strength of the main part of the routine. It was noticeable to me on the dem where he is performing to lay people outside a cafe or restaurant, that their applause was very strong and enthusiastic after the restoration, but much less so when the thread was crumbled - it looked like they didn't understand why this afterthought was being done, and I agree with them. I think it dilutes the impact of the first part of the trick by creating a messy and unnecessary extra finish.

If you want to perform the second phase of the routine, you will need to prepare some 'balls' from the materials supplied. There are enough to last for 24 performances. However, the crumbling creates a mess on the table and all over your fingers. This is not good when you are supposed to be using this effect when table hopping. Javi does suggest crumbling the powder

onto a handkerchief and then picking it up, but you still have to get rid of the debris before you can repeat it, which makes the routine far less practical for a commercial setting.

You are supplied with enough thread to perform the trick multiple times and the instructions are supplied via an online video which is broken down into sections showing three dems, the materials, the set up, and the full handling. As far as I could see, there is no way to download and keep the video footage, so you are actually only buying access to the instructions, something which I always worry is unfair to the customer as the supplier can 'switch off' the video at any point they like in the future leaving the customer with no video reference.

If you like the Gypsy Thread as an effect, and you want to perform a clean handling at tables (it won't work for walkaround circumstances), I would certainly consider learning and performing

the main part of this routine, because Javi's thinking in terms of the presentation and handling is excellent. Once you have watched Javi's explanation, don't feel disappointed that it is perhaps not as radical a departure from previous versions as you might have imagined, instead just go back and watch one of the dems again and remind yourself of how strongly this plays. **ML**

WHAT'S HOT: the routing and presentational emphasis is excellent, and the main part of the trick is suitable for commercial work as long as there is a table the spectator can lay the pieces out on

WHAT'S NOT: the extra ending is a fuss and I think clutters the purity and strength of the first part of the trick.

The video should either have been downloadable or a DVD supplied, especially at the price asked

RATING: 65%



EXPERT PHONE TECHNIQUE

Robert Ramirez

Available from
www.robrammagic.com

Price: £30/\$40

Late on the Sunday night of this year's Blackpool Magic Convention I had the pleasure of seeing some amazing iPhone magic performed by Robert Ramirez in the Ruskin Hotel. I had no idea how he was doing the things he was showing us I just knew I wanted to learn them. Now for the first time Robert is offering four of his routines to the masses on this download release.

Effect one: A spectator types a number into a phone's calculator and multiplies it several times. One

digit from the total is memorised. You instantly know the number they are thinking of.

Effect two: Four 7s are typed into the calculator. Using just your fingers you are able to wipe off the digits one by one. This is brilliant!!

Effect three: Using the stopwatch on a phone you find 3 chosen cards. When the timer is stopped the cards match the exact time, even down to the milliseconds.

Effect four: A friend is called on the phone who is able to tell which card has been selected 3 times under impossible conditions.

I love this kind of magic. The download is well explained and the effects are easy to do. If you like the look of the trailer then I would recommend you click the buy button! **PS**

WHAT'S HOT: brilliant routines using mobile phones

WHAT'S NOT: Some of the effects only work on an iPhone

RATING: 80%



GUARANTEED WIN

Andy Smith

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

Price: £14.99

At that magic moment of anticipation when you eagerly open the new product that's dropped through your letterbox, there are three eventualities that make my heart sink. One is a card thing for which you get a length of elastic thread or magnets; another is a card with sticky stuff on it; the third is a DVD tutorial.

So it was with a heavy heart that I opened Guaranteed Win, Andy Smith's (of Alakazam) first release, to find two of these three awaiting me. Sure enough the DVD was faulty and froze a couple of times, but eventually I managed to watch

all 20 minutes of the explanation. This is primarily a small packet trick, although it also uses a deck. Now I bow to no one in my liking for packet tricks, I love playing with them and seeing what the originator has managed to pack into a four card packet. But it is increasingly challenging for an originator to come up with a packet trick that is not derivative – usually highly so. As you work through it the thought springs unbidden into your mind that something similar has been written about or released before.

It is portrayed as easy to do, which implies a semi-automatic beginner's trick, but this is rather disingenuous. You will find yourself including a DL, Mirage Count, Flustration Count, force and half-pass or KM Move (which amounts to the same thing). The originator seems very comfortable with handling a deck of cards, so I infer that he is a card enthusiast, but the designation of 'easy to do' is a relative term that exists in the eye of the beholder.

There's a lot of handling going on here, so this isn't an effect where the gimmicked cards do the work for you. It will be within the capability of anyone familiar with card work, but I wouldn't give this to a beginner, or a punter who favours

the self-working magic that is all the rage right now.

As with all the best packet tricks, Andy Smith has managed to pack a lot of effect into a small packet. You show four Jokers pretty freely, and an envelope. Someone picks a card, say a black ten, whereupon the Jokers change to match that card - four 10S. The four cards then become AS, KS, QS, 10S, and when the envelope is opened it reveals an odd backed card that completes the royal flush in Spades. So this is a cross between a Wild Card and a Poker Deal.

My DVD froze three times (in different places) and don't you think these silver discs are starting to seem positively antediluvian? It's very clearly explained, in a double-act between Andy Smith and Think Nguyen. It's Alakazam, so the production values are superb. And if you register your purchase on the Alakazam site, as always you gain access to any follow-ups or different handlings Andy Smith or his purchasers come up with.

I had mixed feelings about this. The successive changes certainly look magical, and I'm sure it will have a spectator taken aback. But that comes at a cost. There is a

lot of handling going on, and the envelope seemed not to integrate into the action smoothly. Why a card in an envelope? It's certainly not a prediction. And why does it sport an odd coloured back?

The whole thing smacks to me of another packet trick developed by a card enthusiast, who comes up with a variant of a variation of... something else. I wanted to like it more than I ended up doing, because that succession of changes is pleasing to the eye. I just think it's a long and winding road to get there. **BG**

WHAT'S HOT: the succession of changes is a crowd-pleaser. Introducing a gimmick card helps remove what would otherwise be a rather move-heavy sequence. And it's priced as a plaything.

WHAT'S NOT: it's nevertheless a little heavy-handed in the sequence of moves required. That half-pass grates. As Andy Smith already gave into the temptation to employ gimmicked cards to ease the action, perhaps another gimmick (or reworked handling) would replace this, the weakest spot in the entire handling?

RATING: 66%



pass that is invisible from an angle that is slightly above and just to the right of the performer. This is achieved by a motion that keeps both packets parallel to each other and is covered by a forward and backward squaring motion.

The video starts with an overview of the principles Zee followed in developing the pass, in particular the desire to avoid tension and tell tale flashes. This resulted in a slower smoother execution. The explanation is ultimately quite clear and the camera work good.

Any diligent student of the pass will have encountered the problems with flashing that Zee outlines and his approach to soften and slow the action, rather than depending on speed, is sound. This particular solution, of keeping the packets parallel to each other solves some angle problems but creates others.

The printed DVD cover wisely describes the performance angle as 90 degrees.

The accompanying PDF, most practically downloaded via a QR code, is written in a highly informal blogging style and does not really add much to the video. **CP**

WHAT'S HOT: soft, gentle pass, beautifully executed, invisible from a specific viewpoint. Ideal for video performance

WHAT'S NOT: poor angles

RATING: 45%

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