

Finger Magic

Ordinary objects used for extraordinary magic
by Jimmy Fingers

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1. Linking Golf Tees, and pen caps

When I took up Golf, of course, slow play ahead of me was unbearable, so I started fooling around with golf tees, and, hey, guess what happened? I put together a complete work around for the wooden match sticks penetration.

Now, I've heard some debate for a long time about the way to do the match stick penetration. One school, the guys who always have sweaty hands, and never a Kleenex when they should have one, says that the match sticks just stick to your finger or thumb with the moisture(?) that's there.

The other school of thought revolves around the fact that their hands will never be moist and supple enough to get a match stick to adhere to their fingers. So they use switching of the match sticks position between the fore and middle fingers to accomplish the key ring effect used in Linking Rings.

One other school of thought, or preschool of thought, says the match can be pinched in between the nail and the thumb. But they are probably doing the match catch and balance gag.

My preference was the finger switching method, because of my lack of control of the stationary end of the match in the moisture sticking method.

With golf tees and pen caps, my method gives you the best of both worlds. Undetectable, and absolutely mystifying.

Effect: You start out holding the golf tee between the thumb and last joint of the middle finger, creating a circle that cannot be broken and closed without the other hand helping(?). You take the other hand out of the equation by holding a tee between that hand's forefinger and thumb in the same manner. The two circles are penetrated visibly, and at will, a la Linking Rings. The final unlinking is done precisely through the centers of the tees, visibly, with no cover of any kind, including the hands.

Method: The wide, ball holding end of the golf tee, the bowl, is pressed against the last joint of the middle finger, and the point is against the thumb. The other hand is also set up this way, and the game begins with these loops linked, for learning purposes. The best way to present this is with the other fingers open medium wide. Pinch the sides of the forefinger and ring finger around the head of the golf tee in one of your hands. This keeps the bowl pressed against the middle finger, allowing you to open a stable gap between the pointed tip of the golf tee and the thumb. The control that this position allows you makes it possible to do the linking and unlinking of the circles at lightning fast speeds. Link and unlink at will. You'll have fun playing with this one while looking in the mirror. The final pass through is made with the spectators looking over your right shoulder. The left hand tee is held horizontally, and the right hand's tee is held vertically. Position the centers of the tees bisecting each other while linked. The opening of the right hand's tee and subsequent pull through the other tee creates a flip stick style of return to the thumb of the right hand's tee, and the illusion is undetectable.

You can also let the spectator hold one of the tees between his thumb and middle finger. This is cool.

I am the first person to say don't be the geek attending a party as a guest carrying in your own golf tees, or deck³ of cards, or rubber bands. The whole idea of many of the tricks in this book is to give you some impromptu stuff that you can entertain with. Leave the dove, rabbits, and disco lighting out in the Yugo.

That's why the golf tee trick works so well with Bic pen caps. Not the caps that you use for the snapper trick. The ones on the "BIC round stic medium USA" pens. They are more squared off at the end, and either say BIC USA in a circle on the end, matching the plug on the butt end, or they have an open, three armed ventilation system. That squared end is your ticket to impromptu heaven.

OH NO!!! You can only find one pen and pen cap? Don't worry. If you have to, you can use a match stick, matchbook, lighter (lit would be kind of geeky), even the pen itself, if you can reach. Do it. This one blows 'em away.

When I first came up with this one, one of my cocky friends said, "Oh, that's in Tarbell..." The offer of the \$500 bet shut him up real quick. It's no wonder that magicians don't go to magic club meetings. It's the REAL magicians who are REALLY capable of coming up with original new stuff that they want there at the meeting. The local guy could've never come up with that. The second that the guy from out of town wants to lecture, they'll pay him all of YOUR dues to come show a bunch of card tricks. Of course, he's better than you, because he's from out of town.

If you are creative, don't let these club guys browbeat you. You'll always have young magicians out there that will love the positive attitude that you have toward their fresh outlook on magic. Whatever you come up with, even if you came up with something that you find has already been published, is still great. Remember, the guy who invented it before you got it published somewhere.

Don't let the fact that you weren't the first to come up with the effect discourage your creativity. It's probably not your first creative idea, and it certainly won't be your last. Just try to be well read enough to not embarrass yourself by republishing without crediting. The catch-22 here is that if you read and study too much magic, it gets you to subconsciously think that everything is already out there, and you get overwhelmed by the great thinkers and ideas. You begin to think that there's nothing new under the sun. That's bull. Guys who think that way are everywhere. Don't let them rain on your artistic parade. Be different, and train yourself to always look for the other way to accomplish something. You might begin accomplishing different and better things.

2. Silk handkerchief through Mic Stand, without a reel

Effect: Magician holds handkerchief by diagonal corners in both hands. He pulls the handkerchief taut around mic stand, wand or cane held at both arms length by spectator, or any solid long vertical object. After two tries, on the third try, the silk melts straight through the wand, as if it were reel magic.

Method: Magician holds handkerchief by diagonal corners in both hands. He pulls the handkerchief taut around mic stand, wand or cane held at both arms length by spectator, or any solid long vertical object. On each try, the magician tosses the silk forward (the windup), away from the stand and then attempts to pull the handkerchief toward him, each time pulling the center of the silk back against the mic stand. On the third try, the magician reaches a little further forward past the solid wand during the windup. On this reach, the hands come almost close enough to each other to touch, but only close enough for the next transfer of the right hand's corner. Under the cover of the excess center of the silk being tossed forward, the corner of the silk being held by the right hand is clipped by the left hand's middle and ring fingers, and let go of by the right hand, with the left hand still holding the corner it was holding previously. As the hands pull back to complete the penetration, both hands pass the wand, and immediately upon clearing the wand, the right hand regains possession of the original

corner that it had upon the initial two false attempts. If this is done smoothly, and without hesitation, and with lots of practice, the effect is indistinguishable from the beautiful Silk through Mic Stand that uses a reel. Please note, that the exact corner does not ever have to be grabbed, coming or going. The mass of the silk, along with the speed of the pull through, will cover the penetration. After the pass through is complete, bring the hands apart, being very careful not to pull the corner out of either hand. Touch and finesse are the keys to this beautiful, close up or stage miracle. 4

Bundled with my improvement on Tommy Dowd's silk penetration, and Tarbell's quick knot tie, these three tricks become a penetration off of the wand (Tommy Dowd's), a penetration through the wand (this effect), and a quick tie ending up back on the wand.

This trick originated at some magic meetings in Las Vegas in 1994. I was working on the effect, attempting to transfer the corner after I had cleared the wand, being held by a local amateur. The amateur, whose name escapes me after all this time, made some suggestions and, with the right brainstorming, we came up with this piece. Never underestimate the power of jamming with someone who doesn't know the magic libraries inside and out. I'm not just referring to him, but also myself. An objective layman or hobbyist is the magician's most powerful tool for improvement. Sometimes our objectivity clouds our ability to advance any further than the nose that we are looking down.

3. The improved Tommy Dowd's Silk Penetration

One of my favorite silk tricks in the Tarbell system is the Tommy Dowd Silk Penetration. I wish the inventors, Tommy Dowd and Stuart Robson, could see my improvement on the presentation and handling.

The Tarbell system shows the 24 inch square silk being double knot-tied around a piece of rope held vertically, clenched between the teeth and the other end under the foot. I will present this effect while using a mic stand instead of a rope. You'll be able to understand my pronunciation much better. I will not draw the pictures or teach you the trick here, since it is in Tarbell. I encourage you to peek at a copy of Tarbell 1 (or, preferably, an original). You'll find this trick in the "Knotty Silks" section in Volume 1, Lesson 18 (page 382 in my issue from 1941 by Tannen's).

After you have learned the trick, you'll notice that the move pulling end A around the front an extra time, in figure 4, looks very distracting and unnatural.

Would you like to tie that first knot in a way where you don't have to pull end A around the front again?

Here's the secret that I stumbled upon after days of trial and error. Once you get to the point in Fig. 2 where the left hand's fingers clip the silk, you still reach through loop L, in the center, but not from the front of the rope (or mic stand, as we're doing it). You bring the right hand in from behind the rope, to the left of it, and reach through loop L from there. Pull the fake knot tight back around the way you dipped into the loop, pulling your hand and end A out behind the rope. You'll end up skipping figure 4, and tying the second normal knot in front of the rope, as in Fig. 5.

Next, all that's left to do is to pull the handkerchief forward by the two ends (Fig. 7), and you'll have the old timers at a cool magic club asking questions, and the old timers at the political clubs ignoring the fact that you've done a completely revamped, reworked and improved version of an old trick that always had that cheesy extra wraparound. Now, you've got the new, improved version with a sneaky extra work around.

The perfect ending to this masterpiece is the re-penetration completely back through the mic stand by the remaining two knots. That is elsewhere in this book, known as The Gimmick-less/Reel-less Handkerchief Through Mic Stand.

After that, I'll send you to the Tarbell system again, to learn the Speedy Single knot (Volume 1, Lesson 18, Page 367 in my old copy).

The Speedy Single Knot can be used to make the Handkerchief tie back onto the rope or mic stand, finally. The ends of the silk are brought around toward the back, with the silk on the front side of the rope, and the moves for the Speedy Single Knot are executed in back of the rope while thrusting forward, and spinning your whole body around to the front of the rope. This puts the original second knot back into the silk. That was the knot that vanished when you did the Improved Tommy Dowd Silk penetration.

I regret to say that the tying back on of the silk handkerchief after the other two penetrations is kind of a letdown, but the only true perceivable finale, since things must happen logically and often in threes. Please write and let me know if you find another third piece of the puzzle. There's obviously something that I'm overlooking.

4. The Table-less, gimmick-less Chop mug

A few years ago, I presented this to several local Houston magicians, and a few noticed some potential that I just didn't see too clearly. I was working a close-up gig at a place called "The Copper Cup." The owner asked me to come up with some routines with the copper coffee cup holders being used to hold the porcelain inner liners. I brain stormed without the magnet, and I realized, after some playing, that the magnet was not necessary. Neither was the table. Get rid of the paying customers, and three's a charm. But, this one has the potential to win someone a close-up contest at a convention. I don't do much close-up in shows, but this one, with the right patter and climax, could be a real winner for someone who, when working close-up, doesn't have a table, but wants to do a Chop Cup routine. It uses a regular promotional styled mug, or any cup that will fit the hand well in the way described to do the moves below.

Effect: A small ball or wadded up bill is put into the pocket, and made to appear in a cup or mug sitting mouth down on an open hand. Removed again, it returns, passes through the solid bottom, and turns into a surprise large load at the end.

Method: The performer takes a crocheted chop cup ball (magnet not necessary, I even use wadded up dollar bills) out of his pocket, and drops it into the mug, now being held mouth up. He pretends to pour it back out into his left hand (to show the mug empty), But he uses a Bosco palm (pinky retaining the ball into the cup) and brings a previously palmed duplicate ball into view on his left hand. He swings the mug, with the handle around his thumb, back outward and over his hand until the mug hangs off of the right thumb, mouth toward the back and opening upward, yet tilted back. The ball stays in the mug due to inertia (we'll call this the inertia throw), and the other ball, on the left palm, is supposedly placed back into the left pocket, and the cup is swung forward and up, landing on the top of the performer's right hand, mouth down. Of course, the ball is loaded under the mug, and the ball that was supposed to be placed into the pocket is still palmed in the left hand. Magician gestures for the ball to move from the pocket to the mug. The mug is lifted using the right thumb in the handle as a lever, and the ball is seen to be resting on the palm again. Here's where the description gets confusing, so stick with me. The mug, now empty and hanging over the back-right side of the hand, off of the thumb, is swung over the top, but not the same way that you did it to replace the ball on the palm. This time, you're swinging the mug onto the palm sideways, to hide the ball, and to display the empty mug. The ball is poured off of the palm into the left hand. Actually, since the ball that was supposedly put into the pocket was

palmed in the left hand, and the ball in the right hand is palmed, this leaves the mug laying across the palm, the ball, and all four fingers, with the rim of the mouth of the mug running alongside the semicircle formed by the forefinger and thumb. At this point, the thumb is back out of the mug's handle, and the ball in the right palm is hidden by the mug. This position permits the performer to display the empty mug's mouth towards the audience. Without changing the position of the mug in the hand, the mug is brought up to eye level, mouth upward, palm of hand and ball behind the mug. The left hand gives the other, visible ball to a spectator, and the spectator drops the ball into the mug. After a bit of swishing around in the cup, the ball appears to fall through the mug's solid bottom. Of course, the ball in the palm hidden behind the mug is dropped. To get rid of attention on the ball in the mug, inertia throw is executed, without any question that the mug is empty. The left hand ball is palmed while the left hand pretends to place it into the left pocket, and the cycle begins again.

At some point the left hand switches for a larger load, and it is introduced into the mug while transferring the mug to the left hand, and the ball to the right. The small ball is placed in the right pocket, and the load is produced from under the mug.

This routine, when practiced and rehearsed, is a real juggling feat in itself. All of the flinging and throwing, and the overall large motions get a lot of attention, and will give you big marks in the eyes of the audience, who want to see you as having hands quicker than the eye. And yet there are no unnatural moves involved, and the routine is as clean as any table chop cup or lapping routines around. Give it a try and see.

5. Ghost in the Marker

Effect: The magician brings out his business card, and borrows any business card from an audience member. The two business cards and a black Magic Marker are wrapped in a handkerchief, and placed on a table or the floor. A card is chosen, in the magician's favorite method of forcing. The three of clubs is selected(?) and shown to the audience. The magician goes to see if the pen has written anything on the cards, but, obviously, not yet, as the pen rises under the handkerchief and begins to apparently write the number and suit on the two cards. The handkerchief is opened, and the cards and pen are spilled out. The back of one business card has "3" written on it, and the other business card has the club symbol drawn on it, in black marker. The magician and helper at this point trade business cards, and the miracle is complete.

Preparation: Get one of your business cards and, on the blank side of the card, use the black magic marker to draw a black club pip, solid black, and not too perfect, as if you had drawn and filled in the image by hand. Get a sharp pair of scissors and cut out the pip, leaving no white showing. Also, color the edges of the cutout pip so that they are also opaque black. Then, place a tiny, tiny booger of magician's wax to the black side of the pip. Place a larger amount of magician's wax or double sided tape to the white (non-black) side of your card. Press the black side of the pip to the back of one of your ungimmicked business cards that, on the back, you have previously drawn a "3" on (you should barely have enough of that small piece of wax to hold the pip on), and put it somewhere where it won't become stuck to something else, pulling off the pip. Maybe, in a loose jacket pocket.

One way to give the effect of the ghost writing on the business card is to take out a "glorpy" handkerchief, and a magic marker. Borrow a business card of any type from the audience, and press it back to back to your card (do not show the back of your newly gimmicked card; they probably won't think twice if you have just handed out a few previously). Place the back to back cards in the handkerchief with the magic marker, and fold the "glorpy" handkerchief according to its instructions.

Force the 3 of clubs using your favorite method. Execute the glorpy moves to create the effect of a ghost writing the answer to your chosen card, the 3 of clubs. Upon opening the glorpy, the separated cards display the answer

to the chosen card. Your card, now clean and ungimmicked, says "3", and his card displays a pip that really looks drawn onto the card if you have done it right. The obvious thing to do is to trade cards with the audience helper, giving him yours with the "3", and keeping his card and your gimmick pip for a future use.

The obvious beauty of this trick is the really visual nature of the glorpy, and the natural trading at the end of the routine, that actually makes the spectators think that everyone has seen and had every card, sort of like linking rings. The subtle beauty is the fact that the pip will appear as a drawn image on the back of any audience member's card, no matter what color, texture, or transparency.

Please credit Steve Shaw, the greatest mentalist that I have ever seen, with the "Glorpy" usage for the eerie effect of ghost writing. My contribution is the business card handling, preparation, and overall logical outcome. Try it.

6. The impromptu, sleight of hand rising card out of the center of the borrowed deck

This piece is a collaboration of the efforts of myself, Mari Zurbano, and Gary Norsegian. The first time that I saw a pinky card rise done was by David Jones of Houston, Texas, at the various magic shops that he worked in. One of magic's biggest losses came when David found religion, and dropped magic completely for a few years. Now that David is back involved with the art of magic, I have been considering him as the prime candidate for any opening spot as a resident magician here in Houston. There is not a better loved and respected magician in the Houston area, and he has no political affiliations anywhere to impede his ability to book the coolest acts. He has a pure, true love of magic, and always spreads his joy everywhere he goes.

My second recollection of the pinky rise occurred when I was watching Mari perform at an exclusive restaurant in Las Vegas (Yes, there IS one... and no buffet!) Mari is an incredible close up performer, charming and classy broad, and very indicative of her training and mentor ship by Vegas Card man Gary Norsegian. These two (Mari and Gary) have more original touches on card work than all of the card magicians I know combined.

Effect: Any card is freely selected, and returned to the deck. The performer steps back and allows the selected card to rise almost completely out of the deck, before it stops, and falls freely back into the pack.

Method: To learn the rise, the pack is held upright in the right fingertips in the following manner. The cards all face forward, ends of pack up and down, with the right thumb along the left edge of the pack, very near the left top corner of the pack, and the forefinger, middle, and third finger are along the right edge of the pack, all bunched up near the right top corner of the pack. This leaves the pinky free to lift a card inserted at a slight angle, leaving the lower right hand corner of the inserted, chosen card protruding just a bit (about 3 millimeters) so that the pinky being dragged up the right side of the deck can lift the card about half way up out of the pack.

This is where, if memory serves me right, Mari and Gary left off. Mari was making a big circular movement with her arm to cover the rise, sort of like the motion of wiping off a dirty spot on a window that would be about eye level. The move successfully kept you from noticing the pinky movement, not to mention the fact that it disguised the all important spookiness of a card rise.

We put our heads together, and came up with the perfect cover for the pinky. The pinky's movement is covered by pushing, and jutting, the bottoms of the first five or six cards out to the right of the pack. Hey, they were there, and they weren't doing anything.

So, we were getting a rise of about half of the card. But, I wanted more. Usually that attitude gets me in trouble, but I persevered, came up with another addition at the halfway point. This is the perfect added misdirection for the pinky's movement being covered, and it takes away from the card being pushed for too long by the pinky. 8

The snap move: As the right hand is doing all of the dirty work making the card rise, the left hand reaches across the body, up and toward the deck. It comes in with the fingers all bent under and cupped from underneath, in a straight row, and the thumb pointing out to the right. The right hand releases the weight of the cards into the cradling left hand, the lower left hand corner touching down first. This allows the right thumb and the forefinger, middle, and ring finger to let go of the deck. The right hand begins to carry away upward, but the pinky still is wiping the right side of the deck, making the chosen rising card rise up past the halfway mark. As the card begins to expose the lower index, the pinky releases, and the right hand continues upward, another 18 inches. Once the exhibition freezes, and everyone begins to breathe again, the performer snaps his fingers, and the card, in all of its glory, falls back into the deck, almost vanishing as if it has been caught in the act, by witnesses seeing it break laws of nature that it has no right to break. And, according to those witnesses, it has.

7. Pinch Quarter Vanish to open palm exposure-a coin pass

The pinch vanish was one of those tricks that never seemed natural or effective to me. I'm sure it can be done well, but I never liked it until I came up with this extension of the presentation. I find that a quarter works the best, and it works even better if you have somewhere to go immediately after the pass.

Let's assume a right handed preference. The quarter is held in a French drop position, the way you hold for the French drop when the coin flops flat down onto the fingers. This means that the thumb and forefinger are pointing directly to the performer's left. However, since you won't be dropping the quarter, the middle, ring, and pinky fingers are fanned out, spread and open downward. If you begin to go for the pinch vanish by reaching the left hand to close around the coin, you'll cover the coin for the next move. Pinch the quarter, leaving the edge that is against the right forefinger stationary, and allowing the thumb's edge to protrude back into the proximity of the middle and ring fingers. Simultaneously, turn the hand over, pinky up, and thumb down, palm toward the audience. The middle and ring fingers close, grabbing the quarter from the pinch in an edge palmed position. The pinky remains extended, and the forefinger and thumb, being withdrawn from the left hand's loose fist, part just a bit to show themselves empty. You are now pulling your right hand away from the closed left with a seemingly unnatural pose of the right hand. The right hand thumb is pointing downward and to the performer's left, the forefinger upward to the left, and the pinky is also pointing to the upward direction to the left. The right elbow is held upward and out to the right. The middle and ring finger are bent in finger palm position, with the coin edged into the gap between the fingers, but not showing through the seam in these fingers. It's sort of like the Downs palm, but using the middle and ring fingers as the thumb would be used, or similar to the palm being used by David Roth in his routine where he hangs the coins, only, I think that the placement on edge here is different.

Now you may think that the handling of the coin in this pass is cumbersome, contrived, and unnatural. But, use the turning over to pinch while raising the hands higher for the people in the back to see more clearly, execute the pass in front of the eyes, and use the slow take away to emphasize the cleanliness of the placement(?), and, with a well routined get away, the pass is very effective and natural. Also, at this height, in front of your eyes, this pass is even more effective when you look at the left hand, and your eyes are right there looking at the left hand for the spectators to see where they should be looking.

Let me know if you have any improvements or finesses that may help this pass. I think that there are certain times when it will be very handy.

EXTRA! EXTRA! This move is perfect for a cigarette through quarter switch. Have the Johnson coin in your left hand, finger or classic palmed. With the cigarette in your mouth, execute the move while the hands rise upward. After the switch is made, your hands are right in the position to take the cigarette. Grab the cigarette with your thumb under and forefinger on top of the cigarette. You'll be pulling the cigarette away from your mouth in a manner similar to the way a smoker removes the cigarette after he has taken the last drag, and is about to flick the butt into the bushes. This looks so natural that you'd almost think that this move was made for the cigarette through quarter. If the coin is as well covered in this position for you as it is for me, then you can do the rest of the cigarette through quarter straight from this position. The switch back can be Bobo'd from here very easily also.

By the way, why not consider doing burning a hole in a quarter? Have a cigarette sized hole drilled into a quarter, push the cigarette UP through the coin (being held horizontally) to conceal the pre-existing hole. After this happens, just hand the gaffed quarter and cigarette back to them. You have given them a souvenir, cut out a switch, and made some magicians flinch for a few seconds.

EXTRA! EXTRA! EXTRA! I was working on this switch with Bob Gebert, a playwright/screenwriter and magician, and he helped me come up with a cleaner looking, less muddy look for this pinch move. Have the gimmicked quarter already in the right hand, finger palmed ready for the actual Bobo switch. Take the borrowed quarter with the right forefinger and thumb, in position for the Bobo switch. Execute the Bobo switch, dropping the gimmicked coin in the left hand (be careful to give enough left hand finger coverage to obscure a possible backside up landing with the Johnson style-door coin). At this point, you have the borrowed coin pinched between the right forefinger and thumb, hidden behind the cover of the releasing middle, ring and pinky of the right hand. This position has always seemed awkward and inexplicable, until now. You are in a perfect position to finish the original pinch move by curling in the middle and ring fingers, hiding the borrowed coin as described above. You are moving into the cigarette butt flicking position that hides the borrowed coin perfectly, subtly displays the right hand empty(?), and puts you into a much more comfortable position after the Bobo switch. Bob also pointed out that the flow and pace of these moves make for a really convincing, smooth and natural looking action leading up to the miracle.

8. Magnetic Cane/Golf Club suspension

When I was 18, and attending high school in 1982 (you do the math), I was in a drama class that was going over the props in the costume room. Someone brought out a walking cane, and asked me to do something with it. Since changing it into two silk handkerchiefs was out of the question (but, wait...what if...) I began to toy with the cane. After a few days, I found that I could get the middle of the cane to stick to one palm held vertically in front of me. In this state it just froze to my palm, without strings, adhesive, or any outside sources other than gravity.

A few years later, my friend at the magic shop who has read every book in the store, and most other stores, told me that Nate Leipzig had done this piece years before. As the years went by, I had seen no one else do the effect, and when I used it, magicians asked me where I got the effect.

In 1995, I took up golf seriously, and I naturally began to goof off one day with the props. In a matter of minutes of thinking, I could do a full golf show for strangers that I was trying to give an idea of what I do. One of the highlights was the Suspended Golf Club version of the Magnetic Cane. So, here it is.

First, see if you can do this simple task. Take a walking cane with the hook handle on the top end. Find the center point of balance, or fulcrum. with your arm bent at a 90 degree angle, forearm vertical, and your hand bent way back palm upward, balance the center of the cane on your palm. The cane will be about level with

your forehead. Slowly flatten your hand and palm to a horizontal position, facing openly forward to the front. The first few times the cane will roll forward or slide, but as you get used to the hook's counterbalance, the cane will resist rolling off of your palm. Then, as your balance point becomes the flabby part of your palm, at the base of the thumb, you can use that small tilted ridge to bring your hand to an almost vertical position. Learn this position, and then you'll be ready for the impromptu effect that follows. 10

Take a borrowed cane, after having your hands examined for adhesives or wires. Hold the cane horizontally in front of your face in both hands, clenched closed. The hook will be to your right. At this point the right hand, the hand we'll be using for the climax of the trick, is feeling out the position for balance, even though the other hand and the right appear to be both holding the cane firmly. Once you find the balance point, open both vertically held hands slowly. The left hand stays close, but can't actually push on the cane, or it will upset the balance established previously. The left hand is then removed, and wiped on the pants, through the hair, or scratching the temple in amazement. Then both hands return flat, then both grab simultaneously, and with a spinning flourish (longitudinally) the cane is returned to the loaner.

At this point, another flourish is accomplished by turning the hand slightly in the direction of the counter weight, allowing the cane to ominously spin, tip toward the ground, to a position of catching the hook and walking away with it.

Okay, so I didn't actually float the cane, but the effect of the impromptu borrowing of the cane and the closeness to the effect make this one a winner. I always knew there was another use for that hook on the end of the cane, besides pulling me off of the stage.

The golf club is done in the exact same way. Use a wood (not necessarily the material, wood) instead of an iron, for better adhesion due to the weight. Please let me know how this one works out, and keep me updated on your improvements and experiences.

Note: I just heard a few weeks ago that a guy in Florida used to do this one. Please get him to contact me if you know him to get other information on origins and history, because, like the elders at the magic clubs say, "there's no way YOU came up with that..."

Note 2: I've been told by a magician friend of mine, Terrill Mark Kaplan, that the cane piece was used by J.N. Hofzinsler back in the 1800's. Then we found that the Hofzinsler method was using a blond hair for the support.

Note 3: Another magician friend told me that the magnetized cane was actually first done by Nate Leipzig, the Swedish-born American magician and Vaudevillian, in the pre- and early 1900's. There is actual text and film of him doing this piece. Thankfully, it hasn't been lost in time. I think that the golf club variation will guarantee that.

Space travel may create the ability to use the whole aluminum walker. However, when you see a cane being used by the elderly or handicapped, please resist the urge to grab it from them without them being seated already. I don't have any chapters on faith healing.

9. Fire Flyer

I'd like to dedicate this to the person who asked me to come up with it, Mari Zurbano. One of the good things about most of the female magicians that I brainstorm with is that they are more visual, and more interested in what looks cool and attractive than what is going to fool them. Some of my best brainstorming comes from these workouts.

What do you get when you cross coin magic close-up with fire-eating and parlor magic. You get Fire Flyer, a really neat piece for those of you who would like a cool piece of fire magic to add to your arsenal.

Effect: Performer takes out a lighter to start a fire in mid-air, and he does. The fire first rises above the hand, and then flies all around the hand, with the hand barely moving. At this point the flame jumps onto a fire eating or juggling torch, and the short effect is complete.

Method and Gimmick: This method is dependent on your ability to do the Invisible Thumb palm with a quarter, and do it very well. The ability to do some finger flinging will make this piece look incredible. Otherwise, it's just another puppet show or zombie. You'll need a washer about the size of a quarter, some thin gauge wire (about 30 gauge), and some cotton or thin strands of magician's rope.

Cut off about a 10" long piece of wire from the spool. Tie one end of the wire to the washer, and wrap the long end of the wire through and around the washer, line by line (this will create an area on the washer that feels like a milled edge) until you are left with about a 2 1/2" long tail of wire. At the end of the free end, wrap the wire around about an aspirin sized wad of cotton or rope thread. Later, you will want to paint the washer flesh tone.

Practice this without igniting the wick. Invisible thumb palm vanish the washer (Tarbell 1, Lesson 3, page 68) with the wire hanging over the top of the thumb, pointing towards the audience. Your palm is facing the audience, as if you were hiding the coin. This is your basic position.

Notice that at some angles, and, later, with more lighter fluid, the wire hangs at different heights and angles. This will be good for creating different views.

Disclaimer: Please, do not use this information if you are under the age of 18. If you are of age, this information should be used with caution. Some states, like California have laws prohibiting the use of fire for performance art.

Please, use your common sense.

The first time that I tried this was over the sink in my kitchen. The flame is just too small to stay lit outdoors, and you need to be indoors to get the full effect.

Always keep a wet towel ready to throw over a fire.

A note to fire-eaters and magicians who perform in households, or offices, over carpeting: If you are performing with fire, many professional carpet cleaning solutions contain naphtha. If, by a freak accident, you drop a torch on an area of rug or carpet that has been just cleaned for the guests and hostess of the party, you may be putting yourself in a bad situation. Be aware of these kinds of things.

Now, back to the effect.

Try holding the palm up, with the washer in Invisible thumb palm position. Point that arm and fingers straight ahead toward your audience, the mirror. By slightly pulling back on the thumb, the fire can be made to rise. Go up and down in front of the mirror a few times to get the idea of how powerful this would look on stage.

Now, turn palm facing the audience, and do the same thing with your thumb. Notice how the top side of the thumb helps support the wire in this position. Pulling back and forth with the thumb will send the fire ball back and forth in a horizontal arc.

If you can produce a quarter out of the Invisible thumb palm position, then you can quickly make the fireball start to fly up and away. Twist and turn the hand while following it and reaching for it. Sometimes this looks better with the palm facing to the rear, pinky edge of the hand upward. The act of catching it means regaining the washer in Invisible thumb palm position and flipping back over.

If you are saying, "hey, this stinks," that's because it doesn't fit everyone's style. It takes a very floral, flourishing attitude to do this one. It also takes a lot of practice if you aren't adept at an Invisible thumb palm vanish. With practice, and patience, you could use this in an unsuspecting bar or restaurant, taking the flame from a match, lighter, or candle, and letting it do its thing. Its charm is like that of a zombie. It's in the hands of the master, and the audience's eye is the eye of the beholder.

10. Yo-yo vanish

In 1975, I won a yo-yo championship. I was the Yo-yo champion of LaMarque, Texas. My aunt and my grandmother took me to the local strip center, and Gus Somera was there, doing the coolest yo-yo stuff that I had ever seen (with the exception of the tricks he used to do on the commercials announcing the contest).

I have added dozens of comedy lines to those yo-yo routines, along with several new tricks, not always the most difficult tricks, but always the trick that fits the continuation of the routine. For my finale, I do two tricks. I do the space shuttle, removing the string from my finger, giving it a tug, and letting the speed of the yo-yo returning upwards launch the toy upward, spinning and rising over 15 feet, when outdoors. I catch the yo-yo behind my back, and ta-da, I'm done. If I ever drop the yo-yo during this, I just cite the Challenger, and move on. Okay, in comedy clubs, but that's it...

To vanish the yo-yo, I ask them if they'd like to see the Stealth bomber. As I ask the question, my hands come together as if tightening the string. This goes over better if you have tightened the string like that a few times before. The yo-yo, in the right hand, is held horizontally, and the left hand comes over to grab the yo-yo. If the hold is correct and the yo-yo is completely covered by the hands, it's a simple pass that leaves the empty right hand immediately reaching up for the upcoming downward throw that vanishes the yo-yo. This gives you plenty of time to ditch the left hand's yo-yo in a pocket, *profonde*, or tux tail topit, depending what's on your left side. You could even continue to palm it for retrieval from the hat of a youngster sitting in the front row, but you must be quick, firm and assertive enough to get the hat off of his head without him dodging you. Loading will be a subtle change of hands, holding the hat up far enough to hide the newly loaded yo-yo from peering eyes. Have one of them discover it for extra bonus points.

However, if you have the place to ditch for a complete vanish, take the vanish one step further.

At this point, one could assume that the yo-yo would be considered to be gone. But, with the right use of pantomime, if the lighting is good, and you are on floor level near the first row of the audience, you can pretend to repeat the previous space shuttle effect. When your eyes follow the yo-yo upward, theirs will too, and many will swear later that you made the yo-yo vanish at the ceiling.

Let them say what they will.

11. Pen vanish- a Flip tribute

Okay, so I got tired of the same old pen vanish behind the ear (Harry Crawford's "Ear it is" Tarbell Volume 7, Lesson 87, page 199). Too bad, because it kills with the audience. A pen was also a bit long for most cigarette

moves. My new one uses mostly Flip's maneuvers that are too hard to use with an ungimmicked pen, but I'll show you some tips on doing it without any help from gimmicks, fakes or special pens.

Effect: A pen vanishes into thin air, and returns almost immediately.

Method: Get a plain old Bic plastic pen, the ones being sold right now, as described in the Golf Tee penetrations. We'll start with this one, because it seems to be the easiest. With practice, you will be able to use many types of pens and other similar objects for this vanish and reappearance.

Hold the pen horizontally between the hands, with the ends of the pen pressing into the area of the palm that exists just toward the crotch of the middle and ring fingers. The middle fingers of both hands point straight toward the audience, hands wide open, palms facing each other. The hands are held outward, away from the body, waist high, and to the far left. You could tell the audience that your reason for this position is to keep the pen as far away from the body as you can, so that there is no way that you can be using your body in any way. The real reason will become apparent.

At this point, you could randomly use the Flip flipstick move (Tarbell, Volume 7, Lesson 87, Page 221), but you would have a hard time getting the pen back due to the small size and light weight.

Here's the trick to controlling the pen at all times. Close all fingers over the front of the pen. When closing the right hand, with the end of the pen in the area of the palm described above, the right fingertips pivot the left end of the pen back towards the wrist. If you use the point between the right middle and ring fingertips to push the pen back into the palm and wrist area, like the flip stick move, with the small circumference of the pen, it becomes pressed into the pinched area between those two fingertips. Now this position might be unnatural and, even, uncomfortable, but there is a way to get around this. Remember, to do these moves over to the left of center. When the vanish happens, you will have to do these things:

1. Look surprised.
2. Keep the right forefinger, thumb, and pinky extended. The pose that metalheads/Beavis and Butthead make with their hands when Metallica comes on. All of the left hand's fingers will be kept wide open and extended.
3. Upon execution of the move, the hands will jump outward a bit, and your whole body will respond the way you did when you squeezed that shocking lighter the first time at the fun shop. And that look that you had will be the exact thing that carries this effect.
4. Hold the pose. For a beat or two. Then return to the beginning position. The reason that you will be able to do this is because you have the center area of the pen still pinched in between the middle and ring fingertips. Practice SNAPPING that pen back against the returning left hand, with some sound.
5. Relax the surprised posture and look as if the vanish never happened. You'll notice that THEY still have that surprised look if you get really good at this.

Don't write this one off as not being your style or too hoky looking. It looks great, and it will save you one day at a party or social gathering here you're in your bathing suit and they ask you to do a trick with this pen.

12. Card in pocket-speedy repeat challenge

C.O. Williams (circa 1900) All versions, British

This is an incredible mentalism/card combo that will knock their sock off, just like it did a century ago. It was reportedly first done by C.O. Williams, a British inventor, around the early 1900's. The new twist is that I have cut the time it takes to get the double impact in half. It's really incredible. 14

Original Effect: Any non-giant pack of cards, even if you've never seen or touched it, is given to a member of the audience. He is asked to shuffle, cut and rearrange the deck to his liking. He is then asked to think of a number between 1 and 52. He does, and he is asked to count down to that number of cards in the deck. The volunteer memorizes the card located at the number that the spectator originally thought of, and the performer takes the pack of cards for the first time. The performer removes one card from the pack and places in his pocket. The magician asks the spectator what the number was that the spectator's card was at, and the spectator tells him. The magician counts off into the spectator's hand one card at a time until he comes to the chosen number/card. The magician places it into the spectator's other hand, and the card is NOT the one that was in the spot where the spectator had left it. That is because the card is the one in his pocket. He brings out the card, and replaces it anywhere into the deck.

The trick is so good that the performer is asked to do it again. He does, but this time, the trick is done almost the same way. The audience member counts out the cards this time. Once again the magician has the chosen card safely stowed away in his pocket.

There is one other quicky repeat if they MUST see it again, but you'll have to resort to the book for that one, and I choose not to use it in conjunction with my improvement. The effect is already long and drawn out. You can almost hear magicians yawning.

I will not divulge the secret here. Instead, you must get the Amateur Magician's Handbook, and look at the Hand Magic Section-Please Take a card-Pages 122-123 of the hardback, page 117 of the paperback. I know, the hardback version is totally against what the book stands for, but I kept giving away my paperback versions to kids and not-so-kids who would not part with it later, and would always try to pay me back in cash or lunch. Even lunch at Taco Bell almost made up for the original purchase price of the book. So, I was given the hardback version as a gift to discourage me from always lending mine out. It has worked so far.

My friend, Mick McMillin, has a signed, autographed version of it. He tends to keep a closer eye on it than usual while I'm in the room. And HE's the busker.

My improvement on the handbook version: In the Handbook, There are three versions of the trick listed in succession. All I have done is to have the original volunteer split the deck into halves, and, before doing the first version, giving the other half to another spectator. Ask them at the same time to both think to themselves of a number under 21 (in case the deck is not exactly in halves, or cards are missing). Do the first version to the first volunteer, then immediately do the second version to the second volunteer. The quicker presentation, counting (they only have 20 or less cards each to count), and fast payoffs (boom-boom) make this classic still as applicable and mystifying for modern audiences as it was in its heyday.

13. Paper Balls over the head (comedy) IMPOSSIBLE

Here's a cool addition to paper bar napkin balls over the head for strolling. Do the effect, and toss the ball towards a spectator, where he almost can't miss it. With the right body language and a wink that isn't seen by the helper, most of the time you can get the spectator to catch the paper ball. Even if he doesn't, you go into the explanation of what is about to happen. "I will attempt to make the paper ball jump from my hand into someone else's hand." At this point, usually someone picks up the ball, and goes along with the plot. With the original helper facing you, shoulders squared, use your unused hand to grab her shoulder, and make eye contact

with the spectator who now has the ball. Have him make a fist before you let her turn to look in that direction. If he makes a fist with the empty hand, tell him point blank, "No, the other hand..."

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If he switches the ball to the other hand, then he makes it impossible to play a bigger joke on the helper than the spectacle that he makes of himself. Sometimes another helper grabs the ball from him, with the understanding that there is a miracle being done only for the original helper.

Sometimes there is just no out. But, when this one works, the look on the original helper's face is the sign of a huge victory for you.

14. Ball Vanish-Overhand throwaway to the audience

Get a lacrosse sized juggling ball, or any ball or fruit that is about that size. You may have to set this up with a few tosses to the audience beforehand. Then, you just pull back and grab the ball between your chin and shoulder. The extension of the arm upward and outward will hide the ball from the onlookers straight ahead of you. No more than a throwaway, literally, you lower the arm to expose the previously misplaced ball, lodged between your chin and shoulder. It always gets a lot of squints as you do it, and laughs afterward.

I follow it with...

15. Ball Vanish-Downward follow through vanish

For this one, you must be using a ball (and floor/ground) that allows the ball to be bounced. The ball is bounced to the left and a bit back of the performer, about waist high. The left hand swoops down, over the ball, clawing it with a long, healthy follow through. This will set you up for the dirty work. On the third bounce and claw, the left hand, upon following through downward, throws the ball across the back of the thighs to the right hand, which is waiting just to the right of the right thigh. The left hand is raised, thumb side down and back of the hand facing the audience, as if still carrying the ball. An upward toss, and the ball is immediately retrieved from the right knee by the right hand. Even with a larger ball than palmable, the retrieval can be partially hidden by the thigh during the raising of the right knee.

It may seem difficult to do, but the throw is relatively short, with practice, and the move is very difficult to detect from an audience facing you. Perfect this one in front of a mirror or camcorder. If you do any juggling or golf acts, you'll love this one in addition to your usual sleight of hand.

16. Invisible Thumb Palm cover move

Many magicians try to relegate floral moves to stage magic, and regular movements only to close up. Finger flinging is cool, as long as you are doing it more as a display or exhibition. This is one of those types of pieces.

If you do the Invisible Thumb Palm vanish (Tarbell 1, Lesson 3 "Sleight of hand with coins" Page 65, palm #6) as much as I do, you have either wanted to show the back of your hand, or you have figured out your own way to show it. I've seen people pinch their forefinger and thumb tip together to hide the coin while sweeping horizontally across the whole body.

Here's another way.

Remember all of those finger exercises you did like Doug Hennning? Or the one that Jeff McBride did in his manip routine on World's Greatest Magic? Where you point all of your 8 fingers, straight upward, with the back

of your hands facing the audience? You bend the right forefinger down, then the middle finger, then the ring finger, then the pinky, then the left pinky, then the left ring finger, then the left middle finger, then the left forefinger. Reverse the process, and you mesmerize yourself and the people watching. That exercise was always just a cheesy exercise until now.

Do the Invisible thumb palm to vanish a quarter, as shown on page 68. At this point, the palm is facing the audience, with the pinky edge of the hand down. With the thumb covering the quarter in the crotch of the thumb, you are looking for a way to flip over to show the back and front a couple of times.

Bend the pinky in toward a fist position, then the ring, then the middle, just like the exercise. As you bend the forefinger inward toward the fist position, let the forefinger bend OVER the Invisible thumb palmed coin, and, with the coin covered for an instant, flip the hand over, the back of the hand towards the audience as the fingers open up in the reverse order that they closed. You have used the forefinger's flourish bend to cover the Invisible thumb palmed quarter for the instant that it would have flashed. Wow.

Learn to reverse the move, and you are back full forward. One more time, and you are ready for the finale.

This time, when you flip to the back, don't do the flourish. Instead, close the Invisible thumb palmed coin, forcing the coin into the front thumb palm while turning over the hand (just like in Tarbell). At this point, the coin would be very difficult to put into position to return to a palm forward posture.

Close the hand with the flourish, forefinger first, then middle, down the line, into a closed fist. Now turn the fist facing with the fingers forward, towards the audience. Open the hand, pinky to thumb, flourishing, with the coin displayed in the center of the palm, as if it were there the whole time. Voila!

17. Bottle Sticking

The most awesome effect that I've done in bars is bottle sticking. The people in the audience totally freak when I do this one. It's a cool effect, but it depends on timing, subtlety, and an ability to act and respond to different situations.

Effect: You borrow an empty beer bottle and pour out any leftover swig. You tell the audience that you are going to stick the bottle to the ceiling, and you secretly(?) lick your finger, dump it into some cigarette ashes, and drag your finger around the bottom of the bottle. Ask them to pretend like they didn't see that, and proceed to toss the bottle up toward the ceiling. On the first two tosses, make sure that you come short of hitting the ceiling. On the third, the bottle goes up, but never comes down. When the smoke clears, the bottle has vanished completely, only to be retrieved from under the jacket or skirt of some spectator.

Secret: The method is very similar to "Ear it is" in the Tarbell Course. This trick will take practice, timing, and experience, but you'll find it to be hard to beat.

Do all of the things in the description. First you make your initial tosses with the bottle, making sure that you don't hit a hard to see ceiling fan. All throws are made holding the neck of the beer bottle. Also, look for wires, lines, anything that will interfere. Make sure that your test throws are not so high (over 15 feet) that controlling the throw and catch become unmanageable. Let the second throw go closer to the ceiling than the first, but not too close, risking actually hitting the ceiling and possibly landing in the audience. I cannot stress this too much.

Now for the third throw. It is basically a dove vanish to tail topit type of ditch, but the downswing is putting the bottle between the thighs, the barrel of the bottle out the back of the legs, and the neck between the thighs.

Unless you're Bill and Hillary, you might have to do this in a dimly lit bar to hide the mouth of the bottle completely. Close the thighs together, grabbing the bottle and securing it there, and toss upward with the right hand, harder than the last two tosses. Follow the imaginary flight upward with your eyes, and continue to look upward.

This all happens very fast. You are now vulnerable. Very vulnerable.

The only way that you stand a chance at this point is to fake flinching. You are now fearing being hit by the bottle that has not stick to the ceiling. This is all still happening very fast, due to the vulnerability of having the bottle between your legs.

Go with it.

While flinching, you'll do several things simultaneously. You should have already spotted the person in the audience to your immediate left who is wearing a jacket or skirt. You will have positioned yourself earlier, accordingly for the retrieval. The flinch involves your right hand raised, elbow up, hand shielding eyes. Squint, as if trying to look into the sun. This misdirection will hide the left hand going south for the bottle. This retrieval is better if you have sleeves to cover the barrel of the bottle as you come up. However, the timing should be all the cover that you need. Grab the jacket or skirt, thrust the left hand and bottle under the cover of the chosen spectator's garment, and produce the bottle in all its glory.

The whole act of throwing the bottle upward, flinching, and retrieval should take about 3 seconds at the most. That's about all you can afford.

If you have a friend magician that frequents the bars with you, you can also have him steal the bottle from between your legs. If the bottle was marked before the trick, with a rip across the label, the bottle can reappear in a purse, on a table, or in someone's jacket pocket. It's all up to how good the helper is.

Another nice addition is to wander under a ceiling fan during the third throw. Act dumb, as if you don't know that you are there, and you'll have even more attention on the upswing than without the ceiling fan.

This is one of the most powerful pieces that you can do.

But, let me caution you. Don't do too many pre-tosses, and don't wait too long to do the trick. Also, don't do your pre-tosses with the managers or owners present. Even managers who were friends of mine got ticked off at the brazenness that it takes to do this effect. They are just in fear for their customers. Can you blame them?

Also, it's like fire-eating. Don't be in a situation where you need to ask permission. Remember, if you ask permission from enough people, someone is going to feel that they need to be the voice of reason, and say no. It's much easier to apologize than to get permission. Don't put managers and owners in this position.

Use the Nike method: Just do it

18. Balloon give and take

Every now and then I come up with an occasion to use this gem. It's a great throwaway, impromptu, with many possibilities.

Magician approaches a child with a balloon. He silently gives the balloon's string to the child, but walks away leaving only the lower half of the string with the child. 18

It's obvious. You could bring your rainbow nesting wands, or your breakaway wand, but this beats both of those, makes you look clever, and leaves the child with the balloon, ultimately, when you tie the pieces back together.

Just cut the string in half (or, with many balloon strings, you can just quickly break it in two), and hold both ends in the right hand. With the left hand, give the hanging end to the child. Walk away, leaving the free end.

Make sure and gauge the child's response to the gag. If he begins to cry, make sure you are returning to him quickly with the balloon.

This one always gets a roar.

19. STRAT-a-Card: Signing, Tearing, Restoring And Transporting-A-Card-for large audiences

This is a routine that I worked on in Las Vegas with Vegas magicianne Mari Zurbano. The subtlety and simplicity make it not only an incredibly clean effect in itself, but a basis for improving your own versions with the modular parts of my version. Take the parts that you can use. Leave what you can't. It's up to you.

Effect: An audience member freely(?) selects a card, signs it, and the card is shown around the room to the whole audience. The magician hands it back to the signer to hold, and he presents either an envelope or bar napkin to be used to hold the pieces of card that are about to be torn and placed in one of them. The pieces vanish in the envelope or napkin, and the restored card is produced from the magician's pocket, pack, or anywhere that the magician could have loaded the whole card without detection.

Method: Prepare by signing your whole name or anything that seems to be line filling- First, Middle and Last- in cursive, the way that they would sign their driver's license, across the face of the card, lengthwise (I prefer to use a King of Clubs or Spades for this effect-it makes the deception even that much better). Leave this card on top of the pack. Or, second from the top if you use the glide or any force taking a card from the top.

You will force an unprepared duplicate of your prepared card on the spectator. This card will be signed by him, lengthwise across the face of the card with a thick, Magic Marker (TM). You can justify the full signing with the case of a person saying it wasn't his signature, then at least you could check his Driver's license, have the proper authorities intervene, etc. You can even draw an underline for him to sign on, adding an "X" showing him where to sign. Of course, the previously prepared card must have these things, too. The more distracting, and well rehearsed that your part (underlines, "X"es, etc.) of the signing of the card is, the better chance you have of getting away with the following events. Another hint is to have a magic marker with a really dulled out point that makes the lines thick, no matter what angle they are writing at.

You will now show the audience on all three sides in the front row the signature and the card. Almost as an afterthought, the card is show quickly to the back rows, held high and animated, to all three angles.

At this point, a good top change will help immensely to switch the real signed card for the nearly identical dummy that you have at the top of the pack at this point. My favorite method is to finally show the people to the rear and my right. As I am backing up to come back to center stage, as I come near the mic stand, I bump it, make the top change as I'm turning to catch or steady the mic stand. The misdirection will fool even the most

ardent observer. Of course, you'll have to practice the timing for yourself. You have the spectator, seated in the front row the whole time, put both hands up, (my line here is "As if you were in a convenience store...") and have him hold the card between both hands, straight up. This keeps him from looking at it, keeps it in full view of the audience, and lets the audience think in the back of their minds that you gave the card back to the person who signed it. Have him tear the card in half once, square the pieces up, and tear those halves again, in plain view of the audience of course, since his hands are still above his head. Now, have the spectator hand the pieces to two other people in the audience, and have them tear each piece again. If these people are seated back from the original spectator, then when you lean over to get the pieces, it gives you a great opportunity to load the original signed card somewhere. If you can't find anywhere, you can back out, and produce it from the pocket later.

The duplication of the card, the use of a magic marker that will make the letters a tight squeeze, and the audience's trust of the magician will all come into play in the subtlety of this effect.

Now, the new helpers are holding the duplicate card's pieces up and you get a paper napkin from your pocket, while putting on a thumb tip. Or you could borrow a napkin, and put the cards away, stealing the tip. Whatever.

Trust me, I've tried all kinds of other non-mechanical ways to completely disintegrate a card. Burning, torching, shredding, cutting, soaking in Ronsonol before burning, using cheap Chinese paper cards, etc. Nothing worked, so I reverted to the simplicity of tearing the card into pieces that would fit into the tip nicely, while apparently placing them into the napkin being held by the spectator. Now, the napkin can be burned, without fear of being left with the partially unburned cards that would be left. Or you can just have the napkin ultimately opened, it's your choice.

Another possibility, but only in theory, is to use a multiple ply paper napkin to do the vanish of an untorn card, like a devil's hank. It's best to get this one from the audience. Unfold it after placing the whole card in it, careful not to let the card be shown through the napkin or letting it slide down and out the bottom of the ply. This will depend greatly upon the quality, size, texture, feel, and design on the napkin. You could possibly steal the card from the hidden spot in the center plies, or refold the napkin into quarters and take a bow, unloading the card into a case, onto the rest of the deck tossed down on the floor, or some cover on the floor. That would be a really cool way to return the napkin to the loaner, but risky unless you improve upon that. You can try out what you like, but I'll stay with the thumb tip. The torn card being restored is just too strong.

You've had several opportunities to load the original top card of the deck that has been forgotten by this point. You could have it selected again. You could have it rise (see impromptu card rise in this series). You could just produce it from your, or the spectator's pocket. You could produce it from almost anything. It's up to you.

This should be a fresh change from all of the unfinished card tricks done by Jonathan, and other magicians who don't find it necessary to finish the magic part of the trick. I think Jonathan is the greatest. I also feel that way about good magic.

20. Challenge Watch Steal

This is a great way to nail a spectator to the wall after doing a watch steal. What do you do when someone asks you to steal THEIR Rolex, after they see you steal someone else's watch during the show?

Most magicians would say at that point, no. But here's an alternative to that refusal.

Find a spectator with a loose fitting watch that matches a duplicate that you have in your possession for this. If you can carry with you a very popular style of watch that is at a glance similar to the ones that are worn at the type of gathering that you regularly entertain at, then you are ready for a miracle.

We'll assume that the audience member is standing on your right, wearing the similar watch on his left wrist, loosely fastened, as many Rolexes are worn, due to their lack of adjustability due to time of day swelling and receding mass. He must also be wearing a long sleeved jacket, and have either very loose cuffs, or very tight cuffs to give you the ability to push the Rolex up and out of the way. You begin with the similar duplicate watch palmed in your left hand. You will reach across your body with the left hand, while gripping his wrist and watch with your right hand. As you begin to press the pre-warmed duplicate watch to his wrist, below his watch, you push the intact spectator's watch up his arm, where it will stay lodged long enough to let go of the watch and grab his arm and his watch through the outside of the sleeve of his jacket. This move will be covered partially by the sleeve, and partially by the left hand moving across the body. You will now pull the left hand away with the similar watch being shown to the audience. The length of time that you display the duplicate watch, and to whom, will be dependent upon how close the resemblance to the original spectator's watch the dupe is. With a Rolex replica of the same style, the magician can even display it to the spectator. With a simulated throw, the dupe is re-palmed while the left hand is crossing the body toward the spectator's left hand. The spectator's left arm and watch are released, allowing the watch to fall down into place around his wrist, just as you touch that wrist with your left hand, palming the dupe. With all eyes on the spectator assisting you, you will not have too difficult of a time cleaning up after this one. The total time of all of these effects occurring will be within 20 seconds.

If you have any fear of your abilities under the gun, or if you feel that this is a pipe dream, then don't attempt it. Please feel free to attend a show of mine when I do this. The magicians from the audience are doing their best to grin with their jaw dropped, and the spectators are responding the same way. This one cannot be advertised or used every show, due to the possible absence of the proper band or watch. But when you see the chance, take it. It is absolutely a killer effect, many times taking no more than 7 seconds total to execute. This one is for experts, and shouldn't be used unless you've already learned and mastered the subtleties and nuances of a regular leather band watch steal. That will leave you with the confidence and experience to pull this one off... and on.

Good Luck.

21. Making your own lightweight, yet strong, Tarbell-Delben Rope screw gimmicks-internal for magicians' rope

If you can use a hack saw, you can make your own Delben rope gimmicks for about 40 cents apiece. You'll need to get Aluminum Screw Rivets from a hardware store. The large stores like Builder's Square, and Home Depot usually have them. You can also get the threaded rod (at my store, the color of the paint telling the size on the end of the rod is red). Simply cut the heads off of the inner threaded tube that makes up the screw rivet. Ditch the head and the little screw that comes with each rivet, and cut a piece of threaded rod to insert into the threaded tube that you have now. Now, you get another piece of a tube that you've made, and use it for the female part to the male part that you've just made. A good hard crimp on the outside of the tube with some dykes or the wire cutting part of your pliers will keep the threaded rod from unscrewing, but make sure that the screw's position is correct first. You'll want the gimmicks to fasten and unfasten quickly and easily with about a half turn. Now, you can also get Aluminum Screw Rivet Extenders from Hillman Fasteners. They already have the head removed from the shaft. The male threaded end is a bit long, so you will want to put a nut on the thread all the way down to the base, hacksaw off the excess thread, and back the nut off of the cut section to preserve the thread integrity.

Hint: try to use the virgin cuts that came milled and threaded from the store. Once you get good at this, you can use the little rivet screw to make the gimmicks. Also, make the gimmicks very short, and use E-6000 adhesive to fasten the gimmicks into the rope. It is available from the makers of Goop, Eclectic Products, in Carson, California. It should be available at any big arts and crafts store, like Lee Wards, Michael's, or Crafts, Etc. This stuff is so good, that I use it to seal my radiator holes in plastic automobile radiator tanks. It remains a bit pliable, but tough as hard rubber, and unaffected by heat. It's a must for any magician on the road. Keep it next to your JB Weld and your quick epoxy putty.

22. Instant stage

Some of the magicians reading the newsgroups found this idea to be helpful. The easiest way to make a portable 8x8, or larger, stage is to get 1/2 inch thick plywood 4x8 boards, and some plastic, Rubbermaid styled round garbage cans. The cans should be about 13 to 15 inches high, and must be placed mouth down. These garbage cans should nest together for easy transport and storage.

Other suggestions for the boards. Cut them to fit flat into your van or truck bed, and they will always be out of the way until you need them. Also, cut out a four finger hole about arms length from the long side edge, in the center, to give you an easy way to pick up and carry the board. Make sure that you do not cut the hole so large that you could trip on it, but not so small that your fingers and knuckles scrape while you are carrying it. You might even cut the board smaller than 4x8 for easier transporting. I have a Chevy Astro Van, and I have to cut the boards a bit smaller, but not much. I do leave the boards and wastebaskets in my van all of the time, and I'm always ready to do a bigger show than originally expected, when necessary.

23. Stealing an object from a purse-for entertainment purposes only

The other day I was doing a show at a luncheon, when I stumbled across this great improvisational pickpocket piece that basically fell into my lap.

If you know me, you know that I hate doing strolling gigs. I like the parlor gigs, but the worst for me is performing WHILE people are eating. It is an almost impossible situation to show your abilities in their best light. Here is the secret to making something good from an otherwise ineffective situation, performing to several tables of people sitting down to eat.

During my Disecto routine, I steal the watch of my lady volunteer, and slip it into the bag that covers the Disecto for transport, a bag about the size of one of those plastic bags that they are referring to when they ask paper or plastic. The bag is cloth, about 15 inches wide by 20 inches deep. I allow the volunteer to return to her seat before producing her watch from the bag. My comedy line after producing the watch is to look into the bag, grab the inside bottom of the bag, and lift it inside out, as if I were producing her bra... It gets a huge laugh, and then I looked down at the floor, noticing that her purse had been sitting at her feet the whole time, openly exposing her cigarettes, glasses, compact, etc. Thus reaching into my bag for the bra or underwear joke, put me in the perfect position to grab, through the material in the bottom of the bag, some easy to get, not too personally offensive item that I could produce after returning to the stage area. If you can picture the stage work, footwork, and timing involved in such a steal, you could do miracles with this. She is busy putting her watch back on, and you have just created the misdirection with the comedy to floor them with an obvious item that you could have never stolen without being a real master.

24. Sponge Ball theory

I was watching a lecture by someone doing sponge balls and stuff.

I went to him with an idea after the show, but he was not very receptive to it. He seemed to be the victim of anti-magicianism, but I guess he had been doing lectures everywhere, and had probably become sick of it or something.

My concept for sponge balls, is to use sponge with more memory, quicker, expansion, and use them displayed to the audience as solid balls, maybe black. That way, you could handle them as solid, control the "cups" made with the spectator's hands, and get the similar effect, but more incredible in the fact that the balls multiplied in their hands. Your sleight of hand, setting up their hands, and choreography would have to be much better thought out, but the balls, being perceived by the audience to be solid, or at least not so squishy, would be even more impressive upon expansion.

In conclusion

Thank you for having the patience and perseverance to look over the virtually published book, Finger Magic. I am very proud of the material within. You may not feel the same way, but sooner or later you will be in the predicaments that I was in when I came up with these effects, solutions, improvements and finesses.

This is not a book that caters to beginners, or someone wanting to do self working effects. Most of the material within should only be taken seriously after you have a sense of timing with some good old classics. Sometimes an effect looks strangely impossible on paper, and once you see it, it becomes clear what the author was going for. Make sure that you have the props in hand when trying to execute many of the moves that really should have an illustration or photograph.

There are several reasons that I do not have photographs for these effects. For one reason, I feel that if you have access to the classics, AMH and Tarbell, you will not only get the illustrations for some of the improvements in my book, but by reading these classics, you will also get an improvement in your quality of life. In my own opinion.

Another reason this is text only is to get you to possibly register, and receive the video that goes with this manuscript.

Reason number three is to weed out the curiosity seekers who are just curious. If they troll for the answers, they will take one look at this stuff, and probably never go back to alt.magic.secrets ever again. They will assume that the really tough stuff on T.V. must be much more descriptively intricate than this free stuff on the net.

I hope that I have not scared anyone off by the club critique in the first effect, but it is there to do some weeding out, too. Usually, the clubbies who get run off by that stuff are the guys who would have discounted the material in the book, regardless of any merit that it may have.

And maybe the material has been done somewhere, by someone, before, but I have not seen or heard it unless otherwise mentioned within. If you feel that the material has no merit, please at least respect the intent and purity of my motivation. It is simply to meet people throughout the world of magic that are very hard to get without first proving yourself worthy of interaction. Hopefully, this book will take off that edge that the (more mystical than thou) hierarchy creates. I encourage your creativity, but I warn you, that not everyone will. You are not alone. Take solace from your contemporaries, and relax. The time will come. And hopefully, this book will lay out the gauntlet for other would be inventors and publishers to come together in a format where politics play no role, and positive intent, respect, and material will change the art of magic forever.