

talk ABOUT tricks

by Joshua Jay

PHOTOS BY KEVIN REYLEK



Outro

Every month for the past twelve years, I have sat down, stared at a screen, and thought about how I would introduce my column to you — 144 intros in all. This month's intro is special, because it will be also be my *outro* — my farewell to this column and to you, the readers. How strange it is to sit here now and think about how to say goodbye.

I wrote my first “Talk About Tricks” article when I was eighteen years old, in my college dorm room. Every month since that time, you and I have gotten together in the pages of this magazine and talked about tricks. It's a dialogue that has become a routine rhythm in my life. At times exciting, at other times exhausting, this column has been one of the few constants in my schedule.

I'm 31 now. And after 144 issues and 864 tricks, this will be my last installment of “Talk About Tricks.” Stan and I agree that it's time for a new approach, and I'm eager to see what the team will do next.

They won't have it easy. This is a critical juncture not just for magazines in general, but for trick publishing in particular. In the twelve years that I ran our trick department here at *MAGIC*, the publishing culture has changed more than in the previous hundred years. Since the time of *The Sphinx* (the magazine, not the noseless monument), *the* place to feature your tricks was in magazines. And the reasons to publish a routine were many: to establish an idea, to protect a trick from being stolen, to share a concept with other magicians, to gain renown, to push the art forward. Magic DVDs, which emerged during my tenure, didn't change the situation drastically, because the folks making DVDs still wanted their ideas in print. Many would publish first and record later. Then the Internet changed everything.

We now live in a world where young magicians think of creating downloads of their new tricks, rather than submitting them to magazines. There was always a barrier of entry with books and DVDs: a third party had to produce your magic to bring it to the marketplace. Now, everyone has access to everyone else through phones and screens. Everyone wants to profit from their own ideas. As a creator, I understand this. We work hard on our magic, and the marketplace now rewards creativity in new and immediate ways. But the fact remains: getting top-quality magic for a magazine can be challenging.

The sad part of all this is that we are quickly losing a tradition in magic: our literary footprint. By my tally, last year there were fewer magic books published than in any year since 1999. And the trend will continue to worsen, since magic books are less profitable than ever before. Magic books sell less and take infinitely longer to make than downloads. I grew up reading magic books, but the current generation has bookshelves lined with DVDs. I am sadder still that the very mindset of magicians has changed so much regarding sharing with their peers. I'm reminded of this Turkish proverb I heard and scribbled down in my notebook: “When the ax came into the woods, many of the trees said, ‘At least the handle is one of us.’” Nobody yet knows the fate of printed matter in magic.

That said, I have dedicated an outsized portion of my time to being an advocate for the printed word. One of my reasons for staying with “Talk About Tricks” for so long is that I felt like I was part of a grand tradition. Those of you who read this column and those of you who submitted tricks are part of something much purer than the commercial mess the Internet has created. In these pages, we have shared effects, explored new concepts, and learned about new talent, all in the spirit of *giving*. Advancing the art. Progress.



2001



2002

In my other endeavors with Vanishing Inc. Magic, I have written and published many titles for magicians. Fewer and fewer people are reading these titles, but still I've kept on for those who value the printed word as much as I do. And in 2008 it was my great pleasure to write *MAGIC: The Complete Course*, which has been the entry point for over 100,000 new magicians all over the world. I have been a vigorous advocate for magic books, particularly to the young people I interact with. I hope I have made some difference.



2003

So, what have I learned from “Talk About Tricks”? Lots of tricks, of course. Some great ones. But if there is one overarching lesson I've learned, it is simply this: describing your magic will make you a better magician. The great privilege of this column has been the education I've received through writing up so many brilliant ideas. I have learned so much about what makes great magic great. On a structural level, I have learned to appreciate concise, considered routines, and I can now identify sloppy construction and often have instinctive ideas for how to tighten it up. These are important skills to have in creating magic, and I learned them on this job.

I'm not suggesting that everyone write up all of their own tricks with the goal of publication. No, what I'm suggesting is more personal. Do this for *yourself*. Describe a trick you do, with script and technique interwoven, exactly the way you perform it. I promise that as you do this, you will discover inconsistencies, problems, and unnecessary words and actions. The beautiful part is that the fixes to these problems will often present themselves. Describing your magic forces you to *analyze* your work on a line-by-line basis. Why do you pick up the deck if you will be setting it down again in thirty seconds? Why do you say this line of dialogue *here*, when you can say it *there* and use it to cover the move? Why do you need that double-faced card at all?

Every trick you describe will improve through the simple process of documenting it. And along the way, *you* will improve too.

Some thanks are in order. I have had many proofreaders over the years, and my current team has done an incredible job: Denis Behr, Ken Trombly, Andi Gladwin, Jim Munsey, and Mike Vance.

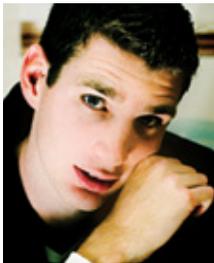
Thanks to current editor David Parr for his honesty and thoroughness. There have been two editors who have been with me through the whole journey: Raj Madhok and Rod Doiron — not just editors, but dear friends.

Stan Allen has been a great influence on me. Stan was wise enough to offer guidance when he thought it helpful and, in his words, “to stay out of the way when it comes to close-up magic.” His trust in my judgment allowed me to run this department exactly the way I saw fit. Stan was always there, in my corner. I wanted to include online gifts; he found a way. I wanted to tip in a free gaffed card; he found a way. I wanted to do cover stories on my contributors; he found a way. Stan is the hardest working guy in magic, and I'm pleased we're such great friends.

I introduced several innovations in my column that I hope made the learning experience easy and more enjoyable for you: a difficulty rating system, tipping in gaffed cards and gimmicks, and the Expertalk section, which focused on refining established techniques. Whoever the *MAGIC* team finds to take over the tutorial department will, I'm sure, add their own point of view and ideas to the mix. If it fits within that form to continue any of the innovations I introduced, I would be honored to see them continued.

I got to work with many of my heroes, who published their own work in “Talk About Tricks.” For me, some of the most meaningful contributors have been Simon Aronson, Lance Burton, Martin Gardner, Paul Harris, J.K. Hartman, Bill Malone, and David Williamson. Thanks everybody.

Some things I will miss, and some I won't. I won't miss wading through the YouTube submissions. Don't get me wrong; there is a unique thrill in “discovering” an exciting new move or talent, or seeing someone twist a classic in an entirely new way. But for every one of those, there are twenty YouTube videos that are excruciatingly, comically



2006



2009



2011

bad. I won't miss those. And I won't miss the photos. After twelve years, I'm ready for a break from illustrative photography.

I will miss the thrill of the chase. If I ever heard even a whisper of a cool effect circulating around, I loved tracking it down before other magazines or producers could. And I might add, somewhat immodestly, I usually got what I was after.

I will even miss the writing. Over time, describing good magic has become a soothing learning experience. It's quiet time every month, just the trick and me.

I took real joy in hearing from all of you on the other side of the page, and in hearing how you are using this material. I often refer to "Talk About Tricks" as a dialogue, and some years ago I altered the format so that it felt more like a dialogue between myself, the creators, and you. I will miss our talks.

So how do I end twelve years of "Talk About Tricks"? Surrounded by my closest friends, and with some of my favorite magic.

Rune Klan, Andi Gladwin, and Joel Givens are my three best friends in magic. Actually, they are three of my best friends, *period*. They are my sounding boards, my test subjects, my brain trust. I asked each of them for something *very* special so we can wrap this up in grand fashion. I have also described Hitchcock, an effect that means more to me than anything I have ever devised. I hope you like this month's collection of magic. For one last time, let's talk about tricks!

TORN AND RESTORED VADER

By Rune Klan



JOSH: You have never seen a torn and restored newspaper quite like this one. Like Beard Book, Sock Prediction, and some other Rune Klan routines I have published in these pages, I suspect few will want to perform this as is, but hopefully the idea will inspire your own variations. It doesn't exactly make sense, and Rune makes no effort to explain it. It's just absurdist humor, with a little magic thrown in.

EFFECT: The performer crumples a newspaper and frantically tears off little pieces, rapidly reducing the newspaper to shreds. He instantly unfolds it to show that he has torn out a perfect outline of *Star Wars* villain Darth Vader.

SETUP: I'll focus less on the actual method here, since I think the real value is in the gag itself. You will probably alter your approach according to sight angles, how many people are in the

crowd, and your favorite Torn & Restored Newspaper method.

The basic idea is that, instead of tearing and restoring a newspaper, you will apparently fashion the newspaper into something new — such as a cutout of Darth Vader. The method is the same as the original torn and restored: you tear up one packet and then reveal a second, hidden newspaper packet.

So the first thing you need to do is decide what paper "silhouette" you will create. Rune uses Darth Vader and makes absolutely no mention or explanation of why he has the superhuman ability to create that shape in seconds. Do not use a Stormtrooper cutout. Never, ever settle.

You need two duplicate pieces of newspaper with a fold down the middle of each — just one duplicate page will do. Glue a stiff piece of paper between one set so that it's stiffer and unfold quickly on its own (Photo 1). You will never open this duplicate page, so it can remain glued in position and be reused for many performances.

Now draw a Darth Vader outline in the middle of the page and, using a sharp blade, cut it out. The simpler the image, the better. You want this to be recognized instantly, even from a distance (Photos 2 & 3).

Precisely how you fold this prepared packet is really up to you. Rune folds the sides together, accordion style, in thirds



(Photo 4). Then he folds the packet upward so that it will open downward quite quickly, by its own weight (Photos 5 & 6). Finally, he marks the upper two corners with a pen so that he

knows, at a glance, how to hold the newspaper in a way that will allow it to fall open (Photo 7).

Begin with this folded packet in your case, hidden behind the duplicate piece of newspaper, which should be mostly open or just gently folded in half.

PERFORMANCE: When you are ready to perform, remove the newspaper, secretly pinning the second packet behind it (Photo 8). Open the page to show the inside, then close it again (Photo 9).

Next, crumple the paper upward, keeping the folded packet out of sight throughout this process (Photo 10).

Now you must simply tear away *most* of the newspaper you just displayed (Photo 11). Rune does this by violently ripping small shreds from the wad of paper, in a spastic and awkward pose, reducing the newspaper to pieces. Be sure to leave a few pieces in your hand — enough to camouflage the neatly folded sides of the duplicate page (Photo 12).

Pause for just a beat, then quickly position your fingers over the two marked corners of the hidden packet. In one action, you will allow this packet to open downward, as you drop the remaining pieces of torn newspaper. They will flutter to the ground, and it will look as though some last remnants just fell out of the holes (Photo 13). It looks like you tore out a Darth Vader design.

JOSH: When Rune does this, it takes less than a minute to perform and it gets a huge laugh. But more serious applications are possible. You could “tear out” the profile of one of the audience members or a chosen celebrity. Or it could be in the shape of a product you’re unveiling or the logo of a company you’re performing for.

LES CARTES OVERLAP

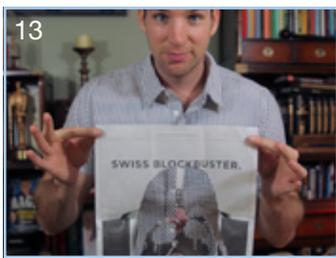
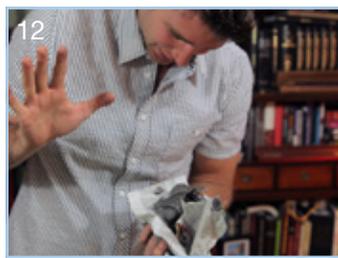
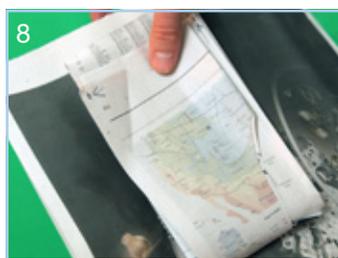
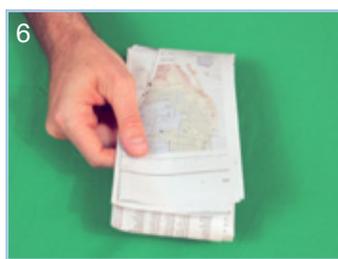
By Andi Gladwin



JOSH: Next up is an intriguing effect that requires a special gaffed card. Happily, we’ve included that card in this month’s issue. Call it a farewell gift courtesy of *MAGIC* and Vanishing Inc. Magic. I’ll let Andi describe the effect to you in his words.

EFFECT: The performer has three cards selected and fairly returned to the deck, which is given a brief shuffle. Aiming to find the selections, the magician removes three cards and shows them to the participants, but none of them are correct.

Slightly dismayed, the performer takes the three cards and gives one to each of the participants. One by one, in the participants’ hands, the incorrect cards are transformed into the selections.



SETUP: You have received a gaff that allows you to show three indifferent cards and then easily change them into three selections. Take the gaff so that the Five and Two are showing, and affix some double-sided tape over the two large Diamond pips (Photo 1).

Place the gaffed card on the face of the deck, with the double-sided tape facing downward. Orient the card so that the Five is to your left.

Finally, position any two cards that you can remember on top of the deck, with the King of Clubs below them. For example, you could use the Seven of Spades and Ten of Diamonds as these cards are directly next to the King of Clubs in the Si Stebbins Stack, making them easy to remember.

PERFORMANCE: Force the top three cards on your three participants. I use a riffle or dribble force for the first participant, then hand the other two people the next two cards from the top of the deck. Once all have memorized their cards, spread the deck on the table, keeping the bottom few cards together so that you don't expose the gaff, and allow your participants to insert the cards into the spread (Photo 2). Pick up the deck and, if you'd like, give it a quick shuffle, keeping the gaff on the bottom. If you handle the pack gently, the double stick tape won't stick to your working surface, particularly if it's a tablecloth or close-up pad.

Spread through the deck at chest height with the faces toward you, and upjog any card (preferably a low-value spot card), followed by the first two selections (Seven of Spades and Ten of Diamonds), without letting your audience see which cards you upjog. Strip the cards from the pack so they are in the following order from the face: indifferent card, second selection (Ten of Diamonds) and first selection (Seven of Spades). This order will allow you to reveal the cards in the order they were selected.

Square the deck and catch a break below the top card (the gaff), ensuring that you continue to hold the deck toward yourself so the audience can't see the gaff (Photo 3). Square the three cards against the face of the deck, adding the gaffed card beneath them. This is done vertically, at chest height, out of audience view. Don't press hard as you add the three cards onto the gaff, so the tape won't adhere to the back of the Seven of Spades. Lower your hands to waist height and then lift up on the four cards with the right hand. Hold the four cards in right-hand end grip and place the deck aside.

Place your left hand palm up beneath the packet and gently separate the gaff from the rest of the packet. If the tape has adhered a bit to the card above it, you can gently pry it free. With the left hand palm up and the left fingers contacting the gaff (Photo 4), pull this card to the left for about an inch to expose the two indifferent cards printed on its face, completing the display of the three "selections" (Photo 5). In reality, none of the cards are the selections.

Look at the three participants and ask if you found any of their cards. You can gesture freely at this point; the illusion of a spread of three wrong cards is perfect. Ask each participant to hold out one hand flat and palm up. As you gesture for each person to hold a hand palm up, quickly flip all three upper cards of



the packet (still held as one) face down on top of the gaff (Photo 6). Do this quickly, and move your right hand above and in front of the packet as you flip over the cards, obscuring this from view. It is discrepant to turn the cards in this fashion, but it will go unnoticed because the action is almost completely covered and you are giving them instructions about how to hold their hands. Press firmly with your thumb on the face-down packet to cause the gaff to adhere to the card above it. You can now spread all three cards in a face-down fan (Photo 7).

The gaff is now on the face of the packet, with the King of Clubs facing downward.

Deal the top card, face down, onto the first participant's hand; the next card onto the second participant's; and finally place the affixed double card onto the hand of the third participant.

Explain that you will change all three indifferent cards into the selections. Start by snapping your fingers over the third person's card and then turning it face up to show that it has changed to the King of Clubs. Take the card and drop it onto the deck, getting rid of the gaff, and then click your fingers over the second and first participants' hands. Have them turn over their own cards to show that their cards have changed, too.

ANDI: It was Persi Diaconis' *Les Cartes Diaconis* (see Dai Vernon's *Ultimate Secrets of Card Magic* by Lewis Ganson) that got me interested in this particular plot. It stems from Edwin Sachs' *La Carte Generale* from Sachs' *Sleight of Hand*. A highlight of my version is that you show the incorrect selections and then, without any fiddling, place them onto the participants' hands before showing that they have changed.

The concept of this particular gaffed card comes from the type of card that Theodore DeLand used in some of his tricks, specifically his Phantom Cards, released in 1907. It was Joshua Jay's 2005 book *Overlap* that got me thinking seriously about this type of gaff. Josh also helped with the mechanics of this trick, and the positioning of the double-sided tape came from his "locking" overlap gaff.

CHEATING SUITE

By Joel Givens



JOSH: Joel Givens has published some outstanding magic in "Talk About Tricks" over the years, and I've asked him for his current "pet" routine for my farewell installment. There is nothing particularly new in either the handling or the method, but the impressive achievement in Cheating Suite is that he has woven so many plots and moments into one flowing routine. For many of us, having just one gambling piece in our arsenal is enough, and this is a great one to have at the ready. It has all the elements (except perhaps false dealing) that you would want to convey in a short time. This isn't the most detailed cheating exposé I have seen, but it is the quickest. In under ninety seconds, you perform a profound set of displays that are so visual they border on the magical.

EFFECT: The four Aces are placed at the bottom of four piles. Through imperceptible card control, they are brought to the top of each pile. Then, the four Kings are controlled and produced. And finally, a Royal Flush is produced.

SETUP: As an extensive setup is required, this is probably best used as an opener. Remove all Aces, Kings, and the Spade royal flush cards. With the pack face down, place the Queen of Spades face down on top, then the Jack, then the Ten of Spades. On top of these, place two indifferent cards. Place the King of Spades *face up* on top, followed by the other Kings, also face up. Place another indifferent card face down on top of the Kings, followed by the four face-down Aces. Make sure that the Ace of Spades is on the very top. Quick recap of the setup from the top down: Ace of Spades, Ace, Ace, Ace, indifferent card, King (face up), King (face up), King (face up), King of Spades (face up), indifferent card, indifferent card, Ten of Spades, Jack of Spades, Queen of Spades.

PERFORMANCE: Deal the four Aces off the top of the pack, turning them face up to display them. Or you could produce the Aces using any method that won't disturb the setup. As you gesture to the tabled Aces, insert your left little finger at the natural break beneath the face-up Kings. Scoop the Aces with your right hand and place them on top of the deck, jogged forward and to the right. Place your left thumb across the top of the deck, pinning both the Ace at the face and the face-down indifferent card on top into place (Photo 1). As you gesture to the Ace on the face, your left thumb and fingers will grip all the cards above the break together and *slide* the Kings to the right until they are even with the four Aces (Photo 2). Note that you still maintain a separation between the Aces and the Kings with your right thumb. In a continuing action, peel the Aces one by one on top of the deck, leaving the Kings lined up beneath the Ace on the face as you slide the other three Aces away from the packet and on top, one by one (Photo 3). This is Tomas Blomberg's Peel Slide Switch, based on Harvey Rosenthal's unpublished Submarine Switch.

Flip all eight cards face down together, as a block, pinning the face-down indifferent card on top of the deck into place as you flip the Aces and Kings over as a unit. Immediately deal the top three "Aces" (actually Kings) into a row on the table. Deal the last card toward yourself, completing the classic *T* formation (Photo 4).

Turn the deck face up. With your right hand, grasp the uppermost half of the deck in Hindu shuffle position, and execute a Hindu shuffle action, mixing cards from the face of the deck, but secretly leaving the top stock undisturbed (Photo 5).

You will now perform four HaLo Cuts [*Rim Shots*, 1975] as you cut about ten cards in each packet from the face of the deck onto each Ace (Photo 6). This situates an Ace on top of each packet, and a King on the face. You're way, way ahead at this point.

"I'd like to demonstrate card control. You see, I've distributed the four Aces at the bottom of each pile. But suppose I need to control the Aces. Without you seeing, I have to be able to manipulate the cards so those Aces appear on top, like this."

So saying, pick up the leader packet, nearest you, and as you turn the Ace face up on top, obtain a break beneath the top three cards of the packet with your left little finger. In turn, pick up the top card of the other piles and turn them face up, placing them face up on top of the packet in your hand. You have caused all four Aces to rise to the top of the packets. You just demonstrated card control.

"That's card control. But it was also something else. You see, any good cheat needs misdirection to get away with his work."



In this case, controlling the Aces wasn't the point. That was the misdirection. You were so busy watching the Aces, you missed the four Kings." Turn the piles in the outer row face up to show a King on the face of each packet, then turn the packet in your hand over slightly to show the fourth King. This, you explain, is misdirection. Spread over the top three Aces and place the Ace of Spades on the table. Keep the other three Aces in your right hand.

You now perform Chris Kenner's Four for Four Switch [*Totally Out of Control*], loading the three cards above the break behind the three Aces as you lever the cards face down onto the deck (so it's a three-for-three switch). Immediately deal the four "Aces" (actually, they're indifferent cards), outjogged, onto the three tabled piles (Photo 7). Drop the cards in your hand on the rightmost pile, then pick up the combined pile and drop it onto the remaining piles, one by one. You end up with an assembled deck that has three protruding cards. The Ace of Spades is still face up on the table.

"Now I'd like to show you what many consider to be the hardest move in cheating — mucking. It goes like this. I push the four Aces into widely separated parts of the deck, and you can see cards between each Ace, right?" As you talk, slowly square the indifferent cards into the deck, and as you riffle the pack, get a break below the top three cards. Palm the cards above the break in your right hand.

"The idea of mucking is to steal the desired cards — in our case, the Aces — from wherever they reside in the pack, and load them into my hand, like this." With your left hand, spread the deck face up on the table to show that the Aces are gone. At the same time, scoop the Ace of Spades off the table with your right hand, loading the palmed Aces onto it, then deal all four Aces face up in a fan (Photo 8). Done rapidly, it seems as if the Aces materialize like magic.

Give the face-up Aces a concave bend along their sides, like you would for Three-Card Monte (Photo 9). The reason for this is that, in a moment, you must be able to pick up the pile of Aces from the table while holding cards in your palm. When the cards are face down on the table, the bend in the cards will facilitate the action of picking them up.

Turn the packet of Aces face down on the table, taking care that the Ace of Spades is on top of the packet. Pick up the King of Spades at the face of the spread deck and use it to scoop the pack back into your left hand. Then replace the King on top of the deck, so it can reside next to the other royal flush cards.

With the pack held in your left hand, perform a pinky count to achieve a break below the top four cards. "I showed you one method of switching cards. Now I'll show you my favorite." As you draw attention to the Aces on the table, palm the four cards above the break in your right hand. Move the right hand away from the pack and pick up the packet of Aces on the table between the right fingers and thumb. The bow in the Ace packet makes this easy, even with cards in palm.

Place the Ace packet on top of the deck as you say, "If I really want to win at cards, I'll betray all my opponents and switch the Aces for an unbeatable hand of cards — a royal flush." Suiting actions to words, you'll deal the top cards off the deck into a face-up row. But as you go to deal the first card, deposit all the palmed cards on top of the deck, which allows you to deal the King, Ten, Jack, Queen, and Ace of Spades (Photo 10).

HITCHCOCK

By Joshua Jay



JOSH: I have performed this effect all over the world and at most of my performances over the last five years. It was also included, in a slightly different form, in my one-man show *Unreal*. This piece means a great deal to me because I was able to bring my passion for old Alfred Hitchcock films into my card magic. The plot is also so unusual that you should have no problem fitting it into your program without risk of repeating any themes. It's easy to do and can easily play to a parlor-sized crowd. I was holding back publication of Hitchcock for a special occasion, and this is it.

This effect can only really be understood when you experience it with the presentation, so bear with the rather vague effect description below. If you follow along, everything will make sense.

EFFECT: The performer begins by removing a card from the deck and, without divulging its identity, tearing it into four pieces. He places these pieces in full view on the table.

Four spectators each select a card and then slip their card back into the pack anyplace they choose.

The performer waves his hand over the deck and shows that, impossibly, each of the four selections has reversed itself in the pack. Then he reveals that each of the four pieces on the table has become part of one of the selected cards. To conclude, the reversed selections are removed from the pack to show that each one is now missing a corner, and the tabled pieces fit perfectly into each card. The pieces have become *part* of each selection.

SETUP: This is, essentially, two switches: a switch of the pieces and a switch of the selections. For the switch of pieces, we'll use a gaff. For the switch of the selections, we'll use a very bold subtlety.

You'll require two very thin magnets. I picked up two round magnets at a magic shop years ago; they are almost paper thin, but they're quite strong neodymium magnets. Affix one to the inside of the flap-side of the card box (Photo 1). I just use clear tape. The inside of the box is never seen.

You must also affix a flat magnet to an index corner of an indifferent playing card. I use clear tape again (Photo 2). The face of this card is never seen. If you use Scotch tape, you can peel off the tape and magnet and reuse them for several performances without having to replace anything except the card you tear. Insert this card into the middle of the deck you're using.

You require four force cards and duplicates of each one. I use the Five of Spades, Seven of Clubs, Nine of Diamonds, and the Jack of Diamonds. Tear off an index corner from one set of cards (Photo 3). With the torn set in numerical order, and the Jack at the face, place these cards face up on top of the face-down deck, with all the torn corners lined up (Photo 4). Place one indifferent card face down on top of these cards to conceal their position. If you use this as an opening effect, as I usually do, you might want to place an indifferent face-down card between each of the face-up torn selections (Photo 5). This

makes it harder to use the deck for other effects, because the top stock is bigger. But this larger setup makes the effect look a little nicer at the very end.

Finally, place the duplicate, intact set of selections face down on top of the deck, again in numerical order, with the Five of Spades on the very top.

Now, a word about the first switch. The switch really begins before the show does. By this I mean that the four pieces you wish to switch in begin on the table, under the card box. If I use Hitchcock as an opener, I just set the pieces on the table and to my right, face down and in order, with the Five of Spades piece uppermost. Then I place the card box on top of the pieces, obscuring them from the audience's view (Photo 6, and note that the flap side is lowermost). However, if you wish to get into this effect later in your show, or you want to approach a table and set things down, just approach by holding the empty box in your right hand, with the pieces secretly pinned to the underside of the box with your right fingers. Set the box down, secretly placing the pieces beneath the box. Either way, you're now ready to begin.

PERFORMANCE: Invite four spectators to join you onstage, or behind the table where you're performing. *"How many Alfred Hitchcock fans do we have out there today? Great! Hitchcock was my favorite director and I think he would have made a great magician, because he was a master of both suspense and surprise. And if you think about it, those are exactly the two qualities all great magic tricks have — suspense and surprise. So I'd like to start this trick the way every great Hitchcock movie starts — with an action."*

Spread through the deck at chest height and upjog the prepared, magnetic card, but don't show its face. Strip the card from the deck and table the pack face down. Dramatically tear the card into four pieces, keeping its identity concealed (Photo 7). *"The action is neither understood nor explained. Hitchcock even had a word for this,"* you say, pointing at the pieces, *"He called this the Mac-Guffin. This is the thing that all the characters are moving toward. They just don't know why."*

Place the piece with the magnet on the face of the packet of pieces, and then place them behind the tabled box, nearest to your body (Photo 8). *"This,"* you say, pointing to the pieces on the table, *"will be our surprise. But now we need to add an element of suspense."*

With the spectators in a row to your left, and ask the spectator nearest to you to call "stop" as you prepare for a riffle force. Cut the pack in half and hold a break as you reassemble. With your left thumb, riffle down the outer-left corner until the spectator calls stop, then lift all the cards above the break with your right hand. Extend your left hand to the first spectator and thumb over the uppermost card, the Five of Spades. In quick succession, hand out the other three cards to the remaining three spectators, in a row. In this way, you force the cards in numerical order, which just helps you keep all four selections straight, as far as who picked which card.

Cut the setup back to the top and gaze at the inner end of the deck to make sure the torn corners of the duplicates are at the inner end.



Spread the deck in a wide ribbon spread on your working surface, but take care that you don't spread the uppermost few cards or you risk exposing the face-up duplicates.

Invite all four spectators to show their cards to the audience, memorize their cards themselves, and then walk around to the front of the table and slide their cards face down into the pack wherever they like. As all four spectators slide their cards face down into the deck, you have both the physical and mental misdirection required to casually pick up the card box and place it in your pocket. As you pick up the box, it will naturally pass over the visible pile of pieces. As it does, it will automatically pick up the pieces as the two magnets connect, sandwiching the loose pieces on the underside of the box (Photo 9 is an exposed view). At exactly the moment these pieces are stolen beneath the box, the duplicate pieces come into view on the table (Photos 10 & 11). The spectators inserting the cards into the deck *physically* block the audience's view of the tabletop during this process, so it is almost impossible to get caught carrying out this switch. It happens in an instant and is nearly imperceptible.

Square up the deck and ask the spectators to go back to their row to your left.

"Now we have both suspense and surprise. We have surprise with these pieces. What are they there for? What role will they play? And we have suspense. You know what your cards are and where you put them, but I don't." As you talk, cut off a small packet from the top of the deck with your right hand and weave it into the upper portion of the left-hand cards (Photo 12). Here, you are distancing the torn selections from one another, so they are better distributed throughout the deck. As soon as you square the cards, again cut about twenty cards off the top of the pack and weave them into the remainder. This spreads those torn cards throughout the deck, instead of having them all clustered near the top.



Turn the deck face up, taking care that the torn ends are nearest you. Hold the cards at chest height and ask the first spectator name his card. *“The Five of Spades? Your Five of Spades is still exactly where you put it, but somehow it is now facing the other direction!”* Spread the cards at chest height and upjog the prepared Five when you come to it, taking care not to reveal the torn corner yet (Photo 13).

“And yours? The Seven of Clubs?” Again, spread through, upjogging the reversed Seven of Clubs. Continue in this fashion, reminding the spectators that *they* put the selections into the pack where *they* wanted. When all four cards are upjogged, take your first round of applause.

“That explains suspense, but it doesn’t explain surprise,” you say. Pause for a moment and then call attention to the pieces on the table. *“I tore up this card before you even selected your cards, and I haven’t touched the pieces since then. Here’s where it gets weird.”* Pick up all four pieces and distribute one to each of the spectators. Make sure you hand them out in order, or else the selections won’t match up in a moment.

Ask the first spectator to call out the name of his card once more. Then ask him to turn over his piece. He will, and it is the Five of Spades. This usually gets a spontaneous round of applause, but the next one is the real shocker.

“And what was your card? The Seven of Clubs? Show it to them.” When the second spectator reveals that she holds a piece to a *different* card, this garners a huge reaction and sets the tone for the remaining two pieces, which you quickly ask the remaining spectators to reveal. You have shown that each piece has become part of a different selected card. It’s as if you tore a card and each piece was from a different selected card.

At this point, nearly everyone believes that the trick is over. You did something suspenseful and something surprising. I have found that I almost always have to stage whisper *“Stay up here”* to my participants so they don’t start to head back to their seats. I want them to stick around for the final twist.

“But the best part of any Hitchcock film is the surprise ending — the MacGuffin. That part you never saw coming, but when it happens, all the pieces fit together. This is my surprise ending.”

You have been holding the pack in a squared condition, with the four selections protruding from the deck (Photo 14). Dramatically swivel these four cards from the pack to reveal that all four are missing corners, and then spread them so all four are visible (Photo 15).

“Please take your card and hold it up to your piece, to show that the card I tore up has become part of each of your cards. Ladies and gentlemen, a round of applause for my four actors!”

You are left with a nice stage picture: four spectators holding up a card and a piece that fits perfectly into it, and an audience applauding them and you.

JOSH: When I perform this effect in my one-man show, I preface the trick with a short montage video of some of Hitchcock’s most famous scenes. And as I perform, an ominous Hitchcock portrait is shown on the screens. The famous *Psycho* melody plays softly in the background, and the lighting is dim. With all the theatrics added in, you would be surprised how the tone of the piece changes from a punchy, upbeat number to a mysterious, almost spooky card effect. **M**

