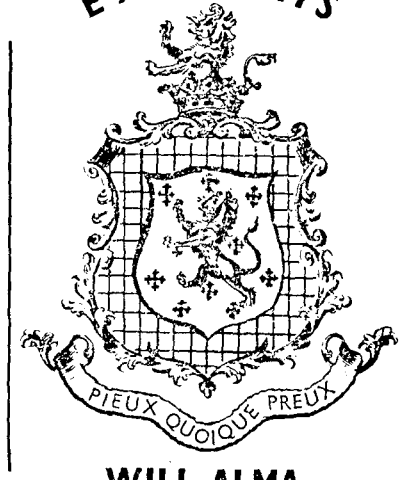


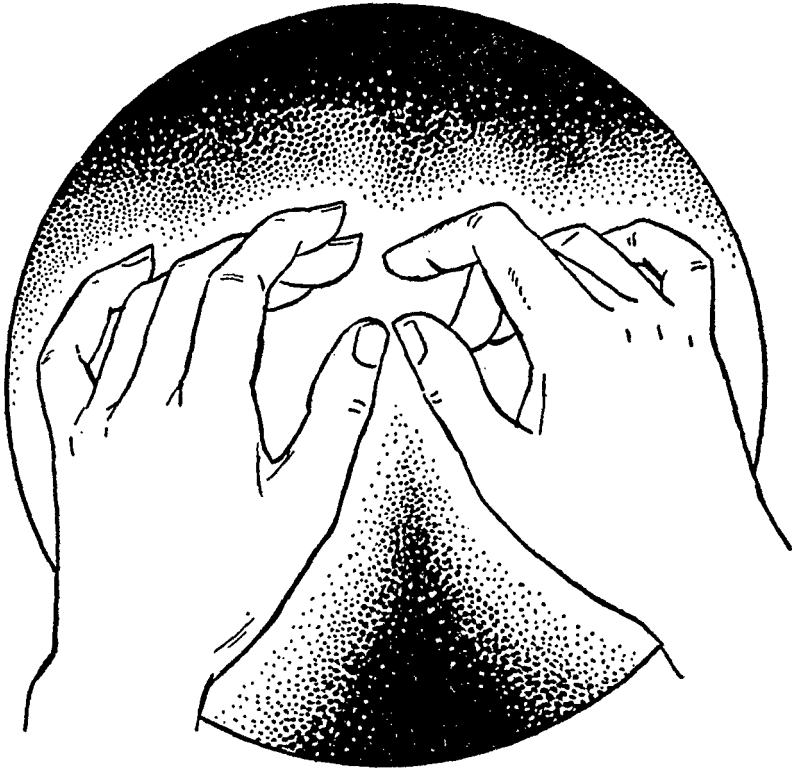


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# *The* HANDS ONLY



by  
Senor Mardo

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PREAMBLE

My first attempt as an author in magic was very humble. Thanks to the kindness of Max Holden, and the inexhaustible patience of John J. Crimmins, Jr., who guided me in my first steps as a writer, the publication of "Routined Magic" was made possible. Today, I still do not understand how my little book has sold so well and made a hit with the magic fraternity. It is my belief, at this point, that I owe the success attained by my first intellectual child, to the unlimited goodness every American possesses and their magnificent willingness to give credit to anyone who honestly tries.

I have been told repeatedly that, if I were to give all the time and sincere effort I have given magic, to any other profession, I could be a successful man today. But I feel that it is too late now to quit and turn to unexplored aims of which I have limited knowledge or none at all. To the last day of my life I have to stick to magic whether I come to the summit of my ambition or not. The thought of doing something else gives me a feeling of defeat and makes my heart quiver with the dread that takes possession of a man when he is about to lose his most precious acquisition, his friends.

At the time I am writing this, my second book, "Applause," is about to go on the market, thanks to Sam Berland, another friend of mine, who is sure that what I write is good and will be of benefit to all those who love magic as I do.

My complete treatise on the Cups and Balls was delivered to Lloyd E. Jones only recently. On that book, "The Cups," I have emptied all the knowledge I possess about this trick, as well as my idea of what I believe a magician should be. There was no intention on my part to hurt anybody's feeling, but simply to unveil the truth. No amount of ability, good looking props, fine wardrobe or unnecessary ballyhoo will make a magician, unless he is an actor.

This little book, "The Hands Only," is only a portion of a larger book entitled "Intimate Deceptions," dealing with close-up magic that I had in mind to publish later on, but circumstances compel me to amputate it from the main body.

Every effect in this book has been done satisfactorily before an audience, and if you follow my instructions carefully I know you will

enjoy the pleasant reactions from them as well as profit. Please understand that they are not my own tricks. They are tricks which have been done before; I have only routined them in a way that brings a more effective result to their performance.

In the last few years, there have been a lot of magical authors who claimed ownership to everything they had in their books. In my opinion, their attitude is foolish. There are plenty of printed proofs to destroy their statements.

It is my hope that you enjoy the following experiments as much as I did putting them together for you.

SENOR MARDO.

San Francisco, Calif.

May 1947.

# THE HANDS ONLY

## TRANSFIX

Let us suppose you are sitting at a table with some of your friends. Ask one of them for the loan of a half-dollar. Ask him to place it between the tips of your thumb and forefinger, edge up, as shown in Fig. 1. Cover the coin with your handkerchief. Remember, magicians always carry with them (or should) a colorful, heavy silk eighteen-inch handkerchief in their breast pocket. This is the one you use. Your



FIG. 1

left hand lifts one corner of the hanky, and shows the coin still there, as originally placed. With first two fingers of left hand, palm up, you clip the coin over the handkerchief and give it a little twist toward you, as in Fig. 2. Your right hand, underneath, releases the coin for a second, at the bottom edge and takes it again at what was the top edge when revolved by fingers of left hand. The coin held thusly, the whole of the handkerchief is shaken down, apparently showing that it is still inside, while really it is outside, in a fold of the hanky. A twist of the coin, and to all appearances, the piece is imprisoned in the very center of the hanky; the four corners are handed out to be securely held. You ask, "Have you a ring? Yes? Thank you. Please stick the four corners of the handkerchief through the ring."



FIG. 2

You explain that you are about to prove an impossibility. To make the coin, much larger than the hole in the ring, pass through it, while in the hands of the spectator. Stretch the handkerchief out on the table, the coin, to all appearances, imprisoned in the heart of the handkerchief, a ring gathering the goods (making a little pouch, which opening is under the handkerchief).

If the four corners of the handkerchief are picked up, and gathered together, off the table, and held aloft, like a lady's purse, and given a little shake up and down; upon opening the handkerchief again, ring and coin may be seen next to each other, free from the handkerchief. Remember, you may keep the ring, but for gimmick's sake, return the coin. People never forget money.

## THE PERVIOUS COIN

You still have the coin and handkerchief from the previous trick; continue before they ask you to repeat the first trick.

You are still at this table with your friends and it is possible that you have been drinking, water at least, and that there are some glasses on the table.

For the next experiment you use two tumblers. One on your right, and one on your left. Pick up the coin with the tips of your thumb and forefinger of the right hand; the left covers the coin and hand with the hanky. Ask one of your friends to take the coin through the handkerchief and hold it high. Now you take the glass on your left side, with your right hand, and bring it under the handkerchief, below the coin and at about three or four inches from the coin. Tell your friend to

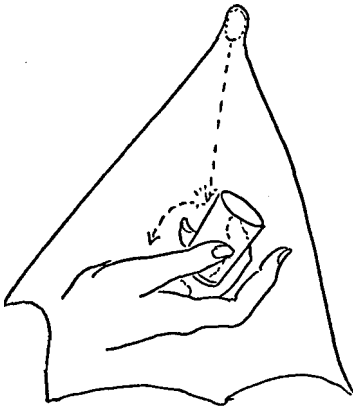


FIG. 3

hold his hand still. The opening of the glass is directly under the coin. Order him to let go of the coin. Everyone present will hear the coin drop into the glass. You ask, "What happened?" You know the answer, but they will tell you that the coin went into the glass. Which is right, and your intent is to prove it by bringing the glass out from beneath the hanky, and after showing everything, to empty the coin on the table. This you do.

"Let us repeat the trick," you now remark, and once again the coin is placed between your thumb and forefinger, and covered with the hanky. "Please hold the coin," you request. "Hold it steady as before. Now let it drop into the glass." But this time you already have the glass tilted to an angle of forty-five degrees; away from you. When the coin drops it will hit the side of the glass and fall into the palm of your right hand. The handkerchief is brought down over the mouth of the glass. During this operation, there is plenty of time to palm the coin in the right hand, bring it out, take the glass on the right side by the top, and bring it under the table, turning its bottom up, close to the table top. The left hand next gathers the end of the handkerchief around the bottom of the glass, lifts the whole thing straight up and starts turning the handkerchief-covered glass around as if to pour the coin out, on the table. In due time you hit the table underneath, lightly, with the bottom of the glass you are



holding in your right hand, exclaiming, "There it goes," and turning the empty glass quickly around, release the palmed coin into it. They will all believe the coin penetrated the handkerchief and the table and landed in the glass underneath. Bring the glass out and set it on the table as you uncover the one with the handkerchief. Watch the expressions on the people's faces, as they see you uncover the glass under the handkerchief.

## EXTORTION

This trick has been marketed by me for a while. When I first came to the West Coast, quite a few of the local boys asked me to release it for sale. This version of the trick is my very personal way to present it, and I hope you make as good a use of it as I have for the last ten years.

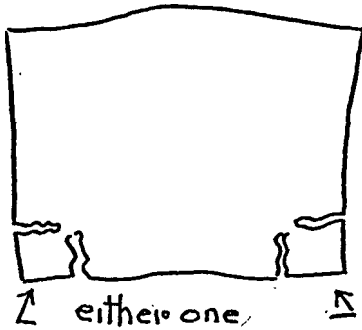


FIG. 4

A paper napkin is always handy in any eating place. Tear two of the corners as illustrated in Fig. 4. I never finish the tearing of the napkin, allowing the spectator to finish the job; this way he is convinced he had a plain piece of paper in his hands all the time.

In your right coat pocket, you have a penny, neatly wrapped in a piece of flash paper, about two inches square, on the center of which you have written the words, "I am sorry," this way:

I am  
Sorry. Also in that very pocket you

have a book of matches. You are now ready. You must not forget that the success of your table performance depends entirely on the rapid succession of one effect after another. Any lapse of action or words will dull the performance, bringing the spectators to a sudden realization of facts, turning their attention to other things. When that happens you have arrived at an unsuccessful finale. You must have a climax with a punch, and then get up and leave.

Let us go on with the trick. The very second you finish an effect, ask one of your spectators suddenly if he has a dime. The request will startle the person. Immediately he will go to his pocket, searching for the piece of currency; in the meantime, you go into your pocket, bringing your cigarettes out. With the left hand take a cigarette out, then offer some to your friends. Now as you go for the matches, bring

the penny in the flash paper out too, finger palmed, or held under the book of matches. The idea is not to let any one know you are hiding anything. Light the cigarette and replace the matches in the pocket. Ask someone to tear a corner off the paper napkin and wrap his dime in it. When it is handed to you, take it between the thumb and your forefinger, so as to almost cover the bundle between the two fingers. Your left hand is by this time stretched out palm up. The right hand



FIG. 5

apparently throws the wrapped dime into the left hand, close this hand rapidly for a few seconds, then open it to show that you really placed the bundle there; but what you really did was to release the finger-palmed penny packet. The right hand goes quickly to the right coat pocket, leaving the dime there and brings the matches out once again. A match is set afire and allowed to burn for a few seconds. Now, please remember, the bundle of penny and flash paper should rest on the spot indicated by the illustration Fig. 5. The hand should be kept stretched out during the whole performance of the trick. Never curl up any of your fingers and thus be hurt. Blow the match out and touch its hot head to the bundle in your hand. There will be a sudden flash to everyone's surprise. The match will be relighted by it, and a penny will be seen resting on your hand. Toss it on the table. When it lands on the tablecloth, besides the penny the spectators will see a paper disc with some writing on it. Ask them to read and say, "I really mean that, I am sorry." Never return the dime. You will destroy the spell.

## CREEPING

I always carry a bit of wax attached to one of the buttons of my vest or coat. On many occasions I have an opportunity to use it. Pardon me, but although the name of this book is "The Hands Only," I am compelled to suggest the use of two small decoys for your assistance.

Your friends may lend you two of their business cards. By the time you have asked for them, you already have secured a bit of wax on the nail of your right hand second finger. Take the two cards, placing one on the top of the other. A little shuffle won't hurt. All you want is an opportunity to stick the particle of wax to one of the cards, right

in the center face of it. The waxed card should be the lowest one.

Lay them on the table, take out your book of matches; tear one match off, place the match on the table, the book of matches on it, next the business card with the bit of wax. Clap your hands or snap your fingers loudly. Pick the card from the top of the matches, lift the book of matches and . . . the match is still laying quietly on the table. Nothing has happened. Once again, you cover the match with the card, being careful that the wax is on the top of the match; place the book of matches on the card, and repeat the clapping. Upon lifting the matches you point to the center of the card as if expecting to see the match on it. Say, "This is very hard." Replace the matches on the card and say you are going to try a different way.

This time, lifting the matches a little bit, slide the card out on one side, set the matches down, apparently on the single match. You must not forget that when you pick the book of matches, with thumb and second fingers, the forefinger exerts a little pressure on the whole thing, making the match become attached to the card. The card is this time placed on the book of matches and you clap your hands again. Of course you know that unknown to your audience, when you pulled the card out the match came with it underneath, stuck to the bit of wax. The clapping business has nothing to do with the trick; it is only showmanship. Upon lifting the business card the match will be seen on the top of the book of matches as if it had climbed there by the force of your noisy clapping. Light a cigarette with this match and throw it away.

Now put the matches away and ask for four pennies. Place them in the corners of a square of about eight inches. Take the two business cards, the one with wax is always on your right. Cover the right upper corner penny first with the waxed card, lay the clean card on top of it. Hold the clean one steady and gently, and draw the waxed one away from under the clean one without exposing the penny. The penny is still covered with the clean one. Next, lay the waxed card on the top of the lower left penny, gently pick the clean one up showing the penny still under it and lay crosswise on top of the waxed one. Repeat the operation by pulling the waxed card from under the clean one and place it on the upper left. Pick the clean one from over the lower left and place it across the waxed one, exerting a little pressure this time, in order that the penny sticks to the waxed card. Holding the top card with tip of thumb on one end and forefinger tip on the other, lift it, just as you did the two times previous. With thumb and forefinger tips of right hand pull the waxed card from under the clean one, carry-

ing away the penny stuck to it. Lay it quietly on top of penny on lower right, being careful that the penny stuck to the card does not land on the top of the other penny, for it will talk and spoil the trick. Now you start the following: Picking up the penny on your upper right corner, apparently place it into your left hand, palming it in right in your favorite manner. The left hand is brought in fist form over the waxed card and the fingers are opened slowly as if pouring something down on the back of the card. Your left hand takes the card near the center on one side (see illustration Fig. 6) and slowly bends it up; this will dislodge the penny from the wax. Then lift the card clear of the table. Two pennies will be seen on it. The next two moves are very important and must be executed with rapidity and precision. With the right hand pick up the two pennies from the table and rattle them in your fist. No one knows how many there are. Bring

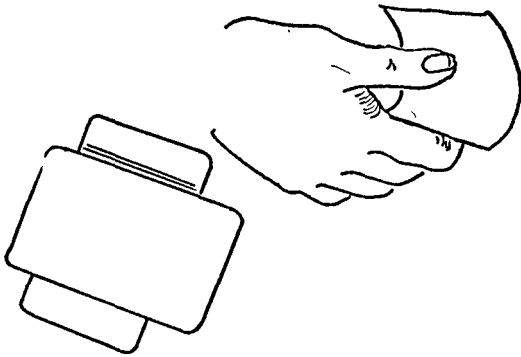


FIG. 6

them to your finger tips stacked. At the same time the card is placed on the table and the two pennies and the palmed one are inserted under it. Pick up the penny on the lower left corner and repeat the sleight; lift the card off, three pennies are under it. Pick up the pennies as before, rattle them and replace them under the card,

adding the palmed one. Now apparently pick something off the back of the card which has been laying on the upper left all this time and ask one of your friends, a lady preferable, to open her hand. Put something imaginary on the center of her palm and ask her to close her fingers as if she really had something in it; bring her hand over and above the waxed card and opening her fingers, pour out what imaginary stuff she had in her hand. You pick the card with thumb on one side, and second finger on the other side, the tip of forefinger presses down on center of card, about where the spot of wax it, making one of the pennies stick to it. Lift the card a bit and only three pennies will be seen. "What happened?" you ask. Look all over the top of the table, and pointing to a far spot you say again, "Oh, no wonder it rolled all the way over there"; pick the ghost penny off the table and place it in the lady's hand again. "Please," you beg, "place your hand a little lower, it may roll off the table." After she has opened her hand, you

pick up the card as explained before, showing four pennies. Tell her, "You are marvelous, thank you!"

When returning the business cards, scrape off the wax with a fingernail.

## UNCANNY RAGS

Perhaps one of the oldest tricks in existence is the basic principle of the Afghan bands. A piece of red or green cotton goods, four inches wide, thirty-six inches long, is sewn at both ends into a circular piece and split three times where the stitches are, ready to rip around, separating the whole into rings. Before the sewing is done, at "A" Fig. 7, the splits have to be cut at equal distances. You will notice that in the illustration, the sections are marked: 1, 2, and 3. Number 1 will be

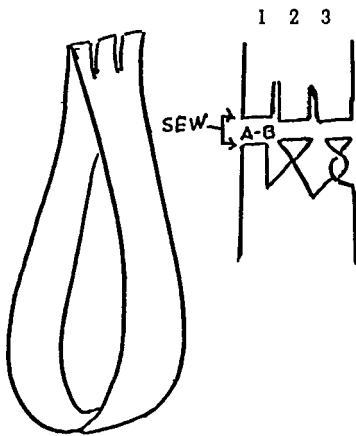


FIG. 7

sewn straight; at 2 before the two ends are stitched together, one of the ends is given a twist, bringing corner "B" to the position where corner "A" is, and then sewing it together; end number 3 is twisted twice, bringing corner "B" to "A," and then to its original position. (Editor's note: 1 no twist, 2 a half twist, 3 a full turn.)

As you rip portion 1 off the wide band, you will have a normal circle in your left hand, about an inch wide, and a wider band in your right hand. Once again take portion 1 and tear again and you will have a large circle in each hand. Tear off portion 2 by ripping at the slit and you will have now a circle twice as large, rip again and you will have a circle inside of a circle. I suggest you take half of the first circle you tore at the beginning and split it with your scissors, right at the stitches making a long tape out of it, tie both ends in a knot with protruding ends; place this one in your right coat pocket, where you have an extra one-inch band, of similar color, ends sewn together in a complete circle, and with a piece about five inches long tied around it and over the joint ends, simulating the one you just placed in your pocket.

After tearing section 3 and having a series of entangled circles, go into your right coat pocket and bring out the band with the faked knot. To all appearances you are bringing out the circle you split open

and then tied the ends together. Remark that you are about to show how uncanny is the behavior of these rag circles. Hold the circle in front of you, hooked to the thumbs of both hands and tugging at it occasionally ask, "Where do you want to cut this circle open?" Most of the times they will ask you to cut it at the opposite end of the knot. All you have to do now is to bring that part of the circle toward the

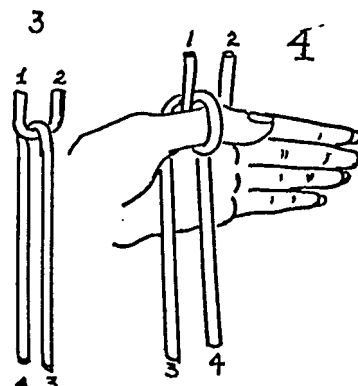


FIG. 8-A

FIG. 8-B

This is to get rid of the real ends which were stitched. The knot is actually at the center of the strip of cloth you are holding and everything is fair. Once again tie these ends together. To all appearances you have two pieces of eighteen-inch cloth with knots at both ends. Ask them to select one of the knots. If they select the one that slides,

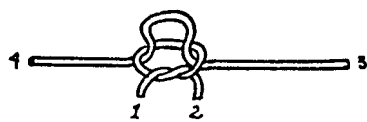


FIG. 8-C

left hand, and when both hands meet, right takes hold of the knot and left side of the band, sliding the knot toward the center of the band, sliding the knot toward the center of the band and bringing the stitched joint to the bottom, holding the stitches between the left hand fingers, letting the apparently knotted ends hang down. Your hands seemingly offer the requested spot to be cut, really one or two inches ahead of the sewn ends. Once cut, a knot will be seen at the center of the band. Ask your spectator to cut a little bit more off the end you are holding in your left hand.

trim its ends close to the band, making a false knot, besides, as you do in your rope trick. Tell them you have decided to trim both knots off. Cut the knot at the real ends off and give it to someone as a souvenir. Ask another person to

hold both ends of the tape, place your right hand at the apparently cut center; by rubbing left and right you will dislodge the small piece there left from the faked knot, and at the same time untie the false knot, leaving for them to see only the center of the tape.

Your next move will be to apparently cut the band, like the rope trick. Instead of restoring the rope in the orthodox manner, you should, once you have it as in Fig. 8-A bring end 3 over left thumb, then tie ends 1 and 2 together (B). The short piece will be this way, tied to an outside loop of the long piece of tape (C). You hold one end of the band and one of the spectators holds the other end; with your free hand

pluck the knot away and hand it to someone saying, "Will you hold this a minute for me?" I guarantee that they will all burst out laughing.

## A WRINKLE ON THE MISER'S DREAM

T. Nelson Downs, Frakson, and perhaps the immortal Robert Houdin were about the only ones who performed this trick the way I think it should be done; the others just try, but have never attained perfection. As for myself, I am satisfied with the few little artifices given to me by my gallant friends in magic.

The real artist uses a champagne bucket, or maybe if he has a comic vein, any old tin can, as large as the classic bucket. The thing is to make as much noise as possible. Please understand that this trick has been explained in several treatises of magic and I am not going to give a routine that might surpass the ones already known, no . . . just a wrinkle I have conceived to make it easier for some of my pupils to produce the first coin. Downs and Frakson acquired a perfect muscular control and a fine mental co-ordination and were able to show both their hands, front and back, to all appearances, empty at the beginning of the routine, while they were concealing one or two coins in their hands. Please don't doubt me, because I have seen Mr. Dantini do it, and besides Mr. Frakson is still living and can prove my statement.

Place a very small portion of magician's wax on the outer center of the bucket bottom; the head side of a coin will adhere to it. In this way, you may be able to hold the bucket by the edge with either hand, without dropping the coin. Place the bucket on the palm of your right hand; the left hand makes a grab in the air as if picking a coin, look at your fingers showing disappointment; transfer the bucket to the left. Remember when looking at your left trying to find out what you caught in the air, your right hand has been dislodging the coin from the bottom of the bucket. Now with left holding the bucket, the right hand makes another catch into the air, producing a coin at finger-tips; this coin is thrown into the bucket, once; taken out, made to vanish, reproduced from some part of your body where you have some others concealed and brought out, finger palmed, together with the first one. Perhaps five or six coins and the initial one will suffice to perform a brief but punchy routine.

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