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**TOM OSBORNE'S**

**3 to 1**

**ROPE TRICK**

INCLUDING

TOM OSBORNE'S Pet Routine also Variations and Routines with and without Gimmicks, Wax and Cement.

The 4 to 1 Method and the last word in Cut and Restored Ropes explaining the Cuts-by-Audience. Variations even to returning Rope to audience for examination.

None Genuine Without This Signature

*Tom Osborne*

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**TOM OSBORNE'S**  
*Famous Greatly Improved*  
*Three-to-One Rope Trick*

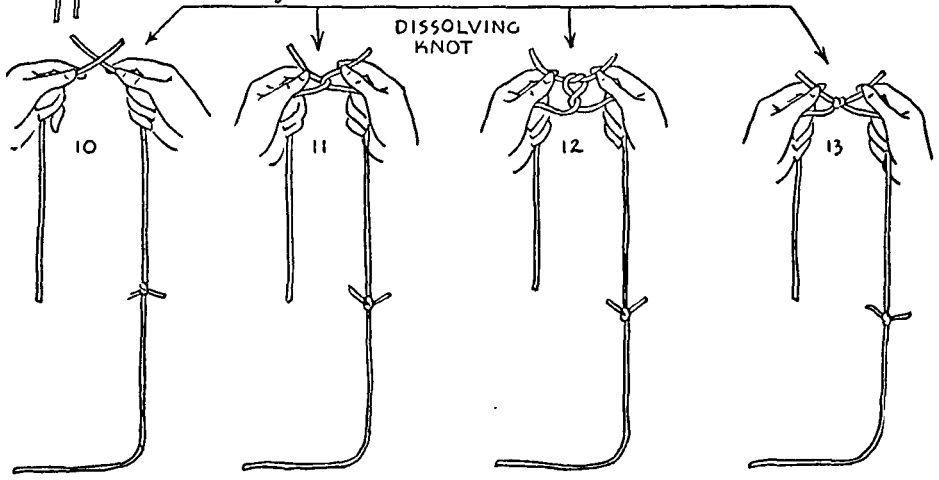
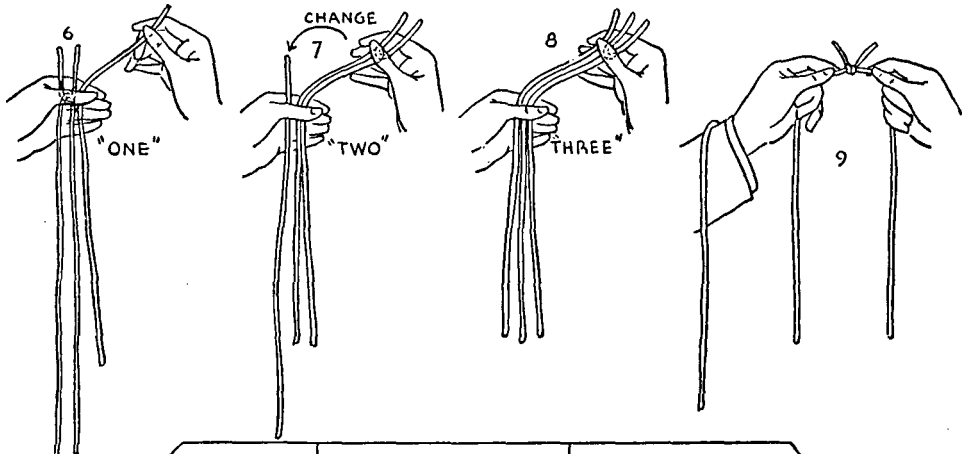
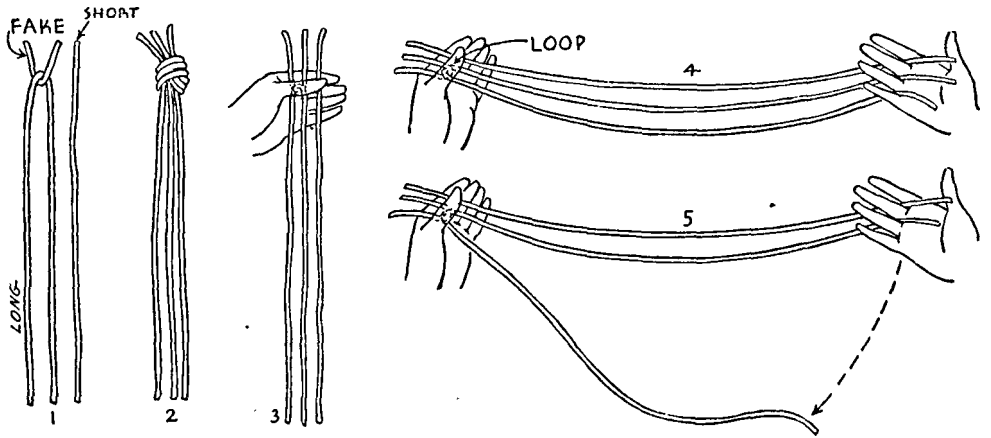
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When you cause three separate pieces of rope to join into a single unbroken length—you have performed a miracle! Your audiences will swear to the fact that you start with a trio of ropes of equal length. They will agree that you tie these pieces together quite fairly. But how you cause them to become one—that's what leaves them gasping.

The above brief outline is the standard official TOM OSBORNE routine, described in minutest detail below. For its working you require about 9 feet of soft braided rope—and nothing else whatever. However, should you feel it to be absolutely necessary to have entire freedom in handling the rope at the conclusion of the trick, you will find several simple joint gimmick ideas described herewith.

Our description of the standard routine starts the actual presentation of the trick with the pieces of rope already cut, but loosely knotted together for convenience in initial handling. If a start from an original 9-foot length will fit better into your program, you will find several methods for cutting into 3 parts right under the noses of your spectators. In fact, they may do the cutting themselves!

All illustrations are from the performer's viewpoint. In fact, it will be as though you were Tom Osborne, himself, looking at his own



## THREE-TO-ONE ROPE TRICK

hands. For Tom, himself, made the original sketches from which his close friend, Bill Hanna, made the finished drawings.

### Basic Presentation for All Routines

Fig. 1 shows how your 9 feet of rope are divided. The looped section at the left, later to give the effect of 2 separate pieces, is slightly shorter than twice the length of the single piece on the right. The little feke piece that runs thru the looped section makes the latter seem to be of the same length as the single part.

Fig. 2 is the appearance of the ropes after the pieces have been gathered together as in Fig. 1—and then loosely knotted. In this condition they will stand the roughest handling, may be pulled from your pocket, lifted from your table or come out of a load without the least fear that their arrangement will be disturbed.

As you start to patter, you untie the knot. This gives you the most natural sort of cover for the joint between the feke and the looped section. Keep back of hand towards audience.

Fig. 3 places your left thumb to hide the feke-and-loop joint from all sides. It is, however, important that the two ends of the feke and the top end of the single piece of rope lay as noted—side by side, flat against the left first finger. No change in this hold is made until the move that starts with Fig. 6.

Fig. 4 starts the first visual proof that you really do have three pieces of rope. Interlace the fingers of the right hand in the three parts as shown. Then separate the hands at about chest level. A slight amount of tension will serve to keep the parts free from each other.

Fig. 5 continues the above-mentioned “proof” by dropping the ropes one at a time, slowly. It is not necessary to count them aloud at this point. Just go on with your patter story and let the spectators form their own conclusions. The skeptics will be entirely convinced with the next three moves.

Fig. 6 is where you show the single piece to be entirely separated from the others. With thumb and forefinger of the right hand, draw the rope up *thru* the fingers of the left hand. This detail of continuously drawing the ropes *thru* the hands for one reason and another

## THREE-TO-ONE ROPE TRICK

may be said to be characteristic of the whole trick. You will see how natural and useful it is in covering some of the later moves.

Keeping the back of the left hand towards the audience, count a good, clear "One"! just as the rope comes free. Calmly return this single piece to the left hand and—

Fig. 7—switch the single piece for the feke and double section in this manner:—Right hand brings rope down until top end is on level with other ends held in left hand. As rope is returned to left hand, momentary position is as in Fig. 3 again. Without pause, move right thumb and forefinger to left, grasping feke ends and drawing feke (with looped section attached) upwards.

As you make the above move, count "Two"! The effect is that of merely adding another separate piece to the one already in hand. The following move is the real "pay off."

Fig. 8 shows how the two parts of the looped section are drawn into the palm of the right hand by the third and fourth fingers, while the thumb and first finger (still securely holding and hiding the feke at the joint) pull the single piece from the left fist—as you count "Three"!

You've counted the ropes twice, differently each time. What could be more fair? This builds confidence in the moves of tying the "three" pieces together.

Fig. 9 is the appearance of things during the making of the first knot. Having counted the pieces as above, they are returned to the left hand. The single piece is drawn upwards and free with the right hand; then placed momentarily out of the way on the left forearm. Of course, the feke's lower end is kept concealed.

Now you proceed to very deliberately tie the feke around the top of the loop. Just a single simple knot is all that you want—and do not draw it too tight; it has to do some sliding later on! On the other hand, make it look as if your pulls on the ends were quite hard. And pretend to tie another knot on top. This will make this first tie look more like the one that follows.

Drop one end of looped section and pick up single piece.

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Fig. 10 shows the former looped or long piece of rope hanging free with the knotted feke at its center. The short piece, in the left hand, is laid across the long piece, in the right hand—the ends extending by an amount best determined by trial to suit the type of rope you are using.

The knot you are about to tie is highly important for a smooth finish of the trick. It is an easily-made dissolving tie, but takes a little time to get the moves smooth and natural. Compare them with those made in doing the first (feke) knot, revising your handling of the latter if necessary to make the ties seem identical.

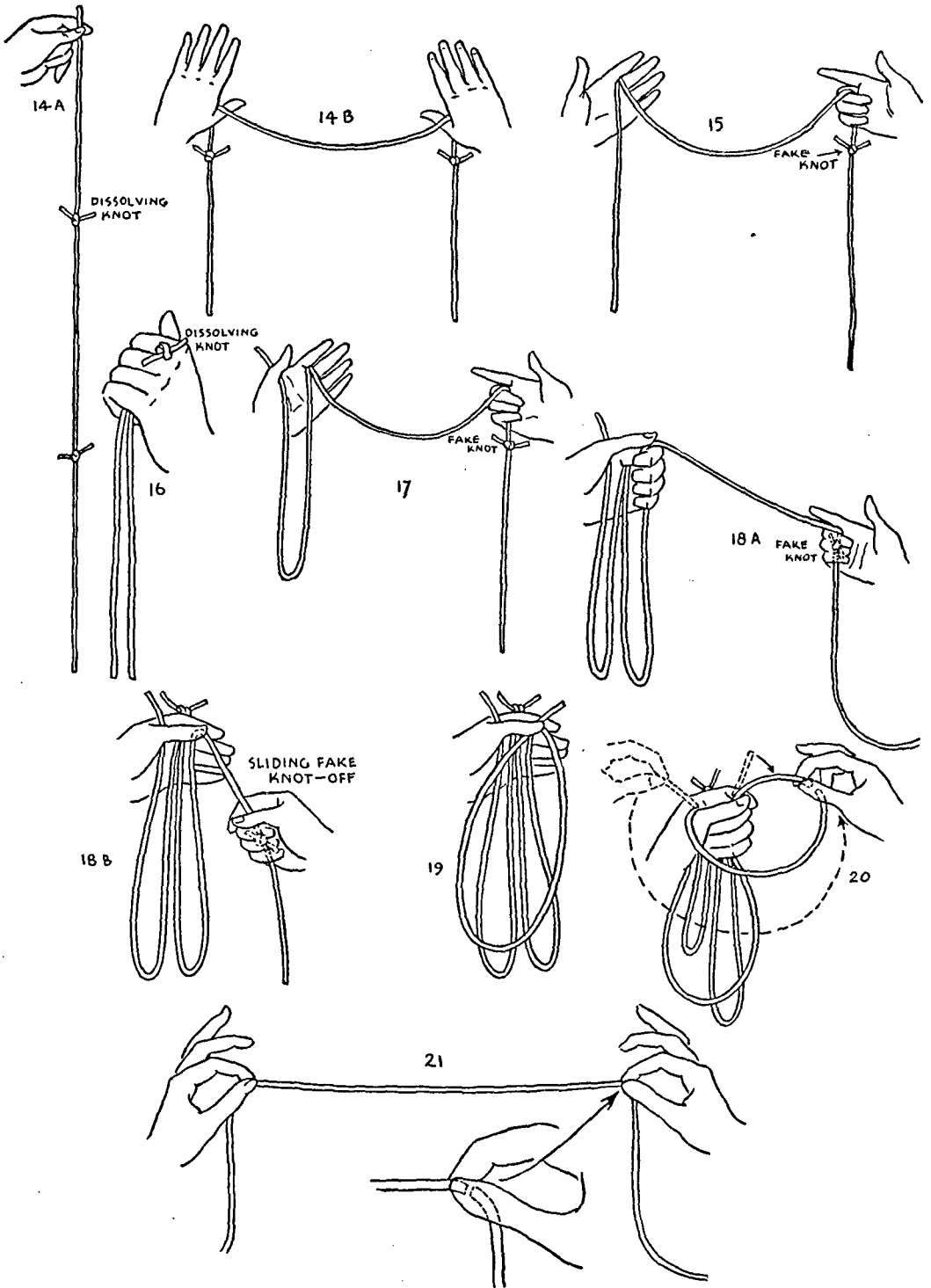
Fig. 11 starts the dissolving knot by using the right fingers to bend the extended end of the lefthand piece of rope around the righthand piece—and back into the left fingers. A similar twist is given the extended end of the righthand rope. The general effect is that of twisting the two ends counter-clockwise.

Fig. 12 is a smooth continuation of the above. The ends are tied in a regular single knot—being sure to make the twist in the same counter-clockwise direction as above. Failure to make both twists the same will not only give the knot a tendency to unfurl ahead of time, but may also, strangely enough, interfere with a smooth break-away when you come to the finish of the trick. However, do not be alarmed! You'll get the knack almost at once and will never forget it. Our only reason for emphasizing the point is that we want to be sure that YOU know as much about this trick as TOM OSBORNE does.

Fig. 13 shows the dissolving knot in its final stage, the very earnest pulling of its ends by both sets of fingers “to be sure that it is good and tight”!

Fig. 14 offers two choices (a) and (b) of displaying the entire length of the “three” pieces securely tied together. In (a) you lower (don't drop!) the long piece with the right hand and then transfer the short piece from the left hand to the right, the free end of the long piece resting on the floor.

For (b) merely move the left thumb to the right of the dissolving knot just made and slide the right thumb along the long piece towards the feke. By turning the palms up and outwards towards your audience, both hands are shown to contain nothing but the rope.





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Now that you have supposedly joined the "three" pieces with knots, the next thing to do is to get rid of the knots! So, you start to gather them up into your left fist—starting with the dissolving one, the tie nearest your right hand.

Fig. 15 shows how the dissolving knot is tucked securely between first and second fingers of the left hand.

Fig. 16 is what the audience sees of the back of left hand.

Fig. 17 is after the entire assembly has been suspended from the left fingers, the right hand now picks up the short piece of rope by its end and transfers it to the left thumb crotch. Then the right hand encircles the other part of the rope (starting near left fist) and slides along until the feke is encountered. When the feke has been entirely enclosed in the right fist, this hand apparently deposits the feke in the left hand. What actually occurs is given in—

Fig. 18—where you see that the left hand merely grasps the rope while the right fist (concealing feke) slides along almost to the end of the rope. Right thumb and forefinger carry the end of the rope to the left thumb and forefinger, beside the free end already there.

As you grip the end of the rope between 1st joint of forefinger and thumb of left hand, the feke is drawn free—to be disposed of as below.

Fig. 19 is how things should look at this point.

As you patter on what has occurred, there's opportunity to go into a pocket for some "magic powder" or other equally effective knot dissolver! That's where you get rid of the feke. Should you not wish to move your hands far from the rope, the feke is readily concealed by closing the last three fingers of the right hand.

Fig. 20 starts the "restoration" process. In Fig. 19 you will notice the two free ends pointing upwards. With thumb and forefinger of right hand draw out about ten inches of the end resting in thumb crotch. Turn the right hand, placed at extreme tip end of rope, so as to butt (or slightly overlap) the other free end remaining between the left finger and thumb. Holding this joint securely with right thumb and forefinger, toss the rest of the rope from the left hand with an outward motion. As soon as rope is entirely free, the dissolving knot comes apart without any further help.

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Fig. 21 shows how the left hand grasps the rope again so as to hold it up for inspection. After a moment, the left hand may release its hold; or both hands may be brought together in order to coil the rope for disposal.

This concludes the official standard TOM OSBORNE Routine. It is the shortest, snappiest and easiest to learn. However, if your performing time permits—or should you definitely desire to lengthen this effect—here are two methods of starting from scratch, so to speak. They might be called “From 1 to 3 to 1.”

### Tom Osborne's Single-Piece Routines

Performers who feel that everything possible should be given out for fullest inspection will delight in the following methods for starting with a single piece of rope 9 feet in length and entirely free from any preparation whatsoever. Later will be given the secrets of how you can even permit members of your audiences to make the two cuts that divide the rope into three pieces!

#### Single-Piece Start—No. 1

This method, the one that follows and the “let them cut it” variations lead directly into the standard routine at the point denoted by Fig. 3.

Using your own or suitable borrowed length of rope, have it thoroughly examined by a committee of two. After they tire of pulling against each other, get them to hold it reasonably taut. With left hand grasp rope about two-thirds from left end—as in Fig. 22. Cut at this point retaining the cut end of the longer part in your left hand. Pass it over to the assistant on your right—as in Fig. 23. Then take the short third just cut off and, standing as in Fig. 24, ask one of your helpers to tell you when you are marking off the center. For close-up of your own view of your left hand see Fig. 25.

Under cover of finding the exact center you make a loop at the top of the short piece you are holding—in this manner:—The center point having been found, tell the committeemen to drop their ends. But the second before they do so, reach your left thumb over the rope held by assistants, hook it in front of (audience side) the dangling vertical rope at point marked X in Fig. 25. Then a twist of the thumb

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back towards your body and then upwards will produce a short loop with upturned outer end engaging the long piece just being liberated by your aides. Your right hand can help in this operation. The finished result will be like Fig. 26, lettered ends of rope corresponding with those of Fig. 25. The assembly is held in the left fist as per Fig. 27.

Either you or a committeeman cuts the loop at point X of Fig. 27—and the ropes in your hand are practically as in Fig. 3 of the standard routine.

### Single-Piece Start—No. 2

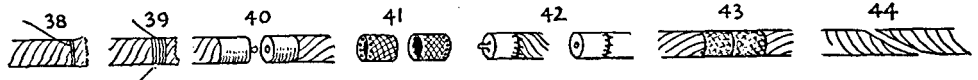
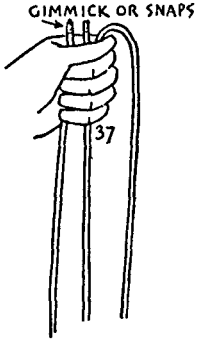
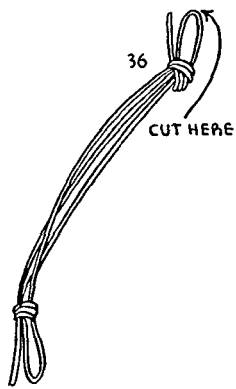
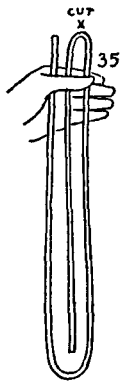
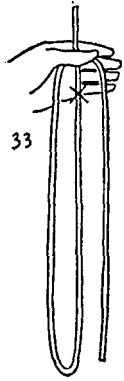
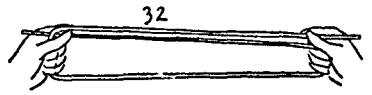
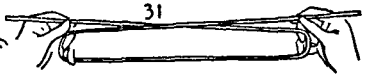
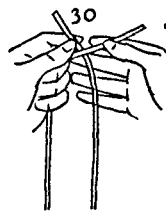
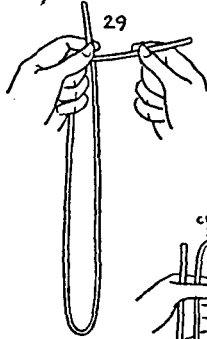
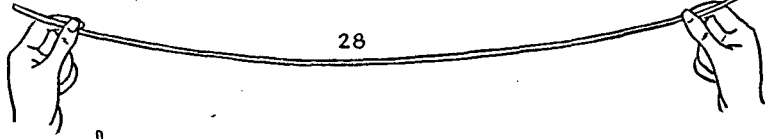
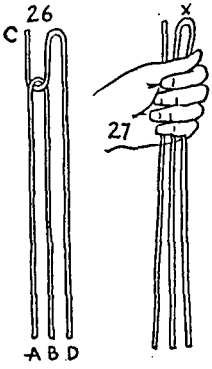
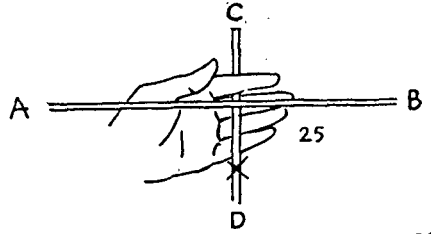
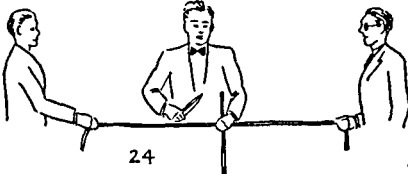
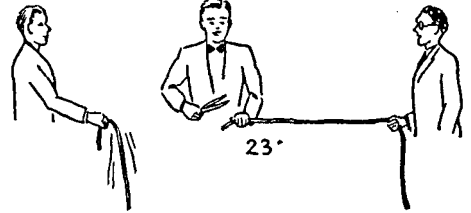
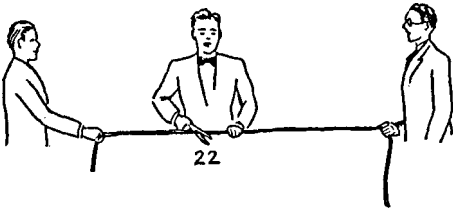
Personally considered better than the above, this method starts with you holding the rope near its ends as in Fig. 28. Then bring the right hand over to the left so that the lower three fingers of the left hand can close around the rope as in Fig. 29. Next, the three lower fingers of the right hand close around the part of the rope hanging from left thumb and forefinger. Fig. 30 shows this action about to take place.

Holding firmly with the thumbs and fingers of each hand, move the hands apart as in Fig. 31.

While pretending to even up the rope into three equal parts, keep the eyes on the right hand—as misdirection for what you are doing with the left fingers. With left forefinger, clip free end of rope against the loop to steady it, Fig. 32, holding the loop itself by the bent third and fourth fingers. Now slip left thumb under spot marked X in Fig 33, and twist this part of the rope out and up. See Fig. 34. As the left fist closes around the parts of the rope, the hook-and-loop effect of Fig. 35 is well concealed. By bringing up the right hand (it having dropped the other end of the coil) the parts in the left hand may be adjusted and more length be stolen for subsequent making of the feke piece.

The hook-and-loop may also be formed by the right hand picking up the rope at point X and carrying it into the left fist. Some performers may consider this the easier way—but it concentrates hand motions, hence attention, at the one spot where it is not wanted during a crucial period of the trick.

In any event, Fig. 35 shows how your rope parts should be when



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ready for cutting. Snip first at the top loop, secretly creating the feke piece. Then a cut at the bottom loop gives you separate short piece of the standard routine—as in Fig. 3.

### Cut-by-Audience Variation

For those performers who feel that a cut-and-restored rope trick loses effectiveness because the cut must be made away from the audience—even though done by committeemen—here's how TOM OSBORNE passes out rope and scissors and LETS ANYONE IN THE HOUSE DO THE CUTTING!

Admittedly this is risky where an audience contains one or two members out to make trouble for the magician. However, where conditions are known to be quite friendly and safe, the after-talk builds the performer's reputation far out of proportion to the risk taken in doing something really outstanding.

Have just one person come up and examine your rope. Don't say what's going to happen; just take it back, giving in exchange your pair of scissors. While the latter are being examined, you manipulate the rope thru the moves of Figs. 28 to 35 inclusive. Then tie a knot at each end of the coil—just a plain knot, as if the coil were a single piece of rope. But be sure that the feke arrangement is well concealed within the knot you make at that end. Now you can toss the coil to your volunteer inspector to cut through the loops at the ends as you designate. See Fig. 36.

Should you feel the need of an excuse for all of this tying business prior to getting the trick really under way, the following is suggested:—You are going to show something learned from a Chinese magician (not telling them what is to come). The magi exhibited his rope, then his scissors (just as you are doing) and then made the rope up into a peculiar bundle. Then he offered the bundle with instructions to cut the loops just so! When the knots were untied, there were three pieces of rope . . . and you go into the standard count moves from Fig. 6 onwards.

### The Use of Joint Gimmicks, Wax and Cement

A very beautiful finish is to toss the rope into the air, holding it by one end only. The effect is that the "three" pieces actually seem

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to melt into one. It is accomplished by firmly attaching the long and short pieces of rope to each other by some means not too easily visible from moderate distances.

Undoubtedly, the best rope-joint gimmick is the machine-made screw type. Usually associated with the trick that starts with three pieces of equal length, these gimmicks have hollow shanks into which the rope ends are twisted—having first been well served with cotton thread. All outside surface must be painted to match the color and texture of the rope used. As the shanks stiffen the ends of the ropes considerably, some experimenting may be required for correct positioning and freedom in order to make a quick, smooth joint. Fig. 37 shows the location of gimmick parts before drawing out the one on extreme left so that it may be looped around to join its mate on the right.

Snap fasteners may be used for joints—either sewed directly on the ends of the rope parts or soldered to metal ferrules. For direct attachment, the ends of the rope must be wrapped with white thread as in Figs. 38 and 39. The finished job will look like Fig. 40. Ferrules make for longer life and are not too hard for the home mechanic, either. Just get a couple of short pieces of thin-walled metal tubing to fit the rope snug. Around one end of each, pierce a number of small holes, Fig. 41, so that the tubes may be sewed to the rope. Then solder the parts of the snap fasteners to the other ends of the tubes—as in Fig. 42. Be sure to use white finished fasteners, even if you have to paint them yourself.

Personally, TOM OSBORNE prefers wax or cement to metal gimmicks of any type. For one very good reason, no extra parts being present, the adhesive methods make it much easier to slide the feke off from the free end of the long piece. Then, too, any suitable piece of rope may be prepared in but very few minutes. All you need do is cut the ends to be joined as shown in Fig. 44. Butt the parts together before applying your adhesive—so as to be sure the parts match up nicely.

Gimmicks or adhesive joint schemes used in routines that start with the rope all in one continuous piece require a change in moves as follows. Naturally, the gimmicks are at the two free ends seen in Fig. 33. Standard procedure for forming the feke would cut off

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one of the gimmicks! So, here's what you do. With the rope held as in Fig. 33, make your first cut at the bottom loop. Draw out the resultant short piece (center one of diagram) and reverse it end for end, without disturbing the long doubled part. Arrange the parts in the left hand so as to look like Fig. 34—only with the bottom loop severed, of course. Proceed to make the lift at point marked X, thus creating the feke when the final cut is made as per Fig. 35. The two gimmicked, waxed or cemented ends are now together at the bottom—so that when you proceed thru the standard steps of knot-making, etc., you arrive at the point for final restoration with things looking like Fig. 37. Now, all you have to do is join up the parts and make the throw-out with one hand only.

### General Suggestions

The best rope for this trick comes from abroad. However, your dealer may carry one of the very excellent made-to-order domestic types. If you expect to use the same pieces over and over again, it is a good idea to wrap the ends of all three pieces (long, short and small feke piece) with fine cotton thread. This will prevent the formation of "whiskers" that might embarrass you sometime by peeping out from between your finger tips! This same idea is used when metal gimmicks are applied. See Figs. 38 and 39.

If, at the end of any routine—standard or gimmicked—you wish to pass the rope out for a final inspection, just chop out some "souvenir pieces" with your scissors. A little adroit trimming off of small pieces will get rid of any telltale secret gadgets. For the non-gimmicked methods, the first cut would be only a pretended one—at the joint between your finger tips. After throwing out the original short piece, cut the remainder of the rope in half—or, if long enough for an effect to follow, use that as an excuse for the cutting down to shorter than the "restored" length.

A 4 to 1 effect is quite possible (though not especially recommended) by using the standard method, plus one gimmick. Simply add another separate short piece. When you count "one" for the first single piece, switch and take up the same as in the 3 to 1 routine. Then pull up the third piece, and finally, the last one remaining.

By use of a single gimmick, you can approximate the regular 3 to 1 routine with three separate pieces of equal length. You may

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get some fun trying out the several possible variations. However, there is no real value in it—except that it might relieve the situation some time when you find that an accident has cut your rope into more parts than you had expected!

Jack Gwynne has carried this suggestion a step further. He presents the effect, letting the audience cut the rope into three pieces, then restores the rope and tosses it to the audience for inspection.

The method used is about the same as the preceding, except an extra loop is formed at the bottom, so when the rope is in position as figure No. 36, you have two loops, top and bottom. Toss the rope out to some one to cut thru the loops. Take the rope back, untie one end, being careful the small piece doesn't fall to the floor; tie the small piece around the rope, and repeat with the other end. With your scissors trim off the feke knots, or slide them off. Toss rope out and show restored.

You will find that this is a good way to either start your routine or you may end any one piece routine with this method.

We will suggest one routine. Before you start your show, take the rope and prepare the two loop method. When ready to present, pick up the rope, as is, and toss out to some one to cut. Take the rope back and restore by your own method. You now toss the rope back to the one who cut it. After he has examined the rope, take the rope from him and make the one loop method, coil and tie as in No. 36, let him cut it again, take the rope back, untie so as to be ready to present the Three-to-One method. Count your three (?) pieces, adding words to the effect that you want to dispel any doubt as to the rope being cut into three pieces.

In conclusion we offer a pet wrinkle that should tickle the fancy of any rope manipulator.

A similar method described under single-piece—start No. 2 on page 9. But with the following addition. Prepare the rope by coating it with cement at the point where it forms into a loop at the bottom of illustration 34. In addition to coating, work the cement into the strands of the rope, forcing it in, even if you must slit the rope lengthwise with a razor blade, over an area of two inches. In arranging the rope through the various steps from 28 to 34, be sure that the cemented



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portion is in the position of forming the bottom loop of figures 34 or 35, which are identical. The cutting is naturally at the usual place marked by X in Fig. 34 and the other cut must divide the prepared area of rope in half.

Now proceed in steps from Fig. 4 to 19, being certain that the prepared ends protrude from the crotch of thumb as in Fig. 19. The kneading of the two cemented ends, as in Fig. 20, will permit you to hold the rope by one end when showing it restored.

### “U Do as I Do” Comedy Version

As Performed by Lu Brent

Using a 16-foot piece of rope proceed from Fig. 28 to 36, inclusive. Have spectator assist you, offering him a duplicate small pair of shears, which you suggest he place in his right coat pocket. You hold the rope, formed as shown in Fig. 36, and permit him to cut the rope half way between the two knots. The two halves apparently consist of 6 separate pieces. Force upon your assistant, by any method you know, the rope which is actually in 3 pieces, and proceed from Fig. 1 to Fig. 21. Untie your knot and instruct assistant to do likewise. Spectator assistant, duplicating your moves, finds himself in a hopeless maze of knots, while you are crowned with success. The shears in his pocket, of course, are used to cut his own rope and your own set affords you good misdirection in disposing of the knot which you slide off and leave in your pocket when reaching for them and instructing assistant to do likewise, to trim ends of rope.

Credit is given to Lu Brent and M. Zerrance, who collaborated in developing this unusual and clever application to a piece of rope.

If you have ever seen TOM OSBORNE, you know the genial smile that he is sending your way right at this moment!

## Finis

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