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BOYS' LIFE



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IT'S MAGIC

By ROBERT LUND

Magicians frequently show up as characters in mystery stories. Sometimes as the hero, sometimes as the villain, sometimes as a passing suspect. Many famous writers of detective fiction, such as Agatha Christie, John Dickson Carr, Clayton Rawson, Paul Gallico and Ellery Queen, have included magicians in their mystery novels.

Here is an experiment in which the magician turns detective, solving the "crime" by magic.

Producing a pen and a 3 x 5 index card, the magician asks several spectators to write down an imaginary crime. One spectator is to write the type of crime. Another is to note where it took place. A third is to write the law-breaker's name. All of the information is written in a single column on one side of the card. The back of the card is left blank. The magician leaves the room while the spectators are writing.

When he returns, the performer takes the card, being careful to hold

it facedown without peeking at the information, and inserts it in an envelope. The envelope is sealed and a spectator is asked to initial the back of it as proof that it has been sealed. The envelope is then inserted in a second (slightly larger) envelope. The second envelope is sealed and another on-looker witnesses the fact by signing his initials over the pasted-down flap. The "clues" are now sealed inside a double thickness of envelopes, precluding any possibility of glimpsing the information through the envelopes.

The magician holds the envelope-in-an-envelope to his forehead, making a point of not actually looking at it. In a dramatic manner, he reveals the type of crime, where it took place and the name of the culprit.

The secret: The only prop needed for the trick is an envelope with most of the address side cut out. The envelope should be slightly larger than the index card containing the clues, so it will slide into the envelope but without much spare space for the card to slip around.

Insert the clue card facedown inside the gimmicked envelope. The front (address side) of the envelope is facing the floor, concealing the fact the front of the envelope has been cut away. Hold the gummed flap pointing outward, toward the audience. Bring the flap up with your fingers and incline your head slightly to lick the gummed surface. Then hold the envelope with the flap side toward the audience and run your fingers along the gummed edge to seal it. It is at this point, while sealing the envelope, that you casually glance down at the cutaway front to see what is on the card. All of these gestures are natural. Try sealing an envelope from a standing position and you will get the knack of it immediately.

One final tip: use a pen with a heavy point. The message is easier to read if it is written with a heavy, dark ink.

A FAVORITE FEAT with professional magicians is the trick that goes wrong. Or so it seems. Everything the magician does backfires, tricking the trickster instead of the audience. Here's just such a trick, a fooler in which the magician appears to blunder—until he springs the surprise finish!

Borrowing a deck of cards, the wizard thumbs through them, removes one card and places it face-down on a table. The audience observes this, but is not permitted to see the face of the card.

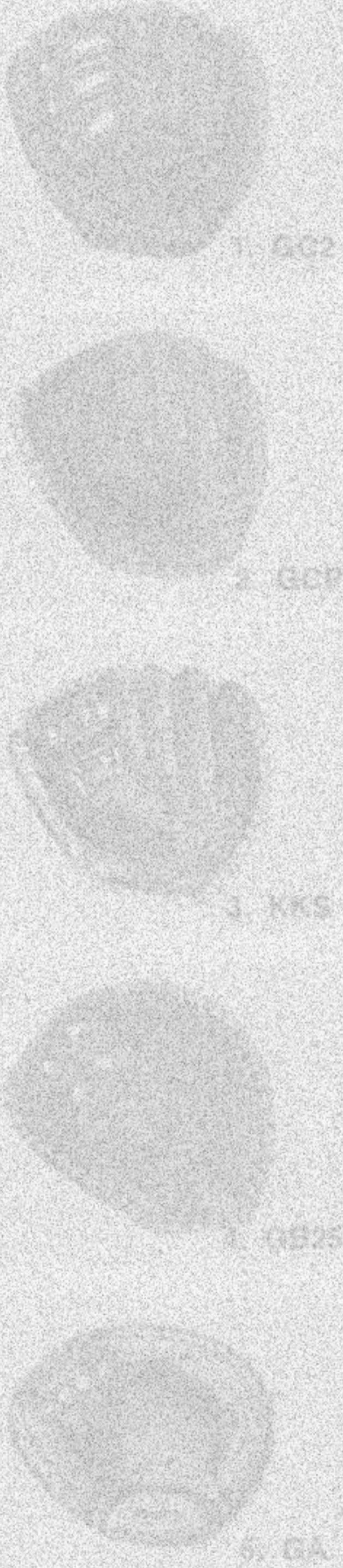
Holding the deck in his hand, the magician invites a spectator to cut the cards, look at the card cut to and then restore the cut. The performer now announces (with great confidence) that he will name the chosen card.

"It was a high card, a face card," he declares. But he is wrong.

"Not a face card?" the wizard replies in astonishment. "Then it must be a low card." He is wrong again.

"But it was red or black," the magician mumbles in an effort to cover his embarrassment. The sorcerer now says he will try a different approach. "Please

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divide the numerical value of the card by two and tell me what you get," he asks. But the card is not divisible by two. It is an odd number. The magic maker has failed a third time.

"But it must be divisible by two," the magician insists. It may be necessary to coach the spectator at this point, because the card he selected is a seven and he may argue that seven cannot be divided by two. It can, of course. The answer is $3\frac{1}{2}$.

The magician turns to the card he placed aside at the beginning of the trick and turns it faceup. It's $3\frac{1}{2}$ —a three of any suit with a half-dollar hidden under the card.

The secret: This trick is self-working except for forcing the spectator to select a seven when he cuts the deck. To do this, place all of the sevens near the middle of the deck. Then secretly crimp the cards at the middle—where you have placed the sevens—by squeezing the top half of the deck so it curls up, and the bottom half so it curls down.

The crimp is concealed from the audience by exerting a slight pressure on the cards as you hold them in your hand. Relax your grip on the deck as the spectator reaches out to make the cut. The top half of the deck will spring up, causing the spectator to automatically cut to a seven.

FOR NEW, NEW MATH, the mystifier asks for two volunteers from the audience. "Someone who's fast with figures," he explains, "and somebody who thinks math problems ought to be fed into computers."

Supplying both spectators with paper and pencil, the wizard rattles off a series of numbers—1, 4, 2, 8, 5, 7. "Please write those figures in a horizontal line on your paper," the magic maker declares. "We will ask someone in the audience to give you a number. Please multiply it by the figure you just wrote down—142,857. The test is to see who gets the answer first. To avoid getting too involved, let's limit the multiplier (the number to be called out from the audience) to something between one and seven."

A spectator calls out a number. The math expert comes up with the answer in a few seconds. His opponent has a tough time with the problem and has to struggle for the answer.

"Obviously," the sorcerer continues, "this isn't a fair match. So I'm going to help our friend here (*indicating the slowpoke*). We'll follow the same procedure. First we write down six figures. Let's keep the same numbers we used the first time—1, 4, 2, 8, 5, 7. And we'll have someone in the audience call out a new number, anything between one and seven.

"Ah, but I know what you're thinking. You think I've worked out the answers ahead of time. So here's what we'll do. I've written the number to be multiplied on this slip of paper. You're welcome to examine it. (*Pass the slip around if anyone wants to see it.*) As you can see, my slip of paper is just wide enough to accommodate the fig-

ure I've written on it and it's blank on the back. So there can't be any sleight-of-hand, I'll curl it up into a circle and paste (*or tape*) the two ends together. Now you can keep an eye on it.

"I'll do even better than that. I won't use a pencil again, so even if I know the answers ahead of time, I have no way of conveying the information to my partner."

As before, a spectator calls out a number. In a flash, as soon as the figure is announced, the magician rips his

circle of paper and hands it to the lagging mathematician, who reads it aloud. He has the correct answer before the math wiz has started.

The trick can be repeated several times without the magician writing anything more on his slip of paper.

The secret: The original figure—142,857—can be multiplied by any number between one and seven and the answer will always contain those same figures in a predictable order. For example, if the figure is multiplied

by:

- two the answer will be 285,714
- three the answer will be 428,571
- four the answer will be 571,428
- five the answer will be 714,285
- six the answer will be 857,142

After pasting or taping the slip of paper to form a circle, you can tear it at any point to give the correct answer. All you have to do is memorize the various points at which to tear the paper, depending on the multiplying figure called out by the audience. ■

STRAIGHT FROM THE BARREL

Fun facts about America's most popular fun guns. By Phil Hahn, President of Crosman Arms Company, Inc.

Our founder?

This is a South American native with a 9-foot-long blowgun. He carries darts in the quiver-like basket slung around his neck. One dart will put a fox dinner on the table. Three darts may be necessary to kill a capybara, a huge 4-foot-long rodent (great eating, I am told). This blowgun is efficient up to 60 yards. The muzzle velocity of 310 feet per second is equal to the average velocity of the modern-day air rifle (all you need is the lung power).

Our Hero.

Hero, who lived in Alexandria about 325 B.C. could very well have invented the first "air rifle." (We've put "air rifle" in quotation marks because the development of the principle is attributed to Hero—*not the actual rifle.*) Through translations of Greek to Arabic to Hebrew to Latin to English, it is revealed that Hero developed a unit called a "pneumatik." It required only a spring behind it to be the prototype of the air system used in a dozen varieties of air rifle. Although documentary descriptions are fragmentary, the ancient Greeks DOHLO had air guns or similar air military machines. They knew and used most of the required principles involved.



What happened to the 2,000 air rifles?

Back in 1942, I was called on by the U.S.S. (Office of Strategic Services). It seems someone in this highly secretive branch of the government decided to purchase 2,000 Crosman compressed-air rifles. Maybe some bright planner with an exceptionally fervid imagination and the all too often limited knowledge thought these rifles could be used as "silent revolutionaries." By undetected loading parties. Or, perhaps, the rifles were intended for distribution in the Far East, in Malayan areas in particular, so silent arms to be used in the destruction of chickens by the guerrilla forces. They got delivery, as promised. But we never learned how the 2,000 Crosman air rifles were to be used. One thing about the U.S.S. Then, or now, they were extremely secretive and not accountable to any one. How do you think the rifles were used?

Have you seen the new Crosman Pellmasters?

The Pellmasters are Crosman's two great new CO₂ Pelmaguns. There's a Pellmaster 707. It shoots .177 cal. pellets and BB's. And there's the new Pellmaster 700. It shoots .22 cal. pellets. Both deliver the same high Crosman quality. Each has a fast-loading rotary magazine. A unique single cocking and safety knob. And the easy-push-button Powerlet piercing. The Pellmasters have high comb. Monte Carlo walnut finish hardwood stocks. They provide uniform velocity—480 to 500 f.p.s. They have hooded post-front sights and adjustable rear sights for windage and elevation. The Pellmasters 700 and 707 are perfect for the NFA 332 Air Rifle 10-meter competition program. These fine, new Crosman rifles sell for less than \$27.00. See them at your dealer's today.



The Fun Guns from
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