


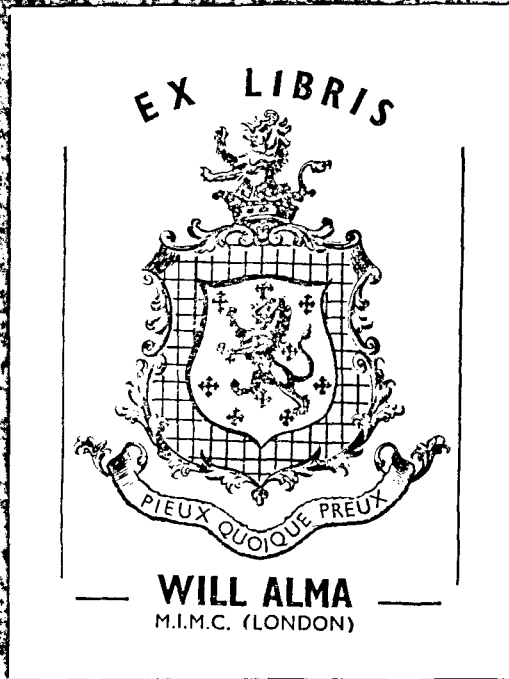
*The*

**PROFESSIONAL  
TOUCH**

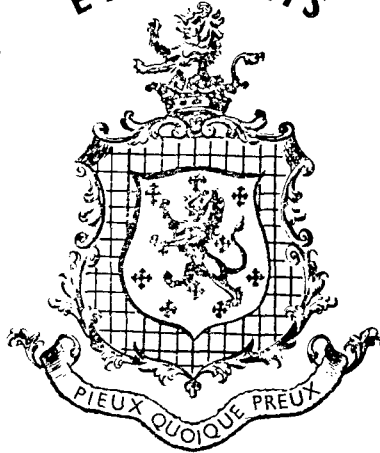


*"Monk" Watson*

*Edwards*



EX LIBRIS



WILL ALMA  
M.I.M.C. (LONDON)



*The*  
**PROFESSIONAL  
TOUCH**

E. B. Haskey  
51 1/8 N. Belfast Ave.  
Augusta, Maine

by

“MONK” WATSON

*Illustrations by Mel*

Published by  
**ABBOTT'S MAGIC NOVELTY CO.**  
COLON, MICHIGAN

## Contents

	PAGE
Foreword by Percy Abbott .....	1
When in Doubt .....	2
Let's Have a Reason for It .....	3
Setting the Tempo .....	5
Have Some Stage Fright .....	10
The Sand Frame .....	13
Can a Trick Be Too Perfect? .....	14
The Fifty-Card Lift .....	16
It's Still "How You Do It" .....	18
Be Sure Your Dress is Correct .....	21
To Acknowledge Applause .....	22
Keep Your Salary Up .....	24
What Does It Get You to Expose? .....	26
Face to Face, by Doc Harad .....	30
The Birth of a New Trick .....	31
A Quickie .....	33
Behind Your Back .....	34
A Coke Twist, by Otto Curl .....	36
A Milky Mixup .....	37
The Lota Trick .....	41
Hand Rabbit in High Hat, by Dell O'Dell .....	44

## Foreword

I have seen Donald "Monk" Watson perform scores of times — as a Magician, as a Master of Ceremonies, as an orchestra leader and as a pantomimist. Without exception his offerings have always met with enthusiastic audience approval.

His natural ability as an all-around performer and his years of experience as an entertainer have taught Monk stage deportment, the right timing of a bit of business, and how to deliver the punch lines in gags and patter to get the best results.

In his work with numerous top-notch performers through the years, Monk has been observant of the methods by which they sold their entertainment and won their audiences, and he has been quick to apply these professional principles to his own performances.

So with this background, I feel that Monk is indeed qualified to give you tips on the "professional touch."

Although Monk's Magic is presented as comedy, he is not simply a Magician who makes use of comedy tricks. Rather he has the knack of making use of any type of effect in Magic and with a deft touch of his own particular style of comedy here and there, producing fine entertainment.

Originality in style and an outstanding personality are Monk's big assets. To meet him is to enjoy him.

If you gain some "professional touch" from the following pages, and I feel you will, I know that Monk will be glad to have been helpful.

Percy Abbott

## When in Doubt

I've been doing some reading lately on how to become a Magician — and of all the screwy things in print today on that subject! It seems that they are trying to make over the whole Magic world. Some of the books have been very, very good, and some — well, not so good.

This book is not going to make a Magician out of a single one of you, but if you do Magic, it may make your act a little more entertaining, which after all is what we are trying to do.

I wouldn't go across the street to see the greatest Magician in the world if he were not entertaining. I love to be fooled, and Brother, I'm a push-over for comedy, but to see someone come out on the stage and just pick flowers, balls, cigarettes out of the air, clutter up the stage with a lot of good-looking flowers without reason or without the entertainment element is just a night wasted.

I'm going to try to give you some of the things I've learned in my thirty years in Show Business. Gee, that is a long time to go without eating; well, part of the time it really was "Coffee and cakes." I did get a bit of the "cream" though, and it tasted good.

Once the bug bites you and you hear that big hand, it is hard to give it up. I love it. So will you, and I hope you all get plenty of big hands.

After going through the mill, so to speak, I've found that an adaptation of the advice often voiced in the old vaudeville days gives a lift to my performances. Ray Dooley, who with her brother, Gordon, did a comedy act, at times pretty knockabout, is credited with this advice to Gordon, "When in doubt, do a pratt fall," a comedy device which is still good.

Please do not get the idea that I'm asking my good friends in Magic to go around doing these things, how-

ever they might save a lot of shows. What I'd like to say is, "When in doubt, tell a gag or get a laugh with a comedy trick."

I've been caught several times with an audience of sour-pusses, and the more I'd try to bring them out of their lethargy, the harder it would be to do Magic. Comes now the cure. I have several little gags on my table for just such audiences, and to date they never have failed.

So, have a few "when in doubt" tricks handy.

### Let's Have a Reason for It

One of my pet peeves is a trick without a reason, or "Why did the balloon burst?"

Once I saw a very clever fellow do the Card in the Balloon (a darn good trick). He had the card chosen



and replaced in the deck, then the deck placed on the tray, the balloon blown up, and then for no reason on earth, the balloon burst. The trick got a good hand, but *why did the balloon burst?*



I do this trick, and I'm going to pass on my idea of doing it. Use it if you wish to or skip it — I'll not be sore.

I force a card, having a duplicate card all set on the tray, then I ask the person holding the forced card to fold it and tear it into eight parts. I take up the parts, add my torn corner to the top and force this corner, saying "Please hold a part of the card for just a minute." I then place the torn parts in my card box and have some spectator hold the box. I return the remainder of the deck to the tray under the balloon, and ask for a cigarette, lighted if possible. I know I could take one out of my inside pocket lighted, but why use my own when they are so hard to get. I then pick up tray and balloon, touch the cigarette to balloon, at the same time tripping the trigger and there we have the card in the balloon, that is, all but the torn corner, which, if I have forced right, is now in the hands of the person who chose the card. Just the fact that I use the cigarette to burst the balloon makes me feel that I have finished the trick (and also the balloon).

You can get a good laugh if while the person is blowing up the balloon, you make a side crack to him, "You're doing okay, but tell me, what is holding you down."

Gee, I almost forgot — I then ask the man holding the card box to open it. He does, finds it empty, falls on the floor, and I say, "This trick really puts them in the aisles." Some never fall on the floor, so I lose the last crack, which isn't so good anyway.

I mentioned that I could remove the cigarette from my inside pocket lighted. Why should it be lighted, but one could say, "I'm wearing my 'lighter' suit." My! My! What corn this Watson is serving this season. In the first place why would a man carry a cigarette or candle in his inside pocket? Good Magic? Well, that is a matter of opinion. It is a clown stunt only. I just read this to my daughter and she

said, "Well, I'd like to see it come out of the pocket," so, do it that way if you want to. I'll still borrow one if I can.

Since I started this raving on "Have a reason for it," I visited the Howe Military School at Howe, Indiana, where I saw some very fine Magic by Loring Campbell and his charming helpmate, Kathryne. Here is a fellow who can handle children like they should be handled. He's never fresh or belittling, but appears to be just a big kid coming over to the house to do some trick — and that makes him one with the kids.

Loring keeps up a running line of talk all through his act — not patter, but *chatter*. He dishes out more *corn* and *puns* than any three acts I have ever seen, but it is meant to be *corn* and the kids enter into the fun and do everything but tear the house apart. He asks for it and he gets "Boo" from all sides, but it is all in the spirit of "You are just as smart as I am." When he finished his show, it was elating to hear the comments — "Gee, but that was a swell show" and "Isn't he a grand fellow?" Then later we saw some of the kids through their dormitory windows showing the other fellows "just how it was done."

In his show Loring did the lighted candle to hank and then from his hip pocket he produced the lighted candle. See what I mean? There was a reason for it being lighted; because he had vanished a lighted candle. That is my argument — have a reason for it.

I would like to pick Loring's show apart and go through every trick for you, but that would be like stealing the act. He did nothing but small tricks and just a little finish trick to say "Good-Night." Nothing big, but a good show. Again I say, it is entertainment and not just Magic. Perhaps that is the reason Loring is always booked a couple of years ahead.

## Setting the Tempo

Stage Department and Tempo are a bit difficult to write about because while there are some set rules on

stage walking, talking, and manners, these rules are more or less elastic for there are very few persons who should enter or conduct themselves on the stage as another would do. The deportment (or stage manners if you will) of any performer should fit or be adapted to that particular individual's personality.

To start off, however, let's take up the very first entrance.

If you have music for entrance, it should be playing at a good FF (that means strong and loud), dying out as you reach center (or wherever you will do your first trick). If you are going to do a Magic act without talking, you should waste no time in getting into your first trick. I have always been taught to get under their skins as soon as possible and to set a *tempo*. Your first impression will follow you throughout your act, so make it good as you can.

If you are doing gloves to flowers (or what have you), walk to your *spot*, smile, and get it over with in a hurry. It is not for applause, so don't look for it, but remember that they are surprised and they have to have time to get over the shock. Too many of us look for a big hand on the first trick. It is just a "Hello" on your part.

And to maintain the tempo, have your next trick all set to get into, remembering all the time that they must have a little time to think about what you are doing or what you have done.

I played to an audience the other day which, I understand, had not seen a Magic show for years. I thought that I was doing the most beautiful "flop" of my life, because I never got a hand and very few laughs throughout the show. When I was finished and my last trick was over, I was certain that here I would have the surest death in Show Business. I walked to the front of the stage with that "Well, there you are" bow, and I'm telling you, to date I have never heard such a hand (for *my* show, I mean). It seems that

they had stored up all their enthusiasm to the very end. They were just not *show-minded*, I found out, but after the show was over, more than usual of them came back and thanked me for appearing there. I asked the sponsor what he thought about it and he said, "They were so amazed they were unable to grasp the answers before you went into your next trick." That means that the tempo was a little too fast for them. You have heard some of our comics say, "If I'm going too fast for you, stop me." Well, *they* do it in fun, but it is very true at times that we all go too fast for them. I'm afraid if I had used such a crack that night it would have been my doom.

I have learned many lessons in my years on the stage. I hope that some of them I can pass on to you to help you. You must feel out your audience, then set a tempo *to* them, not *for* them.

I visited a nite spot in Hollywood, Grace Hayes', I saw Miss Hayes put on her show, and for the last act she introduced her son. This boy is one of the cleverest fellows on any night club floor. He is smart, can do very good imitations, sings very well, and his "drunk" act is simply the last word. Miss Hayes had been working and had the audience in her hand up to this point. As usual, she had set a certain tempo. Well, the boy came on, starting fast, slowing up for the imitations, and then a little stage wait while he was getting into the "drunk" character. He had lost the tempo, and Miss Hayes kept saying under her breath, "Tempo! Tempo!" After about four minutes, which is a long time on the stage or floor, he hit the pace again, and everyone was with him at the finish.

I don't know whether you follow me or not; but we, the audience, had let down for a few minutes, and it was hard for him to pick us up again, but he did it and all was good at the finish.

My good friend, Gil Brown, producer of shows back in 1920, gave me a hint one day that has stuck with

me ever since. I had the band in one of his acts, and we played from the stage. I would set what I thought was a good tempo. He would listen for a minute and then stop us. I couldn't understand what was the matter as we were playing as we had been playing for weeks. He said, "Monk, you are playing a nervous tempo. You should play so that the people out front can feel it and keep time with you. Now if you set a tempo so fast that they are beating their feet off trying to keep up with you, they are nervous, tired, and upset. Try to make them feel smooth."

Boy, how this could fit some of the band acts today. How they are missing the boat, or am I too old. In one of our large theatres, I heard one of the finest bands and for forty minutes I was trying to get my breath. The leader set a tempo — the fastest I ever heard, and perhaps the noisiest. It was just one number after another at a uniform and monotonous pace — fast — fast — fast. The kids loved it, but when the end of the act came he died. Why? Because he had been playing a *dance job* on the stage, and they applauded as in a dance hall. Those who had "set out" the dance, as I had, were so nervous they just couldn't applaud. How much better it would have been, if he had given out with one slow number, which would still have tempo.

This will help us with our Magic act this way. Judge your audience — set a tempo — try to keep them in tune with your act. Not every trick so fast, but give them a breathing spell — not a stage wait, just time to think a little. Keep building up and up to a *finish*. Don't give them too much. Keep a trick up your sleeve for them, should they insist on more.

This whole thing started with your entrance, didn't it — setting a tempo? Music means so much to many Magic acts. They would be lost without it to build up each trick. That is all right if you are doing that kind of a Magic act. I have never used it. Per-

haps I should, but I have to play in many places where they just haven't any music, so I've arranged my act to go along without it. I'm doing an hour show now, and that, my friends, is a long time out there *alone*. I have to keep up my tempo with some gags, those "when in doubt" tricks. I use the Bang Gun when things are getting slow, and my little can of Peanut Brittle (Snakes) is a life saver. Not Magic, I know, but it keeps them *up* to a tempo.

When I do a trick that is over their heads, I laugh it off with "Well, I didn't care for it, either." I throw it away off the stage and wipe my hands. I'm part of the audience that way, and I've broken the tempo with a slow trick, so I have to pick it up again with a little laugh (my own chuckling laugh bit) and it never fails. I may do the same trick to another crowd and it goes big for me. You never know what to expect from an audience. I like to make them feel that I'm just one of them, showing off.

I may have to enter a little differently than you do perhaps, but it is because I'm doing a running line of chatter (not patter) all through my act. I don't want you to try it unless it fits you. I have to come on, walk down front, visit with them, tell them to feel that I'm just dropping in for a chat and to show off, like a neighbor coming in for the evening. It creates a nice feeling and from then on I can set a dozen tempos. Again, don't try this unless it fits you. Look back at some of the comics you know or hear. Bob Hope has to work fast or he's licked; Bob Burns, slow and easy. They set a tempo and stick to it. Our Magic acts should be like that.

I know one fellow who has seen my act, and today he is doing every trick I do, and even trying to imitate my little laugh. (A word about that laugh. I've been asked how I do it. Thank God, it was given to me when I was born, and if folks think it is cute, it is for that reason. It's natural.) I've never seen this fellow work,

but they tell me he does a nice act, all but the laugh. He is over-working and trying to be funny, and he isn't funny at all, and the laugh is forced and unreal. It will not take an audience very long to find that out.

About that laugh, I've thought about it a few times and have forced it myself, but I, too, have found that it wasn't real when I tried to do it, so I just go along and it comes out here and there in every performance — and at the right times, too.

There, that's for you fellows who want to buy my laugh. I couldn't tell you how it is done for money or even if I wanted to give it away. I'll agree it helps me to set a tempo and I'm thankful to hear it myself and to hear the audience pick it up.

### Have Some Stage Fright

Here is a little story about Elsie Janis which I'll never forget. After World War 1, I was part of Elsie



Janis and Her Gang, having done stunts with her when she was giving shows for the A.E.F. in France and

how would you like to know that she wanted me to have stage fright (to a certain degree) every time I went on the stage in her show.

I guess one does overcome it after years of being out front, but I still get a thrill (or is it just a bit of fright) each time I go on, and then I know I'll do a good show — how do you like that, you who have seen me do my “tight-wire” or M.C. work? That is the truth, so help me!

Miss Janis said that when a person got so sure of himself, or herself, that the audience held no fear for him, he was just too “hard boiled” or “nervy”, perhaps getting by on his nerve. Now here is what she told me:

“Monk”, she said, “remember that they love you out there until you do something to make them dislike you. Go out there and do your act with all the love of the stage that you have in your make-up, and they'll accept you. If you have something worth while, they'll see it and you'll go over.”

How true that has been through the years. I've walked out on the stage, forgetting this, and tried to wise crack my way through, but I've died a lot of deaths before my act was over.

I've heard fellows say, “I've never known stage fright.” I've watched them work, and I could see why. They were so dead sure of that “big shot” that they were mechanical, stereotyped, nervy — anything but free and easy. They had me looking at them that way. I couldn't relax, but they were clever.

One of these fellows hasn't changed a line in years, goes over okay, but could be a lot funnier if he would relax and cause the audience to relax with him. He, I might add, is one of the best friends I have and I can't tell him, but perhaps he'll read this and take it to heart. It will mean more money to him. This will not cure all ills, because the stage is a hard place to relax on. You'd better have something to sell before you get out there in front of the lights, and you'd bet-



ter believe in yourself and your talent, which they can't take away from you.

May I quote from James Allen's "As a Man Thinketh":

"Mind is the Master power that moulds and makes,  
And Man is Mind, and evermore he takes  
The tool of Thought, and shaping what he wills,  
Brings forth a thousand joys, a thousand ills;  
He thinks in secret, and it comes to pass;  
Environment is but his looking-glass."

You can just about bring about what you want if you *think* before you go on the stage, and continue to *think* while you are out there.

I read where a fellow was surprised when the audience didn't think he was funny. What I would like to tell that fellow! I believe that a *funny man* is born *funny*. We just have to have some *straight* men on our stages, and it would be nice if we could have more of them in the audiences. Being funny is a business.

Joe Penner, who was one of my best friends, was his own worst enemy. That boy would worry about everything he was to do on the stage. His heart and soul were in his act, and even if some of you readers didn't like him, he must have been good because millions of fans wrote in to the studio and the polls put him on the very *top* of radio, and pictures as well. Just think from a small salary that I paid him in Detroit — \$150 a week — to (and I saw this myself) \$17,000 — not \$1,700, but \$17,000 — that for one week in New York. I visited him back stage and he was the same sweet kid I knew in Detroit. Lines of youngsters, blocks long, waiting for his autograph — they loved that fellow. Why? Because he was one of them, a big funny kid, doing kid things, talking like a kid, laughing, not at Joe Penner, but with the audience. There is lots of difference.

Joe said to me, "Monk, what is it all about? I'm still doing 'Do you wanna buy a duck?'" I told him it

was just the good break he deserved. He was bringing in the crowds and they were only paying him for it.

He was the most serious fellow I ever met just before he went on — and all the time he was on. I remember when he was with me at the Paramount in Los Angeles, someone in the orchestra put grease on his violin bow. He was so upset on the stage that he could hardly finish his act. He came and said, "That wasn't funny. Perhaps to you, but not to the audience, so please leave me alone." That was his living, his work, and he worked to be funny. I'll always remember him.

### The Sand Frame

Here, my friends, is one of my favorite tricks, and I'm going to pass my presentation of it on to you if you want it. I've used it for years and if anything has been put to a test, this trick has had its test.

I use one of Abbott's sand frames. The reason for using Abbott's frame is that I have never found a better one, and also because he gave it to me, which isn't a bad reason. Well, he didn't really give it to me. It seems that he sold me one long before he started the Abbott Magic Novelty Company. I used it for years and then something went haywire with it and I had to have it repaired.

Because I live in Colon and have to pass the Abbott plant several times each day (I really don't have to pass it, so most of the time, I don't, but walk right in), I walked in one day with the frame in my hand and said to Perce, "Hello, my friend", and he said, "Hello, Monk. What's on your mind?" I knew that he was anxious to do something for me so I told him how I had sat on the frame and how it wouldn't work. He took it in his hands and remembered that it was one of his long-lost pets. He said, "I just couldn't see you using such a thing, why don't you let me fix it?" It sort of took me off my feet because I knew that he was busy, but I said I would like nothing better. He re-

paired it and sent it on to me, but do you know that in the mail it was broken again, so I returned it to him, and he made a new one, and when it was finished, he said to the boys in the shop, "That is such a good frame, why not put it back into production?" So that is why you, too, can get a swell frame just like mine. Now here is the effect:

On my table, I have the frame with the card which I'm about to force — I mean the duplicate of the card I'm going to force — in the frame. I also have a P & L card box on the table, which I tell the audience is a cigarette case. I have a lady come up on the stage and ask her to pick out a card (use your own force). She has to pick out my card, because I have fifty alike for her to choose from. She places the card, face down, in the card box, and places the case in her purse. I then tell her that my wife gave me her picture after one of her recent trips. I show the sand frame empty, and say, "Looks like she's gone again." This gets a laugh. (Another version — "A picture of my uncle standing outside a beer joint" and then, "He's gone in again!")

I hand lady the frame to hold above her head (at this time turning frame upside down, allowing sand to leave glass) back of frame to audience. While in this position I ask her the name of her card. When she answers, I ask her to turn frame around (or better still, I turn it around). The chosen card is now seen in the picture frame and gets a hand. Then I ask her to look in the cigarette case which she finds empty. This, my friends, is a real gem, and you'll use it over and over again — and it will cause a lot of nice talk about your show — they'll remember it.

### Can a Trick Be too Perfect?

I had never given too much thought to a trick being too perfect. However, I had it brought to my attention after doing a show in Texas. I was doing the Dollar Bill in Lemon. I did it just as the directions told me to, and it worked fine, and I got a nice hand,

but after the show a fellow came back stage and told me he had an idea that he thought would help the trick. I was all ears, and this is what he gave me. I've used his idea and it has helped, not only in this trick but in a lot of others.

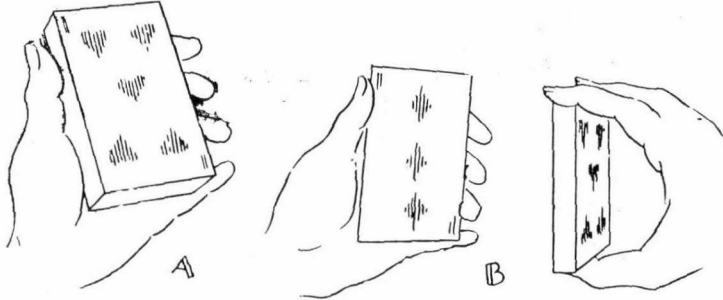
He told me that the trick I was doing was too perfect and that it looked too mechanical. He suggested that if I would make it look as if I had helped, it would look better. As he saw my performance, I had asked for a dollar bill, had a corner torn off, put the dollar bill in an envelope, burned that, and had a lemon selected. The lemon was cut and there was the dollar bill with matching torn corner. I hadn't been within ten feet of the lemon at any time.

He thought if I were even to pick up the lemon and insert the knife, then hand it to the volunteer assistant to finish cutting, it would give the impression that in some way I had put the bill in the lemon. I tried it the very next show and the "Ohs" and "Ahs" were there, also the big hand which I had not received the other times. I have one very good critic, Mrs. Watson, and she told me that she liked it much better that way. I might add that the lemon trick I did was the one put out by Abbott's.

I've used the same thing in several other tricks which seemed too mechanical and it has given them a touch which helped. I believe if we all give the audience something to let them believe they are "in" on something, they'll talk about us a lot longer. They like to think they've caught something, so give them a twist if you can. I can think of the reaction of the audience when Jack Gwynne shows them the feather duster — how they yell, and what a swell feeling he must get, because he does it so well. The answer is: A sucker trick is always good, if you can do it without hurting the ego of your audience. Don't ever hurt them, but you can do a lot to them if it is cute, not fresh.

### The Fifty-Card Lift

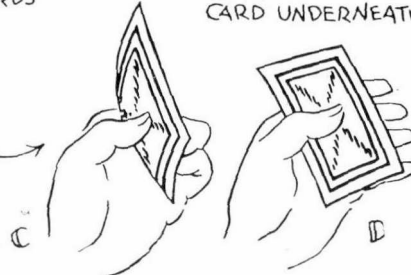
When I say I'm going to show you how to do a *fifty-card lift*, I can just hear some of you saying, "Holy



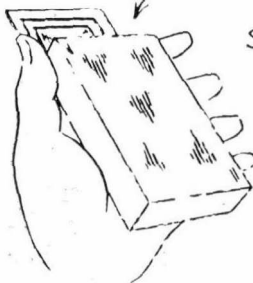
"NOT THE BOTTOM CARD"  
 THE THUMB MEANS WHILE  
 CLIPPING OFF TWO TOP CARDS

"NOT THE TOP CARD"  
 THE SECOND TOP CARD  
 SHOWING - SELECTED  
 CARD UNDERNEATH

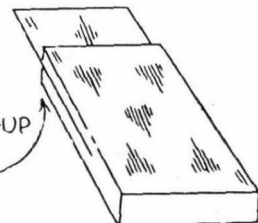
LEFT HAND CARDS  
 HELD AS IN A, THEN  
 TURNED OVER AS ONE



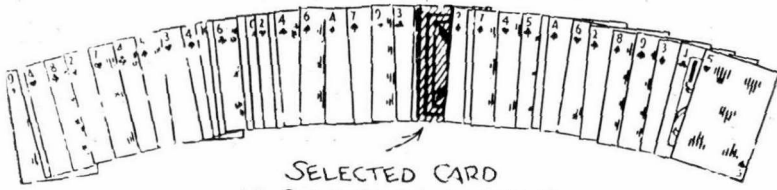
FACE-UP DECK  
 REPLACED



SECOND TOP CARD  
 (NOW ON BOTTOM)  
 IS REMOVED AND  
 REPLACED FACE-UP  
 IN MIDDLE OF  
 DECK



DECK IS CUT AND THEN  
 FANNED FACE-UP



SELECTED CARD  
 IS REVERSED IN DECK

Smoke! What is this guy Watson going to ask us to do next?"

For those who have gone through the years trying, as I have, to perfect the *two-card lift*, this is not twenty-five times as hard, but twenty-five times easier. Yes, I'm going to ask you to make a fifty-card lift, so that you can do the two-card (or double) lift much easier.

Let's go back to the days of vaudeville again. I love to do that because it takes me back to the days and nights of visits with some out past "Greats" — the hours spent with the Great Lester, the Ventriloquist; Nate Leipzig, and so many others.

Now, writing about a double lift brings back the nights of friendly visits with Nate Leipzig. I used to stand in the wings (when they'd let me) and watch him do his act. I remembered almost every move, but at the 1944 Abbott Convention — I mean Get-Together — I had a chance to read his whole act as taken down by Dai Vernon. Well, I wanted to learn more about the double lift, so Mr. Leipzig took me in hand and for hours he taught me his moves. I thought I was doing right well but it was anything but easy. He showed me some very nice moves, reverses, chosen card between two cards, so I had some gems to work on. I've tried and tried, but I've missed something I guess. I also have something, too (Sh-h-h) that I am going to keep.

I've seen some fellows all but stand on their heads with their hands all twisted out of shape trying to fool someone with a double lift. I wonder if they think they are really fooling someone? It is so unnatural, and after all you are not only lifting *one* card, but you are lifting *two*.

You wish to leave the impression that only the *top card* is being lifted, so why not make it look like the *top card* is being lifted. Here is my own little way of doing this *top lift* (upside down) or by lifting *fifty cards*. Let's get to work!

First, we'll force a card and bring it to the top of the deck. Got it there? Okay! Now let's turn the deck face up in our left hand. Where is the *top card* now? On the bottom — right! You show the bottom card (that is, the one that was on the bottom when the pack was face down), saying, "Your card is not on the bottom?" Answer is "No." (While you are doing that you are getting the skin of your left thumb between the second and third card — now on the bottom as the deck is held.) You then lift off the *fifty* cards leaving *two cards in your left palm*, saying at this time, "Your card is not the top card?" What they are really looking at is the *second* card, aren't they? Now you turn over the two cards as one and place the fifty cards on them face up. Then you take off the lower of the two top cards — still the second — and place it in the middle of the deck. What have we now? The deck is face up and the chosen card is now face down in your hand, under *fifty-one* face-up cards. Cut the deck and there you have the chosen card reversed in the middle of the deck.

Follow Mel's pictures and I'm sure it will be easy for you to do this move. From here on, you are on your own. There are a lot of nice moves with the double lift, so why not try to do it the easy way?

### It's Still "How You Do It"

I get a big kick out of that familiar phrase "Not what you do, but how you do it." If ever a phrase has been kicked around, that one has.

Unless I get a laugh or a hand at the end of one of my tricks, I say to myself, "You see, Monk, it isn't what you did, but how you did it." Then I look myself over and give myself a "pep" talk, and if I think I have done the trick as well as I can and still it doesn't go over, I take the thing out right then and there.

Tricks should fit the person who does them. How would some of you fellows like to see me do the Bird

Cage? That would fit me just like the well-known saddle on the duck (or was it a goose?). I've heard more fellows say, "I'm going to get myself a bird cage and do it differently." I can name the ones I like to see do the Bird Cage on one hand, and almost on one finger. I figure a trick like that should be lived with for a long time before it is shown to the public, then it should be done and finished on the spot. This asking the audience to feel my arms, legs, and back is just going a bit too far, because you know darn well that they can find it if they go far enough.



What brought this up in the first place? Oh, yes, we were talking about making a trick fit the performer. Yes, I know it was I who was doing the talking, but I hope you were listening.

How many of you use the Block on the String (Ab-



bott's)? There is a peach of a little effect. First you show that it is just a hole in the block, then that a string passes through this hole, then you ride the block back and forth on the string saying, "Just a block on a string." You then drop one end of the string on the floor and place your foot on the wooden tab, and tell the audience how you can make the block stop at any chosen point on the string. I like to tell them that here is a place where I've found good use for my Magic Wand. I tell them that if I want the block to stop here — indicating with the wand against a spot in the string and holding it at that spot — I just drop it and say, "Stop", and sure enough it stops there. This gets a snicker, not a laugh, then I ask some one to say "Stop". I then hold the wand away from the string, and when they yell "Stop", I do the trick of making it stop at that spot. I then let it fall on my foot, using the gag that it hurt me. To finish I say, "Now the big part of the trick is to make the block come to the top of the string. Please say, 'Go'." At the yell "Go", I pull the block up the string — by hand — and look at them, then walk off, and always get a big hand.

This is one of the tricks you can do any place in your show and it isn't "What you do, but how you do it." This is a sure-fire laugh, regardless of how you do it or where you do it in your act. Gosh, how I hate to pass that one on, but I've always said, "If I find one trick in a book, even a ten-dollar book, then I'm more than repaid for the price of the book." There, my friends, is the price of this book. Use it ten times and you've made money on this book, and the more you use it the more money you make.

When I was in the Grand Riviera Theatre in Detroit (5000 shows in four years) I had several fellows wire me gags from all parts of the country, collect, and I purchased every gag book I could find and from some I got only one good laugh, but it was worth the price of the wire or the book.

When Mel heard that I was going to write a book,

he said, "Why not call it 'Pirate's Treasures'?" Think he had a dirty dig in there somewhere. I'm supposed to be original? Gentlemen, that is going to be hard for any of us to stick to.

I purchased a book the other day in which was a comedy mind-reading act. He had the nerve to charge money for it too. I wonder what Lou Archer would say if he ever read that book. Lou got paid a nice salary for doing that act, word for word, at the Palace Theatre and all over the Orpheum, Keith, and every big-time circuit. I had the pleasure of doing it a couple of times with him, as well as with Bert Wheeler. In that way it gave me a right to do it, so at times I've done it, but to come out and sell it? Oh, Pirate, what a treasure! I'm very happy that this party didn't sell the punch line or rather punch bit — of the act. Should any of you fellows want the punch, I'll send it on to you, if when you use it you'll give credit to Bert Wheeler (not of Hollywood Magic Shop, but the Bert Wheeler of Show Business). I just say, "Here is a bit I saw Bert Wheeler do in vaudeville and I hope I can do it as well for your entertainment." It is very difficult to be entirely original, but if you give a trick a twist so that it looks like you, and tell a gag with a different punch, (that isn't hard to do) and then you are just as original as the next one.

### **Be Sure Your Dress Is Correct**

Here is a subject every one of us should study before we walk on a stage or in front of any crowd of men or mixed crowds, luncheon clubs, in theatres or any place. I have tried very hard to live up to the correct dress at all times.

I was booked at a theatre in Detroit after being away from the footlights for ten years. I had a swell Tux and all kinds of shirts and vests, but I had a worry on my mind. I wanted to know if I should wear a white or black vest (these formal dress customs change from time to time, you know), so I went to one of the leading

stores in Detroit, and talked with a man who knew. He advised me that I could wear either white or black vest, either a soft or stiff collar, but the tie should be like the one he handed me, which was different from those I had been using. With the tie, I was all set to appear — and in correct dress.

All this is written just as a tip. It is so easy to go to one of the leading men's stores and ask. You'll be told just *how*, *when*, and *where*. Then you are *correct*. You'll feel a lot better and you'll work a lot easier. We had a great fellow on our stage one time and he never owned a Tux or a formal dress suit. He wore a blue suit almost every place and he always looked good, but it wasn't *correct*. However, it made no difference in his case, and he was excused because his dress fit the man, for he was Will Rogers.

So, my advice to you is, if you are going to do a show and wish to appear to the best advantage, consider your dress, and to be entirely correct, ask the man who knows and follow his advice.

## To Acknowledge Applause

When you have finished with your trick or your act, you have a right to expect hearty laughter or applause or both. Whether it comes is dependent upon how you have conducted your performance up to that time. But there is a proper way to acknowledge applause — by bowing or otherwise responding to the acclaim of the folks out there in the chairs.

Bowing — for gosh sakes, how can a guy write anything about that. Well, I'm going to give it a try. I had a work-out once and it might help some of you fellows who just don't seem to *sell* your act to an audience. I had one of the greatest teachers on the American stage, Elsie Janis, and she still is, for my money.

It was at the Ford Theatre in Baltimore on opening night of the second "Gang" show. I had a nice

number and I did a dance. That'll surprise a lot of you fellows — Watson doing a dance, and an acrobatic dance at that. Well, after I had finished my number, I got a nice hand, but not the kind that Miss Janis wanted to hear. She called me and asked me to go all through the dance for her after the show. I did everything but the bow. She asked me to do that for her. I made one of the fastest bows in Show Business, and, Boy, I got it *right there*.

“Monk, you don't know how to bow,” Miss Janis said. Then she got up and did the last step of my routine and did a bow.

I'm sure, by this time, you are looking for the answer, but I'd like to ask you to really take this part to heart, and if you do, you'll learn as I did — a trick, not in Magic, but a good trick in stage manners.



She finished the step and then without bowing from the waist, but by looking straight out at an imaginary audience, she lifted her arms, hands apart, almost to a “Sim Sala Bim” as Dante does it. If you've seen Dante, you'll know what I mean. Now with

hands apart and arms lifted to shoulder height, she smiled. Then with just a little nod, she walked off the stage.

I had been bowing with my head darn near to my waist line, face down. She said, "Monk, they don't want to see the top of your head. Let them see your smile. Give them a good look at that kisser when the applause is at its height, then you make your first move. *Don't move while the applause is growing.* Then before the applause dies down too far, you return to the stage, look them in the eye, as if to say, "There, I've sold something and I thank you for buying."

I'd like to hear from some of you, after you have given this a trial. Perhaps you'd like to know that as this is being written, a very clever couple are trying this bow at the Earle Theatre in Washington at \$650 a week — they'll stop shows.

### Keep Your Salary Up

I know that this will hit some of the fellows right between the eyes, and if the shoe pinches, wear it if you are silly enough, or throw it away.

I'd like to write about "No Show for Free" but that would be going just a bit too far, because now and then it just can't be helped. However, we do have a lot of Magicians (?) who haven't got the gumption to *ask* for money — or else they figure their act isn't *worth* money, or perhaps some of them are just stage struck.

I know that many, many noon-day luncheon clubs figure if they give a fellow a free meal, that is pay enough — and in some cases the performer might be overpaid. Brother, look out for that luncheon club that offers you an honorary membership; they are looking for something and you can bet your bottom dollar on that. They figure that you can put on shows or perhaps talk one of your Magician pals into doing a free show now and then, and when that big Ladies' Night comes around, you're stucko.

Now what happens if you say, "Sure, I'll do a show for you for fifty dollars at noon, or a hundred dollars if it is a night party (Ladies' Night)". In a great many cases you'll get it — at least they will respect you for asking for it.

Should you do a free show, you will find you get little attention. In a great many cases you will be given thirty minutes in which to do your act, then when the time comes for you to do your stuff, someone thinks of something to talk about and you end up with ten or even five minutes to do your thirty-minute act. Brother, it takes longer than that to tear down your tables, but it is a good way to put the tricks away, while some of them are still left to watch you.

When they pay you, it is a different story. They think that you are good regardless, until you prove yourself otherwise. They will forget about the pest who wants to talk and you'll get plenty of attention. They want you to *earn* that money. And the more they pay, the better audience they are.

There is just no damn reason for these five-dollar dates. I know one fellow who brags about working all of the time, and he does. He'll go out and spoil more dates in a week than a good agent can make. He is a good Magician, too. He doesn't stop to figure if he books one good date it will take care of a lot of dates he might lose by charging a right price.

I visited a friend in Colorado who is without a doubt one of the cleverest Magicians we have today. He is out there, not by choice, but for his health. He has been booked time and time again in Denver for real money, then up comes a young fellow who wants to show off, or likes to practice before crowds, and the dates fell off for my friend. There was plenty of work to be had in Denver, but someone had spoiled the nice money.

The old saying, "What you don't see, you don't miss" fits this picture, because they will not miss the

beautiful work by a Magician who demands pay and good pay for his shows if they are content to lay out their dough for a neophyte who boobs his Magic.

Then we have the wealthy man who has Magic as a hobby, so he likes to take all the dates he can get his hands on — for free. *He* also spoils it for the boys who make their living with Magic. I ran into this in Arizona this past winter. I heard about the swell show that was given for a big party by Mr. So-and-so and Mr. So-and-so. I had a talk with one of these men later and after our visit he said that he would never do another free show, but would charge and then send in the money for some worthy show for a brother Magician. I think this is a fine idea.

We hear too often, perhaps, about a benefit being given for one of our old Magicians, some of the fine old chaps who have done much for Magic in their more active years. God knows none of us want one of those shows, but we never can tell when it will hit us, so if any of you have a lot of money and you don't have to charge for a show, *charge anyway* and send the money along to one of these benefits. You are doing Magicians a great favor by both actions. When someone asks you to do a show, try to swing it for a friend who needs the money and can give a good show. None of us like to grow old, but it seems that is one of the laws of Nature, so while you're young, get that money — but good.

Don't ever undersell yourself — and at the same time, don't oversell yourself. Don't have that big card printed "The World's Greatest." Get some good tricks, master them and then sell them to an audience — but at a good price — and not just applause either.

### What Does It Get You to Expose?

If there ever was a subject I would like to write about it is Exposing. It is a serious thing to think about, so fellows, give it some thought before you give

it some practice, then for goodness sake, don't do it. It cheapens you if you are doing it to make yourself a *big man* among your friends, and it surely makes you a heel if you do it in back of your Magician friends, while you are shaking their hand in front. *This*, my friends, happened to me.

I have a friend who delights in coming to my shows, possibly just to pick them apart to his friends, and then delights in telling, not only his friends but also others around him, just how the tricks are done. He just forgets that perhaps there is a friend of mine within earshot who might take down notes of his conversation and then pass them on to me. This has been going on for years, so each time I see him I say to myself, "Well, here we go again," and I listen for the hammer to start knocking. It never has failed. This fellow is a very smart and likeable fellow who reads a lot and should know a lot about the working of most of our Magic of today. He has read so much that at times he feels that he has invented most of the tricks he has read about, and he doesn't fail to let that point be known. How much better it would be if he would go to a show with his friends and see the show through and if his friends say, "Well, Wise Guy, how did he do so and so?" to say, "I do know how it is done because I have read it in books." Then that leaves the friends feeling that perhaps they have been fooled twice, once by the Magician and also by their friend. They will have a lot of respect for this fellow, which I'll gamble they do not have now. Perhaps it would add to the show if he would say, "I don't know. It beats me too."

My good wife goes to my shows and when I hear her laugh and know that she, too, is being fooled, it makes me feel pretty good. Now if she were part of the act, or if I felt that I should use her to try my tricks out on, then it would be a different story, but up to date she knows but very, very few of my tricks, and it is fun to hear her say to people who ask her,



“How is it done?” — “I really don’t know and it would spoil the show for me if I did know. I get a big kick out of seeing it over and over again.”

Perhaps I take my Magic too seriously, but please remember it is my living — and not a bad one. My boss has asked me point blank how some of the tricks are done, and I give him the business right then and there. He laughs and goes along paying me — being fooled again.

Getting back to this Wise Guy. I don’t believe that I have ever mentioned a name of another Magician, that he hasn’t tried to belittle him to me. I know if he does that about others, he does it about me. In fact, one night a friend of mine said, “What business is Mr. Wise Guy in?” so I told him, and he said, “Well, he can’t go far with anything because he tears himself down in front of people. He may think he is making himself a big man, but he isn’t.” I afterwards found out that Mr. Wise Guy had wondered, out loud, how I could keep working.

That brings to mind something I read a short time ago — to quote — “I hate the guys who criticize and minimize the other guys whose enterprise has made them rise above the guys who criticize.”

There seems to be a lot of jealousy in Magic. I can see why, but it means no good. I can’t remember where I’ve asked a brother Magician how he did his tricks. I’ve had a lot of them come to me and say, “Do you want me to show you a trick?”, do the trick, and then turn right around and show me the workings of it. That’s a different story. Then he is doing you a favor by giving his trick to you.

I meet now and then with Stewart Judah and John Braun and we have more fun getting down on the carpet and doing tricks, but if we want to pass on the trick it is always, “Monk, here is a nice trick for you,” or the other way around. Not that I can show *them* tricks, but I try to anyway, and if I have my own little

twist to a trick I might even pass it on, because I know that they are *big enough* to *keep* it and perhaps *value* it. I know that the next time I go to Cincinnati I will not run into my trick at every turn.

My good friend, Dorny, gave me several nice tricks while we were playing in the Elsie Janis Gang show together, and I've kept them all these years. Should I ever do these tricks in front of Magicians, I always give him credit. He has some grand tricks that I'd like to know, but how that guy fools me when he starts — and I love it.

Doc Buell in Detroit has a trick up his sleeve that I'd give a lot to know, but I'll never ask him for it. Perhaps some day he'll say, "Monk, how would you like that trick I fooled you with?" Then, my friends, and not until then, will I get it.

Fred Keating, when he played the Fisher Theatre in Detroit, gave me some beautiful card moves, and I worked on them for years, and I'm just waiting until I can show him that I have them down pretty well.

It is my good luck to live in the same town with Percy Abbott — and don't any of you fellows underestimate *his* ability. There is a finished performer in almost every line of Magic. Give him a deck of cards and then stand back and see things happen that are damn near impossible. He has moves that he has worked on for years, and do you know that he has taken time off, and a busy man he is, to teach me. I'm a lucky fellow. Backhand work and palming is an art with him. He has asked me to do more of it; it will help me — Woe is me! A clever turn of the cards while counting, just to add that bit of dressing to my salad. I have never asked Percy for a thing, but out of the goodness of his heart he has tried to help me.

Now I hope this hits a note with some of you boys. Just because you belong to some Magic club, don't feel that if you ask a Magician to visit you and he does some tricks, you can go up and say, "Teach me

that trick, will you?" If he wishes to pass it on, he'll do it without being asked.

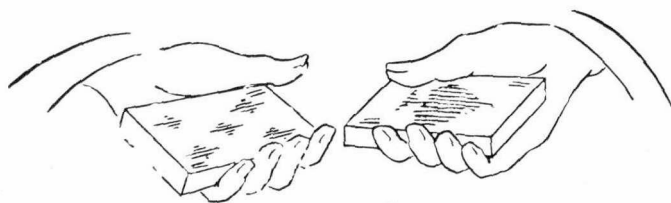
What could be sweeter than to have Dai Vernon walk into your parlor and give you a lesson? My answer to that is, "Nothing could be sweeter." That, my friends, happened to me. I told Dai that I was going to compile a book giving ten tricks to my friends in the Air Corps. (This book is not ready yet, but I hope it will be soon.) and Dai said he would give me a good one, then asked me if I would like a move of his, just for my own work. I was overjoyed and, brother, he handed me one of the best. However, he had to hurry back to Doc Daley, so my lesson was a bit too short. I'll pin him down again some day over ham and eggs in some farm house near Colon (that's where he started the lesson) then he'll finish the lesson — or I'll put salt in his coffee.

*Don't ask for tricks.* If you have a trick to trade, at least give the other fellow an even break. Doc Harad gave me a trick to pass on in this book, so I can think of no better place to do it than right here. And you'll thank him as I did, because he gave it to me without my asking for it.

### Face to Face, by Doc Harad

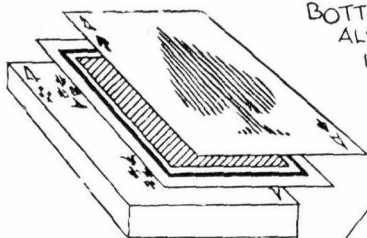
*The Effect:* Hand a person a deck of cards and tell him to place it behind his back. Now have him cut the cards any place and place the halves face to face, bring the cards out in front and then you name the two cards facing each other without touching the deck after it is brought forward.

*How It's Done:* Reverse a card and place it on the bottom of the deck making a note of the two cards facing each other. That is all, Brother, but if you think it isn't a great trick, just try it and see the results. What a simple trick that sounds like, but it is one of the best tricks I've seen in years. That is one that has the "Wise Guy" fooled up until now. I have a twist that helps it a bit.



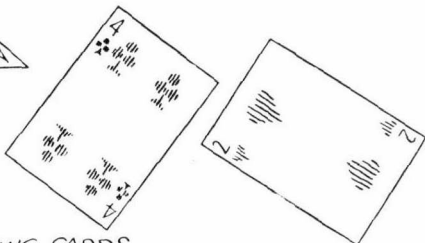
THE WAY THE SPECTATOR  
THINKS IT IS

BOTTOM CARD IS REVERSED  
ALSO BEFORE DECK GOES  
INTO SPECTATOR'S HAND



REVERSED CARD  
IS TWO OF HEARTS

YOU REMEMBER FACING CARDS



After you have reversed the card on the bottom of the deck, place another card facing downward. You can then show the deck as *all one way*. Before handing the deck to the person who is to do the trick, just reverse this card also and you are ready to go to work — or he is. See Mel's sketches on this. Thanks, Doc Harad, for the swell trick.

Again, *don't ask for tricks from the other Magicians — let him offer it to you first.*

## The Birth of a New Trick

There is a big chance that some of you will read this — at least one man will — and I can hear you say, "I thought of that years ago," but to me it is truly *original*. I mean by that, that I have never seen the trick, read about it, or seen anyone who told me the method.

Here is the conversation — and why I went to work on it. The other night, I was visiting with a friend who started to rave about a certain card artist.

He started to talk about a trick like this, "I know you'll not believe me, but this is what I saw with my own eyes. I was handed a deck of cards to shuffle any way I wished. I shuffled the cards, handed them to this fellow (his hands under a newspaper) and he dealt a perfect hand in bridge."

I am sure that you'll agree with me that *that* is impossible. *That, I've got to see!* I know that I can do it — that is it will look like the effect my friend raved about.

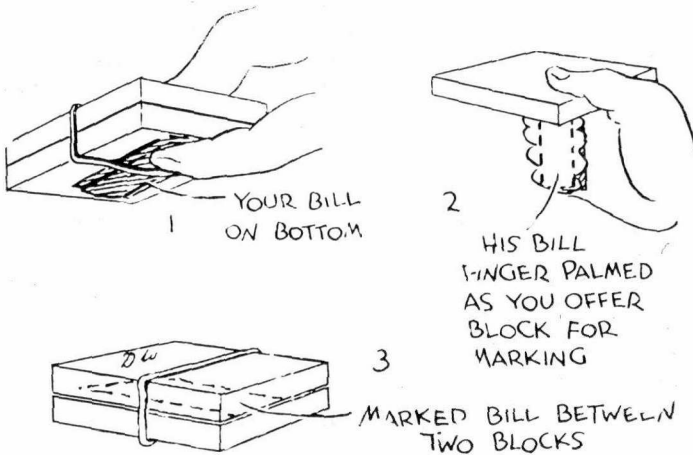
I hope that I'm not poaching on anyone's trick. I'm going to give you a simple trick, which if done well will fool your friends and perhaps some of the boys at the club.

Take a deck of cards, pick out four good poker hands (or a bridge deal) place these cards in your favorite card holder under the vest or inside your coat. Now replace these cards with an equal number of cards, *not duplicating the hands*. Hand the pack out for the shuffle. Have a newspaper held up to your neck, saying, "I'm up to my neck in the stock market," or something just as corny. As the cards are handed to you, add the hands you have in the holder to the top of the pack under cover of the newspaper, and from the bottom of the pack steal as close as possible the same number as the cards added. Then start dealing off the hands — or better still, ask what kind of poker hands to deal. I like to deal a mixed hand — flushes, fours, and then a royal to myself. It is really a simple little matter to make these changes under the newspaper, and you can make it just that much easier if you do pull a gag or two. Keep your hands close to the body while making the switch, and you're safe as anything. Try it and you'll like it, I'm sure.

Remember, my friend said that he saw this trick done with one deck of cards, so I'm not stealing because I use almost two decks in my tricks.

## A Quickie

I'm sure that most all of my readers have a mail chute trick in their collection of tricks, and even though it has been used by many it is still a very nice effect. On one of my recent trips to Los Angeles, I visited the I.B.M. and one of the members did the Card Between the Metal Plates, and very well too — I believe it was my friend, Bert Kalmar. Perhaps some of you would like something along this line to do as a pocket trick.



Here is one I've been doing for some time and it has proven to be a nice quickie. The cost of this trick is about a dollar and two cents. However, you just use the dollar — a bill — but the two cents you will have to put out for a rubber band, and a couple of squares of plywood. I use two pieces about two and a half inches square and about a quarter of an inch thick

*The Effect:* You bring out of your pocket two pieces of wood, rubber band holding them together. You then borrow a dollar bill, first having it marked or the serial number noted. This bill is placed under the rubber band. You now pass out the blocks of wood so that one of them may be marked. The bill is then vanished. The two pieces of wood are placed in the pocket of the person from whom you borrowed the

bill. He is then asked the number of the bill and then told to look between the two pieces of wood, and there he finds his bill, the one you borrowed. Not only does it sound good, but it really is a nice trick.

*How It's Done:* Remember you take two pieces of wood from your pocket, and these are held together by a rubber band. Now on the under side of the wood is *your* dollar bill. This is easy to keep out of sight. You borrow bill, have its serial number noted (or have it marked if you like), place this borrowed bill on the top side of the two pieces of wood. As you say, "Oh, I forgot to ask you to put a mark on the block of wood," you turn over the two pieces, with *your* bill showing. That puts his bill on the bottom. This bill is palmed off into your right hand — a finger palm — see sketch. When block is returned after being marked, you lay it over the *borrowed* bill — but secretly — and place the second block under it. This places the borrowed bill between the two blocks or pieces of wood. Now wrap the rubber band around the pieces, hand to spectator who places the packet in his pocket. You vanish the visible bill (*your* bill) in hand using your favorite method and the marked bill is now found between the two pieces of wood. Try it.

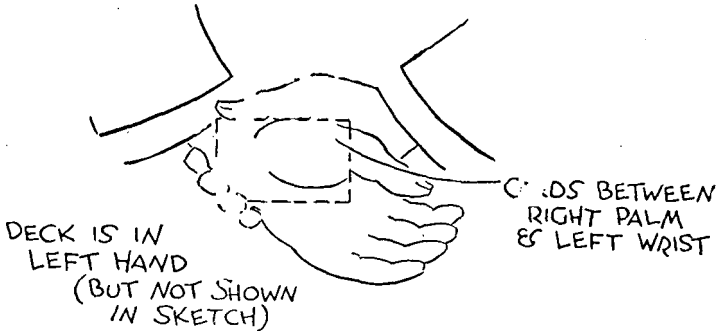
## Behind Your Back

*The Effect:* Deck of cards held behind your back, spectator takes deck, shuffles it, selects a card, notes it, returns it to top of deck, and places deck in your hands which are still *behind your back*. The deck is not brought forward, but is again handed to him to cut. Now with the deck in his hands you ask him to name a number between "One" and "Five", so ninety-nine times out of a hundred he says, "Three." He opens the deck, finds a Three-Spot reversed in the deck, looks at the card below it and finds his chosen card.

*How It's Done:* I've been doing this effect for many years. It was first given to me by a druggist who

had a great many tricks up his sleeve. I never have seen it done by anyone else up to this writing.

First you take a Three-Spot (any Three-Spot) and another card out of the deck, and hold these two cards facing each other in the right palm, the Three-Spot



back uppermost. Place them with the back of the Three-Spot against the back of your left hand (See natural-looking grip as shown in sketch), in which rests the remainder of the deck. You are facing audience with your hands (left lightly cupped as if to receive deck) behind your back. Palm of your right hand now covers the two cards.

Now turn with your back to audience and they see deck face down on your left palm. Deck is offered to spectator to shuffle, choose a card, place the selected card on top of deck and return it to your left palm, face up. Make a half turn and add the two cards which have been resting all this time between the palm of the right hand and the back of your left hand. Then turn back (never bringing the cards from behind your back) and say to the spectator, "I forgot to ask you to cut the deck." When he cuts the deck, have him retain it in his own hands. Then turn around facing him and ask him to name his card, also to choose a number between "One" and "Five." Take the deck and spread out face down and there you have the Three-Spot reversed on top of the card he selected and noted.

In case he says, "Two", you just say, "Two from



five leaves three." If he says, "Four" — they never do — just say, "So — how many numbers do we have below four?" You just can't lose.

### A Coke Twist, by Otto Curl

At the Get-Together at Abbott's in 1944, I met Otto Curl, and he asked me if I would like a bit for the Night Before Party. I was to M.C. this show, so I was open for any kind of a gag which would help the show. He handed me a beer bottle with a hole drilled in the side near the bottom of the bottle. I asked him what was so funny about that, so he asked me if I had ever done the Anti-Gravico. I told him I'd hate to be caught without one in my pocket — this is not a plug, but the truth. So he filled the bottle with water, holding his thumb over the hole in the side of the bottle. Then he placed the Anti-Gravico on the top, turned the bottle upside-down and made the water run at his will.

It hit me as being a good stooge stunt, so I asked my good — and clever — friend, Al Minder, if he would work with me in this stunt, telling him that he might get a bit wet before the trick was over. Please let me tell you, if you haven't met Al Minder or seen him work, you have missed a treat, because he is a very clever fellow and a grand fellow to know.

Here is the way I did the trick (for the first time as far as we can learn). I filled the bottle with water, asked Al to come to the stage, then asked him if he had a match. I then turned the bottle over. This got a laugh. Then I took his match and put it up into the neck of the bottle, and asked him if he had another, holding the bottle so that the open end was aimed directly at his shoe, and letting a little water out at the same time. This was repeated time and time again, each time getting a good laugh. The mystery was there and so was a lot of comedy.

I know how some of you fellows hate to see a

stooge being picked on, but just stop and think, and you'll remember the success of Frank Fay (now of "Harvey" fame) who used stooges, and so many others. You knew that their stooges were fixed, so fix one yourself and do this clown bit and you've got something.

Thanks to Otto Curl for a nice bit — and a cheap one to build.

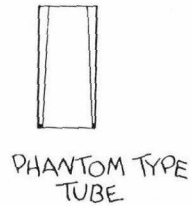
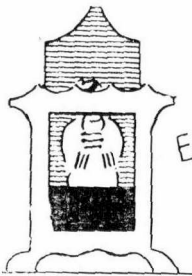
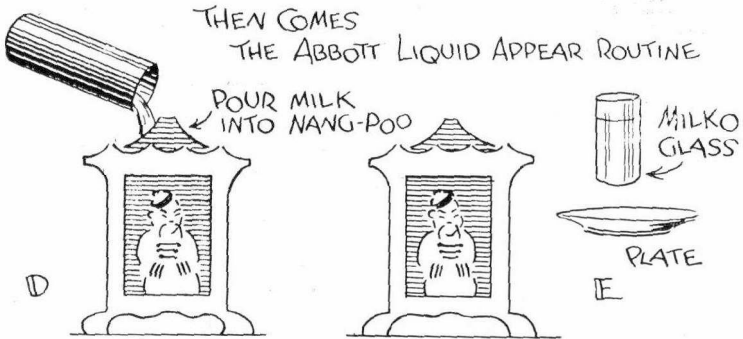
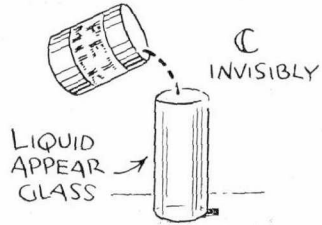
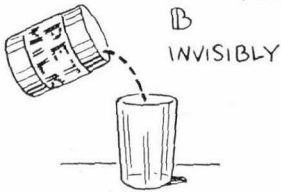
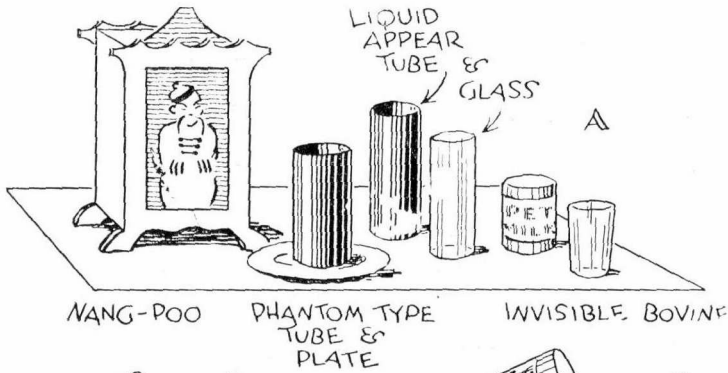
### A Milky Mixup

I like to start this trick, or a combination of several milk tricks, with a story, which is not original, but one which I have been using since 1917, and which was given to me by the production manager of the Federal Motor Company at that time, I have heard other stories somewhat similar but never told this way, so pardon me if I seem to claim this one little story as my material (No, you wise guys, this isn't the one that Clayton, Jackson and Durante used when they were together in vaudeville).

I bring out my rolling table with my trick set up as in Sketch A. I say, "In this experiment in the delusive delving into the hidden mysteries of the white fluid known as milk, I bring you the sloppiest Magic you've ever seen, so if I'm not the best Magician, you'll agree that I am, by far, the sloppiest."

I then tell the story as follows, then the patter which goes with the performance of the routine (the performing business being given in the sections in parentheses):

When I returned from World War I, where I created this next trick — I might even go so far as to say that it was created where the bullets were thickest (Pause) — under the ammunition wagon. My first day in New York was spent trying to eat all the ice cream in the city, then I figured on drinking Canada Dry. I went into a drug store and sat at a counter, and in less



than an hour one of the girls came over and asked what I wanted. I told her I wanted a plain soda, so she says to me, "Without what flavor?" and I said, "I guess you don't understand me. I just want a plain soda." She said, "Yes, I know. But without what flavor. You've got to have it without something —lemon, vanilla, chocolate, or something." So I said, "All right, if I have to have it without something, I'll have mine without chocolate." She left and returned, saying, "I'm sorry, you'll have to have it without something else, because we are all out of chocolate."

You may think this is strange, but the same thought hit me while marching one day — away from the front. I said to myself, "Wouldn't it be nice if you could have Invisible Milk?" So I started working.

(Pick up Invisible Bovine Can — Montandon — and pour Invisible Milk, into a glass — see Sketch B. Hold it up and say):

You are now looking at a glass of Invisible Milk, believe it or not.

(At same time turn the faked milk can around in your hand.)

I'll pour it back into the can *invisibly* (You may get a snicker here). Now I'll pour it *visibly* for the skeptical.

(Pour the *milk* into the glass. Show the milk in glass and say):

I'll now return it visibly to the can.

(Place the empty glass on the table and pick up the bottomless glass used in the Liquid Appear — Abbott's — saying):

Perhaps I didn't make myself clear, so I'll do it once again, this time *invisibly*.

(See Sketch C. Business of pouring milk invisibly into glass, and return can to table holding the empty *bottomless* glass in your hand).

I'll drink some of it.

(Business of drinking some, and wiping some off your tie.)

I'll now place this glass of *Invisible Milk* in the little shiny tube.

(Business of putting bottomless glass into the Liquid Appear tube or can. I place cover on top of can and pick up wand at this time saying) :

Not only has the milk become completely *invisible* but the glass is also invisible.

(Business of pushing wand through the Liquid Appear tube, knocking cover off tube. Wait a second, because they will start to whisper, "Bottomless glass." Then I say) :

For the skeptical I will now bring out the glass full of *visible milk*.

(Business of producing the glass of real milk from the Liquid Appear tube. This makes a very nice *ending*, but I go on.)

I'd like to go one step farther and pour the *Visible milk* into this little cabinet.

(See Sketch D — Abbott's Nang-Poo Cabinet. Here we have a Milko set-up: A solid glass with a bottomless glass rest in the top and painted as in Milko. I might advise you to hold your hand over the Liquid Appear to *hide the center tube* while pouring the real milk into the Nang-Poo Cabinet. From here you bring out the Milko *painted glass* and set it on the plate — See Sketch E — business of showing cabinet empty by lifting the sliding door. Now with the glass full of milk (?) you pick up plate and place Phantom type tube over glass, saying) :

When I count three, the milk will again become invisible.

(Business of turning up plate and vanishing glass and milk — a show of looking for glass, but with one eye on back of plate. Do business of turning the plate

around and all of the sucker gags you know — die box routine — “Turn it around?” then do turn plate around, showing it empty and then produce the glass of milk from cabinet, drink it or pour it out the window.)

That’s it, Brother, but good. It is a swell routine and I do it every show.

### The Lota Trick

I’ve seen Lota Bowls ever since I was a kid, and I’ve seen some of our Magicians get a lot (not a pun) out of this trick, and I’ve seen others use it without that reason which I’ve tried to write about in another part of this book. There is a great effect which I’m getting out of mine and which I’m going to pass on to you boys.

In the first place, let’s go back a few years to the day I was visiting Percy Abbott, when he was just starting his now very successful magic company (We Pay the Postage). I had asked Percy what he had in the line of a running gag, because to me that is one of the funniest things on any man’s stage — a running gag or trick.

Perhaps some of you haven’t such a thing or would not even introduce it just to put a laugh in your serious show. Well, for those who would, I give you my routine. Jump on, you fellows, and say, “That’s mine!” I dare you, but if you do I will not care. I’ll just go on believing that it was original.

It is really funny the number of men who have been the inventors of every trick I do. There is hardly a night goes by that some of our friends in Magic don’t come back to see me and invariably say, “Where did you get that trick? Do you know that I’ve been doing it for so-so many years?” I hate to ask them where they’ve been doing it, because I’m sure that most of them have been but a few miles away from home. However, it is fun, and I listen like a good fellow.

I just couldn't help but go back stage at the Oriental Theater in Chicago recently to visit Mardoni after his show and tell him, "Listen, my friend, I'm going to tell you now that I'm doing, and have been doing, Thayer's 'Here, There and Everywhere' for years, so if you hear that I'm doing it, please don't say, that Watson guy had a lot of nerve to take our act." Mardoni makes a good use of this trick and sells it like the showman he is. I hope I do it half as well. I could, but every time I book Mel along with me on a show, he seeks it out and then bumps into the table and really fixes up the trick in great shape — all over the floor.

I started off to give you my routine for the Lota, didn't I? Well, I'll get back to it. I use the large Lota that I got from Percy that day in his upstairs office. I also use a small Lota for the effect I'm going to pass on.

We have a great many "bar" acts — Pour-a-Drink — Think-a-Drink — and many others — but we'll call mine, "What? A drink."

I'll give you the effect, but I'm not going to give you the formula, in other words, the MIX. That, my friends, is a secret, which you'll have to go after through your dealer. I believe that is the way such things are handled in other books I've read. However, this is what the deception looks like from out front:

On my Victory Table, I have five glasses, three of the shot size and one large glass. To the right of these glasses I have my small Five-Shot Lota (Abbott has them). Now as in all bar acts, I ask, "What, a drink? Name it, my friend, or here is the menu," naming five of the most popular drinks. I pour out one, then show Lota empty. I say, "If you were to be lucky enough to get in on this and talk to the spirits, what would you ask for?" pointing to some person in the crowd. He names it, you pour that drink, and so on, each time showing the Lota empty. You see it is just making a good trick out of a running gag. You can do this between tricks, or all at one time. For the Big

Laugh, I make the switch to another Five-Shot Lota and pour out a large glass of milk. There may be better laughs, but I have yet to hear one.

In some cases I have used it along with the Cake in the Hat. I call the owner of the hat up on the stage and after he takes the cake out of his hat, I pour out the milk from the empty Lota.

Like it? It's a Lota fun, and you have given them "Something's been added" to an old worn-out trick.

I'll never get over watching Maury Kains do his Lota act. He has made a real act out of the Lota Bowl. I might say that I believe he has more Lotas than any ten men in the country. To visit his Magic Chamber is a treat. You start for that funny looking door and just as you reach for the knob, the door opens very, very slowly. You listen for that sound of the squeaking door in "Inner-Sanctum" radio show, but the quiet door just opens.

As you enter this den in the house that Kains built, you have a feeling that all is not well. A very small light comes on and then that odor drifts out into the room filling it with a breath of Buddha, which stands over in the corner laughing at you. The smoke comes from its mouth and you wonder who lit the fire. That is Kains' idea of making you feel at home. You then start looking around and your eyes fall on some of the most beautiful Oriental pieces you ever have looked at. Shelves, under glass, full of valuable gems picked from the Far East. It is his hobby and how he loves it.

Lotas, lotas all over the place, and strange to say, all of his own make! Simply flawless, not a blemish of any kind to mar these beautiful bowls. Some are in the shape of bowls, others are long neck pitchers, but every one has that Oriental touch. I have some of Maury's, and I had another one which I found he needed more than I did, so we made a deal and now he's happy again with his once lost gem.



In his Lota act, you find him pouring water from that empty Lota so many times you even wonder if you are seeing right, then for his big finish he fills a large glass bowl with you'll swear four times as much water as the Lota could hold, plus swimming gold fish. That, my friends, tears down the house. I thought I knew too.

Maury could play the largest theatres in our country, doing just his Lota act, but not Maury. He's one of our Ace camera men at the Movie Capital, and he shoots the stars for us to enjoy.

He has been called upon to make props of Magic for pictures, and you can bet that if he does they will not be exposed. He loves Magic, and Magic should love him. Right now he is taking acts — Magicians — out to the various hospitals to cheer up the guys who have done so much for so little.

### **Hand Rabbit in High Hat, by Dell O'Dell**

Before I give you this next trick by Dell O'Dell, I would like to say something about this lovely lady. I had looked forward to seeing her act for months, when finally the big day came. I was like a kid going to the circus for the first time. After years in show business it is hard to imagine my eagerness to see another performer, but I had heard so many nice things about her that I could hardly wait.

First we visited Dell and Charles in their beautiful home, and after talking show business for hours we were whisked across New York and through the tunnel to Jersey and then to the club where Dell had been playing for months. When she walked out on the floor, the crowd went wild, giving her a hand before she had said a word. Then she started with doves, ropes, rings, flowers and almost everything one would look for in a real Magic act — but in her hands things were different. Her running patter, all in rhyme, gave each trick the added touch that made her the star performer that

she is. She makes you feel at home the minute she starts to work with a smile that is real — not a prop like so many I've seen.

Her Linking Rings were featured on this particular night, and they just seemed to melt together. After she finished her act, she left her rings on her table, knowing that the prying eyes of the orchestra boys would try to find the secret. That, however, she had carried away with her, which was another trick in itself. I got a bang out of watching this First Lady of Magic, believe me.

After her act on the floor was finished, she went into another and more important act. She visited the tables, putting pencils in the buttonholes of men's coats, and giving to the ladies paper dancing dolls and gifts of all kinds to be taken home as a remembrance of an evening with Dell O'Dell. I understand that her expenditure for these items runs into thousands of dollars annually.

I figured this book could not be complete without a mention of Dell O'Dell, because she is "Tempo" personified. She is a master showman—or show woman — knowing all of the tricks of the art of selling entertainment.

With this thought in mind, I asked Dell if she would give me a trick with her patter, and here is her answer — a swell trick — proven to be a hit trick by one of our very best Magicians — not only a great Lady Magician, but one of our very best, lady or man.

Enough of this, you're telling me, so on with the trick, but in case you are ever within driving distance, and you are looking for an evening of unforgettable magical entertainment, drop in on Dell O'Dell and I'll guarantee you'll enjoy it.

"This is my presentation of the Hand Rabbit in High Hat," Dell wrote. "I believe this trick was first put out by the House of Charles in California. I bought



one of them and after trying it out before an audience, saw that it went over very well, so I proceeded to buy the best Knox high hat, and had a hand rabbit especially made out of rabbit fur with a very cute face and with little hands (shaped with fingers) made out of white felt.

“I think you can put these details together — first, the hat is on the table and after I have the cards selected and they are thrown into the hat, the rabbit pops up, first taking the box where the story says, ‘Hello! Hello!’ It’s a big laugh when he thumbs his nose at me and another big laugh when he makes up and kisses me and then looks down the front of my dress. Of course, I don’t know what a man Magician could do about this laugh.

“It is also a nice laugh when he tosses the cards out all over the floor and when he comes up and is chewing on a little carrot. I had a little paper clip sewed under the hat-band which holds the cards so that I can easily grab and throw away the rest of the deck. A little round ring is sewed at the front of the hat and the carrot fits into this and can be gotten easily.

“The whole presentation goes over big for me.”

So here it is:

This trick is really different,  
 Even though someone picks a card,  
 For without my able assistant,  
 I would find it very hard.

It’s not an idle boast I make.  
 He’s cute upon my soul,  
 Yet I must say, until tonight,  
 He’s played a different role.

So just pick a card, any one at all,  
 And remember it if you please,  
 And though I shuffle and shuffle away,  
 My assistant will find it with ease.

I'll toss them right into this high hat—  
 And here's a surprise I know—  
 My cute little assistant pops right up,  
 Anxious to say "Hello - Hello!"

Well, go on, Peter Rabbit,  
 See what you can do.  
 Mess around with the deck of cards,  
 I'm depending on you.

What's that you say, you want some help?  
 Oh, no — you're on your own.  
 You must do this all by yourself  
 Or back to the farm you're going.

(Peter Rabbit makes fingers at Dell from his nose).

Here now, Peter Rabbit, is that nice?  
 You know I'm not any old dame.  
 You must always respect your boss.  
 You'd better hang your head in shame.

Oh, you want to make up by kissing me.  
 Okay — that seems quite fair.  
 Here now, Peter Rabbit,  
 Don't you dare! (He looked in front of dress.)

You better keep on looking—  
 Oh, you don't want those cards  
 And you don't want those cards, either  
 You're working awfully hard—  
 You'd better come up for a breather.

I bet when you first started  
 You thought this would be a lark.  
 Now what are you doing — chewing on a carrot.  
 You think it helps you to see better in the dark?

Now listen. My patience is exhausted.

I'm getting disgusted with you  
Did you ever hear of Meatless Tuesday?

Well, if you don't find that card at once,  
You're going to be in a stew.

Ah, there it is. Are you sure you're right? You  
are?

(What was your card, Miss? The. . . . .)

Well, Peter Rabbit was right.

So I guess he does deserve a good hand tonight.

Well, that's that — this is Monk speaking again  
— and isn't that a swell presentation? Follow Dell's  
instructions, and if I were doing the trick I would  
have the rabbit looking in my coat (in the spot where  
it looks down the front of her dress), with a line of  
rhyme something like this:

So now my little bunny,  
You think that you are funny—  
Like a Peeping Tom  
You snoop into my coat.  
It will really make me snicker  
If you get into my liquor  
'Cause you'll grow horns  
And look just like a goat.