

Old Guys Unite

Accuse me of *age nepotism* if you must, but I just finished spending a few hours with the best set of DVDs I've seen in a long time.



Danny Tong has issued a 2 DVD set with the most practical routines for a restaurant type worker that I have ever seen. Like me, Danny is old as dirt and I'm sure much of what he has to say will be ignored because of that. What a shame.

I strongly suggest anyone study his Egg Bag, Chop Cup and Sponge Ball routines. They show what years of performing and perfecting can do.

Much of the material can be performed without a table which is always a plus.

I would be remiss if I didn't point out a couple of negatives. Danny does use a couple of stale lines that I could certainly do without. Also, the reality is that he has put one DVD worth of material on 2 disks, but that seems to be the norm recently.

Pick these up – you won't be sorry.

Here's what is on the disks:

VOLUME I:

Card To Wallet: A simple no palm approach to get sign "card to wallet" effect.

Bill Matrix (*coin assembly*): This simple method not only produces the coin assembly effect, it provides two additional effects. (That of a color change and production of a large coin.) However, its main function is to get money on the table. One simple adjustment and you are reset.

Sponge Balls: With 2 visible balls you will perform several effects, including the classic in the spectators hands.

Ring Flight/Ring on Stick: A very strong combination of two classics that make a great closer.

Bonus:

Matrix (*additional*)

Bills & Bowls: It's the classic Benson bowl routine done with borrowed bills and a sugar bowl. Like Bill Matrix, the routine was designed to get money on the table.

VOLUME II:

Malini Egg Bag: This 3 phase routine with spectator ends with the production of a glass liquid. Joe Lefler said, "This routine has to be seen to be believed".

Chop Cup: A short, fast routine with this prop that does not promote a gambling theme.

Card on the Ribbon: A slight change in the presentation of this great Jack Chanin trick creates a second effect and leaves you clean.

Thompson's Aces: As an opener for a card routine, this in the hands, ace production would be hard to beat. From a shuffled deck, you will produce the four aces, one at a time, while cutting the cards. Combine this production sequence with "Christopher's Red and Black Aces" (Daley's Last Trick) and you will have an easy to follow routine that does not require the spectator to take a card.

Ropes: A rope routine that runs the gamut from C & R rope to Professor's Nightmare to a 3 to 1 restoration. A complete act on it's own.

Bonus:

Jack: A minor change in this old trick adds another laugh and extends the climax.

Take care.....



Drivel & Drool

Hello....Hello.....Hello.....Hello.....

It seems like the magic blog world is now firmly in the throes of death. I went to clean up my links section today and virtually everyone had disappeared or hadn't been touched in months.

When you click on *Magic Enigma* you get:



Now I'm the first to admit that I would much rather stare at a hot blonde with serious yabos than read a magic blog, but I realized on a recent trip to Las Vegas that man cannot live by breasts alone. At the end of 4 days I was actually tired of hooters of every shape and size. Hard to believe I know.

I miss the wide variety of blogs - even the disputes as long as no one took them too seriously. Several of the older, well established blogs that I didn't link to for personal reasons seemed to have tanked - others seem to be drawing their final breaths. I hope it doesn't continue.

I know readership is way off and comments - even nasty ones, are as rare as truth from the White House. Certainly irregular postings must bear some of the blame, but I wonder if it is something that has just run its course.

Time will tell.....

On being clumsy

Let's define **clumsy**:

- gawky: lacking grace in movement or posture;
- awkward: not elegant or graceful in expression;
- bungling: showing lack of skill or aptitude;

Does this sound like the last magician you saw? Pete Rose will give you 4:1 odds that it does.....

There's a discussion on *Fat City* about purposely dumbing down a performance

for layman, so they think you aren't skillful. Unless you're performing for Cafe regulars or your audience looks like this:



nobody thinks you are creating these *miracles* by magic!

I've often thought that most, if not all, of the *look clumsy* proponents have no choice. They're skillless oafs, incapable of giving a competent performance, so they excuse it with this lame excuse. Hell fellers, Dick F. Cheney makes better excuses than that!

Thinks about it for a moment. When you present a magic trick, it can be explained by ANY audience in one of 4 ways:

1. *Real magic*
2. *Some sort of inhuman force*
3. *Skill*
4. *Some sort of gimmick available at the local shop*

Anyone with an IQ of 55 or greater will probably dismiss the first 2 as improbable. That leaves *skill* or *mechanical trickery*.

What impression do you want to leaves with your audience? I would think most would prefer the former. This is what elevates the art. Unfortunately most performances are the latter. Couple that with a clumsy performance, contrived or not - add a few stale jokes and you take magic down another undeserved notch.

If you insisted on the clumsy approach, call Curly and Moe and see if they want to do a *Stooges* revival or get a job with FEMA, but stay away from magic!

Take care.....



John - Verse 3

This is a tough review to write - at least it is for me. In every magician's development there are certain seminal moments, events or happenings that exert a strong influence throughout his magical development. The ***Book of John*** was one such point for me.

This book, like *Lorayne's Close Up Card Magic*, created an excitement in the reader. It made you want to learn the tricks and both have continued to be major influences years later. When Mendoza wrote his second book, it was apparent, even to him, that he had spilled his guts on the 1st one and had nothing left to say, but the first one was apparently a good seller and he struck while the iron was hot. Not that unusual.

Over 2 years ago John recorded a session for L&L and it has now been released in a 3 volume set simply titled - ***John Mendoza - My Best.***



I don't understand why it takes so long to bring these DVDs to market after the shoot, but it does. Unless Falanga is using the criminally stupid for editing, that can't be the problem. It just may be the timing he chooses. Anyway, they're out now.

We've heard little from John over the years since *The Book Of John*. A pamphlet or 2 and I recall a forgettable book on someone else's magic. He's a regular seller on eBay and participant on Brooks' site also, but that's about it.

I've watched the videos a couple of times and I must say, I'm underwhelmed. I've seen worse, but I expected more. For one thing, I guess, I'm not a fan of lap work. I think it is **grotesquely obvious** to even the *layman* - the simpletons apparently most perform for. John stared into his lap over and over, apparently checking to see if his wang was still attached. It was disconcerting.

His approach was less than low key - he seemed bored shitless and, frankly, his chops were less than I expected. The explanations were more than adequate without being tedious.

I get tired of people excusing crap under the *layman love it* banner. John keeps beating us over the head with how this is his living and magic isn't a hobby or blah blah blah. OK, John, that's fine, but I'll bet you have no problem taking money from the hobbyists you so publicly disdain!

Check out his post on the Cafe. If you read his stuff for long - including his auction descriptions, I believe you'll come to the conclusion this guy is a Dick. I've seen worse, but a Dick, nonetheless. I've never understood guys jumping on the Cafe to defend their products, but they do. Admittedly, none are in Lorayne's class - He's on the Mount Rushmore of Dicks - right next to Rumsfeld.

Conclusion - **I'm glad I bought them**. Surprise! I think there is a lot to be learned from a Mendoza. His choice of material has made him a living for a lot of years and I was glad to see how some of these tricks, that I read about so many years ago, really looked. There was no real flow to the show - this may have been the fault of the editor. Much of it looked like a disjointed dealer demo. I'm disappointed on many levels, but don't feel screwed.

Take care.....



Happy Birthday Magic Cafe

Don't you know you'd have a hard time finding a morsel of cake at that party!

Take care.....



Required Reading

Drivel & Drool

Keith Olberman vs Secretary Rumsfeld

This powerful editorial was brought to my attention by PeaceLove recently. I think it is required listening.

I hope no thinking individual questions anymore that George F. Bush is nothing more than a lame lap dog in the Cheney / Rumsfeld regime. Those of us that lived through the Vietnam War have heard all of this before. It was ugly then and it's uglier now.