

# The Shifting Shaft

There's an old country expression - *Like getting shit on your finger*, used when something just won't go away. No matter how hard you wash, how much soap you use, the odor remains.



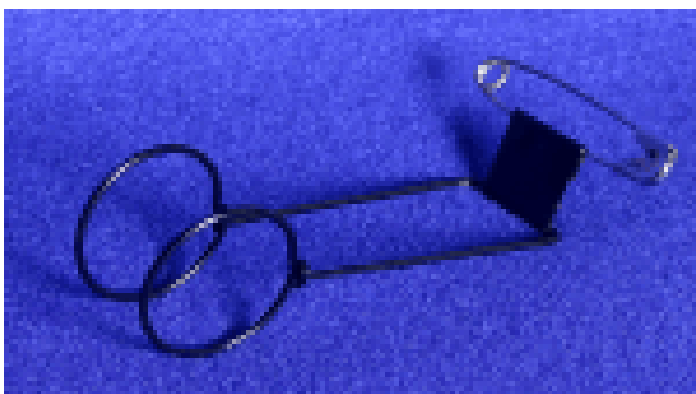
After 12 long years, I began to think the stench from [Silver Shifter](#) was finally beginning to dissipate, then this morning I ran across this. **The return of Silver Shifter!** Oh the humanity. Admittedly, it is now \$15, so you only get screwed out of 15 bucks, rather than 50.

Have they no shame? Have they no shame?

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## I Can't Write 'Em This Good

Penguin has a brass ball holder for sale.....



Too easy. I'll stop here.

Take care.....



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## I/M's Got Goat Pellets



Sometimes the well gets damn dry. I feel bad not posting more often and I refuse to use the old *life happens*. Of course it happens, but you knew that when you started a blog, so it's a lousy excuse.

I've been writing this blog off and on for many years. I haven't checked, but it's genesis is probably as old as any that are still around. It used to be easier. There were more things to get worked up about and frankly, people just cared more. Today the Magic Café doesn't even get enough idiot traffic to be worthwhile. Sure, those that are there are not missing any MENSA meetings, but they are mostly harmless and dull.

A lot of the new stuff comes in the form of video downloads and most of them are cheap and uninspired. What's happened to all of those life-changing tricks that we waited months for, paid for on a prepublication basis and then were delivered crap - if we got anything at all. That's gone. Even the long promised Martin Gardner book was finally delivered.

I should explain the title here. The title was originally *I/M's Got Bupkis*. Once I

wrote that I realized I really didn't know, exactly, what the word *bupkis* actually meant. I did a little research and came up with the following:

*Often translated as meaning small round fecal pellets, referring to the shape of goat droppings. A colorful usage, though a more emphatic expression (in Yiddish more so than in English) is "bupkis mit kaduchas" (???????? ??? ?????) (bobkes mit kadokhes), translating roughly to "shivering shit balls".*

So it's literally, *I/M's Got Goat Shit*.

I guess that's fair.

Take care.....

*i* / *m*

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## Thinking Like A Magician-Part 1



Mike Close is certainly one of my favorite magicians. I am referring to him in his magician role, not as a person. Actually, in my few brief encounters with him he's always been a little bit of a dick.

Anyway he is the creator of one of my favorite tricks, The Pothole Trick. When properly performed it is totally inexplicable and provides both magical and other entertainment and gives the performer plenty of opportunity to banter with his spectators.

If you watch the DVD the amount of thought that he has put into the actual workings of this trick is amazing. Mike Close thinks like a magician and there is

nothing wrong with that. Two of the finest performers in the world, Mike Close and David Williamson both give great credit to their audience as far as their ability to diagnose and figure out their tricks. Both of them take great pains in making sure that the spectators are fooled as well as entertained. When I hear someone say *you're thinking like a magician*, I consider it a compliment, not a valid criticism.

One point in particular in the explanation of the Pothole Trick really caught my attention. Towards the end of the trick the spectator is given one of the business cards with the hand that is dirty. We've all been there and it's damned uncomfortable. He talks at length about the necessity of waiting a beat before removing the hand to avoid it being the only thing in action and thereby calling attention to it. He's exactly right.

Watch a few demos online. I have particularly noticed in the Penguin tricks how so many of the performers try to remove the dirt with light speed and as Mike points out, you are drawn to that hand. It's a natural reaction.

Believe me, start thinking like a magician and quit believing that your audience are a bunch of drooling idiots. There are not. They are real people, not magicians.

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## Good Enough



I'm a big fan of the reviews posted on [My Lovely Assistant](#). They are sincere, well considered and well written.

From my perspective, they suffer from a little bit of *grade inflation*, but that's because I'm a cranky old fart and would rarely give anything more than three stars.

On January 9, 2016, a review of ***Unbound: Gimmickless Invisible Deck by Darryl Davis*** was published. I've seen the DVD and pretty much agree with the

conclusions. The final paragraph got my attention:

*While the technique on this video works very well with practice and the impromptu effect itself is not bad, it will not be for everyone. There is certainly quite a bit of material packed onto this disc and if you like what you see in the trailer and/or read in the ad copy, you might like this one. Just do not call it an 'Invisible Deck', okay?*

It's not bad, but it requires a lot of practice and effort to perform properly and what have you got then - something that is *not bad*.

One thing that amazes me more and more is the effort, time and money put into tricks that are, at best, C+. Why would you do that!

Years ago *Ye Olde Magic Blogge* wrote a terrific series giving his perspective on the best of various tricks. It really made ol' i/m think about his magic and it caused me to pull out some old stuff I had either forgotten or ignored the first time through e.g. ***Charlie Frye's Torn and Restored Card*** buried in the travesty that was the *Paul Harris Project Without Paul Harris*. I miss the *Blogge*.

**Someone please explain to me why any thinking magician would ever consider performing anything that wasn't best of breed!**

Take care.....



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## A Different Kind Of Magic

More magical than so much I see.