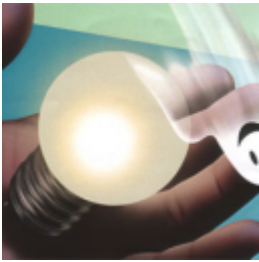


# To light or not to light



After all of these years in magic I bought my first Tenyo magic trick, Scotty York's Lamp Trick or, as Tenyo calls it, Ghost Lamp.

I had the version originally put out by Ken Brooke many years ago and also the "improved" version marketed by Paul Stone. Both of these were breakable and rather fragile, but the trick was worth the necessary care.

The current Tenyo version is, of course, plastic, but it looks much more substantial and is realistic enough to use, I believe. I just keep wondering whether it screams "electronics" to a modern audience. Those that are familiar with the trick realize that it has nothing to do with electronics, but it would be a convenient explanation used to dismiss the trick. I have scrupulously avoided things like magic apps, which have no mystery at all and are only useful as curiosities.

Another concern is whether any trick using an incandescent type of bulb is not dated. I guess the only thing to do is just start working with it and see how a modern audience reacts. I think it's a cool trick, but that means absolutely nothing to the audience. I'll report back later.

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## Damn! That dude is cool

☒ I see that Big Blind Media is about to produce their second set of videos featuring John Bannon, Bullet Train. It is available now for pre-order according to an ad on the Café. To their credit, I didn't see a promised delivery date.

The trailer on their site shows John performing an intriguing looking trick.

There's a neat magicians throw off and the use of several different types of preprinted cards. I've never seen anything quite like it and it looks as if it would have some commercial usage.

I think Big Blind Media is taking the right approach here to combat piracy. The two disc set is priced at \$40, rather than pricing it like it has the secret to immortality as so many seem to be doing now, and it comes with a dozen or so preprinted cards. I'm not so naïve as to believe that this will eliminate copying, but I certainly thinks it makes it less attractive.

The previously mentioned trailer shows John performing in a basement, I guess. It seems that using basements, caves, jail cells, etc. are very much in vogue. I'm not sure why.

A little bit of advice here Fellers. I consider John Bannon to be one of the great creators of magic in the past 20 years, but he will never be cool. I imagine John would be among the first to agree. Just let him present his magic in a straight forward fashion and do away with the attempts at artistic filming and editing. He's just not the right subject.

Having said that, I am anxious to see the DVDs. I always get something worthwhile out of every thing he publishes.

Until Cardzilla....

(I hope they're still using Sammie. What a nice diversion during the weaker efforts)

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**Bob White's Card Magic - A**

# Practical Approach



I recently had a chance to briefly view Bob White's most recent DVD, *Card Magic - A Practical Approach*. I like him and his magic.

His earlier works have been seemingly well received. Personally, I thought his work on the Malini Egg bag was exceptional and the *Torn and Restored Tissue* DVD can be considered the definitive work on the subject.

I'm not so impressed with his current effort. The theme of the DVD is uniformity of action. An unquestionably important and somewhat overlooked subject, but not ground breaking. Bob teaches his work on multiple lifts, the Elmsley count, the Gemini Count, false counts and a one handed Tilt. It's OK and I thought the work on the double lift was the best, but when it was over I found my self saying *so what*.

The tricks using the sleights taught are less than inspiring. Bob's not a showman and the tricks for the most part are pedestrian. There are about 10 of them. Others may find them better than I did.

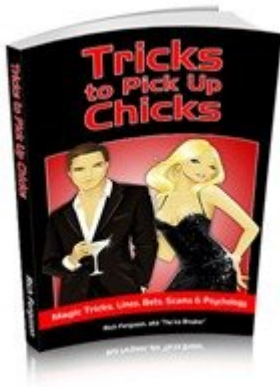
Bob is one of the magic untouchables, so I don't think the reviews I've seen are particularly honest. It's difficult to criticize nice guys - especially underground legends.

Also, these are premium priced DVDs and this is not a premium product. Cut the price in half and it would be OK - at \$50 bucks? No way!

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# If this is not the bottom, you can see it from here

I generally enjoy books more than DVDs - probably a function of age as much as anything else.



There are exceptions. I understand magic is dominated, today, by pubescent boys that use magic as a means of social interaction. That's not the guy on the front of *Tricks to Pick Up Chicks*. Obviously, blondie is ready to take him right there, due to the clever use of a thumb tip!

The DVD by the same name (there's probably a review on the site), at least, was decorated by several astonishingly beautiful women. I'm not sure why this was even produced, except we seem to be reissuing EVERYTHING that was ever written or filmed.

I see Murphy was it classified under *Comedy*. I don't find it funny.

At least it's inexpensive, you'll have plenty of money leftover to buy a few bottles of those pills that make your wang grow down to your knees. Every teenagers dream come true.

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# Bullets After Dark - i/m reviews

I recently sat down and watched the new John Bannon videos. I like John, his magic and his teaching methodology. To those that might not have seen John perform, you may be disappointed in his magical persona. He makes something like \$500 per hour as a lawyer and this is his hobby (and I'm rather sure his passion). He would never make it as a professional performer and I am sure he would be the first to agree. To those that have his earlier productions none of this is a surprise or disappointment.

Like many advanced card men he seems enamored with location type tricks. Larry Jennings also suffered from this malady. To me, these type of tricks are puzzles and have nothing to do with magic. I'm sure others will be as intrigued as John with the mathematical machinations of these type of tricks. To me, they are just plain dull. Fortunately, for those like me don't care for this type of trick their way on this two disc set to justify the purchase.



I don't know if there is a perfect type of audience for a magic DVD. I think we've all grown rather tired of the overly effusive audiences as used by L&L and I know I've grown damned tired of the street idiots used in so many "cutting edge" DVDs that are being produced hourly. John presents a lot of his effects to a strikingly sexy young lady named Sammie. Anytime the trick or explanation got dull, you could be amused by deciding how long that seriously stressed button would be able to keep her blouse closed. It made it through the session, but I don't see how. (Quite obviously, the camera men were equally intrigued)

John presented the rest of his magic to several escapees from the Geek Squad wearing sunglasses, dirty white shirts and black ties. Yawn! Please bring back Sammie.

If you are a fan John Bannon you will certainly want to purchase these two DVDs. While there is nothing earth shattering or revolutionary, the tricks are reasonably entertaining and John's explanations give some insight into his substantial intellect and the histories and evolution of the effects. John's best work is still in

his packet tricks such as *Twisted Sisters*.

His best trick, in my opinion, continues to be *Play It Straight Triumph*. This is included as the last trick on the set, but has been renamed *The Bannon Triumph*. I can't blame him for wanting to associate his name with one of the true modern classics.

I guess it's fair to say that this set reflects John and the current state of his magic very fairly. Production is OK and the camera work excellent. Attempts at being *cutting edge* only serve to distract, however.

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## Smoke 'em if you got 'em

I consider Jim Coles a friend, even though I never met him in the classic sense. He's a fellow blogger and a good guy. You only need to look at his postings like *The Geek Factor* to realize Jim really thinks about and cares about magic.

Jim asked me to read and give my honest opinion on his latest manuscript ***Under Cover***. *Under Cover* is a 22 page pdf describing one of Jim's pet effects - a spectators initialed quarter appears under the cellophane wrapper of a sealed cigarette pack. As with all good tricks, it can be described in a simple sentence, so it has something going for it.

The pdf is carefully photo-illustrated and Jim precisely describes the performance and preparation. To his credit, he also divulges the weaknesses of the effect:

- 1. It's not done by real magic.*
- 2. You use a pack of cigarettes. This obviously means your a Communist and child molester. (As a former smoker, I resent the fervor of the anti-smoking crowd, which puts this at the top of the criminal heap. Meanwhile, the CEOs and CFOs are robbing us blind and laughing their asses off - but I digress.)*
- 3. No instant reset - this is not an any time any where impromptu trick. It is primarily for formal shows and those occasions where you really need to*

*impress.*

*4. It's not difficult, but the setup requires some patience and precision.*

Actually, a short list. Everything has been audience tested over the years and I can't imagine anyone having questions after reading the manuscript, but I'm sure Jim will be there to help if you need it.

Why you should by this:

*1. The effect is off beat and not seen very often.*

*2. It's easily understood from a spectator's viewpoint. You won't lose their attention and they don't have to remember anything.*

*3. This is a fully honed, professional routine and if it is the kind of trick you do, I can't think of a better alternative.*

*4. It's one of the rarest things in magic - a true **bargain**. It's available at [Library.com](http://Library.com) for \$6.50. The price of a Frappacino and a lot less fattening.*

*5. You end clean. I can't stress the importance here. I've seen the best in the world finish routines dirty and they all look as if someone has them by the kajonies and are about to squeeze. There's too much good magic to perform tricks where there's a stench in the air from finishing dirty.*

*6. You don't have to endure terrible, overbearing music in the ads while miracles are performed for a motley collection of street bums and space queens.*

In summary - I really liked it. It's the kind of magic I like - direct, memorable and unfathomable. It requires enough thought and preparation, that you won't see everyone else doing, but there's nothing beyond the reach of the average magician.

In the right hands, you could make a serious reputation with this. I doubt you'll have women tearing off their clothes, but then again.....