

A GUIDE ON HOW TO PICK POCKETS FOR ENTERTAINMENT!

PICKPOCKETING



BY EDDIE JOSEPH

PICKPOCKETING

for Magicians

TABLE OF CONTENTS

INTRODUCTION.....	3
THE THEORY AND FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLE OF PICKPOCKETING ...	5
THE PRACTICE OF PICKPOCKETING.....	7
STEALING FROM THE POCKETS	8
STEALING A WRISTWATCH	14
REMOVING ARTICLES OF CLOTHING.....	17
BETWEEN YOU AND ME.....	20
DELIVERING THE GOODS	21
HOW TO REHEARSE PICKPOCKETING	23
A FEW WORDS OF ADVICE	24

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INTRODUCTION

Eddie Joseph was one of the first magicians to incorporate pickpocketing into his magic act and his concise treatise, the manual you now hold, is still considered the best introduction to this type of work available. Eddie Joseph first became intrigued with the idea of "picking pockets" as a form of entertainment while attending the Indian National Exposition in Calcutta in 1923. Here in his own words is a description of the event...

Men, women and children are seen streaming towards this objective, and above the din of the crowd we hear a voice calling from the direction of the theatre, "Come and see what Mabel is doing." Lifting our eyes to locate its source, we gaze upon the figure of a magician who by then had already created quite a stir in this hard-to-please city of Calcutta. Towering well above the crowd on a raised platform, the magician continues to draw the crowd - magnetically - to fill his theatre. This magician is none other than Percy Abbott.

Our attention is now engaged by a stalwart form. He is elbowing his way through the mass of humanity, shouting, "He is darn clever, this fellow. I must see him again." Hardly did he reach the door of the theatre when he returned again, shouting, "I've been pinched. Someone has lifted my purse." "Who could it be?" inquired someone. "How should I know. All I know is that he was swifter than any magician."

His misfortune, contrary to expectation, did not draw any sympathy, but hilarity. The people were tickled to death to see someone deprived of his belonging. They found fun in our friend's calamity.

But for me, it was the beginning of a strange idea. Here is a man who lost his money, yet he cannot help admiring the perpetrator of this crime. "He is swifter than any magician," and we are supposed to have earned the reputation of being the swiftest mortal beings extant.

Magicians are like blood-hounds; when they start on a trail they don't stop till they get "there." I immediately saw the possibility of employing the methods of the "pickpocket" for entertainment purposes. To what extent I have succeeded may be judged from the pages that follow. To anyone who would add this branch of entertainment - for entertainment it certainly is - to his regular program, instantaneous success will reward his efforts. The practice of "pickpocketing" for entertainment purposes is by no means difficult. You have to understand the underlying principle of it first. The rest comes easy. I will try and be as clear as possible in my instruction, and if you only follow it closely you will never go wrong.

**THE THEORY AND FUNDAMENTAL
PRINCIPLE OF PICKPOCKETING**

People believe that the pickpocket can go about his business - nonchalantly - under all conditions. This is a fallacy. He is bound by limitations the same as the conjurer is.

Nobody is ever pick pocketed out in the "wide open spaces." It simply cannot be done. When you hear of someone being victimized, it was in a crowd - whilst boarding a bus - moving along in a hurry - accidentally colliding against someone - or under some other similar circumstances.

Now it is a psychological rule that the human mind can only be conscious of one thing at a time. We imagine we are thinking of several things together but it is not so. The man elbowing his way through a crowd has only one immediate aim in his mind, that of reaching his destination. The man boarding a bus is occupied with the fear of missing it. The man rushing in a hurry has his mind filled with the thought of being there on time, and the person who has just experienced a collision is too indignant to think of anything else. Whatever the circumstances, the mental state in each case is the same. The mind is preoccupied according to circumstances. The victim's thought, at the crucial moment, is focused in another direction. It is psychological law that facilitates the pickpocket's operations. In other words, the victim's "mental state" becomes a powerful accessory to his own victimization. Without this factor the pickpocket would never survive.

How many times have you experienced this "mental state?" Have you never felt oblivious to your surroundings some time or another when occupied with some distant thinking? Have you always been fully conscious of what was going on around you when, for instance, trying out a new sleight? We have all experienced this condition of the mind not once but many times over.

As the soil has to be tilled before the seed can be sown, the natural tendency of our mind does the tilling for the pickpocket. He is presented a rich and ready soil to do the sowing.

This explains that in the first and the most important part of the execution - the operator plays no part. He merely takes advantage of the mental condition of the victim at the "psychological moment." We shall now examine his role, the part he actually plays to complete the operation.

The pickpocket's work in certain respects bears comparison with that of the conjurer. By this I mean he appears to be doing something, and under cover of his open action, he fulfills his ulterior desire. In exemplification of this we shall look into one of his most common practices. He precedes his "lifting operation" by accidentally - colliding against a pedestrian. The moment of the impact affords an ideal cover. Simultaneously with the impact his task is accomplished. The movement of his hand to the pocket will never be felt; it will be absorbed by the force of the impact.

PICKPOCKETING FOR MAGICIANS

To give you a personal experience of this principle I suggest you place something in your outer coat pocket. Arrange with a friend to walk up and collide against you. He need not be violent as that is not necessary. Simultaneously with the impact he should reach into your pocket and draw out the article. When he does this you will not be aware of the movement of his hand, through your sense of "feeling." Your "mental state," of course, will not play any part in this try-out because you already had previous knowledge of his intention. The bodily impact will "dull" the sensation caused by the movement of his hand to your pocket. Why? The reason is set out in the next paragraph.

It is a little known fact that the sensation resulting from a greater force supersedes that of a lesser force. To understand this point hold a match stick in your left hand and clench your right hand into a fist. First dig the point of the match into the flesh of your uncovered thigh. You will be pretty sure of that thrust. Now let both hands work in unison. The right fist hits the thigh sharply and the left repeats the dig with the match. You will only feel the blow and not the dig. Why? Because the blow is sharper than the thrust. Now if you were to allow someone to hit you on the same spot with a sledge hammer while you use your fist, then the result of the hammer will supersede that of the blow. It is the case of a weaker force succumbing under pressure of the stronger. In plainer language, the greater force numbs the weaker sensation to an extent that you don't feel it at all. However queer this analogy may seem to you, it is here for a definite purpose. This purpose will be evident when we study the practical side of this work.

Having arrived thus far, it becomes clear that the pickpocket can only operate under the right condition. This condition he has to seek. As the magician does not seek but creates his own conditions, he is in a superior position to employ the method of the pickpocket for his entertainment. The "mental state," a condition of the mind, as we understand, is the reaction to our effort at "misdirection." As this principle, by long usage becomes second nature to the magician, do you wonder at all why we are able to hold any member of the audience on whom we are operating in a vice-like grip? Then again, who understands the full significance of the "coverage" principle better than we do? We are already in possession of the two theoretical data. All that remains is to interpret them into practice.

THE PRACTICE OF PICKPOCKETING

In the previous chapter we have seen that the pickpocket has to work under cover of some open action. He cannot just walk up to a person, help himself to what he wants, and then retire. We employ the same ruse.

We entertain the audience. Our tricks form the instrument of entertainment, and consequently we make the instrument serve as our shield. Can anything be more natural than this? It would be absurd on my part to suggest specific tricks to precede each "lifting" operation. Each of us thinks and works differently from the rest. Each of us has to suit the need of the individuality.

The best manner in which I can serve you is to detail the moves I employ and which in my constant practice I have found to be suitable for the purpose which they are designed. All we are concerned with is to teach the simplicity of pocket lifting when employed for entertainment purposes.

To add to the hilarity some parts of the operation are conducted in a manner to make the audience aware of your intentions. They are allowed to see you, for instance, stealing the volunteer's handkerchief. As the volunteer at no stage, gets the slightest inkling of the procedure, the laughter increases with each successive operation. I will show you how to deal with the stolen articles later. For the present, it would suffice to explain how to relieve the volunteer of his belongings without him or the audience knowing that you have taken possession of them.

STEALING FROM THE POCKETS

Almost anything a spectator places into his pocket can be lifted without his knowledge. This includes wallets, cell phones, eyeglasses and eyeglass cases, handkerchiefs, pens, etc. Some items, such as pagers and cell phones inside cases, are clipped to the waist or belt line. Most of these can be stolen with even greater ease. Just remember to apply the same basic principles of misdirection while applying a distracting force “greater” than that used for the lift.

In this section, you’ll also see how you can often use the spectator’s body, coat, etc., and your own body position, and even other objects, as cover for steals. When it is necessary to “palm” a lifted item, it is a relatively easy matter to hold the object in your cupped hand; fingers curled upwards, and keep the back of your hand towards the audience. In this way, you can hide just about anything from a wallet to a cell phone from view.

Three Ways to Steal a Handkerchief from Outer Breast Pocket

First Method:

Position of volunteer facing audience. Stand behind him and with your right hand; offer him something to hold in his right hand. Noticing that he is not doing it correctly, hold his right hand with your right and raise his hand as high as it will reach. During this time your left hand is resting on his shoulder, the left one. The left hand applies some pressure on his shoulder and should not lie there lightly. The moment you raise his right hand you say, “I want your hand up there,” and as soon as his hand gets “there,” press on his right hand and pull up the corner of the handkerchief with your left hand over his left shoulder. The “pull” on the handkerchief should be a decisive one; one swift action and not done slowly. The handkerchief is put into your trouser pocket. The owner neither saw nor felt anything, but in this case you have allowed the audience to see what you were about. This will produce a loud roar of laughter. The volunteer will naturally believe that they laugh due to your helping him on with his hand. The misdirection here is perfect. Since it is his right hand he is concerned with, his face will be turned towards his hand, and later follows its movement upwards. Your left hand presses on his shoulder with a purpose. When you pull away the handkerchief the volunteer will still feel the pressure of your hand there, or rather imagine it to be there, although it has been moved away. The right hand presses on its hold at the critical moment to ensure that the volunteer’s attention is maintained this side to cover the action of the left.

Second Method:

In this method, volunteer again faces audience. Let him hold a tray in both hands. You bring a chair and place it behind him. Press down on both his shoulders with both hands, asking him to sit. This is a natural gesture. You have used it dozens of times in your home, in your office; in fact, anywhere else when inviting someone to sit. Your left hand here is in the correct position. The fingers should be more toward the front side of the volunteer than towards the rear. As he bends to sit, pull away the handkerchief and the fact that he is moving in the opposite direction to the pull the task becomes almost automatic. The handkerchief is disposed of in one of your pockets. The volunteer is again ignorant of what has transpired, but the audience knows - and they laugh.

Third Method:

In this method both the volunteer and the audience are in the dark. A table stands on the left side of stage. Volunteer is still facing audience. You stand beside him. Under the pretext of asking him to fetch something from the table or putting something on the table, you hold him by his right forearm, your left again on his shoulder, and wheel him around so that his right side is now toward audience. Raise his hand about his shoulder height, then let go and point with your right forefinger towards the table. The moment you raise his hand, the right side of his coat is pulled forward with the action of his hand, and this is an additional cover the block the audience's view to the action of your left hand which pulls away the handkerchief. The moment the hanky is pulled away your hand travels to your side. Your body hides the hanky from the audience's view. The volunteer doesn't stand a chance of a look-in. The hanky is disposed of in your trouser pocket. All one has to remember in this kind of work is to execute the secret move under cover of some open action, much the same way as, for instance, alternately passing a ball from hand to hand when proving each in turn to be empty, the wider sweep of the hand concealing the smaller movement of the ball's transfer.

***To Steal Pen or Pencil
from Outer Breast Pocket***

This is the simplest thing to do. As a matter of fact, I used to do it out of devilment in my college days. When I could successfully get away with it, then you can realize how easy of execution it must be.

Have your volunteer face the audience, as you are about to show some trick. You find that he is too close to the front. Placing both your hands flat on his chest, you push him slightly backwards with the remark, "Would you mind moving back a bit?" Your right hand goes right on top of the spot where the pen or pencil is; left hand about the same level on the other side of his chest. What also is important, your head is turned towards your left for misdirection, and as you press against him with both hands, get hold of the top of pen in the crotch of your thumb, or in a more technical term - the thumb palm position. As you move hands away, pull away the pen or pencil and it comes right out. The pull is slightly upwards and to the right. In continuation of the same movement your right hand goes behind him as you turn to face audience and the pen clipped into your pocket unobserved. It is unnecessary to say that when you are turning to face audience for a brief moment your right pocket will be away from the audience and this is the time to dispose of the pen. Here the pressure of your hands against his chest will "dull" the sensation caused by the withdrawal of the pen. Let someone try it on you and be convinced.

***To Steal Pen or Pencil
from Inside Breast Pocket***

Many people carry their pens in their inside breast pocket. Some reason must be found to get there before stealing the pen. So you work a vanishing trick, say with a card, coin or hank, it does not matter which. After the vanish, the article has to be recovered. Your left hand with the concealed article goes in search of it into his outer coat pocket and drops it in there. Not finding it there, it next goes behind the coat as if still searching his inner breast pocket. The pen or pencil is lifted off the pocket and under cover of coat presses it against palm with the third fingers. Part of pen, owing to its length will naturally extend over the wrist. The hand is withdrawn in this position and the pen is kept hidden from view. The missing article not being found there, either the volunteer is asked to help in the search and he eventually recovers it from his pocket. In the meantime, the pen is either dropped to your pocket or pushed through your shirt front. That is why I advocate using the left hand because by merely passing your hand in front of your shirt the pen can easily be disposed of there. If wearing a vest then the pen is pushed through the vest opening. I will explain two other methods of disposing of the pen but in these two instances the pen is disposed of before the hand is withdrawn from under volunteer's coat. One method is to kick the pen with the second or third finger after pulling off pocket and it will be shot up the sleeve. The other method is to push it under your watch strap. If using the latter be sure that your strap is not tied too closely to your skin. It is, of course, understood that the last two methods are particularly recommendable when it is desired to have the hand free and the moment it is withdrawn from under coat.

Stealing Articles from Inner Breast Pocket

People usually carry such things as wallets, driver's licenses, visiting card cases, letter, etc., in their inner breast pocket. To empty contents of this pocket, several trips will have to be made there. Vanishing a bunch of coins and pulling them out one at a time will serve our purpose, but I have found playing cards make the better medium. Hand volunteer a pack of cards for shuffling but before doing so palm a portion of the pack. Reach into his pocket and load the lot but bringing out only one. This you hand to volunteer to include in the pack for shuffling and you appear to be surprised how that card found its way there. To facilitate subsequent operations, the cards are loaded on the other side of the articles that may be lying in this pocket. The articles are allowed to remain near the body side of the volunteer. Two or three trips are later made to the pocket. Each time you palm out an article but at the same time you also bring out a few cards at your finger tips openly. The impression on the audience is that you are merely producing cards from his pocket.

Your position in relation to the volunteer is as follows: Supposing you want to operate on his right inner breast pocket. He faces audience and you are on his right side. When you reach into his pocket you will naturally have to turn your back to the audience partly. Your right hand goes in, palms an article and withdraws a few cards. As soon as cards are withdrawn you wheel slightly to the left in order to show the cards to the audience. This will take your left side away from the audience. After showing the cards you pass them to the left hand and incidentally the hidden article goes with it. You turn again, this time not as fully as in the first time and reach in pocket again while the left drops the article to your pocket on the left side.

In many instances you will find that it will not be necessary to palm out the articles at all. They are simply brought out behind the cards. Such small articles as driving license, cigarette lighter, visiting cards and card cases, matches, etc., are all suitable. In the case of a letter in its envelope, the cover has to be doubled before rendering suitable for handling. You can even attract a large wallet if you get too close to volunteer and pass it under cover of your body to the other hand. A word of caution is necessary here.

**IMPORTANT: On no account, take out any loose change or bills.
This will avoid a lot of complications later.**

This particular type of "lifting" is also suitable for work in the auditorium. Once in each spot is enough, for the palmed article will have to be disposed of first before attempting again and this is best done when walking to another part of the theatre. Since they are only witnessing a feat of card production from the pocket there is no reason to suspect otherwise.

Stealing from the Outer Coat Pocket

To steal from the two outer side coat pockets, it will not be necessary to go there openly as in the last. Let us suppose you have designs on his right side pocket. You stand on his right three-quarter way facing the audience. Your left side at this stage should be slightly behind volunteer's body. You either work a body production here which you have previously loaded or go in search of something. With your right hand reach across his body and move the left side of his coat away, remarking, "Nothing there." Then take hold of the right side of his coat and move it away towards you to expose a part of his body under coat, and whilst pretending to look there expectantly, the coat front forms a wonderful screen for the left hand to operate. It is the simplest thing now for the left hand to take out anything found here. The disposal of it is equally easy owing to position of your body. If operating on his left side you naturally stand on the other side, and the right hand does the stealing.

It would appear to some of my readers that a lot of nerve is required to go in for this sort of thing. That is not so. If you were seated in the audience, would you suspect that anything other than what the magician appears to be doing is being done? No question of pickpocketing will enter the mind. A magician is supposed to "put" things secretly into an audience's pocket and not "take out." Besides, you are working under cover all the time. In a later chapter, I shall show you how to practice the necessary actions without having to go under any friend's obligation to act as the dummy volunteer. All I want you to keep in your mind is TIMING - TIMING - TIMING. This plays an important part in this kind of work, the same as it does in conjuring, swimming, running, or anything else for that matter. One may train his hands in sleights from now till Doomsday and if he has not got the sense of correct timing his display will always appear as "Untidy."

To Steal from the Hip Pocket

Stealing a man's wallet ranks right up there with taking his wristwatch. Many men carry billfold-style wallets in their hip pocket. And while most are particularly sensitive to any movement in this area, with the right diversion anything can be lifted.

Here's one technique that works well. Have a pair of lady's stockings hanging under your coat at the back. You are standing, say on the right side of the volunteer. Your left hand goes under your coat getting hold of the stocking and moves from the back under the coat of volunteer. You are slightly behind volunteer so the movement of your left hand is well covered by your body as well as that of the volunteer. Your right hand moves across the body of volunteer from the front under his coat and around him to his left side, and takes the stocking, PRESS against body of volunteer with your right arm and body. In other words, you "squeeze" him in an embrace while the left hand relieves him of the contents of the hip pocket. This "squeeze" will dull the sensation that the movement of your left hand may have produced otherwise, under ordinary conditions. The article is not withdrawn timidly nor gingerly, but JERKED out. Having gained possession of the article, the right slowly brings the stocking into view while the left passes the stolen goods from the back and sticks it under the belt unobserved.

STEALING A WRISTWATCH

This is one of those rare feats that create real talk and publicity. Does it seem feasible? By all means, and it is no more difficult than the rest. First, let us study the different variety of straps or bands that hold the watch to the wrist. The four basic types of wristwatch bands are the Buckle, Expandable Metal Band or Flex Band, and Clasp-types - either one or two-piece. And, of these, the first two are the ones you are most likely to encounter.



Basic One-hand Watch Steal Technique

A watch with a leather strap and buckle is the easiest type to steal. You must first get hold of the spectator's wrist with your right hand and hold him there with a strong grip. This is very important, and the success depends 99% on this hold alone. Your hold position is as follows: The palm of your hand is directly on the face of the watch, the thumb and fingers on either side of the buckle. This position comes second in importance.

Now, your thumb and fingers operate on the part that holds the strap together. The fingers and thumb undo the buckle by first sliding the end of strap out from the buckle, then doubling the strap over itself and applying a little pressure until the prong slips out of the hole. Make sure to push the prong away, so it doesn't catch when you slide the band out. The hardest part is done. As you apply a suitable diversion, pull the watch away.

The great stage illusionist, John Calvert, uses this technique while bringing a man up on stage from the audience. After spotting someone in the front row wearing the "right type" of watch, Calvert approaches him to request his assistance in a trick. As he helps the man from his seat, he exerts greater force on the other arm, thus diverting any attention and feeling away from the arm where the watch is being stolen. It all happens in a moment and the man follows the magician up on stage unaware that his watch is already gone. After allowing some time to elapse, Calvert nonchalantly asks the man for the time. Of course, the audience sees what's coming even before the spectator does and breaks out in spontaneous laughter.

This same one-hand technique can also be used for the two-piece clasp type band. This style of band also has a two-piece strap, like the leather band and buckle, but it is usually made of a metal mesh. Once on the wrist, one piece tucks under the other and is secured in place using the clasp. Once the clasp is snapped open with your middle finger, the watch will usually fall open and can be easily pulled away.

Now we shall deal with your skeptical smile. Get your wristwatch and place it on your left wrist, but for the moment don't fix the buckle or clasp. Just place the watch in the position it ought to be when worn ordinarily. Now get hold of it as explained, i.e., palm on the face of watch and fingers below and press as hard as you can. Use your full force and then suddenly jerk the watch away. What do you feel? Long after the watch is removed the sensation of the watch still being on the wrist persists.

Do you recall an impromptu stunt with a small coin which you stick on the forehead of a victim? You press on the coin and then you draw it away without him knowing. He is told to drop the coin from his forehead by making his brow jump up and down. The coin is not there but he continues for a long while in the attempt of dropping the coin which he really believes to be there. The pressure on the coin when placed against his forehead creates the sensation of the coin being present long after it has been removed. It is the same thing with the watch.

I would further explain that the watch is not pulled over the hand of the wearer but taken directly off his wrist. Only remember to press on the watch as hard as you can; the harder the better as the watch is jerked away. When practicing this steal don't practice it on yourself, but strap the watch on the arm of a chair and, dragging the chair with you, count the paces taken before the watch is un-strapped. With each repetition try to reduce the paces until you come to the minimum. The chair should be a light one.

Two-hand Watch Steal Technique

Removing a wristwatch with an expandable metal, flex-type band, is more difficult and requires both hands to accomplish the steal. This also means that your other hand is not free to assist in diverting the spectator's attention, so you must use some other ploy. Many performers will keep the spectator busy holding some object, such as a silk, sponge ball, wand, etc., under the pretense of helping with a trick. This also ensures the spectator's hand is clenched into a fist.

The watch is removed by placing the first and second fingers of one hand under the band on each side of the watch face. The fingers of your other hand then slip into the underside of the band and pull down. Spread the fingers of both hands, so the band is no longer in contact with the spectator's wrist and pull it off.

Again, this type of steal needs strong misdirection and diversion, so it is best incorporated into a larger routine that helps you achieve this end. If you have a reason to cover the spectator's hands with a silk or place his hands out of sight behind his back or under a table, so much the better.

Watches to Avoid

The one-piece metal clasp type combines the features of the metal flex band and the clasp. Once the clasp is loosened, the band is enlarged but still intact. In order to steal the watch, it must still be slipped over the wrist. While it can be stolen, it is best avoided for an easier target.

REMOVING ARTICLES OF CLOTHING

Many articles of clothing can be removed from unsuspecting volunteers. These items include necklaces, bracelets, cufflinks, belts, tie clasps, etc. Removing items of this nature always generates laughter and is a sure-fire hit with audiences. As a result, it's a great way to climax a magic show or pickpocketing routine. We'll start with an explanation of how to remove a gentleman's suspenders.

Stealing Suspenders

If anything could send the audience into convulsive laughter, this is it. Just imagine the effect on the audience when you pull volunteer's suspenders right off as he is asked to return to his seat. In search of a missing coin you reach under his vest and under cover of looking for coin, you undo the side buttons which hold the suspenders. Both your hands work together, one on each side and the unbuttoning is done as swiftly as snapping the fingers twice. You don't interfere with the back buttons yet. Go into your routine and when about to pull the suspenders off (this after you have done your trick right through), thank the assistant and ask him to get back to his seat. As he walks away reach under his coat from behind, both hands going there together, and with one move the two back parts of the suspenders are unbuttoned. Pull down on the suspenders and they will come clear from behind the coat in your hands. The volunteer will immediately get hold of his trousers and begin fearing it would result in a calamity, and you, with the suspenders dangling in your hands, follow him.

Removing a Spectator's Shirt

Harry Blackstone, Jr. was not only a master of this - he built it into a "challenge effect" that left most laymen with the impression that he was able to perform this incredible feat with anyone from the audience! With his commanding baritone voice, he would offer his "personal check" for a very large sum of money with the punch line of "or" a vastly smaller amount in cash, to anyone in the audience who could prove that he used a confederate or shill from the audience for the trick. This line always got a laugh but afterward, people remembered the challenge not the gag. It was a masterful Blackstone touch.

This stunt, of course, does require an accomplice who is planted in the audience from the beginning. The best choice is a man who is already attending the performance with his wife and/or friends. Find a good-natured, middle-aged man who will enjoy "pulling one over" on his friends and the audience, and you'll be amazed at how believable this stunt can be. You must find a man with a button down dress shirt and suit or sport coat. Before your show, take him back stage and have him remove his shirt. Place his shirt over his shoulders without his arms going in his sleeves. Button the collar and first few buttons, as you pull the shirt down a bit - draping it in the front. It will only come down part way, but don't worry - the rest will be concealed by his buttoned outer coat. If he's wearing a vest, all the better. Before you have him put his jacket back on, however, have him button each shirt sleeve at the wrist. This allows the shirt cuffs to extend from the sleeves as they normally would. Remember, the arms are still outside the sleeves. When he does put his coat back on, make any final adjustments needed to complete the illusion that the man is wearing his shirt normally. No one will suspect anything, nor have they any reason to. Have him return to his seat with the understanding that when you give him his "cue," he should volunteer to help out on stage. As a little bit of showmanship, pass him up at first as if you are going to choose someone else. Then, go back and pick him.

After he helps out with a trick, allow him to start back to his seat. Seemingly as an afterthought, call him back and say "Let me loosen up your collar a bit." Unbutton the collar and other front buttons, then each sleeve. Now, reach behind his head and grab the shirt - pull upward and the entire shirt will come out as if you've pulled it right off the poor man's back. Allow the effect to sink in for a moment. If you picked a good helper, he'll act as surprised as the audience is, at what just happened.

PICKPOCKETING FOR MAGICIANS

A variation on this stunt is to seemingly pull off the man's underwear. Of course, you just use an extra pair; which is tucked into his pants from behind. Make sure there are no visible lumps. This one works best if the man is not wearing a coat jacket. At the appropriate time with your helper facing the audience, just reach behind him and pull out the extra pair of underwear. Again, a little acting on the volunteer's part will ensure a great audience reaction.

As an added kicker, you can also have one of the man's socks in your pocket. Leave this bit until last. After you've handed him his shirt or underwear and made sure that he received a nice round of applause, let him start back to his seat again. As he does, touch your pocket with an expression on your face as if you've forgotten something. Tell him to wait just a moment and then reach into your pocket and pull out the sock. Say, "Sorry, I think you'll need this, too," as you point to toward one of his feet. You can bet when he lifts his trouser to show that his sock is, indeed, missing - the audience will let out another howl of laughter. You can prompt him on how to play this backstage before the show.

While none of the aforementioned stunts are true pickpocketing, they are highly entertaining and can be used as part of a genuine pickpocketing act or most any magic performance.

BETWEEN YOU AND ME

In the foregoing pages I have explained how we can get into the different pockets of the volunteer. The methods explained are not some theoretical "possibility" but the results of practical experience. When driving a car each of us follows the same line of successive action, but if the mannerism of each is studied, it would show us that no two persons can be alike. The hold on the steering wheel, the position of the legs and body in each case suggests a different individuality. While each driver is following the one set rule of driving, each applies it according to his own mannerism and convenience.

I have set out the rules - the line of action - for you to follow. It is for you to apply this knowledge according to your own requirements. I have purposely not referred to the manner in which your hand should operate in the pocket, nor the exact move of unbuckling the strap and watch, and neither did I detail how to undo the button from the suspenders. A couple of trials in private and you will have discovered a method far more suitable to your mannerism than any that I can show you. Anybody knows how to undo a button with one hand. It is far easier than doing the button. Is it necessary for me to say to put this finger here and the other there?

I have not mentioned anything about the trouser pockets, as I prefer to leave that alone. Many people go about with a handkerchief, paper or other thing sticking half way out of their pocket. It would be easy to pinch this. Just ask him to walk up under some pretext, as you take hold of the article - you don't even need to pull it. He does it unconsciously for you, by walking away. A tie pin can easily be lifted under the disguise of lighting a cigarette for the volunteer. The tip of the little and third fingers do the deed. During your regular program, keep an eye for openings and you would be surprised to see many undreamed-of opportunities. Walking up the aisle in the auditorium for some reason or another you have countless opportunities especially with those seated at the end of the aisle. I was extremely fortunate once finding a lady's brooch on the floor of the theatre. She had dropped it there when entering: You can imagine the publicity I got when later producing the brooch. The lady claiming she was seated right in the center of one of the rows of seats where I did not enter. By this I do not mean to suggest that if you "look out" you are going to find trinkets on the floor, but I do mean that you will see countless openings for your operation which did not enter into your earlier calculation.

In the next part of this work I am going to explain how to "Deliver the Goods," that is, the manner in which they are returned to the owners. On this depends a great deal. It would detract more than fifty per cent from the desired effect if the articles were merely brought to light and returned. The element of SURPRISE which contributes to the completion of the MYSTERY should prevail.

DELIVERING THE GOODS

We now come to the most interesting part of the subject. It is here where the "hounds" are unleashed. Having completed your work with the assistant, or assistants, as the case may be, they are dismissed and asked to retire to their seats. Suddenly it dawns upon you that you are going to do another trick and ask for a handkerchief. Your remarks are directed to the fellow whose hanky you have pinched. He goes for his handkerchief and the expression on his face is enough to start the "roar." If you have used the method to steal where the audience is in the know, so much the better, and the laughter increases. Say, "Never mind. I shall use one of mine." Here take out the hanky you have stolen. You appear quite innocent while handing it to him. The handkerchief has to be marked so you call for a pen. This is missing also and the pen comes out. It is immediately recognized. In the minds of the owners, it appears as if you have stolen these just before calling for them and not much earlier as the case might have been. Addressing the owner of the wallet, for instance, you ask for the loan of a bill. He goes to his pocket, but you immediately take the wallet out and say, "Is this what you are looking for?"

In the case of a cigarette case, offer a cigarette to the owner. The moment he sees it, he goes to his pocket to ascertain whether his case is there or not. You remark, "Well, never mind. You may have mine." The mechanical lighter is used to light the cigarette and then shown casually to owner with the remark, "I wonder what this cost?"

Now the magician with the greater imagination always takes full advantage of any situation. He makes his work appear far stronger than it really is, so here we employ a ruse. In the pocket, have already a few other articles of your own. Articles suitable are such things as a man's underwear, a lady's garter, a piece of tape, in fact, such articles that cannot be removed easily under even the most favorable conditions. Don't have too many of them. Two or three are more than enough and for most of the time only one such will suffice. This part is always best concluded by pulling off the suspenders (trouser suspenders), but before attempting it, hand say the lady's garter to this man and tell him it belongs to that lady over there. "Will you please hand it to her?" Point at some imaginary spot. As he moves away, you pull the suspenders out. He forgets the garter and goes straight to his waist to hold up his trousers. The imaginary spot to which you point must be one of the spots which you have been to at the early part of the program otherwise nobody will believe it, and to make it more realistic, in passing that way earlier accidentally drop something near a lady and pick it up. When the garter is brought out later, the "clever" ones will at once recall this incident and figure that the accident was specially arranged and the garter was really stolen then. Besides, whoever expects a lady to lift up her skirt in public in order to disprove you? You are in any case not pointing to any particular individual.

With the tape, for instance, just walk down and address a man saying, "Are you sure you are not in distress?" Whatever the reply, you hand tape to him. The audience will draw different conclusions and, since this raises more laughter, that is all that matters.

PICKPOCKETING FOR MAGICIANS

With the underwear I proceed as follows: When the suspenders are pulled off, naturally everyone starts laughing. So you bring out the underwear and hand it to someone whom you see laughing quite loudly and remark, "One can't be too careful, you know." If he does not accept it naturally the laughter increases. All this helps the situation and many such ruses will suggest themselves to the operator.

Articles belonging to one person are later discovered in another's pocket. The handkerchief which the audience saw you pinch earlier is secretly loaded to another's pocket or under coat and here the audience, while sharing your earlier secret, is equally mystified when it is later produced from elsewhere. With the greatest of ease - and I mean greatest of ease - articles stolen could be dropped into the pockets of people sitting at the end of the row near the aisle. Get near him under some pretext - you have to be close to him - and the hand that is closest to him does the work. Another way is to ask him to stand up for some thing or another or during a card trick to hold up a card to show the rest. Your hand naturally touches him gently on the arm which he is resting on the arm of the chair. You drop the small article to his pocket and sort of gently help him up. What a natural cover your body makes to assist this operation. In all such transfers from one pocket to another, one has to remember to allow some time to elapse before the final recovery or discovery. The detective attributes his success to the power linking one isolated incident with another. We conjurers, in order to evade detection, always destroy the means of connection and hence it is not necessary for me to go into details - you already know this part of the business.

HOW TO REHEARSE PICKPOCKETING

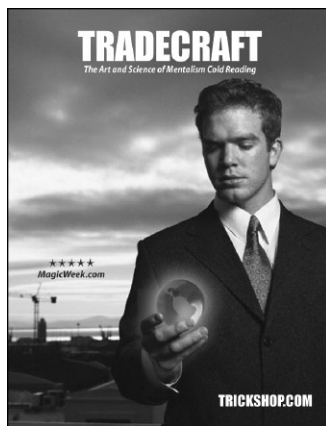
One has to be familiar with one's work before attempting it. In the case of a new sleight or trick, we just stand before our mirror and repeat the same move over and over again. We do not need any outside help. But in this work we have to ask someone to stand before us while we rehearse the operation. It is not so easily accommodated. The person on whom you may be practicing soon gets "fed up." He has no interest in the work.

I will show you how you can go through the necessary practice in the privacy of your own bed room. If you can get hold of one of those tailor's dummies, so much the better, but that is not absolutely necessary. Get a table and place it before your mirror. Now find a chair and place that over the table with the seat side facing front. The highest point of the chair should coincide with about shoulder height of the average person and this can be adjusted by getting the right size of table. Hang a coat on the back of chair the same way as you naturally do at home many times. Now this outfit represents your volunteer and you can go at it for all you are worth. Just to convince you of the effectiveness of this procedure I can modestly claim that this outfit has helped me to learn how to load a bundle under the coat of a volunteer to such a degree of perfection that I am able to work it as close as a couple of feet away from the audience without being caught. Before this, I tried it with several boys to act as dummies, even paying them by the hour, yet they got fed up standing there seemingly "for no reason at all," as some have said to me.

A FEW WORDS OF ADVICE

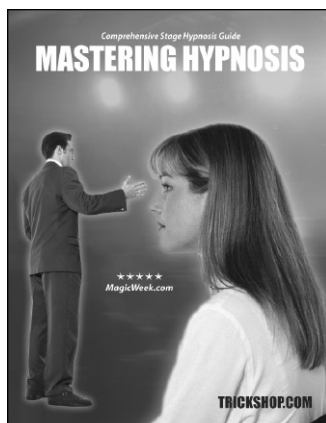
Just remember the time when you first started magic. You were keen and enthusiastic. You came to the first public demonstration and the loud round of applause you got. What did that mean to you? Wasn't that the REAL stimulant for you to forge further ahead? While learning the tricks, everything seemed so dead that at times you wondered whether your tricks would be appreciated at all. I am referring to the time when you first started magic; not the present period. So it was the first public demonstration that showed you the worth of the trick and not the private practice.

The first public applause and appreciation was the real incentive for you to "carry on." It was then when you realized the "Performing" value of conjuring. It is the same ease with "Pickpocketing." After its first public presentation you will understand more about its worth than I can tell you in fifty years.



COLD READING TRADECRAFT

Imagine meeting someone for the very first time and being able to reveal not only some of their innermost thoughts, but details of personal events yet to come. It appears to be nothing less than a genuine demonstration of extra-sensory perception, ESP. This is the power of cold reading – a process used by professional psychics, mind readers, fortunetellers, intuitive counselors and guides, and mentalists. In “Tradecraft,” you’ll learn how to harness this power to entertain your clients. Our concise “how-to” manual takes you step-by-step through the process of developing YOUR OWN cold reading abilities - from gaining a solid grasp of the underlying scientific principles at work to the practical application of specific methods and techniques. Plus, you’ll even learn how to correctly answer the most difficult questions readers face. Rated five stars by MagicWeek.com. 52pp.



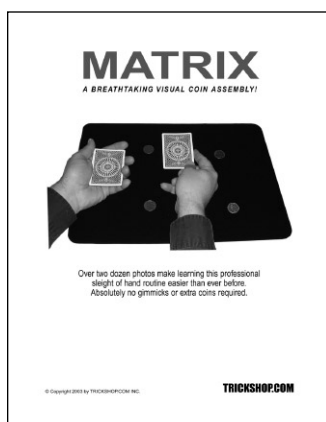
MASTERING HYPNOSIS

If you’re interested in mastering the art and science of stage hypnosis, we’re confident you’ll find no better guide available today. This insightful, how-to guide will teach you everything you need to know – from how to hypnotize both individuals and groups to the closely-guarded professional techniques used to deepen hypnosis and maximize the power of hypnotic suggestions. What’s more, thoughtfully designed practice sessions will help you become proficient in performing many of the same classic tests and entertaining stage hypnosis routines used by top professionals worldwide. Plus, get in-depth advice on putting together and marketing your own stage hypnotism show. Rated five stars by MagicWeek.com. 98pp.



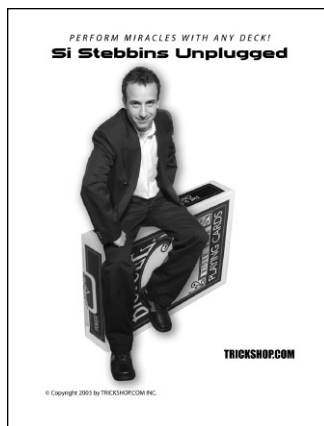
EXTREME MAGIC

Interested in strong, visual, “in-your-face” magic you can perform at school, on the street or in the clubs? Extreme Magic brings you over a dozen of today’s most powerful street magic effects. Tricks you’ll be ready to do anytime, anywhere, to amaze old friends and new. While a few of the effects and techniques do require some practice to master, you’ll be able to perform most right away. Spiral bound booklet with easy-to-follow photographs and concise, clearly-written text. Learn many of the best tricks from David Blaine’s Street Magic TV Special, including The Marlo Snap Change, Twisting Arm Illusion, Balducci Levitation, Ash on Hand, Two Card Monte, Spoon Bending, and much more. 25pp.



MATRIX VISUAL COIN ASSEMBLY

Four coins (US or Canadian quarters, UK 10-pence coins, etc.), placed in a square layout on your close-up pad and each covered with a playing card, assemble one at a time under the same card. The flight of each coin is amazing - the spectators actually see the coin vanish from one card and reappear under the other as you snap the cards. No gimmicks or extra coins are required. At the end, you are left completely clean and all may be examined. Our clearly written instructions with over two dozen large, clear photos make learning this professional sleight of hand routine a breeze. In fact, you’ll probably pick it up with just a few hours practice. Rated five stars by MagicWeek.com. 12pp.



SI STEBBINS UNPLUGGED

While most magicians and mentalists are familiar with the Si Stebbins System, very few ever tap its true potential. In Si Stebbins Unplugged, you'll learn how to transform any deck into one of the most powerful trick decks ever devised. Best of all, it will be a deck that you can use not just for one trick, but for an entire performance of entertaining, commercial card magic effects. What's more, when you're done, the deck can be fully examined! Clearly-written explanations and over 50 photographs detail every aspect of the system – from basic handling to innovative concepts and techniques designed to elevate your work into the miracle class. A must-have resource for every magician and mentalist who performs with a deck of cards. Plus, 16 entertaining effects. If you work for real people, this is absolutely killer material. Rated five stars by MagicWeek.com. 52pp.



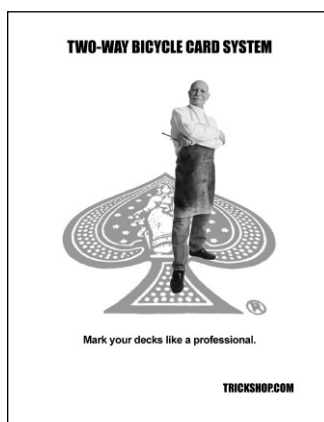
PREMONITION MENTAL CARD MIRACLE

Eddie Joseph's Premonition is considered by many to be one of the most amazing feats of Card Mentalism ever conceived. Here's the effect. ANYONE in the audience is asked to name ANY card. The person naming the card is asked to come forward and pick up the deck of cards on your table. This person now removes the deck from its case and deals out every card in the pack but fails to find the one he named. He is now told to count the cards and finds only 51. ONE CARD IS MISSING AND THE MISSING CARD IS THE ONE JUST NAMED ALOUD. The magician reaches into his pocket and without the slightest delay brings out the very card named by the spectator. 13 pp.



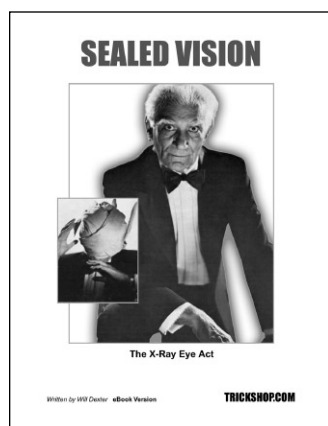
PAUL FOX MIRACLE GIMMICK

Perform absolute mind reading miracles with a deck of cards. For years, this was Paul Fox's best kept secret. A small gimmick that allowed him to ascertain the identity of cards merely thought of by one or more spectators. Please note, nothing, except the deck, is ever seen by the spectators. The deck may be handled with perfect freedom – nothing is concealed on the fingers or in the hands. There are no duplicate cards, no false shuffling and no memory system or mathematical formulas employed. The gimmick does everything except whisper the names of the chosen cards in your ear. Fits any bridge or poker-size deck. Use your own deck. We supply the gimmick with our new updated, illustrated instructions that make learning how to use it a breeze! Plus, four mind boggling routines from the master himself. 10pp plus gimmick.



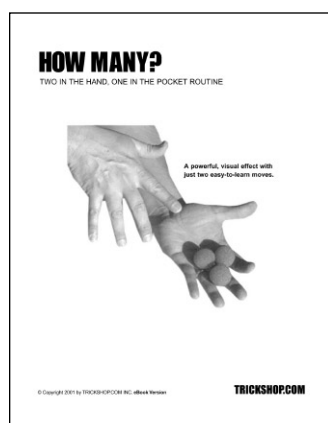
TWO-WAY MARKED BICYCLE DECK SYSTEM

Learn how to mark your own Bicycle deck using the same professional system used by magic shops. No messy inks or colors to match. A simple, inexpensive tool available at any office supply or art or craft store is all you need. Our illustrated instructions show you step-by-step how to mark all suits and values. Two-way system works with both red and blue backed decks, and enables cards to be read from the top or bottom. Instructions sold for entertainment purposes only. 16pp.



SEALED VISION

The performance of the X-Ray Eye Act always leaves a profound impression upon an audience. You begin by talking about “second sight” and how you have developed your own abilities in this area. To preclude the possibility of subterfuge, you now allow members of the audience to place heavy cotton wads against your eyes and then seal them with surgical tape. To make it even more conclusive, a dark heavy blindfold is placed around your head. However, despite your vision has been completely sealed off, you are able to walk into the audience and read money, credit and business cards, pick colors, name objects, etc. This definitive treatise by Will Dexter covers over a dozen types of blindfolds, numerous techniques and subtleties, as well as program ideas and publicity stunts such as the famous “Blindfold Drive.” 73pp.



HOW MANY? ROUTINE

The “TWO IN THE HAND, ONE IN THE POCKET” trick is a classic of magic. And like all classics - the plot is simple, direct and magical. Three balls are shown. Two of these are placed into your left hand and the third one goes in your pocket. Magically, the third ball travels from your pocket to join the other two in your left hand. This effect is repeated a second time. Finally, just when the audience thinks they are catching on and believe you have three balls - you slowly open your hands to reveal you have none! Over two dozen photos take you step-by-step through this easy-to-master routine. Just two simple moves accomplish everything and there are no gimmicks whatsoever. Best of all, you are left completely clean at the conclusion of the effect and reset for your next group of spectators. Ideal for walkaround, trade shows, etc. 9pp.

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