

TOPS & BOTTOMS

by DON ALAN



When I was first approached about writing this monthly babble, I immediately sat down in a corner and quietly racked (which is slightly uncomfortable due to fifteen balls and a very small rack) my brain for a title. Finally I arrived at the title above by sticking my thumb into the pie which my wife delivered to this very small corner. It may be that she felt it looked undignified sitting in a corner without one. After sticking my thumb into the pie four or five times, I finally came up with a Tag Line, which my spouse seems to think refers to a pair of pajamas and is quite happy that I am writing about something else other than magic. This has become a small joke around the house and after rereading the above I realize just how small a joke it is. But now I hmd a title and submitted it to Neil Foster, our esteemed Editor, who being the smart alec he is, immediately dug into the files and came up with a column written by Harry Cecil some years ago, entitled Tops & Bottoms.

I hereby apologize to Mr. Cecil for not changing the title, but it seems that we have no more pies and my wife will not bake another just because somebody stole her husbands idea. I say to Harry Cecil, "Great minds run in the same channel, providing you have the set turned on." So each month I will retire to this small corner and hope that I will be able to provide a few plums for all you Jack Horners, which is a stage name I just thought up.

The real Jack Horner retired some years ago with the advent of the theatre in the round. There was just no place left for an act of his kind.

Now this month we shall discuss money, which if any of you feel so inclined, you may send me in care of the Editor. It will go to a very worthy Cause, Cause I need it, having just acquired a very heavy mortgage on a doll house in an ideal location and close to transportation. Have you ever tried to get on a bus with a doll house? It is not easy and some day I will market my method, which I have kept very secret.

Money is popular. Therefore we can assume that the production of money in a magic act will always be popular. This is based on an old proposition of Einstein's, Sol Einstein who is credit manager for a frozen food concern. Having seen Abbott's excellent spring bills (small plug) I started to play around with a few ideas and came up with the following, which I hope you will use before we go out of business.

ABBOTT'S spring bills come with or without strings, (large plug) I prefer the strings, as I have found it keeps the bouquet of bills from falling apart. Now for a cute opening gag. Tie a packet of spring bills to the handle of a small toy pistol. Then walk out concealing the bills in the hand that holds the pistol and say, "They say crime doesn't pay... but it's a heck of a part time job," tossing the gun and bills into the air on the word "pay".

I have had great success with this in banks and jewelry stores. An alternate method is to tie the bills to a real gun and come out shooting. You'll find that this kills them, but makes for a very short act.

Try this. Fasten the bills to a sexy calendar picture. Now to perform, show picture and as you crumple up the picture and toss it into the air you say, "Now there's a girl that's built like a million dollars". This is a cute trick and also gives you an excuse to your wife for having the picture around the house.

Maybe you'll use this. Obtain a medium thick book and open it to the middle and cut out two wells, as in the sketch. These should be large enough to hold the two packets of spring bills as in diagram. Now scotch tape the packets in place and you will find that you can carefully close the book. Now make a cover for the book which reads, "How To Make A Million Dollars". I suggest that you put the cover on before you load the bills, but it is pretty funny to those who watch you set up the trick to do it the other way. To perform, pick up the book any time in the act and show, saying, "I have just written a book entitled, HOW TO MAKE A MILLION DOLLARS. It's sort of a get rich quick scheme", as you open the book to the middle, and the book will be filled with money.

One more time and then I'll foreclose. This was worked out for my trip to England. Buy the heaviest fish weight you can find and fasten the spring bills to it. Then midway fasten by scotch tape a check as in the diagram. Now fold the weight against the check and then the bills. To perform hold the check so that the bills are concealed and say, "I had a very difficult time cashing a personal check in London, and when I finally found someone who would cash it he cashed it in English money. (Here toss the whole works into the air and catch the bouquet. Let the effect sink in and then say, "Now not being too familiar with the exchange I said, "How much money is this?" And he said, "About 8 pounds." Now as you drop the whole works on the floor you say, "that sounds about right to me", The thud that this will make can be heard in the largest theatre and gets a good laugh, if done right. See diagram for details.

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