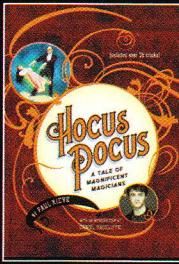


Genii

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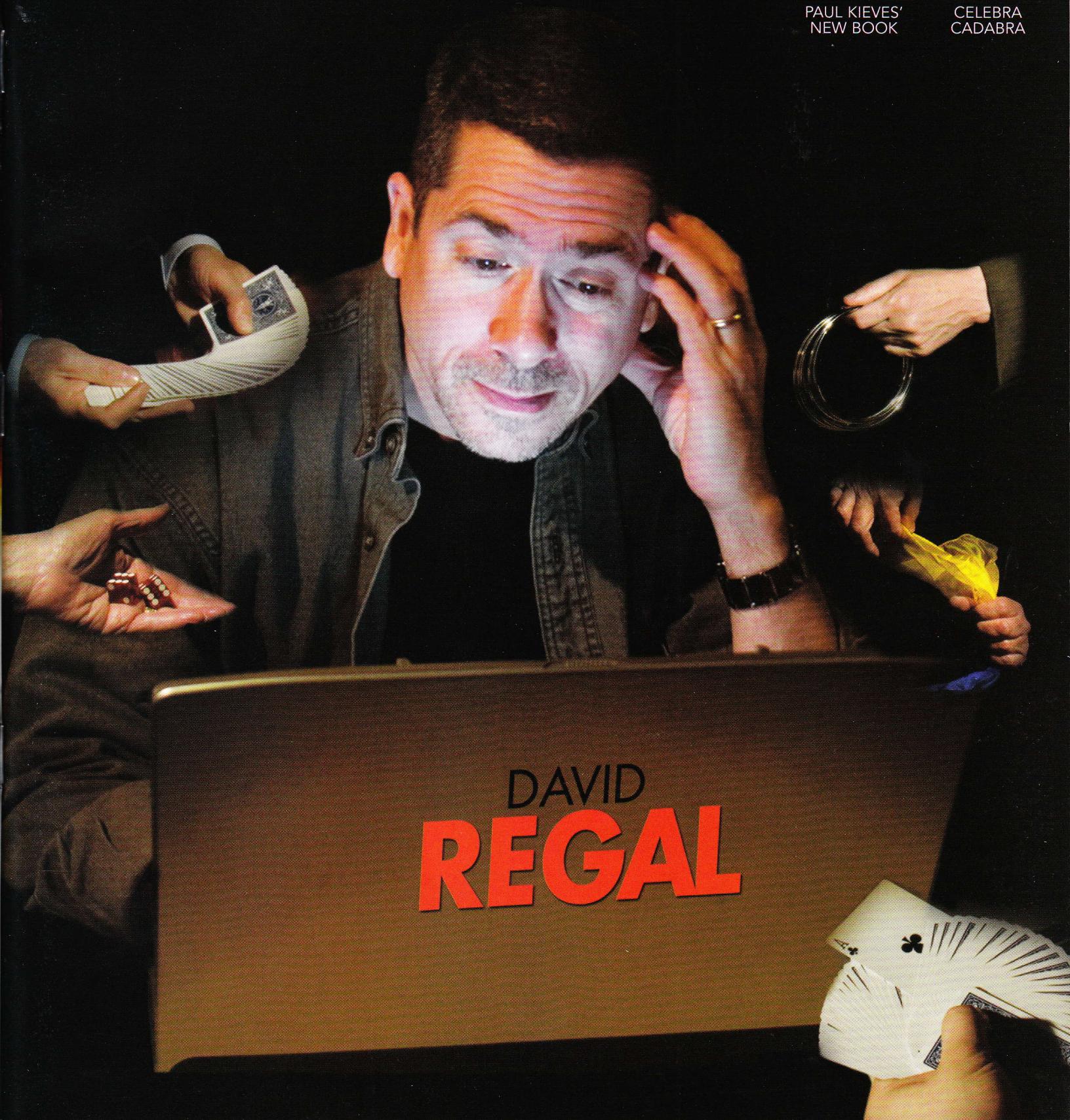


PAUL KIEVES'
NEW BOOK



CELEBRA
CADABRA

DAVID
REGAL



By the Book

By Jim Steinmeyer

There's a reason why magic insiders have been anticipating David Regal's latest, largest, book of magic.

"You have to realize that audiences generally don't have any idea how to watch a close-up show," David Regal suggests, with a sly smile and a whisper that conveys a conspiratorial air. After a long career in show business—not always magic, but always show business—he's learned about these things the hard way.

Well, okay. That's a good point, I admit. Audiences don't see much close-up, and might be confused, unless they're actually at The Magic Castle . . .

"No, no. Especially at The Magic Castle!" Regal interrupts, his smile growing wider. "You can feel it in the room. I know that part of the audience feels that magic is cool, that someone who's learned it must be a Renaissance man, a person worth knowing. And then part of the audience equates it with a sideshow; you might as well be biting the head off a chicken. And you can feel that, too. 'You're going to try to make me look like an idiot.' That's Seinfeld's joke about magic: 'Here's a quarter. Now it's gone. You're an asshole.' I think that's everyone's fear about a magic show. Even at The Magic Castle, some of the audience is wondering if their job is

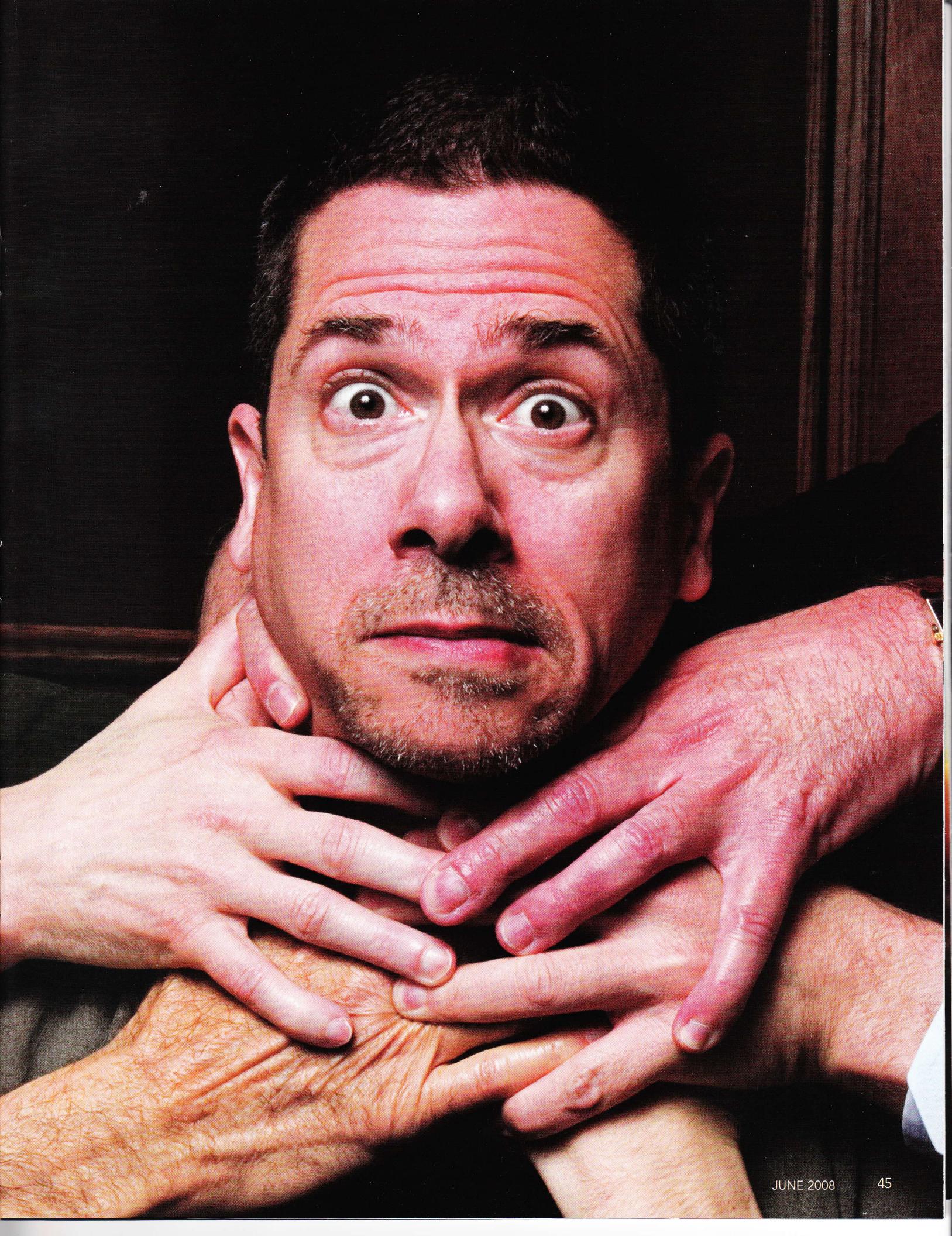
just to try and figure out how it's done.

"In the real world, three to five percent of the people out there like watching magic. And 95 percent probably have no opinion at all, or they dislike it. And I really think that a magician has to teach them, in the process of entertaining them."

David Regal is out to win converts. He can do it in his performances, a few people at a time. No doubt he'll also do it wholesale, by inspiring other magicians. With an impressive and substantial new book, *Approaching Magic*, David Regal approaches a subject that's been a passionate interest since childhood. His many original effects, close-up and stand-up magic, have earned him an admirable reputation. For decades he's been an "insider" in the magic community—first in New York, then in Los Angeles, performing and inventing magic, reviewing tricks, and now even coaching magic on television "As magicians, we're all really approaching magic, because we're not performing real magic. Of course, the book is about my own approach, and how I've developed routines. But the point is that magicians can each develop their own approach." Magicians who read the book for the tricks will probably come away with something far more valuable, David's insightful lessons about the delicate mix of secret and presenta-

Photo by Damon

DAVID REGAL

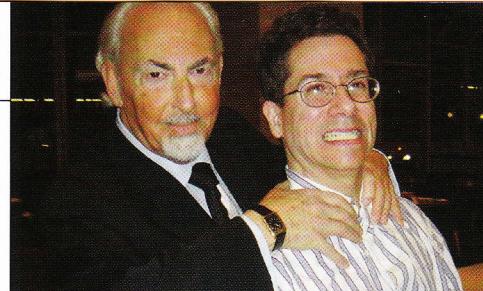




Kelly Rippa



Bernie Mac



David Berglas

tion that form a modern approach to magic.

A conversation with David Regal is pretty exciting—active, surprising, funny. First, you have to remember his years performing professional comedy, sharing the stage with a troupe of comics and the occasional guest star like Robin Williams. That comic timing is always on display, dancing around the edges of the discussion. You're reminded that one of his specialties is writing for animated characters. He can easily disarm you with a laugh, make a point, pose a question, and have you scratching your head. It's tough to keep up. It's even tougher to take notes.

But when the subject is magic, the conversation is especially redemptive. David Regal is smart about magic. He thinks about it in intelligent ways, and always treats it as a worthy pursuit: with appreciation. Maybe it's because he really loves magic. He loves the feeling it gave him, at 12, reading Al Baker's books. He loves the feeling, which he fondly recalls, of being fooled at an early visit to a magic club meeting. And he talks about a new idea or watching a performance by a great magician with the same sense of enthusiasm and excitement.

"I realized I was making a mistake at The Castle by starting with a trick. And so I changed my approach. I start by saying I'd found an old 'Dear John' letter. It's a sad situation, and I start to tear up the letter, talking about broken hearts." Here, David demonstrates, with each tear taking on special significance as his patter becomes sweeter and more plaintive. There's the faint whiff of bad taste in the presentation, parodying the cloyingly over-the-top presentations that magicians love to use to make their presentations seem important. And David is a good enough actor to just walk the edge. The pieces are torn, and he contemplates the torn bits. "Wouldn't it be wonderful if some-



Jim Belushi

thing that's been broken could be mended, and become whole once more?" There's a long pause. I say, 'Yeah, right,' and toss all the pieces

into the air. For me, it was more important to start by not doing a trick, and let the audience relax.

"You know, this isn't a contest. We're here to have fun. And magic is a service industry. The point of the exercise is to uplift people."

Over the years, David Regal has thought about magic in many different ways, and delighted himself by these constantly-changing, kaleidoscopic views of the art. Card sleights, comedy routines, mechanical devices . . . What a magician brings to the table and what an audience has the right to expect. If he's sometimes a tough critic of magicians, he's always been hardest on himself, and always pleased to be the subject of his own experiments. Maybe that's why Regal's big book of tricks, *Approaching Magic*, has become one of the most eagerly awaited publications for magicians.

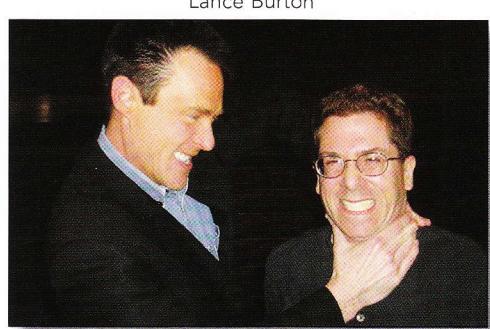


David's interest in magic started when he was a boy living in Newton, Massachusetts. He took the trolley to downtown Boston, where he visited Little Jack Horner's

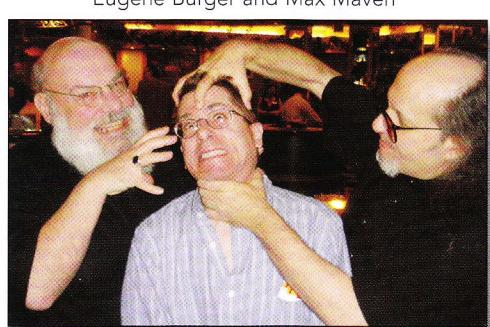
Joke Shop. At Emerson College, he majored in acting. After graduating, he moved to New York and became the manager of the Magic Towne House, a performance club that was owned by Dick Brooks and Dorothy Dietrich.

"I learned a lot at the Magic Townhouse. I was put in charge of the kid shows. You know, at a place like Magic Townhouse, that was a very important part of the market." He started by rolling together all the tricks he knew that would work for kids. "I did 45 minutes, one trick after another. I did 16 tricks. All the standard stuff." But as the months proceeded, he realized what he was doing wrong. "It was all about me. All about me fooling them and showing them tricks. I changed the focus. It became about the kids. About them having fun, and their relationships with each other and the magic. I ended up doing six tricks in 45 minutes. And it was better."

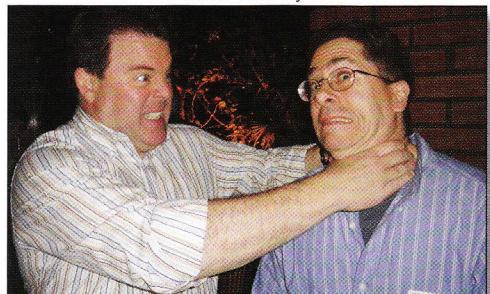
David became a friend and associate of magicians Meir Yedid, Eric DeCamps, Peter Kousasian, and the regulars who gathered at Reuben's



Lance Burton



Eugene Burger and Max Maven



John Carney

restaurant. "It was the most unbelievable group of people, who might have nothing in common but a deck of cards. There's Ace Greenberg, Ken Krenzel, Sol Stone, Bob McAllister, Oscar Weigle, Lenny Greenfader, and Wesley James. I loved how you'd have Ace Greenberg, Donald Trump's money man, fighting over a deck and arguing about a sleight with a guy who was a security guard—it was the great leveler."

He formed a valued friendship with Harry Lorayne, studying his book *Close-Up Card Magic* as a text. To him, Harry provided an ideal. "Harry can sell an effect like no one else. You're fascinated and ready to applaud before he's even started. I remember going with Leslie, my wife, to a Tannen's Jubilee. At that time, Tony Spina used to have a party in his hotel room, and we sat on the edge of the bed, watching all the young Turks do their best material; actually it was the old Turks, too. After all these great performances, Harry came out, and someone suggested that he do a trick, his version of the 'Magician and the Card Shark.' He pulled out his deck of cards. And Harry's cards were ... well, they looked like he'd found them on the street, and they'd already been run over. He pulls the cards out of the case—there's barely a card case there—and starts through the performance. Leslie leaned over to me, completely unsolicited. She was completely captivated. "Now, this guy's a pro," she said. She'd seen some of the greatest magicians of the time, but there's just something about Harry that engages an audience.

Years later, Harry Lorayne wrote *Star Quality*, a book about David's original effects; for many magicians this was their introduction to David Regal.

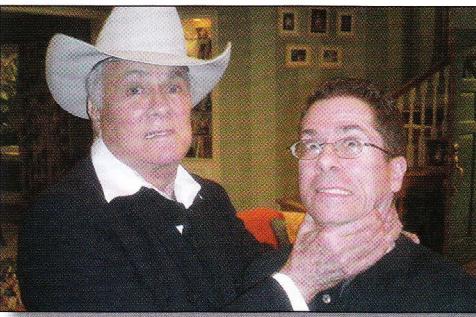
For six years David was a principal performer with Chicago City Limits, a New York-based comedy team. It quickly gained the distinction of New York's most successful comedy group, offering more than 2,000 performances at the Jan Hus Theater. David also wrote sketches for the group, expanding his range of skills. "I did stage magic with the group, and incorporated magic into some comedy sketches, as well. We did a bit where two guys sat on park



Boyz 2 Men



Tweedledum and Tweedledee



Tony Curtis

benches on opposite sides of the stage. Both opened briefcases on their laps. One was a thief who could apparently enter the 4th Dimension.

He pulled out a gun and stuck his arm deep into his briefcase ... then his arm came out of the case across the stage and he proceeded to rob the other guy, pulling the man's personal possessions through a space/time continuum. They'd leave the left side of the stage and come out of the thief's briefcase on the right side. It was just a fake hand stuck on the side of the victim's briefcase and some tight timing, but it got roars."

During his time with Chicago City Limits, David was also drawn to the knuckle-busting sleight-of-hand routines that had made him swoon, the "real stuff" that he'd been learning. He'd take advantage of his opportunities in the theater, demonstrating close-up for groups of people before and after the show.

"You know, for hobbyists, it's all about the secret," he explains. "I was re-learning magic, and in some way I was desperate to do the wrong thing. I was watching really great sleight-of-hand magicians, my friends. But I wasn't appreciating what made them special, I was coveting what they had in common as opposed to what made each one unique; I wanted to belong, to be like them. And of course, no one actually says, 'Honey, let's go see that guy who's like everyone else'."

It was his friend Meir Yedid, no slouch with a deck of cards, that set him straight. "You know, David, when I see you in a comedy group, you're fantastic," Meir told David. "When you pick up a deck of cards, you're like every other magician." "It devastated me," Regal remembers. "It was the best critique I ever received."

"I dropped entirely the way that I presented tricks," he

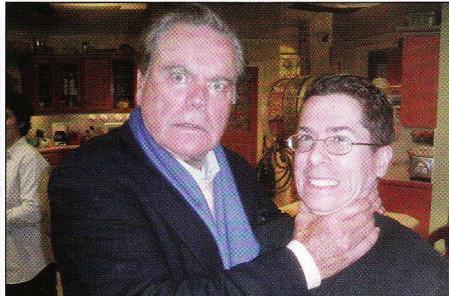
Jason Alexander



Derren Brown



Robert Wagner





David Roth



Whoopi Goldberg

explains. "I took what I'd been doing, put it in a hole in the ground, and covered it with cement." In fact, his years of experience with Chicago City Limits should have provided the example, but he realizes now that he was still thinking like a magician. "I used to do an acting exercise in which you'd perform the same lines over and over again but convey different emotions each time. And, of course, it always made sense, because it wasn't the words that mattered, but the attitude—the way one character felt about another character onstage and how it was conveyed."

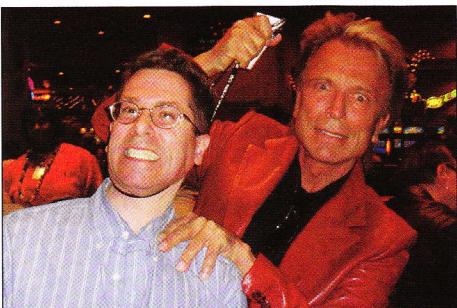
He realized that these scenes were really the plots of his tricks. Just like the shows at Magic Towne House, it was about the audience. "To me, the show is really emphasizing the experience. Finding out that people are in love, or that one spectator is the luckiest guy on earth." David realized that the characters reacting in these scenes were the performer and the audience; a magic show was the shared experience.

"Unfortunately, a lot of magicians subscribe to something that I call the Used Car Salesman School of Magic," David explains. This is his shorthand way of describing the smart-ass presentations that are a typical crutch: mixing a tone of superiority, a bit of insult humor, and a kind of "look-at-me" attitude. "Too many magicians want to do this. But, I've seen some brilliant examples of great magic. I saw Tommy Wonder do the Ambitious Card at a New York Symposium. He was performing for laymen. And the Ambitious Card is a typical 'look-at-me' trick. My memory is that when Tommy did it the card only came to the top about three times. But each time, he got applause. I'd seen hundreds

of performances of the Ambitious Card. But I'd never seen a magician get applause every time that card came to the top. I told myself, 'I'm not sure what's happening, but there's something to learn here.' It sure wasn't about the number of times you did the trick. Tommy was a phenomenal communicator. He knew where to find the magic in each trick."

"A lot of us talk the most when we have

the least to say. So I script every piece of magic carefully, so that the words are there for a reason, they convey some meaning." Is it true that he actually scripts the spectator's lines and reactions as well? "Oh, yes. Absolutely. The writing is not just for me, but for the audience. You have to have some idea of what you are trying to accomplish with a presentation, and a good part of that is deciding how, in a perfect world, you'd like the audience to react. Once you achieve that, the goal is to replicate it with each performance. Sometimes a reaction hinges on a moment of intensity, a surprise, or a funny line. One can also resort to 'secret methods' of stagecraft. I'll tell you about that. In the 'McCombical Deck,' Billy McComb gives the best,



Siegfried



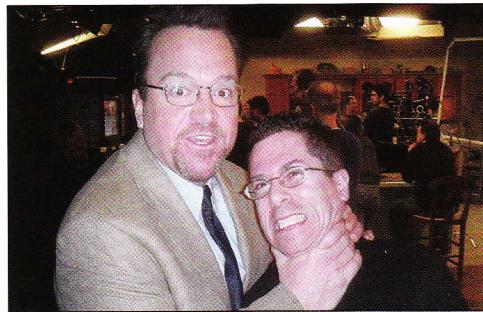
Fran Drescher

most concise instructions you could ever want. And he has a very important piece of advice, which is that when the spectator names the wrong card—she's supposedly picked the wrong card at the crucial moment—Billy says that you should 'do nothing.' Most people try to overact. But it's a funny situation, and that's the best advice. 'Do nothing.' I wanted to figure out the next step, how to convey that something was wrong. I tried saying something to the spectator so I'd look concerned, and she'd look concerned, but I was trying to get her to 'play her part' the way I envisioned it. I eventually realized that the secret was to move my lips like I was talking, but to say nothing. The audience thinks I'm whispering to her. She looks at me with a confused expression because she can't hear what I'm telling her. It's exactly the right reaction from both of us."

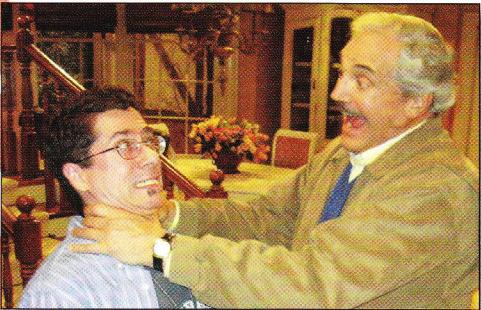
That relaxed, gently humorous, casually improvised feeling that surrounds David's performances is a sign of his professionalism. If it looks like he's taking a lot of



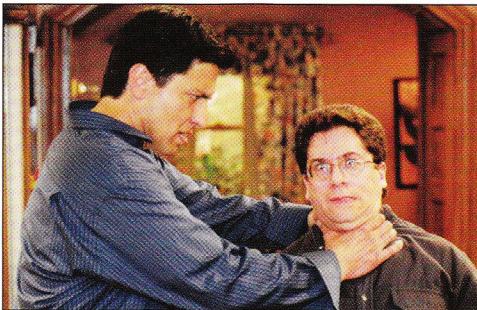
Juan Tamariz



Tom Arnold



Hal Linden



Ray Romano

chances, you've been fooled. He doesn't really take chances. "If you just count on inspiration, you'll be a failure. To me, the script is the intent. And it's important that you have an intent. Even if your intent is wrong. You need to know where you want the audience to go. Maybe you think they were supposed to laugh, but they didn't. Or they were supposed to be afraid of you at a specific point. So you write for the audience. Of course, in performances, we've all had spontaneous reactions that were great, and then we try to find ways of nudging the spectators to give those responses."

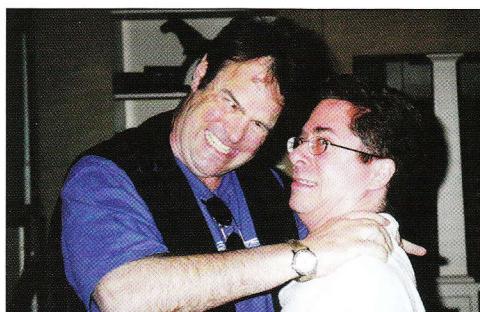
Several years ago, David was called into Disney to talk about writing comedy for a sitcom. The writers had a problem developing material for some tangential characters in a scene, and David urged them to simplify the situation by cutting out the dialogue in its entirety. "I found myself telling them what I still feel is great advice: 'Anything is better than bad.' And that's also an important lesson for magicians. After all, we can hear a song we like sung so badly that we want to turn off the radio. You know, if it's bad, just don't do it. And there, you've improved your presentation. Anything is better than, 'Do you want to see a trick?' So give yourself a premise, anything other than that. 'Here's something I do to try and impress women. I hope it works better for you.'" It's a typical David Regal line, comically over-the-top and slightly self-effacing at the same time. "Not great, but it's a premise."

David is convinced that magicians don't realize how they come across. Years ago, he worked a Sunday brunch at The Magic Castle and heard a fellow performer begin the show by telling his audience, "I don't like working for kids. Those of you in back who can't see, that's tough, I do close-up magic." "That was quite a way to start the show," David says. "They hated him. Think about that charac-

ter he's presenting and that relationship he's initiating. Slydini could say, essentially, 'I'm a nice old guy, and I'm going to try to fool you.' We can love that guy. But I'm a young asshole and I'm going to fool you,' that's a character we despise."



Not surprisingly, David's insights into comedy landed him work on the West Coast. His Hollywood work started with a typical Hollywood story: David arrived to develop a show for Tribune Entertainment, only to have everyone he knew at Tribune fired in a classic house-cleaning. He bounced back, writing for animated series and then working his way up the ladder. He became the show runner ("That's what they call the head writer") for *Rugrats*, then turned his attention to writing for situation comedies—he wrote for *Everybody Loves Raymond*, and was then quickly in demand as a writer on comedies for Fran Drescher, Bonnie Hunt, and Whoopi Goldberg.



Dan Ackroyd



Mac King

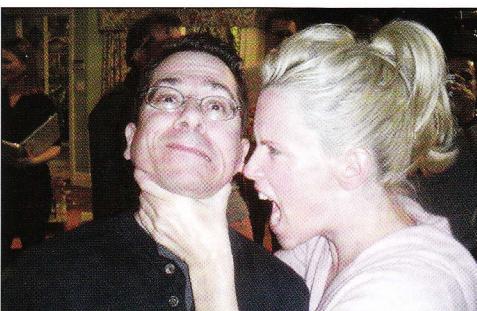
David and Leslie raised their family in Los Angeles—his son Jake and daughter Samantha. With The Magic Castle nearby, a community of great magicians at his doorstep, David's work in magic was never far behind.

His own book from six years ago, *Constant Fooling*, found numerous fans, as have a collection of his marketed tricks, including "Sudden Deck," "There and Back," "Pasteboard Massacre," and the "Regal Color Changing Deck." As for the last trick, "I had the idea for years. I finally bit the bullet and had thousands of them specially made by the U.S. Playing Card Company ... just so I could have one of them."

For magicians still unfamiliar with his magic, Regal's interest in presentation might suggest a predilection for simple, ordinary, classic methods—dull stuff—that he could easily adorn with personality. But the mark of a David Regal trick is just the opposite. His experience



Clown



Jenny McCarthy

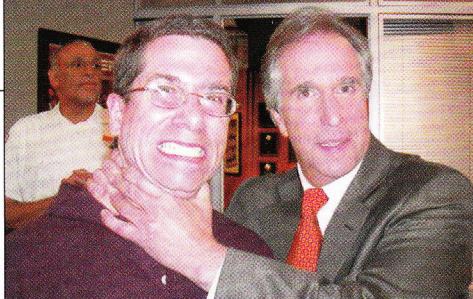
in magic has given him a unique toolbox of secrets and applications. His effects are always a delight for the magician as well, blending sleight-of-hand, simple mechanical devices, or offbeat secrets to create devastating results. Friends of Regal, and fans of his magic, can't go very many sentences without the word "diabolical" working its way into the discussion.

He admits to an unabashed love of "gizmos," in a typical magician way. One guilty pleasure is buying boxes of cheap junk at magic swap meets and sifting through the treasures to discover an occasional gimmick or a bit of apparatus that might inspire him. "I generally go to the swap meet with two hundred bucks, and rather than buy two \$100 tricks," he explains. "I'll get 100 \$2 tricks. Then I go home with what I call 'Divorce-in-a-Bag'."

David's role as a product reviewer for *Genii* is part of that interest. He really loves tricks. In his job as a reviewer, he's seen that there are fashions for certain types of tricks, and magicians latch onto the latest fashion. Of course, this doesn't always mean that the latest version is the best version. "Right now, there are a lot of Any Card at Any Number versions, coins in bottles (none as strong as using a folding coin) and Torn and Restored Cards."

As for coming up with his own effects, David's love of tricks has worked to his advantage. He realizes that, if he were working as a professional magician, he probably wouldn't be coming up with a bunch of tricks. "But there's something therapeutic about the process." He appreciates the gizmos and tries to find the right mix of presentation and secret.

"Actually, I work hard at it," he explains, "except that I wouldn't really call it work because I enjoy the process so much." When he became infatuated with a card trick commonly called "The Last Card," David spent a year exploring every possible method, reading variations in books, examining different bits of painted wooden apparatus on magic shop shelves, and comparing the strengths and



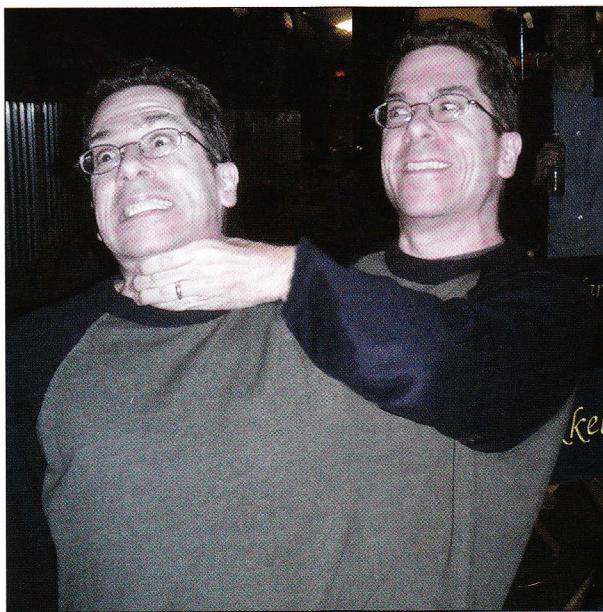
Henry Winkler



David Williamson



Penn & Teller



The Inevitable

weaknesses of each. After a year of work, he felt that his research paid off. He created his own version, and framed it with a wonderful routine about performing magic for his grandfather ... oblivious to the fact that his grandfather hated every moment of it—typically Regal, a blend of smart wit and self-effacing humor.

A couple of years ago, David decided to take on the Cups and Balls. "I know it sounds ridiculous, but I took about a year and read every single Cups and Balls routine that's been published. You really can do it. There are a finite number of them. Many of them are very similar. A number of them are excellent. I read them all, Hoffmann, Vernon, Ireland, Mendoza, Wonder, Williamson, Ammar. I was trying to come up with what I felt would be a new wrinkle." Only when he was finished, when he felt he'd done his homework, he sat down and created his own routine for this classic effect.

And, of course, David Regal's Cups and Balls aren't really like any other routine. The effect takes on a special significance because he starts with three small plastic cups, just like the red, blue, and yellow cups that he bought when he was a boy. "I introduce it as the truth, and it's the only time I tell the truth in my entire act," he laughs. He then puts the cups away, using metal cups to perform a sophisticated sequence of magic. By the end of the routine, when the plastic cups work their way back into the effect, the routine comes full circle, magically and emotionally. Again, it's all typical Regal—smart, funny, and amazing at the

same time. I saw it when he premiered it in the Close-Up Gallery at The Magic Castle; the room was packed with magicians and the club buzzed for weeks, like the good old days: "Did you see Regal's Cups and Balls?"

Incidentally, he did the same thing to me with a ring in a Nest of Boxes routine. I saw it at the Parlour at The Castle. David's routine and method fit together like a finely crafted puzzle. The presentation is a lot of fun, and the secret—a

one-man wonder in which the borrowed ring appears sealed in a package on the other side of the stage—is a model of simplicity and insight. When he told me how it worked, I wasn't sure whether he had to be a genius or a madman to even try it. But he did try it, and the result was perfectly magical. I think the right word is "diabolical."



These routines, and dozens of others, have been gathered together in *Approaching Magic*. "Right now, I'm afraid that books are falling out of favor. Everything is turning into DVDs. But working on this reminds me of being 12 years old and encountering adult magic books for the first time. Did I understand it all? Maybe half of it, but reading magic books was a transforming experience for me," he says. "I want to enter the lottery of giving that experience to someone else."

"Magic has done everything I could ever want magic to do for me," he says. "It's paid for things. It's taken me places, introduced me to people." As for his new book, the result of the last six years, "I know that this is the best thing I've done," he says. "It's the best I can do."

David deliberately spaced his lessons about framing routines throughout the book, so that magicians can learn by example and see how presentations are used to enhance specific effects. He was glad to hear the response from one friend, a professional magician who read an early copy of the book. "He told me that he ended up internalizing my examples, and that he began thinking about his own presentations, not to make them more like mine, but to make his performances more unique to himself. That's the real point of the book, in addition to offering up lots and lots of tricks." For David, that meant that he'd done it right. Not by preaching, but by just giving some examples that made sense. He's happy to think that his experience will be of use to other magicians.

"Every baby knows how to laugh," David says with a smile. "If you put them on their backs and tickle their feet, they laugh. And that's really what magic should do for an audience. You're putting them on their backs and tickling their feet. And maybe that's something the audience hasn't felt since they were six months old. Music can do that. And I really think that magic can do that, too." •

Undiminished Star Quality

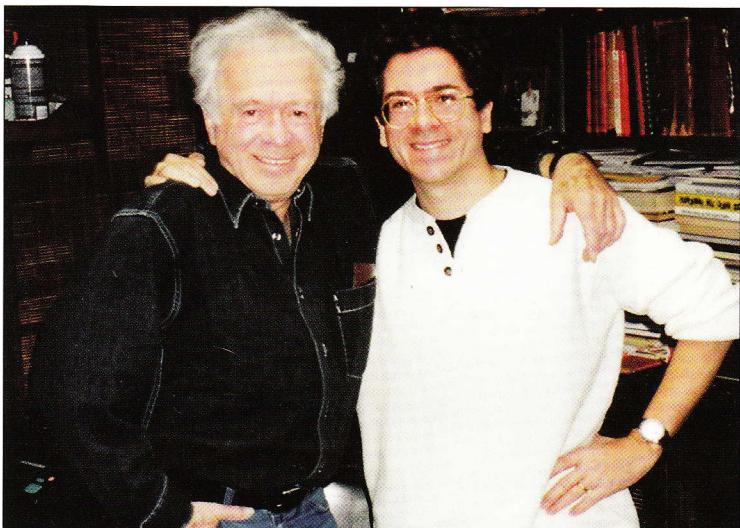
By Harry Lorayne

I have met, spent time with, many magicians—amateur and professional, known and unknown, famous and infamous, good and bad and indifferent, stage and parlor and close-up, male and female—all over the world. I remember them all, enjoyed the company of all (or most), but only a few stand out in my mind.

I first met David Regal in the early to mid-1980s, when he started to visit the New York City "cafeteria," where the good guys would "accumulate" on Saturday afternoons after the magic shops kicked them out.

David's great love of, and for, magic had to take second place to his comedy career. At that time, he was a member of the improvisation group, Chicago City Limits, New York's longest-running comedy review. I saw the show and was quite impressed; it was wonderfully entertaining and David, of course, helped to make it so.

David's career now is comedy writing, but he keeps his hand deeply buried in the magic cauldron—writing, creating, lecturing, reviewing, performing, critiquing and reviewing, and more. But, back to the eighties:



Harry and David

A few of the regular "good guys" (there were always out-of-town/country visitors) that'd meet at the cafeteria in

those halcyon days, were Dai Vernon, John Scarne, Dick Cardini, Oscar Weigle, Ed Balducci, Paul Curry, Richard Himber, Ken Krenzel, Sol Stone, Francis Carlyle. As time went on, we were joined by David Roth, Frank Garcia, Richard Kaufman, Eric DeCamps, Doug Edwards, Gene Maze ... then, Mark Sicher, Steve Cohen, and so many more. What did we do at the cafeteria? Well, we tried to fool each other, tried to learn from each other, wanted suggestions, criticism (looked for kudos).

David and I became good friends. He produced one of the first, if not the first, interactive television show (starring me). We had a ball. Unfortunately, we don't get to see each other too often now, because he's West Coast and I'm East Coast. But we do keep in touch. When he's here or I'm there, we surely do get together.

In 1984, I started to publish David's contributions in *Apocalypse*, and continued to do so until his "Call To Colors," an excellent card routine, in the final (December, 1997) issue of the magazine. Whenever I ran one of his items, the response was always gratifying. His magic is

fresh and imaginative, and he entertains as he fools!

The more I saw of David's magic, the more I felt that it should be recorded. So when he asked me to do a book of his stuff, I said "Sure." As I go through *Star Quality* now, I feel as I did way back then, when I wrote: "Talk about 'something for everyone'—it is a treasury of marvelous, stunning, effects and routines." (No plug here; the book has been out of print for years.)

And from my Foreword (please forgive my quoting myself; I can't say it any better now than I did then)—"There is 'just talent' and then there is 'star quality.' David, his comedy, his acting, his *magic*—all have some of *that*."



It was easy to write this short article; I simply "told it like it is." What's difficult is to select one item from *Star Quality*, as I was asked to do (and re-write just a bit). There are more than 60 items in that book and each and every one of them is great. Well, I selected the following routine which was, and is, one of my many favorites.

Temporarily Out Of Order

Created by David Regal, Described by Harry Lorayne

David liked the 1-2-3-4-5 reversal idea (a plot first published by Noel Stanton in *The Gen* in 1965), usually using the Ace to Five of Spades. He devised the following which uses the Ace to Four of Spades. It's a "packet from the deck" routine. You don't have to carry special cards; it's impromptu. You'll "take in" other cardmen with it; it's very good.

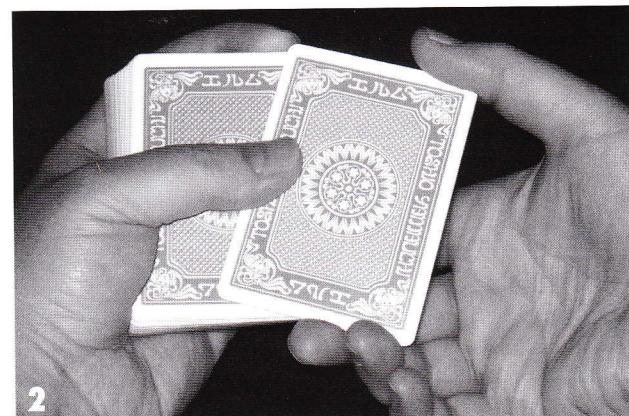
Performance: Say that you need the Ace to Four of Spades and as you run through the deck looking for them, and moving them to bottom of the deck, secretly get the remaining three Aces to top; the Ace of Clubs between the two red Aces. The Spade cards are at bottom in 4-3-2-1 order; the Four of Spades is the face card.



The face-up deck is in left-hand dealing position. Spread off the Spade cards to display, spreading off three extra cards. Square, catching a left little fingertip break under all seven cards. Do one more display, spreading off only three

of the face Spade cards. David likes to hold the three cards on the deck, maintaining that break; all looks open and aboveboard (fig.1).

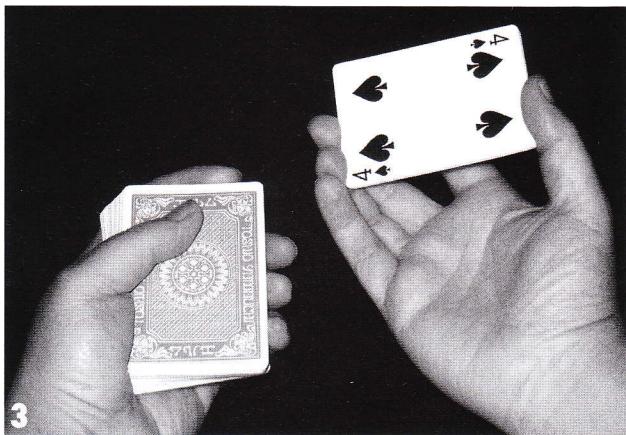
Square and remove the seven-card block, your right hand holding it from above. Say, "It can be confusing trying to keep in mind which is at the face, the Ace or the Four. I might flip over the deck like this, and I might flip over the four Spades like this ... which do you think is on bottom, the Ace or the Four?" The actions to match: When you mention flipping over the deck, use the right-hand packet to do just that. The packet goes under the deck proper at its right side and flips it over to the left, onto your left palm. When you say, "... and I might flip over the four Spades like this ... , turn your right hand palm up, the seven-card packet face down,



and leave the packet on the deck, stepped to the right. Your left thumb holds it in place (fig.2).

This is a slightly awkward moment only at first, but not if you continue along smoothly. As soon as the packet is placed, release with your right hand and re-grasp it from above. So, the figure 2 position is a fleeting one. Immediately lift the packet, as you ask which card is at bottom, the Ace or the Four.

Whatever the answer, reply appropriately: "No; it's the Four" or "That's right, the Four." As you reply, turn your right hand palm up to show the Four of Spades (fig.3). "If I reverse the cards like this—Ace, Two, Three, Four—which is on top now?" Actions to match: Turn your hand palm down. Peel the cards onto the deck one by one. Peel one ("Ace"), peel the next ("Two"), the next ("Three"); *flash* the face of the remaining card (four-card block) as you say "Four" and then place the block face down onto the deck.



Since your spectators just saw the Four of Spades go to top, the answer will be, "The Four is on top." Say, "No, no—it's the Ace!" Deal the top card, the Ace of Spades, face up onto the table and, without a pause, deal the next card (Two of Spades) face up onto it, then the next (Three of Spades) and, finally, the Four of Spades.

At this moment, some cardmen will suspect duplicate cards. So, casually spread off the top three cards of the deck proper, *flash* them (they're indifferent cards) and place them to bottom. You need to get rid of those three cards anyway, might as well flash them as you do!

Now, scoop up the tabled packet and drop it face *up* onto the deck; the Four of Spades is the top face-up card. Say that you'll do it again, *slowly*. As you speak, spread the top face-up cards to display, spreading off three extra face-down cards (the three Aces). Square, catching a break under the seven cards.

Show the four Spade cards again, using J. K. Hartman's Secret Subtraction, which is an excellent switch of three cards. (See my *Afterthoughts*.) Peel the packet's top face-up Four of Spades onto the deck with your left thumb. Flip it face down with the right-hand packet and deal it to beneath the packet with your left thumb. It's all one continual move; the face-down card falls onto your left thumb which pushes it up to under the right-hand packet. Your right thumbtip keeps the Four of Spades' inner end separated from the "packet proper" (fig.4). Turn your right

hand palm up to flash the Four of Spades once more ("The Four.") It will look as in figure 3, except that your right thumbtip holds a separation between the Four of Spades and the rest of the packet.

Okay; turn your right hand back to position and your left thumb peels the next card (face-up Three of Spades) and moves it, as taught, to under the packet. Your right thumbtip now separates two cards at packet's bottom. Turn your right hand to flash the Three of Spades ("The Three"). Peel the Two of Spades; flash it ("The Two"). Your right thumbtip separates three cards now.

The "move" occurs as you peel the Ace of Spades, and it is (should be) imperceptible. As your right hand moves the packet to just above the deck proper, your left thumb reaching to peel off the face-up Ace of Spades, let the three separated cards drop onto, coalesce with, the deck as your left thumb peels the Ace of Spades. The Ace of Spades is immediately moved to beneath the packet and your right hand turns to flash it, as you did the others. Every move looks exactly as when done with the first three Spade cards, and you've cleanly switched in the three Aces for the three Spades.

Turn your right hand back to position, packet face down, as your left hand tables the deck. That's important; the next (last) piece of magic happens *away* from the deck. Flash the Ace at packet's bottom once more and then openly reverse count the four cards onto your left palm—"Four, Three, Two, Ace." Flash the Ace of Spades just before placing it onto the first three cards.

"Which is on top?" The answer (if you're doing this right) is, "The Ace." You say, "No, the Ace is on bottom!" There'll be a confused pause here. Repeat, "Yes, the Ace is on bottom." Another pause. "It's the wrong color, but . . ." Flip the packet face up to expose a red Ace. Deal the four Aces onto the table one at a time!

Afterthoughts: The Secret Subtraction is fine; I sometimes use the Braue Addition or my own "To Catch An Ace #5," instead. And yes, you can change the four Spade cards to the Ace to Four of Hearts; you'd set the four Heart cards on top, Ace of Hearts at top. You'd have to switch in (and out) four cards; the "drop" is done *after* peeling the Ace of Spades. Go from there. I prefer the routine just as taught. It's good magic. David conceived it, I've taught it, you have to do *something*—that is, learn and perform it!

