



793.8

*Where is The Magic?*

JEFF STONE

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*When you confront the boundary of your  
ignorance, you are a child again.  
If you can cross the boundary, you learn.*

**-Clay Neves**



*A Lot of Magic Starts at The Fingertips . . . ends at the Wrist  
Paul Starts at The Brain and it Goes to the Heart*

**-Andrew Mayne\***

\* Speaking of Paul Harris on Magic Newswire's This Week in Magic (6/14/10)

*Astonishment Over Moves.*

**-My Mantra**

# 793.8

## WHERE IS THE MAGIC?

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# Thank You



There are always so many people I owe a debt of gratitude by the time I complete any of my books. So let me start by thanking all of you, my fans who have waited patiently for this book to finally be completed. So many times I thought I was so close only to discover that I was so far.

Thank you to Brad Gordon for always being a true friend and a true inspiration when it comes to thinking about magic. Thank you to Jay Sankey for constantly nagging me about the progress of this project.

Thank you to Andy and the rest of the Murray Taco Time gang for letting me take up a booth for many hours on end while writing until my laptop battery gasped its last breath.

Thank you to my family for the rest of the writing time down in my man cave that is Stone Cold Magic Headquarters. While I'm there, my family merely senses my presence . . . they don't see me.

Finally, thank you to my daughter Courtney. It was her final challenge to the entire family that we each work on a goal every day that finally got me to buckle down and complete this quest.

**FIRST EDITION**

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# Foreword



Jeff couldn't have written this wonderful book at a better time.

After far too many years of rabbits hopping out of hats, overly serious magicians staring 'mysteriously' at their audiences, and the pompous presentations of pointless puzzles, magic is finally changing.

Audiences and performers alike, are re-evaluating the dust-covered idea of 'The Magician,' especially in light of Google and our so-called 'Age of Information.' When the secrets to most tricks can be readily found on YouTube, where does that leave the art of magic?

In Jeff's book, he asks again and again: where is the magic? Jeff offers a thrilling range of answers to this question, suggesting that magic can be found in the element of surprise, in classic card trick books, in the emotion behind lines of script, in connecting with people, in not knowing, and in so many other lush places.

I'm an enormous fan of the philosophical perspectives flowing through this book, but make no mistake, these pages also document many powerful, clever, commercial magic effects. Among my favorites are 'Leaving Decks', 'Martika', and the extremely intimate 'Ode to Charlie.'

Jeff also shares a wealth of great advice on performing and creating, along with many brilliant subtleties. In fact, you'll find fresh thoughts and clever insights on every single page. Jeff's brain just can't help itself.



And when it comes to the important subject of scripting, Jeff really outdoes himself. I can't remember the last magic book I read that offered such an ambitious analysis of scripting. Truly inspiring stuff.

Where is the magic? Between the covers of this book, that's where.

Jay Sankey

Oct 31, 2013

Toronto, Canada

*Dedicated to Dodd Vickers for his continued effort  
to remind us all what real magic should be.*

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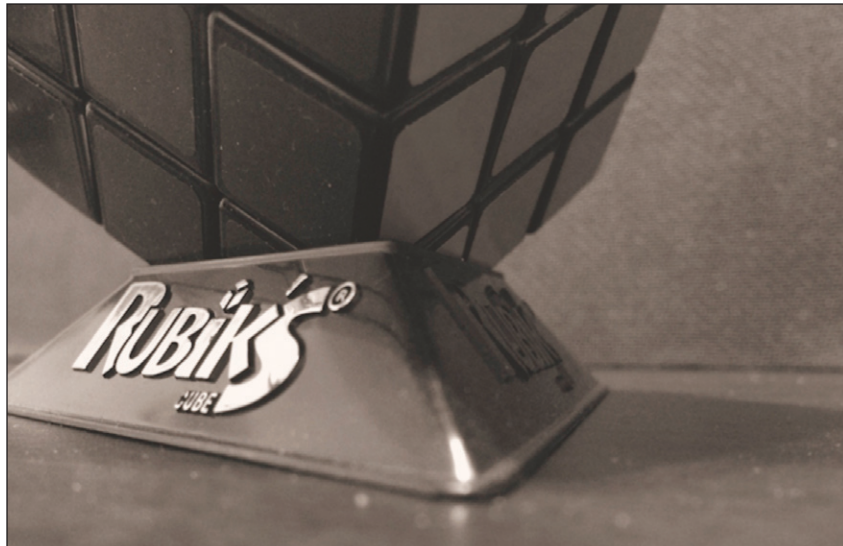
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# Introduction



A standard 3x3x3 Rubik's Cube has 43 quintillion (that's 43 million, million, millions) different configurations that it could possibly be twisted into, yet I (and many, many others in the world) can take a mixed cube in any one of these 43 quintillion configurations and solve it in about a 40 seconds . . . a minute on a bad day.



Australian cubist, Feliks Zemdegs holds the record of 5.66 seconds as of the time of the writing of this book. If you think that's a fluke, think again, the world record before that was 6.18 seconds, before that, 6.24, before that, 6.65, 6.77, 7.03 . . .

Oh . . . did I mention that all six of those records are held by one person, Feliks Zemdegs? Yet in 1974, when the Hungarian professor Erno Rubik invented the cube, he wasn't even sure if a solution was possible. Now, I'm no Erno Rubik, but this book and his tool to explain three dimensional geometry gone international super-star puzzle have a lot in common. The mission of this book is many-fold. One of the "folds" is to get you thinking. Very often when I create an effect, I have no solution. I may have a rough idea of how I might accomplish it, but that's about it.

Many of the essays or effects in this book are very much like the Rubik's Cube in its first year . . . I'm not even sure if a workable solution is possible. Yet as I began extracting my thoughts and notes from my journals to create this project, the methods, presentations and further developments came as I wrote. However, though I've captured these thoughts for your benefit, it is *not* the point of this book – far from it. There are plenty of cases, in fact, where I give no method. I leave it as a puzzle for you, the reader, to solve.

The point is the effect, not the method . . . *Astonishment Over Moves*; wonder above all else must prevail. If you're looking for a book on method or audience management, or how to pick spectators this probably isn't for you. Those subjects are certainly found within these pages, but only as needed to illustrate a deeper point . . . effect over method. Though there are plenty of routines that I've honed over the years taught in this book, there are also crazy essays that are meant as thought experiments to provoke you and your mind. How's this for an effect . . . you become 20 years younger before a live audience, and you stay that way. That's a crazy effect, yet I have a possible method in the essay called *Dedicated to the Art*.

The point of that essay will not be to get you to perform the effect, but rather to get you to think about effect . . . any effect. The effect is the affect when done properly. Furthermore, when the

affect is correct, the audience experiences a moment of astonishment or wonder (as we'll refer to it in this text).

When I was very young, my father did essentially the coin from the ear trick (it was really denim pants back pocket label from mouth), and to this day, it still feels like real magic.



It was the moment that started me down the path that I am still on today . . . a journey to a feeling . . . wonder. I've lost my way over the years. A phone call with Bill Malone back in the nineties where he clearly told me that being a good technician isn't enough got me back on track. He asked me, are you entertaining? The answer back then was no. What is the answer today? It would be something like "I'm a lot more entertaining now than I was back then." For Bill it was all about the impact on the audience.

Throughout the upcoming text, I will be using various techniques to open your mind to wonder, some more subtle or more bold than others. Though you will learn a lot of great routines, you will also (hopefully) be guided toward the path of wonder.

When you saw the title of this book, likely you had one of two reactions. You either thought, "What the heck does 793.8 mean?"

or you thought, “Hey isn’t 793.8 the Dewey Decimal code for Magic books in the public library?” If you fell into the latter category, you very likely remembered being at the library as a young child checking out magic books. You might have remembered the excitement, the thrill or the feeling you felt as you were studying and learning magic.

I remember the feeling . . . the feeling of thumbing through books like *101 Easy To Do Magic Tricks* by Bill Tarr . . . those illustrations of things I’d never seen before. And other books with the colorful pictures with cheesy kids dressed in even cheesier top hats and capes. The colorful flowers and silks and apparatus that looked so cool. It was wonder-full – full of wonder.

That feeling is the feeling that I contest is lost among just about every magician out there. I’m trying to bring it back to you the reader/magician and to the collective world population that we call our audience. Too many magicians have forgotten about wonder. Hopefully by the end of this book, you’ll be on this side of the fence remembering wonder.

At the end of each effect/essay/etc. you will find a section called *Where is the Magic*. The intent of this section is to spark some imagination and get you thinking and wondering about what makes this effect or essay or idea magical . . . where is the magic (i.e., wonder)? Of course, the dual meaning of this question can be found in the fact that this is the very question, when asked of a librarian that will be answered with the title of this book: 793.8.

Jeff Stone  
Salt Lake City, Utah  
August 2012





## Getting in the Right Frame of Mind

What follows is three essays. First, *Magic is a Drug and Drugs are Dangerous* is meant to get you remembering. That's one of the main purposes of this book. I want you to think back to a time before you were an "addict." What got you "high" back then? That's what gets your audience "high" today.

Next we take a bizarre turn and dive into context and the meaning of words with *You, Me and Dupree*. The intent here is to plant the seeds of the paradigm shift. I'm trying to help you/us take the time to look at effect. After all, effect is what matters most: how the effect affects.

Finally, we hit essay number three, *That Reminds me of a Time Back in 'Nam* which has a goal that picks up where *You, Me and Dupree* left off. This is all about setting the context and the tone of your show. We dive into a sample of how you might start off your show.

However, the real purpose is to get you thinking in terms of context, meaning, attitude, etc. It is here that we find magic.



## “Effect”-ive Essays

This next section of essays is meant to take you on a journey with several experiences from my life at an early age and more recently. Although we'll be discussing things like paradigms and dogmas along with hallucinations and keeping your mind open, the ultimate goal of this group of essays is to get us thinking about effect . . . presentation, not method.

We'll discuss the truth that even though spectators ask how it's done, they really don't want to know. We'll discuss this as it applies to effect.

We'll finish up with two essays that evolve into possible effects as we examine my favorite question, “What if we went the other way?”

When I read the Paul Harris trilogy, *The Art of Astonishment*, I was already very familiar with his work, his effects, etc. However, I had no idea about his thinking on the concept of astonishment, and I had no idea how much of a genius he really is. I knew he was clever, and I even knew that he was a genius, but I had no idea to what level his genius extended until I read those books.

Once I caught up with the rest of the class, I thirsted for theory essays from Paul Harris. Since pretty much all of that was published in this trilogy, I had no choice but to read the essays over

and over again. There were a couple of “out there” ideas that he published as just that . . . ideas. Stuff that was never tested or stuff that was maybe even close to impossible in practice, but probable in theory. The next few essays fall into one of those categories . . . untested or merely theoretical.

Let’s start this bizarre journey with a piece I call, *Dedicated to The Art*.



## Miscellaneous Mischievousness

Next up . . . a handful of ideas, subtleties, thoughts, concepts and other things that have various applications.

In *Force Schmorce* we'll take a peek at spectator choices, verbiage and using Equivoque properly and logically. We'll follow that with some pointers on how to take advantage of luck when it comes your way during presentation in *Notes on Miscalls*. Further, we will briefly touch on how to orchestrate this so called luck and exploit it when it happens and even when it doesn't.

In my quest to give meaning to the Down Under Deal (*What's the Deal with the Down Under Deal*), I've developed a simple presentational subtlety to make sense out of the procedure. Let's also add some levity to our presentation with *Card Memory*.

Within the walls of the section, you'll find a brand new force that gives meaning and logic to making a spectator do math on a thought of number, *Luke and the 15 Force*. What follows, *Forces of Nature*, is a crazy journey through a huge vault of bizarre book test ideas. You'll find some crazy stuff on taking a borrowed-book book-test to the next-next-next level. For more formal performances, add the few ideas from *Book Test Subtleties*, to your routine for an improvement in fairness and legitimacy.

Next we'll further the discussion on luck and magician's choice and how their paths often cross as we learn the principle of *Faux-Quivoque*. You'll further find a brand new use for a Svengali Deck, in an excellent essay on Equivoque and similar techniques will open your mind to the power of this combination of tools.

With *Invisibly Subtle*, you'll find a simple way to modify your invisible deck to take all the risk out of this power tool, and finally, we'll wrap up this section with *Twinkie Picker*, a handling and presentation of my effect (from Gemstones), *Epicenter* (bill in sealed Twinkie), to a brand new place with perfect logic, fun and presentational clarity that makes me wonder why I didn't do it like this in the first place.

The goal of this section is to load up your arsenal with some serious tools that will take your magic/mentalism into a different realm . . . much more powerful and wonderful (i.e., full of wonder) realm.



## Actual Effect

What follows are mostly fully fleshed out effects, many of which are direct from my working repertoire. Others are tested but not necessarily “proven.” Still others are not even tested, but as you read them, you’ll see the full potential and recognize, immediately, their value. Many of these effects will be a journey that we take together as we walk through how I got from the idea to the finished product. Many of them kept leading to more and more ideas as you’ll see.

*The Fake False* is a combination of stuff I’ve done many times and stuff I’ve only thought about doing. *LEAVING DECKS* is an effect that I’ve proved the concept on, but have never performed for a real audience.

*Martika* is a crazy effect that I’ve never done and one of the aforementioned journeys we’ll be taking together. It’s an effect that has the risk of offending people due to the sensitive subject matter (fallen heroes and veterans) but at the same time has huge potential to truly move an audience.

On the other end of the spectrum are effects like, *I Need a Hero* which has been a staple in my stand up show for years. *Ace Re-Visited* is my handling of a Larry Becker effect that is the perfect strolling book test and another staple in my close up act. *Stone*

*Cold MagiCard* is my script, handling and performance for Mark Jenest's *MagiCard* that I've used for years.

*No ESP Cards . . . No Problem* is one that I, literally, never leave home without. It uses five ESP cards, and I carry them in my wallet. However, the version taught here can be done even if you have no ESP cards.

Next we pick up my Handling of Eugene Burger's *Gemini Money* called *Gemini Shopping* which has been tested on a few magi, but not fully audience tested. However, this is one that you'll immediately realize is very powerful and has a very good emotional hook and lends itself well to fun and audience participation.

Then we head down the road of real mind-messing-with stuff with *Memory Relapse*, an update on Jay Sankey's effect *Memory Lapse* where you cause a spectator to forget a thought. In this version, they have no choice but to believe that they truly forgot. Very powerful.

Finally, we end this chapter by having the spectator speaking in tongues with *Tower of Babel*, and no she's not a stooge, instant or otherwise. She really does speak in tongues and has no idea why.



## The Malini Effect

This following section is full of very powerful effects that will absolutely send the participant to “wonder” land in the truest meaning of the phrase. The effects take a lot of preparation. We’re not talking about full deck stacks . . . we’re talking about Max Malini-esque stuff here.

You’ll be so prepared to immerse your participant into wonder that you may never actually get to do it. These are special moments that require a lot of work, but will be so powerful that you’ll never be able to repeat them or top them.

Though not everything in this section requires a monster set up, I chose to honor Malini’s name because many of the things he did (which DID require the elaborate setups) created the most powerful moments of wonder that are possible in the world of one on one magic.

Yes these are big claims, but once you read them, you’ll understand their power.

We’ll start off *MOAB*, *UT* an oddly titled effect that was inspired by an out for the Mother Of All Book Tests that took me on a journey from a cool effect to a pure connection with the spectator. Where we ended up is nowhere near a book test.

Next we’ll check out *Everything Fades*. This is just about as im-



possible as it gets. Essentially, any object a spectator names materializes in your hand. Yep . . .

Finally, we wrap up this section with two effects where the magic is so powerful that you aren't even there when it happens. With *Don't Try This At Home*, you perform a strange experiment where you mail a prediction to the spectator and it proves to contain everything she is thinking of. Very weird and a very powerful way to market yourself.

Last, but far, far, far from least, is *Ode to Charlie*, where a coin literally materializes from thin air when the spectator is in another room, or even at home.

***With:***

Over a Dozen effects . . .

More than 20 essays and thought experiments . . .

Nearly 270 pages of madness . . .

You're sure to find the answer to the question . . .

Where is *The Magic?*

**793.8**

