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Making A Jumbo Jet Vanish

The vanishing of a 747 Jumbo Jet while it rests on the tarmac has become one of the most significant vanishes of all time. On many occasions this illusion has been performed before a live television audience, while a crowd of onlookers keep an eye on the real thing. It is not an illusion most magicians can afford to perform, still I will explain the most common way of performing this trick.

The audience will see the jet as it taxis onto an area at the landing strip. The crew will park the plane and disembark. The audience, both viewing at home and on the scene, can see the airplane from all directions. Spotlights will be pointed at the plane, making it fully illuminated against the dark night.

At the performer's command, the lights to flash off, then back on. When the lights are relit, the plane is gone. The spotlights are once again pointed in the same direction as before, but there is no jet plane, only the tarmac and the night. The plane is then brought back in the same manner. The lights will flash off then on, and the plane is back. The crew boards the plane and taxis it back to the hangar.

The secret: I'm sure that you guessed it: The plane never really leaves the tarmac. But how is it made invisible? Many spotlights are surrounding the plane, which is in a cordoned-off area all set for the effect. Between the massive search lights and the audience, there is a netting draped from light to light. Encircling the plane.

When the plane is first driven or taxied into the area, the one opening between the searchlights is clear of the netting. Once the engines are shut off and the crew disembarks, the technicians will hook up this last piece of netting. This is done under the cover of preparing the these massive searchlights for illumination.

The netting is the same which is used on stage productions. On the stage, the netting acts as backdrops for various scenes. With the proper lighting, the backdrops and scenes will change. When backlit, you will see the image on the netting, when front lit you will see right through it.

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In the case of the jet plane, the huge searchlights are set in such a manner that at one point you see through the netting and you can easily see the plane. In the next setting, you only see the black of night, since this is the scene secretly painted on the special netting. Black is also the same colour of the tarmac, so it appears that the jet is gone and you see the ground where the plane once sat.

When the jet is made to reappear, the netting is dropped to the floor while the lights are out. Turn the lights back on and the jet has returned.

Positioning of the netting depends on the circumstances. If the audience is only in front of the plane, then only mask that part of the plane from the audience with the netting. For more angles, use more netting, surrounding the plane if necessary. Neither the human eye nor the camera will be able to see through the netting when the correct lighting is in effect.

This netting not only is used in stage plays, but many of the modern magicians will use this effect on their shows and specials, it is a great way to make things appear or vanish.

Vanishing of a statue such as the Statue of Liberty can be controlled in the same manner under the right conditions. When "Liberty" was under construction a few years back, it was completely surrounded with workmen scaffolding and platforms. The scaffolding would be an easy way to attach the netting and cause the illusion to take place.

Only a performer with a keen sense of timing could come up with events such as these. So look around, see what other opportunities for these types of effects are available, then go out and perform them.



The Flight Of Icarus

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Oh to fly. This ambition is and will continue to be humanity's greatest quest. Siegfried and Roy have had this trick as part of their Las Vegas show-off and on -over the last couple of years.

The effect: The lights focus on the performer, who, without any effort at all, lifts up off the stage. Back and forth, across the stage, the performer can be seen to fly. Rolling, floating, hovering above the stage. Whether the "flyer" is flying through hoops, into boxes or otherwise about the stage, it appears to be done with great ease and a great deal of magic!

The secret: Before you run out and try to duplicate this effect, remember this: The trick is done with wires and truly needs a great showman to make the audience watch with interest.

For years and years, big stage productions have had everything from furniture to people flying in them. One of the most memorable was the Peter Pan stage production. In this show, up to two dozen people are seen flying at different times.

Is this magic? No, not at all. It is merely a stage effect. The performer actually leaves the stage just before the flying is to be performed in order to have a body harness installed, and wires attached. The leaving of the stage is covered with any of the following: a screen projection depicting the history of flight, other performers taking the stage, an encore trick, etc.

In order to hide the wires, which make this trick work, you need to have a very special background. The background must either be the same colour as the wires, or have a busy pattern. Have a fan or wind machine blowing onto the background curtain, the rippling will make it more difficult to see the wires, which will be in the foreground against the moving curtain.

The wires are hooked to a series of pulleys, and the performer becomes a human marionette. The wire system usually are operated by two people, but depending on the complications of what you want out of this particular effect, they can be controlled by as many more assistants as desired.

Adding flight within a glass case or box is just more of the same. The wires will travel on either side of the lid and continue to hold the performer off the floor. The flips or somersaults can continue because the wires are still connected to the performers harness.

Anyone who has seen a skilled puppeteer may have seen this same overall type of effect with the puppets. In Peter Pan, as an example, whole scenes were built around flying. The most famous, to me, is when Peter teaches the children to fly. This feat supposedly is accomplished by thinking of good thoughts. When that happens, out the window all the children and Peter Pan fly to Never Never Land.

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But what really makes the flying trick a show stopper is the fact that the performer wants it to be. The performer sets a mood of make-believe in which we believe anything is possible. No, no one actually believes that they have just witnessed flight, but people do enjoy being absorbed into the world of fantasy and magic.

Unfortunately, this effect is one that can't be performed in every setting. The background must be specially set and the wires and pulley system must have the proper theatre hook-ups to make it work. Lighting, too, will play an important part in pulling off this feat.



Statue of Liberty Vanish

By far one of the most celebrated illusions David Copperfield has performed.

As seen by millions on television and by a select group who were on site, the statue was clearly seen against the night sky, both with spotlights shining on it and a ring of lights at its base. The select group of participants sat on a small stage facing a small curtain. The curtains were then closed, when they were reopened, the statue was gone, while the spotlights were still blazing and the ring of lights were still lit. Above, a helicopter hovered, but no statue was in sight.

Moments later the curtains were closed. This time, when they reopened, the statue had returned. What a sight. Such a trick.

The secret: Although there are actually several methods to this stunt, I will describe the one which is easiest to perform.

The staging area for the trick is really the seating area and not the statue. The seating area and the television camera bay are located a short distance from the statue. The seating area is a circular stage with curtain suspended between two pillars. The curtain area is between the sightlines of the seats and cameras, and that of the

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statue.

The spectators at home and those in attendance have a good view of the statue, through the open curtains. When the curtains are closed, the statue is completely blocked out.

Surrounding the statue is a ring of lights and in the immediate area are spotlights, focused on the statue. Actually, there are two sets of lights. One rings the statue, one rings an area next to the statue. More amazingly, the platform on which both the spectators and cameras sit, is nothing more than a large turntable.

Here are the inner workings: The ring of lights around the object (in this case the Statue of Liberty) is lit. The spotlights sweeping the area are focused on the object too. When the curtains close, the spectator platform slowly turns away from the object. The first set of lights ringing the object are turned off. The second set, near the object are turned on. The spotlights are now redirected to the area above the lit ring of lights. A smoke machine is turned on to further hide the object and to make the lights dance in an eerie empty space.

When the curtains are reopened, all that is seen is the smoke, the lights, the searchlights, but not the object. Because no one can see around the curtain area, the audience is unable to make out the dark silhouette of the actual object. But to further diminish the chances of this happening, a bright flash of light precedes the opening of the curtains. Much like looking into the flash of a camera light, there is a temporary blindness which stays with people for many seconds. In the meantime, hovering, the helicopter also has moved, and is now over the new empty area. Naturally no object is beneath it. Even photographs won't later reveal the trick. Any one around the outside of the platform taking photographs with a small flash camera, would not be able to pick up the dark statue because those small cameras have short flash ranges and do not have the distance required to photograph the object. But the photograph touch is a nice addition to an otherwise simple trick.

Returning the object to visibility is simply a reversal of routine. Unfortunately, the slow, steady movement of the seat platform makes for a slow paced and dull effect.

When you break it down, the Statue of Liberty vanish becomes a simple trick. Much like a black art illusion. But, more importantly, it just shows how gullible people can be. I'm sure that if people did feel the seating area move, they wouldn't say anything. No one would want to ruin such a good trick. This way, they felt like they, too, were in on the trick. And tricks were meant to be kept a secret, now, weren't they? Well, maybe not.

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Snow in the theatre

Less of a magic trick and more of a theatrical production, Snow in the theatre is an "Inside" trick.

The lights go down and the performer stands in the center of the stage. It becomes windy on stage, while the lights have been turned off and replaced with a spotlight on the performer's hands. As the performer rubs their hands together, a snow like substance appears from the performer's hands. Then, magically, the theatre begins to be bombarded with snow blowing out from the stage and onto the audience, which begins to reach out and touch or catch the snow-like substance.

The secret: Anyone old enough to remember the Lawrence Welk Show, will remember the champagne bubble music, which was a mainstay of this television program. This trick, complete with music (although it is rock music), has just the same effect.

Behind the performer's hands and hidden by the darkness is a bubble making machine. A similar machine can be found in most theatrical theatres. It basically manufacturers a bubble from a soap-based liquid. Much like a children's bubble toy sold by the thousands each summer across North America. The bubbles are created, then blown through an opening, out toward the audience. The larger the bubble machine, the more bubbles will result. Additional machines throughout the theatre also will make bubbles, sending clouds of them floating all through the theatre.

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Floating Rose

Effect:

You probably seen David Copperfield do dancing paper & floating rose in his TV special. You take a piece of paper, give form to it, and in you command the paper float in the air, it also move. You can do it with your hands in your back! After, you take the paper, give it the shape of a rose, and magically the rose float in the air. You set fire to the paper rose and it transform into a real rose!!!

Preparation:

You need to buy some "invisible thread." Take one single strand of the thread and attach two pieces of tape, one at each end. On one end wad it up into a ball. On the other end, attach to anything. You also need some flash paper with which to make the rose. You will need a real rose, concealed in your left pocket and a lighter.

Method:

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First, Put the balled up tape end of the invisible thread in your mouth. Then make a rose out of the flash paper. Step back until the thread becomes tight (you can tell because the tape in your mouth will start to come out). Now place the paper rose on the thread, engaging it under one of the petals, and viola! You now are floating a paper rose! You can move it by simply moving your body. Now for the switch. Your body should be with the right side to the audience, and the left side hiding the rose. With your right hand, reach for a lighter (preferably a zippo) and light it. Bring it under the paper rose, but DO NOT ignite it. This is misdirection while your left hand grabs the real rose. With the rose in your hand, light the flash paper, and bring your left hand up to the same position as the paper rose. The appearance will be that the paper rose turned into a real rose! Take a bow, and throw the rose into the audience.



Effect : David Copperfield walks through the great wall of china

When David Copperfield goes inside the first box there was a switch made, copperfield goes under the box and goes into the hollow stairs he then gets carried away inside the hollow stairs. A lookalike in shadow form pretends to walk through the first part of the wall, after he plays his part he gets inside the hollow base platform. By that time the assistance's pull the sheets away to show that he walked through the first part of the wall.

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The stairs that copperfield is in is behind the camera boom as it makes a complete rotation over the wall. The assistants on the other side of the wall take the same stairs and put it next to the other plate form.

The assistants climb the special stairs and hold up a small white sheet of cloth. It looks like David Copperfield is pushing his and and face through the cloth.

The secret behind this action is that the person on the right is just controlling a pair of fake hands which he controls with his right-hand. The person on the left is just pushing a fake face through the cloth with his left-hand.

The two assistants then drop the small sheet cloth and listen to the wall to see if David is all right. They then slowly roll down the sheets to cover the frame box up and make sure it is tucked in good, they go down the stairs to wait for copperfield to make his way through the second part of the wall.

All he has to do now is get out of the hollow stairs and inside the box and watch his angles with the light. He then comes closer to the light so it looks like he is coming through the second part of the wall. He pulls the sheets away to reveal himself, the white cloth stays on the floor because it contains the props.



Grandfather's Legacy

EFFECT: This is a breathtaking visual transposition as four aces vanish and then reappear under the 'leader ace'. You'll learn the stunning 'Pop out' move

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to produce the four aces to start. Then you'll slowly and visually vanish each Ace from its packet -

one moment it's there, the next it isn't! Blink and you'll miss it! At the conclusion, the vanished aces just appear under the leader ace with a touch from your finger! This beautiful routine works well with a gambling patter or music, but it's so powerful

you could give your vocal cords the afternoon off and let the magic just speak for itself!

TO CREATE: Grandfather's Legacy: For this trick you will need 3 double-backed cards.

AD(ace of diamonds) with an indifferent card, AC with an indifferent card, and AH with an indifferent card, leave the Ace of spades normal. Now you need duplicates of the AD, AC, and AH (none of them double backed). Have the tricked aces and the ace of spades spread through out the deck ace-side down, and the normal AD, AC, and AH on the top of the deck face down. Turn the deck face up and spread through the deck, skipping the first 10 card or so, so the audience doesn't know that you have 3 aces on top of the deck. Put the three tricked aces, ace-side up on the table with the normal AS, also face up. Then turn the deck face down again and deal three cards from the top of the deck face down onto each ace, the three top cards(aces) going onto the normal-ace-of-spades. Take the first pile with a tricked ace, spread the cards showing one face up ace. Square the pile and take one card from the top of the pile an put it on the bottom, don't misdirect, just do it. Make a magical gesture and turn the pile over showing that the ace has turned into a normal card. Then pick up the pile with the four aces, take one card from the top of the pile and place it on the bottom. Then turn that pile over and spread off the bottom card just showing the AS and the card that was on top. Repeat this for the remaining piles.

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Indian Burn

EFFECT: The Magician holds his arms out in a “follow me” motion. One wrist is placed over the other with thumbs pointing to the floor. The fingers interlace and on the count of three, the magician twists his wrists to be pointing straight up.

METHOD: Here’s the arm twisty thing David Copperfeild opened with. It really is a cool trick. You have to perform it right though. The fact that he did it in front of an entire audience is risky as hell. When he said, “ok, thumbs down,” he stopped and said, “sir, I said thumbs down,” in which almost the whole audience got momentarily distracted, which is all you need. It’s really simple.

Just do as he did first. Ok, hold out your arms, put your thumbs facing down, cross your arms right over left, now line up your thumbs real good (*this is where the special move happens*) now clasp your fingers to together, and rotate your arms (which they cant do)

* **SPECIAL MOVE:** The spectator will momentarily look at their thumbs to line them up. While then do that, you take your left hand (the one underneath) and spin it 360 degrees counterclockwise. It helps if you open your hand and close it real quick again because it’s less likely to get noticed when you’re doing the move. It’s kind of a stretch though. Make sure you have your thumbs aligned and pointing down when you finish the move. Now just clasp the fingers and do the impossible. This is almost full proof; If you do it to one person and have them stand facing the same way as you, and to your left. Kind of like the old 360 arm-twist trick.

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