



The Invisible Mirror

(and other things I found in Freddie's Wallet)

An e-Book by Bob Cassidy

PART ONE - THE TEXT

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This is "Freddie's Wallet." I call it that because I bought it at *Fred Myers*, a popular department store chain in the western United States - referred to by the locals as "Freddie's." (It would be more accurate to call it "Freddie's Credit Card Case," because there is no money compartment - it is strictly for credit cards, identification, and business cards.)

On the outside of the case is a clear ID window. In the photograph, it is located on the back of the side with the credit cards. If you were to slide a card into the left vertical compartment near the centerfold, it would be visible in the outside window. In essence, it does the same job as the original two-fold Jaks peek wallet.

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But “Freddie’s Wallet” isn’t just another peek device. While it serves admirably in that capacity, its main use is as a switching gimmick that also provides cover for an umbrella move, a peek, and finally the return of a spectator’s folded billet. All of this happens while the billet seemingly remains folded and in full view. This is made possible by the interesting gimmick seen lying before the wallet in the previous photograph.

If you like the concept, and I am sure you will, you’ll be happy to know that “Freddie’s Wallet” is not a device you are apt to see being used by many other magicians or mentalists. It is not available in magic shops – in fact, it is not available ANYWHERE. The only way you can have one is to make it yourself. Fortunately, this is an easy task and shouldn’t take you more than half an hour or so after you have obtained the proper credit card case and the necessary materials.

[For those of you who were wondering, the quote above the Doctor Bob photo on the first page is a reference to those unfortunate beings who, having seen “street magic” and the various exposure shows on television, have concluded that magic and/or mentalism is a talent you can buy in a magic shop. Doctor Bob has banned these individuals from his neighborhood, or, as he puts it, his “hood.”]

The wallet, as I said, is really a credit card case. Since there is no money compartment, it is an easy matter to gimmick the case without having to cut through the extra layers of leather and cloth that you would otherwise encounter. Additionally, the case is smaller than a regular wallet and will fit neatly into your outside jacket or shirt pocket.

You will notice that there are two different credit card/ID cases shown in the photographs that follow. The larger of the two is the one I used in the video clips. In addition to the billet “switch and peek” feature, it also has a magnetic window on the outside, which can be used to peek at what has been written on a business card inserted - writing side down - into the second horizontal pocket on the left side of the case. For those of you who want the case to double as a rather nonstandard peek wallet, I will show you how the magnetic window is constructed and the means by which the peek is obtained.

The second case, the smaller of the two, does not have an outside window. In fact, the one in the photos is a modified “Stockbroker” - a commercial gimmick designed to facilitate the “Out to Lunch” principle. If you own a “Stockbroker” case and don’t mind cutting it up like I did with mine, you can - in addition to the billet feature - use the case for your favorite OTL effects. Otherwise, any available credit card case will do - as long as it has three or four horizontal credit card pockets on the inside left and/or right sides.

The media clips will give you an excellent idea of how the billet switch and read works. It will take some practice to do perfectly, but it is not nearly as difficult as you might imagine. If you just make up the wallet and play with it a while, you will soon discover how it facilitates what would otherwise be a difficult series of moves. You will also have a lot of fun making the dummy billet appear and disappear as you push the gimmick up and down.

WARNING: If you are among the minority who will be tempted to use this device as a means of performing the infamous "Rising Billet" trick - DON'T DO IT!

There is one other thing that the case will do for you. In the video clip "The Methods", you will see that I have concealed a silver dollar size convex mirror under the front flap of the case. It has a magnet attached to the back. Since the billet gimmick is made of tin, the mirror, when removed from its hiding place, will cling to the outside of the case where it can be used to obtain a reflection of a drawing made by a spectator on a business card. In practice, the handling is pretty standard:

Remove a business card from the case and hand it, along with a black Sharpie Marker, to a spectator. Ask her to draw a simple picture on the blank side of the card and, when she is done, to hold it at arm's length before her. Turn your back while she draws, and take the opportunity to slip the mirror out of the case and affix it to its back. Later, when you turn around to face the spectator, tell her to hold her card higher so that it is at her eye level. Use the hand holding the case to raise her arm upward to eye level, thus giving yourself an opportunity to see a reflection of her drawing in the mirror. I can be seen pantomiming this move on the "Methods" video.

[While the foregoing might appear to be the "Invisible Mirror" of the title, the *real* "invisible mirror" is the reflection you will obtain of the spectator's thoughts when you use the wallet for its primary purpose - the switch, invisible read, and return of a folded billet. Why this is called "The Invisible Mirror" is beyond the ken of rational minds and cannot be discussed here.]

Before I go any further, one point regarding the media clips should be made absolutely clear. The videos are designed to show you how the switch works and what it basically looks like from the audience's point of view. They do NOT show how you should actually perform it.

The "graceful" hand gestures, etc., are for illustrative purposes only. In practice, it should look like you just placed the folded billet into the case while pointing out that you will put it in a "safe place" until later. After the peek is obtained and the billet refolded, the case should be tossed to the table, and or pocketed while you proceed with your revelation. (AND IN ABSOLUTELY NO EVENT, SHOULD YOU PERFORM THESE MOVES TO THE MOZART ACCOMPANIMENT USED IN THE VIDEO. The only purpose of the music was so that you realized the videos are **supposed** to be silent.)

Later, by using the gimmick “in reverse” you will be able to return the spectator’s billet to her. DO NOT hold the case in your hands throughout the demonstration, as this would draw unnecessary attention to the device - attention that SHOULD be directed to your apparent “thought reading.” (Personally, I prefer to toss the case onto a table in order to take an advantage of a subtlety we will discuss shortly.)

A NOTE ON THE MEDIA FILES:

To properly view the media files you should download the latest version of Real Player. In the “options” dialogue of the player, you should select the option that allows Real Player to play media directly from your hard drive without first downloading it. (Otherwise, it will operate according to its default settings and attempt to download the file from the Internet. If you were to leave the default setting and then click on the link in the html file named “contents.html” (the page that links to all of the media) it is quite possible that you will see a window that says “Real Player has attempted to perform an illegal operation and will be shut down.” This will not occur if you change the default settings as indicated OR if you just click directly on the media files in the folder where you unzipped them. It is a lot more convenient, though, to access the files through the “contents.html” page. In this manner, you can view both the text and the media at the same time in separate windows.

[Sorry if the foregoing seems a bit confusing, but this was the only way I could make this eBook compatible with most computer systems.]

THE BILLETS AND THE UMBRELLA MOVE

In many of my previous writings, I have stated that the actual size of a billet is irrelevant, as long as it fits your hand. I have always been quite comfortable with either standard size business cards folded into quarters or 3 X 5 index cards cut in half to form 3 X 2.5 inch billets, which, when folded into quarters serve equally well for most switches.

With "Freddie's Wallet," however, another consideration comes into play - not only must the billet be properly palmable when folded, but when it is opened out as well, since the entire unfolded billet must be easily concealable in a finger palm position as shown in the following sequence of illustrations. In my case, and perhaps in yours, the perfect size is obtained by cutting a 4 X 6 index card into quarters - resulting in four billets per card, each measuring 3" by 2" - or, for our European friends, approximately 75mm X 50mm.



There are two handlings I use for the insertion of the folded billet into the wallet, but the mechanics of the finger palm are the same in both. Only the timing is different, as we will see momentarily. At the beginning of the switch/read sequence, the spectator's folded billet is palmed in the right hand while apparently placed into the second horizontal credit card slot. At the same time, the left fingers push the gimmick into view from the bottom or back of the wallet (depending on the style of case), creating the perfect illusion of the folded billet being inserted halfway into the slot.

The billet is palmed laterally between the middle and ring fingers of the right hand.

This exposed view of the umbrella move, shows how the billet is finger palmed and will also illustrate to you why the size of the billet is important. In the first photo to the left, the billet is allowed to spring open along its centerfold. Note that the folded sides of the billet are along the bottom and to the right (facing the wrist).

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The thumb is then inserted between the two uppermost quarters and pushed toward the center.

This causes the billet to umbrella out into finger palm position where it is held securely in place by pressure from the thumb on top and the upper side of the little finger below. Due to the size of the billet, it is perfectly concealed in the hand. In practice, the hand is not extended as much as in the photograph, but is held in a natural, cupped position.

The move is done either as shown in the video clip – with the inside of the case facing the audience, or with the case held facing upwards in the left hand, the tops of the credit card slots facing the audience but tilted slightly to the floor – thus preventing a view directly INTO the pockets, which could expose the existence of the gimmick. (Don't worry, if this is not clear to you yet, it will become so as you view the videos and read the details of the gimmick's operation.)

One method of opening and reading the billet is shown in the video. The entire operation is done with the right hand, which holds the case as shown in the clip and opens the billet at the same time.

Another method is to grab the billet with the left hand beneath or behind the wallet and to later umbrella it out with the left hand either in the trousers pocket or under cover of a pad or the case.

Or, you can use the method I prefer and allow the billet in the right hand to be slid into the hook at the bottom of the gimmick, which holds it securely on the back of the wallet. This allows the hands to be casually shown empty (AND I MEAN CASUALLY - WITHOUT MAKING IT LOOK LIKE YOU ARE SHOWING YOUR HANDS EMPTY!), then retrieving the billet in the right hand where it is either umbrella'd out as above or taken to the trousers pocket.

Watch the first video, "The Read" and you will see how deceptive the apparent insertion of the billet into the case is. The next three photos show how the gimmick works in the smaller of the two cases.



The top picture shows the gimmick projecting from the second slit from the top as seen by the audience. The second photo shows the back of the case and the third shows it from the side so that you can see the "hook" at the bottom of the gimmick.



Note that the second picture shows the gimmick on the OUTSIDE of the case. This is just so you can see it in the photo. In practice, it actually enters the wallet from a slit at the BOTTOM of the decorative black band that goes around the case. (This is simply made from Scotch Brand Decorator Tape. If you are a perfectionist, you can cut a band from the leather of another wallet - or an old leather jacket or book cover, or whatever - and glue it in place with Crafter's Cement.)



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The only purpose of the band is to conceal the existence of the slit. The band is not required if you choose to insert the gimmick from the BOTTOM rather than the back of the case as I have done with the larger wallet in this sequence of photos. The gimmick is simply a LONG piece of index card folded so that the top portion looks like a folded billet. It is taped to a short strip of tin -cut from a tin can - the same width as the billet. The bottom of the tin is bent into the hook shape shown in the photos. This serves two purposes - it keeps the gimmick from going up too far into the slot and also acts as a clip to catch the spectator's billet as I mentioned previously.



I personally prefer the gimmick that extends from the back rather than the bottom. This is because the gimmick will extend outward from the bottom of the case when you wish the slot to appear empty. Thus, the bottom of the gimmick must be concealed by the left hand prior to the "insertion." With the back slot, the gimmick only goes to the bottom of the wallet when the gimmick is out of sight, and halfway up the back when it is in view. This is a matter of personal preference, for there is an advantage offered by the "bottom slit" - and you can see it in the video (in which a "bottom slit" and extended gimmick are used. That is that the left fingers do not have to push the gimmick into view. Instead, the right hand merely pushes the wallet to the left as it "inserts" the billet - the end of the gimmick is against the left palm - and the dummy comes into view.



The basic principle should be pretty clear by now - the gimmick is simply a "slide" that moves up and down, making a "billet" appear or disappear at will.

I am well aware, and I'm sure you are too, that a similar effect can be obtained purely by pantomime (which is how I refer to "simulation" type sleights.) It is very difficult, however, to simulate the action smoothly and without hesitation. Furthermore, the existence of the hook adds an entirely new dimension to the effectiveness of the illusion.



Speaking of illusions, there is a very nice subtlety that can be done if you simply toss the closed wallet to the table after apparently inserting the billet. Look at the lowermost of the three pictures to the left and you will see what I mean. The case naturally opens up a bit on its own, thus innocently leaving the billet in apparent full view. I never draw any attention to this, but it is something that is certainly noticed and is a very strong psychological "convincer".



The top photo shows where the cut is made for the bottom-style insertion, and the second photo shows a cardboard "tunnel" I taped to the inside of the pocket to insure that the gimmick comes out straight from the center of the pocket, and not jogged off to the left or right.



The tools needed to modify any standard credit card case are quite simple: black decorative tape or scrap leather strips; crafter's cement (this is available in craft shops or you can order it over the Internet through JoAnnsFabrics.com - easily the greatest craft supply outfit on earth); an eXacto knife, and some scrap cardboard to act as stiffeners and to make a "tunnel" if you so desire.

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The last two photographs show the convex mirror and the optional magnetic flap. Note that the mirror actually goes on the back of the wallet after you remove it from its hiding place under the flap on the inside of the case. (The flap is right under the mirror in the photo.) There is a tin shim taped under the flap as well so that the mirror, which has a magnet taped to the back, will adhere easily. (Also - as I mentioned earlier, the billet gimmick itself has a tin strip in it, so if it is still in the case it will also act to hold the mirror.)



The magnetic flap can be made if you are using a case that has an ID window on the outside of the closed case. This is cut out and a piece of credit card is glued to its back. A button magnet is then taped to the back of the ID portion. A small square of tin is glued to the inside of the case - this is what keeps the flap locked shut.

The case is, of course, prepared with a horizontal slit just below the top of the second credit card slot. The slit goes right through to the back and is aligned with the uppermost part of the "window." In the photo, you will note that almost the entire face of a business card is exposed when the window is opened.

There are a few additional subtleties here. There are two pieces of credit cards glued into the slots inside of the wallet. One of them is apparently BELOW the inserted business card, thus adding to the illusion that the card is effectively isolated.

You may wonder how it is possible to push the card into the slot when there is a magnet holding the outer ID panel to the inside of the window. This is not a problem as the card easily slides BETWEEN the magnet and the inside of the case proper.

Again, if any part of this description seems a bit obscure to you, a few viewings of the media files should set every thing straight. I am sure that if you take the time to make yourself a "Freddie's Wallet" you will find that it was time well spent, and I predict that this will become one of your favorite multipurpose tools.

Good Luck and Good Thoughts

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