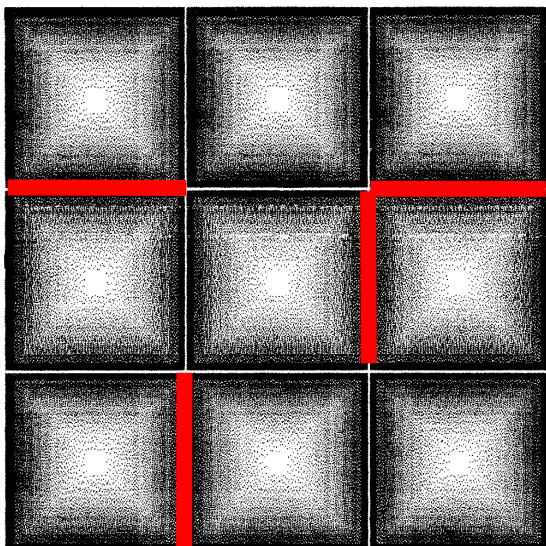


A Magic Box – Jack E. McCoy

Illusion: The explanation to why money vanishes from pockets is explained with the use of a quarter. The eagle, it is explained, gets agitated when jostled about in a pocket full of change. A bunch of change is collected and placed in one spectator's cupped hands. A square piece of stiff paper, soft creased into a 3 X 3 grid, is handed for examination. It is colored to resemble that of a bird's nest. An old-style quarter (eagle-backed) is signed by a spectator and dropped into the spectator's cupped hands. The spectator shakes his hands, stirring the coins. It is explained that the eagle quarter is getting irritated. "There" the magician explains, "It's flown out; stop shaking, but don't look. Keep your hands closed. Hold still and I'll catch it." The piece of paper is taken back, shown both sides, and instantly folded into a square box. Another spectator holds his hand out, palm up. The magician holds the box up into the air, acting as a tall tree with a nest on top. "There, I think it landed. Shhh, everyone be quite and hold still. Don't move" The box is lowered, and when tilted over, the signed quarter falls out of it and into the spectator's hand. The other spectator now looks at all his coins and finds the signed quarter is truly gone!

Working: I won't be describing a coin switch as this isn't a beginner's book so I imagine you probably already know one, and if not, there are many methods already described in many magic books. The presentation with the cupped hands should also be obvious to you from the earlier description. Basically: Gather many coins (with some quarters), put them in the spectator's cupped hands, retaining one quarter (secretly palmed) in your right hand. Have another spectator sign a quarter. Now, with the right hand, pick up the signed coin and ask the spectator to slightly open the top of his cupped hands. Switch the signed coin with the secretly palmed one as your hand moves up above the cupped hands, and drops the regular quarter in, secretly retaining the signed coin in your hand. The right hand gets the signed quarter into finger palmed position as the left hand gives the paper grid for examination. The grid is taken back and folded into the box. During the process of folding, the finger palmed coin is automatically loaded inside the box (under a secret flap) as I will teach you. The rest is show. A shake of the box causes the coin to jump out from under the flap and into view.

Making the box



The coin box I designed is a 3 X 3 grid, cut from a piece of cardstock or stiff paper. Each square is equal in size and slightly larger than a quarter. The red lines show the cuts that are in the grid.

The decoration on both sides can of course be anything you like. For explanation purposes, the dark drawn side (pictured above) will become the inside of my box. I like the bird nest patten, though I do think a magic box looks nice when the inside is dark toned (such as magic). I've chosen to leave the other side blank for contrast in the illustrations.

In addition to the box, you will probably want a small rubber band. Though not totally necessary, it makes the box easier to handle and holds it together once folded, which frees up your hands. If you don't have a small rubber band, don't despair. The box isn't difficult to maintain with the fingers.

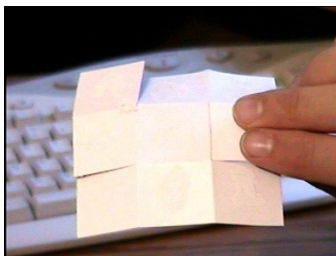
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 4 | 5 | 6 |
| 7 | 8 | 9 |

For explanation purposes, I've numbered the squares 1 – 9 on the side that will be the inside of the box. Notice the relationship of the numbers to the cuts. You may want to do this with your first paper grid, which will aid you in learning the folds.

My explanation begins where you've already switched the marked coin out and have it finger palmed in your right hand. While the spectator is examining the paper grid, get the marked coin finger-palmed with the index and middle finger. With the left hand, take the grid from the spectator and lower it toward the right hand. At the same time, the right hand rotates palm upward as the grid is lowered onto it. It should be simple for the quarter to end up under square #6.



The quarter is hidden underneath panel #6 (between it and the index and middle fingers).



Rotate the hand palm down, at the same time sliding the index and middle finger toward the card's edge to show as much card as possible. The quarter is hidden under the fingertips.



Rotate back palm up as the index and middle slide themselves and the quarter back under the card.

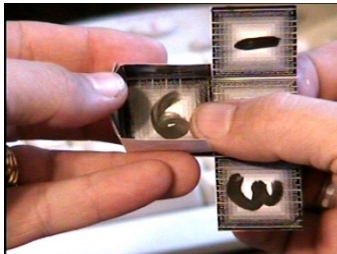
The move described in the last 3 illustrations is credited to Glenn Harrison (Glenn Harrison's Coins and Cards, Chapter IX). It gives a very fair and strong optical illusion of seeing every part of the hand and the card without anything possibly being hidden.



The left hand grasps the card at the lower left (#7) square. The right hand continues its hold at #6.



The right hand rotates counter-clockwise with its square (#6) onto the top of the center square (#5). The left hand likewise rotates its square (#7) counter-clockwise onto the top of the lower middle square (#8). The box will begin to form.



Once the left part of the box is formed (#6 is square on top of #5 and #7 is square on top of #8), you can move your right thumb out from the box. The quarter is secretly between #6 and #5



The right index now lifts the upper middle square (#2) to form the remaining side of the box.



The right thumb and middle finger fold the upper left and right squares (#1 & #3) around the sides of the box.



Rotate the open end of the box over toward the left.
With the left hand, put the rubber band around the box.



The box is now complete. The #6 square is a secret flap.
The quarter is below it. Warning: There is one slit (that's toward your right thumb) where the quarter can slide out, even unintentionally. Keep your thumb in front of it and you'll have no problem.

My usual way of producing the quarter is:



Hold the box at your fingertips.



Quickly tip the box over in a dumping motion. The quarter will fly out from under the secret panel and into the waiting hand. The secret flap jumps back up into its original place.



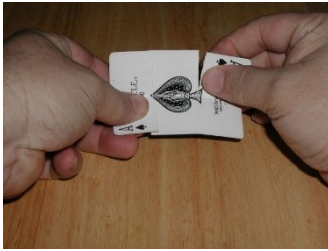
You can immediately show the inside of the box. All looks normal. Everything happens so quickly that the quarter seems to magically appear from nowhere.

Remember: The spectators think the coin is in the spectator's hands with all the other coins. Its sudden appearance from the magic box will be a massive surprise to them. You can almost see the amazement on my keyboards face.

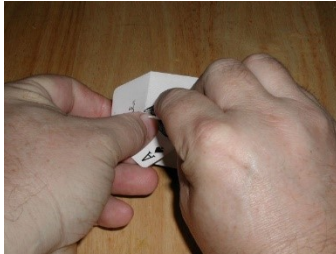
Using a playing card:

There is an impromptu method for using a playing card that I came up with as well. Its workings are identical to the box previously explained, only with sections 1,2 and 3 nonexistent.

Fold the card in half lengthwise, unfold, then fold it widthwise into 3 sections. Now tear the crease below each pip from the edge to the center crease.



Hold the card similarly as in the bird's nest version. The coin is hidden below the rightmost pip, between the right thumb and fingers.



The hands rotate identically as the previous method.



Rotate the box towards yourself so the open side is visible to you only.



To the spectators, it looks like a solid box. It doesn't matter if they know the back is open. It's a close enough representation.

You will find that, if you press your index downward on the top of the box, the coin will drop out of its hiding place and onto the table, making an audible clunk. Raise the box to show the coin's return.