

MAGIC marketplace

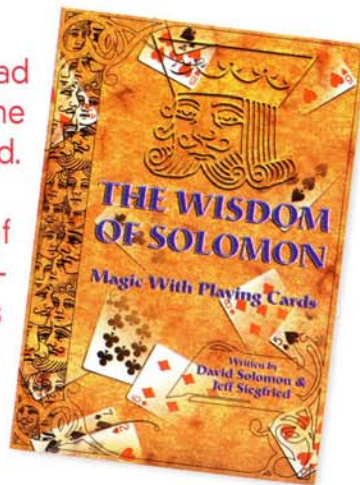
The Wisdom of Solomon

by David Solomon
and Jeffrey Siegfried

Reviewed by Jason England

For the past few months, I've been drowning in bad magic DVDs. There seemed to be no way to get to the surface. Thankfully, *The Wisdom of Solomon* arrived. This book is exactly the breath of fresh air I needed.

Solomon's name isn't new to the readers of *MAGIC*. He's published items in Joshua Jay's column, is the author or co-author of several books on card magic, and is strongly associated with both Ed Marlo and a stalwart of the Chicago Session, a get-together that meets in Simon Aronson's kitchen every Saturday.



The results of David's exposure to one of the greatest ever (in Marlo) and his recent interaction with several of magic's top card thinkers in Aronson and John Bannon are clearly evident in this new release.

Solomon's previous large hardback book was *Solomon's Mind*, written by Eugene Burger and released in 1997. This new release follows a similar, if not the same, format. The outward appearance of the two books is virtually identical, even down to the cover art. They are the same size, have nearly the same number of pages, and will make an attractive set on your shelf. The books appear to be laid out in a similar fashion, and *The Wisdom of Solomon* uses photographs instead of line drawings, just like the previous work.

One thing different about *Wisdom of Solomon* is the writing. Whereas Mr. Burger acted as a narrator and guide to Solomon's magic, as well as writing the technical descriptions, *Wisdom* was written by Solomon and co-author Jeff Siegfried. The difference between the two styles isn't enormous and will have zero effect on your ability to learn the effects contained within, but it is apparent once you've got the two works side by side.

The material in *The Wisdom of Solomon* can be summed up with two words: card tricks. Don't think I'm merely stating the obvious here. And as a self-confessed card-trick junkie, I don't mean this in any sort of

derogatory way. But the fact is, you won't find many presentational elements here. Unlike a book of Darwin Ortiz's card magic, in which every effect comes complete with, at the very least, a workable presentational framework, these are bare-bones card tricks. You've got great starting material, but you'll need to add a bit of *you* to really get it humming.

Now to the tricks. Although the book is full of good material, I've found the following to be the most promising and most worthy of developing into full-blown presentational showpieces:

Right out of the gate Solomon delivers a fooler in Just Friends. Although previously published in Steve Beam's excellent *Semi-Automatic* series, this is worthy of reprinting here. The deck is cut into four packets and a King is cut into each of the packets by a spectator. Instantly, the four Kings are shown to be back in the hands of the magician and it is revealed that the spectator has cut a Queen to the bottom of each packet on the table.

Perhaps I'm just a sucker for effects that utilize both dice and cards, but I really liked Very Dicey. It's a series of coincidences arrived at by using the dice (rolled by the spectators) and the cards that ends with an impossible location of a signed selection.

In Revised Mexican Poker, David credits both Tomas Blomberg and Bannon — also no slouch in the card trick department — with aiding

him in coming up with this killer version of the Elmsley classic. It's been published before, but if you don't know where, I'm not going to help you find it. Read it here, or dig for it — the search is worth the effort.

Gold From Straw Elevator is an interesting take on a Peter Duffie idea. David has added a royal flush climax to a very deceptive three-phase elevator sequence. I first saw this effect on Joshua Jay's *Talk About Tricks* DVD set. I had read it before in *MAGIC*, but had not actively experimented with it until being reminded of the effect by Josh's DVDs. You've probably seen it or read it, too. Consider yourself doubly reminded.

Purely A, 2, 3, 4 Thru the Kings is David's handling of a great Marlo effect. The trick is a multi-card and multi-phase elevator sequence that would take too long to properly describe here. Suffice to say it's interesting and a little off the beaten path, in a good way.

Solomon's good friend Don May contributed several effects to the book — a small section of them, in fact — but Stinger Monte is the one that caught my eye. I won't give away the effect, in case you get a chance to see it performed. Norman Beck showed this around at 31 Faces North this year. If it's good enough for that crowd...

I'm always in favor of effects that utilize, either secretly or openly, the bottom deal. Solomon Meets Gardner/Marlo does both, depending on the reader's level of skill. The effect involves a demonstration of

card control abilities — the performer deals himself four Kings from different parts of the deck — and ends with a double-duke of Aces to a spectator and a straight flush to the magician.

There are well over a dozen other effects that caught my eye while reading the book. Solomon and Siegfried map out the methods behind clock effects, versions of Oil & Water, mathematical self-workers, half-a-dozen Ace assemblies, and a handful of tricks utilizing gaffed cards. You can bet that I'll be going back to visit them in the near future. For now, consider just some of the names mentioned in conjunction with the effects found within. I think you'll recognize some of these guys: Juan Tamariz, David Ben, Eddie Fechter, Gary Plants, Darwin Ortiz, Dr. Sawa, Steve Draun, John Bannon, Simon Aronson, Roberto Giobbi, and Bill Malone. I'm not saying that each of these men directly inspired effects or moves in *The Wisdom of Solomon*, but these are the caliber of thinkers that are inspiring and encouraging David. With tricks like these and that list of names, how can you go wrong?

The Wisdom of Solomon by David Solomon and Jeffrey Siegfried. 212 pages, hardbound with dust jacket, illustrated with photographs. \$50 (domestic postage paid, international rates vary). Available from David Solomon, 848 Green Bay Rd., Highland Park, IL 60035, www.davidsolomon.net.