

Alright boys and girls. This month we're taking a peak at a couple of recent items and a couple of older items. After all it's not just new stuff that needs the gems separated from the rubble. We've got three Gems and one Rubble this month. We'll be looking at Cameron Francis's *The Omega Mutation*, Jay Sankey's *Revelations Shirt*, Jeff Hobson Live, and Curtis Kam's *The Rat Pack*.

So Let's Dive in:

The Omega Mutation Cameron Francis (MSRP: \$99.00):



So Cameron is a weird guy bordering psychotic. I'll bet we'd get along great. He's just my style! The Omega videos are actually quite good... Definite Gems. First the basics: the production quality is seriously top-notch. Big Blind Media does an incredible job, and I really like the crazy style of their recent products. Very surreal, bizarre, yet realistic. Quite a strange mixture.

I love the music... some good hard rock going on there. Also, the underlying story of a virus outbreak caused by Cameron is pretty fun. The entire video is shot in a quarantine tent with contamination-suit donning spectators. Very funny stuff. Also, Cameron's not a half bad actor either.

The Omega Mutation is a 3 DVD set with 27 effects. Are they all Gems? Of course not. That would indeed be a rare Gem of a video set. However, none of the effects are Rubble. For the most part, there really are no new plots or revolutionary methods, etc. However, this material is clearly workers material.

It's clearly magic that is audience tested and designed with the working pro in mind. Cameron has a great presence and personality. Based on these DVDs alone, I'm convinced that he is a very successful performer.

Obviously covering all 27 effects would be a bit tedious and take too much time and space, but I'll give some highlights. One last thing before looking at the effects. Quite a few of them require extra set up or preparation that would make things a little bit of a pain for strolling. However, there are also plenty of effects that are completely impromptu. *Signed and Assembled* as well as *Hard Knocks* from disk one immediately come to mind... Both effects are incredible.

• **Disk One:**

- *Vivid*: The brilliance behind this effect is that it's a torn and restored card that reuses the same card every time, so you don't have to destroy a card each time. Very cool idea and very practical. Gem.
- *Insecure Prediction*: Killer magician-in-trouble effect with a nice visual restoration at the end. Total Gem!
- *Cagey*: I believe this effect will be in the upcoming Reel Magic Quarterly (Issue #4). There are several effects on this series where signatures or ink seem to move from one card to another. This is one of those, and it is incredible. Not to mention that the method is just as fun as the effect. Definite Gem.
- *Dime a Cap*: Man if I could do a decent striking vanish this would be in my rep right now!!!! Totally visual penetration effect. Visual Gem!
- *Signed Assembly*: I really like this effect. It's an assembly effect, but it uses 3 signed cards and is much, much more streamlined than typical assemblies... Very powerful Gem.
- *Back In Ten*: All I can say is WOW! This is the one... you know the one that's worth the price of the DVD. This one is now officially part of my strolling act. Killer business card give away. One of the best applications for the OTL principle I've seen. I wish that he did not publish this one! Gemini Gem!

• **Disk Two:**

- *Card A Que*: Very visual effect. Requires a little bit of extra stuff to carry around, but sooooo worth it. Gem.
- *Cheque This*: Hello! Here it is again... the one that makes the prices totally worth it. This is one of the sweetest uses for a bill switch. If you work, you'll use this. Gemini Gem!
- *Last Laugh*: The ending to this actually caught me off guard and nailed me... good one. That alone makes this a Gem.

• **Disk Three:**

- *Ring Flight*: Very cool effect. Easy reset, but does require a few extra "stuff." Nothing that's hard to come by, but I just really like to have minimal stuff to carry around. This one however it probably worth the extra stuff. Gem.
- *Space Available*: Alright. What the heck! This one... darn... why did he have to release this. If I came up with this idea I wouldn't tell Anyone! That's all I'm saying. Gemini Gem!
- *Dups*: Another groovy idea... Just trust me... This is a good one. Gem!

Final Thoughts:

Cameron is clearly a working pro. It shows in his performance, confidence, personality, technical skill, thinking, prop management and so much more. You want some good solid material to add to your professional act, get this DVD. GEM! The MSRP is \$99.00 Bucks. It's worth it gang. Of the 27 effects, there are at least 4 or 5 that are completely worth the price. Plus plenty more that come darn close. This is available from [Big Blind Media](#) or your favorite magic dealer.

The Revelation's Shirt Jay Sankey (MSRP: \$40.00):



Watching a DVD like this, only one thought comes to mind: What is Jay smoking and where can I get some?! If I had as many good ideas flowing through my brain as Jay, I think my head would explode. For \$40 bucks you get a T-Shirt that is pretty darn hip, and very much "today's style." Plus you get a DVD which we'll cover in a minute, and you'll get my favorite thing in the whole package, a shirt tag with a prediction on it, a killer addition by Richard Sanders.

The T-Shirt has 5 predictions built into (plus the tag). Some of the revelation can work together for a mini routine. Or you can do the effects separately. The DVD is more than generous with the amount of information taught... typical Jay.

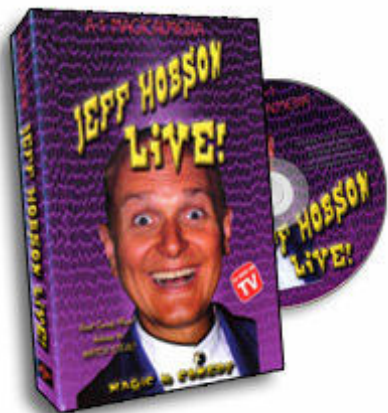
First of all, you'll see each of the five routines performed, then each of them explained... of course. For those in the know, of course, if you have a prediction printed on a shirt, rest assured that a f**ce is in use. Well in the bonus section, Jay teaches several techniques for this.

I think my all time favorite thing with this product (besides the revelations tag!!!!!!) is his work on the old ESP TV magic trick. The old point to a card on the screen, now move 1 card left or right, now move 2 cards up or down, etc. First of all, Jay came up with a way to do this twice in a row and get a different result. That alone is worth the price. However, on top of that, he gives, hands down, the BEST justification for having you start on one card and do the "moving around business." It's perfect, and brings this effect from more of a puzzle or "math thing" in the mind of the spectators to a totally freaky mentalism effect.

The bottom line is that all you need to do is where this shirt and you've got 3 or 4 effects you can do with no props. For two of the effects you need a deck of cards which can be borrowed, but the rest of the stuff needs no deck. You can borrow a few coins, or just have them stare at your back and you can tell them what card on your back they are staring at. **Get it. Total Gem!**

The MSRP is \$40.00 and is available at [Sankey Magic](http://SankeyMagic.com) or at your favorite magic dealer.

Jeff Hobson Live (MSRP: \$34.95):



Jeff Hobson has to be one of the funniest performers I have ever seen. This video does teach a few effects, but it does NOT teach his whole act that you'll see. However, you will learn a TON more from watching him perform than you ever will from watching the "teaching" section.

This DVD is a Live performance of Jeff Performing his incredible act. Totally hilarious and entertaining. You definitely want more when it's over. On top of this, he teaches you his handling for Silk to Apple, Balloon Bag and a few other things. Balloon Bag has to be my favorite routine. A complete routine with just a paper bag and a few balloons. Talk about packing flat and playing Enormous!

If you're looking to be entertained by an incredible performer, get this DVD. If you're looking to learn by watching a pro in action, get this DVD. If want to learn a few killer tricks to add to your act, get this DVD. Total GEM and a must have for anyone who's even a tiny bit serious about magic.

The MSRP is \$34.95 which is a heck of a lot cheaper than buying a ticket for his show. This is available at your favorite magic dealer. **Get it. GEM!**

The Rat Pack (MSRP: \$35.00):



And we save the worst for last. Yes, ladies and gents, if you haven't guessed, *The Rat Pack*, is this month's Rubble. Seriously, who brings a rat trap to a restaurant and sets it on the table?! I don't think the manager would be too keen on that idea.

However, let me say this. I think the idea has potential in the right venue. I'll talk more about that in a minute. In the meantime, let me point out that the performance segment on the DVD totally fell flat. Curtis got more applause when he took the Rat Trap out of his case than he did when he found the card in the trap.

The effect is that a real Rat Trap is set. The deck of cards is set next to the trigger. You, the magician, grab the deck and "magically" find the selected signed card before the trap goes off. I imagine that it's quite a scene when the trap snaps and all the cards go flying in the air while you're left holding the selection. However, if you buy the DVD you'll never know if what that looks like because the trap failed during the performance. My thinking is this: They could have shot another performance take. Call me crazy, but I don't think it would have been a problem.

Ok, so for some positive feedback. It's clear to me that Curtis is a working pro. He knew how to build suspense, how to really interact with the audience and have fun with them. He even recovered reasonably well when the trap didn't spring. So don't "hear" that I'm criticizing Curtis as a magician. I think he's a great performer.

I'm not so sure that he's a great teacher, however. He seemed very unrehearsed, choppy, unsure of himself, and just plain awkward. Also, every other phrase out of his mouth during the explanation was "we are not recommending that you do this." or "it is dangerous" etc. We get it! It's stupid and dangerous to put your hand in a rat trap. I think there was a bit of overkill on the disclaimer.

Also, during the explanation portion, there was a lot of awkward and superfluous language. For example, I remember once watching Frank Garcia on the Stars of Magic videos and he actually said, "I'm going to, by the process of utilizing this pen, have you sign this card." By the process of utilizing a pen! Who talks like that! Crazy! Anyway, there were a few cases on *The Rat Pack*. I think it was just due to Curtis being a little nervous talking to the camera.

During the performance section, Curtis discussed, graphically, how a trap "snaps the vertebrae of a large rodent." That is just something that I don't want to hear while I'm eating at a restaurant. However, as I mentioned, this piece has potential for the right venue.

This could work in a house party for sure, a smaller corporate environment, hospitality suite, etc. Curtis did a great job building the tension just before the moment the trap would snap. Unfortunately there was no climax because the trap didn't snap.

Alright, I'm rambling and repeating myself. If you think you'll ever do a signed card removed from a deck before the trap springs effect, then buy this DVD. The MSRP is \$35.00 and is available from the [Magic Bakery](#).

Sorry Curtis. You definitely are a seasoned pro and a great performer, but on this particular DVD, I just don't see the value. Rubble.

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