

# Andy Segal's Cue Magic

## Inside the World of Modern Trick Shots

By Andy Segal

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## Part I – Getting Started

<b>1: Introduction</b> .....	<b>3</b>
<b>2: Terminology &amp; Conventions</b> .....	<b>7</b>
2.1: The Rails .....	8
2.2: The Pocket .....	8
2.2.1: Hanging a Ball .....	9
2.3: Frozen Balls .....	9
2.4: Diagram Markings .....	10
2.5: The Diamonds .....	10
2.5.1: On the Line/Behind the Line .....	11
2.5.2: Measuring From a Diamond Line .....	11
2.5.3: Diamond Intersection Lines .....	11
2.5.4: Inside a Zone .....	11
2.5.5: Spin .....	12
2.5.6: Deflection .....	13
2.5.7: The Diamond System .....	14
2.5.8: Short & Long .....	16
2.6: Throw .....	18
2.7: Shot Categories .....	20
2.8: Difficulty Ratings .....	21
2.9: Power .....	22
<b>3: Trick Shot Concepts</b> .....	<b>25</b>
3.1: Tangent Lines .....	26
3.2: Aiming Systems .....	26
3.3: Jump Shot Techniques .....	27
3.3.1: Standard Grip .....	27
3.3.2: Dart Grip .....	28
3.3.3: One-Handed Jumps .....	29
3.4: Measuring Spin on a Jump Shot .....	30
3.5: Massé Techniques .....	30
3.5.1: Standard Grip .....	31
3.5.2: Dart Grip .....	31
3.6: Measuring Spin on a Massé Shot .....	31
3.7: Aiming a Massé Shot .....	32
3.8: For the Southpaws .....	33
<b>4: Equipment</b> .....	<b>35</b>
4.1: Standard Cues .....	37
4.2: Jump Cues .....	37
4.3: Massé Cues .....	37
4.4: Silicone .....	38
<b>5: Props</b> .....	<b>39</b>

## Part II – Cue Magic

<b>6: Bank/Kick Shots</b> .....	<b>45</b>
6.1: Compression Kick Back #1 .....	46
6.2: Compression Kick Back #2 .....	47
6.3: 5-Rail Chain Reaction .....	48
6.4: The Slider .....	49
6.5: Pinball .....	50
6.6: The Chaser .....	52
6.7: 6-Rail Kick .....	53
6.8: Time in the Side .....	54
6.9: Freeway .....	55
6.10: Spinning Bank .....	56
6.11: Ultra Thin Bank .....	58
6.12: Three Rails & Three Trays .....	59
6.13: Split Hit .....	60
<b>7: Speed Shots</b> .....	<b>61</b>
7.1: 321-123 .....	62
7.2: Seven Ball Speed .....	63
7.3: Pyramid .....	64
7.4: How Many Can You Do? .....	65
7.5: The Twist .....	66
7.6: Drop Kick .....	67
7.7: Jump and Reverse .....	68
7.8: The Original Speed Jump Shot .....	69
7.9: Speed Demon on Steroids .....	70
7.10: Lefty Righty Speed Jump .....	71
7.11: Blur Jump .....	72
7.12: Markle's Madness .....	74
7.13: Catch & Release .....	75
7.14: Swing .....	76
7.15: Swipe .....	77
<b>8: Juggling Shots</b> .....	<b>79</b>
8.1: 15-Rail Kick .....	80
8.2: Three Ball Juggle .....	81
8.3: The Phantom Shot .....	82
8.4: 1,2,3,4 Rails .....	83
8.5: Jamey's Juggle .....	84
8.6: Field Goal .....	85
8.7: Swipe Jump .....	86
8.8: Lefty Righty Juggle .....	87
8.9: Easy Button .....	88
8.10: Down the Line .....	90
8.11: Slalom .....	92

<b>9: Stroke Shots</b> .....	<b>93</b>	<b>12: Multi-Cue Jump Shots</b> .....	<b>139</b>
9.1: Rendezvous Fouette .....	94	12.1: The First One-Handed Shot That Uses Two Hands .....	140
9.2: Zig Zag .....	95	12.2: Crisscross .....	141
9.3: Reverse Four Rail Kick.....	96	12.3: Double Back Atcha .....	142
9.4: Silicone Follow .....	97	12.4: Chopsticks.....	143
9.5: Hood Variation.....	98	12.5: Viagra Shot .....	144
9.6: Double Kiss Follow .....	99	12.6: Wide Chopsticks .....	145
9.7: Circular Follow Pinball.....	100	12.7: Triple Jump .....	146
9.8: Force It Back .....	101	12.8: Four Triples .....	147
9.9: Resistance Jump .....	102	12.9: Progression Speed Jump.....	148
9.10: 2mm Gate Draw .....	103	12.10: Quad Jump.....	149
9.11: Split Sticks .....	104	12.11: Triple Chopsticks .....	150
9.12: Jump Fouette #1 .....	105	12.12: Triple Chopsticks With Timer .....	152
9.13: Jump Fouette #2.....	106	<b>13: Wing Shots</b> .....	<b>153</b>
9.14: Last Man Spinning.....	107	13.1: The Original Wing Shot.....	154
9.15: Tray Rebound .....	108	13.2: Reverse Wing.....	155
<b>10: Massé Shots</b> .....	<b>109</b>	13.3: Combo Wing .....	156
10.1: Tim's Escape.....	110	13.4: Triple Combo Wing.....	157
10.2: Around the Wall.....	111	13.5: Combo Wing + 1 .....	158
10.3: The Accidental Massé .....	112	13.6: What Goes Up Must Come Down .....	159
10.4: The Soft Massé.....	113	13.7: Push Wing.....	160
10.5: Stacked Massé.....	114	13.8: Quadruple Combo Wing.....	161
10.6: Upside Down Massé.....	115	<b>14: Miscellaneous Shots</b> .....	<b>163</b>
10.7: Bogdan's Massé .....	116	14.1: Karate Chop .....	164
10.8: Silicone Ball.....	117	14.2: Lift.....	165
10.9: Speed Massé.....	118	14.3: Chain Lift .....	166
10.10: The Original Running Massé .....	119	14.4: Pop It Back .....	167
10.11: Running Massé #2.....	120	14.5: Rainbow Shot .....	168
10.12: Jump Massé.....	121	14.6: Pop It Up .....	169
<b>11: Jump Shots</b> .....	<b>123</b>	14.7: A Game of Jacks.....	170
11.1: Over, Under, and Over .....	124	14.8: An Aerobic Game of Jacks .....	172
11.2: Off the Rail.....	125	14.9: Toss .....	173
11.3: Rebounding Racks .....	126	14.10: Finish Your Drink.....	174
11.4: Sticky Jump .....	127	14.11: Corner to Corner Spin .....	175
11.5: Original Double Jump.....	128	14.12: Rebound .....	176
11.6: Double Popper Jump .....	129	<b>15: Partner Shots</b> .....	<b>177</b>
11.7: Quick In & Out.....	130	15.1: Bruce's Weave .....	178
11.8: High Bar .....	131	15.2: Pitcher & Batter .....	179
11.9: Prison Jump .....	132	15.3: Cue Ball Toast.....	180
11.10: Contortion Jump.....	133	15.4: Newton's Line.....	181
11.11: Nine Ball Contortion.....	134	15.5: Lightening & Thunder .....	182
11.12: Back Atcha .....	135	15.6: Target Practice .....	183
11.13: Split Jump.....	136	15.7: Motion Resistance Draw.....	184
11.14: The Original One-Handed Jump .....	137	15.8: Double Wing Shot.....	185
11.15: Nick's Quick Six Pack.....	138		

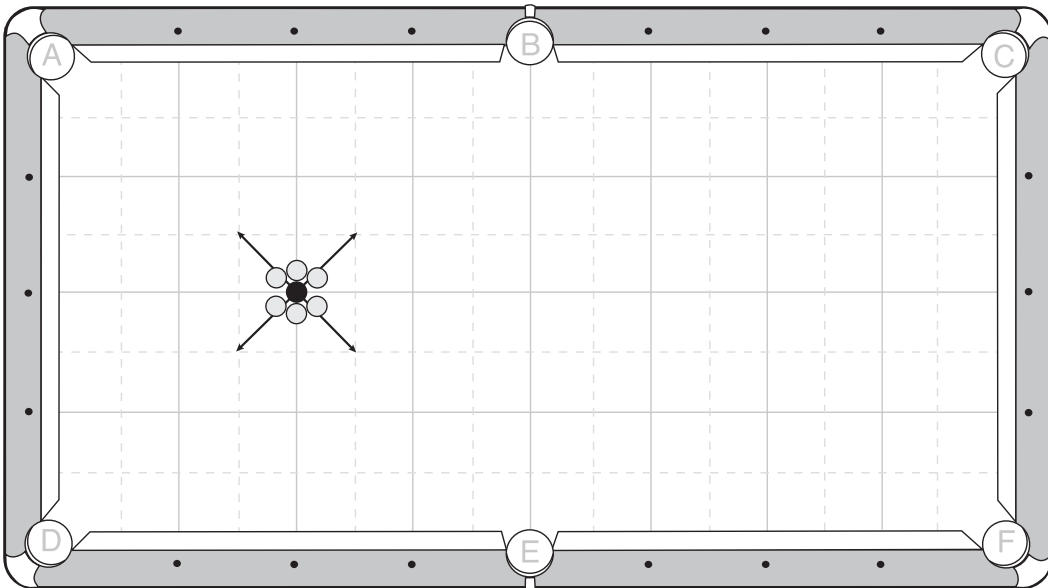
## Part III – The Lighter Side

<b>16: Funny Stories .....</b>	<b>189</b>
16.1: Andy Segal .....	189
16.2: Sal Conti .....	190
16.3: Matt MacPhail .....	192
16.4: Tony Robles .....	192
16.5: Adam Ferrara .....	193
16.6: Team USA .....	194
16.7: Three Amigos .....	196
16.8: Jerry Orbach .....	197
16.9: Mitch & Ewa Laurance .....	198
16.10: Andy Segal Reprise .....	200
<b>17: Photo Gallery .....</b>	<b>201</b>
<b>18: About the Author .....</b>	<b>217</b>
<b>Appendix .....</b>	<b>221</b>
Footnotes .....	223
Getting Involved in Professional Trick Shots .....	224
ESPN Events .....	226
Difficulty Rating Index .....	227
Inventors Index .....	230
Hiring Andy .....	235

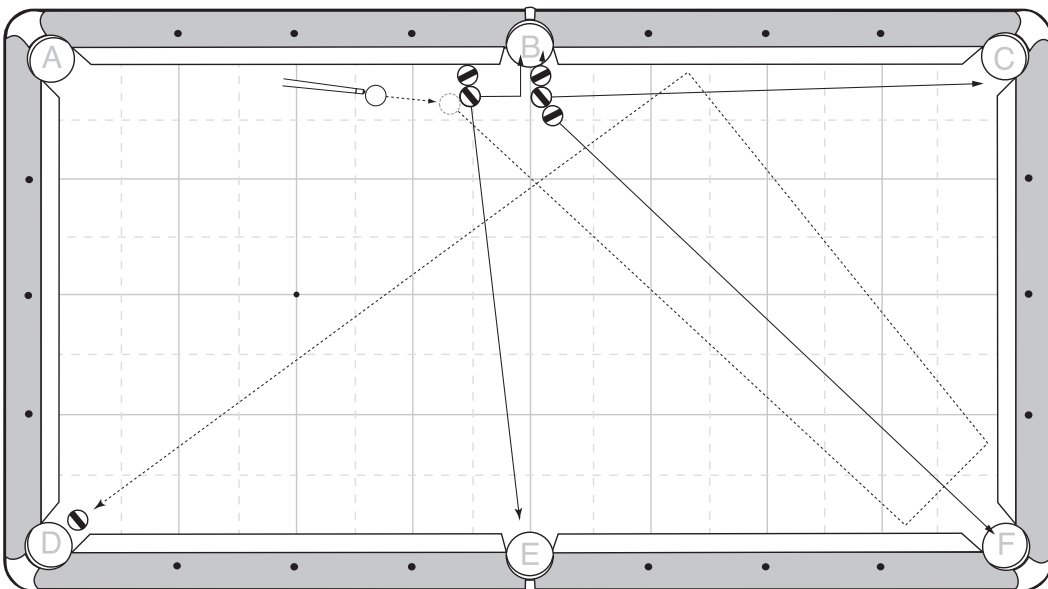
# 1: Introduction



Trick shots have been around for a long time. Originally they consisted of carefully aligning a few balls and making them all in one stroke. Some of these shots were given generic names like *3 in 3* (three balls made in three pockets) or *4 in 3* (four balls made in three pockets). Others were given memorable names such as the *Rosebud Cluster* or the *Just Showin' Off Shot*.



The *Rosebud Cluster* allows the center ball to be made in any of the four pockets shown. I set this shot up on Good Morning America for Chris Cuomo, the host, and he made it on his very first attempt.



The *Just Showin' Off Shot* was made famous by Steve Mizerak in an old Miller Lite commercial.

With these older shots, the skill was mostly in the setup. Once the balls were aligned properly, any player could make it providing that they had a minimal amount of skill and could shoot straight. The problem was these shots took too long to set up. Still, these were all I had in my bag when I first started performing in trick shot shows, so I had to arrive an hour before show time, set up the shots, and tap the balls<sup>1-1</sup> so I could quickly reproduce the same configuration during the actual performance.

In 2000, Matt and Bettiane Braun<sup>1-2</sup> created ESPN's Trick Shot Magic, the first nationally aired and organized trick shot competition. If you were to look back at the first few episodes, a lot of the shots dealt with clusters of balls being set up and made in multiple pockets. Back then, one of the most innovative shots was a one-handed jump shot.

My first ESPN event was in 2003 at the ESPN Zone in Baltimore, MD. A last minute cancellation by one of the competitors and a phone call from the producer led to six days of preparation, resulting in a second place finish which is something I will never forget.

Not wanting to be a mere filler for the player who dropped out, I spent those six days working on new shots and modifying old ones, changing them in various ways so that I could hopefully catch the veterans off guard. With only two attempts per shot, I was counting on them not being able to perfect my new shots that quickly. My first match was against Italian trick shot artist Stefano Pelinga. Since each shot was worth one point, the match was essentially over when I assumed a three point lead with two shots to go.

I then waited for what seemed a very long time until my first televised match. Yes, it was only a day, but a case of the nerves prevented me from sleeping or having anything more than a few bites of food. In the semi-finals I was matched up against Charles Darling, a veteran player from prior ESPN tournaments. That match proved to be a lot closer and tougher than my first as shown by the final score of 11-11. We then moved into a sudden death tie-breaker, an eight rail bank onto the face of a \$100 bill. I shot first and landed the cue ball a few inches from the bill. Despite all of the multi-rail kick shots he picked during our match, Charlie hit the cue ball four rails and scratched in the side. Now it was on to the finals against the two-time champion Mike Massey. Mike proved to be the great player he was by winning that match as he captured his third Trick Shot Magic title in four years.

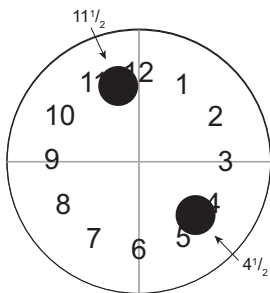
I have since been invited to the ESPN events every year, and I have seen the shots evolve into what they are today. Very rarely do you see a setup shot, as they have been replaced by speed shots, multiple cue shots and a variety of skill shots. Almost none of these shots would ever come up in a standard game of pool, but they are very flashy and appeal to the television audience.

In this book, I have included a selection of the newer style of trick shots, leaving the older shots to the numerous books published in years past. Some of the shots in this book are difficult to learn, but they all rely on specific concepts which can be practiced and mastered. My goal in writing this book is to not only share with you this new collection of television shots, but to teach you the underlying concepts. I hope to encourage you to practice them and create the next generation of trick shots that will have me scratching my head in the future.

### 2.5.5: Spin

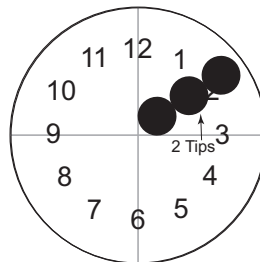
The term *spin* or *English* refers to hitting the cue ball off center. Hitting the ball above, below, left, or right of center will cause it to react differently during the course of a shot. The five basic types of *spin* are *top*, *bottom*, *left*, *right*, and *center*. *Top spin* results when you hit the cue ball above center, *bottom spin* (or *back spin*) comes from a below center hit, etc. *Center spin* (called *center ball*) occurs when you hit the direct center of the cue ball. Then there are combinations, like *top left spin*, *bottom right spin*, etc.

During a typical game of 8-ball or 9-ball, most average players and even most of the top players will limit themselves to the basic types of *spin* mentioned above, unless a rare situation comes up. When performing trick shots, the exact *spin* that's applied to the cue ball needs to be more precise. Sometimes *top left spin* needs to have more *top* than *left*, and sometimes it needs to have more *left* than *top*.

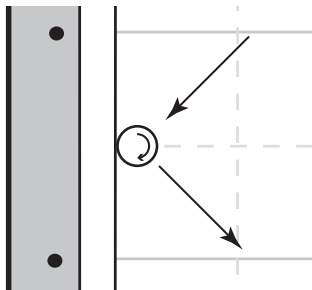


The *clock system* is the simplest way to explain the different points on the cue ball to hit. When describing a certain shot, I may instruct you to hit the cue ball at '12'. That means you should hit it with only *top spin* (above center, no *left* or *right*). If I say to hit it with '7', use *bottom left spin*, but more *bottom* than *left*. Basically, anywhere along the 7 o'clock line. Half and quarter hours may also be used in some situations. '4 1/2' means *standard bottom right spin*, and '11 1/2' means almost straight *top spin with a touch of left*.

The amount of *spin* is measured from the center spot on the cue ball, visualizing the width of a tip and moving away from the center along whatever *spin line* you are using ('2' English is shown in the diagram). Very few shots require *center ball spin*, even when playing 8-ball or 9-ball. Whether you are using top, left, bottom right, etc, the typical shot uses approximately two tips of English. Use this unless otherwise specified.

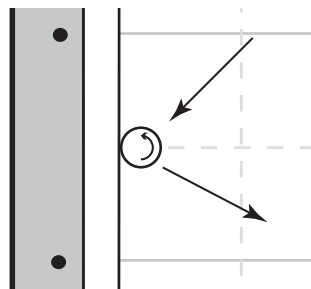


*Running* and *reverse English* may sound confusing to someone who doesn't play a lot of pool, but these concepts are really quite simple.



*Running English* helps the cue ball around the table, causing it to *run* (travel) further.

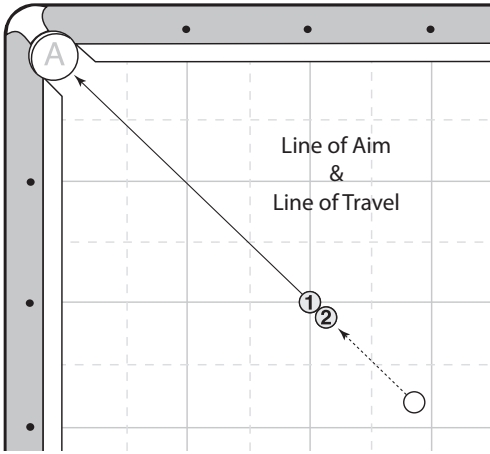
*Reverse English* hampers the movement of the cue ball, causing it to *reverse*, or travel less.



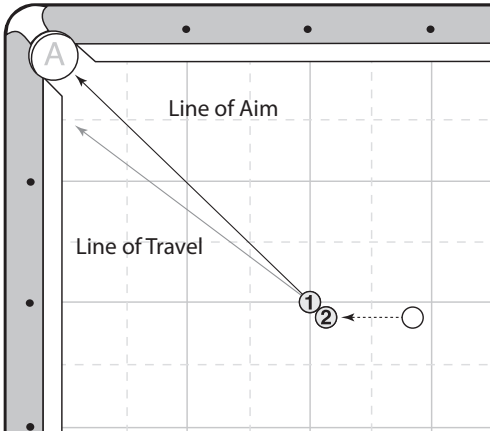


## 2.6: Throw

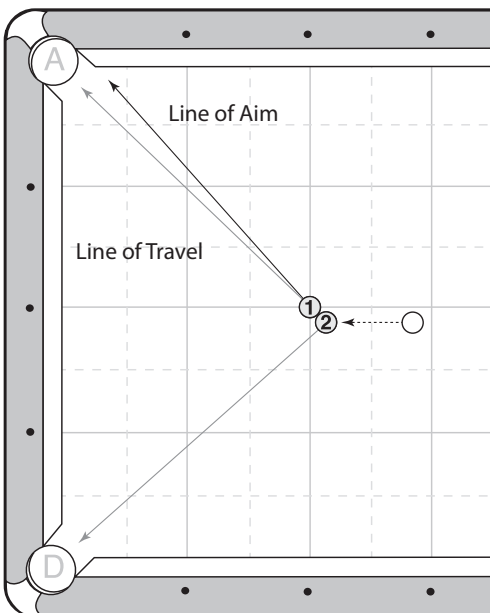
*Throw* refers to the altered path an object ball takes when it starts out frozen to another ball. A common theme with older trick shots has the 1-ball starting on the spot (2,2 diamond intersection point), and the 2-ball is frozen to it.



When two balls are lined up at the pocket's center, the second ball (the one closest to the pocket) will only go in if the cue ball hits it directly in line.

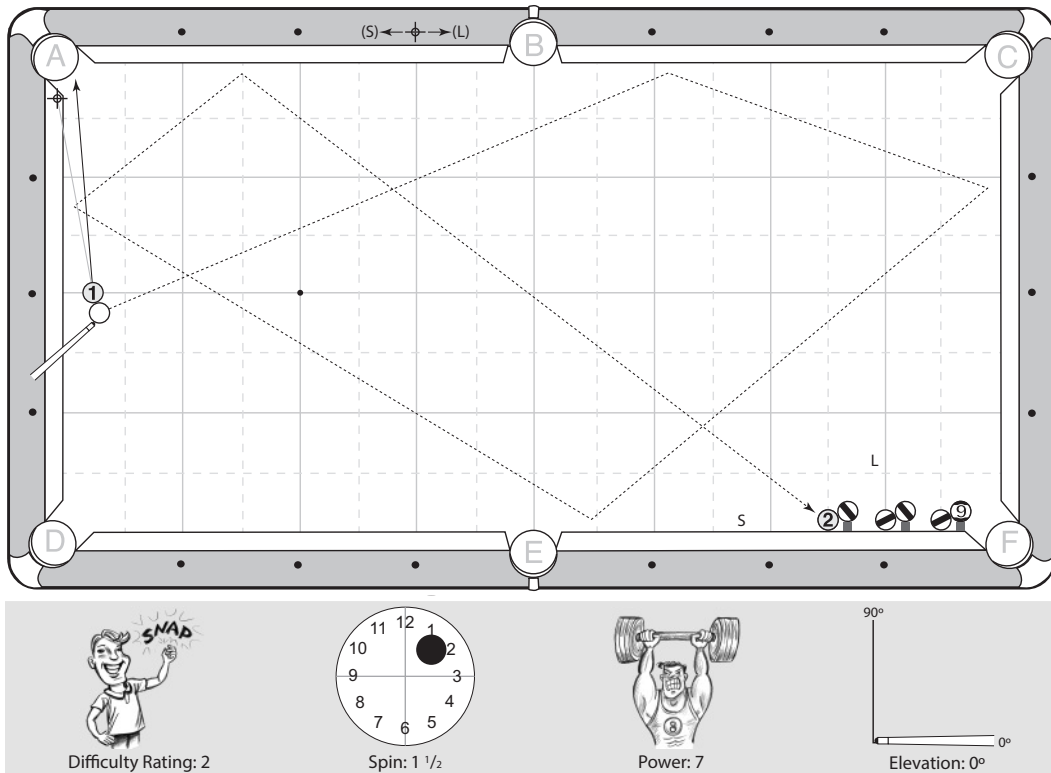


From this angle of approach, the momentum of the cue ball and the friction between the two setup balls cause the ball to be *thrown* off the line of aim, missing the pocket as shown.



This setup works better. The balls are aligned for the long rail pocket point and the ball is *thrown* into the center of pocket 'A'. The nice thing about this setup is the other ball will also be made in pocket 'D'.

### 6.3: 5-Rail Chain Reaction



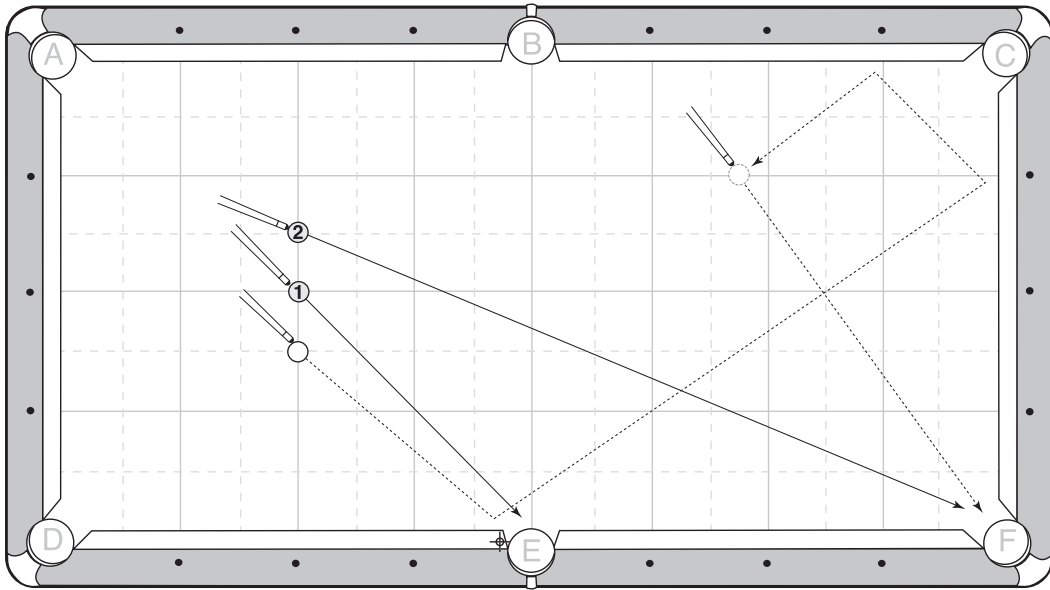
The *5-Rail Chain Reaction* is also part of the Artistic Pool Shot Program, and it is always a crowd pleaser because most people who have never seen a trick shot show before enjoy watching the chain reaction at the end. They also like seeing the cue ball fly around the table, and with such accuracy. This shot begins with the 1-ball being cut into corner pocket ‘A’. The cue ball then travels five rails, hits the 2-ball and starts a chain reaction, resulting in the 9-ball falling into corner pocket ‘F’.

**Setup:** Place the 1-ball on the long center line of the table, exactly one ball-width from the cushion. The cue ball is frozen to the 1-ball, and it is lined up at the short rail pocket point. The six other balls on the opposite end of the table are about 1/4 to 1/2 inch off the cushion, with every other ball propped up on a piece of chalk. Each pair should be frozen, and there should be about one ball-width between the groups.

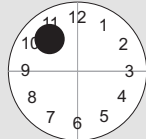
**Solution:** Aim at the third diamond with 1 1/2 English. Remember that the cue ball is frozen to the 1-ball, so instead of travelling along the line of aim, it will travel along the line as indicated in the illustration. The cue ball should kick five rails, hit the first ball in the chain of six, eventually causing the 9-ball to fall into the corner pocket.

**Adjustments:** The most common way to miss the shot is long ‘L’. That is, the cue ball hits one of the other balls in the chain instead of the first one. If that happens, change your line of aim ‘(S)’. It is less common is to miss short ‘S’, and the adjustment is in the opposite direction ‘(L)’. If you miss the 1-ball, your initial setup was misaligned. If the 1-ball misses by hitting the short rail, change the setup so the balls line up a little closer to the pocket, and vice-versa.

### 8.3: The Phantom Shot



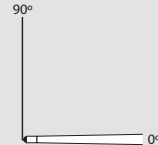
Difficulty Rating: 3



Spin (cue ball): 10 1/2  
Spin (others): Center



Power (cue ball): 3  
Power (1, 2-balls): 3  
Power (cue ball 2nd hit): 6



Elevation: 0°

Bruce Barthelette introduced *The Phantom Shot* back in 2005 when he was invited to the ESPN Trick Shot Magic competition for the first time. Bruce got the idea from a friend of his named Joe LeMaine. The cue ball is shot three rails around the table. While it is still rolling, shoot the 1-ball into side pocket 'E' and lag the 2-ball toward corner pocket 'F'. Re-hit the cue ball after it hits the third rail into the same pocket as the 2 before the 2-ball gets there. When Bruce shoots this in competition, he requires that you use a free-hand bridge. This means that your hand may not touch the table.

**Setup:** Place the 1-ball on the spot. The cue ball and the 2-ball are adjustable anywhere on the second diamond line, but I recommend that you place them as shown in the diagram.

**Solution:** Aim the cue ball at a point just before the side pocket and use running English. Quickly shoot the 1-ball, but not too hard because balls tend to bounce out of the side pocket when they approach it from that angle. Lagging the 2-ball at the correct speed is key. When re-hitting the cue ball, make sure that you move over to the side of the table. If you stay behind the short rail, the cue ball may travel too far and the rolling 2-ball will block its path to the corner pocket.

**Adjustments:** Don't be in a rush to hit the 2-ball immediately after hitting the 1-ball. Take a look first at where the cue ball is situated. If the cue ball has already hit the third rail, hit the 2-ball right away. However, if the cue ball is still rolling toward the third rail, wait a beat or two. If you hit the 2-ball too soon, that may not leave you with enough time to wait for the cue ball to hit the third rail. This common error happened to my opponent in the 2010 ESPN Trick Shot Magic semi-finals!

## 18: About the Author



Andy Segal started playing pool in High School at JC's in Rego Park, NY. In a group of friends, one will excel at one activity, and another will excel at something else, and so on. Well, pool was Andy's gift. Every weekend he found himself walking the 30 minute trek to the pool room, often playing with friends, but sometimes alone. After Andy entered college, things were no different. He spent hours at night playing on various tables around campus with his best friends, Jim Dale and Alan Gilds. Once they ran out of competitors at Carnegie Mellon, they migrated to the Student Union at the University of Pittsburgh, a much larger school with a Billiard Club. The competition was much stronger at Pitt, so it took a little while to get used to it, but they soon found themselves playing up to the level of the best players in the club.

At the time, JR Calvert (founder of Inside Pool Magazine) was attending the University of Pittsburgh, and he and Andy had many tough matches. JR introduced Andy to the professional side of pool, taking him to his first major competition, The Akron Open, held each year at Starcher's Billiards in Akron, OH. Andy's first match was against Jose Parica, a billiard superstar from the Philippines. After a rough 11-0 loss, Andy then lost his next match 11-2, but he kept going back every year because he knew that this was the next step to improving his game, and he eventually started winning a few matches.

It was at the Akron Open that Andy first met Mike Massey, a future member of the BCA Hall of Fame. While meeting Mike, a funny situation developed. Andy had always done magic growing up, and when he approached Mike and asked him to do a trick shot, Mike said, "Later, but here is a magic trick I can show you." Mike then pulled out a trick deck of cards but, as it turned out, Andy had the very same deck in his pocket! So he pulled his out and said, "Do you mean this trick?", and they have been good friends ever since.

A number of years later, Mike got Andy involved in professional trick shots, and he first competed in the 2002 North American Artistic Pool Championship, at Hippos Billiards in Utica, NY. He received the shot program from Tom Rossman, and then practiced diligently every day for a few months. Andy came in fourth and, after that high finish, he never played professional 9-ball again. He was so consumed by trick shots that he didn't want to do anything else. Later, when he was invited to be one of four representatives from America to play in the 2003 WPA World Artistic Pool Championships in Kiev, Ukraine, Andy jumped at the chance. He finished fifth out of 11 players, but won the Gold Medal in the Bank/Kick discipline, and he shared the Gold Medal in the Jump Discipline with Massey.

When Bogdan Wolkowski had to pull out of the 2003 ESPN Trick Shot Magic event, Andy was recommended by a few players. He got the call and, with only six days of notice, he started practicing and inventing new shots in an effort to try to fool the veterans. His very first match was against Stefano Pelinga from Italy. After beating Stefano, Andy advanced into the semi-finals the next day against Charles Darling, the 2001 World Champion from Missouri. A few hours later, Andy got a call from his wife Kim. She was on a train and was scheduled to arrive in Baltimore in just under an hour. That was a nice surprise, and her presence helped to calm Andy's nerves. He made it past Darling by way of a tie-breaker shot, but he ended up losing in the finals to Mike Massey, who won his third Trick Shot Magic title in four years.

Ever since that tournament, the table was set for his career in trick shots, and Andy moved up quickly through the ranks. The following year he won the 2004 Northeastern Open and the 2004 Las Vegas Open. Later that year, Andy lost again to Mike in the semi-finals of Trick Shot Magic, but he got a rematch in the finals of the 2005 Masters Championship, and he was able to defeat Mike for the first time.

Andy won his first World Championship in 2007 at the Lider Club in St. Petersburg, Russia. The tournament came down to the final shot, where Andy had to make the most difficult massé shot on his first attempt to tie Sebastian Giumelli, a superstar from Argentina. After his successful first attempt, the players squared off in a sudden death tie-breaker for the title, which Andy won. Ever since that event, Andy has occupied the top spot in the WPA world rankings in Artistic Pool.

Below is a complete list of Andy Segal's titles and achievements as of the writing of this book. For more information, visit his website at [www.andysegal.com](http://www.andysegal.com).

### **World Championships**

- 2013 WPA World Artistic Pool Champion
- 2012 WPA World Artistic Pool Champion
- 2011 WPA World Artistic Pool Champion
- 2007 WPA World Artistic Pool Champion

### **ESPN Championships**

- 2010 Trick Shot Magic Champion
- 2009 World Cup of Trick Shots Champion (with teammates Bruce Barthelette, Mike Massey and Tom Rossman)
- 2009 Trick Shot Magic Champion
- 2008 World Cup of Trick Shots Champion (with teammates Bruce Barthelette, Mike Massey and Tom Rossman)
- 2006 World Cup of Trick Shots Champion (with teammates Bruce Barthelette, Mike Massey and Tom Rossman)

### **Masters Championships**

- 2013 Masters Champion
- 2013 Masters Doubles Champion (with partner Dave Nangle)
- 2009 Masters Champion
- 2007 Masters Champion
- 2005 Masters Champion

### **US Open Championships**

- 2012 US Open Champion

### **UTS Tour Championships**

- 2012 VIP Billiards Champion
- 2011 Las Vegas Open Champion
- 2011 Hi-Tech Billiards Champion
- 2011 Shooter's Billiards Champion
- 2011 Southeast Classic Champion
- 2010 Willow Billiards Champion
- 2010 Shooter's Billiards Champion
- 2010 Big Shots Billiards Champion
- 2009 Las Vegas Open Champion
- 2009 Herbert's Billiards Champion

### **Other Championships**

- 2011 Duel of Champions Winner
- 2008 Comet Classic Champion
- 2007 Artistic Cup (I) Champion
- 2005 Comet Classic Champion
- 2004 Las Vegas Open Champion
- 2004 Northeastern Open Champion

## Discipline Medals

2013 Masters - Best Make %  
2013 Masters - Most Creative Shot (by player vote)  
2012 US Open - Stroke Champion  
2012 US Open - Massé Champion  
2012 World Championship - Massé Champion  
2011 Artistic Cup (V) - Trick & Fancy Champion  
2011 Artistic Cup (V) - Follow Champion  
2011 Artistic Cup (V) - Jump Champion  
2011 World Championship - Special Arts Champion  
2011 World Championship - Draw Champion  
2011 World Championship - Massé Champion  
2010 Masters - Trick & Fancy Champion  
2010 Masters - Special Arts Champion  
2010 Masters - Follow Champion  
2009 Masters - Trick & Fancy Champion  
2008 Masters - Jump Champion  
2007 World Championship - Draw Champion  
2007 World Championship - Follow Champion  
2007 World Championship - Jump Champion  
2007 US Open - Special Arts Champion  
2007 US Open - Follow Champion  
2007 Masters - Massé Champion  
2005 Comet Classic - Special Arts Champion  
2005 Masters - Trick & Fancy Champion  
2005 Masters - Jump Champion  
2004 Las Vegas Open - Special Arts Champion  
2004 Las Vegas Open - Draw Champion  
2004 Las Vegas Open - Massé Champion  
2004 Northeastern Open - Trick & Fancy Champion  
2004 Northeastern Open - Special Arts Champion  
2004 Northeastern Open - Draw Champion  
2004 Northeastern Open - Jump Champion  
2004 Northeastern Open - Massé Champion  
2003 World Championship - Bank & Kick Champion  
2003 World Championship - Jump Champion  
2003 North American Championship - Draw Champion  
2003 North American Championship - Massé Champion

## Other Achievements

Technical Advisor for the Woody Allen film 'Sweet and Lowdown'.  
Urban Tarzan on Spike  
    Played the role of "Mike" (property owner).  
Scorned, Love Kills (Episode: Rules of Engagement) on Discovery ID  
    Played the role of "Detective"  
Featured player in 'Spin Doctors' (Comcast 3D).  
Featured player in 'The Wondrous World of Artistic Pool' (Comcast 3D).  
Appearance on Good Morning America (ABC).  
Appearance on Amazing (National Geographic).  
Performance of trick shots on commercials for All Detergent and AT&T.