

The Amazing Snake-Go!

by David Ginn

Now for a simple gimmick you've never heard of! But my friend William G. "Bill" Carpenter of Texarkana, AR, who passed on to his Heavenly reward several years ago, DID imagine it and BUILT IT! Years ago he said to me: "David, I am going to send you a snake gimmick that I thought up, created, invented on my own. I want you to see it, and if you can use it in any way, do what you want with it." So after sitting on my workbench for too many years, Bill's SNAKE-GO gimmick has not only found its way into my summer library show but also my lectures! And, it is so simple!



David on UK tour

Bill said to me, in essence, I want to be able to make a spring snake pop out of a box or tube or can or even a paper cup ... anytime during my show ... under my control ... and probably using only one hand to control it. SNAKE-GO does all of that! And it's not for sale ... because it is so simple you can make one in five minutes!



figure 1

Let's go through the making process: First, you need a **SOFT METAL CAN**, as shown in **FIGURE 1**.

Bill used ones that potted meat or chicken chunks came in. One I have in hand says: "**CHUNK HAM, water added, chunked & ground, smoke flavor added. Product of Holland.**" This can is about 1½ inches tall and 3 inches in diameter. It will easily hold a collapsed 3 to 5-foot spring snake.

Important: You must be able to squeeze or flex the can side to side, using your thumb and first fingers, in order to change its shape from perfectly round

to slightly oval. This is what makes the gimmick work. A heavy metal can will NOT work.

Take a piece of coathanger wire about FOUR inches long to make a PIN and bend a hook into it with pliers. See the photos. Drill two holes in the top sides of the open can. The holes should be directly opposite each other. Insert the coathanger hook into one hole as shown and use the pliers to bend it more so it won't come loose.



figure 2

Extend the coathanger straight across from one hole to the other as in **FIGURE 2**. The pointed end of the coathanger should extend about 1/8-inch across the can top. NO MORE!



figure 3

Now flex the can from side to side, making it longer the way the coathanger PIN is pointing. This allows the pin to go through the opposite hole. By flexing the can perpendicular to the pin, you can cause the pin to come out of the hole.

Move the pin to one side as in **FIGURE 1**. Insert your spring snake into the can and collapse it. Do not try to collapse the snake first and then insert it; the snake will end up popping you in the face! Instead, feed the snake into the can bit by bit. Once the snake is in the can, move the pin over the snake. Flex the can so the pin goes through the hole and holds the snake in place. Make sure the pin goes at least 1/16-inch to 1/8th-inch through the hole in the can. **FIGURE 3** shows the snake loaded and the pin holding it down.

Now to make the snake pop out: All you have to do is squeeze or flex the can with your thumb and fingers from top to bottom perpendicular to the pin. See my hand in **FIGURE 4**. That shows the ready-to-squeeze position. Okay, here we go:

One, two, three — **SQUEEZE!**



figure 4



figure 5

Out pops the snake in **FIGURE 5**, and believe me, that shot was hard to catch.

Unfortunately, my friend John Doyle with his camera was 40 miles away ... so I shot this picture with my right hand while holding things with my left hand!

Now, what can we do with the SNAKE-GO gimmick?

Bill employed it early on with a Water Monte effect he saw me do in a lecture. Three Styrofoam cups (one filled with slush powder), water put in one, it vanishes and you end up tearing them all up. I used to produce a 15-foot silk streamer from the last, but Bill wanted a spring snake to pop out.

SNAKE-GO was the answer. This 1½ x 3 inch can, he said, fits easily inside a styro cup, which can be inverted at the beginning of an effect to make the cup appear empty. You could even use one gimmicked cup. Pretend to pour milk into it with a magic milk pitcher or trick glass, then have the snake pop out. All you have to do is squeeze the can through the walls of the cup.

I am currently using a loaded SNAKE-GO in a large bucket with other props. I reach into it to get something and grasp the can. As I am talking I tell the kids, "No, there's nothing dangerous or scary in here!" Just as I say the last word, I flex the can and out pops the snake and I scream to make them laugh.

Yes, I am just getting started with SNAKE-GO. I see limitless possibilities, and that's what will make using it fun. Also, the fact that it is such a simple gimmick to use, for magicians or clowns. And for me, using this simple gimmick will remind me always of Bill Carpenter's willingness to share with his fellow magicians and clowns, for the love of magic and the love of people.

David Ginn

David Ginn, 2008