

PHIL GOLDSTEIN



**THE
BLUE
BOOK
OF
MENTALISM**

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Three of the routines herein were originally published in Invocation, Magick and Genii magazines; they have been re-written. The rest of the material is being released for the first time.

introduction

You are about to read my first book on the subject of mentalism. Hopefully, it will be the first of a series on the subject. The ideas in this volume cover a variety of approaches to the field. Most of the routines use solo operating procedures; a few require the use of a secret partner. Some are specifically designed for stage performance; others are intended for close-up, and most can be adapted for either situation. There are scientifically oriented presentations, and those with an occult tone. Some are light-hearted and whimsical, some quite serious in approach.

I love magic in all of its forms, but mentalism is the branch that I perform for money. I am a professional mentalist, and - happily enough - I work frequently. Mentalism is the one area of magic that seems real to a lay audience. They not only suspend their disbelief...they believe. There are innumerable approaches to the presentation of mentalism, and I cannot and will not try to tell you what is best for you. I will, however, offer some observations on the field.

The general field of magic is limited - there are only so many basic effects in conjuring. Mentalism is even more constrained. There are only four basic effects. They are:

TELEPATHY - communication between two minds. A thought is sent by one party and received by another. Whether the performer acts as transmitter or receiver, the process is essentially the same from an objective classificatory viewpoint - such as that of the lay audience.

CLAIRVOYANCE - the reception of information that is unknown to everyone present. In this process, there is no transmitter - the mentalist receives knowledge without apparent informational source.

PRECOGNITION - literally, "knowing before". Having knowledge of future events before they happen.

PSYCHOKINESIS - physical manifestations of mental energy.

That's it. That is all you've got to work with, presentationally. In fact, the public tends to blend the first three categories together as well. Slightly modified areas also blend in; e.g., **PSYCHOMETRY**, which falls in between Telepathy and Clairvoyance. **DIVINATION** is another form of Clairvoyance. **SPIRIT MANIFESTATIONS**, thematically a bit removed from the preceding, are in fact variants on the basic category of Psychokinesis.

It is from these four basic demonstrations, therefore, that we must build entertaining routines. All the many techniques that have been evolved for the first three categories, moreover, can be reduced to just three basic actions:

FORCING - manipulating a spectator into saying, doing, or thinking what is supposedly a free choice - when in fact you have maneuvered his or her activity into a restricted choice.

STEALING - which is to say, obtaining information which is supposedly not being given to you.

AFTER-FACTING - i.e., seemingly showing evidence of a prior commitment in the form of a prediction, when in fact that evidence has been introduced after the information has been obtained.

A fourth category could be added: **GUESSING**, but this is in fact related to Forcing in that whenever a mentalist engages in the art of fishing he is dealing with a restricted field of choice - often in conjunction with stolen information.

There are many technical variations on these three techniques, but they all accomplish these same three basic actions, often used together as supportive actions towards a single end. In the fourth category of Psychokinetic effects there are many variations, but they most commonly fall into the realm of secret gimmicks or actions, although the power of suggestion is often solely responsible for PK demonstrations.

I point all of this out in order to advance the idea that we are working in a field which is extremely limited. There is an obvious danger of falling into constant repetition, and thus progressively boring our audiences. The only way to rise above the limitations of our field is by developing unusual and interesting presentational approaches. It is my intention whenever I set out to create a new routine to try to develop a theme which will hold an audience's interest. I hope you will give the following ideas a try. They work.


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desire

"One of the most fascinating regions of the human psyche is the area which deals with desire. Because emotions and aesthetics play such important roles in this realm, I have found it to be a difficult area to explore. Nevertheless, this evening we will attempt to make just such an exploration, because the same conflicts that make desire such a strange and often irrational province of the mind also serve to make it one of the more interesting aspects of the way we think."

With this introduction, the performer hands out half a dozen business cards and pencils to as many spectators. He continues, "Before any of you write anything down, I would like each of you to dig back into your own memories, and to think of a place to which you have travelled in the past. It can be anywhere in the world - some place close to home, or on the other side of the globe. The important thing is that you must have actually been in that place at some time in the past...a place to which you would like to return some day. I want you to take a moment to recall that place: what was it like? How did it look? The people, the buildings, the sounds and sights - how did it feel to be there? In a moment I will ask you to write down the name of the place you are now thinking about."

"However, I will make one exception. You, sir - I'm going to ask you to do something a little bit different from the others. I want you to concentrate on the name of a city to which you have never been. Please listen carefully: this must be a place that you've never been to visit - but that you have wanted to visit. Perhaps you have read about this place in a book, or seen pictures of it in a magazine or movie, or know others who have been there, but you have never been there yourself. You want to visit this place! As you focus your mind on this location, feel your own personal desire to go there. It is this desire that will be the key to our experiment."

"Five people will write down places to which they've been in the past. One gentleman will write down a place to which he has never been. Will you all begin writing...now." The performer turns his head away as the six spectators do their writing. When this is finished, a seventh spectator is requested to collect the cards and pencils. The pencils are put away, and the collecting spectator is asked to mix the half dozen cards before handing them to the performer. When the mentalist receives the cards, he holds them writing side down, and once again points out the circumstances that have been set. He states, "I am going to read off the name of the city that is on the top card. Before I do this, I want to caution my six writers not to give any indication as to whether this is their's or not. Please don't say anything - do not raise your eyebrows, don't smile or blink. Please remain neutral, so that we may conduct this experiment under test conditions."

The performer turns over the first card, and shows it to the audience. It says, perhaps, "Paris". The mentalist says, "Ah, Paris. The capital of France. A city which is alive...a city meant for evening walks down the boulevards. I sense that this city was part of a significant experience for someone - but I do not feel the presence of the particular form of desire that we spoke of. The writer of this card has been to Paris, so I know that you (gesturing to the "odd" spectator) did not write this. On the other hand, I'm getting a distinct feeling from you (indicating another spectator)...that this was a most memorable place for you to visit. This is your handwriting, is it not?" The per-

former hands the "Paris" card to that spectator for verification. He is correct.

This process is followed for the next four cards. Each time, the performer makes comments about the city, each time the writer is properly identified. As it happens (|), none of these first five cards is the one written by the "desirous" spectator. The performer, of course, makes verbal observations on this point: "I am left with one card," he states, holding it face down in his hand. "Quite obviously, it belongs to you, sir. I can feel the desire right here at my fingertips, but a simple process of elimination would tell me the same thing. If it's all right with you, I'll turn the card over and read aloud the name of the city you wrote - the city you desire to visit. If you feel embarrassed, I will not read this card. Do I have your permission?"

The spectator says yes. The performer, without looking at the writing side of the card, begins to describe the desired location, finally giving its name. He is completely accurate, as is verified when the card is finally turned over, shown, and returned to the last spectator with the performer's thanks.



You have by now realized that this routine combines three classic effects in mentalism: the "living a Dead Test" (without the sometimes undesirably distasteful feeling the use of dead people's names can often produce); Annemann's "Pseudo Psychometry"; and the revelation of an un-read message. Two pieces of information are needed in order to accomplish the effect: you must know whose card is which, and you must get the opportunity to read one of the cards without the audience's knowledge.

The first part is by now rather standard in mentalism. The six cards are marked with any easy-to-read system. Nail-nicking or edge-marking are fine. There are many ways that business cards can be marked. The printed side can be altered by shading in closed letters with a pencil or scratching away the ink with a razor or needle. J.G. Thompson Jr. wrote up a lovely marking system in the book, "Between Two Minds" that will handle up to ten cards. Instead of business cards, file cards can be used. Fine methods for marking this type of card include "Think Don't" by Sid Lorraine, which appeared in issue #47 of *Magick*; and the method described by Bill Severn as part of his "Symbolic Sight" routine in his book, "Magic in Mind". At any rate, the cards having been marked, there is no further preparation. They are handed out in order to six spectators so that, as with all versions of "Pseudo Psychometry", you will later be able to match the cards with their owners.

When the mixed packet is returned to you, you casually move them about in your hands, face down, as you go into your summary of what has taken place thus far. During this casual mixing, you position the "desire" card second from the top. (In other words, if you had directed the 3rd spectator to write down the unvisited city, you would now spot the card marked "J" and shift it to the position just below the top card of the packet.)



Now comes the subtlety: the packet is held in the left hand, palm up, the long way (as if it were a deck of cards and you were about to deal them). As you square the cards up, get a little finger break below the second card. You are going to do a particular kind of double lift (this is going to scare hell out of those mentalists who don't do card work, but it is in fact quite easy). The right hand comes over to the packet, palm down, and the right thumb is inserted into the break. The fingers of the right hand grip the card along the top at the right long side. The two cards are taken as one, and turned so that the double card is vertical, the the written side of the 2nd card (the "desire" card) is facing you.

Now that you understand the move, here's the application: you say, "I am going to read off the name of the city that is on the top card." you do the double lift, and sight the writing. You now know the name of the "desired" location. Immediately drop the double card back onto the top of the packet face down as you continue, "Before I do this, I want to caution... (refer to the description of the effect for the rest of this statement)." Having finished with the statement, you take the top card (genuinely), and turn it towards yourself, in the same manner as you took the double card a moment before.

Read off the name of the city written there, build up to revealing the writer, and give the card back to that person. Now state that you'll try it with another card, and as you say this, casually re-mix the cards, bringing the "desire" card to the bottom of the packet. In between each revelation, mix the cards, but always keep the "desire" card on the bottom from this point on. Obviously, when you are down to the last card you will be able to reveal its contents without apparently having seen what was written on it.

NOTES: Technically the routine can be done with more than six people, but I think that six is probably the maximum number that can be used without the routine starting to drag, unless you are gifted with an exceptional amount of charisma.

It is possible that more than one spectator will write down the name of a particular city. This is one of the reasons for having the writing verified. Let's say the first card said "Paris". And then the 4th card wound up saying "Paris", too. You'd express your own surprise at this coincidence, and then say, "You know, it's funny, but when I was talking about Paris just a few minutes ago, I felt a certain feeling coming from you (indicating the proper spectator), as if you were thinking, 'Me too! Me too!'"

It may have occurred to you while reading the description of this routine, "What happens if the last spectator does not give his permission for me to read his card?" First of all, this is extremely unlikely -



there is no reason why the spectator would actually feel embarrassed by your revealing the name of a city he'd like to visit! The reason the request is made for permission to read the name is simply to allow the performer to emphasize the fact that he has not looked at the card up to that point. If the last spectator refuses permission he is doing so just to be contrary. This is not a problem - the solution would be along these lines: "I will respect your wishes, and I will not read this card. Let me tell you this much, however... I get the impression that you were thinking of a city with a very warm climate... lots of palm trees and sandy beaches... is that correct? As I said, I won't reveal the name of the city you desire to visit, but I do believe it begins with the letter 'O'. Here is your card back, sir, and thank you." Under these conditions the spectator will almost certainly stop being difficult, and will give "permission" for you to go on and reveal the entire name of the city. Even if he doesn't, the impact on the audience is just as strong.

burnt offerings

The problem with two-person code routines is, of course, getting your partner to sit still long enough to learn the code. Since this person is usually a spouse or friend (not that the two terms are mutually exclusive...), she or he most likely does not share your undying enthusiasm for mentalism. The following routine has the advantage that it involves a code that takes literally a few minutes to learn. It is an impromptu, informal demonstration of ESP which allows you to introduce your business card to someone you have met at some type of gathering.

Let's assume that you are at such an affair, and you are talking with one or more people. The discussion drifts (or is pushed) towards psychic phenomena. You say, "Have you ever heard of tea-leaf reading? It is really quite interesting... the reader studies the formation of the tea-leaves at the bottom of your teacup, and from their pattern is able to divine all sorts of secret knowledge. Now, I don't personally do tea-leaf readings, but I can do something similar. I'm referring to the science of tephramancy - reading burnt ashes!"

Allow me to demonstrate with a simple example. Are you familiar with the five ESP testing symbols that were developed by Dr. J.B. Rhine in the Parapsychology laboratories at Duke University? (Here you explain what the five symbols are, sketching them if necessary.) Here is a pen and a piece of paper. I'd like you to relax your mind... and then think of one of those five symbols. When you have made your choice, draw that symbol on the paper. Now, while my back is turned, I want you to burn the paper in this ashtray. Let me know when the paper has been reduced to ashes.

"All set? Fine. Here is my business card. Would you pick up a pinch of the ashes, and place them on the card. Good. Now let's have a look. Hmmm... I seem to be having a little difficulty deciphering these ashes. I tell you what - my wife has always been better at doing this than I am. Why don't you take these ashes over to her, and ask her to read them. I'll stay here."

The spectator carries the ashes over to your wife, who may be in a separate room engaged in her own conversation. She says, "What? Ash reading again? Oh, all right... let me see. It looks like the plus sign to me." (And of course, she is right.)



The method is quite simple. You must find out the chosen symbol for yourself, and then code it to your assistant. I will explain the code in a moment. As far as obtaining the chosen design, there are numerous methods which fit in well. Probably the most obvious one that comes to mind is the center-tear. If you don't mind a minimal amount of preparation, you can carry around a pocket-sized impression pad with you. Other methods include Annemann's "The Modernized Reading", J.G. Thompson Jr.'s "Embers", and Irv Weiner's "Impromptu Impression". With this latter, half the card would be burned, and the other half used to carry the ashes.

Now for the coding procedure. What makes this code fun is the fact that the spectator applies the code for you. The placement of the ashes actually does code the chosen design. There are three ways in which the ashes can be put onto the card, and they are easily distinguished from one another. First, a pinch of ashes can be placed onto the card. Second, the ashes can be smeared across the card. Lastly, the ashes can be scooped up with the edge of the card. The code I use is as follows:

CIRCLE: a spot of ashes on the printed side of the card.
CROSS: a spot of ashes on the blank side of the card.
WAVES: a smear of ashes on the printed side of the card.
SQUARE: a smear of ashes on the blank side of the card.
STAR: the ashes are scooped up with the edge of the card.

The code is, as mentioned earlier, very easy to learn. When I first tried this out, I taught the code to a friend who had never done any mentalism before - in fact, she was not even familiar with the Rhine symbols. In less than five minutes we were ready to work it.

The surprise element of having a third party "read the ashes" is very effective. When you are done you can bring out a bunch of your business cards and say, "Here - let me give you a clean one to keep." Chances are that others will ask for one, as well.

tephramantic brainwave

As you may have gathered from the title, this routine is another presentation for the ubiquitous Brainwave Deck. Ever since Dai Vernon introduced the concept in the pages of the Jinx in 1938, magicians and mentalists have been building routines around it. This version has an occult orientation, combined with the modified Brainwave set-up known commercially as the Ultra-Mental Deck, as well as some other techniques which we shall come to in time.

The performer introduces a sealed envelope. Inside the envelope, he informs his audience, is a pack of playing cards. "A deck of cards is useful in more ways than the common games of chance normally associated with it. The modern deck is descended from the Minor Arcana of the classic Tarot deck. It is not merely a batch of suits and values - it is actually a carefully planned instrument, and as such has its roots all the way back to the ancient sorcerers and wizards of the distant past. In the Far East there is a central concept, known as Yin and Yang - the opposing principles which are involved in constant interaction. For every given principle, there is an equal principle that lies opposite the other in the circle of life. Yin and Yang: life and death, dark and light, hot and cold, happiness and sorrow...and so, too, you will observe that in a deck of cards there are two contrasting colors - the light red, the dark black. If we square the two

opposing principles, we come up with the number four - an important figure in the occult sciences. There are four elements: four compass points: four seasons of the solar cycle. So, too, in a deck of cards there are four suits - originally swords, cups, wands and coins; today spades, hearts, clubs and diamonds.

"In each suit there are thirteen values - the precise number of lunar months during a single solar cycle. The median point of the number 13 is seven - the number of days in a calendar week. And of course, the number of calendar weeks in a solar year is fifty-two...the exact number of playing cards in a deck. Furthermore, if you were to add up all of the digits on the cards in a pack - four ones, four twos, and so on - the total would be 354...the exact number of days in a perfect solar cycle. So you can see, the 'ordinary' deck that sits in your desk drawer at home is not ordinary at all...but a very special calculating tool, if used properly."

The performer explains that an experiment will be attempted with the deck of cards lying inside the envelope. He now calls attention to a mystical diagram which has been drawn on the outside of the envelope. He introduces a piece of paper, on which has been drawn a smaller version of this diagram. Handing the paper to a spectator, along with a pencil, the mentalist asks the spectator to relax his mind, and then write the name of a playing card inside the diagram. He cautions the spectator not to show this writing to anyone - the performer or anyone else in the room. When the writing is completed, the paper is folded.



Muttering incantations, the performer rips the paper to shreds, and tosses the pieces into a small metal bowl. "We must now destroy this writing completely...with fire." The spectator is handed a book of matches, and told to set the pieces of paper in the bowl on fire. As this is being done, a second spectator is asked to chant a mystic incantation, and all others are requested to remain absolutely silent.

When the scraps of paper have been consumed, the performer opens the envelope. Inside, as promised, there is a deck of cards. The box that the cards are in has been sealed with sealing wax. The seal is broken, the deck is removed. When the cards are spread, a single card is seen to be reversed. This is taken out of the pack and placed onto the table, face down. "For the first time, would you reveal the name of the card you wrote in the mystical diagram." The spectator states that he wrote down the two of spades. The tabled card is turned over...it is indeed the two of spades.

"Our experiment has been most successful," the performer states. "The twin diagrams have established a link between themselves that is beyond explanation. The first diagram was destroyed - all that remains is this small quantity of ashes. The larger diagram on the envelope is still intact. If the moment is right, this should prove to be most interesting..."

The performer takes some of the ashes from the bowl, and rubs them into the center of the diagram on the envelope. As he rubs, an image is seen to form inside the diagram...it is a bit hard to make out, but eventually can be seen to read "2 C".

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The moment was obviously right! The techniques involved in this routine, in addition to the already-mentioned Ultra-Mental Deck (which, in case there could possibly be a soul who does not know, is a deck which can produce any card as the only face down one in a spread), are the classic center-tear, and a nail-writer prepared to write in colorless wax. These two concepts have been used over and over by mentalists for a variety of effects. There are some nice qualities to the ways they are used here. In this routine, as opposed to most, there is a logical reason for burning the folded paper. The mystical diagram is utilized to force the spectator to write his information in the center of the slip. The center is stolen during the tearing process, (I will not go into the details of this process - it has been described in many texts, and you probably have your own handling for it, anyway.)

The stolen center is read as the spectator starts to burn the pieces of paper in the bowl. This activity, along with the other spectator's chanting (and I leave it to you as to what to tell him to chant...) is plenty of distraction for both the reading of the stolen center, and also the next activity, which is to slip the wax-tipped nail-writer onto your thumb, and write the name of the appropriate card onto the center of the diagram on the envelope (which you have casually picked up). You have justification for holding the envelope, for in a moment you will be opening it up.

One other nice thing - this is one case where your nail-writing technique can be sloppy, since the final image is meant to be a bit vague. (After all, when the spirits make contact with us from the Great Beyond, they have a tendency to leave their penmanship skills behind.) At any rate, after the card is revealed, the ashes are rubbed onto the envelope, and the initials of the card make their appearance, for a startling conclusion to an intriguing presentation.

'tis the season to be lying

Every performer, no matter what branch of entertainment he or she is in, wants to take advantage of holiday themes. When performing around Valentine's Day, every comedian will launch into sweetheart jokes. Singers will trot out the Irish standards when St. Patrick's Day comes around. In the field of mentalism, it is perhaps a bit more difficult to work in seasonal routines than in other entertainment areas. The following routine has the advantage that it is specifically related to holidays. It was originally developed for a string of dates near Xmas, but can in fact be tailored to fit any holiday where gifts are exchanged. It also has the working benefits that it packs extremely small, but can play for a very large audience. It's topical, easy to prep, and easy to do.

It is based on Arthur Emerson's "Liar's License". This wonderful routine first appeared in Sam Dalal's *Swami* magazine, and was included in Colonel Emerson's lecture, "An Evening at the Magic Circle". Arthur has extended his kind permission for me to include my variation here.

The performer discusses the upcoming holiday (for example, Christmas). "It's a particularly joyful time of year," he explains, "and one during which our minds work overtime, planning gifts and celebrations, thinking of loved ones and having a good time in general. I'm sure that everyone here this evening is making some sort of plans for giving gifts to their friends and family, and that is the focus of this experiment."

"I have a few gift tags with me. You'll notice that they're blank - for the time being, no names have been filled in. They will not remain that way for long. I'm going to hand them out to four ladies in the audience."

This is done - each of the women is handed an identical gift tag, and a pencil. The performer approaches one of the women, "I'd like you to think of a very special person in your life - you have been planning on a very specific gift for this person; something special, just perfect for that individual. In fact, that person has been in your mind tonight. Concentrate on that person...on the gift...how happy they'll be to receive the present that you have chosen just for them. When I turn my head away, I want you to write that person's name on the gift tag you hold. Ready? Go!"

When the woman has finished, she is asked to place the tag into the mentalist's empty outside jacket pocket. He collects the pencil, and now turns to address the other three women. "For you three, I have a different request. I want you to also write names on your tags, but I want you to lie! Don't write the name of a loved one on your tag - in fact, I want you to write down a name of someone you don't even know! I realize that Santa Claus usually punishes people for lying so close to Christmas, but I'm sure he'll make an exception this time!" (A similar line can be used, depending on the actual holiday being worked into the routine.)

When the three women are done writing, each in turn places her tag into the performer's pocket along with the first one. Gathering back the rest of the pencils, the mentalist walks back to the stage. He reaches into his pocket, and shakes his hand about - clearly mixing up the tags. Now the tags are removed from the performer's pocket, and placed onto a table. "Ladies and gentlemen, a gift-giver's dilemma: only one of these tags is actually intended for a real person. Behind the writing on that tag is an honest sentiment; genuine caring. The other three tags are frauds - dishonest fakes! I propose to attempt an intuitive sorting process."

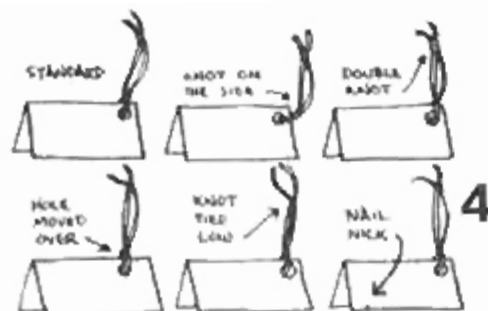
Turning to a lady in the front row, the mentalist continues. "If I were able to sort through these four tags, and find the only one that bears a real name, wouldn't that be impressive?" The lady nods in agreement. "Well, I think it would be even more impressive if you did it! I told you we'd use an intuitive process...well we will...with your intuition!"

The performer gets the woman up onto the stage. She is asked to reach out and pick up one tag. This she does. She holds onto this tag as the performer reads out the three that are left. Each time, one of the liars acknowledges that the tag is here - the true name has not yet been found. Of course, the lady reads off the name on the selected tag - it is the genuine name. Her intuition has indeed proved most successful.



The method for this routine is extremely simple. As in the original "Liar's License", one of the four tags is marked, to differentiate it from the others. I use bright Christmas tags as in the illustration. These may be marked in numerous ways; several are shown here. This is obviously the tag that is given to the "true" spectator. When the tags are removed from your pocket, you know which is the real one. How do you insure that the last spectator picks the proper tag? The answer is Equivoque - the Magician's Choice.

I will not go into a description of the technique of Equivoque here. I must assume that every reader is familiar with the basic process. My own approach to this technique is described in detail in the book, "Mentalism of the '70's", published by Bob Lynn.



NOTES: This routine plays extremely well, and you can soak a large chunk of time out of a small set of inexpensive props. Instead of putting the tags on a table as I do, you can place them on a tray as Colonel Emerson does, placing the tray on the spectator's lap as she sits on a chair on stage.

Arthur has his chooser already seated on stage before handing out the tags. I prefer to do the routine as described - surprising the woman at the last moment, and getting her to come up and choose. I find that this surprise plays very nicely, and adds a touch of situational comedy to the routine.

You will find that the three liars often write down funny names on their tags, which adds to the humor as they're read off later in the presentation. Make the most out of their wit.

pre-duck-tion

The performer, during the early part of his presentation, points out a toy duck, which is suspended from the ceiling, out of reach. There is a rolled-up piece of paper in the toy's mouth, and this, too, is pointed out.

Recalling the old Groucho Marx television show, "You Bet Your Life", the performer explains that the paper in the duck's mouth has a word written on it...a secret. Now the performer displays a gift-wrapped box, stating that the box contains a prize. A person from the audience is selected. The performer says, "If you can guess the secret word, you will win this prize. I will give you a couple of clues - after that you're on your own. The word is a relatively common one, in the English language. It is five letters long. That's all - no more clues. The field has been narrowed to only a few thousand possible words...make your guess!"

The spectator thinks it over, and guesses. Let's say the word is "table".

At the very end of the show, the performer invites the spectator back on stage. Once again, the word is stated - "Table". The performer says, "Rather than letting me touch the secret word, let's get someone else to help. Another person - let's say the show's MC - climbs up on a chair or stepladder, and removes the rolled-up piece of paper. He brings the note to the performer, who says, "No, I don't want to touch it. Give it to our contestant." The spectator, upon being handed the note, unrolls it. In large letters, there is the word "table". The performer hands over the prize, and thus ends his performance on a happy - and baffling - note.

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The method is simple. The spectator is not a stooge...but the MC is. When he hears the chosen word, he writes it on a piece of paper, and rolls it up to duplicate the appearance of the dummy note, which is in the duck's mouth. The dummy and the duplicate are both made out of a reasonably stiff grade of paper. On the dummy is a five-letter word, for who knows, you might strike it on the nose - the spectator might actually name the word written on the dummy slip, and you'd have a bona fide miracle on your hands! However, on with the method for those other occasions (when you have to cheat). The interior of the toy duck is hollow. When the stooge comes out to retrieve the rolled-up paper in the duck's mouth, he has the duplicate paper in his top pocket. He climbs up on the chair, and faces the duck. His back is to the audience, and his body blocks their view of the duck. During this moment, he extracts the duplicate from his pocket, and pushes it into the duck's bill, which in turn pushes the dummy so that it falls inside of the toy duck. This takes but a second, and he then unlooks the duck and brings it over to the performer, with (apparently) the same paper still visible in the duck's mouth.

While this is being done, the performer brings the spectator to the front of the stage, saying, "Aren't you excited? Let's hope you're right! The word was 'table', was it?" and so forth. In this manner he not only builds the audience's interest in the upcoming climax - he also keeps the person on stage with him from standing to the side of the ladder as the stooge does the switch of papers.

Now comes a piece of psychology: the stooge comes over to the performer and the spectator, to deliver the duck. He begins to hand the duck to the performer. The performer reacts by "flinching as if to avoid contact with the duck, exclaiming, "No, I don't want to touch it!" He directs the stooge to let the spectator remove the paper. This is done, and the paper is unrolled. In the face of impossible odds, the word on the paper is "table" - the precise word that was chosen by the spectator, from among thousands of possibilities.

The MC (stooge) is thanked for his help. The spectator is thanked, congratulated, and awarded the prize (which is a box of candy or some other inexpensive gift).

dangerous game

"Russian Roulette - truly a dangerous game. An affair of life or death. I propose a simulated game of Russian Roulette. Rather than use a gun, we shall use a somewhat less lethal weapon...a deck of cards. Kindly put the pack at some point, and then deal the next six cards into a little pile on the table. Fine. We'll put the rest of the deck away, as you shuffle the group of six you've chosen. We will think of these six cards as the chambers of a gun. One of the chambers will be loaded - the death chamber, as it were. I'd like you to take one of the six cards, and use your finger to draw an imaginary X across its face. That will be the card that I must avoid. Replace it among the other five cards, and mix them once again. Now deal the six cards into a face down row on the table. It is my task in this game of chance to eliminate the cards one by one, without hitting the death card. It's not exactly life or death, but I will remind you that my reputation is at stake... Should I turn up the X card during this elimination, I will have lost the game - and figuratively, my life.

The performer slowly turns up a card. It is not the death card, as the spectator acknowledges, so it is discarded. He does this again with a second...third, fourth, and fifth. Each time, the discarded pastboard is a "safe" one. The performer has thus obviously won the game. He beams with pride, and says, "Wait - before we turn up this final card, let's carry the game a step further...would you concentrate on the name of the lethal card...I get the distinct image of a red card...a diamond...the four of diamonds. I am correct? So you see, it really wasn't a game of chance after all!"

?

There are two easy ways to accomplish this effect. The first method is to make use of a marked deck of cards. However, with a few subtleties it is possible to perform the routine with an unmarked deck. This deck is one with a one-way back design. (Obviously, a subtle one-way back is desirable - e.g., Aviator Bridge, or Tally-Ho Circle Poker). During the initial business where the spectator draws an imaginary X on the card, the performer sees to it that the death card is replaced into the packet facing in the opposite direction from the other cards. As for the identity of the card - the deck is stacked, so that when the cards are dealt out the performer can simply glimpse the bottom card of the deck while putting the balance of the pack away. Now it is a simple matter to determine what the final card on the table happens to be.

the tempermental guest

The mentalist and his audience are seated around a table. He introduces a small antique box. Inside the box are six items: five small "objects", and a drawstring bag. These are taken out, and the five articles are lined up on the table. The bag is given to spectator A. From his pocket the performer takes a sealed envelope, and this he gives to spectator B, who is asked to sign his name on it and then put it in his pocket for safekeeping.

The performer says to spectator A, "I am going to leave the room. While I am gone, I want you to examine these five trinkets. Look them over, pick them up, and choose one. Do not simply go with your first impulse - weigh your decision carefully. When you have made your choice, please take that item and place it in the drawstring bag. Hold on to this. The other four objects I want you to replace in the box, and then put the box aside, out of view. When you are done, let me know, and I will return to the room."

The performer is escorted out of the room by spectator C, who waits outside with him as a "guard". When they are signalled, they return to the room. The wizard takes his seat. Spectator A is asked to hold the bag in his left hand, and to place his right hand on the mentalist's forehead. Now the performer begins to talk about the spectator, giving information concerning his background, interests, health and personality, finally stating that, "Because of the things I'm sensing about you, I have the feeling you must have selected... the finger ring." (Naturally, he is correct.) Now spectator B is asked to open the envelope which he has been holding. Inside is the following statement: "My tempermental quest will choose the ring."

?

First of all, it should be obvious that this is an elaborate framework for a cold reading. Therefore, your abilities in this area should be sharp before you decide to mess about with this presentation.

The antique box is simply an old jewelry box. For the five objects, use any small items that look interesting - pieces of jewelry, a tiny prism, a key, an old coin, etc. None of the items is prepared; nor is the drawstring bag or the antique box. What is prepared is spectator B; he's a confederate. In advance the two of you have agreed upon a numerical order to the five objects. In the envelope you hand him at the start of the routine is the prediction for object #1. In his inside coat pocket are the envelopes with predictions for objects two through five. These are pre-signed. (He signs envelope #1 when you give it to him - now all five envelopes match.) If you want to get fancy you can seal the five envelopes with sealing wax. Each envelope is nicked to identify which prediction is inside.

When the stooge gets the first envelope, he signs it, and puts it in his pocket at the front of the stack of envelopes there. Of course, he observes which object spectator A puts in the bag while you're out of the room. When you come back, you go into your reading legitimately "cold". About half-way through the reading, your secret assistant casually reaches into his pocket, and brings out the proper envelope. He doesn't make anything out of this - he's simply toying with it, and you ignore him. A glance on your part tells you which object is in the bag - you spot the marking on the envelope held by spectator B. The envelope not only serves to code you as to the selection, it also sets you up for your big finish, for it contains the proper prediction. During the course of your reading, work around to the term "tempermental" in describing your pigeon. (This word is applicable to anybody if it's worked in right.) After you've soaked as much out of your reading as possible, go for the object, and have the prediction opened. Finish.

I should point out that there are a number of ways in which this can be made into a one-man routine. Various solo effects such as Dr. Jaks' lovely "Thimbleosophy", Rick Johansson's devilish "Rip-Off", or Bob Sommerfeld's brilliant "Ripped!" can all be applied, and there are additional methods that I have developed for ascertaining which object was taken while you were out of the room...but these shall wait until a future book.

geometric coin

This impromptu close-up item is designed for that informal moment, say after dinner, when the talk has turned to paranormal avenues of communication...

The performer takes a piece of paper and a pen out of the room for a moment. When he returns, he has torn two scraps of the paper and folded them into billets. These he places on the table, explaining that they are two different predictions.

Taking a handful of change out of his pocket, the performer lays out some different coins in a row. "Before you are some coins that will be directly involved with our experiment. Our test also concerns simple geometric shapes, and I would like you to run through some of the more common geometric figures in your mind as you reach out and touch one of the coins..."

Let's say that the coin chosen is the dime. The spectator then names a geometric shape - let's say triangle. The performer tells a spectator to pick up the first billet. On the inside is a message: "You will think of a SQUARE." The mentalist has clearly failed with one of the tests, but he does not seem concerned. Directing the spectator to open the second prediction, the performer smiles as two things happen: (1) A dime falls out of the folded paper. (2) On the inside of the paper the spectator finds the following message: "I was only kidding about the square...and I thank you for thinking of the TRIANGLE!"

The method is straightforward. It depends on a Magician's Choice for the coin (but you probably knew that already), and a three-out system for the geometric shape. The set-up is only needed to cover the three most common figures - the square, circle and triangle. If the spectator should name something different (such as a trapezoid), you say, "No, we need something more basic than that," and thus restrict the choice.

The papers you put on the table are as described in the write-up. The first nominates the square, the other contains a dime and the "correction" to the triangle. Unknown to the spectators, there is a third billet in your pocket, which states, "I was only kidding about the square...and I thank you for thinking of the CIRCLE!"

If the spectator chooses the triangle (the most commonly chosen of the three shapes) you're all set, and need not touch the papers. If he says "circle", you do the following: with the left hand (which you can freely display as being empty), you pick up the coin billet, and dump out the dime onto the table, showing the correct prediction of the coin. Now ask a spectator to read out the other slip - which has the prediction for "square" on it...and as he does, the right hand comes up with the circle billet finger-clipped. You do a billet-switch, tossing the circle billet onto the table. You have plenty of cover for this...and are now set to ditch the triangle billet, and have a spectator open up the tabled slip for your climax.

Should the spectator name "square", you again begin by dumping the dime out of its slip, and then allow the spectator to read off the proper prediction inside of the other slip. The purist may want to have a fourth slip which is blank, to switch for the slip that contained the coin, so that at the finish of this handling the second billet could be left for examination. I find the whole presentation to be quick and impromptu, and casual enough to warrant just stuffing that slip into your pocket and being done with the whole thing.

the spirit is willing (to write)

Spirit writing techniques have been used by mediums and mentalists for many years. The impact of such physical manifestations has always been very strong. Stronger still is the situation where the writing appears on a surface that has been previously signed by a spectator. In this close-up routine the writing appears on the back of your business card which has been signed on both sides by members of the audience. More than that, at the conclusion of the routine the card may be handed out as a souvenir. On top of that, the actual writing activity of the spirits is witnessed by the spectators...or so they think!

First of all, let's examine the business card, for it is gaffed to produce the writing. On the blank side of your business card, take a marking pen and draw a mystical diagram such as the one shown in the illustration. It can be any design, as long as it involves a closed space in the center (such as the oval shape in the illustration), and has room for a spectator's signature. Next, take another business card and cut out a piece to match the center space of your mystical design. In other words, if you were using the design shown here, you would cut out an oval that fit exactly over the oval on the first card.

In order to present the routine, you will need, in addition to the prepared card, a small pencil (about three inches long), plus a gaffed handkerchief. This last item is a dealer effect, sold under several

names. The original monicker was "Glorpy". Normally the item is used to produce movement from an empty handkerchief. In this case, the movement will be supposed to be that of the pencil.

Use a soft pencil to scrawl your spirit message inside the center space of the card. Now take a bit of magician's wax, and apply it to the cut-out piece. This piece is now waxed onto the center of the business card in order to cover the spirit writing. If you've been careful, the extra piece will not be discernable, even from a few inches away. It will appear that the back of your business card bears a mystical diagram with a blank center space.



The handkerchief is in your left coat pocket. Begin by discussing spiritualism. Introduce the card - show it openly on both sides. Explain that the mystical diagram on the back of the card contains some ancient symbols used to invoke the spirits. Ask one or two spectators to sign their initials on the corners of the card on both sides.

The following handling will allow you to steal the extra piece of card. Hold the card in the left hand, diagram side down. The right hand picks up the card from above, holding it by the narrow edges - the thumb at the inner end, the fingers at the front edge. Pick up the card, and show the diagram once again to the audience. Return the card to the left hand, and as you do so, flex the card by squeezing the right hand. This will cause the card to bow, and make the center waxed-on piece pop off into the left palm. The left fingers curl up slightly to mask this. Immediately pick the card up once again with the right hand from above. The left hand turns palm towards you as this happens - carrying the extra piece clipped with the fingers. The right hand drops the card on the table as the left hand goes to the pocket and brings out the "Glorpy" handkerchief, leaving behind the stolen piece.

Fold the handkerchief as per the instructions sold with the item. (As this is a dealer item I will not reveal the working here. Suffice it to say that it is a clever - and inexpensive - prop.) Pick up the card from the table and place it inside the folded handkerchief. As you do this, turn the card over, so that it lies diagram side up. Now place the pencil into the folds of the hank, so that it lies on top of the card.

As with the standard handling of "Glorpy", place your hands on the edges of the folded cloth. You can have one or two of the spectators also place their hands on the perimeter of the handkerchief. Concentrate...perhaps mutter an incantation. After a few moments, work the gimmick to cause movement under the cloth. The spectators will take this to be the pencil actually writing beneath the handkerchief (and later some will even swear they could actually see the pencil itself stand up and write!).

After the activity has subsided, unfold the cloth, and display all.

elemental

"The ancient alchemists divided all things into four categories: the four elements of earth, air, fire and water. Modern scientists tend to scoff at the ancient mystic arts...and yet they, too have placed the world into four basic forms: solid, which would correspond with earth; liquid, which matches water; gaseous, the nature of air; and energy - well represented by fire.

"It perhaps occurs to you that the ancient alchemists were onto something... In their dark rituals, they would use four symbols for the four elements of the cosmos. This bowl of water is the first. A lit candle of course shows the element of fire. The earth is represented by the quantity of salt in this bowl. This final, empty bowl contains...air.

"For reasons which will become clear, I shall mark each of these bowls with pieces of cardboard. On the first, we will mark a W - for water. I'll place the card behind the first bowl. On the second card I will write the letter F - for fire. The third card is marked with an E, for earth, and lastly we'll draw an A on the fourth card - to denote air."

Suiting action to word, the performer openly draws large letters on four cards, and places them in front of their appropriate bowls. Walking away from the table, the performer requests a spectator to walk over to the table, and indicate one of the elements. The spectator chooses the candle...fire.

"You have selected the element of fire - an element that has certainly held fascination for humankind ever since the dawn of time. Fire holds the power to aid us...and to destroy us. Kindly pick up the candle, and gaze into the fire. Stare intently into the flame. Observe its glow. Think about all of the times you make use of fire in your daily life, without ever giving consideration to its potentially destructive nature. Think about how hot the flame you are observing really is...think about burning...and now, would you walk back to the table.

"You eliminated the element of water. Would you turn over the W card. Fine. You also eliminated earth - please turn over the E card. Now kindly turn over the third card you chose to avoid - the A card for air. There is one card left - the card that represents the fire you were drawn to...would you turn that card over."

The spectator does so, and finds that the entire face of that card has been scorched by flames!

With the proper build-up, this presentation can be extremely powerful. To begin with, I must inform you that the selection of the element of fire is made possible by Equivoque - the Magician's Choice. What must be now detailed is the way in which an entire side of one of the cards is hidden, when all four of the cards were apparently shown on both sides.

Four pieces of cardboard are used. They can be of any size - you will want to experiment, to find the largest possible size that is comfortable for your hands. Let's assume that for most people a little over 1" x 5" will do. One of the cards is prepared in advance. Take a felt-tipped marking pen and write the letter F on the card. Now use a match to scorch that side of the card, taking care that the other side is kept un-marred.

At the start of the showing, the cards are stacked with the prepared card third from the top, burned side uppermost. When you introduce the cards, pick them up and fan them towards yourself. The audience will see four blank surfaces - the burned surface is only seen by you, and you already know it's there...

At this point someone reading this has just thought of using an Elmsley Count to show both sides of the cards as being blank. This is unnecessary - all eight surfaces will apparently be shown in a moment. The cards are casually fanned as you continue to talk about the four elements.

Close the fan. The cards are held in the left hand. The right hand takes the pen and draws a large W on the face of the card. Turn the left hand to display this letter, then turn the hand palm down. The right hand reaches under the cards and removes the lower-most W card, and places it on the table behind the bowl of water, writing side down.

Turn the left hand so that the cards once again face you. On the next card, draw the letter F. Turn the hand, and show this letter to the audience. You turn the hand down, and glide the card, so that the one above the F card - the burned one - is taken instead. This card is removed and placed burned side down on the table, behind the bowl with the lit candle.

The Glide is an elementary sleight. Just in case there is a mentalist reading this whose phobia against cards is so strong that he does not know this sleight, I'll run through it quickly: the cards are held from above with the left hand. The left fingers draw back the bottom card, as in the illustration. The right fingers contact the next-to-bottom card at the front end, and slide it out from the packet. To all appearances, it is the bottom card that has been taken.



At this point, after laying down the first two cards, you are left holding two cards. The bottom card has an F on it. You've no doubt just figured out that what happens now is that the left hand turns towards you once again. You pick up the marking pen, and apparently draw the letter E. In fact, you don't contact the paper with the pen during this, except for the bottom horizontal stroke, which transforms the F that is already there into an E. (I'd like to think that the folks who invented the contemporary Western alphabet for making this deception possible...)

The E is displayed, and dealt behind the salt. The final card is marked with an A, and you're all set to finish the routine.

The "Elemental" routine can be done close-up, of course. Using your own business cards, it can be made virtually impromptu. Working in an informal setting in someone's home or a restaurant, one can use an empty glass for the air, a glass of water for the water, a salt shaker for the earth, and a book of matches for the fire.

double undercurrent

The mentalist displays a small metal box. "Earlier this evening," he explains, "I gave a container just like this to a member of the audience. I asked her to secretly write down the identity of any playing card on a piece of paper, and to seal that paper inside the container. It has been in her possession ever since."

The person is asked to stand, hold up her container, and verify all that the performer has said. As soon as she has done so, she is asked to re-take her seat, and to continue to guard the metal box.

A second spectator is selected, and asked to join the performer on stage. A new deck of playing cards is introduced. The mentalist addresses his second helper. "I would like to use this deck of cards in an experiment in intuition. I will involve both you, and the lady who has already begun her participation by writing a secret piece of information, and sealing it into a metal container. Would you open the deck. Remove the advertising card and the two jokers. Now mix the deck completely - shuffle it until you are absolutely sure that the order of the cards is completely random."

This is done. Next, a card is taken from the center of the face down shuffled pack. This is a totally free choice - in fact, the spectator is offered a chance to change his mind and withdraw a different card. His selection is placed, still face down, into the duplicate metal box, which is closed and handed to him.

The first spectator is now invited on stage. One spectator stands on either side of the performer. Each holds a closed metal box. The conditions are re-capped. For the first time, the initial spectator is asked to open her container, to remove the paper contained therein, and to read aloud the identity of the card she wrote down earlier in private. The second spectator is asked to open his box, and from it to remove the card he randomly chose from a shuffled pack. It is a perfect match to the first spectator's designated choice.



The working is quite simple. Your container is a locking card box, which will automatically switch the second spectator's random selection for a previously loaded card. The first spectator's box is an unlicked duplicate of the locking card box. You know which card to load in the second box because before the show you had the first spectator write her secret selection on a clipboard or impression pad - and in between this time and the start of your show made the appropriate load into the locking card box.

Of course, other switching devices can be used instead of card boxes. Sam Dalal's novel "Delna Device" works perfectly for this, as does a Humber Wallet with a little care in handling.

middle telepathy

"Fourth Dimensional Telepathy" was brought out by Annemann in the 1920's. Over the years, many mentalists have evolved their own routines on this idea. The general outline of the routine is that three spectators write information onto three cards or billets, which are sealed into envelopes. In the original routine, the information was a number, a word, and a drawing. The performer divines the contents of the first two envelopes, and then duplicates the sealed drawing on a large slate or pad.

Some of the solutions have been extremely clever. In some cases the performer has done his divinations without apparently ever opening the envelopes. Impression devices, window and slit envelopes, psychological forces - all of these and more have been put to use. When I set out to work out a version for my own use, I established some goals for myself. I of course wanted the most direct method - one which involved no pre-show set-up if possible. I wanted the method to be totally sure-fire. Most importantly, I wanted to tie together the three pieces of information in a logical manner, each one seemingly more difficult to divine than the one preceding it.

Along the way I came to the conclusion that it would be very nice if I were able to hand back the billets as I finished with them. Since I had already worked out a one-ahead routine, this seemed to be problematic, but the solution hit me in the middle of a performance one night, and I immediately worked it out. The result is clean mentalism that has powerful impact.

This is what the audience sees: the performer displays a deck of ESP cards. He discusses the work of Dr. J.B. Rhine at the Parapsychology laboratory at Duke University, and shows the pack to consist of five symbols - 25 cards in all. After a serious discussion of the use of these cards, he has a spectator take and note one of the cards. The card is returned to the pack, and the pack is placed aside. The mentalist addresses the spectator: "At this moment you have a symbol locked into your mind. In a few minutes I will pry into your mind, and locate the image you now hold. Here is a slip of paper, an envelope and a pencil. I'm going to ask you to write down the image you are thinking of - draw that symbol on the paper. I ask you to do this for two reasons: first, because by writing something - by expressing a thought with physical action - you will reinforce the image in your mind. Secondly, I have unfortunately had the experience of having a spectator change his mind later on in a test such as this, and although I certainly am not suggesting that you would do such a thing, this piece of paper will act as a safeguard - a written record of your thought, which we can consult later for verification. Let me turn my back...now please draw your symbol. Have you done that? Fine - now fold the paper in half. Fold it again, in-to quarters, and place the slip into the envelope, and seal it. OK? Thank you."

The performer takes back the pencil, leaving the envelope with spectator #1 for the time being. Turning to another spectator, he gives this person the pencil, plus another paper and envelope. "A drawing has been made, to represent a visual image locked in this first person's mind. To be honest, it won't be all that difficult to deduce which symbol this first volunteer is thinking of, for I've obviously limited his choices...to a field of five designs. I'm going to make it harder for myself with you, for what I'd like you to do is to

draw any simple design or picture. This can actually be a drawing of an object, or it can be one or two simple geometric symbols. I don't want to limit your activities here, but I will ask that you keep the drawing relatively simple...don't make it too hard for me!" Again, the performer turns his back as the second spectator draws something on his paper, folds it up and seals it in his envelope.

The pencil is handed to a third party, along with another envelope and paper. "For you I've saved the hardest subject matter. I want you to think of a face! Now, don't worry - I'm not going to ask you to draw a face, but I want you to think of any famous person that everyone in the room will recognize. This is important. It will be just about impossible for me to succeed at this test if you write down someone I don't know...such as your Aunt Martha...so please think of a celebrity of some sort. I don't want to limit your choice - it can be a man or woman, in fact it doesn't have to be a human being at all...it could be a cartoon character, a famous animal, a TV star, singer, movie star or politician. Someone we all would know. Think about that person - what they look like, how they dress, how they move...and then, while my back is turned, write that person's name down on the paper." This is done, and the slip is folded and sealed into the envelope.

The performer turns to face the audience. "Before I collect these envelopes, I would like to have the three people assisting me hold the envelopes up to the light. Take a good look. You can probably make out the shape of the folded slip inside your envelope, but I think you'll agree, it would be completely impossible to read those pieces of paper through the envelope. Is that correct? Fine - I'll take them back now." He gathers the three envelopes and brings them back to the stage. There he takes a marking pen and numbers them 1, 2 and 3.

He picks up a large pad of paper, and walks to where the first spectator is sitting. Asking the spectator to stare directly into his eyes, the performer studiously traces shapes in the air, passing the marking pen in front of the spectator as he constructs imaginary lines and curves in the air. "Hmmm," he says, "there are, of course, only two types of ESP symbols - those drawn with straight lines, and those drawn with curved lines. Your's was indeed a straight-lined figure." The spectator concurs. The mentalist returns to the stage, raises the pad in front of him, and begins to sketch. He then hands the pad to a spectator in the front row, writing side down.

"Don't look at what I've drawn just yet. I've given you my pad - I am committed to what I have set down in ink. For the first time, let's see what this first spectator actually was thinking of." He takes envelope #1 and rips it open, extracting the slip of paper from inside which he immediately hands to a spectator, who opens it up and shows the rest of the audience that it bears a drawing of a star. The performer instructs the spectator holding his pad to raise it up and show it...it, too bears a drawing of a star! So far, so good.

Giving the drawing away as a souvenir, the performer continues. "The next attempt will be more difficult, for the possibilities are much wider. This second individual has drawn a simple - I hope - picture or design." Again, the performer stands before the spectator and makes lines and curves in the air as the person stares into his eyes. He seems to pick up information from the spectator's subconscious reactions to these patterns...and nodding to himself as if making a final opinion, returns to the stage and again draws a picture on his pad. Again he hands the pad to a front-row spectator, drawing side down.

He picks up the second envelope, tears it open, and opens the billet inside. "Ah," he proclaims. "I was very close. The drawing that this person made was of a house..." and as he says this, he shows the billet to the audience, handing it to a spectator, "...and my picture shows a triangle on top of a square...rather house-like in shape, I think you'll agree." Again, the drawing on the pad is given away as a souvenir.

"This final test is the most challenging, for this person is thinking of a face - something that changes with every mood, each emotion, each passing day, each life-event. I would like this final volunteer to kindly come up on stage with me." The spectator does this. "You are thinking of some person, or perhaps some comic-strip character or animal, but in any event, a face... The identity of that face is locked inside this envelope...which we will leave here on the table for the time being. What I would like you to do may sound silly, but please look directly into my face...and imagine that, instead of seeing me, you are seeing the person or creature whose name is sealed in that envelope. Instead of my eyes, you see his or her eyes...the shape of their jaw...their complexion, their hair-style...everything about the way that person looks."

The spectator does this. There is absolute silence for a moment, and then the performer announces, "I can tell you this right away - you are thinking of a man - and a flesh-and-blood man, not a cartoon character. That is correct, is it not? Now concentrate on the specifics...ah yes, this person has a roundish face...dark complexion...hair not too long...am I right so far?" The spectator agrees with all that has been said. After a bit longer, the performer states, "I believe I have enough information to make an educated guess. You may return to your seat - I'll take my chances with what I've ascertained."

Picking up the pad, the performer writes something down, and again hands it to someone in the front row to hold. He now goes over and opens the final envelope. Unfolding the paper, he laughs - "Oh, this is very good - I think we'll say that for all intents and purposes, this is a direct hit! This person wrote down the name 'Peter Falk' - the television actor - and if you will turn over my pad and show the rest of the audience, you'll see that I wrote down... 'Columbo' - the very character played by...Peter Falk!"

What this effective routine entails is a simple one-ahead sequence combined with some very simple billet-switching. Although the techniques are not new, a great deal of thought has gone into their application, and this will be described in detail. The props required for this routine consist of: several small slips of paper, about 2" square; several small manila pay envelopes; a few pencils; a marking pen; a large drawing pad; a deck of standard ESP cards; a 5-billet index. The index is loaded with five slips, each bearing a different ESP symbol. This can be easily constructed out of cardboard, as in the illustration, or a simple impromptu index can be made out of a matchbook, as pictured. (Who first came up with this latter idea I do not know, but it is a most clever and functional device.)



CARDBOARD WITH RUBBERBAND



MATCHBOOK INDEX

Regarding the other props, actually only three slips, three envelopes and one pencil are necessary, but it is always wise to have some extras on hand, should anything go wrong. I like to make use of a clever concept of Tony Raven's, which he calls the "virgin state" principle. The envelopes are kept in a paper band with a price tag on it, as if you had just purchased them. This emphasizes, psychologically, that the envelopes are ordinary and untampered with (as, in this case, they truly are), and thus, by extension, that all the props are every-day articles that are in no way "props".

The ESP deck is stacked with the standard rotation: circle, cross, wavy lines, square, star - repeated five times. This deck is in its case on the table, along with the pencils, papers and envelopes, plus the pad. The index is in your left coat pocket, as is the pen.

Opening with the ESP cards provides several things. First of all, it establishes a serious, scientifically-oriented introduction to the routine. It also affords you a no-fail start for your one-ahead work. And, by limiting the first spectator's choice to a field of five, you are able to utilize an index which is likewise limited to a field of five...thus making your work extremely easy.

Obviously, the first spectator's selected symbol becomes known to you right away, because you sight the card above the place where he withdraws his selection. The deck is discarded early on, and the audience is likely to forget that it was ever used - but you play down the difficulty involved with this first test anyway, actually reminding the assembly that the field was limited. After the three spectators have made their written records and sealed them in the envelopes, you collect same. Don't forget to have them hold the envelopes up to the light - this will kill any thoughts by members of the audience that you might be able to see into the envelopes, and heightens the drama of the building situation.

Collect the envelopes by taking the first spectator's, and adding the second spectator's behind it. The third spectator's envelope goes behind the first two. Do this openly. Now, as you turn back to the stage, you simply shift the top envelope to the bottom of the stack. This is not a move - your body shields the activity from view. As soon as you get back to the stage, hold up the envelopes and explain. "I'd better number these before I forget which is which [1]. Take the marking pen from your pocket, and draw a 1, 2 and 3 on the envelopes, going from the top down. Because you shifted the top one, you are actually putting a 1 on #2, a 2 on #3, and a 3 on #1. The envelopes are tossed onto the table.

Pick up the pad. Walk to the front of the stage and re-cap what has transpired thus far. Now walk over to the first spectator, look him in the eye, and start tracing patterns in the air with the marking pen. Caution the spectator not to give you any clues - to keep a poker face during all of this. This tracing business is a lovely theatrical concept of Ned Rutledge's, and it is very strong - apparently you are picking up virtually invisible reactions from the spectator. A nice touch at this point is to mention the two types of ESP symbols - straight-lined and curved. Pause, and inform the spectator that you believe that (for example) his figure is made with straight lines. This suggests to the audience that you don't already know the exact symbol being thought of - you're picking it up gradually. When the spectator tells you you're right thus far, don't forget to react - smile! You are making headway. Return to the front of the stage, and begin to draw.

A note here: lay people may not know the term "pencil reading", but when you draw an ESP symbol in large strokes, many in your audience will automatically pick up what you're drawing...thus spoiling your first revelation. Mask what you're drawing, by making lots of fast strokes in all directions, but only letting the pen actually contact the paper to make the figure you want. This serves to confuse the audience - and they will not know what you've actually drawn until it is later shown. It's a minor point, but an important one.

The pad is tossed into a front-row spectator's lap. Drawing side down, as you deliver the lines given in the description of the effect. During this, the marking pen is returned to your left coat pocket - and your left hand removes the proper billet from the index. This is taken out in a finger clip position. Walk over to the table, pick up the envelope marked #1, and lay it on top of the clipped billet, as in the illustration. The right hand rips the top off the envelope, and the right thumb enters the top of the envelope to withdraw the billet. The right fingers go behind the envelope, and as the hand moves up it takes both billets - the thumb pulling out the genuine contents of the envelope while the fingers draw up the extra slip from behind. This cheating action is masked by the left fingers which are cupped around the envelope. It appears as if you're simply drawing out one slip. Hold the two slips as one at the right fingertips as the left hand discards the envelope. Now you do a standard billet switch: the hands come together, and the right thumb pulls back the top billet as the left takes the other billet and hands it to a spectator to open. When they do, they see the proper ESP symbol drawn on it. The right hand, meanwhile, just drops to your side and rests...



The spectator reads out the symbol from the slip, and the spectator holding the pad turns it up to show a match. A word here, and an important one: don't forget to react. Remember, you're not supposed to have seen the ESP symbol that was drawn on the slip. When you're informed that your drawing was correct, let the audience know you are hearing good news: smile! Display an expression of relief - your first test was a success! If you forget to react, you are telegraphing the fact that you already knew the information. Don't overlook this important piece of theater.

You again walk up to a spectator - #2 - and repeat the tracing-in-air business. When you return to the stage to begin to draw, you use the cover afforded by the pad to open up the stolen billet - this tells you what the second spectator drew. Once you've read the billet, re-fold it, and slip it under your left thumb which is grasping the left side of the pad. (This entire operation is very quick, and can be done by the right hand alone, opening the billet with a flick of the thumb and re-folding it just as quickly.) Now draw a duplication of the second spectator's picture. It will play much stronger if you do not exactly match his drawing. Instead, come very close - for example, the situation described in the write-up of this routine, where

a picture of a house was matched by a very similar geometric design. Make some small mistakes - thus, when the two drawings are compared, the impact on the audience will be, "if he had seen the drawing, he would have drawn it precisely. Since he did not draw it precisely, he must have not seen the drawing!" Psychological touches of this sort make the difference between tricks and mentalism.

Again the pad is given to a front-row spectator. The billet at this point is clipped by the left hand. Take envelope #2 from the table, and rip it open it with the same handling as before, only this time you do not give the billet to an audience member. Discard the envelope, perform the switch of billets, and open the billet up yourself. You are looking at the writing on slip #3, but you react as if seeing slip #2 for the first time. Grin as you look at the slip, look up and address your audience. "This is quite interesting. I think you'll agree that I was very, very close..." Proceed with suitable comments, as you re-fold the billet. Now switch billets again, as you casually hand the real #2 billet to a member of the audience, for (implied reason) verification. The pad is held up - you have again succeeded.

I generally tend to down-play my second success - expressing a certain amount of dissatisfaction because I did not score a direct hit. This lends more "genuineness" to the proceedings, and helps to build dramatic tension towards the final stage of the routine.

You now know the contents of slip #3, which at this moment is clipped in the right hand. You are going to follow the same handling as before, transferring the slip to the left hand under cover of the pad, but this time you will not have to open the slip to read it - you've already done that. Follow the presentation outlined previously, having the 3rd spectator join you on stage, stare into your eyes and visualize the person he or she wrote. Send the party back to their seat, and make your final notation on the pad.

Some notes on this final phase: if you have any skill at caricature, use it here. If you can draw a recognizable facsimile of the chosen celebrity, you've got a powerful visual climax. If not, your best bet is to score an imperfect match - as close as possible without actually duplicating the spectator's choice exactly. There are several ways to do this. In the case of an actor, if the spectator has written the actor's own name, you would write down the name of that actor's most famous role - as in the case of Peter Falk/Columbo. If the spectator writes down the role, you write down the actor. Other examples of near-matches would be Yul Brynner/Telly Savalas (both are actors who shave their heads completely bald); Charlie Chaplin/Adolf Hitler; etc. One of the strongest finishes I've ever had for this routine came when a young woman wrote down "Bullwinkle" - the cartoon moose from television. I drew an antlered figure, and labelled it "Rudolph the Red-nosed Reindeer" - and grabbed a tremendous reaction, much stronger than if I'd been directly on target.

Of course, before the name is revealed, you walk over and pick up the #3 envelope. Open it, and make your switch. This time you can get rid of the extra slip by crumpling it up with the envelope and discarding them simultaneously. At any rate, when you read the information on that final slip, again remember to react - again, this is the first time you are seeing the slip (as far as the audience knows). If the contrast between the slip and your final recording is amusing, by all means, laugh - show the audience that it has taken you by surprise. You are tickled by the slight disparity between what the spectator wrote and what you did - and delighted at such a near-perfect match.

Practice the simple actions on this routine and you will have as strong a ten minutes for your stage act as you could ever want. The props cost next to nothing; it can be done just about impromptu, and can play for a very large audience. Make the most of it.

chaos

of the four basic categories for mentalism effects, the area of psychokinesis has been least-explored. I believe that the surface has just been scratched. The creative work of Uri Geller - no matter what you may personally feel about him - has proved that demonstrations of PK are extremely interesting and provocative for lay audiences.

The following presentation is quite dramatic and startling, as it displays a burst of PK from a distance, with visible evidence both during and after the PK activity. In addition, it makes use of borrowed articles. What happens is this: the performer borrows a variety of metal objects from one or more spectators - coins, keys, charms, rings, etc. These are dumped into a handkerchief (which may also be borrowed). This assemblage is put onto a table, and the group moves several feet away - in fact, completely across the room if so desired. The members of the gathering are asked to focus their concentration on the metal - to imagine rays of force projecting from their minds to the cloth-and-metal package across the room.

There is silence. The seconds tick past...and suddenly there is a clank of metal as the coins and other metal objects are seen and heard to react to the combined mental force of those in the room. The objects actually jump a couple of inches in the air - they are clearly audible, and their motion is unmistakably visible. This is no optical illusion - no mass suggestion. They move!

Hushing over to the package, the performer lifts up the handkerchief. Upon examination, it is seen that one or more of the objects have actually bent...lasting evidence of this unusual demonstration of psychokinesis in action.

Naturally, everything may be examined, as it is all borrowed. For those who suspect some sort of explosive device, let me point out that there are no burn marks on the handkerchief - in fact, the metal objects are not even hot.



Of course, there is a gimmick. It's something I've known about for years, but only recently figured out an application for. It is an item known as the "Jumping Disc", sold by the Edmund Scientific Co., Edacorp Building, Barrington, New Jersey 08007. A package of twelve costs only \$2.25 postpaid at the time of this writing (item #P41150). What it is is a small bi-metal disc, extremely thin (one inch in diameter). The disc is concave. It is rubbed between the fingers, to heat it up slightly, then pushed to a convex condition. If you lay it on a table and wait, in a little while it will hop about five feet in the air. The exact time it takes for this to happen is not under your control - it has to do with the relative cooling times of the two metals used in the construction of the disc. The more you have worked the disc in your hand prior to setting it down, the longer it will take to jump.

As stated above, the disc will jump about five feet into the air. However, if the disc is weighted down with coins and keys, it will only jump up an inch or two. Furthermore, if it is covered with a handkerchief, the cloth will muffle the loud "crack" the disc makes when it jumps.

PHIL GOLDSTEIN



**THE
RED
BOOK
OF**

MENTALISM

Introduction

Half a year has passed since the appearance of the first book of this series, the Blue Book of Mentalism. Response to that book has been excellent. Here is the second small volume of this project.

In the introduction to the Blue Book, I offered a brief analysis of the basic categories of effect in the field of theatrical ESP. The range of effects is extremely limited, and for that reason every mentalist runs into an immediate obstacle in trying to routine a show: due to this limited choice of plot-lines, it is dangerously easy to put together an act that is highly repetitive, and thus ultimately boring.

The emphasis, then, must be on presentation - even more so than in the field of magic. A basic plot must be dressed up in an interesting fashion, to hold the interest of the audience. As few basic effects as there are in mentalism, when it boils down to actual performance, the vast majority of ESP routines can be described with a single two-word phrase: "revealed choice". The spectator is offered a selection from a restricted field, and the performer reveals that choice.

It is a plot which can be extremely exciting. It can also be extraordinarily dull.

We search for unusual thematic approaches. In so doing, we are often sidetracked by the romance of novelty, and unknowingly fall into another trap.

Mentalism demands a straight line of action. The premise upon which most mentalists work is that they are possessed with uncanny abilities, pedestrianly referred to as "mind-reading". In approaching any effect, the question must be asked, "If I could genuinely read people's thoughts, what would it look like?" The fraudulent demonstrating we actually do must approximate this genuine action as closely as possible.

Many clever mentalism routines require a very circuitous chain of events before reaching their climax. When the spectators are required to pick two cards, add their values together, divide the result by three, turn to that page in a book, count down to the line determined by the number of fillings in their teeth...something is wrong - and the audience knows it. This is not mentalism - it is a puzzle. Perhaps a very clever and baffling puzzle, but a puzzle nonetheless.

There is nothing miraculous about a puzzle. Competent mentalism is miraculous.

Another related problem with such circuitous routines is that it takes far too long for the action to get underway. This is also true of some relatively direct routines. The action in a mentalism effect is the mentalism itself - not the preparatory steps. Unquestionably, the sequence of events leading up to the actual mindreading can be - must be - interesting. However, as a general rule, the earlier one can get to the pay-off, the better.

Yet another limitation in our field, of course, is that with rare exceptions we are unable to make use of particularly interesting physical materials. If we exclude the related field of occult presentations, our props consist of very simple, functional items: pads of paper, books, cards, and the like. Occasionally we get the opportunity to hang an ornate prediction chest from the ceiling, or something similar, but by and large we must stick to the type of prop which seemingly exists only for its obvious functionality.

For reasons of credibility, our materials must be very ordinary. Because they are ordinary, they are therefore not very interesting.

All right. Given that we cannot depend on our props to hold the audience's attention, we are forced to conclude that in essence it is the performer's personality, and that alone, which will be used to hold the audience during the preparatory periods of a performance. Probably no other performance field, with the exception of stand-up comedy, makes such a demand on the presenter.

In devising routines, I attempt to find dramatic vehicles for myself. All entertainment is based on the fundamental principles of theater. Every performance - whether it be a song, a joke, or a miracle - is a piece of theater. This holds true whether the performance is taking place in a stage situation, or off the cuff.

Each performance piece must be considered a theatrical story - perhaps a very brief one, but still and all, a story. In order to develop as a story-teller (which I am contending is essentially what we are), one can benefit from studying other story-tellers, to examine the ways in which they operate.

In this manner, I have intentionally looked to fictional writers for inspiration; to stage and film performers; to all of the other story-tellers that intrigue me. Sometimes one can learn from the most unlikely sources. As an example, I will mention that I learned a very valuable bit of theatrical technique from (of all places) a Bruce Lee Kung Fu movie! As removed from mentalism as it might seem, an approach of Lee's was appropriated, modified, and put directly into my work as a nightclub performer.

It occurs to me that we all too often approach our work with a very limited conceptual focus. Given that the nature of the material itself is, as I've maintained, very limited to begin with, this only serves to restrict us even more. From such conditions stagnation rather than progress is the most likely result.

Ours is a game of imagination.

Forgive me for waxing didactic, but it is a game I love dearly. I hope you enjoy the Red Book.


Philip Goldstein
March, 1977

Ladies and gentlemen, I propose to show you something you have never seen: a Four-Sided Triangle. Earlier this evening, I spoke to two members of this audience, and asked them to participate in an experiment which we shall conclude in a few moments. I talked to a gentleman...is that man here? Ah, there you are. Sir, would you please verify everything I say. First of all, we have never met previously. About half an hour ago, I asked if you would assist me by safeguarding a sealed envelope. The envelope has been in your possession since then. I asked you not to open it or to let anyone else handle it. Is this correct, sir? Do you have the envelope now? Fine. Please continue to hold onto it for the next few minutes. Ladies and gentlemen - the first side of our Four-Sided Triangle.

"Some twenty minutes ago, I spoke to a woman, and asked her to also participate in this demonstration. Madam, would you please identify yourself. I will ask you to also verify all that I say concerning our earlier meeting. When we spoke, I asked you to first of all clear a blank space in your mind, and into this space to insert the thought of a playing card. This was a free determination on your part. You were to lock the thought of a card into your mind, and since that time you have not told the name of this thought-of card to anyone - not to me, not to your friends or to anyone else here. I specifically asked you to not even write the name of this thought-of card down. You have simply kept the image locked tightly inside your head. Is all of this true? Fine. Please do not reveal your thought just yet. You are the second side of our triangle.

"I also have a deck of playing cards with me, and I'll ask a third member of the audience to help me out right now. Sir, will you join our triangle? Please extend your hand, and touch any one of these cards...that one? Fine. Remove it and hold it up against your chest. Don't let me or anyone else see that card at this time. You are the third side of the triangle.

"Three sides, ladies and gentlemen...but I promised you a Four-Sided Triangle. The fourth side is...me. Madam, for the past twenty-odd minutes you have kept a secret thought hidden in your mind; the thought of a playing card. For the first time, would you reveal to me and everyone else the name of this card you have been thinking of..."

The spectator states that she's been thinking of the five of clubs. The mentalist calls on the first man to open up the envelope. It contains a jumbo card...the five of clubs. The other spectator shows the card he removed from the pack. It, too, is the five of clubs. A Four-Sided Triangle.

The reader has probably surmised that the selection made by the third spectator was a force. There is thus no mystery as to how the jumbo card in the envelope matched. The question is, how was the mentalist able to obtain the information as to what card the first spectator was merely thinking of, without the use of impression devices of any kind (since she was not allowed to write the name of the card down at any time)?

The answer is disarmingly simple. Prior to the performance, the mentalist takes a spectator aside. He says the following: "I'd like you to help me with an experiment that will be part of my show later tonight. The first thing I want you to do is to clear a blank space in your mind. Have you done that? Good. I've got a deck of cards. Would you take one? Look at that card, and then return it to the deck. Now please insert the thought of that card into the blank space in your mind. Have you done that? Lock it in there - please don't forget it, for I'll ask you to tell it to me later. For the time being, don't tell me what the card is. Don't tell it to anyone else, either. Don't write it down, just keep it locked inside your head. Okay? I thank you in advance for helping out in this, and if everything goes well, our experiment should prove a success later on during the show."

That answers that! You simply use the same forcing deck that you will be using later with the third spectator to force the five of clubs on the initial participant. The deception really takes place when the performer re-caps what went on. He asks the lady to verify all that he says. He states that he asked her to clear a blank space in her mind. She agrees that this happened. He states that he asked her to insert into this blank space the thought of a playing card. She verifies that this is what happened. Of course, the performer neglects to mention that an actual deck of cards was used in this process. When he states that it was a "free determination" on her part, the rest of the audience assumes that this means a mental selection. The woman interprets the same statement to mean exactly what went on: she had a free (as far as she knew) determination from a physical deck of cards.

What is being exploited here is double entendre. The performer's public statements are subject to two similar but different interpretations - one by the woman, one by the rest of the audience. Note that the construction of the routine is such that the woman is fooled herself, even though she knows that a deck was used in the selection process, for she still does not know how the performer ascertained her choice. Thus, she is an unwitting accomplice in a baffling demonstration of mentalism.

Parallax

The performer displays two pads of paper, and two marking pens (all of which may be borrowed). Three spectators are invited up on stage. They are given a pad and pen, and asked to stand at one end of the stage. The performer stands at the other end, with his back to the spectators.

Addressing the first spectator, the performer asks him or her to draw a simple geometric design. After a moment's concentration, the performer also draws something on his pad. Without turning around, the mentalist tells the second spectator to take the pad, and to write on it a letter of the alphabet. After some thought, the performer also writes something on his pad. Still with his back to the assisting group, the performer instructs the third spectator to take the pad, and on it to write any number from one to a hundred. Knitting his brow, the mentalist writes his final thought onto his pad.

Before turning around, the performer hands his pad to a randomly selected spectator in the front row. At no time has any of the spectators announced his choice out loud - or even shown it to the rest of the audience. And yet, when the two pads are compared, the information on each is identical.

?

Yes, there's a catch. Spectator #3 is a confederate. You've previously agreed that he will write down the number 49. In addition, he is the one who codes you as to what the first two spectators wrote. This is information easily available to him, once the pad is handed to him.

The coding is done quite openly, but it is disguised. For all intents and purposes, there is no banter between you and the spectators. However, as a perfectly acceptable (and inconspicuous) social gesture, you ask each spectator his or her name. The name spectator #3 gives you codes the information to you. The geometric shape is coded by the first name, with this simple system: Andy = circle; Andrew = oval; Bruce = X or plus-sign; Charles = triangle; Dan = square; Daniel = rectangle; Dave = parallelogram or diamond; David = trapezoid; Ed = pentagon; Edward = pentagram; Fred = hexagon; Frederick = 6-pointed star; Harry = octagon. These will cover virtually anything drawn by the first spectator.

The letter of the alphabet is coded by your confederate's choice of surname. The initial letter of his announced last name is two places earlier in the alphabet than the letter to be coded. For example, "Jones" would code the letter L.

When you state you are drawing a shape on the pad, you actually write down the first digit of the pre-arranged number. When you seemingly write the letter, you in fact put down the second pre-arranged digit. In pretending to write the number, you actually write the letter and draw the geometric shape.

Disposable Color

"In order to allow myself a completely random selection of an assistant from this audience, I shall toss this paper ball over my shoulder. Whoever catches it, please come up and join me on stage." This is done.

Addressing the spectator, the performer continues. "If we were to meet at a social gathering, we'd probably ask certain questions about each other, to find out what the other person is like. Questions such as, 'what do you do for a living', or 'do you have any unusual hobbies'. However, I'm not so much interested in what you are like, as in what your mind is like. In my line of work, I must find out the way you think. Thus, the kind of question I ask in order to gain some understanding of your personal psychological make-up would be this: when I snap my fingers, would you call out the first color that comes to mind."

The mentalist snaps his fingers. The spectator names a color - for example, blue. "Would you kindly un-crumple the paper ball you've been holding onto." The spectator does this. Written on the paper, in large letters, is the word BLUE.

?

The method depends on a psychological force, plus an out. As you probably know, if you ask a spectator to quickly name a color, the most common choice is red. However, if you give the spectator a moment to consider the process...in other words, tell him that you're going to ask him to name a color, and then demand it, the most common choice is blue. If you'll try this out, you will see that there is a high success ratio.

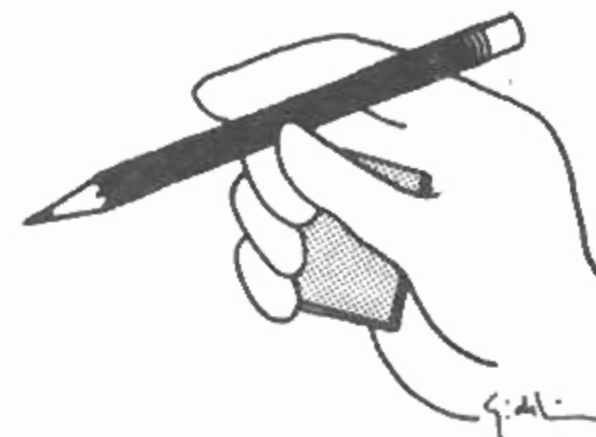
Ah, you're wondering what to do if the spectator should name a color other than blue. The answer is...nothing! Remember, you've not informed the audience that this is a prediction effect. It is introduced as a method for gaining psychological information about the spectator. If he names, say, orange, you just smile and say, "That's fascinating! Most people would have said red, or perhaps blue...but you said orange, and this tells me a lot about the independent way in which your mind operates."

Casually take the paper ball from the spectator, and get rid of it. Continue by saying, "Given this individualistic mentality of yours, I must adjust my approach accordingly...." -- and now dive right into your next routine, using this spectator.

Writer's Cramp

This is a billet-switching technique, which will allow you to exchange a reasonably large slip of paper for a duplicate, under cover of a natural set of actions.

The billets should be made of relatively stiff paper, to make the handling easier. The dummy billet is finger-clipped between the fleshy base of the right thumb, the the center joints of the second and third fingers. Also held in the hand is a pencil - which both justifies the curled position of the hand, and also helps to accomplish the actual switch itself.



When the spectator has finished writing on his billet, he folds it. You take it with your left hand, holding it at the left edge, between your left thumb and right finger.

State, "I will initial this slip, for future reference." The hands come together - apparently for the right hand to mark your initials on the slip using the pencil you hold. What happens is that for an instant the right hand comes in front of the left, blocking the spectator's billet from view. During this instant, the left hand cops the duplicate billet between the tips of the first and second fingers. The genuine billet is retained by the right hand in between the base of the thumb and the first joint of the second finger.

This takes but a fraction of a second, and it is all done during a natural action. Immediately, use the pencil to jot your initials onto the (dummy) billet in the left hand. The switch is done. Proceed as you will.

the Happy Horoscoper

The performer displays a set of twelve large cards. On each is printed the symbol for one of the astrological signs. A spectator is asked to name his or her birthdate. Let's assume the date named is the tenth of June. "Ah!" exclaims the mentalist, "you are a Gemini." He openly removes the Gemini card from the packet, and places it aside on a nearby chair or table. He now proceeds to give an astrological reading for the spectator. For a climax, he informs the audience that the reason he was able to give the spectator such an accurate reading is that he came prepared to meet a Gemini that evening. Turning the packet of eleven cards over, each card is seen to be blank on the back. The card previously removed - which has been in full view at all times - is now turned over. Printed in large letters on the back of this card is the message, "Happy Birthday!"

The method is extremely simple. Thirteen cards are used. Each card has an astrological sign drawn on it with marking pens. (You can locate the appropriate symbology in any horoscope booklet.) Two cards are made for the sign Aries. They are identical on their faces, but the back of one has the "Happy Birthday" message printed on the back in large letters.

The cards are arranged in proper date sequence, with the "Birthday" Aries card on the face, the normal Aries card behind it, then the cards for Taurus, Gemini, etc. The face of the "Birthday" Aries card is prepared with a generous quantity of magician's wax.

When the cards are displayed, the two Aries cards are kept together, so that only twelve cards are seen by the spectators. When the chosen spectator is asked to reveal his or her birthdate, the card for the appropriate sign is removed from the fanned packet, and placed on the face of the group. Obviously, the prepared Aries card adheres to the back of this card. The two will stick together, due to the wax. The double card is placed aside, facing the audience. An Aries card will still show at the face of the packet, so that all will appear to be fair.

After doing a combination astrological/cold-reading on the spectator, turn over the group of eleven cards to show blank backs, then turn over the tabled double card to show the birthday greeting.

Should the spectator's birthday fall during the sign of Aries, do not discard the Aries card. Instead, simply turn the packet face down, and fan out all thirteen cards (the audience will not think to count the number of cards in the fan), to show that the back of the face card - Aries - bears the message.

The effect is described as a stage routine, but obviously a smaller set could be made up for close-up performance. You might wish to make up duplicate cards for each sign with the birthday greeting on the back of each, so that the card could later be switched, then given to the spectator for a souvenir. In this case, you would probably want to include an advertising message in small print on the face of the card.

Satan's Nightmare

Earlier in the evening, the performer has given a sealed envelope to a spectator to hold onto. If the spectator cares to examine the envelope (by feel or by holding it up to the light - he has been asked not to open it), he will find that a card of some sort is contained therein.

Later on, during the performance, a deck of tarot cards is introduced. A spectator (other than the one holding the envelope) is asked to take one Tarot card. He is given a pen, and asked

to write down the first three digits of his license number, social security number, or any other number which is in some way connected with his personal life.

The card is taken back, the pen also, as the wizard discusses the "significance" of the numbers. The card is given to yet another spectator, who also notes the written number as well as the card's value, and proceeds to tear it into pieces. These are placed into a bowl, and burned.

While the flames are consuming the card, the envelope is retrieved from the spectator who has been holding it up until now. The performer dips his finger into the ashes, and writes the spectator's number across the outside of the envelope. With proper mystical chanting, the envelope is ripped open, and its contents extracted. Those contents happen to be.... the selected tarot card, bearing the written number, all of which can be verified by the various participants. Having truly transcended the laws of space and time (among others), the performer bows deeply.



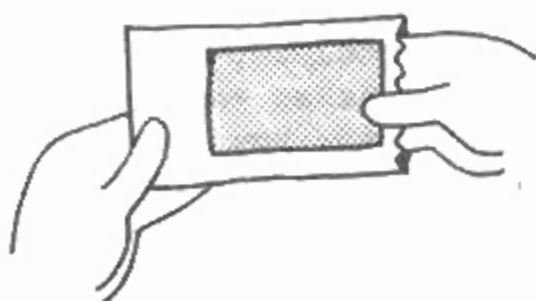
This routine is based on an old and lovely routine of Henry Hardin's, called "Satan's Mail", and also an effect of William Lindsay Gresham from the Phoenix, entitled "Nightmare Allez".

The deck of tarot cards is a Menetekel deck, which is to say that it is made up of pairs of duplicate cards. The envelope is prepared by having an arbitrary tarot card glued inside of it. This will never be directly viewed - its only purpose is so that the spectator who is holding the envelope will be able to feel (and see, should he hold the package up to the light) a card inside the envelope. The other required materials are a bowl, some matches, a pen, a nailwriter with lead to match the pen (the thick Listo is best), and a tiny amount of magician's wax. The daub of wax may be stashed in any one of a variety of locations - select what is best for you.

The envelope is given out before the show. During the performance, the deck of tarot cards is introduced, and one is taken by a spectator. When the spectator takes your Listo pen to write his number on the face of his card, you are obviously able to see what card he selected. Thus, when you break the pack at the place the card was taken from, it will take but a moment to note whether the mate of this card is now on top or bottom of the pack. In either case, position it so that it is on the bottom. As the spectator is writing his three-digit number on his card, you casually look over his shoulder, and write the same number on the mate card, using your nailwriter. The deck of tarot cards is large enough to supply adequate cover for this activity, and besides, all attention is on the spectator at this point. There's no need to try and duplicate the spectator's writing - just get the right numbers down in the proper area of the card's face.

Have the spectator return his marked card to the top of the face down deck, face up. Turn his card face down on top of the pack. Right now you have two duplicate cards - not only of the same value, but bearing the same 3-digit number in the same position. As you walk over to the spectator who is to do the burning, it is a simple matter to boldly remove the face card of the deck and hand it to him. There is no move involved - just do it. He will immediately see that he is getting the right card by noting its value and the number inscribed on it - both of which have been stated out loud already. Thus there cannot be any thought that you have switched cards, unless your own guilt serves to telegraph this fact.

This spectator is given the card, and asked to verify the written number. He is now instructed to rip the card to pieces, and to burn it in the bowl before him. While this is being done, cop the pellet of wax on the tip of your middle or ring finger, right hand. As the card is being burned, ask for the return of the envelope. When you receive it, smear the wax on the center of the back of the envelope. Casually show the back and front of the sealed envelope, and then rest it for a moment on the top of the deck (which is still in your left hand). The spectator's marked card will stick to the daub of wax and will be concealed behind the envelope when you pick it up. Take the envelope by the edges with the right hand as the left gets rid of the deck. Transfer the envelope to the left hand - once again, by the edges (not to make a big thing out of it, but just suggesting by your handling that there is no "sleight-of-hand" going on...). Using your right forefinger, dip into the bowl of ashes, and write the chosen number across the front of the envelope as you mutter suitable incantations.



Rip open the end of the envelope, and reach inside with the fingers of the right hand. Ignore the card that is glued to the interior (it won't come out, anyway). The right thumb slides the marked card along the back of the envelope. From the front it will look exactly like the marked card is

being removed from within the envelope. The card will come out with its back to the audience. Pause a moment, then turn it around. Astral Projection, or...?

To clean up, simply crumple up the envelope and throw it away. The spectators are not interested in the envelope, but rather in the card - which they're free to examine to their hearts' content.

Psychini the mentalist has been approached by an interested party, who would like to see a demonstration of the former's abilities. "Fine," replies the mystic, who proceeds to take a pocket writing pad and pen from his pocket. As he writes on the pad, he explains, "What I am committing into writing has some bearing on a choice you will be making in the next few moments. It is my intention to mentally control your response to a simple question I will ask. You make take your time in answering, and you may even change your mind before finally deciding - but I assure you that this paper will give proof that your final choice was not the product of your own free will, but a specifically guided and controlled choice...controlled by my will."

As he concludes this statement, he finishes with his writing. Tearing the sheet from the pad, he folds the paper into a small packet, and places it on the table.

"There - I've committed myself. Now for your question. I want you to consider the numbers from one to six. Take your time, but decide on one of those numbers. Then look me straight in the eye, and state your chosen number." The spectator thinks for a moment, and calls out "four".

The performer invites the spectator to open the paper. On it is the following:

"The Great Psychini is:

1. Remarkable
2. Unusual
3. Fascinating
4. YOUR CHOICE
5. Uncanny
6. Entertaining"

?

The method is simplicity in itself. In the performer's pocket is a simple five-billet index, loaded with duplicate lists. Each list has been re-ordered so that the phrase "YOUR CHOICE" appears at a different number - one, two, three, five and six. During the presentation, the performer writes the #4 list on the pad, and folds that slip to resemble the pre-written billets in the index. Should the spectator name "four", no further action is necessary. For any of the other choices, he must of course remove the proper billet from the pocket index, and do a billet-switch as the tabled paper is picked up and handed to the spectator.

Note that the action of writing out a slip as you talk to the spectator serves to suggest that only one slip could possibly be in play. The effect is not earth-shaking, but it is a nice, direct demonstration of mental control - and the spectator is left with a physical reminder of the event, which promotes your name. Additionally, if the pad of paper used has your name and address imprinted on it, the list given out as a souvenir will be even more valuable from an advertising point of view.

Vision Version

Over the years there have been many routines devised using a deck of design cards. One of the very first to appear in print was Annemann's "Extra-Sensory Perception", first published in the Jinx in 1935. This routine made use of a stacked deck of design cards. In the time since, many variations have appeared using the same basic concept. What most of these routine lack is a climax. Most follow the Annemann effect, where two designs are selected by as many spectators, and the performer is able to duplicate the chosen images.

The problem is that once the first design has been revealed by the performer, the successful revelation of the second has no particular impact. True, it is impressive and baffling, but there is nothing to theatrically cue the audience that this is the finish - that it is time to burst into an appropriate round of applause.

In this routine we will discuss the handling and presentation of the basic design deck effect, and then explain a follow-up use of the deck for an impressive finish.

"Some fifty years ago, at Duke University, Professor J.B. Rhine established the first parapsychology laboratory, to investigate something he termed 'ESP' - Extra-Sensory Perception. In order to scientifically explore this phenomenon, Dr. Rhine devised a set of five designs, known as ESP Testing Symbols. The five symbols are a circle, a plus-sign, three wavy lines, a square, and a star. Each is an easily identifiable visual image, and thus the symbols lend themselves quite nicely to the testing of telepathic interaction.

"I propose a series of tests using visual imagery. However, in order to expand the possibilities, and to make things more difficult for myself, I will not limit our materials to a field of five choices. Instead, we shall make use of this pack of visual images. You will notice that there are about thirty cards, and on each there is drawn a different simple design. Observe also that the backs of the cards are blank - to preclude any possibility of marking the cards.

After mixing the cards, the performer picks up a large drawing pad. The pack is placed face down onto the pad, and the pad is extended to a spectator, who is asked to cut off some cards, and to hold them up against his or her chest. This is repeated with a second spectator.

"Please note that even if it were possible for these cards to be marked, there would be no way for me to take advantage of it. Both the faces and backs of the designs that have been cut to are concealed from my view."

With his left hand, the mentalist holds the balance of the cards, plus the drawing pad, as he takes a marking pen from his pocket with his right hand. One of the spectators is asked to look at and concentrate upon the randomly selected design at the face of their cut-off group of cards. After some thought, the performer begins to sketch on his pad. When he is done, the spectator is asked to show the design on the face of his or her packet. Simultaneously, the performer turns around his pad... the drawings match exactly.

Taking back the spectator's cards, and tearing the top sheet off of the pad, the performer turns his attention to the other assisting audience member. Again, the mentalist is able to precisely duplicate the spectator's design.

Taking back the spectator's cards, the performer places the pad and pen aside. "I would like to use this selection of images for a further demonstration. Would you please join me on stage, sir. Here in my pocket there is a sealed envelope. Would you please take it, and hand it to anyone in the audience. Fine. Now take the cards, and deal them slowly, face down, one on top of the other, onto the palm of my hand. At any time you wish, you are to stop dealing.

"Right here? All right, let's take a look... You have stopped at the diamond. Let's see...had you stopped one card earlier, it would have been the star...one card further, and it would have been the spiral...but you decided to stop here at the diamond.

"Where is the person holding my envelope? Would you be so kind as to unseal it now. Take out the folded paper inside. Unfold it, and hold it up so that we all may see what is drawn on it."

The spectator does this. On the large sheet of paper is an equally large drawing...of a diamond.



Let's discuss the two parts of the routine separately. For the first phase, as mentioned earlier, a stacked deck of design cards is used. Some versions of this idea have involved a cue-list of the order of the images. I prefer to use a set of mnemonically-ordered designs, so that no list is needed. Although the deck is stated to have "about thirty" cards, it in fact contains just twenty-five - to make the memorization simpler.

Many others have published design stacks, so if you do not care for the following, you can research others...or devise your own. This is the one I use:

- 1 ○ single line (first Rhine symbol)
- 2 + two lines (second Rhine symbol)
- 3 ≡ three lines (third Rhine symbol)
- 4 □ four lines (fourth Rhine symbol)
- 5 ☆ five lines (fifth Rhine symbol)
- 6 ⬠ six points
- 7 ☁ cloud ("seventh heaven")
- 8 ∞ resembles figure eight
- 9 9 resembles figure nine
- 10 10 resembles figure ten
- 11 11 resembles figure eleven
- 12 ⌵ hourglass shape (twelve hours)
- 13 ⚡ lightning bolt (unlucky)
- 14 14 vaguely resembles figure fourteen
- 15 * easily associated with preceeding figure
- 16 ♀ "sweet sixteen"
- 17 ♂ easily associated with preceeding figure
- 18 \$ resembles figure eighteen
- 19 N N for nineteen
- 20 \$ twenty-dollar bill
- 21 21 legal drinking age is 21
- 22 22 a "two-two" train
- 23 △ a second three-line figure
- 24 π four & twenty blackbirds in a "pi"
- 25 ¢ twenty-five cent piece

The cards are stacked in order from the face of the packet (i.e., the circle at the face, then the plus-sign, etc.). When the cards are mixed, they are of course actually false shuffled. The standard Charlier (False Haymow) Shuffle, described in many texts, is fine for this - or you can just use a series of cuts.

When the two spectators have each cut off a portion from the top of the face down pack, the card which is left on top of the remainder of the deck will cue you as to the second spectator's design. In other words, if the two parallel lines is on top of the pack after the cutting, the second spectator's face card is the hourglass.

A simple action allows you to look at the top card of the remainder. The cards are sitting on top of the pad, which is being held by the left hand. With the right hand, remove the top card and use it as a scoop to pick up the rest of the cards. As these are taken by the left hand, you can easily glimpse the new face card, which cues you as to the second spectator's design. Therefore, direct your attention to that person, and "telepathically receive" the image from him... Draw it on the pad, show that they match, then retrieve the second spectator's packet.

The top card of this packet will cue you as to the first spectator's design. When you get the second person's packet, place it on top of your own packet. Now you will boldly sight the top card, by lifting it off of the pack and using it to gesture to spectator #1, as you ask that person to concentrate on the image they've selected. Again, draw the picture on the pad, show, then retrieve the packet from the first person.

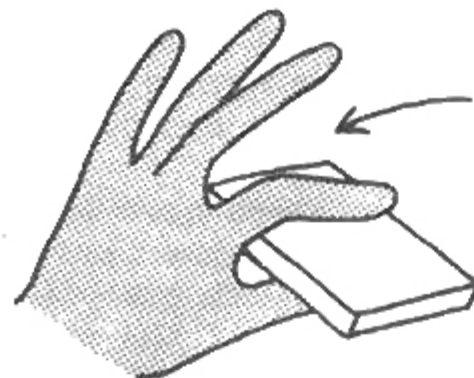
That covers the first part of the routine. Now for the second phase. How are you able to force the diamond on a spectator, with no apparent sleight-of-hand or suspicious activity? The fact that there is no diamond in the stacked pack of cards should indicate to you that a second pack is secretly substituted for the first.

Before explaining the switching technique, let us quickly describe the forcing pack. Twelve of the cards in this deck bear the diamond design; the other thirteen cards have different designs as in the first pack. The force cards occupy the even positions in the deck.

The forcing pack is in your left coat pocket. In your right inside coat pocket you have the envelope with the diamond prediction. The technique used to switch the packs evolved from a write-up by J.G. Thompson Jr.

The legit deck is in your left hand. The spectator is standing on your left. With your right hand, pull open your jacket to display the envelope in your pocket. Ask the spectator to take the envelope from your pocket. As he does so, his body blocks the audience's view of your left hand's activities. The left hand goes into your left coat pocket, and switches decks.

The actual switching action itself is something I call "Diveswitching". The legit deck is held between the left thumb and forefinger. When the hand enters the pocket, the fingers splay out. The legit deck is pressed to the right - against the side of your body. This causes the deck in your pocket to fall to the left. It will automatically be caught between your first and second fingers. Let go of the legit deck, and withdraw your hand, holding onto the forcing pack. This activity is one that can be done extremely fast - in less time than it takes for the spectator to accomplish his activity, which is blocking the audience's view.



After the envelope has been given out, hand the (forcing) pack to the spectator, telling him to deal the cards face down onto your hand. You can easily keep track of the cards as they are dealt, so when he stops you'll know whether there is a force card on top of your packet, or on top of his. Interpret the situation so that he gets a diamond. The cards before and after the diamond can be shown as being indifferent cards. Note also that the bottom card of each packet can be flashed as an indifferent card.

Discard the rest of the deck. Have the prediction envelope opened for your very visual applause cue.

Power Drain

An unusual psychokinetic demonstration: the performer shows a small bar magnet, four or five inches long. He uses it to pick up some paper clips, sticks it on a metal surface (whatever is handy, such as a refrigerator door, or the edge of a metal desk). He now places the magnet in the center of the table.

Knitting his brow, the performer directs his mental energies towards the magnet...to psychically drain the magnet. After much grimacing, sure enough, the magnet is no longer functional: it won't pick up the paper clips, or anything else, for it has truly lost all of its magnetism. There is no switch, and the hands are empty at all times.

?

A gimmick is used, but it's in full view. It is a dealer item produced by Emerson & West, known as the "Kling Ring". This is available from most dealers. It is a ring with a black stone. The stone is actually a magnet, and this is the key to the effect. The "bar magnet" is in fact just a piece of steel. When



you hold it to pick up the paper clips, you curl your ring finger down so that the magnet in the ring comes into contact with the steel - and the latter acts as a conduit for the magnetism from the ring, picking up the clips.

The steel bar adheres to the door thanks to a dab of wax you conveniently placed there beforehand. When the bar is removed from the door, you use your fingernail to scrape off whatever small traces of wax have transferred to the bar.

The rest is theater.

Pscrabble

"I am often asked, 'How did you learn to do what you do? How do you practice?' Frankly, the only way to develop abilities such as mine is through experience. One thing I do in order to keep in shape, however, is to exercise.

"Now when an athlete wants to exercise, he or she jogs, or does calisthenics. In my line of work, I exercise by stimulating my cognitive processes with intellectual games. One of my favorite such games is probably familiar to most of you: the game of Scrabble."

The performer empties a bag full of Scrabble letter pieces into a bowl. "If you've ever played the game, you know that each player gets a random selection of seven pieces. Each wooden square has a letter, and a numerical value. The object of the game is to use letters you receive to make the word with the highest point-value possible. Sir, would you kindly mix the pieces in the bowl. Now I want you to remove any seven of them. To keep it a secret, don't show the pieces to me; don't look at them yourself, either - just drop them back into the bag. Good.

"Madam, you will be our player. Have you ever played Scrabble before? Excellent. Remove the pieces from the bag - let me turn my head away first. Place the pieces on the table in front of you. Study them carefully. Now I'd like you to form the best possible word you can with those letters. Go for the highest point score you can. Take your time.

"You'll excuse me for talking to you with my back turned, but I want to keep this a fair game. Have you formed a word? Fine. Just concentrate on the point total. No, a little harder. Ah, it's coming in...a two-digit number...twelve - no! Thirteen! The total is thirteen - is that precisely correct? Thank you.

"Wait - before I turn around, let me try for the word. If I'm lucky, it's not too long a word. How many letters - no, don't say it out loud, just think...thank you. The word is indeed not very long - three letters, in fact. True? Thank you. Would the first letter be an F? Now think of the last letter. No, no not the center letter - I already picked that up, it's an O. It's the last letter I'm interested in. Just think of the last letter...just keep thinking of the letter X. It is an X, isn't it - your word is FOX. I am 100% accurate? Thank you. And thank you for playing the game with me - now I've had my exercise for the day.

?

The method is disarmingly easy. The bag in which the pieces are first introduced is a Grant Drawstring Change-Bag. This is one time where such a prop is completely above suspicion, for many Scrabble players keep their pieces in just such a carrying bag. In addition to looking right, the bag is constructed out of a thick material, which will deaden the sound of the pieces when the dirty work is done.

At the start of the routine, all of the letter pieces are in one side of the bag, except for seven: O-1; L-1; G-2; M-3, F-4; X-8; Q-10.

All of the pieces except for these seven are dumped into the bowl. The spectator mixes the pieces, chooses seven (without looking at them...) and puts them back into the bag. The second spectator reaches into the bag to take out the pieces. Obviously, you open up the other side of the bag for her, and it is the previously determined pieces that she receives.

The specific selection of letters and values is such that the spectator does not suspect anything - the word she must make is "fox", but because a number of other words can be made from the letters, she will feel like she's making a decision with a fair assortment of letters.

The possible words are: "go", "log", "fog", "lox" and "fox". It will be obvious to the spectator that the word with the highest point value is "fox". Proceed from there.

!

PHIL GOLDSTEIN



**THE
GREEN
BOOK
OF
MENTALISM**

Other books by Phil Goldstein:

The Blue Book of Mentalism
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Numero Uno
Time Out
Pointer
Quadrophonic
5-Card Polka
Symbol Simon
eXception
Inside Out
Cirous
Overdose

Introduction

One year has passed since the debut of this series. In this, the third installment, I am offering a variety of new routines which I hope will find favor with you.

In my lecture work, I have discussed a theory which is the basis for all of my endeavors in both magic and mentalism. The most important part of this theory begins with the following premise: "The shortest distance between two points is a straight line." (I am informed that in higher physics, this does not always hold true...but for our purposes, let's assume it does.) If we accept the above premise, then it stands to reason that the shortest distance between two actions is a straight line of action.

To take this one step further, it follows then that the most logical path of action between any two actions is that straight line of action. Thus, any deviation from that straight line must be considered illogical...and thus suspect. Your audience may not be consciously aware of such things, but at the very least a deviation from a straight line of action will register subconsciously — and once the audience suspects your actions, the ballgame is over. In the words of Harry Lorayne, "if the audience knows something was done, it is as bad as if they know what was done."

As it happens, due to the intricacies of methodology, we are often required to break away from that straight path of action. The point that cannot be forgotten is that such a departure from logical action is something that can't be ignored. It must be dealt with, or else it will serve to trigger the audience's suspicions. In some cases, it is possible to eliminate the problem by alterations in the methodology. Other cases are not so easily changed, and must be dealt with through some sort of thematic justification — either explicitly or implicitly.

Destiny

"Do you believe in Destiny? That two seemingly unrelated paths can be inevitably drawn together towards a common conclusion, through the influence of unseen forces...guided by the hand of Fate. If I might borrow that deck of playing cards, I will attempt to invoke such an occurrence.

"Before I take the deck, would you shuffle it. Mix the cards, to insure that their distribution is completely random. Perhaps someone else would also like to shuffle the pack. Fine. Right now, I am going to think of a card...yes, I've decided upon one. I will remove my card from the pack, and place it here on the table.

"Madam, would you also think of a card. Have you done that? Please remove your card from the pack, and also place it onto the table. Now would you kindly cut the deck into three piles. Place your card on top of that pile. Put the next pile on top of that. My card goes on top of that, and the last pile on top of all. At this moment, my card — the two of spades — is separated from your card, which was...please tell me...the ace of hearts? All right, the ace of hearts and the two of spades are separated by some fifteen or twenty cards.

"Let's alter the positions of the two cards, and let's leave it up to chance. Madam, would you pick up the deck and shuffle it once again. At this point, none of use knows where either my card or your card happens to be — nor do we know how near or far apart our two cards are. But you will recall that I proposed an experiment in Destiny... Deal the cards one at a time from the top of the deck, turning the cards face up as you deal them onto the table. When you reach either of our cards — the two of spades which I thought of, or the ace of hearts which you thought of — stop the dealing right there."

The spectator deals until she reaches the ace of hearts. The next card is turned over — it is the two of spades. The two cards, lost in the shuffled pack, have indeed been drawn together by the influence of Destiny.

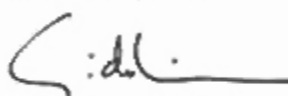


This routine grew out of Arthur Carter's "A Universal Out", from the Magigram, August 1975. It is a most powerful effect, and yet happily enough it requires no sleights, no gimmicks, and no preparation. Because the performer almost never handles the deck, the idea of trickery is eliminated, and it plays as legitimate fate. It should be noted that this routine will also play exceedingly well with Tarot cards, which can add to the quality of mysticism inherent in the plot.

In the routines in both this and my previous mentalism books, I have tried to offer presentations which play logically to the lay spectator's mind. In so doing, I have hopefully created a number of effects which will, if properly presented, play as legitimate Extra-Sensory Perception.

There has been, for quite some time, an on-going debate as to whether a mentalist should claim genuine mindreading powers, or present him/herself as a theatrical entertainer — a magician without a rabbit. As a professional performer in the field of mentalism, I have my own strong personal opinions on this matter. However, it is not my desire to involve myself in this debate within these pages. I will venture the opinion, however, that no matter what one's own feelings on this issue may be, it is necessary for a mentalism routine during performance to play as if it were the real thing. I believe that my published routines live up to this.

We have the potential to instill a sense of wonder in our spectators, perhaps to a greater degree than in any other branch of entertainment. It is, literally, a wonderful game.



Phil Goldstein
September, 1977

To begin with, you borrow a deck of cards. Have several spectators shuffle the pack. It makes no difference how well the deck is mixed. The real reason for having a number of different people shuffle the pack is that you're looking for a spectator who uses an overhand style of shuffling. When you find that person, you are all set, and it is that person you will use to participate in the routine.

You claim you are thinking of a card. Pick up the deck, and remove any card, placing it face down on the table. Let's say this card is the jack of diamonds. When you run through the deck, you note and remember the top card of the deck — for example, say, the deuce of spades.

The spectator is instructed to think of a card, then to remove it from the pack. At this point, three things are possible. If the spectator has thought of the jack of diamonds, when she looks for that card it will be missing. Her inability to find the card will clue you in on this, and you alter the ending of the routine by explaining that, through the powers of Destiny, you both were drawn to think of the exact same card.

The spectator may think of the two of spades. In this case, you will know the identity of the spectator's thought-of card, as you will observe the spectator removing the top card of the pack and placing it on the table. In this case, you would alter the ending to show that it is your destiny to be able to telepathically receive the identity of the spectator's card, though she is unable to guess the identity of yours. (If the spectator is able to guess that your tabled card is the jack of diamonds, take her aside and find out her secret...)

Most of the time, however, the spectator will think of a card other than the one on the table or the one on top of the pack. In this case, proceed as follows: have the spectator table the deck, and cut it into three piles. When she does, keep track of which pile is the original top third of the pack. The top card of this pile will be, of course, the previously noted card (deuce of spades in our example). Instruct the spectator to drop her card (ace of hearts in our example) on top of this pile, then to drop another pile on top of that. Your card (which is the jack of diamonds, but which the audience has not been shown) is dropped on top of the assembled cards, and the remaining pile is dropped on top of all. At this moment, the ace of hearts is directly above the two of spades.

The next step is simple: you lie. You state that the card which you thought of and removed was the two of spades. The spectators will believe that your card and the spectator's ace of hearts are in two separate locations in the pack. Now tell the participating spectator to give the deck a shuffle. As you have arranged by the particular spectator you've chosen to work with, this will be an overhand shuffle.

The odds are about 80% that any two cards which are next to each other in the deck prior to an overhand shuffle will still be next to each other when the shuffle is done. Thus, at the conclusion of the spectator's shuffle, it is a good bet that the ace of hearts is still directly above the two of spades, wherever in the pack that pair may now be situated.

Have the spectator deal cards from the top of the pack, face up, until she reaches "one of the selected cards" (you don't want to let it be known that you already know which card she will come to first). When she reaches the ace of hearts, your deuce of spades will be right after it — clearly the forces of Destiny at work.

By all means, there is an element of risk involved in this routine. There is no simple "out" available should the cards become separated during the shuffle. However, the risk of failure is not all that large, and certainly the impact of this effect when it is successful merits taking that risk. If you are unable to face such a risk, take up box magic.

Combo

The performer hands a pad of paper and a marking pen to a spectator seated in the audience. A second spectator is given a pack of playing cards. The first participant is asked to draw a simple design, composed of one or more geometric shapes. The second spectator is asked to mix the deck, look through it, and remove any card he likes.

The mentalist never touches the deck or pad of paper again — and in fact these may all be borrowed, as no preparation is involved. There is no conversation between the performer and the participants, aside from the delivery of instructions — thus precluding any coding. Nevertheless, the performer picks up his own pad and pen, and writes down his impressions. After the performer's pad has been placed aside (so as to rule out the possibility of any one-ahead system, or any alteration of what the performer has drawn on his pad), the choices are shown. The first spectator has drawn, say, a square inside of a circle. The second spectator holds, for instance, the three of spades. On the performer's pad (which may in fact be turned over by a spectator) is a perfect duplication of the drawing, and also the name of the proper card.



A code is indeed used, but it is a silent system, and the coding action is completely hidden by the action of the routine itself. Spectator two is a confederate, with whom you have pre-arranged the card to be thought of — in this example, the three of spades. This spectator arranges to sit in the second or third row of the audience. The first spectator may be anyone, but you see to it that the person you choose as the first participant is sitting in the first row, diagonally in front of the confederate. Thus, your stooge is able to see over the first spectator's shoulder, and note the design drawn by the genuine participant. He then codes it to you, in a non-verbal way.

The code is derived from Bob Wagner's "Simbal Dek", in his book, "Magic Dungeon Mentalism". It, in turn, was derived from a routine by Tot O'Regan which appeared in Ed Mellon's "Mental-Wise". What this is is a set of fifty-two designs, made from one or more geometric shapes. Each design is mnemonically linked to a playing card, and the system is extremely easy to learn. O'Regan used a pack of design cards based on his system, and was thus able to do various stacked deck routines. Wagner revised the designs, and in addition to offering stacked deck ideas, proposed using the system in conjunction with a verbal code, to allow one member of a two-person team to cue the other as to what design had been drawn by a spectator. The "Simbal Dek" system can duplicate or come close to duplicating just about any design that a spectator might draw.

In my application of the system in the "Combo" routine, the mentalist is apparently working alone. Both he and his stooge have learned the code. The stooge knows — by simply looking — what the first spectator has drawn. When the stooge looks through the deck, he locates two cards: the previously agreed upon three of spades, and the card in the pack which correlates to the first spectator's drawing. In our example, the design was a square inside a circle. The card in our system which links to this design is the four of clubs. Thus, in this instance, the stooge would cut the four of clubs to the face of the deck as he went about removing the three of spades and placing that in his pocket.

When the performer hands the pack to the second spectator (the confederate), he retains the card case. Thus, it is a perfectly logical action for the stooge to offer the deck back to the performer after removing a card. The mentalist waves the offer aside, informing the spectator (stooge) to keep the pack until later. This will throw any observer off the track, should that person be expecting the performer to look through the pack to find what card is missing... However, when the stooge holds the deck out to the performer, he holds it in such a way as to flash the face card to the performer. Thus, the mentalist is able to translate the flashed card into the first spectator's design.

There is one variation: the three of spades matches a simple triangle in the system. Should the first spectator draw that same figure, the stooge would immediately place the balance of the pack into his pocket, without offering to give it back to the performer, and thus the latter would know at a glance that a triangle was being coded.

revised 'simbal dek' system

				
A		□	⊙	△
2	+	⊞	⊕	⊠
3	△	⊞	⊕	⊠
4	□	⊞	⊕	⊠
5	☆	⊞	⊕	⊠
6	⬡	⊞	⊕	⊠
7	♣	⊞	⊕	⊠
8	8	⊞	⊕	⊠
9	≡	⊞	⊕	⊠
10	*	⊞	⊕	⊠
J		⊞	⊕	⊠
Q	○	⊞	⊕	⊠
K	.	⊞	⊕	⊠

Old Math

"Ladies and gentlemen, one of the very first intellectual processes we learn to understand is that of basic mathematics. No matter what your profession might be, no matter how you occupy your time, it would be virtually impossible for you, or me, or anyone to go through a day without making use of some basic mathematical reasoning. Every time we handle money, look at the clock, consult the calendar, or simply walk down the street, our minds must deal with numbers.

"I call to your attention two envelopes. Ah - you see? I've already used a number during the simple action of telling you what I am holding. Two envelopes. In this first envelope is a piece of paper, and on that paper is a number from one to ten. I would like each person here to relax, and simply grab onto the thought of a number...any number from one to ten...the first number you think of. Fine. Let's open the envelope. As you can see, the target number I was concentrating on was seven. How many people thought of that number?

"That many? Wonderful. Of course, this was a very simple test, with certain basic and obvious psychological factors involved. After all, seven is a lucky number for many people, and perhaps this influenced some of you. But this was just a beginning. You see, inside of this second envelope there is also a written number, but we shall use a more advanced thinking process to arrive at that figure.

"Would you be so kind as to hold onto this envelope for me? Thank you - I shall call on you shortly. Now, would you also help me out, madam? Fine. Here is a pad of paper, and a pencil. Would you relax...take a deep breath...don't try to out-guess me, just respond naturally. I want you to write a number from one to fifty on the paper. Tell me when you're done. Now? Good.

"Sir, would you please take the pad and the pencil, and get ready to also write down a figure - no! Not yet...I want you to also relax...take a deep breath...and now put down a number between fifty and a hundred. Take as much time as you need. All done? Fine.

"Let's see...is there someone here who feels capable of adding these figures up accurately? How about you - thank you. Total the numbers chosen by these two people...all set? Would you tell us all, in a nice loud voice, just what the total happens to be. Eighty-eight? Might I check your addition? Hmm...looks correct to me. Sir, you've been holding that envelope since before we began...would you now open it and show us the paper inside. What is the number drawn on that paper? Eighty-eight? Thank you so much."



The basic "Add-A-No" effect is a good one. There have been countless variations, but most have suffered from two drawbacks, in my opinion. First, they failed to establish a context for themselves, and thus they stood the risk of playing very dryly. In the above presentation I have offered my packaging, designed to overcome this by providing a conceptual framework which in turn involves most of the audience actively in the ongoing process.

An even more serious drawback to me has always been the potential confusion such a routine can create in the minds of the audience. Most of the time, large groups of figures are used. At the very least, three three-digit numbers must be added by a spectator. This is taxing to a nervous audience member (and believe me, spectators do get nervous in such a situation of responsibility - and are open to making mistakes in even simple addition). In this routine we limit the arithmetic to simply two two-digit numbers - and in so doing, make the effect even stronger, since there is no possibility for confusion with such simple numbers, and thus the audience senses that no chicanery can have taken place. Sometimes less is more.

As far as method is concerned, the simplest ungimmicked method is to use a small pad without any cardboard backing - i.e., one that looks the same on both sides. Prior to your show, you have filled in two two-digit numbers to fit the prediction. The first is less than fifty, the second more. In our example (eighty-eight), you might use 25 and 63. It is virtually impossible for a spectator to mis-add these figures - even in a nightclub situation where there has been alcoholic intake involved. Don't forget to write the numbers in two different handwriting styles, as they are supposed to have been put down by two different people.

The pad is given to the first spectator, blank side up, and that person is told to write down a number less than fifty. A second spectator is given the pad, and told to write a number from fifty to a hundred underneath the first figure. Now you take the pad and pencil, and walk to the other side of the audience. As you do, you simply turn the pad over, handing it with the pre-written figures up for the third spectator to total.

A modicum of care will keep the two-sided nature of the pad's preparation from being noticed. If you are uneasy about this, there are a number of gimmicked pads available from the dealers which are worth your consideration.

The Psychic Bartender

The adaptation of mentalism for nightclub circumstances necessitates certain modified qualities. Routines must be, as a rule, kept even shorter than normal, to accommodate the reduced attention span of a drinking audience. This routine, as with the previously detailed "Old Math", was developed with this need in mind. It not only plays with relative brevity — it specifically plays into the nature of the audience's primary activity...drinking.

The performer addresses his audience. "I often wonder what I would be doing, had I not developed the abilities I have been demonstrating for you. Mine is an unusual profession, and an exciting one. I often think that if I had to choose another line of work, I would still gravitate to the world of nightclubs. Perhaps I'd be involved in one of the more creative nightclub occupations — mixing drinks.

"I truly admire bartenders. In their own fashion, they are artists. I do not have their skill in blending ingredients in just the right proportions. My work is psychologically oriented. But perhaps I can apply my work to theirs."

So saying, the performer picks up a large piece of cardboard, and a grease pencil. Turning to a spectator, he asks that person to name their favorite drink. This is written on the board. A second spectator names a beverage, and this is added to the list, and so on, until five or six drinks have been written on the board.

Turning to yet another spectator, the mentalist asks that person to consider the choices on the list, and to mentally decide on one. After a moment's pause, the performer turns the list towards himself, and marks an X next to one of the names on the board.

Keeping the board turned away from the audience, the performer asks the participating spectator to name her selection. It is, say, an Apricot Sour. The mentalist calls out to a waitress, "Would you please deliver an Apricot Sour to this young lady, and put it on my tab." As this is said, he turns the board around. The X has been marked right next to the item, "Apricot Sour".

The working of this effect is quite old. What is being offered here is a new presentational concept for this routine, plus some ideas on handling.

The board and pencil are ungimmicked. In addition to these, you will need a Listo-style nailwriter — which will duplicate the mark of the grease pencil. At an opportune moment, you must slip the nailwriter onto your right thumb, so have it in an accessible location. Your right coat pocket will suffice.

When you mark the list of named drinks onto the board, write them as large as possible. However, keep the writing near to the center of the board. Leave a few inches of white space at the top and bottom of the list. When the list has been written and displayed, turn the board around to face yourself, and pretend to mark an X to the left of one of the drinks. As you do this, keep your elbow tucked in tight to the body, so that the audience cannot see exactly where you are apparently writing.

You are holding onto the board by its left edge with your left hand. The pencil is in your right hand. Put the pencil away, into your right pocket, and come out with the nailwriter in position on your right thumb. The left hand turns so that the edge it is holding is on top. Take the board from this edge with the right hand. You are now holding the board so that the list is still facing you, but it is now upside down. It is thus a simple matter to mark an X with the nailwriter next to the proper drink on the list. (Refer to the illustration below.)

When it comes time to make the revelation, just rotate the board forward to turn the list to face the audience, right-side-up. Hand the board out as a souvenir, and ditch the nailwriter at your earliest opportunity.

For those who are uncomfortable with the use of the nailwriter, a variety of gimmicked versions of this basic effect have been developed by U.F. Grant, Milbourne Christopher, Peter Warlock, Micky Hades, Clayton Rawson, Bill Severn, and Syd Bergson, among others.



Nucleus

The performer borrows a pack of playing cards. A spectator mixes the cards, and then takes one (it is a genuinely free selection). After signing his/her name across the face of this card, the spectator returns the card to the pack. The performer mixes the cards, some face up and some face down, so that the deck is now a jumble of backs and faces.

"In the religions of India, there is a concept known as the 'Chakra'. A 'Chakra' is an energy center — and there are several of them located along the human spine. In Western terminology, we might use the word 'Nucleus' to describe this focal point, where energy is concentrated. I firmly believe in the existence of this 'Chakra', but I take it one step further...I believe that such a nucleus or energy center exists in everything — even in inanimate objects...such as this deck of playing cards. At the moment, this deck is in a state of chaos — random disorder — but I believe there is a nucleus to this deck...and that this nucleus,

this energy center, exists at this moment centered around a single card which is special. Special because you have focussed your attention on it...signed your name across its face. I believe that if I feel through this chaotic mixture, and can locate the nucleus of the pack...I will find your card."

So saying, the performer begins to spread the cards on the table. He runs his hands over the scattered pasteboards. There is silence — save for some murmured incantations on the part of the performer. This is serious business. The tension begins to build. Suddenly, the performer starts to raise his outstretched hands...and about half of the played-out deck clings to his fingers! Slowly he raises his hands, bringing the clinging cards higher and higher, until the hands reach eye-level, at which point — he screams! All of the cards fall to the table — with one exception: the signed selection is retained in the performer's hands.

Of interest in this routine: unlike any other demonstration of "Animal Magnetism" this writer has ever seen, there is a surprise element built into this routine. The audience does not expect the cards to cling to the performer's hands, and if the mood is properly set up, the reaction will border on shock. Also note that the deck may be borrowed; the selection is fair; the card is signed. During the clinging action, the fingers are spread apart. There are no body hook-ups, and no angle problems. The routine may be done as close to the spectators as you wish.

?

I was originally going to market this as a separate item. The gimmick (yes, there is one) can be made by anyone with a few moments' work. The gaff is made out of two playing cards. Take some clear plastic sewing thread (available at any 5&10), and using a needle, run the thread through a card as in the illustration, so that a loop is formed. The size of the loop should be just larger than the circumference of your forefinger. Tie the loop at the back of the card. Now rubber-cement this prepared card back-to-back with a second card. Apply a generous amount of Magician's Wax to the face of this second card. You're all set to perform the effect.



If you're going to be performing this effect with borrowed cards, you may want to make up two gaffs — one in bridge size, one in poker (although a bridge-sized gaff will work with either type of deck). At any rate, the gaff is in your pocket at the start of the routine. Have the pack shuffled, and have a spectator remove a card from the deck. Hand the spectator a pen (a thick felt marker is best), and tell the spectator to sign his/her name across the face of the selected card. Since you do not want to see what the selection is, you turn your back...and while your back is turned, you add the gaff to the face of the deck! The waxed side should be at the face of the pack.

When the selection has been signed, turn around again, and have the card returned to the pack, so that it goes below the gaff. You can simply cut the deck for the return, or use a Hindu Shuffle, or various other handlings. In any event, the gaff goes onto the selection, so that the selected card is now waxed by its back to the gimmicked card.

The waxed-together cards now form a block that is three cards thick — plus there is a loop of plastic thread on top of them. It is therefore extremely easy to locate them. Cut the block to within a few cards of the face of the pack. Now cut the pack in half, turn the top half face up, and riffle shuffle the two halves together so that the cards are mixed face up and face down. Take care during this that you do not accidentally separate the selection from the gaff. Follow this with a few overhand shuffles. If you know that a particular spectator shuffles overhand fashion, you can have her or him shuffle the deck at this point, without disturbing the set-up.

Place the deck on the table, and deliver the "Chakra" monologue. Build the mood. Now studiously spread out the cards. As you do this, locate the gaff. This is easy — first because of the thickness, and also because you know the upper face of your gaffed card, and can look for it as you spread through the deck. As soon as you find the gimmick, slip your right forefinger into the loop of thread, up to about the first joint of the finger. Now, in the course of further spreading, shove cards from the balance of the deck above the edges of the gaff. It is not at all necessary to try and set the entire deck — it actually plays better if only about half the cards cling, so act accordingly.



When you're ready, position the hands as in the illustration at left. The left forefinger covers the only visual evidence — the crease made by the thread as it pulls against the skin of the right forefinger. The

spread condition of the fingers gives you the leverage required to get the cards to cling to the underside of your hands — and at the same time, makes it look as if there could be no way to have the cards adhere! This position avoids the pinch-grips so often necessary for various "Animal Magnetism" effects. You'll note that because the gaff is self-contained, you can do this with your sleeves rolled back.

Raise your hands, bringing up about half the deck. A few cards will slip loose and fall back to the table. Don't worry about this — it is a visual imperfection comparable to a mentalist making a "near-hit" in a telepathy experiment. Gaze steadily at the clinging spread of cards. Focus your gaze, as if it were your eyes that were holding up the cards. This will increase the drama of the moment. When the hands come up to eye-level, scream. Don't hold

back on this — be loud...it will succeed in startling the hell out of your already-thrown audience. As you scream, relax your grip — and all of the cards will scatter to the table...except for the gaff, which will stay in your hand due to the loop of thread over your finger. Simultaneous with the dropping of the cards, raise your hand and display the signed selection held between thumb and fingers.

When the scattered cards are being picked up, you have ample time and cover to get rid of the gaff.

Notes: If you are indisposed towards playing cards, the gimmick can be made to fit a deck of Tarot cards, Zodiac cards, design cards, word cards, etc. In this case, you might want to expand upon the initial patter, to tie in with the specific theme of the cards you are using. T.A. Waters has made the excellent suggestion of using one's business cards for this routine — perhaps in conjunction with a Living-and-Dead test, or some similar concept.

Whenever possible, I present this routine on the floor — giving me a longer rise, and a larger shower of cards at the climax.

Discretion

The performer is seated at the table, along with a spectator who sits across from him. A draw-string bag is shown, and its contents are emptied out onto the table. These are two dozen discs. Each bears an astrological sign. The chips are sorted out, and it is seen that there are two complete runs of the signs of the zodiac. The spectator takes one set of discs, the performer takes the other.

The performer and the spectator both takes their sets below the table. They mix the discs, then exchange sets below the table. Each continues to mix the charms they hold. The performer instructs the spectator to hold the set of discs in his/her left hand. Now, with the right hand, the spectator is to remove a single disc from the mixture — and the performer does the same.

Another spectator holds the bag so that the performer and the first spectator may discard the discs in their left hands. The bag of discs is put away. The performer and the spectator now hold one chip apiece, below the table.

"Before we look at our discs, let me tell you my birth-sign. I am a Scorpio. What is your astrological sign?" says the performer. The spectator replies, say, Taurus.

"The purpose of this experiment was, of course, to attempt to establish a paranormal affinity between ourselves. Let us now find out what the two discs we hold represent."

The discs being held by the performer and the spectator are looked at. The performer has the disc for Taurus...the spectator holds the disc for Scorpio. Each has found the other's sign.



Thirty-six discs are used: two of each of the zodiac signs, plus an extra twelve duplicates of the performer's sign (in our example, Scorpio). At the start of the routine, the 24 legitimate discs are in the bag. The dozen Scorpio force discs are in the performer's lap. In advance of the performance, you must find out the spectator's birth-sign. This can be done by discrete questioning prior to the show; with the use of a center-tear or impression device; or by simply asking the spectator outright. In our example, the spectator's sign is Taurus.

When the two sets of astrological discs are displayed, the spectator gets one set and the performer the other. Spot the Taurus sign in your group. When you take your set below the table, the Taurus disc is set onto your knee, the other discs are dropped into your lap. Pick up the set of forcing discs, and when it comes time to exchange discs with the spectator, that is what he/she is given. Obviously, the spectator will now have to choose a disc bearing your sign — Scorpio. You are able to select the spectator's sign, as it's been placed aside onto your knee. The spectator discards the force discs into the bag, and you discard all 23 chips at the same time...thus getting rid of all the evidence before the climactic revelation.

Predixion

"I call to your attention this deck of playing cards. You will notice that the cards are sealed inside their case by several rubberbands, and that a folded piece of paper has been attached to the box. Sir, would you be so kind as to hold on to this deck for a few moments.

"Here is a second pack of cards, which we shall use for a process of both random and specific determination. Madam, please take the deck. I want you to deal cards onto the table, face down, one on top of the other — but you don't have to deal from the top of the pack...you may deal from the center or the bottom, wherever you wish. Continue dealing until you decide to stop — don't let me influence you in any way.

"You have chosen to stop at this point? Fine. Put the rest of the pack aside. Pick up the dealt-out pile, and now deal them into two piles. Good. Let's look at the top card of each pile — cards you have arrived at through your random actions. Let's see...the four of clubs and the five of hearts. You have narrowed the choice down to two cards. The next step of the process will involve your own decision-making capabilities. Hold your hand in mid-air, between the two piles. In a moment you will decide on one of the two cards — the four of clubs or the five of hearts. There is no double-talk here...whichever of the two cards you bring your hand down upon, that is the one you will have chosen.

"Ah. You have placed your hand on the five of hearts. We'll place the rest of the cards aside. Sir, do you still have the deck I gave you earlier? Please remove the folded paper, and read what it says, out loud."

The spectator reads: "Earlier today I had an intuitive sense about one card in this deck. So sure was I of my accuracy that I took a marking pen, and draw a large X across that one card — the card I felt sure would be selected in the fairest manner by a spectator later on..."

The spectator takes the deck out of the case, spreads through the cards, and finds that indeed one card has a large X across its face. That card is the five of hearts.



This routine makes use of a modified "double deal" force, to narrow the spectator's choice down to two cards. At the outset, the two force cards (4C and 5H) are on top of the deck. If the spectator deals a pile from the top of the deck, the force cards wind up on the bottom of the dealt pile. If this dealt pile is now re-dealt into two piles, a force card will end up as the top card of either pile.

Ray Goulet has given me permission to describe a valuable subtlety he devised for this force. Note that, in the write-up of the routine, the performer allows the spectator to deal cards from anywhere in the deck — top, center or bottom. How can this be allowed, and the success of the force ensured? The answer lies in the timing of your statements. The spectator is instructed to deal the cards onto the table, face down, one on top of the other... As you make this statement, the spectator will start to deal. By the time you make the offer about dealing from other locations in the deck, the spectator will have already dealt at least two cards — the force cards — down, and thus the force cards will be in position on the bottom of the dealt pile, and the source of the rest of the cards is immaterial. The timing of the statements is so natural that the most observant spectators will be deceived into thinking that the entire composition of the dealt pile is random.

In this fashion, then, the choice is narrowed down to one of two possibilities — the 4C and 5H. The question is now how to cover both of the possible choices. The answer is simple and bold: the 5H has a large X across its face. The 4C has a large X across its back. The spectator handles everything himself — thus it is up to the performer to verbally guide the spectator into the proper handling. The point is that when the pack is looked through face up, the mark on the back is thus concealed — and vice versa.

Onstage Bender

The creative mind of Uri Geller has significantly advanced the world of mentalism. No matter what your opinion may be concerning Mr. Geller's career, there is no question as to the magnitude of his impact on the field.

Geller's work, particularly in the area of key-bending, has been scrutinized by many, and most (though not all) of his methodology has been made available to magicians and mentalists. When the public phenomenon known now as the "Geller Effect" began to grow, I explored the technical aspects of key-bending. I chose not to use metal-bending in my regular performance work, for the simple reason that the game belonged to Geller. However, there were a few special occasions when I was specifically asked to do some metal-bending, and in some instances I obliged.

The basic techniques of metal-bending have now become so common that I have decided to eliminate the key-bending effect from my work, completely. For the time being, it is passe. Needless to say, this is only my opinion, and thus it only affects my own performance work. However, for that reason, I am now going to part with a presentational concept I worked out for my own infrequent use in key-bending demonstrations.

One problem inherent in the key-bending effect is that, in most versions, there is nothing for the audience to look at. True, the bent keys are displayed at the conclusion of the demonstration, but in most of the methods the actual bending process is not seen, taking place as it does inside a closed hand, or at the very least under the performer's stroking fingers. This fact, plus the fact that a key is a relatively small object, meant that key-bending was not a particularly good item to present for any but an intimate audience — and doing it on stage was pretty much out of the question. The bulk of one's spectators would feel "left out" during such a demonstration...and thus their interest would quickly wane.

The following approach was specifically designed to circumvent that problem. The pitch begins as the performer goes out into the audience and collects a number of keys from the spectators. Five to eight keys is the number I found best. Two spectators are also asked to accompany you back to the stage. During the walk back to the performing area, you put the "work" into two or three of the keys. I will not go into the details of key-bending here. As I have stated, the basic information is readily available elsewhere, both in the form of secret bending devices, and sans-gaff techniques. At any rate, by the time you reach the stage with your two spectators, a couple of the keys are bent.

The handful of keys is immediately given to one of the spectators, who is asked to hold them in between his/her hands. Your contact with the keys has been minimal, and as far as anyone knows, nothing has yet transpired...the spectator is ostensibly holding the keys in the same state as they were in when borrowed a moment before — i.e., unbent.

Turning to the second spectator, you display a metal pendulum. (I made use of a silver amulet on a thin chain, which I often wear around my neck.) The spectator is told to hold the end of the

chain in the left hand, letting the amulet hang down. Now you explain, "In order for anything to happen — IF indeed anything will happen tonight — I am going to need the help of every person in this room. I cannot make this happen by myself. My role is that of a conduit...of your energy. I would like you to focus your attention on the amulet. Concentrate your personal mental energies on that amulet...and as you do so, it will begin to swing back and forth...back and forth..."

What is being exploited here, as you have surmised, is the age-old "Sex Detector". The spectator who is holding the pendulum will, through unconscious motor response manifested in minute movement, start the pendulum swinging. This physical activity will have a very strong impact on the audience — particularly on the spectator who is holding the pendulum. Continue exhorting the audience to concentrate on making the pendulum swing...higher...more...more...

During this, your energy level must rise. Your voice should become louder. Your excitement should be apparent. In this way, you will fuel the spectators' response — particularly that of the pendulum-holder. The amulet will swing in a wider arc, presenting a visual focal point for every member of the audience.

When the pendulum is swinging in a strong arc, direct the spectator who is holding the keys to hold his/her hands directly underneath the pendulum. Explain that the audience's task is now to push the energy down from the amulet into the keys. "As the collective energy makes its way down into the keys, the pendulum will start to swing in a circle...changing from swinging back and forth to swinging in a circular pattern...circling around, as the energy goes down into the metal of the keys..."

Under your verbal guidance, the pendulum will indeed begin to swing in a circular motion. Your excitement should build even higher. Direct your attention to the spectator who is holding the keys. Explain that, "as the energy enters the keys, you may feel something...a tingling feeling...perhaps some heat...perhaps even some motion...something moving in between your hands...do you feel something? The warmth, the heat, the movement..."

If you have made a reasonable choice in selecting your spectators, the response will be profound. They may jump, or squeal, as they believe they can feel the keys actually bending underneath their grasp. Every spectator I have ever had hold the keys has stated that they felt something. The extent to which they responded differed, of course, but the experience was always real for them. The power of suggestion, coached along by the visual stimulus of the pendulum's movements, is potent motivation.

When you feel the pitch has reached a peak (and this entire process takes but a few minutes at most), ask the spectator to open his/her hands and examine the keys. Your tone should be one of enthusiastic curiosity...did it work? Of course, two or three of the keys are found bent...and the activity happened completely in the spectators' own hands...

It is difficult to convey just how devastatingly strong this presentation can be, in the right hands. It depends entirely on your own dramatic abilities, with the necessary confidence to turn a purely theatrical bluff into a miracle.

Ranch Dowser

Years ago, I devised a way to exploit the "Sex Detector" which has served me well for a long time. Basically, I took the popular "Ranch Bird" effect, made famous by Don Alan, and turned it into a convincing psychic demonstration. In so doing, I altered the method somewhat, making it extremely practical.

The original routine made use of a one-way forcing deck. This is not necessary for the following routine. You will need a regular deck of playing cards, plus five duplicate cards — say, the ten of clubs. These, along with the 10C from the deck, give you a bank of six mate cards to work with.

At the appropriate time, cull the 10C to the top of the deck, and load the extra duplicates onto the pack. Cut the bank of six 10C's to the center, keeping track of where they lie, and use a Classic Force to make a spectator pick one of the mate cards. This is an easy task, as you have a field of six cards, and thus a fair margin of error.

When the card has been taken, cut the other five duplicates to the top of the deck. Instruct the spectator to look at the chosen card. Now explain that you will lose the chosen card among several other cards. Deal off the top five cards, and put the rest of the deck aside. The six cards are mixed, face down, and then dealt into a row on the table.

Introduce the pendulum, explaining that it will serve as a receiver for the spectator's psychic energy. The spectator is told to hold the pendulum still over each of the face down cards. You state that even though neither of you knows the location of the selected card, there will be a clairvoyant response on the part of the spectator when he/she is over the chosen card — something akin to the process of dowsing. When the pendulum is held over the selection, it will start to swing back and forth...

If your suggestion is properly handled, the pendulum will start to swing over one of the cards. Gather up the other five cards. As the spectator turns over the designated card — revealing it to be the previously chosen one — you have ample opportunity to get rid of the five duplicates.

The Mind's Eye Deck

The performer displays a deck of forty or so cards. They are blank on the backs (to preclude the possibility that they have been marked). On the face of each card is a simple drawing. Each card is different. The pack is shuffled. The performer turns his back, and the spectator is instructed to cut the pack, remove the card cut to, and return the cards to the box from whence they came.

The spectator concentrates on the drawing on his card, then places the card into his pocket. BEFORE the performer turns around, he begins to accurately describe the drawing the spectator is thinking of. Taking out a pad of paper, the performer draws a sketch...which is exactly correct — he has matched the chosen design. And by the way, the spectator can immediately examine the deck.



The pack IS gimmicked, but in a way that would be extremely difficult for an uninformed person to find, unless they spent a lot of time playing with it. It is based on the "Svengali" principle that was created decades ago by Burling Hull. The original use of the Long/Short principle was to force a specific playing card (and indeed the original deck is still a popular selling item). At some point various people realized that the L/S principle could be used to keep pairs of cards together — i.e., to create a stacked deck that could be riffle shuffled (because an L/S deck can be given such a shuffle and still stay in pairs of two).

Here are the pairs of cards in the Mind's Eye Deck:

○ □ circle/square	⌚ ⌚ clock/hourglass
♥ ♦ heart/diamond	⌀ ⌀ spiral/square spiral
♣ ♠ club/spade	💡 🕯 lightbulb/candle
★ ☆ 5-pointed star/6-pointed star	& + ampersand/plus sign
0 1 oval/rectangle	? ! question mark/exclamation
5 V numeral 5/roman numeral 5	💀 ☠ skull/coffin
2 II numeral 2/roman numeral 2	⌘ ⌘ pound sign/union jack
🚂 🛤 train card/railroad track	☪ ☪ cup of tea/letter T
🌊 3 wavy lines/triangles	∞ X eggs/X
☁ ⚡ raincloud/lightning	🌳 🏠 tree/house

Once you have drawn the forty pictures onto as many blank cards, trim the second card of each pair short a fraction of an inch. The deck is assembled with the first card of each pair going above the second as the deck is put together face down. This pack can now be riffle shuffled face up, without disturbing the pairing.

The next thing to note is that, should the pack be cut while face down (assuming that the deck is gripped from the narrow edges during the cut), the top card after the cut will be the second design of a pair (a short card)...and the first design of that pair will be on the bottom of the deck.

If you look further, you will notice that each of the second designs shares two common aspects: each is drawn using only straight lines, and the number of lines used in each is an even number.

This is the means by which you will perform the Mind's Eye effect. Start by taking the pack out of a case or box. Casually run through the cards to show the different faces. Give the pack a few riffle shuffles, face up (this will keep the pairs together). Now turn the deck face down, and place it on the table next to the card case, to the left (refer to the illustration at right). This idea comes from the late Eddie Joseph, and it is brilliant. The spectator is told that, when your back is turned, he is to cut the deck anywhere, and to place the cut-off section on the table over to the right of the case. Because the pack is right next to the case, the spectator has no choice but to cut with his fingers gripping the narrow edges of the pack — thus insuring that he will cut a short card to the top. He is to cut the top half over to the right, and then to place the remaining cards (the bottom half) on top of the cut-off stock. Then he is to look at the new top card (the one he cut to), and to place this in his pocket.



When the spectator informs you that he has done this, you begin to describe the selected design. You can start to do this before you turn around, for you know that the chosen design is made out of straight lines, and that there is an even number of lines in the drawing. After you reveal this information, you turn around, and in the course of talking you reach over and return the pack to its case. In so doing, you glimpse the bottom card — which cues you as to the exact identity of the chosen design in the spectator's pocket. You can now take out a pad and pencil, and draw the correct picture for your climax.

Some time after devising the Mind's Eye effect, I hit upon the idea of carrying the deck in a clear plastic box — the type in which many decorative decks are sold. In this case, the pack is placed on the table, right next to the bottom of the plastic

box. The spectator is instructed to cut off some of the pack, and deposit the cut-off section into the open box. He is to remove the card cut to, then put the balance of the pack into the box, and replace the cover onto the box. When you later turn around, you simply pick up the box and put it away... and you can easily glimpse the cue card on the bottom of the pack, right through the transparent bottom of the box.

A clever modification was later suggested by Roy Miller: by using the principle featured in Larry Becker's "Psycho" (a dealer item), the clear plastic box can be replaced with an opaque one.

At the conclusion of the routine, as previously stated, the deck will survive a cursory examination without the spectator realizing that it is a L/S set-up. The blank backs help to conceal this fact, and if you use card stock with right-angled corners (instead of the rounded corners of playing card stock), the L/S qualities will be very hard to detect. A quick riffle shuffle of the pack, face down, will destroy the pairing system.

That's it. Once you've constructed the pack, you're always ready... and as I've said, there is no need to memorize anything; the cards will cue you easily because the pairs are linked in simple, logical ways. Of course, you can make a deck with less or more than forty designs, at your own discretion.

