

Bob Cassidy's

Theories and Methods for the Practical Psychic



“Why do I call myself a practical psychic?”
“I cheat.”

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Sacred Chao Productions
Federal Way, Washington

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Introduction

And my startling, yet mostly true, biography

The present volume is a compilation of ideas, routines, theories and practical tips of the trade for the working psychic entertainer. It is also the first completely new work I have released in seven years.

Since my first book, *Pseudomentially Yours*, was released in 1977 much has changed in my approach to the art as well as in my life. At the time I already had three years of work as a cruise ship entertainer under my belt and, having finally finished my education by obtaining a law degree, was about to embark on what was to be a ten-year career as a trial attorney.

My activities as a mentalist became limited to appearances for local comedy clubs and organizations, co-founding the *Psychic Entertainers Association*, and serving as editor of its official publication, the *Psychic Entertainers News and Information Service*- referred to by the founders as **P.E.N.I.S.**, an acronym we later were forced to discard when the newsletter was renamed *Vibrations*, reflecting the increasingly respectable and mainstream qualities of the organization.

Actually, everything in my life was slowly becoming respectable and mainstream. Given my nature, this was a frightening course. What many would view as growth and developing maturity, I saw as stagnation and decay. And so, in 1988, I began anew as a full-time performer. Having made the brilliant decision to leave my home in New Jersey (where all of my contacts in show business were) for the Entertainment Mecca of Washington State (chosen because it was farthest distant from the life I sought to leave behind) I essentially found myself in the middle of nowhere with not much more than a change of clothes, a briefcase of equipment and great expectations. [Note: It has been suggested that my abrupt departure was due to a fractured marriage, excessive use of alcohol and mind altering substances, trouble with the Internal Revenue Service and a general mental breakdown as evidenced by the emergence of an alter ego known as the Rt. Rev. Dr. Bob. This may or may not have a basis in fact, but do you expect me to remember everything?]

Of course, in the beginning there is no such thing as a full-time performer. I discovered that a source of immediate income was required and quickly became proficient at the three essential skills of the aspiring actor and entertainer- waiting tables, cooking and bartending. The latter quickly became my forte as it offered me a constant audience upon which to practice my art.

In a matter of a few years my performances were much in demand at four star biker bars and other notable establishments. This was where I developed many of my more eloquent patter lines such as, "I'll bet you thought this was all bullshit" and other clever witticisms.

The performance I described in the *Art of Mentalism 2* evolved during these years. That volume, in turn, led to several lectures for magical groups and very successful appearances at *The Magic Castle*, where I was shocked to discover that I had become rather well known in magicians circles.

This was followed by a philosophical period, which resulted in *The Principia Mentalia*, the successful series I wrote just prior to the release of *Quintessence*, my ill-fated attempt at a bi-monthly publication for mentalists.

The lesson I learned from *Quintessence* was that it is impossible to create quality material within rigid deadlines. For me, at least, creativity doesn't happen on schedule. It is something that cannot be forced.

The effects and presentations contained herein were developed over the last several years. "Theories and Methods," itself, was originally released as a limited edition three-part e-book. Here, for the first time, it is released in printed form with minor modifications. Gratuitous profanity, x-rated images and dirty limericks have been deleted, thus assuring you of a wholesome reading experience. (for the most part)

All of the material has been used in my performances, and since that's the way I pay the bills these days, I know it is all practical.

Good thoughts to all of you.

Bob Cassidy
August 13, 2002

Seattle, Washington

The Difference between Mentalism and Mental Magic

Both mentalism and mental magic are forms of entertainment. Neither is more inherently entertaining than the other.

Pure mentalism looks exactly the same as what I would call "pure magic" (best typified by the performances of David Blaine,) that are very direct and seemingly impromptu. They tend to defy logical explanation and actually appear to real magic. In both cases, many members of the audience may believe they just saw "the real thing."

Mental magic and most theatrical magic are also indistinguishable. Both are obviously illusions or special effects, which are visually or intellectually interesting, but nonetheless are generally perceived to be tricks by even marginally intelligent audiences.

HOW TO TELL IF YOU ARE DOING MENTAL MAGIC OR MENTALISM:

Pay attention to what audiences generally ask after seeing you perform. Do they ask things like:

"How is that done?"

"Can you show me another trick?"

"My five year old has a birthday coming up, what do you charge?"

If your answer is "yes," you are doing mental magic, which is best described as "effects with a mind reading theme, which are, nonetheless, perceived to be magic tricks." They do not create the illusion of the "real thing."

If, on the other hand, you have succeeded in creating the illusion of mentalism, you will receive responses like these:

"Did you learn that somewhere, or is it something you were born with?"

"How did you know that?" (as opposed to "How did you DO that?")

"Get away from me, man. Don't be messin' with my head!"

Mentalism and mental magic, then, are different forms of entertainment. Both elicit different perceptions and reactions from an audience. The mentalist, therefore, has an ethical responsibility unknown to the conjuror or mental magician, for he is in a position to make people believe in, and rely upon, to their detriment, his alleged powers.

Keep this in mind always -

"To run a successful con, you must first make yourself believe in it. But once you believe it, you, yourself, have become the mark."

- William Lindsey Gresham, *Nightmare Alley*

It is very important that you believe in your abilities while you are on stage, as we will see.

But, in the end, we must remember that we are merely entertainers and storytellers.

On Creativity and Originality

Everything you do should be original or uniquely presented in an original way. If anyone watches you perform and says later, "I saw a guy on TV do that," you've failed. (Unless you are the one who invented the effect and the guy on TV copied you; in which case you might say "Yeah, he does it almost the way I taught him to!")

If you are the kind of performer who sees something on TV and immediately runs off to the magic shop to get the props to do the same thing, you are reading the wrong book. If you should one day decide to take this art seriously, please feel free to come back. But for now you may return to the faceless crowd of wannabees where you may all gripe about not getting any breaks even though you can do the same things the guy on TV does.

You know what's funny? Go to ebay and look how the folding coin is advertised. First off, it is never a half dollar- always a quarter. It is not advertised as a folding half, but as David Blaine's "Biting a Coin in Half." (Or, most recently, and amusingly, "Bite and Spit") Why anyone would want to present it Blaine's way, or to do any of the effects that Blaine does, is a mystery to me. Do they really think that by doing so they will get their own shot at a television show? (Personally, I believe there is a sound psychological reason behind this desire to imitate- the imitator secretly wants to BE the person they are imitating. But stop and think- did you ever see an Elvis impersonator who you mistook for the real thing?)

Are you an artist or a hack? Do you perform for money or for your own amusement? If you love the art and can act, create, innovate, take risks, and work long hard hours, months and years, you may one day be known as [insert your name here] If you just want to copy and let the artists do the creative work you will one day (soon, if not already) be known as "that dude who thinks he's David Blaine (or whoever it is you happen to be imitating.)"

Is mentalism an art or a business? Is show business a show or business? These questions have the same answer: BOTH. To succeed both artistically and financially you need to learn both ends. You can be a true artist who never makes a dime or a well-off hack who's never had an original thought. I sympathize with and love the former, but while I may recognize the financial success of the latter I nonetheless realize that successful pirates and parasites are equally well off.

Effects, Techniques and Devices

The Elemental Disks

The clever devices that exist for divination effects have always fascinated me. I am referring to commercially available effects such as Chazpro's *DieCypher*, Viking's *Transmental Gemstation*, and Magic Wonder's *Super Sight*. Rarely, however, are these kinds of props useful to the practical mentalist. That is because, if they are presented as described in their instructions, they are primarily puzzles. Additionally, the props are obviously specially manufactured for the effects. They would best be described as "Mental Magic" as opposed to "Mentalism."

That is not to say they are altogether useless. Their workings, in fact, are quite clever. With a bit of routining, a theme, and a believable excuse for the prop, some excellent mentalism is possible.

I give you the following as an example of how useless items can become the basis of effective routines. Try applying the basic theory to some of the junk that has accumulated in your drawer over the years and I'm sure you will be pleasantly pleased with just how creative you can be.

In **Principia Mentalia** I described such a routine for *DieCypher*. Here we will look at *Super Sight*.

Here is a brief description of the effect, which is currently readily available at most dealers for about thirty dollars:

The device consists of five brass disks. They are about $\frac{3}{4}$ " in diameter and each is a different color. Also supplied is a brass tube with a screw-on lid and a cloth drawstring pouch in which to carry it all.

As described in the instructions, the effect is as follows:

While the performer's back is turned, a spectator hides one of the disks in the pouch and puts the rest into the brass tube. He is instructed to screw the top onto the tube.

Upon turning around, the performer is able to divine which colored disk is in the pouch.

That's it. And as it stands, it is not much in terms of a mental effect. But apart from being very well made, the device has one saving grace. Unlike similar effects, the focus is NOT on what is put into the brass tube (Which, obviously, is gimmicked), but what is hidden in the bag. (Which is not gimmicked at all.) The focus, then, provides good misdirection from the actual method.

What the effect lacks is a point. Beyond that it is just a one out of five shot, which is the main problems with all effects of this genre.

Oh- one last problem, which is why you will rarely see anyone perform the effect- there is a minute marking on one side of the tube that is very difficult to see in some lighting situations. A quick glance at the marking and its position relative to a mark on the lid is necessary to determine which disk is missing from the tube. This must be done without staring at the tube.

From this effect I have developed my favorite one on one "psychic reading" effect.

The props don't exactly scream "Magic Trick-Fake!" – but neither do they look like anything you ever saw before. But they are rather beautiful and intriguing. So I asked myself, "What are these things for?" (It's the same question I ask when I wander through stores pretending that everything I see is an effect for which the instructions have been lost.) The answer came immediately.

"They're elemental disks. They are similar to rune stones but instead of runic letters they each represent one of the four elements of alchemy- Fire, Earth, Air and Water. The fifth represents Quintessence, that which binds them together and creates a sum greater than the total of the parts."

That's the seed of the routine. To reinforce the identity of the discs I printed a small label to wrap around the tube. On it are printed the names of the four elements. The label does not wrap all of the way around the tube. There is a gap of about $\frac{1}{4}$ of an inch between the left and right ends of the label.

The gap coincides with the position of the secret mark, thus making it instantly ascertainable regardless of the lighting conditions! This not only makes the effect practical but also gives it a reason for being.

The routine is very utilitarian and effective. I begin by explaining the discs and what they represent. I give all five disks to the sitter and ask that she place them in a row on the table. She is to put her favorite color on the left end of the row and to put the rest of them in descending order to her least favorite on the right end. This sets me up to do a "Luscher Color Test" type of cold reading

At the conclusion of the reading I say to the sitter, "We now know which colors you are attracted to. But now lets find which color is attracted to you! (Based on the meanings I gave each color in the reading, this is presented as a

prediction of what the future holds) Pick up all of the disks and shake them up in your hand. Take the pouch and the disks and hold them under the table. Put one disk into the pouch and draw the strings tight. No one, not even you, now knows which disk is in the bag.

“Put the pouch aside and, still under the table, put the rest of the disks back in the tube and screw the top into place. Just set the pouch and tube on the table, I won’t touch them, and give me your hand...”

I now, having glanced at the tube and determined which disk is in the bag, begin to receive “vibrations” from her hand which lead me strongly to suspect that the element/color of blue, for example, is attracted to her and will have an influence upon her in the near future.

She opens the pouch and finds the blue disk inside!

When I first tried this out I had a good idea that it would play well. I didn’t expect that there would soon be a line of young women wanting me to read the discs for them! I ended up booking three private parties- not bad for a night’s work, and the best reaction I ever got from a brass “magic trick.”

Any card at any number

I can’t count how many different approaches that have been devised for this effect since its first appearance in Hugar’s *The Encyclopedia of Card Tricks*. Raised to almost legendary status by British mentalist David Berglas, for many performers it remains the Holy Grail of mentalism with cards.

The best and most direct method is the original one- a memorized stack and a shift. I have done it that way for years, but I must admit there have been times when the pressures of performance have made it difficult to focus on the necessary calculations required to know which card must be shifted to the bottom of the pack to put the named card at the given number.

Only the original method allows for a performance this direct, unless, of course, a stooge is employed. Most other variations call for slightly altering the effect. Leslie Anderson’s brilliant *Garage Sale*, which appeared in her wonderful booklet *Eight Brass Monkeys*, had a spectator call out any card. The performer then produced a deck of cards allegedly just purchased at a garage sale. The price sticker was seen to read 47 cents, for example. Speculating about the nature of coincidence, the performer allowed an audience member to count to the 47th card in the pack and, sure enough, it was the named card.

I have already published one alternate approach in *The Principia Mentalia*. Here is my latest development of the idea.

The Effect: (As performed in the most direct manner and as seen by the audience)

A spectator is asked to name any playing card. Another spectator calls out a number between one and fifty- two. A third spectator counts to the selected number and finds the named card.

Method:

My favorite approach is virtually indistinguishable from the original effect, it just eliminates the mental calculations. Using a memorized pack, I have the card named first. I then estimate its position in the deck and make a pinky break at the cards approximate position. A gambler’s glimpse is used to confirm or correct the position of the break, and I shift it to the top of the pack **while** I am turning to the left to select the second volunteer.

I hand the deck to a third spectator **before** the number is called out.

The third spectator counts to the selected number by dealing one card at a time, face down, onto my outstretched left hand. At the end of the count the card is on the bottom of the stack in my left hand.

From here I either side steal it to the top, or do a one-handed bottom deal, turning the named card face up in the process.

While I have found this to be a most practical solution, I realize that most mentalists do not share my love of sleight of hand with cards, so I developed the following. While it uses a prepared pack and slightly deviates from the original presentation, the deviation is not noticeable and the effect remains extremely direct. Here is exactly as it appears:

The performer shows the pack to be well mixed and snaps a rubber band around it. He hands the deck to a spectator and asks him to merely peek at a card and to call out its identity. The performer retrieves the pack, and without looking at it, puts it into his right trouser pocket.

A second spectator is asked to call out a number between 10 and 40. The performer retrieves the banded deck from his pocket and hands it to a third volunteer who removes the band and counts to the selected number. The performer needn't handle the deck at this point, for the named card is actually found at that number.

All that is required is a pack of cards consisting of three duplicate banks of ten cards each. Each bank consists of identical cards and is in order from ace to ten. The suits are randomly ordered but identical in each bank. There are ten odd cards on the top of the pack, followed by the three duplicate banks. Fourteen indifferent cards are on the bottom of the pack. There are, then, 54 cards in the pack. (The extra cards are there for a reason, which will soon become apparent.)

The cards can be shown freely at the outset without revealing the duplicates. After putting a rubber band around the pack, the first volunteer peeks at a card, ala Hoy's Tossed Out Deck or the Psychomatic Pack. I simply ask him to peek at a card somewhere in the middle of the deck and to call out its name for all to hear. This assures that he will peek one of the cards in the duplicate banks. (If he should riffle through a few it won't be as disastrous as it would be in the Hoy or Psychomatic routines, where all of the cards are the same.)

I retrieve the pack, but before placing it into my pocket, I adjust the rubber band a bit. Previously it was wrapped around the middle of the deck. I casually slide it to about an inch from the end of the pack.

While asking the second volunteer for a number, I casually put **both** of my hands into my trouser pockets and get the pack into a sort of dealing position in my right hand.

When the number is called, I simply deal off enough cards (while my hand is in my pocket) to put the named card at the correct number. The position of the band makes this a relatively easy matter. I would strongly suggest, though, that you wear loose fitting slacks with rather large side slit pockets. (I find "Dockers" type slacks to be perfect- but more on these and Cargo slacks later.) This is why there are 54 cards in the deck. The added cards help to keep the deck from looking too thin after a few are dealt off. (No more than nine will be removed in the effect.)

The rubber band is easily adjusted to the center position as the cards are removed from the pocket and handed to the third volunteer.

But, you ask, how do I quickly calculate the number of cards to deal off? That's the easy part. You will recall that the spectator was asked to call out a number between 10 and 40 and that the first card of the first bank appears at position 11. Starting at positions 21 and 31 are the second and third banks.

Suppose the first spectator calls out the five of spades. You already know that the card is at the 15th, 25th, and 35th positions from the top. You will never need to deal off more than nine cards to put the selected card at the appropriate number. If you don't like the idea of dealing cards off in your pocket, you may simply hold the banded deck in your left hand, thumb count the right number of cards and shift them to the bottom. (As long as the band is not too tight, this will not interfere with the shift- in fact it will facilitate the move and allow for surprising speed.)

Presentationally speaking, it is important that you pay very little attention to the deck of cards and rather focus the audience's attention on hearing what you are saying rather than watching what you do.

The Moleskine Divination

WARNING: What follows may appear to be the most complicated effect you have ever read. (And I will admit, it is the most difficult I have ever had to write, which is why I didn't release this routine a long time ago.) In fact, the presentation is very simple and direct. My explanation of the method is rather lengthy, as I have tried to make it as comprehensible as possible and yet as comprehensive as required. I truly believe that if you fight your way through to the end and actually TRY the effect, you will find it was well worth the effort. In fact you will find that you can perform the mechanics of the effect with a minimal of effort and concentrate all of your energies upon the presentation. If you just take the time to put this together and try it, I am sure you will be pleased with the result.

Recently, while browsing in the gift section of Barnes and Noble, I found a *moleskine* journal of the type used in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by world travelers, artists and writers. It measures 3 ½ inches by 5 ½ inches and is about a half an inch thick. It contains forty stitched-in pages of heavy artists paper. There is an expandable pocket on the inside back cover. The hard backed journal is bound in beautiful black *moleskine* and a heavy black elastic ribbon is sewn to the back cover. It wraps around the front cover to keep the book securely shut. (See and order one at) <http://www.mondoemodo.com>

Since this type of book is often used as a travel journal, it inspired me to develop yet another remote viewing effect. Coupled with the *Pocket Watch Premonition*, which follows, it is one of my strongest pieces of close up mentalism.

Effect:

The mentalist proposes a test in remote viewing, in which he will attempt to mentally visit a randomly chosen location selected by a committee of spectators, and kept secret until after the mentalist has attempted to describe the site.

Explaining that it is necessary that the location be selected at random from hundreds of different possibilities, the performer exhibits a black journal, which, he claims, contains over one thousand different locations, each of which has been assigned a different four-digit number.

The spectators are permitted to examine the volume. Each page has seven or eight handwritten entries, each preceded by a four-digit number. Here, for example, are what the first two pages look like:

Target Number and Location
 Series #
 456ET457NY458L567R
 Authorization Code:
 568C578D

0751-Acapulco, Mexico
 0757- Washington Monument
 0761-Smithsonian Institute
 0764-Lexington, Kentucky
 0767-Paramus, New Jersey
 0772-Stonehenge, England
 0773-Oberamergau, Germany

0700 series
 page 1

0700 series

0774-Eiffel Tower, France
 0778-Berlin Museum
 0780-Daytona 500 Racetrack
 0781-Naples, Italy
 0785-Empire State Building
 0787-Sears Tower, Chicago
 0790-Caesar's Palace, Las Vegas
 0792-Big Ben, London
 0797-Munich, Germany

0700 series
 page 2

Next comes the 0800 series all the way through to the 2800 series. Each entry has a different city, monument or local assigned to a different four-digit number.

The performer goes on to explain that each location has been assigned a number to assure the double blind nature of the test. That is, a committee of spectators will select a random four-digit number, but will have no idea which city it represents. They will keep the number secret from the performer and will not check the corresponding city until after the mentalist has completed his attempt at remote viewing. (This is the nature of a double blind test; it prevents the subject from using telepathy to ascertain the target, and assures that an accurate result is, in fact, the result of genuine remote viewing.)

To assure the random selection of a number, the mentalist brings forth three special dice, each of which has a different three-digit number on each side. The spectators are allowed to toss the dice several times and to add the three top numbers. (I give them a calculator to aid in the addition). Each time they look up the corresponding location in the book until they are satisfied that each roll produces a different random location.)

Once the committee is satisfied as to the fairness and randomness of the procedure they are asked to retire to a corner of the room, where they are to roll the dice and remember the resulting total. They may, if they wish, write the total down on a piece of paper for future verification, but they are not to allow the performer to see or touch the paper until the conclusion of the test. Alternatively, they may simply commit the total to memory.

A number having thus been selected, the performer begins his remote viewing and gives an increasingly detailed account of the location he "sees" in his mind. He makes notes on a large pad for later comparison with the target location.

Having committed himself both verbally and in writing, the committee reveals the selected number and looks up the corresponding location.

It is the exact place described by the mentalist.

Method:

Many performers legitimately object to the use of dice, cards, etc. in making supposedly random selections of words and such. In this case, the test conditions *motif* justifies the odd selection method. It provides a believable basis for an unfathomable effect that perfectly simulates an authentic remote viewing experiment. (Well, the audience **thinks** it does, and that is all that matters.)

The beauty of this routine is that while the selection is forced, a force does not seem possible since the spectators themselves have verified that a different location comes up on each roll of the dice. Additionally, the effect may be repeated with an entirely different result.

Unlike most descriptions you are likely to find in dealer's catalogues and on their websites, the above is a completely accurate rendition of what the audience sees.

Actually, this is just a new use for Royal Vale Heath's classic Die Cyphering Dice, first described in detail in J.G. Thomson's classic work *My Best*. It is yet another of those clever effects that are rarely done because the props have no seeming reason for being.

The effect has been pirated more times than I can count since its creation in the 1940's, and is still offered for sale by many dealers. Most dealer versions, however, are not suitable for the remote viewing routine because each die is a different color. One currently available version is called *The Human Calculator Dice*, and, regrettably, the instructions give no credit to Heath nor do they contain his many interesting variations of the effect. The dice, however, are all the same color **as they must be for use in my routine.**

If you cannot obtain a set of the dice it is quite easy to make them. Simply buy five wooden cubes at a hobby shop and paint them white. With a black fine point marker you can put the proper numbers on each die. The numbering of each die is described below.

Ted Annemann loved the effect and suggested that the performer say that the dice came with a new game he recently purchased. Nowadays, with the proliferation of odd dice used in role playing games, this is still an excellent explanation.

The marketed effect originally consisted of **five** dice, each a different color. It was presented as either mind reading or as a demonstration of super calculation. Each die had a different three-digit number on each side and were not loaded, magnetized or shaped. In other words, they all rolled fairly. But if the dice were rolled and lined up in a vertical column for addition, the performer would instantly know the total by merely glancing at the dice. This was due to the unique nature of the numbers on each die.

It was only necessary for the performer to add the right hand column of figures. The resultant two-digit number would be the last two digits of the final total. By mentally subtracting that two-digit number from fifty, the performer derived the first two digits of the final four-digit total.

Before you panic, there isn't any mental math involved in the remote viewing routine. As I said earlier, the location is forced. But to understand the method, rather than to simply perform it by rote, you must understand how the dice work.

Here are the numbers on each of the five dice. (While only three are used in this routine, you must nonetheless, obtain or make a set of five.)

I refer to the dice as the "four die," the "five die," the "six die," the "seven die," and the "eight die." They are each named after the middle digit of all six of their respective numbers as can be seen here:

The "four die" has the following six numbers, one on each side of the die: 642, 147, 840, 741, 543, and 345. You will note that the individual digits in each number add up to 12.

The numbers on the "five die" are: 558, 855, 657, 459, 954, and 756. The individual digits on each side total 18.

The "six die" is numbered as follows: 168, 663, 960, 366, 564, and 267. The individual sides total 15.

The "seven die" is numbered:

971, 377, 179, 872, 773, and 278. The individual sides total 17.

And the “eight die” is numbered thusly:

483, 285, 780, 186, 384, and 681. The sides each total 15.

If you were to multiply $6 \times 6 \times 6 \times 6 \times 6$ you would most likely conclude that there are 7,776 possible totals if all five dice are thrown and the top numbers added together. In fact, due to the unique numbering of the dice, there are only 27 possible totals and all of them will yield a four digit total in which the first two digits added to the last two digits will total fifty.

Now that you’ve come this far and digested all of that - forget it. All you need to know for this effect is this:

If only three dice are used there are only twenty possible totals for that specific set of three. In other words, if you use the 5, 7, and 8 dice, there will be only twenty possible totals. If you switch the 8 die for the 4 die there will still only be twenty possible totals, but they are different from the totals produced with the 5,7, and 8.

Each of the twenty possible totals for the 5, 7 and 8 dice will yield a different, random, location. These are the dice the committee uses at the beginning of the test to verify that all is fair.

It is only necessary to switch one or two of these dice (for other dice in the set of five) to produce one of five different force locations. (Actually, there are ten possible combinations of three dice out of five. By only using five of the possible combinations the effect is considerably streamlined.)

While it would be tricky to switch all three dice, it is a simple matter to switch out one or two of them in the act of either pushing the dice toward the spectators or in picking them up and handing them over. A simple shuttle switch (as used in the classic three ball routine) would serve admirably.

As we’ve seen, the 5,7,8 combination will yield a random location.

The 4,5,6 combination will yield a location that is related to Paris, France, or Paris itself. (That is a major subtlety in the routine- each location can be listed in several different ways.)

4,5,7 yields a location that has something to do with New York City.

4,5,8 will yield locations that will all relate to a description of London.

5,6,7 produces locations associated with Rome, Italy, and

5,6,8 gives you locations associated with Cairo, Egypt.

5, 7, and 8, as noted produce twenty random locations, none of which are remotely related to the five force locations.

The most difficult (or rather, tedious) part of the routine is putting all of the possible entries into the book and filling the rest of the book with entries taken at random from an almanac.

If you look once again at the sample of the first page given above, you will note that the book has a serial number and authorization number on the first page. Apart from adding dubious authenticity to the book, the numbers are, in fact, a cue sheet to the different combinations and resulting locations.

456ET457NY458L567R568C578D

This seemingly random combination of letters and numbers tells us that the 456 combination yields the Eiffel Tower (and other places related to Paris) Similarly, 457 is NY. You should be able to figure out the rest of the serial number for yourself!

Since the lowest possible force total is 774, all earlier entries will be dummies.

The following will tell you which entries to put at which numbers. You will add random cities as needed to fill out the book. There should be seven entries on each page and no more than two force locations on any given page. (In most cases you should be able to have only one possible force location on each page.)

With your *Moleskine* and pen in hand, proceed as follows to fill up the book. Your efforts will be well rewarded.



The book has 40 pages (*moleskine* note book – If you are using a different type of book, adjust accordingly by either removing pages or changing the number of entries on each page.)

Put seven entries on each page for a total of 280 entries (82 of these are the five force locations 198 are random entries.)

The locations are:

456 dice will force The Eiffel Tower (Paris, Seine River, etc.) Locations are:

774, 873, 972, 1071, 1170, 1269, 1368, 1467, 1566, 1665, 1764, 1863, 1962, 2061, 2160, 2259, 2358, 2457, 2556, 2655, 2754 (21 places)

457 dice will force New York: 785, 884, 983, 1082, 1181, 1280, 1379, 1478, 1577, 1676, 1775, 1874, 1973, 2072, 2171, 2270, 2369, 2468, 2567, 2666, 2765. (21)

458 dice will force London: 792, 891, 990, 1089, 1188, 1287, 1386, 1485, 1584, 1683, 1782, 1881, 1980, 2079, 2178, 2277, 2376, 2475, 2574 (19)

567 dice will force Rome, Italy: 806, 905, 1004, 1103, 1202, 1301, 1400, 1499, 1598, 1697, 1796, 1895, 1994, 2093, 2192, 2291, 2390, 2489, 2588, 2687, 2786, 2885 (22)

568 dice will force Cairo, Egypt: 813, 912, 1011, 1110, 1209, 1308, 1407, 1506, 1605, 1704, 1803, 1902, 2001, 2100, 2199, 2298, 2397, 2496, 2595, 2694. (20)

578 dice set is the dummy set for showing audience the procedure. Be sure the following numbers are in the book and all contain random entries. Here are the possible totals for the 578 set:

824, 923, 1022, 1121, 1220, 1319, 1418, 1517, 1616, 1715, 1814, 1913, 2012, 2111, 2210, 2309, 2408, 2507, 2606, 2705. (20 random locations result from this dummy combination - 578)

There are 123 essential positions and 80 pages

700 series is the lowest page

2800 series is the highest page or 22 series

3 forces in the 700 series

5 forces and one dummy in each of the series 800 through 2500

4 forces and one dummy in 2600 series

3 forces and one dummy in 2700 series

1 force in 2800 series

Series are either 3 or 4 pages long, with 7 entries per page.

700 series is 2 pages. There are 7 entries per page. (There will be 3 forces among the 14 entries)

800 to 2500 are 4 page series (18 series) 4 x 18 = 72 Pages (there will be 28 entries, including 5 forces and one dummy in each series.)

2600 is 2 pages 14 entries including 4 forces and a dummy

2700 is 2 pages 14 entries including 3 forces and a dummy

2800 is 2 pages 14 entries including one force

Use 2895, an impossible total, for the last entry.

The Pocket Watch Premonition

Here is something that is far easier to describe than the *Moleskine Divination*, but can nonetheless incorporate the *Moleskine* routine very effectively. But, even standing alone, I think you will find it a worthwhile and utilitarian addition to your repertoire.

While there are many presentational possibilities, I'm currently in a manic remote viewing phase and so shall describe it as a combination of traditional remote viewing (if there is such a thing!) and precognitive remote viewing- referred to by the *cognoscenti* as PRV (not to be confused with parvo, a disease you may have caught from your dog, or angel dust- although the latter has been known to create other strange forms of mental activity.)

The pocket-watch is just window dressing and the effect may be performed with any suitable container.

Effect:

Prior to performing, the performer has casually placed a closed pocket watch on the table.

A spectator is asked to visualize a spinning globe and to imagine that he stops it with his outstretched finger. He is to call out the location he imagines to be nearest the spot where his finger landed.

Let us suppose he says "Monte Carlo."

The performer responds, "I know you probably don't believe me, but just last night I dreamed I was gambling in a casino. It wasn't Las Vegas or Atlantic City, though. The people were all speaking French or Italian and I had a strong feeling that I was actually in the famous casino in Monte Carlo.

"Are you buying all of this?" he continues. Depending on the performer's delivery, the audience will either respond with polite laughter or derisive snorting and catcalls. (In some of the finer four star establishments inhabited by motorcycle aficionados, the last remark will, upon occasion, result in someone politely observing, "What an asshole! When does the stripper come on?")

"Well, let's try this," the performer continues, "Let me see if I can visualize what you will do in the next few minutes." (Here is where the *Moleskine* routine can be inserted. Otherwise, proceed as follows.)

Removing a paper-clipped packet of billets from his right trouser pocket (these are made from 3 x 5 index cards which have been cut in half to produce 1 1/2 x 2 1/2 inch billets - there are about ten billets in the packet) the performer states that he will write a prediction. Having done so, he folds the billet into quarters and places it before a spectator. He returns the rest of the billets to his pocket.

At this point he performs any prediction effect where the outcome is forced. (I usually borrow five coins and use equivoque to force the coin that matches my prediction.) It need not be a powerhouse prediction e, because

immediately after the prediction is revealed, the audience gets blindsided by a jaw-dropping climax. Suppose the performer has just succeeded in predicting that the volunteer would select a quarter. He continues:

“Amazing, isn’t it, how the mind can be influenced? But I’ll bet you still think I was kidding about the Monte Carlo thing, don’t you?”

“Now some of you may have noticed that I put my pocket watch on the table before I asked you to select a city. I haven’t touched it since. Look at what’s inside.”

With a clearly empty left hand the performer picks up the watch and releases the catch, causing the lid to pop open. Inside the watch case there is a folded billet, visible to all. The performer dumps the billet into a spectator’s hand and asks him to open it and read its contents aloud.

It says, “I really did dream about Monte Carlo!”

Method:

This is about as simple and direct as it gets. Prior to the performance, place a dummy billet in the watchcase. Use magician’s wax to fix the dummy in place. (The dummy is made from thin paper and not index card. It will, however, look exactly like a folded billet made of index card stock. It is made from paper because index card stock would prevent the watchcase from completely closing.)

The packet of billets is also prepared- All of the billets have been prefolded into quarters and opened out again. I pre-fold them several times in both directions to facilitate the handling, which follows.

The top billet of the stack is folded in half. The top half of that billet, which has been folded back, has the following prewritten on it - ”I really did dream about. . .” The bottom, visible, half of the card, is left blank. The second card down, which is fully opened out, has this written on it...”You will select the quarter.” The folded card is held in position by the paperclip used to hold the stack together.

The rest is almost embarrassingly simple. When you remove the stack of billets from your pocket, keep the side with the folded billet toward your body, concealed from the audience’s view. When you write the coin prediction, you are actually filling in the name of the selected city on the bottom half of the folded billet. You then take the second billet from the stack (which has the quarter prediction on it), fold it into quarters and place it before the spectator. Take the stack back in your right hand and return it to your pocket. While your right hand is still in the pocket, the fingers refold the “Monte Carlo” billet so the writing is on the inside. (This is why the billets were prefolded and straightened out several times- it makes this part very simple and fast.) Finger palm it.

Remove your right hand from your pocket, keeping the folded billet finger-palmed. Alternatively, you can leave the folded billet in your pocket and retrieve it later.

Finish the coin prediction. Just make sure you have the pocketed billet in right finger palm prediction by the time the coin prediction is being read.

Following the presentation, you next pick up the watch with your empty left hand and pop it open. While showing everyone that it contains a folded card, casually place the open watch onto your right hand- directly on top of the concealed billet.

Ask a spectator to open his hand and state that you don’t want to touch the folded card. Turn your right hand over directly above the spectator’s hand, at the same time releasing the palmed billet. Properly timed, this creates the perfect illusion that you simply dumped the billet out of the case.

As the spectator opens and reads the prediction, casually put the watch back into your pocket and scrape out the dummy billet. Absentmindedly take the watch out again and place it on the table in the event that someone wants to admire it.

The Cargo Switch

The following is a utilitarian idea, which you should find very useful in creating or enhancing your own routines.

For many years I had sought out the perfect deck switch. I also needed a new pair of trousers – the kind with spacious side-pockets that facilitate this type of work. The type known as “Cargo pants” particularly intrigued me. The style features two extra side pockets at the mid-thigh position on each leg. The tops of the pockets are just under your fingertips if you are standing at attention. (I know, you are thinking, “I can’t wear those things with a sport jacket or suit!” Don’t worry; I have that problem covered.)

By tucking the flaps in, the pockets will remain slightly open at all times. If you are standing facing your audience and turn your body slightly to your right, the right hand can secretly drop anything it is holding into the right thigh-pocket. The reverse procedure allows you to secretly dump into the left pocket.

The ideal situation, I found, was to alter a pair of dressy black chinos by adding pockets at fingertip level. The positioning is the same as on the “cargo pants,” but these “secret pockets” are closer to the back of each thigh, almost below the rear pockets. (And much like the pockets used by our manipulator friends!)

I also decided to keep a large earth magnet in my wallet, which I carry in my right rear pocket. Just by dropping my hand to my side and letting go of what it was holding, I could grab whatever was stuck to the magnet at the same time.

I think I’ve made the possibilities clear, and I don’t want to ruin the fun you’ll have as you discover just how easy it is to invisibly switch just about anything at all. Just pick up a pair of cargo pants for casual wear and play with the switches until you are comfortable with them. Believe me, in a matter of weeks you will be begging for your wife, girlfriend or tailor to alter a dress pair of slacks.

Pre-show clipboard technique

Did you ever realize just how easy it is for a television mentalist to obtain pre-show information? It is just as easy to use the same innocent technique in any performance venue. Just let the audience think that the show is being videotaped or audio taped for possible broadcast.

Prior to the show I simply have an assistant advise members of the audience that since the show is being taped, it is necessary to obtain releases from prospective volunteers. They are reassured, though, that their images will not be used or broadcast unless they actually are selected as volunteers and are entirely happy with their experience. As they are handed their release forms, each conveniently attached to one of my hand-made carbon impression clipboards, they are told to “fill the forms out now, while there is time, and turn them in afterwards if you do not object to appearing in the finished tape.” The clipboards are casually retrieved after they have been filled out.

The release is a standard legal looking document that requests *innocent* information like name, address, phone number, date of birth and other information used to keep records of my accuracy. To that end they are requested to write a “test question,” to aid in postproduction analysis. (!)

The Secret Language

Mentalism - The complex art of reading people's thoughts and selling them steak, while at the same time understanding that the people, their thoughts and the steak don't actually exist, except in your head.

It seems to me that the most successful modern mentalists call themselves something else - which is probably a very good idea since most people have no idea what the words "mentalists" or "mentalism" mean. Since it has at least three definitions, none of which refer directly to our art, even those who are familiar with the word may be confused.

Mentalism originally referred to the metaphysical doctrine that mind is the true reality, and that objects exist only as aspects of the mind's awareness. That is still its primary definition in philosophy, psychology and other disciplines.

Around the beginning of the twentieth century it acquired another meaning - the theatrical presentation of mind reading and psychical phenomena. Our forefathers simply exploited a growing public interest in spiritualism and what we now refer to as the paranormal.

The early "mentalists" or "mind readers" claimed genuine psychic abilities. Some gazed into their crystal balls to answer questions or predict the future. Others simply demonstrated their "powers" as a form of "educational" entertainment.

Prominent magicians of the day claimed that the public needed to be protected from those who claimed to be authentic, but who used the methods of conjuring to deceive. (And, in some cases, they probably just didn't want the competition.)

The irony was that many of these so-called "methods of conjuring" were not the primary techniques used by the stage mentalists. Such venerable devices as the nail writer, billet switch, slate technique, center tear, cold reading, various rope ties, and the one-ahead gag, were either invented by the fraudulent mediums they emulated or by the mentalists themselves.

Magicians, of course, recognized that they, too, could exploit the public's fascination with so-called "powers of the mind." Many included real or pseudo exposures of psychics in their programs. Others added "mental effects" to their repertoires. Some, deciding that "mental magic" had greater audience appeal than "straight magic," built entire acts around the theme.

A few began to call themselves "mentalists" and defined their form of "mentalism" as a subcategory of legitimate conjuring. It is hardly surprising that, to this day, magicians and mentalists argue about the origins of mentalism and the difference, or lack thereof, between mentalism and mental magic.

Now for the latest complication:

Advertisers have always known that people will buy one brand-name product over another identical product if you "sell the sizzle and not the steak." It's an ancient concept, but modern marketing experts felt a need to give it a more scientific sounding name. They now refer to it as "mentalism."

Want a sure-fire way to baffle people, or at least elicit a blank stare?

Tell them you're a mentalist.

The Billet Switch

Why do we call them billets?

The word "billet," comes from the French "billet-doux," a love letter. (literally, a "sweet little letter.") Mentalists refer to these little pieces of paper as "billets" because that's what they were called in the heyday of fraudulent spiritualism. (Sitters were asked to write "letters" or "billets" to the dear departed in the hopes they would receive an answer through the medium. This was in the days before e-mail when people actually wrote letters to everyone they knew - even to dead people if there was no one else around who wanted to read them. Their descendants are known as spammers.)

Billet work is, to me, the purest form of mentalism. With just some paper and a pencil you can work anywhere. The literature, however, is rather sparse. The reasons are simple:

- 1) Most mentalists don't specialize in billet work, and
- 2) A good portion of the written material was, and is, authored by theorists who have little real-world performing experience.

Two notable exceptions are Theodore Annemann and C.L. Boarde (the late Warren Schoonmaker). Both stressed complete naturalness in handling, proper timing and the importance of treating the billet with apparent nonchalance - as a simple aid to concentration and nothing more. Annemann's analysis of the techniques of the legendary Bert Reese is essential reading for any mentalist. Boarde's encyclopedic work describes every major technique with considerable thoroughness, although he can sometimes seem obscure. (Since I came to know Warren, I decided that the obscurity was somewhat intentional. His pedantic approach concealed a quick wit and a dry sense of humor.)

Many magicians, and not a few mentalists, have joined the futile search for "stop-motion camera-perfect" switches and peeks. There are, I must admit, a few modern sleights that come close to that criterion, but they are totally unnecessary. Learning them is actually a hazard, for the performer may become so proud of the sleight that he draws attention to it, destroying the illusion of mentalism with a gratuitous display of digital elegance.

In other words, if you make the billet the center of attention, you are not doing mentalism- you are doing a magic trick with a slip of paper. The fact that the trick may fool an audience should not fool you. As I pointed out in Volume One, they will wonder how you secretly read the paper when they should be thinking, "Hey, that's spooky. Is he really reading my mind?" (or "my body language," or whatever your persona is supposed to be doing.)

There is yet another issue that keeps many from doing billet work. It is the opinion that billets are themselves illogical.

"Would they have to write anything down if you could really read minds? They wouldn't, so the very use of the paper is suspicious.

This objection is invalid on its face, however, because it begs the question. To put it another way, it assumes a fact not in evidence.

Look at the statement again. It simply assumes that a "real mind reader" would not need to have things written down. Is that necessarily so? If you were a real mind reader would you have them write things down? Why or why not?

If I were onstage and really reading minds, I know it would make some people nervous, and some people would feel threatened. Skeptics would KNOW I was a fake before they even saw me work and would be certain to try and trip me up.

Nervous volunteers sometimes find it hard to concentrate in front of an audience. The act of writing helps them, and the billet can act as a little reminder should they forget what they were thinking about.

Those who feel threatened are somewhat comforted in knowing that I won't be running amok in their minds, revealing their innermost thoughts in public. They are happy to know that there is a slip of paper, which proves what they were really thinking. I am equally happy to know that there is written proof of the thought which cannot later be denied.

The billet gives me comfort and security because it will prove that I really do read minds. The skeptics, of course, will refuse to write anything down and will expect me to adhere to their preconceived notion that real mind readers don't have things written.

And so on.

Those of you who have seen me work or who have read *The Art of Mentalism 2* are familiar with the line I use in handing out a billet:

"I have you write it down for two reasons, one - it helps you to focus the thought in your mind; and, two- it keeps you from changing your mind later and making me look stupid."

The Open Switch and Read

The title aptly describes my approach to mentalism in general and billet work in particular. I've found that moves that are boldly and openly performed are the hardest for anyone to detect. My billets are three by five index cards, which have been cut in half to form 3 by 2 ½ inch rectangles. I always pre-fold them into quarters, give them good creases and open them out again.

I keep a stack of ten or fifteen billets in my left trousers pocket at all times. They are held together with a paper clip. There is one folded blank billet [this is the dummy] in my right trouser pocket. I have several short pencils in my right jacket pocket.

The pocket management is very important. Everything is always in the same pockets whenever I leave my home.

When working impromptu I always employ the idea of "Jazz Mentalism." That means that I have a general course I will follow to "get" a spectator's thought, but I will constantly try to take advantage of opportunities that may arise in

the course of performance. In good billet work many principles come into play. Psychologically favored choices, cold reading, pumping and acting are the first lines of attack. Many times I do not have to resort to a switch at all and have succeeded in divining the spectator's thought by purely psychological means. This is the art of mentalism in what I believe to be its ideal form. It is very close to real mind reading.

I always really try to get the spectator's thought without resorting to the switch. I make myself believe that I can really read thoughts. If I believe it, they will believe it. (Even a devout skeptic can be convinced that I sincerely believe in my ability. He might think I'm deluded but nonetheless sincere.) And once that sincerity is obviously felt by the audience, I am in a position to utilize the boldest of moves without fear of detection.

Far too many mentalists fail to convince an audience simply because they have failed to convince themselves.

Here is the framework for my "one on one" impromptu mind reading method:

I always preface the demonstration by explaining to the participant that she must actually visualize her thoughts in order for me to receive them clearly. I take the packet of billets from my left pocket and remove the paper clip.

I ask her to gaze at the top billet of the stack (I refer to it as a piece of heavy paper, NOT as a billet) and to completely relax her mind, to make herself as calm as possible and then to imagine that she can actually SEE a color forming on the surface of the card. Invariably the suggestion to relax will cause her to visualize blue.

I don't tell her she's thinking of the color blue, though. Instead, I say that I am starting to visualize the color blue. Usually she is thinking of blue and is a little startled that I picked it up so quickly.

But suppose she says, "I don't have a color yet." Or, "I was thinking of green." That's no problem because I never told her she was thinking of blue. I said that I was seeing the color blue.

I don't tell her that, though. Instead I say, "That's okay, I just wanted to see if you could pick up the color I was projecting to you. You started to think of blue and then it just changed, didn't it?"

This almost always hits because she was, at some level, probably deciding which color to visualize, thought of blue at one point and then changed her mind."

You can usually be sure of a hit if you tell a spectator they changed their mind before settling on a thought.

The foregoing bit has set the stage for the billet work. I remove the top card from the stack and give it to her along with a pencil. I ask her to relax once more, and instead of imagining that she sees a color to this time to visualize a word. "Let's not make it too difficult just yet, just visualize a word with about four letters. No, no, not THAT kind of word (said in a light and humorous manner) a nice word. Good.

"Just see the word in your minds eye and then fix it in your memory by printing it on the paper. I want you to try to send me the letters one at a time as you print them. I'll turn my back for just a moment while you do that.. When you are done just fold the paper into quarters and hold on to it. Okay, can I turn around?"

"All right, I think you are getting the idea now. You have a word in your mind. Now let it fade away and we'll try just one more thing. Imagine that you are taking a trip to a place you always wanted to visit. See that place in your mind. I'm going to turn my back again and I want you to unfold your paper and print the name of the place beneath your word. Think of one letter at a time, as before, all the while imagining that you are actually visiting the place.

"When you're finished just refold the paper."

During the course of all of this, I have put the stack of billets back into my left pocket and have obtained the dummy, which is now held by the right hand in position for the Simplified Baker Switch, described below.

When I turn to face her I hold up my left hand so it is just above eye level to my left, my palm facing her. (It's the same position you'd take with your right hand if you were being sworn as a witness.)

"Just place the paper into my left hand. "

She puts the paper in my raised hand where I hold it between the thumb and forefinger. (The exact position is shown in the Baker switch below) My empty palm is facing her and it is obvious that that hand is otherwise empty. I do not say that it is empty and purposely don't look at it. I keep my eyes fixed on her instead.

Now let's imagine that it is you who is performing the routine. After you've read through the rest of the presentation and reviewed the mechanics of the switch, you will want to re-read the rest of the following with billets in hand. From here on I will refer to "you" as being the performer.

Tell her that you get an overall feeling of warmth, that it is somehow related to the place or the word she is thinking of. If you have followed the exact language used above you will find that the word she is thinking of is probably "LOVE." Don't guess at it - just don't be clear as to whether you are receiving the word or the place.

"I get a letter, the second letter I think, and it is round, isn't it? Four letters, there are four and the second letter is round, an "o" or an "a."(You'll know at this point if you are hitting on the word. If there is a positive response keep zeroing in for the word "love.")

A lot of things can happen now. If all has gone well, you will hit the word. As she acknowledges it, or otherwise reacts, you will casually drop your left hand and transfer the billet to your right hand, at a natural speed, with the billet remaining in full view at all times. You will gesture with both hands and take the billet back in the left hand. The switch is now complete. The dummy is in full view, held in your raised left hand as before. The only difference is that, this time the BACK of your hand is facing her.

It is certain that you will now be getting reactions from the spectator. It is the TYPE and TIMING of the reactions that will dictate the moment and pace of the switch.

Here is how you get the info from the stolen billet. Regardless of your degree of success this far, you still at least need to get the place she is thinking of. Tell her you are getting a bit of sensory overload, too many details that are hard to make sense of, etc.

"Here," you say, "hold out your hand" Take the dummy with your right fingers and thumb and put it on her hand. "Put your other hand on top of it and see the place in your minds eye."

If you see that she is completely convinced of your ability, you may be able to get away with telling her to close her eyes to help visualize the place. You could then take a look at the stolen billet.

There are two safer approaches, however. One is to move so that you are now standing on her right side as she concentrates on the billet between her hands. Your left hand with the stolen billet is now in perfect position to open it behind her back in position for an incredibly easy peek. (I often use this gambit on stage.) The other option is to put both of your hands into your pockets, mumbling something like, "I've got to write it down - I've got paper here someplace . . ."

Open the stolen billet out against the stack in the left pocket and bring out the whole stack. Your right hand retrieves a pencil from the jacket pocket and you start to scribble notes on the face of the stolen billet. Or at least you pretend to. You then pretend to cross it off and put the billet on the bottom of the stack, ostensibly giving yourself a fresh stack to scribble on.

You are now free to finish as you will. At the end just take the billet back from her and hold it in your own fist as you rapidly finish describing her thought of location. Then just absentmindedly put it into your pocket. Talk to her for a bit and then say, "Wait, you might want to keep this," and return it to her.

Simplified Baker Switch

For the record, two distinct switches are often referred to as "The Baker Switch." One was a hand-to-hand switch; the other used a thumb tip. The hand-to-hand version was published in 1940 in Al Baker's Mental Magic. I have asked several fellow mentalists who have read the description in the book to show me what the move is supposed to look like. And every mentalist seems to interpret it a little differently.

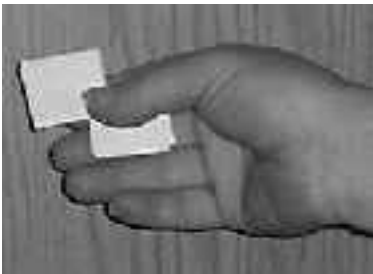
The problem is that the illustrations in the book do not correspond with the text. The text refers to a hand action that results in a position completely different from the pictures.

I played with the general idea for a while a long time ago. I liked the result and use it often. It may or may not be the actual Baker switch. But whatever it is, I think I am accurate in saying it is simplified. I've taken pictures of my own hands doing the move and, for the most part, I will let them speak for themselves.

In the "Open Switch and Read" the dummy billet starts out in the performer's right hand as shown in the first picture:



The dummy billet held in the right hand. It is gripped by its upper left corner between the pad of the thumb and the bottom quarter of the first phalange of the index finger.



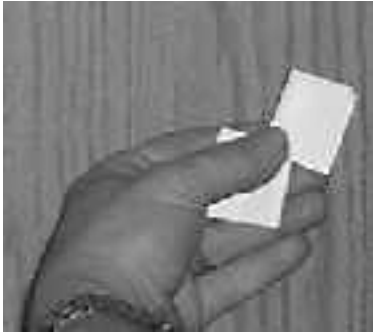
This picture shows the right hand after the spectator's billet, formerly held aloft in the left hand, has been placed over the upper left corner of the dummy. The fingers of the right hand have not moved from their previous position.



Here the hands approach each other. The spectators billet is about to take the same position in the left hand as the dummy previously held in the right.



The left thumb and forefinger now grasp the upper left corner of the dummy.



The hands have separated and the dummy is in full view at the tips of the left fingers.

In action, from the front, it should appear that the billet has been passed from the fingertips of one hand to the fingertips of the other.

The Eye of the White Dwarf

Sees all, tells all

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Just give 'em the Eye!*

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As you may have noticed, I have started using more photo illustrations to illustrate my effects. I hope you find helpful but, personally, I think it is a mixed blessing.

In my earlier books I avoided illustrations as much as possible for a few reasons, the first of which is that I am not a very good artist. But in the beginning I felt that the practice of describing my effects completely in words, and making them clearly understood, would help me to improve as a writer. And describing the workings of complex moves can be very challenging.

But pure text doesn't take advantage of all that computers and electronic publishing have to offer. And, of course, the age-old adage that a picture speaks a thousand words is as true as it ever was.

[The downside is that I have a few critics (whose opinions I hold in high regard, except when they're full of shit) who seem to judge my writings more by page and word count than by content. Effects like this one take a few pages to describe. The idea can also be conveyed in 3 pictures. I

guess I'll just continue to write introductions like this one and try to keep the word count up.]

Most of you are probably familiar with the "Test of the White Dwarf." It originally appeared in the first volume of *The Art of Mentalism* as the "Two Envelope Test." Later, it appeared in Bascom Jone's *Magick*.

This is the version that I carry with me all the time for quick impromptu work. It takes less time than my "Open Billet" routine and is especially designed for use with my business card.

The business card is pictured above. The only other requirements are two manila envelopes. The larger one is a #3 coin envelope and the smaller is a #1. The business card will just fit into the #1. I use Kraft manila envelopes manufactured by Columbia. I get mine at Office Max. There are five hundred in a box.

The smaller envelope has a small hole (the "eye" of the white dwarf!) cut out of its face. The position of the hole corresponds exactly to the thought balloon on the business card. This is why I use such a small envelope for the card- the business card just fits into it, thus guaranteeing that the hole and the thought balloon remain aligned.

Here is a photo of the two envelopes. The smaller one already has a card in it.



To complete the set-up, put your business card into the smaller envelope and put that into the larger. Don't seal the envelopes. The flaps should both be facing the same way and both envelopes should have the same side facing up.

In performance you remove both envelopes from your pocket and hand them to a spectator. Tell her that there is something in the envelope and have her hold them both up to the light to see if she can tell what is inside, thus subtly showing that the envelope is opaque.

Take the envelope back and hold it seam side up. Remove the smaller envelope and hold it up to the light in front of her eyes and ask if she can tell what is inside that one. You show the envelope from both sides. This is possible because the hole is small enough to cover with your thumb. (as seen in the second photograph)

Remove the business card to the participant. She is to think of a short word, concentrate on it, and then turn the card face down. Turn your back while she does this and hold both envelopes in your left hand. The large envelope is held seam side down. The smaller envelope is on top of it and is seam side up. (the seamless sides of the envelopes are face to face)

When the participant is done printing her word in the thought balloon and has turned her card face down, turn to face her and extend your left hand (it holds the envelopes) to her. Have her slide the business card into the envelope, telling her that you don't want to touch and that it will be sealed inside two envelopes so it will be impossible for anyone but her to know what her thought could be. (She has already seen for herself that it is impossible to see through the two envelopes.) Seal the flap of the smaller envelope, still holding it face to face with the larger one, and have her put her initials on the flap.



Turn the stack of envelopes over so that the smaller one is now facing the floor and the seam side of the large envelope is facing up. With your right hand, start to withdraw the bottom envelope out to the right. As you are doing this tilt the envelopes toward yourself so as not to flash the "eye." Slide the smaller envelope into the larger and note the word showing through the hole. As soon as the hole is out of view inside the larger envelope, tilt them down again so your participant can see the rest of the envelope clearly being placed into larger one.

Seal the larger one and hand it to her, telling her to hold it between her hands and concentrate on her thought.

Now you could just tell her but the word was, but then you would have no excuse to retrieve the envelopes and open them yourself. Instead, I take a notepad or another business card and jot my impressions on it as I read her thought. I don't let her see what I am writing. When I am done, I tell her to give me the envelope and I hand her what I have just written, telling her to hold it face down and not to peek just yet.

Hold the envelope seam side up. (Otherwise the dwarf's eye is going to be looking right at her when you take out the smaller envelope!). Open it, and take out the smaller envelope. Open that and remove the card. As you are turning it over to read it, use your other hand to casually crumple the envelopes and put them in your pocket.

Proceed with your dramatic revelation.

If the impressed participant says she will come to see your show, be sure to say, "I'll keep an eye out for you!" (Sorry, I couldn't resist.)

Brain Busting

The Magazine Challenge

Dunninger was the first to come up with the so-called "Brain Buster" effects. Every week he would present one of these "special tests" on his popular radio program. These unique experiments, combined with different panels of celebrity "judges", gave the impression that Dunninger's demonstration was much more than just a routine performance.

This is an important element of effective performances - the seemingly spontaneous response to an impossible and unexpected challenge. This is far more exciting and memorable than effects that appear to be part of a set routine.

"The Magazine Challenge" occurred to me the night before a corporate show. In all of my programs I try to refer to a current topic in the national news that is particularly relevant to my specific audience. I'll stop in mid-sentence and pause for two or three seconds, as if the news item has given me the idea for a special test. The timely reference and the "sudden inspiration" create an extemporaneous atmosphere that makes the demonstration seem more relevant and "real."

This approach, of course, requires a mentalist to be up to date on the major national news events and issues that will be likely to strike a chord with a particular audience. And all of us know what those issues are, because we have done at least **some** research. We know, for example, that standard double entendres are apt to be misunderstood if we are performing at a club named "Sappho's." (If the previous sentence leaves you puzzled, and you are over seventeen, you are unprepared to ad lib in public.)

Recently, I arrived a day early for an out of state job. I had booked a room in the same hotel where the event was being held. I went down to the hotel gift shop to pick up a newspaper and a magazine.

But then I realized that I already had all I needed for the next evening's special effect. It was typical of the "brain buster" genre - bold, direct and simple to execute. (Provided, of course, that your balls are composed of fine brass)

All I needed to do was check the gift shop hours and see if there had been a sudden run on "US New and World Reports" in the hour or so before my show.

Now I realize that this is an awfully backwards way of describing an effect, but I thought you might have some fun trying to figure out what I did with what I had learned. At first I thought the idea would be of limited use, but I have since found that I can do it almost anytime that I am working in a hotel or resort. The only prop I need is a cheap, vest-pocket dictionary.

Keep this effect and method to yourself. It is an extremely valuable effect based on lateral thinking.

The next night I opened with a few psychological choices and my own variation of Koran's Five Star Miracle. The audience was attentive, polite and very responsive.

I displayed three paper back books and began the normal intro for my book test sequence. I stopped abruptly in mid-sentence and stood completely still for a mental count of five. Shaking my head slowly, I tossed the books back into my case and continued.

"You know, every time I do this test there are those who think that I have somehow memorized the books or that I can see a reflection of their word by looking at their eyeballs or something. The only way to do this properly is by letting someone concentrate on a thought that would be impossible for anyone to know.

"And last night I had a dream that something strange would happen here tonight. Let's try something different and see what happens.

"There's got to be one person in this audience who is reasonably honest and sober. Who is the most responsible person in the room?"

After a lot of laughing and finger pointing, a popular executive stood up to a large round of applause.

(If the audience didn't pick a subject, I was prepared to randomly select about five candidates and put the selection to a vote- the point was that it HAD to be a fair selection, which completely ruled out the possibility of prearrangement or collusion. And it was. As long as they didn't select someone who had too much fun at Happy Hour, I really didn't care who they picked.)

"Well I guess you are the most responsible guy in the company. Here's what I'd like you to do. Oh, wait a second . . ."

I caught the attention of a hotel staff member and said, "Is there a gift shop in the hotel, or a magazine stand?" (As if I didn't know!)

She said that there was one in the lobby.

"Is it still open, do you know?"

"Yes, they are open until eleven," she replied. [This is an essential part of the routine-- it had to seem like wasn't sure if there was a shop or if it was open.]

"Okay, then." I took a ten-dollar bill from my pocket and said to the executive. "Thanks a lot for cooperating. Here is what I want you to do. Go down to the gift shop. Pick up a magazine. Get one with photos or pictures in it, something like *Time*, or *Newsweek*, *US News and World Reports*, or *People*. Anything like that, as long as it has

photographs and ads that the people in the back will be able to see. Roll the magazine up and put it in your pocket. Oh, yeah, maybe you'd better pay for it first - this should cover it."

I gave him the ten.

"When you come back, keep the magazine in your pocket and don't show it to anyone. Just go back to your table and we'll do the test near the end of the program."

He left the room and I went on with my three-envelope routine, concluding with the duplication of a spectator's hidden drawing.

I acted as if I was done with the show and then suddenly remembered the special test.

"As you know," I said, "I originally was going to do a test for you with some books. But I decided to try it differently and I think that might be because of a dream I had last night. I'm not sure, but I think that dream might have something to do with what is about to happen."

I approached a woman near the front of the room and asked her what she would think if I told her that in my pocket I had a prediction of a word. "A word that no one yet knows, a word that the gentleman will pick from whatever magazine he purchased."

As she responded doubtfully, I took out my pocket dictionary and said, "I have a strong feeling that this book contains the very word. At least I hope so! It would be a pretty poor dictionary if it didn't!"

"But no, this is not my prediction. I sealed that up in an envelope."

I took a large envelope from my pocket and explained that it contained the word that kept repeating itself in my dream. I gave her the envelope and explained that I would not touch it again until the experiment was over.

"Okay, now we need to pick a number. I want this to be random so why don't you just stop me somewhere as I flip through the dictionary. Good - and what page did you select? Page forty-three, fine!"

I now addressed the man with the magazine and asked him to show it to everyone for the first time. I then instructed him to turn to the selected page. "Is there a picture, or pictures, on the page? Yes? Will you please describe one of them for us?"

He described the President's Retreat at Camp David in Maryland. I asked him to call out the very last word on the page. The word was "innocence."

The woman now opened my prediction and read it aloud:

"I dreamt that a man named David called me from a camp in Maryland and kept repeating that his innocence would be proven at last."

I reiterated- "Camp David - 'at last' - the last word was "innocence."

Method:

The seemingly random purchase of a magazine is actually a force.

What I noticed when I first went to the gift shop was that *U.S. News and World Reports* was the only news magazine they carried. (This is hardly unusual. Hotel gift shops are not exactly Barnes and Noble - although I wouldn't be surprised if Amazon eventually got into the business!) They may have carried others, but if they did, they were sold out. I knew they didn't have any more *People*, either, because I bought the last copy.

So when I suggested a list of magazine to the spectator, the only one I mentioned that the store actually carried was *US News & World Reports*. I checked back at the bookstore about an hour or so before the show to make sure that the situation hadn't changed.

(At first I thought that this sort of method was a one-shot type deal, that I could not possibly do this if the hotel shop carried more magazines. Then I realized that there are many well-known magazines that would not be stocked for one reason or another. It is just a matter of giving the spectator the names of several magazines they DON'T have along with one they DO carry.)

I'll bet you already assume that the dictionary had a short page so that I could force the number forty-three. Well, you could certainly do it that way, but as I indicated, the dictionary is something I always have with me, and I'd hate to have to get a new one every time I needed to force another number. And besides, I don't know what number I want to force until I have had a look at a copy of the magazine the spectator will purchase. I need to find a page that allows for the most interesting prediction I can come up with.

I use a threaded dictionary of the sort that I described in *The Art of Mentalism (Part One)*. I find that by stretching out the thread at the page I want to force it works just as well as a short page. And, obviously, I have the added advantage of always being ready to perform the regular threaded book effect. (I think a pocket dictionary, or a Bible perhaps, is the only type of book that you can logically carry around with you without raising unnecessary suspicion. For those who would like to own a threaded dictionary, I highly recommend the one produced by my good friend, Ed Fowler. It is marketed as "The Working Performer's Dictionary Test" and is available from Denny and Lee Magic in Baltimore. (www.dennymagic.com)

But, as I said, the short page force will work just as well for this effect. Just be prepared to buy a new one each time you do the effect.

I know some of you are thinking, "Why not just enlist someone as a stooge, either by meeting and briefing him beforehand or by slipping him one of those "Be a sport and help me play a joke on the crowd" notes along with the ten spot. I suppose you could, but you would not be able to have the audience legitimately select the subject. It is the selection process that convinces everyone that confederacy is impossible. But even if you could pull off a seemingly fair selection, do you really believe that this corporate guy is not going to tell a few of his friends what really happened?

There is an old presumption in the law that says if you find a person lied about one material fact, you may infer that he lied about other material facts. It's called "False in one, false in all."

So much for your credibility.



Real PK

The Disconnect in Action

This is my presentation of the Psychokinetic Pen. It uses a *Bic* pen that operates on the same basic principle as the old Adam's "Mr. Topsy" trick.

It has also been used in the commercial effect, The Telekinetic Timber and its somewhat inferior clone, *The Poltergeist Block*.

I never cared very much for the effect using the blocks, although there have been so-called "real" psychics who have used it. (and exposed by Magicdom's own "Protectors of Gullible Americans.")

I could never see how the block was a logical thing to carry around.

The pen is very logical, but the basic effect is not as strong as it would first appear. The pen is balanced on the end of a table with half of its length extending over the edge. After due concentration, the mentalists causes the pen to fall over.

With the widespread exposure of invisible thread reels it is virtually guaranteed that thread will be suspected as the modus operandi.

It doesn't matter that thread is not used, unless, of course, you can prove that impossible. But even if you pass a hoop over the pen (!) someone will think that you blew on it. (the fact that you are standing 20 feet away notwithstanding)

("Over two hundred and fifty thousand thread reels sold!! " according to the proud inventor appearing on a recent video collection of thread magic. And he is only one of dozens of guys making the things.

This is a prime example of the unfortunate 21st Century phenomenon known as "The Trivialization of Magic."

Using the principle of misdirection that the late Bob Haines referred to as the "logical disconnect," however, these theories are convincingly ruled out.

Most of the tip-over effects are based on the movement of mercury or various other substances inside the object. But you probably won't want to make one yourself when you discover how difficult it is to seal up properly. I can vouch for the quality of the pens made by Banachek.

Here is my version of the effect together with some prop management tips I hope you find useful. I honestly think that, in this form, the PK pen is one of the eeriest and most effective presentations of pseudo pk possible.

Effect:

The performer balances three pens on the edge of a table and focuses his attention on any pen selected by a spectator. The performer point to the floor and the chosen pen falls off the table. The performer may give the chosen pen away as a souvenir.

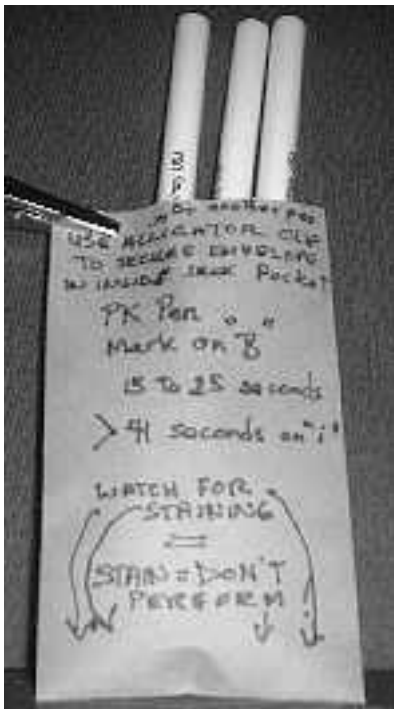
Method:

There are two powerful aspects to this routine. The fact that only one of the pens falls to the floor rules out the possibility of a hidden source of air. For the other pens remain motionless. And the apparent free choice of which pen is to fall creates an inexplicable problem.

One of the pens, of course, is the gimmicked PK pen. I always mark the gimmicked pen with a small mark directly next to its "balance point." That is the point near the center of the pen, which must be directly over the edge of the table.

To apparently give the pen away, a very bold switch is employed. After the pk pen has fallen to the floor take the other two pens in your left hand. It is natural for you to have your back to the audience at this point. Bend down and pick up the pk pen with your right hand. As you stand up switch the gimmicked pen for one of the pens in your left hand. Turn around and give the pen in your right hand away. There is no reason for the audience to suspect that this is not the same pen that fell, for they had no idea that you intended to give a pen away after you picked them up.

If you haven't tried this, or seen it done this way, you just won't believe the incredible reaction it gets. It truly looks impossible.



picked the pen that fell!

I keep the pens in the envelope shown to the left. On the envelope, I have written the number of seconds that the pk pen usually takes before it falls. The manila envelope is used for a good reason- the pen must be held point side down prior to performance. So I put all of the pens point side down in my pocket. The envelope is affixed to the top of my inside jacket pocket with the alligator clip so that I may withdraw all three pens quickly without the envelope accidentally coming out with them.

If by any chance the liquid in the PK pen has leaked, there will be a stain on the bottom of the manila envelope and I will be forewarned not to perform the effect.

The apparent free selection of the pen is my favorite part of the routine.

Take the pens from your pocket and note which one is the gimmick.

Ask a spectator what position we will focus on- one, two, or three.

Simply put the pk pen at the proper position! From the spectators' point of view, all of the pens are the same and it doesn't seem to make any difference, which goes where. They are, after all, asked to name a **position**, not a particular pen. Later, however, they will mistakenly recall that they actually

In Defense of the Dead

For Syd Bergson, Maker of Miracles

(Note: An incredibly powerful effect appears after the following diatribe. It is something I had intended to keep for myself and would not have published it but for the reasons stated. Please keep it to yourselves and Syd's Mystery shall have been restored and returned to those for whom it was intended.)

Internet auctions have become a major source for anything and everything related to magic and mentalism. For dealers, bargain seekers, and those who just want to look around or "buy it now" it has been a great boon.

But the negatives are significant and the dangers great.

Just recently, I had to deal with a so-called reputable ebay dealer who had been regularly selling photocopies of my Art of Mentalism 2. I was not the parasite's only victim. I understand that he has photocopied anything that will fit into his copy machine. While authors of large, hard cover books are relatively safe (until he buys a scanner) the rest of us have found ourselves vigilantly patrolling auction sites to defend our copyrights from those who would steal and profit from someone else's work.

But at least we are able to do that. It is far more difficult to strike back from beyond the grave. It saddens me to see how quickly their works can be copied and spread through cyberspace. It is even worse when their writings are prostituted as free giveaways to promote a cyber huckster's sales.

A few weeks ago I obtained such an item. It was a little magic booklet. It contained the entire text of the late Syd Bergson's "Teleperception." A very clean piece of mentalism, it never got the serious attention I thought it deserved. Many thought it was far too bold and others, who read it but didn't try it, thought that it wouldn't fool anyone. It was bold all right. And, in the hands of a strong showman was very deceptive. I'm sure all the folks who got the free promo booklet are going to appreciate it.

The mini books creator stated that he was reprinting Syd's work to insure that this wonderful effect would not be lost forever with Syd's passing. Is that what happens when a creator dies? His work gets lost forever?

That's a load of crap. Performers from around the world bought Syd's works. They will be in their libraries for years to come. Those who want to insure that ideas live on will either perform the effects or improve and refine them.

I spoke to Syd Bergson many times during the early years of the Psychic Entertainer's Association. He was among our first members and will be missed. The following routine is published in his memory.

The effect is my own modified version of Syd Bergson's effect "TelePerception." It remains as bold as ever but I think you will like what I did with the handling.

Syd's Mystery Restored

Here is a quick description of Syd's original idea:

Effect:

The premise is that the mentalist gives the participant an ESP test. He shows five standard ESP cards (Circle, cross, wavy lines, square and star) and five manila envelopes. He puts one card into each envelope and mixes them so that the spectator does not know which card is in which envelope. The performer holds one envelope before the spectator and asks him to try and guess which design it contains. He then draws the design of the spectator's choice on the envelopes. The procedure is repeated for the remaining envelopes.

When the cards are removed from the envelopes it is seen that the spectator has correctly guessed all five designs. The odds of this happening by chance are just one in one hundred and twenty.

Method:

This is as bold as it gets. The performer never really writes on the envelopes at all. Each envelope already has a design drawn on it, which matches the card inserted by the performer. The stack of envelopes is held seam side up. The top envelope of the stack has a circle on its face, the second a cross, the third has three wavy lines, the fourth a square, and the fifth has the star. Since they are in a known order the performer merely puts the circle card in the top

envelope, the cross in the second, etc. He absentmindedly mixes the envelopes around a bit before continuing with the revelation just in case the spectator remembered the order of his choices.

The performer never shows the faces of the envelopes. Of course if a spectator correctly guesses an envelope, the performer can show him the face of the envelope after he has pretended to draw the design on it.

That's the entire effect and, bold and simple as it may seem, it can be very deceptive if presented confidently and seriously. It **could**, however, be worked out by a skeptical spectator with a sharp mind and a good memory because it is a very logical method.

The logical spectator could think like this:

- 1) I noticed that he didn't show the faces of the envelopes until the end.
- 2) If he put each card in an envelope that was marked in some way to show what card it contained, he could then ignore my actual guess and draw the actual design in the envelope.
- 3) But I would have been able to tell by his hand motions if he was not drawing the design I picked.
 - 4) Wait a minute! That's why he never showed me the faces of the envelopes! They already had the right designs on them, so of course his hand motions looked right. He was just pretending to draw the card I named!

Bingo! And if you don't think there are spectators out there who think in this very logical manner and who pay attention to everything you do, you are wrong.

There are many effects that can be deduced by a person who has no knowledge of magic, even though the effects are very strong and totally fool most of the audience. Many self-working tricks are like this.

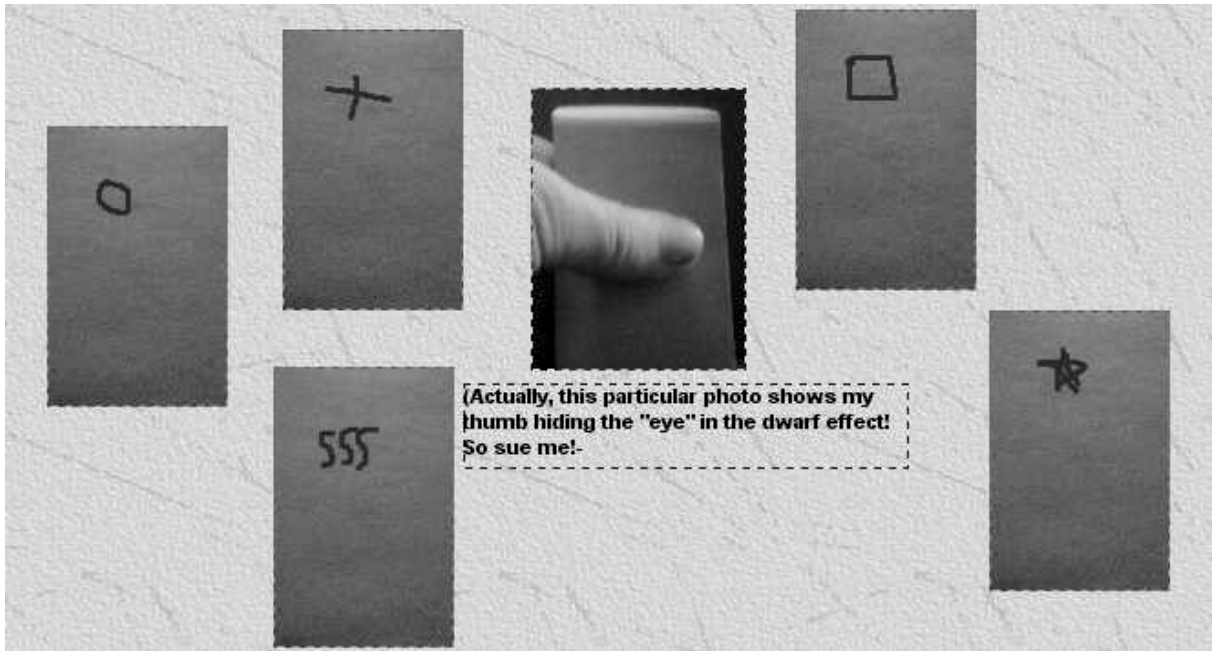
Most people don't pay attention to all of the details and really don't make a serious effort to work out the method, but there are far more than a few who do think about it. Occasionally they think out loud. This, again, is where the principle of the logical disconnect can be used to literally "disconnect" the logical sequence which leads to a solution. The "disconnect" is usually a subtlety that rules out the actual solution.

If, in the above effect, the spectator had seen the fronts and backs of the envelopes before he made his selections; if he saw for himself that the envelopes were totally opaque; if he mixed up the cards himself before they were put into the envelopes; the logical solution could not be correct.

Many performers, in trying to improve an effect like this think it is necessary to change the method. But very often the cleanness of the original presentation is lost. The logical disconnect is usually the answer. In my version of the Bergson effect the spectator will remember that he verified the envelopes were opaque, he saw both sides of the envelopes, and he mixed the cards before they were sealed up. (It is important to note that the performer never overtly draws the spectator's attention to any of these facts, he just modifies his presentation and handling to apparently make them self evident. The actual method, though, remains the same!

Here is how the logical disconnect is used to make the effect completely impossible looking without complicating it in the least.

When you prepare the envelopes be sure that your drawings are big enough to be seen, but just small enough to be covered by your left thumb. (The same idea is used in "The Eye of the White Dwarf") I use a *Sharpie* marker rather than a pen or pencil because the lines are very visible even if the drawing is rather small. Here are photos of the five envelopes and a photo of my thumb hiding the drawing:



Also, I use six envelopes rather than five, and the ESP cards are marked so I will know which is which after the spectator has mixed them.

When the effect begins the five ESP cards are in the sixth envelope, which is totally unprepared and has no markings on either side. The envelopes are in a stack and are flap side up. The top envelope of the stack is the circle. The next is the cross, etc. The bottom envelope is the one that contains the cards.

When the stack of envelopes is initially brought forth it can, therefore, be casually shown on both sides as you make a remark about the necessity of using opaque envelopes for the test. Hold the stack seam side up and hand the bottom envelope, which contains the cards, to the spectator. As him to look at both sides of the envelope, hold it up to the light, etc. to see if he can see what is inside.

He'll probably say that there is something in it, but he will agree that he cannot tell for sure what it is. He cannot see through the heavy Manila paper.

Take the envelope back, remove the cards and pocket the unprepared envelope. The others are seam side up on the table in front of you or in your left hand. Be careful not to flash the drawings on the backs.

Show him the cards and explain the designs. Then let him mix them up. When he is finished, take the cards and deal them out in a haphazard face down row on the table.

Tell him you are about to test his ESP and that you will seal the designs at random into the envelopes. Because the cards are marked, you will have no trouble picking up the circle first- apparently just randomly picking it up from the row on the table and sliding it into the top envelope of the stack, which you are now holding in your left hand. Put that envelope on the bottom of the stack. Then "randomly" select the cross and put it in the next envelope. Continue in this fashion until all the cards are in their proper envelopes. Casually mix the envelopes up and then put them down in a stack, seam side up.

Reach into your pocket for a Sharpie marker (the same one you did your drawings with!), pick up the top envelope with your left hand and turn it so the design faces you. Cover the design with your thumb and casually show the envelope on both sides, asking the spectator if he is able to see what card you inserted. (Important- you are not

showing both sides of the envelope as if you are trying to prove they are innocent. You are making sure that the spectator cannot see through them, an important distinction- we're doing mentalism here, not a card trick!)

Turn the envelope toward yourself again and ask him to guess what card it contains. Whatever he says, pretend to actually draw it on the envelope in the same position as the drawing you made early. Don't just move your hand around. Let your motions show that you are actually drawing his design. Put the envelope face down on the table and follow the same procedure with the rest of the envelopes.

DON'T show each one of them front and back, you don't want to be "over proving" anything.

Should the spectator actually correctly guess a design or two, you can flash the drawing as you put the envelope down.

You're all finished and clean. Just casually mix the envelopes around before you reveal the perfect results.

If, by chance, the spectator guesses all of them correctly, you will be able to show him each envelope after you've drawn his selection. You will also have found someone to take to the racetrack with you.

A Magical Parable

I wrote this piece about five years ago as a response to how the art of magic has changed in the Internet age.

There are five million stories in the "Naked City." This is one of them . . .

Nearly two hundred years ago a young man went to a concert where he was startled, amazed and entertained by the virtuosity of the great violinist, Paganini. He was particularly impressed by the adoring reaction of Paganini's audience, especially the women.

He decided that he, too, would become a master, and would obtain the same respect and adulation.

He immediately went in search of a music shop to purchase an Amati- the finest violin made. He asked the proprietor if he could buy the sheet music for the pieces he had heard Paganini play.

The shop owner handed him the music and asked, "Are you a musician?"

"Oh, yes," said the young man, "I am the next Paganini! I have one question, though. What is the meaning of all of these black dots and lines on the sheet music? I cannot read this!!"

"Sir," replied the owner, "that is the way music is transcribed and written. Before you can be a Master you must first learn to read music, you must learn your scales, do your exercises and master the fundamentals. I assume you are a violinist?"

"Well, it looks pretty easy to play. Paganini had no trouble with it, and it was obvious that what he did was very easy. Besides, I have no interest in learning scales or doing exercises. I simply want to know how to play the pieces I heard Paganini play."

The old man laughed so loudly that the boy took offense. "Listen, old man, " he said, "Don't laugh at me and give me lectures, just tell me the secret to playing these pieces!!"

Unbeknownst to the boy, the old man was the Great Wizard Kenton (from the Land of AZ), a renowned initiate of the Magickal Arts.

"My son," he stated, "To receive the answer to your query, you must first live for two hundred years. You must then buy a device that will be known as a computer and use it to travel into a dimension called cyberspace. There you will encounter a beast known as The Internet. Ask to be transported to a domain known as alt.music.secrets, and all will be revealed to you. "

"And they won't preach at me the way you have done? They will simply tell me the secret?"

"Yes. A few you meet there will preach to you, true. But most will be happy to trade the secrets of Paganini, say, for the secrets of Mozart. I will be happy to sell you a harpsichord and Mozart sheet music so that you will have something with which to barter."

"Now you are talking, old man! Sell me the harpsichord and the music . . . And one more thing- where can I buy the secret that will enable me to live for two hundred years so I may find The Internet?"

"Not to worry," replied the shopkeeper, "People like you will be around forever."

The story you have just read is true. The names have been omitted to protect the innocent and to spare the stupid.

The Thirty Second Rule

**You will make it or break it in the first 30 seconds, so be real and get to it.
-Dr. Bob**

Part of acting is having the security to turn yourself loose and let yourself go. . . Audiences believe what you believe. It's a matter of believing yourself. If I believe me, then you've got no choice. None at all.

-Morgan Freeman, quoted in Caught in the Act: New York Actors Face to Face

[The keynote of my acting] is the ability to be caught up in a story, to really believe in a situation. That's the power of belief.

-Julie Harris, quoted in Actress to Actress

Your routines must be second nature. If you have to stop and think about what comes next you will put a crack in your illusion and are apt to be confused, much like the absentminded bank robber who tied up the safe and blew the guard.

-Dr. Bob

The year was 1973. I was twenty-four years old and had managed to talk my way into a summer contract as an entertainer aboard the Holland *American Line* cruise ship "Rotterdam."

Of course I had no business being there, but you couldn't have told me that. After all, I had been performing for twelve years - birthday parties, Kiwanis lunches, Masonic Lodges, churches, high school talent shows, and fundraisers of all types and sizes. I even made the local papers a few times.

The previous December I was hired to entertain at the Holland - America employees' Christmas party. The entertainment director loved my act and hired me on the spot for the upcoming summer season. (He tried to say more, but was experiencing problems with multi-syllabic words due to being drunk on his ass.)

It looked like it was going to be a great summer. I only had to do four shows a week for audiences I assumed would be made up of the same older folks I'd entertained at the lodges and churches. " Piece of cake," I thought.

I really should have done some research. I would have discovered that the "Rotterdam" was, at the time, the second largest cruise ship afloat and carried upwards of twelve hundred passengers per week. Facing tough competition from *Royal Caribbean*, *Princess*, and *Norwegian American* lines, in 1973 Holland *American* dramatically raised its entertainment budget in the hopes of attracting an affluent younger crowd.

When I arrived there were:

Two orchestras and two rock bands;
An acrobatic team from Germany;
The Danish magician Viggo Jahn;
Hans Moretti and Company, illusionists;
Jimmy Reneaux (sleight of hand with cards and doves);
Stu Scott - ventriloquist;
Barbara Hanna - singer;
Yvonne Moray- dancer, singer, comedienne; and
Joe Haller, comedian, formerly of the team of Haller and Hayden, and an Ed Sullivan show veteran and many more whose names are buried somewhere in one of my time-corrupted memory files.

They had had worked everywhere - from the Catskills to Las Vegas and Hollywood. (Yvonne Moray was one of the three Munchkinland ballerinas in "The Wizard of Oz." She lives there forever now.)

I knew I was in way over my head. Someone grabbed me by the arm after lifeboat drill. It was a harried looking guy I later learned was the assistant cruise director.

"Bring your charts, intro and cue sheet to Carlos, the orchestra leader. You're the second act in the "Welcome Aboard" show at eight- twelve minutes, ok? Exactly twelve minutes, no more, no less- we've got a second sitting show at ten."

*There is a serious problem here. I don't have a **real** act like on TV - just the stuff that I do for parties and lodge meetings. I'm not even sure what he means by charts. There hasn't been any mention of a rehearsal or anything like that. It looks like everyone already knows what he or she is doing.*

Except me.

Eight o' clock in the main lounge. (That's what they call it but it looks like a Las Vegas showroom to me.)

The orchestra hits a long, brassy chord to wrap up a disco version of "In the Mood." Joe Haller opens and quickly has the audience roaring hysterically to his rimshot punctuated comedy.

Then I vaguely hear myself being introduced and make my way to center stage. I'm blinded from all sides by two thousand watts worth of spotlight. I can't feel my legs. The emcee thrusts a microphone into my hand and I try to see faces in the sea of shadows that faces me. My throat tightens and goes dry- my opening line comes out as a hoarse, unintelligible whisper. I feel myself foundering in an ocean of flop sweat.

Somehow I made it through the act. After a minute or two I managed to focus on my routine and that settled me down a bit. The audience was in a good mood and gave me some encouraging applause - I suspected, though, that it may have been motivated by pity. I knew that this was probably my first and last performance on a cruise ship.

The performers all sat at a few tables on the port side of the main lounge. I tried not to make eye contact with any of them as I took my seat. It didn't matter, though. They all looked the other way as if they didn't notice me.

Joe eventually broke the silence. He leaned over to me and said that the cruise director wanted me to go up to the Sky Deck to help the hostess out with a singles party. I didn't have to worry about the second show because everything was running behind and they needed to shorten it.

"How bad was it, Joe?" I asked. He looked as if he was remembering something from a long time ago. "Meet me in the crew bar at midnight," he said. "We've got a lot of work to do."

"Actually, you're a pretty good mentalist. I have no idea how you did any of those things," Joe said, as I took a seat next to him in the nearly empty crew bar.

"Come on, Joe, I was terrible. I don't belong here."

"No, really, you weren't all that bad. There is really only one problem."

"And what's that?" I asked.

"Your act stinks."

"I thought you said I was pretty good."

"The mind reading stuff was fine. But nobody took you seriously after your first thirty seconds. Never forget the thirty-second rule. You only have thirty seconds to establish yourself and connect with an audience. If you don't manage that it doesn't matter what you do next. No one will really care.

"If you hadn't scored pity points tonight, they would have ignored you completely.

"I don't know how you managed to get hired, but if you don't learn to handle yourself on stage you're going to spend the rest of this cruise giving tours of the ship and selling bingo cards."

I had no idea why he did it, but Joe took me under his wing. Years later I learned that my "performance" reminded him of his first stage experience.

Three weeks later I had my second chance. I was still nervous but I managed to remember most of what he'd taught me. And, during my next performance, he did me a favor I'll never forget.

I was working "in one" (in front of the curtain) in the theater show. I had just started to speak when I heard a deep bellowing sound coming from behind the curtain. It sounded like a large cow or a bull. No one else heard it, but it was unmistakable. Someone was behind the curtain mooing!

And it sounded a lot like Joe.

I cracked up and my nervousness vanished. The situation was so hilariously ludicrous that I completely forgot about stage fright. Giving the crowd a puzzled look, I held the mike to the curtain, treating the whole audience to an unscheduled bovine serenade.

They began to laugh. Thirty seconds into the act and the audience was mine. I still had a lot to learn, but I never returned to the bingo business.

The *Thirty Second Rule* dictates the opening structure of your act.

A beginning mentalist wrote to me recently and said that he thought it would be a good idea to open his act with my card memory routine. He felt that it would give him credibility before he got into his "mind reading" effects.

Now the card memory is one of my strongest effects and I have never failed to impress an audience with it. But as an opener it is suicidal. Before you can establish credibility you have to "command and connect."

Commanding an audience means getting and keeping their attention. To *connect* with an audience you must make them feel as if they are part of the show.

You must do both within thirty seconds.

You have no time to gradually build yourself up to performance pitch. You have to do that before you go on. That's when you loosen up, focus in, and psyche out.

Some deep breathing and calisthenics will loosen your muscles and calm you down. Visualizing all of those wonderful people and looking forward to meeting them will focus you in. Totally **believing** in and becoming the character you are about to portray will psyche you up.

You should be pretty close to your maximum performing pitch before you are introduced. You're going to walk out briskly and professionally. That should take no more than five seconds.

In the next two seconds you will take the stage and firmly establish your presence. This extremely simple, yet very important, technique seems to be relatively unknown among magicians and mentalists.

Here is how you do it - You've made your way to center stage. Now **freeze for a mental count of two**. That's two full seconds - "one one-thousand, two one-thousand"- of standing perfectly still. This creates an immediate sense of expectancy in the audience. You have established your presence and you are about to connect with them. And you've only been on stage for about seven seconds.

Now is the time to direct a casual remark, or topical quip, directly to an individual, or to the audience as a whole. Make direct eye contact with at least three or four people sitting in different areas. The combination of a seemingly conversational remark and individual eye contact is what establishes the *connection*. You are talking with them, not at them. You should act as if you are among a group of old friends. The moment the audience feels this they will see you as an old friend, also. You will have won them over before you've performed your first effect.

(During the course of your performance you will try to make eye contact with everyone. Don't just look in their general direction or somewhere over their heads as is sometimes recommended. Actually make direct contact with their eyes, and hold it for a second or two before directing your attention to someone else. Treat an audience with the respect they deserve. They are not just observers; they are the most important part of your act. You cannot practice mentalism by standing in front of a mirror and reading your own mind.)

It is a good idea to consider all of your lines as being a part of a dialogue rather than a monologue. The dialogue is with the audience. While they are not usually expected to verbally respond, they will nonetheless communicate with you through their expressions, eye contact and body language. Just as a good conversationalist listens to his partner, a performer "listens" to his audience by observing and paying attention to their physical responses.

You have established your presence and connected within thirty seconds. You are in complete control and ready to begin a direct, to the point, opening effect which will establish your ability, expertise, or talent.

Gimmicks, Sleights and Devices

In this section I'll describe some very practical methods for establishing the illusion of mentalism. Several illustrative effects follow them.



The Watch

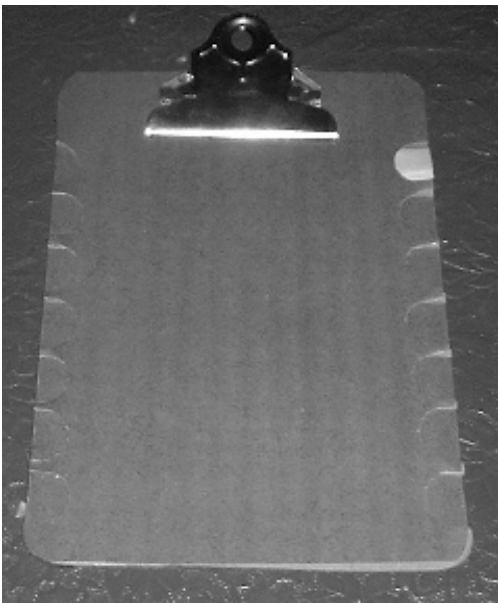
These are five-dollar pocket watches available at WalMart and most department stores. Note that the chain has a clip on both ends. I simply

took the clip off the extra chain and attached it to the one in use. Interesting possibilities arise when you have an identical watch on each end of the chain. (One, of course, is always kept concealed.) The disk is shim steel. I took it from an old color changing poker chip set. Alternatively, a disk may be fashioned from aluminum foil and cardboard. My favorite watch routine, using one watch and the disk, is called "Eternally Yours" and appears later in this book.



The Prediction Chest

I bought this little chest at from an artists supply and crafts store. They are sold unfinished and come in a wide variety of styles and sizes. This one sells for about \$2.50. In combination with a Lippincott "Quarter Go" box and my Clipboard Billet Index, it is the foundation for The Boys of November, a routine in which you predict all of the details of a World Series played in the minds of the audience.



The Clipboard Index

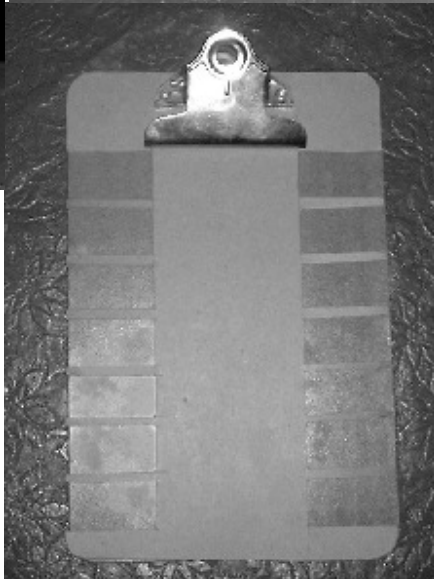
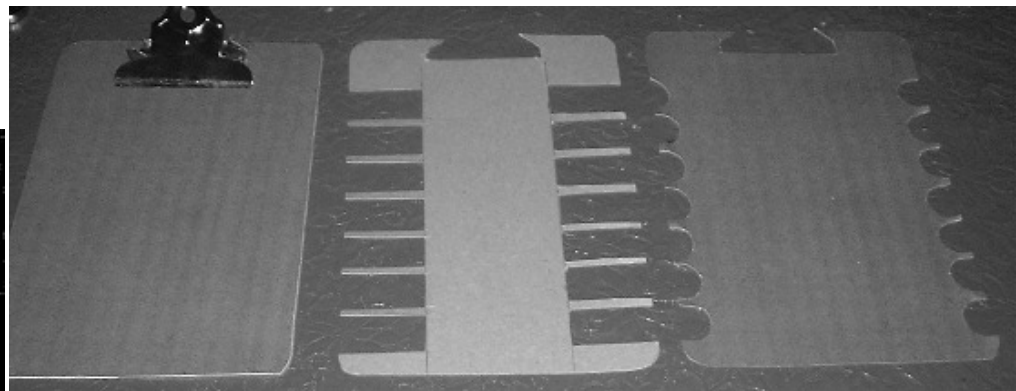
Since this is a device that is never handled by the audience, you will have no problem making a perfectly serviceable unit with some Contac™ or shelf paper, a piece of heavy cardboard and any size clipboard.

The cardboard "skeleton" is glued to the clipboard. (See photograph below left.) Each of the openings is sized to accommodate the particular size billet or card you wish to use. This one will accommodate 15 slips. In *The Boys of October* I often print the billets to resemble newspaper clippings. While only eight billets are necessary, the routine is structured in such a way that it appears the article has predicted the most minute details of an imaginary series of games played by the audience.

The photo below shows the three components of the board. The center piece is 1/8th inch cardboard. The photo on the left shows the board with the cover piece removed.

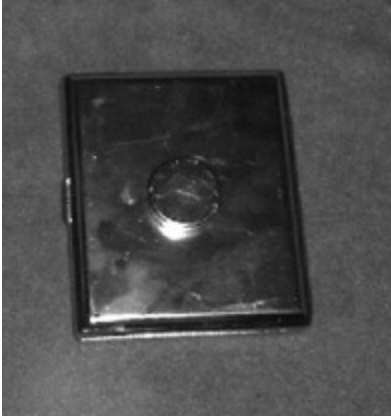


The candlestick billet holder inspired this. Mine is simply is quite heavy which keeps Crossover is performed the top of the post. There is display of a billet as Tests.”



The Billet Holder

described in the Tarbell Course in Magic the stand from an old desk lamp. The base it from accidentally falling over when The from the stand. There is a cork stuck into a slit cut across the top to allow the required in “The Godfather of All Billet



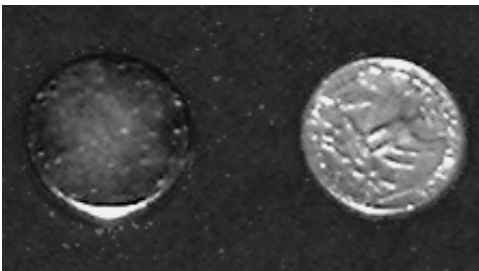
The Billet Case

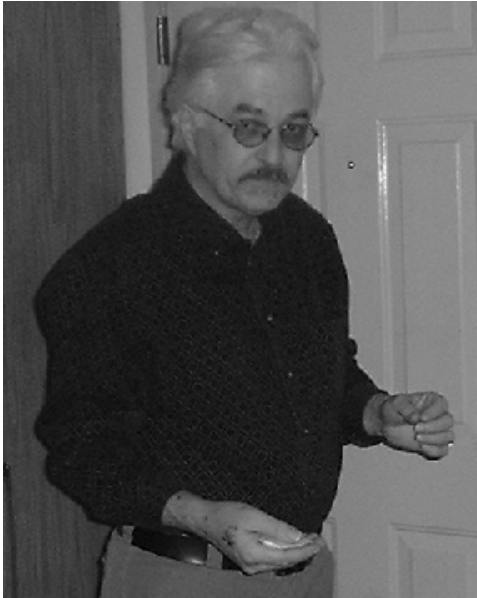
This is something I always carry in my pocket. It is an inexpensive metal cigarette case. Any similar case may be used as long as a magnet attracts the metal. A supply of billets and pencils fit perfectly into the case. For impromptu work you can leave the case open in your right jacket pocket. When going to the pocket with a palmed billet, it is a simple matter to perform the umbrella move and drop the now open billet into the case. Later you remove the case from your pocket, snapping it shut in the process. Merely open it to get another billet and you can easily read the contents of the stolen slip.

The photo on the upper left shows the case in closed condition. The circular object in the middle is a neodymium boron magnet. These extremely powerful magnets are available virtually everywhere. You can see the relative size of my magnet by comparing it to the U.S. quarter in the photograph below. The magnet and case are the basis for the cleanest covert read of a billet that I've ever seen or used. "The Invisible Read and Holdout," used in combination with "The Crossover" has been, until now, my most closely held secret. Please give it the minimal practice it requires to do it justice. And DO NOT treat it like a "move." Don't be furtive and never draw attention to your hands with flourish-like moves. I cringe whenever I hear an armchair expert refer to his latest pipe-dream switch as "elegant in appearance." If you've drawn sufficient attention to your handling to warrant appreciation for your "elegance," you've destroyed the illusion of mentalism.

I know I have said that many times before, but I'll keep saying it because far too many performers just don't get the point. . Magicians do elegant tricks with slips of paper. Mentalists read minds.

It's as simple as that.





The Cassidy Crossover

IMPORTANT NOTICE

The photograph to the left does not, despite allegations to the contrary, depict me, disguised with a false mustache, offering a bribe to an unnamed public official. The caption is printed without my permission or authorization.

"So what's it going to take to forget about this? little matter?" asks one of the central figures in a recent nepotism scandal.

-Photo by *The Inquiring News Bee*

The Basic Switch

This description is best followed with billets in hand. As always, I use index card stock, 2.5" by 3" folded into quarters.

The left hand is held with its back to the audience, fingers pointing upward. The billet to be switched out is held between the tips of the thumb and the first two fingers as shown in the first photograph in the sequence below. The billet to be switched in is finger palmed in the right hand as shown in the exposed view. (Second photo from the left) The remaining photos show what the move looks like from the audience's point of view.



Start **Exposed View** The right hand moves to the left, apparently removing the billet held in the left hand and passing it to a spectator on the far left. (The next photo shows the conclusion of the sequence.)



The conclusion of the switch.

The Mechanics of the Move

That's what the audience sees. In fact, the billet finger palmed in the right hand has replaced the billet originally seen in the now empty left hand.

The move may be performed completely in the hands, as above, or the billet stand may take the place of the left hand, as it does in the "Godfather of all Billet Tests" which is described later in the book. Here is what actually happens:

The switch is very similar to Vernon's "Spellbound Move" with coins. As the right hand crosses over the left, the billet in the left hand is thumb-palmed in the crotch of the right thumb, leaving the left hand empty. At the same time, the tip of the right thumb pushes the finger-palmed billet to the fingertips. The right hand **MUST NOT STOP** in its motion to the left. That is the key to the perfect visual deception created by the move. You will note that the body also turns slightly to the left as the right hand crosses over.

This is one of the few moves that are easily learned both right-handed and left-handed. (And you must learn to do just that if you expect to return billets to spectators seated to your right!)

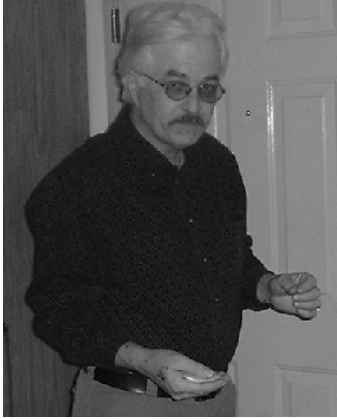
When the billet stand is used, its purpose is to keep the billet in full view and OUT of your hands to the greatest extent possible. When the crossover move is done with the stand, the stand merely takes the place of one hand. In the following sequence of pictures, I am doing the exact same thing as shown above, but the stand is taking the place of my left hand. As before, the billet to be switched in is finger palmed in my right hand.



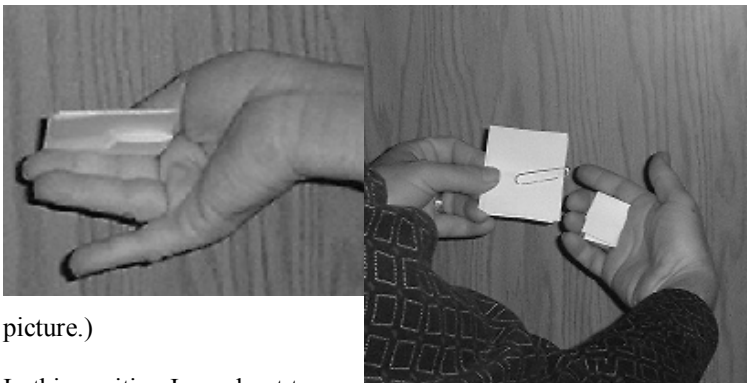
As before, the right hand continues in a smooth motion across the stand. The billet in the stand is caught in a right hand thumb palm as the hand continues toward the spectator on the left.

Once you've got this mastered, proceed to the "Invisible Read and Holdout" to learn the other major element of "The Godfather of All Billet Tests."

The Invisible Read and Holdout



As I said in the section describing “The Crossover,” the picture on the left does not depict me paying a bribe. I must admit, though, that it catches me in the act of stealing. My right hand is holding a stack of billets held together with a large paper clip. You can see the clip in the next photo, which also exposes the stolen billet that I am hiding under the stack. (The mustache is false.)



The billet is hidden below the paper-clipped stack held in the right hand. The picture on the far left shows me lifting the stack away with my left hand to expose the hidden billet. On the near left, the photo shows the billet hidden beneath the stack. (The pinky is elegantly extended for the sake of pictorial beauty – In performance such elegance would be fatally stupid. Keep the fingers together as shown in the former

picture.)

In this position I am about to execute the “Invisible Read” with the aid of the magnetic “Billet Case,” which acts as a holdout. (I’ll explain how the billet got under the stack in the first place in my description of “The Godfather” routine.)

I turn to my right and drop my right hand to my side, thus taking it briefly out of view. The stack will now be directly over the magnetic holdout in the back right pocket. (This is simply the “Billet Case” described earlier – with the magnet affixed to its surface, it doubles as a holdout.) Since the large paperclip is magnetic, the holdout secures the stack to the pocket, thus freeing the right hand to open the billet with the well known “umbrella move.” (Basically, you just shove your thumb into the billet toward the center, and it “umbrellas” open.)

I then take the stack back with my right hand with the stolen billet now unfolded on the bottom. (It is not held in place by the clip but that doesn’t matter, as no one can see the bottom of the stack anyway.)

The entire move should take no more than two or three seconds. Lately I’ve been able to do it in about one second without any noticeably quick actions. It’s done while I’m turning, talking, and walking as I gesture with my empty left hand. Shortly thereafter, I apparently pull a blank billet from the bottom of the clipped stack and place it on top, apparently to jot some notes. I actually take the loose stolen billet from the bottom and place it on top.

The writing is now staring me in the face.

Proper Placement and Use of the Holdout

The photo to the left shows me placing the holdout case into my right rear pocket. Note that the magnet is positioned on the left center of the case. This maximizes the cover provided by my body.



Contrary to appearances, I am not scratching myself in this photo. The photograph depicts my right hand dropping to my side as I turn to the right. The moment the stack is above the magnet, I let it go, retaining only the stolen billet in my right hand.



Here, the right hand is executing the umbrella move. As soon as the billet is opened it will be placed writing side against the stack. The stack, with the open billet beneath, will be grasped by the right hand and brought back into view. The entire move takes about one second.

The sequence is entirely invisible and is covered by natural movement as I turn and walk to the right while addressing a remark to that side of the audience. The motion of the right arm simulates the exact manner in which the arm naturally "swings" while a person is walking.

If you have a clear understanding of the "Invisible Read and Holdout," you are prepared to go to "The Godfather of All Billet Tests" to see how it is all put together.

The Godfather of All Billet Tests

Get down, get funky!

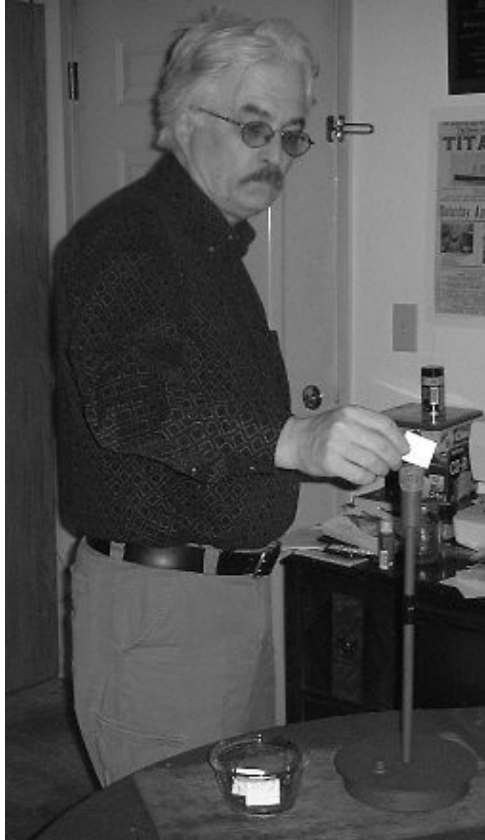
-Lawrence Welk, "The Godfather of Funk" 1968

The picture seems to show my right hand removing a billet from a bowlful collected from the audience. (The picture shows a rather small bowl, which is, of course, all that is necessary for a small audience. In most shows, though, I usually use a large punchbowl and collect anywhere from fifty to two or three hundred billets.)

The picture, however, only shows what the audience is allowed to see.



In fact, while absently stirring the billets about before removing one from the bowl, I have secretly finger palmed an extra billet in my right hand.



The visible billet is placed in the slot at the top of the billet stand. My left hand, in the meantime, is removing a stack of blank billets – secured with a paper clip – from my left pocket. As soon as my right hand is free, it will receive the stack from the left hand. The stack will then act as cover for the finger-palmed billet.

Effect:

The classic question-answering act thematically updated to suit your stage persona

Prerequisites:

“The Billet Holder,” “The Billet Case (holdout),” a bowl or other receptacle for the billets, several stacks of billets, each paper-clipped together, and a supply of pencils. (I use golf pencils, which are available by the gross and have my logo and contact information embossed on them.)

The psychological aspects of the Q and A Act have been widely covered in the literature. I particularly recommend the sections on Q & A in *The Art of Mentalism* and *Principia Mentalia*. (particularly because I wrote them)

Most of the Hull, Nelson and Corinda material is seriously dated, but you will find some very valuable insights in Banachek’s *Psychological Subtleties* and in the works of John Riggs. You should also study the art of cold reading, particularly the works of Herb Dewey (“The King of the Cold Readers”) if you are fortunate enough to find them.

Method:

As you may have already deduced, the combination of the "Crossover Switch" (both the "in the hands" version and the "Billet Holder" version), and "The Invisible Read and Holdout," offer many excellent combinations that will aid in the creation completely amazing and deceptive effects. If you were to add a few psychological readings and perhaps some preshow work the sky would be your limit.

But for practically impromptu use, the following sequence is hard to beat:

1. Pass out the billets and pencils. In a nightclub setting you may have them distributed to the tables before you go on. Behave politely and generously toward the wait-staff, and they will be able to assist you with this. (They will also assist with many other things that rude and/or cheap performers will never learn about)
2. Have a volunteer from the audience collect the billets. It is critical to the illusion of mind reading that you never really appear to pay much attention to, or even care that much about, the written questions. Your attitude should convey that they are simply used to aid in concentration and serve as a double check should someone challenge the performer's accuracy. (In real life this rarely happens unless you set up the "challenge" yourself.)
3. While looking at the audience and talking with them about how they should focus on their thoughts (perhaps picturing them on a mental movie or television screen), casually stir the billets with your right hand. **DO NOT LOOK AT OR INTO THE BOWL!!!** I use a clear glass bowl to further establish that nothing tricky goes on with the papers, that they remain in full view at all times. Remove one folded billet and hold it in your right fingers. Don't look directly at it, but act as if you are receiving a negative or confusing impression. Return the still folded billet to the bowl and remove another one. Actually keep the first one finger palmed in your right hand as you hold the new billet at your fingertips.
4. Explain that the papers are used merely for verification purposes. Place the visible billet into the slot on top of the billet stand as your left hand retrieves a clipped packet of blank billets from your left jacket pocket or from your table. Casually explain that you, too, occasionally need to write your impressions in order to focus on them properly. As you are speaking, transfer the packet to your right hand, covering the stolen billet. Turn to your right as you address the audience on that side of the room. Casually drop your right hand to your side and, utilizing the Holdout, open out the billet and put it on the bottom of the held out packet. Pull the packet away from the holdout and bring your right hand back into view. As I stated elsewhere, this should happen in a matter of seconds.
5. Start to answer an imaginary question and then pause for a second. Grab a pencil from the table or your pocket and scribble some notes on your packet. Perform the invisible read as outlined above. Read the stolen billet as you pretend to jot a note on it. (Don't actually write anything on it, as you are going to return all of the used billets to those who wrote them) Pretend to cross out the writing, and stuff the spectator's billet into your right trousers pocket. Act as if you are just disposing of an incorrect impression. In fact, it comes right back out of your pocket in the finger palm position used for the "Crossover Switch."

There are many alternate ways to secretly read the writing on the stolen slip. Master several because you can't use the "I screwed up and need a fresh piece of paper gambit" more than two or maybe three times per show. I just walk around the room a lot. I stay well away from the billet holder and the billet receptacle except when I am removing or replacing a billet from the bowl or stand. This creates endless opportunities to secretly read the billet. You can be extremely ballsy about this because, if you believe in yourself and have carefully read, learned, and executed the critical matters covered by "The Thirty Second Rule," it will never cross the audience's mind that it is even possible

for you to cheat. You have taken command, you have connected, and you've established your credentials prior to commencing the Q and A routine.

Whether or not the refolded stolen billet is finger-palmed in your right or left hand is dictated by the location of its author. You discover their locations by requesting the writers of the questions to identify themselves when you call out their initials or ask who had a particular question in mind. Apparently retrieve the spectator's billet from the display stand, actually executing the switch, and return it to him or her **still folded**.

Do not, except maybe once or twice, open up the billets to "verify" their contents. The classic approach to the one-ahead is probably known by enough people to populate the City of New York. Why allow them to share their wisdom with members of your audience?

From here to the conclusion of the routine, is simply a repetition of same sequence of moves. Steal another billet from the bowl while visibly putting a new one onto the stand, etc. Once you've mastered the rather simple mechanics of the "Crossover," I am certain that you will make this routine, or a variant, a major part of your program. There is simply no stronger form of mentalism than an expertly performed billet-reading act.

The Quarter Bend



"A perfectly flat quarter. I cover it with my fingers and rub it gently. Look! The quarter is bending! Please keep it as a souvenir."

The pictures show exactly what the effect looks like to a spectator.



This is my handling and modification of a standard, yet very effective, sequence using a very inexpensive reel. (Typically the device is used to vanish a coin.)

The reel, shown at the left, is available at Wal-Mart and department stores everywhere. It is made in China and is sold as a retractable key ring. The heavy black cord extends about two feet and the pull action is strong. (So much so that I attached a piece of felt to mine to prevent the quarter from making any noise when it slams into the pull.) These reels sell for less than \$3.00 each. (I initially bought two dozen of them and modified them to act as billet pulls, coin pulls, card pulls, and am working on a taffy pull for next weeks social at St. Peters.)

The device works best, and is virtually foolproof, if the quarter is permanently attached. I drilled a small hole near the edge of a straight quarter and tied it to the end of the cord. (Be very careful when you cut the key ring from the

cord. Wrap the cord around your fingers a few times so it doesn't accidentally retract into the reel, never to be seen again. Secure the knot with *SuperGlue*TM to guarantee its permanence.

The device works best as a sleeve pull. Not only are the angles excellent, but also you needn't wear a jacket. I routinely use sleeve pulls of this type while wearing a short-sleeved shirt. I merely position the pull high enough on my right arm to be concealed by the lower edge of the sleeve.

The reels I bought have a metal belt clip mounted on the back. I have seen others that have safety pins attached. Either type will work fine. The reel is attached to an ace bandage or a folded tennis elbow brace. (I much prefer the "brace to the ace" because it slides on and off quickly and its position is easily adjusted.)

The cuff of the shirt may be buttoned, as the reel will extend through the opening in the side of the sleeve. (just above the button, about a quarter of the way to the elbow)

This position makes it very easy and convenient to access the tied quarter and put it into position for the effect. Merely by crossing your arms or by placing your left hand over your right forearm, the left fingers simply pull the quarter out of the sleeve's side opening.

Set up and Handling:

Since this routine is most effective if the bent quarter is given away at the conclusion, it is best to bend several dollars worth at a time. (I always, however, carry two pairs of heavy-duty pliers in my glove compartment in case of an emergency.)

With the reel in position on your forearm and a bent quarter in your right trousers pocket, you are ready to begin.

Finger-palm the bent quarter in the right hand. Secretly obtain the threaded quarter from your sleeve and hold it at the tips of the right fingers. Place the quarter on a table (or on the floor, your knee, or whatever surface is convenient) and hold it firmly in place with your right forefinger as seen in the first photo in the performance sequence shown on the previous page. . Extend all of the right fingers, concealing the quarter, as you begin to gently rub it against the tabletop. At the same time simply release the pressure on the tied coin and let the bent coin fall into position beneath the fingers.

Bring the fingers slightly back, as shown in the third photo of the sequence, and continue the rubbing motion as you point out that the quarter is starting to bend. There is nothing startlingly original about metal bending, but this handling creates an effect that is about as startling as mentalism can get.

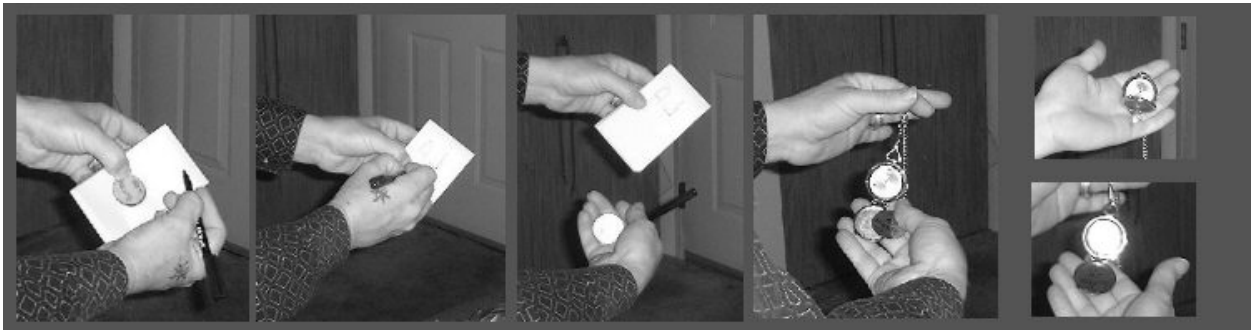
The easily obtainable reels and the arm brace hook up are essential tools for which you will find many practical applications. You may have noticed, for example, that by replacing the drilled quarter with a paper clip you have an excellent billet pull. A perfectly invisible switch may be performed as the clipped billet is slid toward the spectator. Merely by folding your arms you will have access to the stolen billet.



Eternally yours . . .

This is another of my favorite routines. While Al Koran's "Magic Medallion" and Don Wayne's "Room Service" served to inspire me, I have combined the basic effect with a time prediction to give the routine some depth. It has a strong logical disconnect which greatly enhances the illusion of impossibility, and a bit of psychology which causes the audience to think that you predicted far more than you actually did. The latter, of course, is one of the hallmarks of effective mentalism and magic-- "It's not what you did, it's what they think you did."

As written, the routine is an intentional tearjerker. It provides effective and dramatic counterpoint to light hearted and laugh provoking routines, and often creates emotional connections with spectators' individual lives and memories.



The above photos should resolve any questions you may have about the handling, which follows.

The Script

The mentalist and a woman participant are sitting next to each other on bar stools. The woman is seated to the performer's right. A tight pin spotlight is isolates them on the otherwise darkened stage.

The woman is wearing a wristwatch. If she did not have one, the mentalist would have handed her a large-faced woman's Timex when he escorted her to the stage.

The mentalist's tone is conversational. His entire attention is upon the woman - we'll call her Peggy.

The performer holds a pocket watch. A small notepad and a pen are on a third bar stool, which is on the mentalist's left.

Mentalist: A good friend of mine gave me this watch a long time ago. I guess you could say he was my best friend. We went to high school together and both had part time jobs in the same grocery store. In 1968 we enlisted in the Navy together. And a year later we nearly died together.

This was his watch. He won it in a card game and called it his lucky charm. Sometimes when I handle it I get the weird feeling that I am seeing things through his eyes. I see the little Southeast Asian bar where we had our last beer. San Miguel. They put formaldehyde in the stuff, you know. I can almost taste it now.

This is too strange.

[He puts the pocket watch into his shirt pocket.]

May I see your watch for a minute?

[He takes Peggy's watch, looks at it, pulls out the stem and begins to reset the time.]

You would have liked him. We all called him by his last name. Benson.

Here, keep turning the hands on your watch and when you're finished just push the stem in. Keep the watch face down in your hand while you are moving the hands. I don't want either of us to know at what time the watch is finally set.

You're done? Good, just hold the watch in your hand. Close your fingers around it.

[He takes the pocket watch out of his shirt pocket.]

Yes, this was his watch. His lucky charm. It wasn't very lucky though. It doesn't even work anymore. It stopped telling time. Probably because I smashed the stupid thing onto the floor. . .

It was four thirty in the afternoon. I'm going to write that down, because I need you to remember that. Later on I don't want you thinking that I just made that up.

[The mentalist picks up the pad and pen and writes]

I never told you his first name did I? I don't think he ever told anybody what his first name really was. Even when we were kids everybody called him by his initials. They probably stood for names he couldn't stand.

Take a guess. What do you think his first and middle initials were?

Peggy: **[She answers along the following lines.]** R B. I think they were R B

Mentalist: I'm going to write that down, too, so you don't forget. I can never forget; that's for sure.

It was broad daylight. The bomb went off about fifty feet from us. Everybody started yelling and running. My buddy just sat there holding his lucky watch. The smile was still on his face. Like he didn't even know what happened.

Like he didn't know that he was dead.

Some lucky watch. I took it from his hand and smashed it onto the floor. It didn't even get scratched. But it never ran anymore, either. I kept it anyway. It's all that's left of my friend.

About an hour before he died had gotten it engraved. He said he had figured out why people engrave their names on watches.

"It's because time is eternal," he said. "Nothing lasts forever except time itself. I think that when a guy puts his name on a watch he's just hoping to catch a little bit of that. A little bit of the eternal."

Let me show you the engraving.

[The mentalist snaps the watch case open, the face toward the woman. It's tilted slightly upwards so she can see the face but not the inside of the cover.]

See, it's stopped at four thirty. That's when I broke it. Look at the engraving, read it out loud.

[He hands her the watch so she can see the engraving inside the lid. She reads it aloud.]

Peggy: Petty Officer Third Class R.B. Benson. July 30th 1969.

Mentalist: R.B. Yeah, that's what everyone always called him. You did, too, and you never even met him. Or maybe you did.

You set your watch a while ago. Maybe he was right about some things being eternal. Maybe he helped you out a bit. At what time did you set it? Take a look and tell us.

Peggy: Four-thirty! I can't believe it! **[or words to that effect if the performance has gone as planned]**

[The following line is delivered after Peggy returns to her seat. The performer stands alone on the darkened stage and the pin-spot is now extremely tight.]

Mentalist: To many people, time is a frightening thing, a countdown to the last moment of our lives. But, as you've seen this evening, the line between reality and illusion is an illusion itself. We create our own realities, dream our own dreams and cast our own fates according to rules we have written ourselves.

If your rules say that something is impossible, it most certainly is.

My friend Benson once put it like this - "It's not what's in front of you that blocks your way. It's what's inside you that holds you back."

Good night and good thoughts.

[Pin spot fades to black]

Method:

I think this routine is an excellent example of how effect and method are truly secondary to the entertainment value of a complete presentation. The whole thing is a *Twilight Zone* type story staged to create a strong emotional response.

While it may seem a bit odd, even morbid, at first, the story, properly delivered, should give the audience an entertaining and positive experience. It affirms the idea of personal power in a large impersonal world. It holds out an invitation to the world of the mind. And to me that is the whole point of being a mentalist.

The pictures at the top of the page show how the "engraving" is loaded into the watch. Everything is prewritten on the disk (see "The Watch" if you don't know what I'm talking about) except for the two initials. You simply fill them in after you've written them on the pad. You will notice that the performer starts writing things on the pad long before he asks the participant to do anything. This is an extremely important point. If he doesn't pick up the pad and

pen until AFTER she picks the initials, he would create the impression that the writing is going to be a significant part of the routine.

You should also note that the performer says he is going to write down the time because "You need to remember this. I know I always will." The line should be delivered as if he is writing it down for the spectator's benefit. After all, he already knows what time the watch was broken. He only writes it down to be sure that the spectator remembers what happened.

The story-telling approach is what makes the whole thing logical and understandable. Presented as a straight prediction effect the ploy wouldn't make much sense.

As I mentioned in the description of "The Watch," the disk may be made of metal cut to fit the inside cover of the watch, or simply a piece of cardboard covered with foil.

In either case, I suggest that you write your notes with a pen that is designed to write on a metallic surface. I bought a special CD marking pen at an electronics store that works perfectly. On paper it looks just like a felt tip. On metal it is semi-permanent. (After the performance you will need to scrub the disk to remove the writing.)

If you are using the foil and cardboard disk, you might want to use a pencil. The writing needn't be dark because the only one who is possibly going to see it is the volunteer. But when you use the pencil on the foil, the softer cardboard beneath will make the initials really look as if they have been engraved in the metal. (That is, however, a detail that will be lost on the rest of the audience.)

The only thing I haven't explained is how the spectator sets her own watch to four-thirty.

That's because there is nothing to explain. The only real presentational secret lies in your acting ability. When you take the watch from her, you pull out the stem and start turning it. Just set the time for four-thirty and push the stem back in. On some watches there is a middle position for the stem that is used to set a calendar function. If this is the case, just push the stem to that position before you give the watch to the spectator. The stem will still turn regardless of the position. (The hands won't move, though, which is why you tell her to keep the watch face down.) If you've put it into a middle position, tell her to push the stem in when she is done setting the time. Otherwise, just tell her to tell you when she is finished turning the stem. Then reach over and pretend to push it in yourself, as the watch remains face down on her hand.

Presented properly this is a very memorable effect. If you use the routine, and perform it well, I will be glad. If it inspires you to write a better routine, I will be truly happy.

For those who thought the preceding was a comedy routine, the following may be of interest.

Find the Dead Guy!

This is a rather interesting living and dead routine that I have been doing for a while now.

Presentation:

Mentalist: People are always asking me about the guy on TV who talks to dead people. You know who I mean. Is he real or is he a fraud?

Actually, I don't care one way or the other because the only dead people he talks to are the ones nobody except their immediate families ever heard of. I mean if he talked to somebody even moderately famous during his lifetime, I think the show would be far more interesting.

I'd love to have the chance to ask Lee Harvey Oswald, for example, what really went down in Dallas in 1963. Back then all he said was, "I didn't kill anyone. I'm just a patsy."

But he was obviously afraid to say anymore. Well now he's dead, so what is he afraid of?

Why doesn't that guy who talks to the dead people just give him a call and find out if it was the Mafia, or Castro, or a pissed off Joe DiMaggio? Well, maybe it's not as easy as that. Maybe famous dead people have better things to do than guest spots on syndicated television. Fine.

What the guy on TV needs to do, then, is to add a little bit of entertainment value to the show. Something to keep us interested even if we never met or heard of the deceased.

Why not a game show type thing? Like the old "To Tell the Truth." Three people. Two are liars. Who is telling the truth? There could be two extremely boring live people and one dead one. Contestants win big bucks when, after judiciously questioning the trio, they are able to correctly identify the dead guy!

It's a natural.

Now many people who have seen the guy on TV might think it would be easy to find the dead guy because he is the only one that won't tell you anything but his initials and that something in his head, neck or chest area (you know "somewhere around here") is what finished him off.

But maybe it could go something like this . . .

Effect:

The mentalist hands a volunteer a business card and a pencil. The spectator is asked to concentrate on the name of a famous dead person and then to print it on the blank side of the card. He is to put the card face down on the table (or some other available surface) and to tell the mentalist when he has done so.

The mentalist then says, "Wait, this won't work if the dead guy is by himself. Here are five more business cards. Print the names of people who you know are still alive on those cards. If it is possible that a person you are thinking of is just being unusually quiet and possibly not dead at all, please do not use their name.

"Tell me when you are finished. Good. Now mix up the cards."

The mentalist takes the cards and gives them another mix. He then deals them into a face down row on the table. He retrieves his pen from the spectator. Turning to a female spectator, he says, "If I were to tell you which of these business cards had the name of the dead guy on it, you might think that I was doing some sort of a trick. But if you could find it without looking at the faces of the cards, *that* would be interesting.

"I'm going to hold my pen like this over the cards." The mentalist holds the pen between his thumb and first two fingers at the end opposite the point. The pen is held about two feet above the card on the left hand side of the row. (from the performer's point of view.)

"I'd like you to just lightly hold my wrist with your right hand. Not too tightly - I need to be able to move the pen back and forth over the row.

"Now, as I start to move the pen, I want you to look directly into my eyes and I will look into yours. We won't look at the cards. Any time you'd like, just squeeze my wrist. "

The volunteer squeezes his wrist and the mentalist stops moving the pen. He asks the volunteer to push his hand straight down so that the pen touches the card over which it was stopped. The mentalist pushes the rest of the cards aside and asks, "What would you say if this card had the dead person's name on it? Wouldn't it be strange that you stopped over it? But wait."

Turning to the first spectator, the mentalist asks him to concentrate on the deceased's name.

Slowly the mentalist describes the decedent and gets the letters in the name. Finally he announces the name and asks the first volunteer if he is correct. The spectator confirms that it is.

He has not yet, however, turned over the selected business card. Addressing the woman participant, the mentalist continues, "Well, he says I got the name right. Do you think you found it?"

He tells her to turn over the card. It bears the name of the dead guy!

Method:

This one is practically all presentation. I don't recommend this routine for a regular stand-up show if you desire to create a serious impression. I use it in impromptu situations when everyone knows that I am just having a good time and that this has nothing to do with the "serious nature" of my work. (!)

Getting the name is easy. The first business card is marked. When it is mixed in with the other cards, you pick up the cards and give them another mix. Just cut the marked card to the bottom of the stack and peek it as you go into an overhand shuffle. Since there are only six cards, you will find this to be incredibly simple.

Cut the pack so the marked card is fourth from the top and then deal the six business cards into a row from left to right. The marked card is in the fourth position and you already know the name written on it.

The rest is simply presentation and build up. Start to move your wrist before you tell the woman that she should give it a squeeze when she wants you to stop. Move very slowly. Don't look at the cards and don't let her look at them. It is easy to remember the approximate location of the card.

Tell her that she is to squeeze your wrist whenever she feels like it. Don't tell her why. Ninety percent of the time she will stop you over the fourth card. If you sense she is not going to stop you on time, just speed up a bit and move your right hand right off the end of the row. Say, "Wait, I think we have to start going the other way. I think we went over the end of the row. Look at my eyes."

Start moving back to the left. Since you are coming back from a spot somewhere off the end of the row, she will probably squeeze your wrist at just about the right spot. If she is one card off in either direction just tell her to push your hand straight down while still looking in your eyes. Since you are about two feet above the cards just tilt point in the direction of the correct card as she guides your wrist downward. She'll never notice that you have moved a short distance to the left or to the right.

I know, you are saying, "What if I miss completely?" You probably never will. I have never failed to conclude this successfully, because I never tell the woman why I want her to squeeze my wrist. If it is way off I just say, "Good. That's how I want you to do it. Move me straight down to a card and then we'll do it a few more times." All you do

now is AVOID the proper card. This is easy because you can veer slightly in either direction on the way down. After each card is touched, push it aside and push the rest of the cards in the row together to eliminate the space that was occupied by the missing card. Explain that the living can only attract the living (if you are using the "out") and that you believe the remaining card must therefore bear the dead name. Finish as described above.

The marked card identification using a business card is ancient, as is the overhand shuffle peek. (It is rarely done with business cards, however, and I often fool unwary magicians with it.) The moving pen approach is based on an effect by Harry Lorayne called "The Moving Pencil" in his classic *Close Up Card Magic*. Use of the pencil idea for the out is mine, I believe. It is only possible because just six cards are used in the routine. It would hardly play with a full deck!

Try this routine. You will discover that it plays much stronger than it reads.



The Boys of October Or, How to Capitalize on a Baseball Strike

You just never know what's going to inspire a new routine. Sometimes it is simply the accidental convergence of two completely separate events or

ideas.

It is said that the human mind has a tendency to create context and relationships where none actually exist. Brain research seems to prove this - just as our minds connect the dots in the sky to create big and little dipper and a menagerie of strange beasts, every mentalist and cold reader knows that a spectator can unconsciously add specific details to a general statement thus creating a personal relevance that did not exist before. Everyone does it to some degree. We all subconsciously connect the dots.

It was an odd convergence of this type that inspired this off-the-wall prediction effect.

One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest was playing on television. I've seen the film too many times to count, but I left it on because it never fails to put me in a good mood.

I needed that because I had just read in the newspaper that the odds were against the Seattle Mariners having a shot at the World Series this year. Once again, it appeared that the season could be prematurely ended by a players' strike.

I'm a baseball fan. My friends are baseball fans. Specifically, we are Seattle Mariners fans. We love to go to Safeco Field in the hopes of snagging an Ichiro bobble-head doll. (They don't give 'em out to adults, so you have find an inattentive five-year-old and do a quick snatch and run. The kid's just gonna break it anyway and, besides, I can probably move the thing on ebay for a quick hundred or two. It's the American way, and face it, baseball is the American game.)

I was contemplating how a strike would effect all of this when I heard Jack Nicholson doing the famous scene in *Cuckoo's Nest*, in which he does the play by play for an imaginary world series because his fellow mental patients can't watch it on television.

Hearing the scene and thinking about the news gave me the idea of doing an interesting "safe" prediction. By "safe prediction" I mean predicting the outcome of an event or the headline of a newspaper without running the risk of having it blow up in your face when the headline, for example, is a major tragedy or disaster.

(Why didn't you tell the police? Why didn't you try to prevent it? Why? Because you are probably a fake, that's why. That or you had some inside knowledge, in which case you belong in jail.)

That's why I don't do predictions of national or world events. And besides, it doesn't fit the character of my stage persona. I read minds. I sometimes influence them to do what I want them to do. Sometimes I can also affect a physical object. But I don't predict the future. If I did I'd be a millionaire.

But predictions are, nonetheless, fascinating effects which can be reworked into effective routines. If you can make it appear that you mentally influenced the outcome of a committee's action, for example, you have a strong yet "safe" prediction routine.

In this effect, the audience decides the outcome of each game in an imaginary World Series. The mentalist records all of the details on his clipboard for later verification. Before any of the imaginary games begin, a trusted spectator is given a small key. On the mentalists table there is a small wooden chest.

"The first game has just finished," announces the performer. "The first world series game ever between the legendary 1909 *Chicago Cubs* and last years champs, the 2001 *Arizona Diamondbacks*."

"Tell me, please, who won the first game."

Members of the audience take turns answering the performers questions. The performer occasionally asks for other details about specific games. For example, before asking for the outcome of Game Three, he says that the final score set a major league record for runs. "How many runs was that?" he asks. "Ninety-seven. The final score was ninety-four to three. That certainly would be a record, wouldn't it? Who won the game by the way?"

At the conclusion of the imaginary series the mentalist states that he has an article that appeared in today's imaginary sports news.

"It's in the little chest on the table. Sir? Yes, the gentleman holding the key. Will you please stand up?"

The mentalist opens the little chest and removes a smaller wooden box, which is locked with a padlock. He takes this box to the spectator with the key.

"This is where I keep my imaginary news clippings. Unlock the box, sir; inside is an article I cut out of the imaginary paper. Take it out of the box and read it to us."

The article is read and it goes something like this:

An astonishing World Series ended today in a final astonishing game. After a score of 94 to 3 in Game Three, the 1909 Cubs defeated the defending champion 2001 Diamondbacks four games to two. But it all happened in your own minds, so you already knew that.

Of course the entire prediction is correct.

Method:

If you have read the sections on "The Clipboard Index" and "The Prediction Chest" you already have the entire means by which this effect is accomplished. There are, however, some twists in the presentation that makes it far more amazing than a typical 50/50 sports prediction.

In this routine the prediction is typed or printed by computer. (Does anyone actually still use a typewriter? If not, am I typing this or keyboarding it? I have no idea.) This completely rules out any theories that you may have secretly written out the prediction when no one was looking, "Like that masked magician guy on the TV."

A World Series can last for up to seven games. Yet the article found in the chest predicts the outcome of the entire series plus details from specific games.

Actually, there are only eight possible outcomes, each of which is printed to look like an article from "The Imaginary News."

Here's how it works –

A World Series ends as soon as one team wins four games. It is, after all, a best out of seven competition. In terms of games won and lost, there are only four possible results.

Four games to none; four games to one; four games to two; and four games to three.

But since either team can win, there are eight possible outcomes. The Cubs win by one of the four scores, or Arizona wins by one of the four. (I know this is obvious to those of you who follow baseball, but I am sure it is less comprehensible to mentalists outside of the USA. The basic premise and psychology, of course, is applicable to any sporting event that is played in a "best of" series of games.)

The clipboard index, then, is loaded with eight predictions and the proper one is loaded into the *Lippincott* box as it is removed from the larger chest.

The real strength of the routine, though, is the manner in which the details are handled. The mentalist actually asks for little details about two or three games, which he duly records. The "record score" of "94 to 3," in the above example, is a total fake as the mentalist only pretends to have heard someone call out that outrageous score. But the way in which he delivers the line makes it very ambiguous as to whether somebody actually selected that score. Everyone will assume it was freely selected because of the way it was worded. Reread that portion of the routine and you will see exactly what I mean. It's really just a rhetorical question. But since all the other questions were legitimate, this one will slip by easily. The mentalist records other details that the audience may supply, even though they don't actually appear in the final article. Papers, I am afraid, never get the whole story.

Not even imaginary ones.

An Invitation to You

So ends *Theories and Methods for the Practical Psychic*. Some of you will have found it useful, others less so. Some may be amused and others merely puzzled. All of you, however, probably purchased it, for which I am most grateful.

The road is never ending and the definitive work on mentalism is yet to be written. Those of you interested in my other writings and creations are invited to my private web site for mentalists at www.mastermindreader.com/cd/home

I look forward to seeing you there.

Good night and good thoughts.

