

A man in a dark suit, white shirt, and dark tie with suspenders is leaning against a light-colored curtain. He is smiling and looking towards the camera. His right hand is near his chin, and his left arm is crossed over his chest.

PURE EFFECT

*Direct Mindreading
and Magical Artistry*



DERREN BROWN

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And Magical Artistry

by

Derren Brown

Photographs by Peter Clifford

H&R

MAGIC BOOKS



Derren Brown and his lovely cat Spasm relaxing at home.

When a performance is over, what remains? Fun can be forgotten, but powerful emotion also disappears and good arguments lose their thread. When emotion and argument are harnessed to a wish from the audience to see more clearly into itself – then something in the mind burns. The event scorches onto the memory an outline, a taste, a trace, a smell – a picture. It is the play's central image that remains, it's silhouette, and if the elements are highly blended this silhouette will be its meaning, this shape will be the essence of what it has to say. When years later I think of a striking theatrical experience I find a kernel engraved on my memory: two tramps under a tree, an old woman dragging a cart, a sergeant dancing, three people on a sofa in hell – or occasionally a trace deeper than any imagery. I haven't a hope of remembering the meanings precisely, but from the kernel I can construct a set of meanings. Then a purpose will have been served. A few hours could amend my thinking for life. This is almost but not quite impossible to achieve.

From Peter Brook's *The Empty Space*.



We are proud to be able to offer the magical fraternity this series of manuscripts that Derren made in the 1990s. Although originally nothing more than a few blank sheets of paper tied together with string, we have been able to reconstruct them as he would have wanted had he cared. This first volume represents the best of his output, before he eventually retired to concentrate upon his second great love – contributing short stories to the specialist magazine *Wheelchair Fellatio*.



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A MOMENT OF YOUR EXCEPTIONALLY VALUABLE TIME

I deeply, and widely, believe that performance is a very personal affair, and that one must pursue one's own sense of integrity and remain a little detached from advice and precedent offered by tradition. For this reason, I do not offer myself as *arbiter elegantiae*, merely as another student following his exquisite nose through these matters. All of the nonsenses described in this book are routines and ideas that serve me well in the very practical matter of performing for real people whom I hope will sit quietly and not be sick. These effects are offered to anyone interested, with the aim that they will suggest to the reader notions more suitable to him and his own splendid style.

For the reader who is interested in nothing but solid mentalism, some of the routines on these pages may appear as soiled whores; shameless Daughters of Joy who have raised their petticoats and yielded their most secret charm to the flippant and capricious world of mere thaumaturgy. To that reader I can only apologise for my unabashed love of mixing mindreading with magic to find the strongest effect – I do believe that the two, in context, may complement each other quite charmingly.

Of course it is equally true that the reader who comes to this volume in search of neat tricklets may also find but disappointment and chagrin – many of my routines demand in performance a setting of the psychological stage, and a delight in the baroque-like filigree of linguistic devices that subtly guide and, Lord help us, even manipulate the unwitting participant into making responses agreeable to the success of our little theatre. These techniques, I hope, will not be enjoyed by all.

I am unsure then who precisely will find this book entirely to his or her palate. Hopefully no one other than myself, although I trust that more will find something of use in these pages. Perhaps those others who have been obliging enough to pay actual money for my volume but who find it only vapid, mindless and irrelevant will find some other use in it – perhaps they could fashion from it an impromptu hat to wear in the rain, or it may even serve as a simple toy for a least favourite child.

PART ONE

PRACTICAL

*The image comes to mind of a man juggling the
most delicious fruit in front of a group of
hungry children.*

MAKING CONTACT

I worked as a magician for eight years before I realised what I was doing wrong. Two events made me stop and re-evaluate my performance. The first occurred at a magic convention in London when I met Eugene Burger, who was performing for some magicians at a bar table. I asked if I could join him. He reached over and shook my hand, gesturing for me to sit down. He introduced himself and asked my name, in that characteristic mellifluous blend of rich baritone timbre and erudite camp. I sat down, expectant and grinning like a big girl. "Now," he stated in a voice that sounded like a Russian Orthodox mass played backwards at low speed, "I want you to pick a card..." Magic was afoot.

The second came as I reflected upon a conversation not dissimilar to many I had had before with a member of what we elegantly refer to as the 'laity,' as we peer down from the dizzy ecclesiastical heights of thaumaturgy. This chap, a guest at a function where I had been table-hopping, had told me of a trick that he had seen a magician perform some twenty years before in a bar. I forget the details of his wonderfully embellished version of what I guessed to be the original performance, but some time later the chord struck. I realised that the magic that I perform is the anecdote waiting to be told twenty years from now by my spectators.

The incident with Eugene Burger made me realise that my magic was missing the experience of wonder. There was no awareness of the emotive potential of magic waiting to happen. No welcoming of the spectator into something special. Mr. Burger deftly and unselfconsciously created a sense of something wondrous. The later reflection on the conversation after the function made me realise that I was not treating my magic with the respect that it

deserved – that while I was just making sure that I got round all the tables before the speeches started, I was giving the guests something that they would probably never get again in their lives: most probably they would never see another magician perform live and close-up. I was giving them a few minutes that could stay in their minds for at least another twenty years before they decided to relate my tricks as their anecdote years in the future. I knew that magic is something inherently very impressive, but when I considered my attitude, I saw that it did not reflect that fact. Rather, I was concerned with being funny, and getting through a handful of tricks in a short space of time. Rather than focussing on the experiences of the few individuals for whom I was performing, I was thinking in terms of the room as a whole, and which tables were left to ‘do.’

I decided that my magic had to change. That I had to give serious thought to presentation. That, in fact, my presentation of the effects is where my impact as a magician lies – I realised that it can turn a good effect into something artistic and stunning. I believe that the concentration on presentation is the most practical aspect of magic performance, presuming that one is working already with a set of decent effects.

This process of addressing my performance will take an entire career. I do agree with Eugene Burger that one could spend a lifetime working on a presentation worthy of an effect, and this book is designed to be a set of thoughts and effects that have come to fruition during my early days on that road. I hope that some of my thoughts will seem appropriate to the reader, and I trust that the effects contained here will spark off ideas for him to create his own. I trust that the astute reader will not be inclined to perform my routines quite as I describe them.

My Aims and Priorities

I don't consider myself a Mentalist. I do not restrict myself to mindreading effects when I am performing in the real world. Enough magicians have asked me about the wisdom of combining magic and mindreading in performance. No lay participant in my effects has ever queried this. If I explain my thoughts here, I will be able to express a few points that I find important. They begin with the old worry about mentalists' disclaimers and the ethics of psychic performances. I have an interest in suggestion and what gets labelled 'hypnosis.' I work to combine magic and mindreading with 'hypnosis' to create something new and very powerful. Because this is a keen interest of mine, I tend to communicate it in my performances. I find that most intelligent spectators are more interested in the psychological techniques than the sleight-of-hand. Most would rather feel that they had only seen the card change because they *expected* to see it change than because I was adept at exchanging it under supposedly impossible conditions. So whilst I have no desire to present my effects as mere psychological chicanery, I will allow the possibility that a lot of subliminal suggestion is afoot. People do find that fascinating, as do I. Now, later I offer to take the spectators a little deeper into the art and we embark upon a few mindreading and 'psychic' effects. Here I let them feel that I am using a heightened sensitivity to body language and a whole set of hypnotic skills to make the effects work. I don't spell it out unless someone takes me to one side and talks to me about it, but I base my own silent script and the belief I take on board about how I'm getting the information into or from another mind on the notion that these suggestion-based techniques really work that reliably.

This classic presentational ploy that Banachek calls 'psychological direction' allows for the illusion of enormous skill, as long as you let the participants figure out for themselves that you are employing such methods. I believe I earn their respect by

denouncing 'psychic power' as woolly guff and I challenge those lobotomised flower-fairies who believe in such nonsense, appealing to their intelligence and belief in themselves as sceptical creatures. The other advantage of this angle is that it allows the effects to sit comfortably with a magic routine that suggests that similar ploys are at work. The two sets become connected by a seductive undercurrent of apparently deft manipulation of the participant's minds. At first, these techniques are being employed to produce wonderful, mystifying and artistic magical effects. Then the tone darkens, and the performer, almost with an air of reluctance, sensing the correct rapport in the group, casts aside his props and amusements and begins to rely entirely on his knowledge of human nature to delve into the thought processes of the group. The spectators sense this intensifying of the situation, and adjust their interpretation of the event accordingly. *What we are seeing here is no longer trickery.*

Whilst I see the arguments for not combining the two areas of performance as valid and sensible, I do feel that they are limited. I would take my idea even further and say that it is sometimes even possible to combine magic and mindreading in the same effect and still have something that has a deep impact. In these pages I will discuss a favourite effect of mine, *Smoke*. I perform this as a closing item in my close-up set and it is, if you'll forgive me for being so awful, something of a stunner. The effect is that a *thought-of* card is divined, disappears from the deck, and arrives burnt and smoking in the performer's mouth in place of the cigarette he had been smoking throughout. It would fail as serious mentalism, although it might work as a piece of bizarre magic if handled correctly. Emotionally, the three-part structure allows for a real impact:

1 - the card is merely looked at in a ribbon-spread. The performer is facing away. The deck is reassembled. Yet he states his aim to divine it, without touching the deck. This will get everyone's attention. It does seem impossible. Climax One - the card is named. The spectators sit back.

2 – The magician says it was never there in the deck. He lets the participant argue that he saw it. The performer coolly blows a smoke-ring, smiling to himself. All eyes are now on the squared deck. The magician spreads it out again. True, the card isn't there. Suddenly there is confusion. The spectator is sure he saw it. Climax Two, which will have the audience searching for an answer. Their attempt to work out how the performer knew the card is thrown into disarray.

3 – The performer splutters and the cigarette seems to be causing him trouble. It can be seen to have changed. He removes it and unrolls it. A resolution to the card's disappearance is given, but the weirdness has escalated irretrievably. There are no answers.

The aim here is to begin with a decent mindreading effect and then take it a stage further. While out of place in a straight mentalism routine, the effect of the 'magic' ending is, I feel, to stop them from treating the mindreading like a puzzle to work out, and to yield to the greater performance.

As much as I perform mindreading effects, I rarely enjoy watching most mentalism – I do feel that its entertainment value is inherently quite low. It is more suited to late-night demonstrations – rather like telling ghost stories. In commercial performance, I prefer to ensure that the effects I perform are really going to knock the audience for at least six. So these effects here are borne out of a desire to push mindreading into somewhere new, and a wish (which I hope one day to achieve) to combine conjuring, hypnosis and psychic effects into a heightened new form of close-up entertainment.

WORKING WITH THE SPECTATOR... IN MIND

If we are honest, what is our starting-point for forming an effect? I feel there is a tendency amongst many magicians to start with a new move, some clever sleight – from some point of methodological skill. Then the possibilities of that move are explored, until an effect is formed. Often that effect is marvellous, and one that will fool everyone. But to make it magical, the magician will have to change focus. And there, I feel, lies the rub.

The question for the performer in forming an effect should not be 'What can I do?' or 'How can I use this?' The ultimate questions that will lead to truly magical effects must be spectator-centric. 'What would really freak out a spectator?' 'What would convince them that I possessed this power?' 'What would move them in a particular way?' 'And what would they want to see?' Only after answering this, I think, one should ask – 'And what *then* can I provide to take it a step further?'

It is my opinion that this leads to a more creative process. The performer is placing himself in the position of the spectator. He is subjecting everything that he does or desires as a performer to the consideration of the effect that it would have on a spectator.

This consideration is paramount also in the performance – not just the effects themselves. I remember recently visiting the restaurant where I regularly perform here in Bristol. I was sat in the spacious, Byzantine lounge area where attractive staff and a belly dancer pampered the guests. This was after maybe ten years of performing, but was the first time I ever got a clear sensation of exactly how I would feel if I were to be approached by a magician. It occurred to me that in those years of performing, I could never have

really considered that. I realised how easily a chirpy, adequate magician would have made me cringe and been utterly out of place. I saw that I wanted to be pampered, not made to feel self-conscious. Had I really been ensuring that my little audiences had actually warmed to me and felt comfortable? I imagined a suave and theatrically-dressed chap coming over and introducing himself with a charming and discreet air – asking if he might join us for a few moments... I saw that it would be exactly right, exciting and elevating. But how easy it would have been to get that wrong!

I realised that through feeling insecure about approaching a table and compensating through brashness, I had probably alienated a lot of people in the past. How easy it is to be an embarrassing imbecile with this work!

Setting a Context

These thoughts led to me restructuring much of my close-up performance. Here I can only speak of how it affected my own style, which is appropriate to the venues where I perform. But I think the questions and considerations – but I make no presumptions about my answers - are worthwhile for anyone to take on board. Those that have will realise how rewarding such a reappraisal is.

The magician's first task is to set a context for his performance. I see the group as a *tabula rasa*. I approach them, I feel, with charm and confidence, and quickly achieve rapport. Yet I also retain an authority that I want them to feel. I want to be seen to be withholding something. I want to hold a promise of something for them. I want to give them time to get ready for the magic. To become curious and attentive. To watch, essentially, on *my* terms. This is much more enjoyable than launching into a routine immediately. I

can learn everyone's name, and make sure that they know mine. I am, after all, coming into their group uninvited. I have a basic responsibility to be at least civil. Again, I remember Eugene Burger at that convention. The magic can start long before you start an effect. I also remember that if I am walking into their space to perform, I am asking them to form judgements about me. Any magician that begins a table-hopping set with the selection of a card or the inspection of an object is deluding himself if he thinks the audience are interested in the cards or prop for those moments. They are forming their opinions about the performer and assessing how they feel about him. I feel it is much better to realise that and give them a chance to like me and respect me before I start performing my magic for them.

For me, another result of making these changes was that I started to really and reliably enjoy table-hopping and walkaround magic. This may sound strange, but I trust that all of us that perform regularly will be familiar with the terrible ennui that can set in before approaching the first group of the evening, or starting again after a break. We're not in the mood. I found that by changing the way I interacted with the spectators and slowing down my performance to allow them to feel charmed and respected, I never again felt that grotesque reluctance to perform that comes when one has to force oneself into an 'upbeat' state unwillingly. There was no need to do that. My performance became more honestly me. An exaggerated version of me, certainly, but I no longer had to become something that I wasn't.

The next level where one must be aware of setting a context, I feel, is finding a meaning for the effect itself. Much has been said on this by other authors and I do not have the years behind me nor the standing to speak with the same authority. Similarly I can add nothing very new to the discussion. But consider this: if what you are presenting to the spectators is seen to be a *puzzle* to be solved, then they will be concerned with that task. And as with any puzzle

offered, if they cannot arrive at the right answer themselves, then they will feel entitled to be told the solution. If the performer does not offer one, then they are entitled to feel resentful. I think of those ghastly lateral-thinking problems that a particular type of person enjoys offering for solution. Rather than simple murder, one engages in an attempt to find an answer depending on how polite one feels one should be. Imagine if one genuinely tried to work out the problem, until finally giving up, to find that the poser of the problem had no intention of confiding the answer. Heaven forefend that any of us should be such arses in our performance, but the question of what meaning we are attaching to the effect is vital to performing strong magic that transcends the mundane.

If I may be so bold as to offer an example from my own repertoire, then I would direct the reader to my effect 'Transformation' towards the end of this book. This is, from a technical point of view, little more than some cards changing on the table, but it will have immense personal resonance for the spectator. Inasmuch as it is important to relate the effect to the life of your spectator for them to find some meaning inherent in it, there is little in the realm of magic and mentalism more relevant to a spectator than a personal reading, which forms the structure of the effect.

A Tabula Rasa

I would suggest that the participant with whom you are about to begin your magic presents a clear, open and responsive slate for you to fill with emotional information. Most will have had no experience of live magic before, and even more will have had no previous experience of *your* magic. The spectator/participant awaits cues from you to know how to behave. Presuming that you have picked your participant with a reasonable degree of wisdom, you

can presume that she is eager to be helpful and not appear to be incompetent of performing the tasks at hand.

This is why I believe before anything else regarding performing effects, that what you perform should be presented as essentially serious. *NOT* necessarily solemn, but essentially serious. When I think of an effect in this way, I imagine it to seem to have integrity, relevance, and elegance. Although it may be communicated with humour, it is clear that it is not trivial. The adult spectator realises that magic is an adult art. Because your participant comes to you eager to learn how she should respond to your performance and instructions, you have the choice of whether she responds to them in a transient, lightly amused way, or whether she takes something rather personal and marvellous away with her.

Behind each effect I perform is the question of whether the presentation and communication of the effect are *worthy* of it. The effect has potential for unspeakably powerful impact. Where along that line am I performing it? Am I merely trivialising it?

If we take, then, as our starting point that our participant is open to suggestion and emotional and psychological direction, we can now consider what emotions and states of mind are useful to elicit, and how to do so. Paul Harris has written marvellously about how magic takes us back to our infantile state of astonishment. That the experience of wonder triggers that early period when nothing made sense and the world was one of unfurling surprise. It seems to me that this would be a marvellous experience for a spectator of my magic to have. When I began to consider this, I saw the importance of eliciting emotions with the magic, to give it a deep resonance and to provide an emotive journey of some sort for my audiences.

May I suggest that your aim as a magician is to create and manipulate wonder and astonishment while avoiding confusion and mere puzzle solving on the part of the spectator. There is an inherent

beauty in possibly all effects, something that can be found and brought out. If the audience find a sense of that beauty, and even artistry, it will be easier for you to help them attach an emotional meaning to the effect. This emotional meaning is one at the opposite end of the spectrum to resentment, which we have discussed as the emotional result of failed puzzle solving.

There are a number of ways of securing an emotional response in a close-up setting, where lighting and music changes are impractical, if not ludicrous. The first is simply to suggest or demand these responses. If you are working with the presumption that there is something inherently beautiful in making an object vanish (which I believe there is), then it is reasonable to be quite blatant in requesting the appropriate reaction from the spectator: "I hope you'll watch this carefully and not miss a second. This really is a beautiful moment that you'll remember for the rest of your life. Your ring simply and elegantly... disappears. Isn't that lovely?"

The second technique is a little more involved. In the world of hypnosis and Neuro-Linguistic Programming, it is called anchoring. Perhaps you'll be enough of a love to let me consider it now separately.

Anchoring

This is a useful skill, and one that although it will sound a little elaborate in description, should become second nature in performance. Here, we are working with our natural tendency as human beings to attach associations to such things as objects, faces, environments, gestures and tones of voice. It is the same process that occurs when we hear a particular song and are taken back to the emotions associated with our first hearing of it, or when by merely

thinking of people we know we make ourselves feel melancholy or excited. This can be of use to us as magicians interested in eliciting powerful responses of different kinds, and in giving the audience a more powerful memory of the event. Here is the basic process for 'anchoring' a response:

1 – Gain rapport with the spectator and then, as you talk, enter that desired state yourself. This you can do through amplified voice tonality and physiological changes on your part. If you keep the rapport in check, you should bring the spectator with you quite easily. You can ask her questions relating to her experience of it to amplify it further.

2 – When you can see that she is in the correct state, 'anchor' it with a touch or gesture and a suitable word or sound on your part.

3 – Repeat this a few times over a period to enhance the association.

4 – You can now trigger off that response again by using the same touch and word at a later point.

It certainly is not desirable to spend time eliciting the state (Step One) in every effect that you present. However, often, a useful response will present itself quite spontaneously through a strong reaction to an effect – a reaction that you can then 'steal' through an anchor for later. Here are some examples from my own experiences with this technique that I hope will communicate the relative straightforwardness of the procedure:

The Energy In The Spoon

This was a great example of a spontaneous response that I anchored and kept for later. I was performing some spoon bending in a cafe queue in the rather delightful Primrose Cafe in Boyces Avenue, Bristol. As the spoon bent slowly upwards, the woman to my right became quite animated and said that she could see the energy rising up the handle. Far from wanting to discourage her notion, I leant over and touched her on the shoulder, making the same "Whoa!" sound that she had just made in shock. Then a little later I bent another spoon and was about to let it break in two. Just before I did this, I touched the same woman in the same place and excitedly exclaimed, "Whoa!" in that same way. Immediately she shifted from watching attentively to getting excited again, pointing at what she could see again as energy. As the spoon broke, her excitement peaked quite vociferously.

Stopping Smoking

This has nothing directly to do with magic performance per se, but is a good example of the power of this technique. I was sitting with a chap I knew reasonably well in a pub, the two of us slowly yielding to the flordid grape. He mentioned that he wanted to give up smoking. In my practice as a hypnotist, I have seen many people who have this request. I had neither time nor inclination to spend serious time with him then, so I started a conversation on the first cigarette he'd smoked. I asked him a series of questions about the toxic nature of that first experience, and as the questions about the sensations demanded increasing amounts of detail, so too he became deeper involved in that state. The only way he could answer the

questions was by fully reliving the unpleasantness again. As he did this, I drummed casually on the table with my fingers. I brought him to a peak, drumming louder, then stopped dead and changed the subject drastically. Ten minutes later, he extracted a box of the foul weed from his pocket and lit one to smoke it. I immediately drummed on the table. He spat the thing out, nearly gagging. *He had no idea why it tasted bad.* Taking advantage of his confusion, I leant over and said knowingly – “And now whenever you try in vain to smoke one of those, you can feel this each time stronger...” That was two and a half years ago, and I know that he has not smoked since.

Sometimes in a magic performance, the spectator that is helping you may be experiencing a subdued version of the effect that everyone else is witnessing. This device is something I enjoy using to create the effect of a real miracle for the audience. It may be that pre-show work has taken place, of which the vast majority of the audience have no idea, or some more subtle division of effect between what the participant thinks is occurring, and what the audience believe to be the case. Here it will be useful to make the one spectator react in an amplified way, to match the audience’s reaction – and their expectation of her response. I have often seen a mentalist point at someone in the audience and say something along the lines of, ‘You, Madam are thinking of a country.... it is Denmark, am I right? And your mother’s maiden name would be Jones, would that be correct?’ The audience member, rather than reacting with the appropriate response of sheer mindless terror, merely nods and is asked to sit down. The rest of us are careful to react to this apparently strong effect, for we note that the spectator was not especially impressed. Here, the value of a good anchored response would be invaluable. In a close-up setting, where this sort of methodology is at work, care could be taken to ensure that the girl in question responds well as follows: During previous effects, her enthusiastic responses to the magic are repeatedly anchored - say,

with a touch and some sort of exclamation. Then, when it is later desired that she respond in an amplified way to an effect, he triggers off the touch/sound anchor again. She will find herself responding much more powerfully.

Here are some further examples of anchoring used to provide a greater emotional response to an effect:

Enhancing Your Attractiveness to the Spectator

This may sound a little suspect, and perhaps it is. However, there is a very flirtatious quality about performing magic to the opposite sex that can be exploited to ensure that they play the right psychological game during (and, if you like, after) the effects. Invariably I find myself alongside the female managing director of the company that has booked me for the evening, and I find that by using the following ploy I can induce her to feel a little more than attraction to the magic – which goes a long way in the schmoosy world of corporate networking. First I want to create the ‘desire state’ and anchor it, so early in the set I might begin with:

‘Have you ever seen something that you just *know* that you have to have? Something that you see and immediately know that it has to be yours, and you won’t stop thinking about it until you have it? You know what I mean? [I give her time to find something and respond accordingly.] You know that feeling inside you get when it just penetrates you and says [I put my hand on her shoulder] *Look at me*. And you really want it. Well, that’s how I felt when I first saw magic that I couldn’t explain. I knew that’s what I had to do. Let me show you what I saw...’

Then later, when I come to do a bit of mindreading, I place *my hand on her shoulder* in the same way and say ‘*Look at me*’ as

before. I may continue, 'Now I'm sure that *you like me* have had some experiences you can't explain away...' triggering off the shoulder anchor again with the words '*you like me.*'

It's a harmless piece of seductive by-play that enhances the feeling of intimacy you may wish to create. And brings in a bit of extra work.

Out of This World

Here I use Paul Harris' idea of our natural state of astonishment to provide a strong emotional ending to Mr. Curry's classic effect. I can only say that my performance of this has doubled in impact since I included this at the end, sitting back and talking for a moment to build anticipation before the rows of cards are turned over:

'Well, I've been performing magic for ten years now and one thing keeps occurring to me. That magic can take us back to our infantile state, our natural state of mind, which is one of *wonder*. [As I say this I move my hand over the cards with a gesture that will mirror the turning-over to come in a few moments. This is the anchor]. As babies we wonder at everything – the world is full of astonishment. Of course after a while we start to learn how things work and we lose that capacity to hold something in childlike awe [I gesture again over the cards]. Do you know what I mean? And it's the same when you first start enjoying magic. The same feeling of *wonder* [gesture]. But for me, of course, once you know how it's done, and you know the secrets, you lose that beautiful sense of astonishment. You watch a magician with his hands all over the cards and you can see him doing the moves. So... you can imagine what it's like for me, after ten years of doing this, to just sit back and see something utterly impossible [I start to turn over the cards] that

makes you *wonder* about that beautiful child-like state again. Remember this, and thank you very much indeed.'

It may read rather disgustingly, but now every time I perform this effect there is a beautiful silence as the emotions are triggered, then expressions of disbelief, and then comments along the line of, 'It sends shivers through you, doesn't it?' This I find very rewarding. It really has become something more than a card trick.

I repeat, it would not be appropriate to overwork this sort of presentation, but to have a small number of such points during a set will, I believe, enhance the impact of the performance considerably. Of course it must happen in a way that is entirely honest and congruent on your part – you should be really feeling the states of mind that you are describing and eliciting.

RISK AND DELIGHT

"Familiarity begets boldness"

The Antiquary by Shackerley Marmion

If one works as a full-time table-hopper, a week may pass where one performs the same trick a hundred times. Slowly one may come to leave behind the lesser joy of this terrible whoring, in favour of more exclusive performance, but for those of us at least who cannot live out our expensive lives without occasional returns to the bustling banquet hall, I would like to offer for discussion the problem of over-familiarity with those methods for achieving our miracles.

I am thinking of a tendency that I recognised in myself to consistently use tried-and-tested means for my magic that harked back to when I first began to perform the effect in question. There are a few effects that I have performed for years, and feel that I would be able to continue to do so effectively, even if my brain were removed by a nurse. Even though I was growing as a magician, and becoming increasingly skilled with people and performance environments, I was continuing to use methods that were suited to me as a fledgling performer. I am convinced that it is too easy to perform old tricks in old ways without any reappraisal of their emotional impact, the meaning they convey, and what they say about *you as a performer*. It is an eye-opening procedure to return to those effects and design

new presentations – but I have already spoken of this, and the importance of context in magic. Here I would like to mention an area that I find allows me to experience some delight and entertainment in my own performances, namely the use of bold technique and the employment of risk.

The safe and solid methods that we once needed to perform an effect with confidence may now not leave us room to apply our years of experience and skill that we have amassed as good magicians. We may delight ourselves in excellent ruses in our latest effects, but think nothing of over-handling in a trick we have performed for years. I would like to defend the use of boldness, blagging and bunkum in close-up magic, and suggest that it can provide more of an edge to the experience of performance.

Let us look at some effects that we are all familiar with. The famous ‘Cigarette-thru-Quarter,’ or (more correctly) ‘Cigarette through Pound Coin,’ meets with an interesting reaction from magicians alone. Many, myself included at one time, would not perform it, from some lurking feeling that the effect was a little ‘too clean.’ There is no doubt that this effect is a modern classic, but at the same time any performer that does not think that his audience is going to take some convincing that the coin was not exchanged is probably deluding himself, perhaps more than his audience. I thought that I had solved this problem admirably when the reaction from the spectators seemed all that it should be. Then, one night, after the cigarette had made its defiant journey through the coin (symbolising the mammonish reticulation of Wealth and Debauchery), a lady responded, “Ooh, you must have swapped the coin for one with a hole in it.” Two other people jeered at her with sarcastic cries of, “No! Really?” and so on – suggesting that her remark was so obvious that it didn’t need stating. Despite one’s frustration at this only partially correct solution, it is not appropriate to vehemently insist that they saw the cigarette emerge from the coin *leaving no hole*. It is clearly more sensible for them to presume that

you managed to exchange the coins under impossible conditions than it is to believe that the cigarette went through. This lady's reaction, or more correctly that of the miserable, flatulent bugger to her right who had said nothing all evening but chose this moment to open his foetid, purulent mouth to mock her conclusion, worried me. For the presumption that the coin was exchanged to be so obvious that it would inspire mockery to even mention it seemed to me to be a problem. And I wondered how often similar conversations had occurred once I had wished these groups a good evening and wended my way.

The solution that I offer here is, I'm sure, far from complete, but it illustrates a point about incorporating a certain boldness of subterfuge into the proceedings. Firstly, there is an old rule that one takes for granted as a magician that one must never make explicit possible solutions or methods for fear of alerting the spectators to precisely those methods. For example, it is wrong to say, "Notice that my hands are empty": instead one must make a gesture that shows the hands to be clearly so. This is generally good advice, but I do feel that certain provisions can be made. On the one hand, the guilty magician who has exchanged a card and is suffering pangs of conscience, and who refers to the card as "the same card" unnecessarily is clearly making a mistake, as is the coin worker who comes out with such monstrosities as "I place the coin in my right hand," and then points at his fist for good measure. Such over-enthusiastic references to the glaringly obvious are horrendous. However, in those situations, we do not wish to arouse any dubiety in the mind of the spectator as to a fact that should be obvious, and our stating of that fact will only cause them to pay undue attention to it. The presumption is that *nothing untoward has happened*. But in the case of the cigarette effect under discussion, I believe that the stronger presumption will be that *the coin has been exchanged*. Similar effects may also create a similar bias in the minds of the audience. The rule that forbids us to say such things as "Notice that my hands are empty," no longer applies. If we know that the audience will

believe unanimously that our hands were not empty before some object is produced, then I feel that a mere gesture to demonstrate emptiness does not suffice. Many may forget that they saw a pair of empty hands, and work with the more convincing logic that they must have already contained the object. One must look at the presumptions made by the spectators and work with those presumptions. If they have no reason to presume that a subterfuge has occurred, it would be disastrous to mention the possibility, even by denying that possibility. But if we are honest and see that in a particular effect the presumption will be strongly in favour of some secret move, then our demonstrating of the fairness of the procedure by explicitly eliminating possibilities of chicanery can be justified.

Therefore, I decided that the only way to perform the 'Cigarette through Coin' effect satisfactorily was to face this issue of the partial transparency of method head-on. As far as I could see, the presumption in the minds of an audience of average intelligence was that I had exchanged the borrowed coin for one with a hole. (Not wishing to describe the workings of an effect currently on sale, I will presume the reader understands the method for achieving the effect, and not explain it beyond referring to the exchange that does need to take place). This is frustrating on two counts: firstly, the method is a little cleverer than that, and if they would look carefully they would see that there really is no hole remaining as the cigarette exits the coin; secondly (and this may sound a little fey), I work hard to believe in my magic as I perform it, and such explanations spoil it for me too. The following change in handling has allowed me to deal specifically with the exchange issue, and needs nothing more than sheer confidence to make it work. I would recommend this change to anyone performing this effect.

It is simply this – ask for the loan of a coin and take it from Person A to your right and pass it to Person B to your left to 'hang onto for a moment.' Bobo switch the coin at this point, and leave the gimmicked coin in her hand. *Don't* tell her to make a fist around it,

just leave it on her hand. Then ask her if she has a cigarette. If she has one, let her find her pack and extract one for you – this will occupy her and keep her mind away from the coin. If she has none, bring out your own. Here I open up a lovely silver cigarette case, and palmed beneath it is the real coin, still retained, as I ask her to remove one. I then ask her to inspect the cigarette (be it mine), or to light it (be it hers). She will do all this with the gimmicked coin in hand, and pay it no attention. Take the cigarette, and light it if need be, and then ‘start’ the trick. I turn to the group and say, “Now, when I do this on your electric television sets, we are often accused of stopping the cameras and swapping the props. You are getting to see this live and very close-up.” I particularly aim the next sentence at the lady with the coin. “Please watch very carefully – I don’t want mindless accusations that I distracted you and exchanged things when you weren’t looking.” I reach over to take the coin from the spectator at fingertips. “Look – I am using the very tips of my fingers – no sleeves, no pockets, no swapsies. Poppet, you may wish to keep an eye on the coin, you are nearest after all.”

I then continue with the effect. For the sake of completeness, I finish by removing the cigarette with my right hand, the real coin still finger palmed. The gimmicked coin is displayed as whole and undamaged in the left, and I take it with my right fingers and bring the cigarette back to my mouth. As the hand swings down, I drop the wrong coin into the left and extend it for retrieval by the spectator, mentioning that he will be able to feel a warmth in the centre of the coin. As I say this, the cigarette is still in my mouth. The attention on the coin and the act of talking in this way provide enough distraction for the guilty left hand to be forgotten. It comes up to take the cigarette, and the coin rolls from the hand into a Topit as it makes this journey.

The act of leaving the gimmicked coin with the spectator before you apparently begin allows you to, in effect, perform the trick without having to exchange the coin. You are able to safely

spell out that nothing is being exchanged and therefore deal with the major obstacle in the presentation of the effect as magic. Some may still object that the mention of exchanges remains counterproductive, but I would answer that to not deal with this issue is to ignore a major challenge in this marvellous effect.

I also believe that the boldness and risk involved in this handling makes the task of performance far more interesting. The magician must remain alert, and his interaction with his audience becomes a little more involved.

Another favourite from the shelves of the magic dealers is the Flying Ring. I perform this regularly, with the ring arriving, by means of climax, inside my sock or pierced onto my arm, depending on the sensibilities of the venue. (Both revelations, upon reflection, may be equally repellent). Here the inclusion of a couple of bold moves makes the effect, I feel, more powerful. Firstly, after displaying the ring in the left hand and commenting on its beauty (I do not make snide remarks about it being cheap – this is an example of the pointless unpleasant behaviour I mention earlier), I let it shoot into the case as I extend a now imaginary ring at the left fingertips and ask the spectator to blow gently upon it. I bring my hand close to her mouth, knowing that she won't have a chance to refocus and see whether the ring is there or not. This is an old ruse, but it is effective. The rest of the spectators think that she has seen it. I then make a fist with the one hand and slowly perform a vanish. However, the real boldness comes later, when I vanish the key-case from between the spectator's hands. After the ring has travelled twice to the key-case, I remove it fairly and proclaim that I shall repeat the effect, but with the owner of the ring (who is sat to my right) holding the keys. I take the ring onto my right thumb and hold the key-case in the same hand. The following actions happen quickly, and are designed to leave the spectator focussed on the ring, while she thinks she holds the key-case. Firstly I tell her to hold out her hands. I apparently pass the case to my left hand to give to her,

but in reality it falls into the Topit. The right hand forms a 'thumbs-up' position, displaying the ring fairly near her face and I wiggle the thumb slightly, as if I am preparing for a secret move. As the left hand travels across, apparently holding the case, I instruct her to cover it with her other hand.

The situation that develops here is called by some hypnotists a 'cataleptic trance.' Her hands are placed outside of her awareness as she focuses on the ring. Or perhaps we are reminded of the situation where one is passed a drink while at the same time having an absorbing telephone conversation, and might stand for some while with the drink still at arm's length, unaware of the amusement caused to the rest of the room. If this is handled correctly, her attention will be so focussed on the ring that she will perform the actions involved in taking the case (and I help her by moving her other hand to 'cover' it) without any conscious involvement. Instead her attention is absorbed by the ring, while her hands hold an imaginary key-case.

I now false pass the ring from my right thumb to my left hand, retaining the ring in the way one might vanish a thimble. Because I am close to the lady in question, I can use the cover of her body to load the ring into a slit in my trousers that will cause the ring to be dropped via a chute into the sock. Simultaneously I extend the left hand and suddenly snap it open and say, "Gone!" My right hand, and I hope you find this as amusing as I, travels behind her so that my fingertips are near her ribs on the far side. The left hand points at her hands apparently clasped around the key-case and says "Gone!" as I secretly deliver a tickle to the aforementioned ribs. The spectator responds with a jerk, and opens her hands, her attention only now directed to her hands. The case has gone. "Feel that?" I ask. Regardless of what she thinks has happened, the effect on the rest of the spectators is priceless. It does look as if the case disappeared in a burst of magic electricity between her own hands.

The reason for the snappy vanish of the ring in the left hand is to ensure that the spectator has no chance to think, "Ah, it's going to disappear from there, and reappear in the case which – oh yes – I am holding." Rather she is kept in the frame of mind where her attention is being quite forcefully controlled. It never returns to her hands, which supposedly hold a key case.

Another bold ruse to enliven one's performance and enhance the magic applies to psychokinetic effects with borrowed watches. I have a real fondness for this type of effect – the impact is always very strong, and the performance generally impromptu. Even if I have left the house without a magnet strapped to my knee, I find these effects most powerful to perform when requested to display my skills.

I finish the routine by stopping the second hands on a few watches. Two spectators – one to my left, and one to my right - hold a watch each in their hands, and I instruct the spectator to my left to perform various visual exercises and to suspend his disbelief for a while to allow the phenomenon to occur. After I secure his involvement, I tell him to hold his breath and then at any moment of his choosing, to merely think the word 'Stop.' He does, and the second hand halts. The spectator to my right is told to hold his breath in the same way, and when he looks at the watch in his hand, he sees that it has stopped too. One other spectator from the group may express scepticism or plain awe – I tell him to hold his breath and think 'Stop.' I gesture for him to look at the watch that he is wearing and when he does, it too has stopped. All three watches are started up again under the spectators' control.

Few routines have as much potential for such rewarding nonsense as these. The effect of his own watch being strangely affected is staggering for a spectator, yet the means used to bring about such behaviour are straightforward.

The above episode with the three watches is achieved as follows: the watch to your left is stopped using a large PK magnet, as one expects. I sit loosely cross-legged, away from the table, and the spectator holds the watch flat on his hand, while I ensure that it remains in the vicinity of my knee, to the side of which the magnet is strapped. I found that using the table was not as effective – too many spectators guessed that a magnet could be strapped there. Somehow, though, the absence of the table seems to stop the suspicion of a magnet from arising. As for it stopping at the exact moment that the spectator thinks ‘Stop’ – well, one can generally get away with this. Part of the reason for telling him to hold his breath is that he will not delay the mental instruction for too long. Between that and the fact that it takes a moment to realise that the watch has stopped, one can convincingly create the illusion that it stopped on command. Even if this subtlety is missed, the effect of the watch stopping will be dramatic enough to pass over this minor regret.

The watch given to the spectator on my right has had the crown pulled out at an appropriate moment before placing it in her hand. Again, I do not ask her to make a fist around it, nor do I place it facedown. It is openly face-up and stopped in her hand, but everyone, her included, is focussed very heavily on the watch held by the spectator on my left. It is a minor point, but far fewer people will ever think that the watch was pre-stopped if it has been fairly displayed on the spectator’s hand for some time. Also, after stopping the watch to my left magnetically, I can give the spectator to my right instructions to hold her breath and think ‘Stop’ – which take a few moments for her to process and perform. Thus, her noticing that the watch has stopped and her subsequent reaction are delayed, which further reinforces the illusion that the watch was moving before it was instructed to stop. I do not tell her to choose her moment in thinking ‘Stop!’ – I just tell her to do it. If this extra subtlety has worked well with the first spectator however, I will exploit it immensely. Later I can truthfully say that the watches

stopped when they were mentally instructed to do so, and hopefully the first instance, where the moment was apparently chosen secretly by the spectator will blur across the other instances.

The strength of the first stopping of the hand is such that the secondary and tertiary effects, if performed in rapid succession, will go unchallenged. The third watch that is stopped on the spectator's wrist has been previously tampered with. Perhaps ten minutes earlier I have, during the course of another routine, pulled out the crown on someone's watch. I make sure that I sit far away from this person during the watch routine, but keep a lot of eye contact with them during the effect. Thus it is not difficult to get them to make some comment after the first two watches have been stopped, and I can react to this comment with the final climax in a way that seems very spontaneous. The tampering with the crown can be done using classic pickpocket ruses, such as moving the spectator from one seat to another, or holding his wrist while his attention is focussed on something in his other hand. I approach it as I would a watch-steal, but it is a lot quicker to perform.

If you are silently asking, "But Derren, what if the spectator realises that his watch has stopped before you want him to?" then perhaps this chapter is not well suited to your style. Otherwise, I hope that I have illustrated something that I feel very strongly: that bold ruses make the magic more interesting for the performer and keep him alert, and allow for some very direct magical effects.

More Risks: Seize the Chance

I hope Jerry won't mind me recounting the following brief episode:

I sat with Mr. Sadowitz in his London flat and he offered an effect for contemplation. A box of matches is to be handed to a spectator, who is instructed to remove any number he likes while the performer's back is turned. The performer is then to turn around, retrieve the box, and give it a shake. After doing so, he correctly names the amount removed. A method must exist! He was eager to find one.

I grabbed a box of matches from the table and handed them to Jerry, inviting him to remove some while I faced away. He did, and I turned around and took the box. Without shaking it, I told him he had taken four. This is going to seem awfully over-clever, but he had indeed taken four. I coolly assured him that I had been doing that effect for years.

I hadn't, and soon told him the truth that I had just guessed. It wasn't clever, and I don't mention this to appear as such. But it was, at that moment, a good trick. It now forms part of my working repertoire, with a couple of minor alterations. I have shown it to some very well known magicians, and enjoyed their response. I always guess, and I always say four. If any of those magicians are reading this now, I can only offer my smuggest apologies. If you are interested in Jerry's solution to the match problem, I would refer you to 'Mystic Matches' in *The Crimp* No. 49.

When I talk to most magicians about effects like these, they suggest multiple outs to remedy the problem of failure. I find this road will only damage the effect. There are few outs that can be offered without in some way introducing unwanted chaff into the presentation, and I think that audiences are a little wiser to the notion of this device than we would like to give them credit for. This is not to say that 'outs' are not extremely valuable, but here I would like to concentrate on a different approach. My thoughts here will

not be suitable for most performers, but I think that they will have some value to a few.

The problem of failure is only a relevant one if one frames the non-happening of the intended effect as such. Let us presume for the moment that there is no problem when the hoped-for coincidence is not realised. But that if there is a 'hit,' the effect will be absolutely staggering. Surely this is worth some contemplation? Yet I have very rarely seen magicians employing these strategies.

Here is my point. Throughout many effects, a point is reached where the climax can be massively amplified by allowing for the possibility of sheer chance to intervene. Using certain psychological gambits known to the performer, random chance can be biased somewhat more in his favour than others might imagine. If Dame Fortune is feeling moody and unusual, and the effort fails, then it can be brushed off, and the previously intended climax is pursued. But if She smiles upon him, the magician has created an unfathomable mystery, and secured his reputation.

The only hindrance to this practice is the magician's own insecurity. Let me provide a few examples from my own repertoire.

Zippo

The magician removes a silver Zippo lighter from his pocket and lights a cigarette. He extends the lighter to a spectator and asks her to stare into the silver surface and name her favourite playing card, adding that the Ace of Spades would be a little obvious. She thinks for a moment, and names the Queen of Hearts. "Interesting," says the performer, and blows a stream of smoke at the lighter. As the spectators' eyes follow the stream of smoke, they see that the

lighter now has the image of the named card engraved, in full colour, upon both sides.

Telephone

A deck of cards is handed to a gentleman for safekeeping. Another spectator calls a friend on the telephone and asks her to name a card. She tells no one what card has been named, and hangs up. The magician asks if there is anyone else at the table that knows the friend that has been telephoned. Somebody does, and she is asked to visualise that friend, and to imagine her with a playing card in the centre of her forehead. She does this, although she tells no one which card she sees. The magician instructs them to both name the cards that they have in mind, on the count of three. One spectator is to name the card chosen over the phone, and the other is to name the card that she sees in her image of the person who named that card. The magician counts, and *they both name the same card*. While the spectators recover from this shock, the magician mentions that while a synchronicity can exist between those that know each other, the harder task for him was to know beforehand which card would be selected by them both. As an afterthought, he takes the deck from the gentleman and spreads it out. That named card is seen to have been reversed in the deck from the beginning.

Instant Card

A spectator shuffles a deck thoroughly and hands it to the magician, simultaneously naming any card in the deck. The

performer takes it at fingertips, and then places it on the table. He instantly produces the card from the deck.

Those three effects I perform regularly, but I should have to find an excuse if someone should request one from me. Let me explain how I incorporate them into my routines to hopefully communicate what I consider to be the wisdom of allowing Chance to play her hand.

Firstly, and in reverse order, *Instant Card*. I will look at this one first, for here there is no reason for the performer to feel at all insecure. Here there can never be failure, for the effect will have never been attempted should the card not be found. There is nothing remotely new or original in this idea: I would merely wish to encourage performers to travel these roads more often. The miracle is attempted whenever a card-effect is to be performed that can begin with the naming of a random card by the spectator. For example, the *Ambitious Card* routine could commence thus. In this case, if the *Instant Card* effect 'fails,' you would move straight into the *Ambitious Card* and no one would be any the wiser. However, should luck be on your side, you stop right there.

The handling I use to give me the greatest chance of finding the card is as follows. Firstly I make sure that the spectator names the card while she holds the deck. I ask for a card to be named in an off-hand way, so that the deck will not be watched too intensely once I retrieve it. I take it fairly, glimpsing the bottom card if I have not done so already. In the action of squaring, I shift the top card slightly, and glimpse that too. If the card was on the bottom, I have the most delightful of miracles to reveal, and can do so in whatever way seems best. Should it be on the top, a similar miracle has occurred. Presuming that neither has occurred, I remark upon the choice of card as I pass the deck. I now have a different top and

bottom card to check as I fiddle. Should it be either one of those two, I will declare my intention to cut straight to the card, and then perform a one-handed Charlier cut, allowing the card to slide off the top or bottom into my fingertips as the two halves reassemble. If you perform this move, allowing either card to dislodge and be drawn out by the left fingertips, I think you will be pleasantly surprised at how much this looks like the card has been cut to, once it is drawn from the centre. If you precede this false revelation with a dribbling of the cards into the left hand, it will really seem as if you have cut randomly and fairly. Which I suppose you have. Finally, if the card has not appeared by this point, I comment on how fairly the deck was shuffled by the spectator, as I give the deck a one-handed shuffle. This shuffle allows one to easily glimpse the card at the face of the upper pile as the top section is moved away. If one riffles a few cards in the centre with the left forefinger before making the necessary cutting action, one has the luxury of glimpsing a few more. If the card is spotted in this process, it can be brought to the face of the pack during the shuffle, and the same cut revelation embarked upon that I have previously described.

Here, one has had the chance to glimpse six or seven cards. It is important that nothing is made of the shuffle, if it was needed, unless the card is then produced. Otherwise, having mentioned the fairness of the spectator's shuffle, I continue by concluding that she is presumably happy that the cards are all they purport to be. Making some remark about how little trust there is in the world nowadays, I spread the cards and openly remove the named selection. I then proceed with the *Ambitious* routine, or wherever I was heading.

The *Telephone* effect is a dressing-up of the *Invisible Deck*, and the idea of using a card named over the telephone came from

watching John Lenahan perform this classic effect. I would, however, suggest that the effect can be improved even further by allowing for the interplay of fortune. Again, one can stack the odds in one's favour, but here there is a real possibility of the attempt clearly failing. I shall offer my solution for that event.

Have one lady sit on the deck while Spectator One calls a female friend. The relevance of the lady being seated on the deck is to allow a few jokelets later, when one can ask her to 'keep shuffling them,' or even to 'fish out the box,' if the situation permits. The lady telephoned is asked to name a card, with the qualification that the Ace of Spades is too obvious. The card is named, but the spectator keeps its identity quiet. Spectator Two is another lady, and she is asked to visualise the telephoned party (if she knows her) and to allow a playing card to come to her mind. I am already hoping that by using two ladies for the selections, there may be some similarity in the choices. By removing the Ace of Spades from the game as being 'too obvious,' there should be reluctance on their parts to choose either an Ace or a Spade. Similarly, if neither is given a chance to change their minds, the odds of a similarity of some sort are increased a little, in that they are less likely to choose a particularly obscure card. Either way, I say nothing concerning the possibility of their naming the same card. Instead, I reiterate that *it is the card named over the telephone that shall be used*. But, I add, I sense an interesting rapport in the group, and would like to try something interesting. I explain that I would like them both to name their card on the count of three. Once I have ensured that they will call out the cards clearly and simultaneously, I count with some drama. The cards are named. It is far from necessary that they name the same one. Let us look at the options:

Both name the same card. Splendid! This happens more frequently than one may imagine, given the psychological context of the

selections. This, then, becomes the climax. I remark that a group of friends will often generate this sort of unconscious communication, which it can take others years to learn. As an afterthought, I retrieve the gimmicked deck from the lady and spread them to show the reversed selection.

Two similar cards are named. Marvellous! I look knowingly around the group and say, "Interesting, isn't it? A group of friends can create a bizarre unconscious communication, something that it can take years to develop consciously and with guaranteed accuracy. That's more my job, which is more difficult, for I don't know you very well. But you seemed such a delightful group that I thought I would take my chances." I retrieve the deck, and continue. I remove the reversed card, and ask for the name of the card selected telephonically. Many will forget that the card has just been named.

The cards sound unrelated but will be paired in the deck. With that same confident look, I repeat the names of the cards, and exclaim my own mystification at how 'this always happens.' "Two cards, chosen at random – and a deck over there that has not been touched, at least not by me. Now there is a closeness that exists in a group like this, which allows for a closeness of rapport and ideas. I'm hoping that the position of those two cards in the deck will reflect that closeness. The Seven of Hearts and the Six of Spades, I believe you said. There is a closeness already in those numbers. Let's look through the deck... there's the Six. [The reversed card is seen] Well, I wonder where the Seven could be – the card named over the telephone. [There are expressions of disbelief from the spectators as they realise that the reversed card must be the Seven]. Do you realise the implications, sir, of this being the correct card. Not only as physically close as possible to the other choice, but reversed from the very start. Erm..."

At this point I remove the card, ditch the deck, and look at the face of the single pasteboard. I allow a look of confusion to pass

over my features and for a moment believe that I have made a ghastly mistake. The tension has built well, and I show the card to be correct.

What, I imagine the reader now asks, if the two cards are entirely and irretrievably unrelated? No problem, my poor frightened babes. But first let us proceed to the *Zippo* effect, where the likelihood of 'failure' is larger.

My friend Ian Rowland, author of the definitive work **The Full Facts Book Of Cold Reading**, bought for me in Los Angeles a marvellous Zippo lighter with the Queen of Hearts engraved on one side. Knowing that I always have this card shortened in my deck, and that it is a favourite of mine for psychological forcing, it seemed a useful gift. I wondered for some time how I could use it, and currently use the following handling. The effect I am to perform is the *Cigarette Through Pound Coin*. Once the spectator has the gimmicked coin and a cigarette in her possession, I extend the lighter to her, with the engraved side against my palm. "Stare into my lighter," I say dramatically, "and name your favourite playing card. Not the Ace of Spades: everyone says an Ace for some reason." I snap my fingers to suggest that she answer quickly. She looks into the silver surface and names, let us presume, the Queen of Hearts. I relax and light the cigarette, then blow smoke down on the lighter, turning it round in the process. Alternatively, I may just ask her why the lighter made her think of that card, and as she looks up at me, simply turn it over. Then I say, "Look again," and she does. The reaction here is priceless. I immediately say, "Ah, I had fifty-two of them in my hand," and casually show both sides with a paddle move, if she does not immediately take it from me to examine it. The point of this is to suggest that she had a much wider choice of cards

than the likely range of about six that she would go for when asked in the way that she was.

I perform this effect several times a night, and I would say that it works about a quarter of the time. Of course there are times when it works infallibly all night, over and over again. You may still be unhappy with this, but for me the balance is clearly in favour of attempting the effect. If you are cynical of my vague statistic, then let us briefly look at why the Queen of Hearts may be chosen more frequently than one might presume. Firstly, one has chosen a lady, and us chaps know how all the ladies love the pretty hearts. (NB – girls can't click their fingers either, so don't ask them to, it'll spoil the trick. And they always leave the lavatory seat down, too). Secondly, one has asked for a 'favourite card.' Thirdly, one has effectively eliminated the Aces and the Spades by the qualification, "Not the Ace of Spades. Everyone chooses an Ace for some reason." The language here is just a little vague, and intends to have the effect of steering the spectator's choice away from that whole area. Thirdly, the Queen of Hearts is a very popular favourite card choice, at least amongst women. The odds here are stacked well.

By now I imagine the reader quite upset that no solution has been offered for the problem of 'failure.' The cautious performer will arrange for a series of 'outs,' but should this happen, I am sure that the directness of the effect would be lost. Let us imagine that the performer doesn't really mind if the effect fails. It was only a brief diversion, and the effect of success would have greatly outweighed that of failure. This must be one's attitude from the start.

Now, in the case of *Zippo* and *Telephone* and anything else along similar lines that the adventurous reader may devise, the dramatic crescendo culminating in the hoped-for revelation must be intense. The nervous performer will underplay the request for the card and the drama of the situation so that if it fails, he is left with less egg on his red and unhappy face. But if he does so, then he will

not make success, should it strike, appear intended. If he appears surprised by the coincidence, it will appear to be just that – a coincidence. But if I ask a spectator to specifically project an image of her favourite card onto the side of my lighter, and become quite intense in my request, and delightful in my histrionics, then I don't feel that any spectator will shrug and ask if 'everybody names the Queen of Hearts.' It simply would make no sense for me to have relied on coincidence when I had invested so much in the performance of the effect.

It is this sense of drama, and complete confidence on the part of the performer that will allow for a good reframing of the effect should success be elusive. By building-up the effect in such a way, an enormous tension will be created amongst the group. Expectations will be high. If the spectator, at the peak of tension before the *Zippo* revelation, names some irrelevant nonsense like the Eight of Clubs, I say, "The Eight of Clubs? Do you want to change your mind?" We will presume that she doesn't change her mind to the Queen of Hearts. Confidently, I turn over the lighter to reveal the Queen. "The Queen of Hearts!" I exclaim, and for a moment the group look stultified. Then I slump and say mournfully, "Yeah, that never works." The tension has now been released at its zenith, and believe me, the group will laugh like fools, realising the joke. "I don't care. It's well worth it. You'll go home tonight and forget I ever tried that. But if that had worked, you'd have been up all night, and remembered that for the rest of your life. I'm not bothered." This is said in good humour, and while shifting from a slumped, disappointed look to an enthusiastic and up-beat one. The desire in this shift in physiology and tonality is, of course, to bring them out of their own deflation into an entirely light-hearted one. It may not read well here, but this is a genuinely very funny moment. It also serves to undo any pomposity that the performer may have built-up around him, and injects an appealing tongue-in-cheek quality to his assessment of himself before the group. I have no hesitation in

performing such effects for this reason, as the results of 'failure' become quite positive.

This clearly will not suit many styles of performance, but where there is good-natured humour I feel that such a diversion will have its place. It will normally loosen up a stiff-collared group of recalcitrant, taciturn farts, who'll otherwise resent your apparently getting the better of them.

PART TWO

MAGICAL ARTISTRY

"ZAMIEL'S CARD"

After embarrassing you all by feverishly denouncing the practice of forming an effect from the basis of an appealing sleight (rather than beginning with the question of what would appeal as an effect), I must upset you further by explaining that the following magical routine was indeed borne from little more than my enjoyment of a 'move.' I had, for perhaps no other reason than simple madness, spent some days working on a routine where a playing card, signed no less, is torn up rather horribly before a paying, baying audience. As if this were not spectacle enough, I would then take the disembodied fragments and from them form once again the very same card in a grotesque and Gothic piece of Frankensteinia. It would be called 'The Card that is Torn Apart and then Is Fine Again.' After a while I abandoned the effect, but I retained a move that I had developed through my efforts – a mixture of previous ideas concerning the false transfer of a playing card from one hand to another. This loose and shabby mongrel now needed new accommodation, and after a while the following effect was born.

My marvellous friend Lennart Green had installed in me a love of very 'visual' card magic, and a faith in performing bold vanishes and reappearances. After many splendid evenings spent with a deck of cards, a fine wine and a couple more whores, I seized upon a simple notion that I thought would make a splendid effect, and which could utilise in the process this new sleight. Namely, that a card could be thought of by a spectator, and then the magician would find the card in an imaginary deck on the table, by peeling off *real* cards from the top of it. Cards would appear at his fingertips as

they were removed from this invisible deck, and one by one would be openly placed in his pocket. Eventually he would stop, holding a card before him, its back to the audience, and ask for the card to be named. The spectator, who has merely thought of a card, names it for the first time. The magician fairly turns around the card, and it is indeed the correct one.

The idea of removing real cards from an imaginary deck appealed immensely. This is really no more than producing cards at fingertips, which is of course familiar in one form or another to us all. However, this handling allows for a constant stream of cards to be produced individually, and at each appearance the hand can be shown to contain only that card. The false transfer, which I have called *The Figaro Transfer* (after my parrot), can be used whenever a card is apparently moved from a right hand to a left, and I feel is a convincing ruse when one wishes openly to place a card in the left pocket with the left hand, but retain it in the right hand. The reader, no doubt nonplussed by that last brag, will bear with me in anticipation of a full explanation of the move in a later paragraph.

As for the selection of the card, this can be arranged in various ways. Most of the time for lay audiences I will riffle a real deck of cards before a spectator and ask her to remember one that she sees, and force a choice using the short card in my deck. Then I bring it to the top and vanish the pack by lapping it, and proceed with the effect. Alternatively, a card can be forced and returned, controlled to the top using your most loathed method, and then the deck vanished in the same way. Whichever way appeals, you wish to have the forced card accessible on your lap.

When I perform this for wise and knowing magicians, I ask the spectator to shuffle an imaginary deck and then I spread it before her and ask her to remember one 'that she sees.' Here I shamelessly instigate her into the proceedings with an idea that has precedent in Karrell Fox's **Another Book**: I allow her to see a torn index of the

force card, stuck to my palm. This is just the corner of the card, torn from the main body and adhered with wax or similar substance in the centre of the palm, which will be visible to her as I spread the imaginary cards. One can even ask her quite openly to 'play along' at this point, and the audience will be none the wiser. It's not big, and it's not clever, but sometimes competitions offer large sums of prize money, and one must do what one must. Besides, I have an appealing charm and devilish handsomeness about me that spectators adore, and no one ever tells.

Procuring the card for the Figaro Transfer

The audience is seated and physically restrained in front of you. A spectator may sit at your right, or come forward from the audience to assist at points where she is needed. In your left jacket pocket there sits in trepidation an indifferent card, facing the body.

Firstly, let us presume that you have taken the honest route and employed a genuine deck for the selection of the card. The card now resides at the top of the deck (and quite excitingly so, for no one knows but you) as you say words to the effect of, "Now, let us make this a little more interesting. You have a card in mind, and she resides somewhere here amongst her brothers and sisters. Were I to run through the deck and find her, you might be impressed, you might be astonished, you might even be sexually aroused, but I would feel unworthy of your delight, for such a triumph would be pedestrian in the extreme. Therefore, with your permission, I shall find the card without being able to see the deck. This would allow me to share in the sensation of magic. Shall I proceed?"

During this talk, you have spread the cards face-up on the table, and in doing so, theatrically faced away from the display. Obviously you have taken a modicum of care not to expose the face

of the chosen card at the top. After briefly displaying them thus, you reassemble the spread, and face the spectators again. You turn the cards face down, lapping the deck as you square it. You then mime the action of spreading them face down, revealing the disappearance of the deck, and continue by saying, "I can now no longer see them. Yet I shall find your card."

Allow the vanish to achieve its effect on the spectators, and then mime reassembling the deck once again. Lean forward and ask the spectator to cut the deck and complete the cut. You have your elbows on the table at the edge nearest you. Your right forearm crosses along the table edge to your left elbow, with the right hand loosely hanging over the edge of the table above your lap. The left forearm crosses in front of the right. As you lean forward to request the cut, and as all eyes regard the actions of the spectator, your right hand secures the top card of the lapped deck in Tenkai palm. Once it is held, the left forearm moves perpendicular to the body and places its hand near the centre of the table, and the right hand with the palmed card comes onto the table and relaxes.

If you have chosen to utilise the imaginary deck for the selection of the card, here is my handling. The spectator sits at your right side. In the left jacket pocket you have an imaginary deck and the torn force index with a large blob of some adhesive substance such as wax or Blu-Tack upon it. Also residing there is some sort of unusual item that the invisible deck will be placed upon later – I use a little spinning disk with a holographic design on it – and an indifferent card, face towards the body. In the left waistcoat pocket one can find the matching entire card, also facing the body. Should you perform in more shabby attire than I, the card can protrude from your trouser waistband. I trust you all wear trousers. Should you be a female performer and are still unsure what to do, may I suggest that you read this as a signal that magic is a man's job and that you may be better cut out for a counselling profession or just sitting with friends talking about relationships.

The left hand goes into the pocket and adheres the torn index to the palm. Try and secure it so that it will be presently displayed the right way around to the spectator. It emerges from the pocket carrying the imaginary deck, which is offered to the spectator for shuffling. You retrieve the deck after complimenting her on her efforts, and spread them before her, asking her to remember any card that she sees. At this point I face away, but I look back briefly and add, 'just go with me on this one.' I then continue with, "...and say it to yourself over and over again." The point of this phrase is to stop her from questioning whether or not she will indeed choose that card, or whether she will select another to ruin the game. By forcing her onto the next stage in the proceedings and giving her new and absorbing instructions, she will follow along and not spoil the effect. It is worth adding that you should communicate a note of mischievous gratitude and good humour to the spectator so that she feels appreciated, and not used.

Return the cards to her and remark to the audience that you have something of interest to show them. The left hand goes into the left pocket to disengage the index and remove the disk. At the same time, the right hand holds the jacket to aid the removal, and steals the force card in Tenkai palm. This is a steal common to Gary Kurtz's *Flurious* routine and several of Guy Hollingworth's effects. The disk is displayed in the left hand as you describe it as some sort of lucky talisman. "For magic is about dreams," you exclaim, "and realising the imaginary." Theatrically place the disk in the centre of the table. Be good enough to place your deck on the exciting object and I shall in turn find your card from within it." Pause dramatically.

You are now ready to perform the Figaro Transfer, which will create the effect of removing cards one by one from the top of the deck. As with any move that boldly employs the Tenkai palm,

you should be aware of your geometric relationship to the spectators. The more sat in front of you, the merrier.

The Figaro Transfer

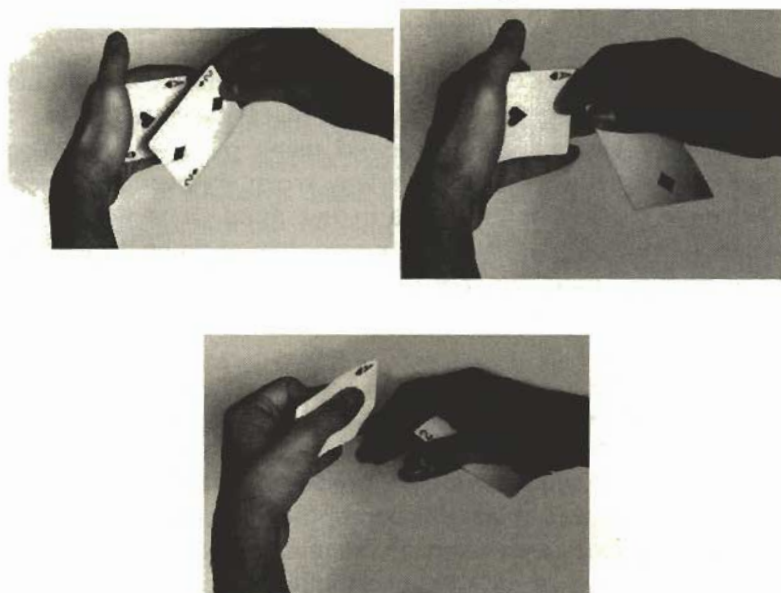
The right hand approaches the imaginary deck with the card in Tenkai palm. The palmed card should be face up. The first and second fingers curl in and clip the left corner on the approach to the centre of the table. They extend to reveal the card at their tips as it is apparently removed from the tabled deck. It should be held with the long sides parallel to the table, back to the audience. The hand is



seen to be otherwise empty. Look at the card as if to determine whether it is the correct one, and alter the finger grip on the card, so that your thumb is on the face against the second finger on the back. "No," you say, and the left hand comes to apparently remove it and place it in the left pocket. The left approaches from above, turning down and to the right as it moves to take the card in a dealing position, only with card and hand rotated ninety degrees to the right. However, as the left palm covers the face of the card, the right snaps it into Tenkai again. The left merely mimes the removal of the card, cupping around it, and apparently places it in the left jacket pocket. Here it secures the indifferent card in a classic palm.

The right approaches the 'deck' again and removes a card in the same way. Again, the performer looks at the card for a moment.

A similar process occurs, but this time the left approaches with the palmed card. As it moves slightly in front of the card displayed in the right, two actions happen simultaneously. The card in the right is snapped into Tenkai again, and the card in the left is revealed, back again to the audience, by opening the fingers wide and curling in the forefinger so that it grips it against the thumb. The card in the left is being held as if it were a sodden piece of tissue paper about to be flicked across a classroom at the face of a girl.



The illusion of the left hand merely having taken the card from the right is very strong. It happens in a split second, and then the card is carried away by the left hand, which goes back into the pocket. The fingers resume their position and the card is again classic-palmed. Meanwhile the right has again approached the deck and brought the next card into view. The transfer is repeated a few times – I find that seven times is ideal. (Lovers of “Der Freischütz” will remember that

Zamiel's bullet is the seventh. Here we have the magically forged seventh card). On that final production, I approach the right hand with an empty left, and genuinely take it for a moment. Then I exclaim, "Aha! That one seems about right. Would you name the card that you have in mind for me." The card is held facing you as the card is named. She names the card, and you look for a moment at the card before you. Look up at the audience and say, "Well..." and turn the card around. "There we are – the Four of Diamonds" or whatever it may be.

If you choose to use the 'instant stooge' methodology in this or another effect, it is worth using an index that is clear and simple. I use the Two of Hearts. I would avoid using picture cards. The spectator will be a little confused anyway when she sees the index, and will have to shift a few gears in her mind. It is worth not complicating things further by using a card that might be difficult to catch during those moments. For the record, I do not advocate this method – I think that to use a deck and vanish it is a neat beginning to this pleasing effect.

This effect is a very strong one, and I do say so myself. The image of the cards being peeled off the deck is, I find, rather lovely, and I feel it is more impressive than producing them from the air. Such a presentation would lack the conceptual appeal of a magician coolly removing real cards from an imaginary deck. Here I was trying to capture some of the strong aesthetic impact that Mr. Green creates when he deals cards on the table only to have them vanish as they touch it. I hope that the confident reader will enjoy performing it as much as I.

A THREE CARD ROUTINE

The following is a marathon of a card trick, with which I generally open a set of card effects. It is fairly ostentatious and complicated, but I feel that the structure and pacing allow for a very engaging routine and a worthwhile investment of time on all sides.

This effect has its origin in Tom Mullica's routine that begins with the selection of four cards and concludes with the double appearance of the cards under the box. This uses three cards, which I find makes for a more pleasing structure to the revelations, and is generally more useful for a close-up setting, where a table may offer two or three spectators (both numbers being ideal for the effect) but less likely four. I find it works well as an opening routine: it is long, relaxed, and has a pleasing symmetry. It is involving for the participants, whereas something like an *Oil and Water* opening that leaves them only observing is, for me, a little alienating as an opening effect.

The effect runs as follows. The magician is seated with some people at a table. The deck is ribbon spread for the selection of three cards – A, B and C. These are then returned to the deck, which is shuffled if you wish. The deck is placed on the palm of the left hand, and the performer introduces the subject of spirit intervention. Slowly the deck begins to cut itself in the middle – the top half sliding eerily to one side. The performer completes the cut and shows the card selected by the spirits to be selection C. This is placed on the table. The card is very cleanly transformed into each of the

other selections by rubbing it against the table. Finally it is rubbed and it vanishes altogether. The selected cards are immediately and cleanly removed from various pockets. The cards are then cut into the deck at positions determined by the spectators. This is done very cleanly and slowly, and the deck may then be shuffled. The magician then begins to deal cards from the top of the deck, instructing person C to stop him at any point. Wherever C says 'Stop,' it happens right on his card. Next, the performer spells to the card B, turning over a card for each letter. Card A is produced as follows: the spectator takes the entire deck (minus the two selections already found), and shuffles it. The performer tells him that he is to name any number and the card will be at that position in the deck. The spectator finishes shuffling and names, say, 17. The magician takes the deck at his fingertips and fairly deals off 16 cards. The last card is placed on the table for the spectator to turn over. It is correct.

Next the magician talks about the old street-game of *Three Card Monte*. He suggests a game with one of the spectators, but warns him the victim never wins at the game. The spectator is asked to point at the card that he feels is his own. The magician demonstrates some stunning sleight of hand and exchanges the selected card for an indifferent card in the deck. He repeats this demonstration with the second, and then performs the third exchange at full speed, where the card does not appear to touch the deck. All three cards are now exchanged. But when the deck is spread out, the cards are not visible in the deck. This is offered as a further insight into the methods used by con artists to cover their tracks. The magician asks if anyone knows where the cards went. He points out the card case on the table, and the cards can be seen underneath it. He removes them, and offers to repeat the effect. He looks at the case, and they are already there, back under the box. He removes them again, and offers to do it *again*, and this time appears to be explaining his techniques of distraction. The cards are replaced in the deck at positions chosen by the spectators, and with some amusing by-play and some flourishes, the cards vanish from the

deck. The performer spreads them out, and sure enough, they have gone. They do not, however, appear to be under the case, which has been watched very carefully by the spectators. The cards are reassembled, and the magician explains that he has been cheating, by using invisible cards. He spreads them out again, but the entire deck has disappeared. He picks up the box and shakes it: a few cards are heard to be inside. He hands the box to the most astonished spectator, who retrieves the three selected cards from within. Fin.

A few more words about the effect. There are a few things here that will interest the magician, but the bulk of the work is already known to the informed performer. I sincerely hope that no one would be particularly interested in performing this routine verbatim, but I offer it in the hope that it may spark a few ideas. The spectators are supposed to enjoy it as a feast of surprises and sleight-of-hand, and to become increasingly engaged in the process. The trick could be stopped at any point, for it is structured in such a way that each revelation builds from the last. I feel that it is pleasingly routinized, and allows one to enjoy some rather baroque ornamentation, which might be counter-productive in a shorter routine that would perhaps benefit from simplicity. I have also grown suspicious of the value of brief tricks, whereby a selected card may be transposed to the box, or be found by spelling to it. I have strongly come to feel that these sorts of effects work better if structured into a concatenation of surprises that build to a great climax, rather than being offered rather limply on their own. To engage an audience in an effect, I feel it is necessary to take some time with it. And if nothing else, if I only perform one card trick for a group, it is this one, which allows for the impact of a virtuosic display and leads to an exhausting climax.

The reason for performing the effect is given as an opportunity for the magician to 'warm up.' The working is as

follows. Firstly, the deck requires a short card, which is a minor piece of surgery that I perform on each deck as it comes to be used for performance. But that is all, and the only reason for doing so is to locate the card quickly, so the purist can assuredly find a different method to aid the locations as required. The effect is introduced as an opportunity for a bit of fun. The deck is spread on the table, with the short card on top. The card box is on the table to the right, perhaps six inches from the edge of the table. Three cards are selected. If there are only two spectators, I have them choose one each, and then as an afterthought I ask them to select a card for me also, although I won't look at it. This, I explain, allows me to play



too, which I assure them is something of a rare treat.

I have the cards returned and controlled to the top using Dai Vernon's Multiple Shift. Card C, from my right, is taken first, and

goes near the face of the fan —, far to the left. Card B, (either mine or from the person as opposite me as possible) goes to the right of the first, and finally card A (from the spectator to my left) somewhere to the right of that, but not much further than the middle of the deck. The fan can be spread to hide the fact that the cards are being placed in the bottom section of the deck. They are displayed, and then in the action of pushing them flush and cutting the deck, I strip them out to the bottom. To now bring them to the top, I ask each spectator his or her name, and in doing so riffle off the bottom three cards and catch a break above them. Then, as I repeat their names altogether, I perform a three-fold cut onto the table, finishing with the three selections on top. This I time with my repeating of the three names, which provides some symmetry, and even some reason for the cut. Whatever method you choose, the cards now reside on the top, A on top, then B, then C.

I turn to Spectator C and ask him to honestly tell me if he believes in psychic power, astrology, and spirit intervention. If he says 'No,' I pause and stare at him for the moment and then turn to the other spectators and say, "Okay, I shall be using you two quite a lot for these tricks." If he says 'Yes,' I say, "Then I shall be using you quite a lot for these, I hope you don't mind." There is a laugh from the group. During that interchange, I have done the following. I have openly sprung the cards into my left hand, giving them a downward buckle. I then execute a pass somewhere a little below the middle of the deck, and give the new upper section a bend in the opposite direction. The two halves are now really only in contact across the middle, with the three chosen cards on the top of the bottom half.

I tell the spectator to visualise his card, and explain that if the spirits are with us, they will cut to his card. I gently dribble the cards into my left to show that all is fair, then square them and extend my left hand, straightening the palm and fingers. The deck is held low down, so the breaks along the short sides are not clear. By tensing my arm and allowing a vibration to move into my hand, the

upper section of the deck will start to move toward the spectator, especially if it is aided by the tiniest tilting of the hand towards him. With a little practice, and if one avoids trying this with an absolutely brand new Bicycle deck, a very eerie impromptu *Haunted Deck* will leave the spectators rather uneasy. I have attempted to fully replicate the *Haunted* revelation by turning my hand a little, and catching the face of the bottom card of the top half with my little finger before tilting the deck back again, but this can not, as far as I can see, be done very effectively.



By executing a pass a little below the middle of the deck you have ensured that the top section is just less than a half, which is ideal. More than half will often cause the top packet to split into two, and too few do not provide enough weight to create the steady movement. Should the deck part neatly but in the wrong place, never mind. In that case, you would, in the action of lifting off that top half, reassemble the deck very briefly, and cut at the break. Otherwise, if all has gone according to plan, openly cut the deck by placing the shifted section underneath. The three selections should now reside on top.

As you ask the same spectator if he can still remember his card, prepare for a triple lift. Show the correct card (C), and place the real top card (A) on the table facedown in front of Spectator C. Now turn to Spectator A and ask if his card was similar to C's. As you name C's card at this point, gesture at the card on the table. Whatever his answer, pause for a moment, then pull the tabled card over towards him. Breathe warm air onto the back and front of your right hand (thus showing it empty), and rub the card against the table. Pick it up and display the change with a flourish. I spin it on my index finger *before* turning it face-up, to heighten the drama a

little and increase the illusion of the change having occurred at that last moment. Show the changed face at shoulder height, and then exploit the reaction to the colour-change by top-changing it for card B. This is placed face down in front of Spectator A. Now repeat the change, but first of all mention how much more difficult it will be to repeat the effect, because everyone will be watching the cards a lot more closely. Nonetheless, rub the card and reveal the final change. At this point I would suggest handing the card to Spectator B for a moment to inspect. Alternatively (and this is probably more efficient), allow her to make the final change herself by rubbing the back of the card. The effect on a lay audience of these changes is very strong, and it is worthwhile allaying any suspicions of gimmicked cards. I also feel that finishing by revealing the middle person's card, presuming that he sits opposite you, is a little more dramatic than finishing this part of the routine turned to someone on your far side. This is a small point, but there we are.

You continue. "This can be done with any card," you mention, casually returning the card face down to the top of the deck. Now perform the *Rub-a-dub Vanish*. There are a few points about this vanish that are worth making. Firstly, because you have already been rubbing the cards, it makes sense to lead into the vanish through this particular technique. Secondly, ensure that a good flash of the right long side of the card appears at the right side of the hand. Thirdly, when the card has apparently been taken, inconspicuously move the deck to your side and out of sight. Fourthly, do not reveal the vanish immediately, but rather pretend to palm the card in the right hand by making some suspicious movement as you rub it, then move the stiff hand away to one side and say, "Look! It's gone! I shall bring it back." This bit of by-play, which may or may not appear to be serious, will convince the spectators that you have the card palmed. Then, as you rub back in the same place, suddenly relax the hand and spread the fingers. "No, it's definitely gone..." This diversion will make it almost impossible for the audience to backtrack and remember the removal of the card

from the deck. I allow for the effect to sink in by searching around for the card a little, looking under the close-up mat and so on (which will allay some suspicions).

I shall offer two methods for producing the cards from the pockets. You must assume a standing position for either. The first is the method I use, but necessitates the sporting of a jacket that not only has a Topit, but also has access from the side pocket into this device. I palm off the top two cards into my right hand as I turn to Spectator A and say, "Hmm, so your card was the [*whatever*]," and insert my right hand into the left inside of the jacket. I drop the second card and let it fall into the Topit, and then produce Card A from the inside pocket. This is placed face up on the table. I take the deck in my right hand, and showing an empty left hand, reach into my left side pocket and fairly retrieve Card B from the Topit. While I do this, my right hand moves to the right outside pocket and pushes the top card off into the pocket as the body turns to the right and attention is focussed on the second selection being removed from the left side. The second selection is placed up on the table to the right of the first, and the deck placed in the left hand. The right is shown empty and removes the final card from the right pocket, then places it face *down* on the table to the right of the first two.

Another method is to palm off one card into the right, and to take the deck in the left. Both hands enter the trouser pockets, the left with the deck still held there. The right brings out its card, face-up and at fingertips, and just afterwards the left hand brings out the top card in the same way, at the extended first and second fingers, which it has taken from the deck and allowed to be reversed by the action of removing the deck from the pocket. These cards are placed on the table, face up. The right hand then palms the top card and produces it from the inside pocket.

The first two cards are now on the table, from left to right, face up. The third card, however, is facedown to the right of the

others. Look at the back of the card rather insecurely and request that Spectator C reach across at fingertips and turn it over. Try and slow his actions down here by enhancing your display of uncertainty. He turns over the card, showing it to be correct, as you express your delight at your success and sit back down. This will give you ample time to begin the set-up for the return of the three cards.

I am a little confused now at my own mathematics, but the following procedure will, surprisingly, return the three cards exactly where you want them during an exceptionally fair process whereby you riffle through the deck and ask them to call 'Cut.' At each called-for location (no forces), you cut the deck and enter the card at that point. At the conclusion of this brief procedure, card C will be eight from the top, card B will be able to be spelt to from the position of card C, and card A will be directly beneath card B. If you were to try the following with the cards in hand, I think you may be surprised at the result.

While the spectator goes to turn over the card just removed from the right pocket, turn the deck face-up in the left hand, and riffle up to the short card. From here, count a further six, and cut or execute the pass with the deck at this point. Then turn the deck facedown. Now, you are still standing up, and the spectators will be making a series of jokes about the card that has been removed from the trousers. You must act as if the production of the cards was the climax to the trick, and indeed this is a neat little routine in itself. However, after you have turned the deck face down, thumb count the number of cards needed to spell card B, which is facing you on the table, *minus one*. Continue doing this as you sit down. If need be, you can still be finishing the count as you pick up card C from the right and draw attention to it once more. At the point where the thumb finishes the count, begin a Charlier cut. As the halves reassemble, insert the card between them. In each cut, you will be ordering the deck for the return of the *next* card, which is actually

being placed on the top. Square up the deck, and immediately dribble the cards into the left a couple of times. This is ostensibly to show the fairness of the return, which is a strong point, but it will also provide an anchor for a piece of chicanery after the return of the next card.

Now turn to Spectator B and request that he call 'Cut' as you riffle through the deck. If you hold the deck quite near him, he will succumb to an overpowering urge to jam his fingers into the deck rather than merely calling out the instruction. Something can be made of this reliable piece of clumsy behaviour on his part if you so wish, but *nicely* please. Card B is returned as the deck is given a Charlier cut at the appropriate point, but leave the card injogged half an inch or so. As you square the deck, lift the selection and all above it with the right thumb and executing the pass at this point. Selection B is therefore passed to the face. The pass can be covered by turning to Spectator A and dribbling the cards into the left hand as before - except the bottom half is lifted first and dribbles onto the top half, and then the action is repeated fairly with the entire deck.

Card A is returned fairly - Spectator A calls out 'Cut' as the performer riffles down, and the deck is cut and the card returned between the halves. Square them or dribble them: demonstrate that the cards really are lost. As you do this, you may feel that you really have lost that selection, but of course it resides under card B. For this reason, it is worth ensuring that the bottom card of the deck is not flashed as the final Charlier is made. This can be done by changing the angle of the cut slightly to ensure that the bottom half is kept parallel to the table as it comes over.

Now, with the deck face down, cut or pass the deck, bringing the short card to the top. All is now set. If you look through the deck, you should find that card C is eight from the top, card B can be spelt to beneath it, and A is directly beneath that.

A false shuffle could be performed at this point, but I prefer to remind the spectators that the three cards were returned to places that they chose themselves (which is not quite true – Spectator C did not call ‘Cut’), and that there was no way that I could have had any control over that process. I stare at the deck blankly for a moment, and then turn to a lady (or Spectator C be she one), and say, “So I thought perhaps you might like to find the first card for me. Watch....” You are now going to reveal the first card (C) through the ‘psychological stop’ procedure, found in Hugard and Braue’s **Expert Card Technique**. For those not familiar with this most splendid ruse, proceed as follows: with the instruction ‘Watch,’ lean forward and slowly take a card from the top and place it face down on the table. Repeat this deal, spinning each card on the index finger if you can, to keep the lady spectator visually occupied. At the fifth card, say with just a note of irritation in your voice, “Just say stop whenever you like...” as if she has been slowing down the proceedings. Hopefully she will apologise a little, which is a good sign. If your gentle encouragement for her to hurry is too harsh, other spectators will join in with sarcastic references to her being slow. Although this can be funny, albeit barely so, it will ruin the procedure by distracting her attention and relieving her tension. The best you can do is try to ensure that no one else makes these comments, and if they do, to stop the count, and resume when you have her attention again. Immediately deal the sixth card, still deliberately but without any flourishes, then the seventh, rather slowly, and then the eighth. Hopefully she will call out ‘Stop’ at this point. Obviously, you have some easy leeway: if she stops you on the seventh, you deal it and ask her to take the eighth. If she stops you on the ninth, you can either return it to the deck in the left, or perform a double lift with the tabled packet. Occasionally you will find that someone tries to catch you out, and makes you continue through the deck. This you handle as follows:

The eighth card, if it is dealt, is dropped to an injog position. Further cards are placed roughly in line with the rest – the whole thing should look fairly casual. As soon as the ninth card goes down begin spelling card B to yourself. Whenever she stops you, put down the deck and pick up the tabled packet. Some tension will have built up during the dealing if she has made you deal deep into the deck. Unfortunately this means that all attention would now be on the packet to see which card was reached with the deal. Execute the pass with the packet in squaring it as you look at the lady and ask, “What was your card?” I used to distract attention through a quip at this point directed at the lady if she made me go right through the deck—“You realise I can have you wetting the bed for the rest of your life.” If this was my first suggestion that her patience in calling ‘Stop’ was not what I really wanted, then the tension relief that it caused provided a genuine laugh and a good moment to perform the pass. However, a joke at this point will drop the tension in a way that can only detract from the revelation that follows. You would have to work to re-build the tension to create a strong reaction when the card on top of the packet is revealed to be the correct one. It is better, therefore, to ask a question that heightens the tension, not releases it too early. This may sound an obvious point, but I do feel that the *appropriate* placement of humorous remarks is vital to the structure of well-engineered magic.

Presuming that you are stopped before the second card is spelt, keep a break between the halves after the pass. Reveal the top card, and then in the wake of the reaction (which will be nothing like as strong as if the psychological stop works), pick up the rest of the deck in your left hand, transferring the packet to the right with the break being kept by the right thumb. Now turn to the second spectator and mention the name of her card and explain that you will spell to it, one card for each letter. In saying this, bring the hands together and drop the cards below the break onto the deck. This resets the deck for the spelling of the next card. Place the packet in

the left hand (now only 7 cards) face up on the table, and card C face *down* to the right.

If you have spelt past the second card, which means that the lady is really heading for a smack, continue as above, executing a pass to bring the selection to the top. However, do not keep the break after the pass. After selection C is shown, place it face down to your right, but keep the packet in the left hand.

Regardless of which situation you are in, when you come now openly to spell to the second card, first make sure that the spectators understand what you are doing. While it may seem a straightforward procedure to the magician familiar with such nonsense, to the uninitiated it will seem strange and a little confusing. I have had spectators stare blankly at me as this card has been produced on the last letter, spectators who have had not the faintest glimmer of an idea of what on Christ's beautiful Earth I was purporting to do. Let us assume that you have spelt past the card in the 'Stop' deal, and you now hold the packet in your left hand. Turn it face up. You can now spell to card B from the face of that pile. When you show the card on the final letter, pause for a reaction and then relax. In relaxing, perform a double lift, taking the selection and the one below it, which, thanks to this system that all made sense to me once, will be selection A. Place these two face down on top of and half-a-card-to-the-right of the face down tabled selection C.

If card B still resides in the main deck, you should now have the deck in the left hand. The seven cards (supposedly the dealt-off pile) are face up a little to your right, and the face down card C is to the right of those. Now, explain the spelling procedure, and start to spell the second selection, dealing a card from the deck and placing it face up on the face up pile of dealt-away cards. The advantage of placing them face up is that if you have lost or added a card somewhere in the procedure, you can keep a look out for the card as you reach the last letters. It can either be produced on the last letter,

or be the next card after it has been spelt, or if one too many has wandered in, you can include a full stop or 'period' to the spelling, which will meet with a laugh from the group. As you come to spell the suit, begin dealing cards with the left hand, pushing each card over and taking it with the forefinger beneath and the second finger above, then extending the fingers to display the card face up between them. This you ostensibly do to show that the cards are really coming from the top of the deck, but it will allow you to execute Lennart Green's *Windmill Move* at the selected card.

This runs as follows: when you see the selection, which should be revealed at the last letter, you begin to deal it in the same way, but instead of releasing it, you will turn the deck face towards the audience with the short edge parallel to the table, and turn the card at fingertips to also display it face to the audience in this position. Here the lower left corner of the card contacts the upper right corner of the deck, and the corner of the single card will have secretly become tucked under the corner of the top card of the deck. I shall do my best to explain how this move happens, which allows for



a single card to be displayed, and then for another card to be added behind it in the action of swinging it away from the deck.

First, ensure that the deck is deep into the hand, so that as the first and second fingers take the card, they do so at the outer right corner. Indeed, the thumb should lie right across the outer end



of the deck. Push off the top card in the way described, turning it face up by extending the first and second fingertips. In this position, the first finger is above the second, with the flat of the nail gently pressing the card against the lower part of the upper phalanx of the second finger. Both deck and card are parallel to the table. By bringing the fingers a little around each other so that they press side to side, the card can be rotated perpendicular to the deck so that it now faces the audience directly. Allow the bottom of the left long side, near the fingers, to come just in front of the outer right corner of the deck, by allowing the two fingers to tilt their card slightly

towards the left. If the deck is not positioned deeply enough in the hand, it may also help if you bevel the deck by pushing the top towards the right and down with the heel of the thumb. The wrist twists inwards, bringing the deck to face the audience, and the card is rotated further to continue to face the same way.

To achieve this, it must use the top right corner of the deck for support. The second finger can come away from the back of the card and join the first finger on the face, now pressing it against the bevelled corner of the deck. The third finger can also contact the face next to the second. Deck and single now face the audience. The left thumb pushes the top card of the deck a little way off, as if beginning a deal. The single card can now be manoeuvred so that its lower left corner slips behind that extended upper right of the top card. The thumb should be at these corners, pressing against them with the

ball of the thumb against the corner of the top card. The three fingertips provide support from the front, as well as some cover. The audience reacts to the card's display. Then, in the action of twisting the palm upwards, somewhat on the 'off-beat,' the card is now swung clockwise back onto the deck with the second or third finger of the right hand for a moment, but entering under the top card. The two cards are kept a little separate from the deck, and as the right hand comes over the deck, it squares the two, and immediately rolls them way to the right by diagonally opposite corners; the thumb at the inner left and the third at the outer right. The left fingertips can be used to catch the back of the double and cause it to swivel as the right hand moves with them to the right. This is a gentle flourish, and is done in the moments following the revelation of the card.

Other moves exist to allow a top card to slide under a second, any of which could be performed here. My own '*Velvet Turnover*,' described later in the book, would do the job adequately. Mr. Green's method, however, is extremely efficient, allowing the top card to be cleanly taken, and the brief reassembling of the card on the top of the deck barely registering. It is well worth the practice needed to perform *The Windmill Move* deceptively.

The two cards are held thus in the right hand, which casually gestures as you address Spectator A. You say, "And you can tell me any number, and I shall make the card appear at that position in the deck." As he starts to name a number, stop him, and insist that he shuffles the deck first. Place the double card (selection B with selection A behind it) on-top-of-and-half-a-card-to-the-right of the face down selection C on the table. Without worrying about how squarely they have settled, pick up the face-up pile and add them to the main deck, and hand it to Spectator A for shuffling. While he shuffles, have him name a number. I usually restrict it to a maximum of twenty to keep the pace of the effect, but this is by no means necessary. You retrieve the deck at fingertips and repeat the number to yourself, with some concern. "Seventeen. Right. This may not

work." Presuming that the double to your right is safely squared, point at the selections and say, "One card stopped at randomly, one spelt to, one at number seventeen...." Begin dealing slowly, dealing each card with a snap. The last card, however, is apparently dealt on-top-of-and-half-a-card-to-the-right of selection B, using Amilkar Reiga's 'Open Prediction' sleight from the *Secret Sessions I* videotape. In fact, the right second finger merely snaps the seventeenth card as the left thumb pulls it back onto the deck, while the right hand pretends to place the card next in the row. Actually, the right thumb brushes against the back of the double and slides the top card of the pair across to the right. The illusion of a third card being placed down is very strong. It is worth referring to the tabled cards before counting, as I have suggested, for this reminds the spectators what the two tabled cards are. Otherwise your sudden dealing of the seventeenth card onto the row may not make immediate sense. As you make the fake deal, ask Spectator C to your right to turn over that seventeenth card, 'so that you cannot be accused of cheating.' As he does this and during the subsequent reaction by the spectators, you prepare yourself for the next stage.

This you do by getting a break under the top three cards. After the spectator has displayed the final selection, reach over and take them with your right, and in the action of squaring them with both hands (the left still holding the deck), exchange the three for the three from the top of the deck, keeping the break. Toss the three indifferent cards onto the table facedown. The right hand returns to the deck and palms the three selections. Casually and as you relax, the right hand moves to the box and drops them behind it, then places the box over them in the classic way. At the same time, the three cards, posing as the selections, are pushed forward with the left fingertips, and all attention is drawn here. You are taking advantage of the 'off-beat' created by the climax to the previous revelations, and the only advice I can give is to do this in the most relaxed manner possible. The climax to the routine comes from Mr. Mullica's effect,

as I have said, with an extra kicker to provide a suitable ending to this marathon.

You suggest a game of *Three Card Monte*, or *Find The Lady*. If one of the selections was a Queen, then it is suggested that the Queen is found. If there is none, then ask Spectator B to touch his own card. As you say this, you are mixing them wildly. As he reaches, stop his hand and explain that he won't ever win at this game. I say this mainly to avoid the slightly unpleasant situation a spectator is placed in with these sorts of challenges. All three cards are about to be shown to be wrong, which is rather unfair. Had there been a real challenge to a game, it might have been another matter, but here our purposes are to delight. By telling the spectator that he won't win beforehand, he won't invest anything in making his choice, and therefore won't feel a minor pang of humiliation to see that the cards are all indifferent. I don't want to lose a personal connection with my participants, and were I to have him make a choice and then immediately turn to the rest of the audience, continuing with my patter as I reveal them all to be wrong, I would leave him hanging and feeling out of place. It is a huge temptation in magic routines to do this, mainly to get a laugh at someone's expense. Again, I remind myself that I am aiming to create a sense of delight and wonder, and this is quite antithetical to humiliation, however mild.

The other reason for stopping him at this point is to make sure that he doesn't quickly turn over a card. You only want him to touch one, and you reiterate your instruction at this point. Some humour may be extracted from moving his hand across to a different card as you look him in the eye and tell him that he won't win. Generally they will not realise that their hand has been moved until they look back down.

Pick up the card selected, still not showing it, and explain that the con artist will secretly exchange the card. Fan the deck in the

left hand, and pretend to perform at slow speed an exchange of the selected card for one in the deck. This I do by inserting one short end of the card into the fan barely beyond the white border, and then quickly flicking it over. Place the indifferent card face up on the table, and then repeat the fake exchange with the second. It is important to the nature of this routine that this look like a genuine, but staggeringly deft exchange. The third you offer to perform at 'full speed.' Here I merely pick up the card and spin it horizontally on my forefinger, allowing it to just move close to the fanned deck for an instant. The third card is thus displayed as an indifferent one. You continue by saying that the con-artist will also make sure that no one can see the three cards in the deck, just to cover himself should anyone grab the deck from him. As you say this, ribbon-spread the cards face up, and show that the selections have vanished. As you gather them up, ask if anyone noticed where the selections went. You reassemble the deck, explaining that they are under the card-box to your right. Keep a break under the cards as you return them to the top, and immediately palm them in the right hand as the spectators look at the card box. As in Mr. Mullica's routine, the left hand removes the box and cards, and tosses the latter face up in the centre, as the right once again drops the next three cards behind the box and replaces the box on top. I find that much extra mileage can be got from allowing one of the cards to flip face down as you throw the three in the table. This keeps the spectators' eyes glued to the centre of things, missing the reload. Pick up the three cards and reassemble the deck, keeping the break again, and mention that a good con artist knows all the secrets of misdirection. Then point out the three cards under the box again. The reaction to their second appearance is very strong. The right palms the three selections from the deck, the left lifts the box, and the right then drags the three off the table, adding its own three in the process. They are placed on the deck, and immediately the right hand deals the top three selections onto the table, face up.



During the aftermath of this double-revelation, you will load the three selections into the box, while replacing three indifferent cards on the table. This is done as follows. Hold a break under the top three cards of the deck again, and retrieve the three cards from the table, as if the routine were over. Square them against the deck and exchange them as before, placing three indifferent cards on the table as you lean back and relax. Hold the break under the three selections. The right hand picks up the case, which should be held with the hand above, and the side with the crescent-shaped notch facing down. The lid remains closed. The left hand points its forefinger, still holding the deck, and pushes the three indifferent tabled cards forward, as if one were offering them for inspection. This may seem bold, but nobody has ever picked them up in my years of performing this routine (and we like bold, don't we?). The right hand moves in front of the body with the box, and tilts it onto the same plane as the deck. As the deck comes back, the three cards are fed directly into the box. The lid is closed, but it will push in a little as the cards slide in beneath it. With this action you sit back too, and place the box back to your right in its previous position, but turning the lid so that it faces you, hiding the opening. Paul Gertner has a similar approach to getting a card into a box in *Steel and Silver*.

"I shouldn't show you how that's done," you say rather coyly, "but I'll give you a fair chance to catch me. I'll get them back under the box when you're not looking." As you say this, lift the box in your right hand, thumb at the left long side, third finger at the right long side, and the fourth finger at the inner short side, ensuring that the cards do not fall out as you swing the case up to flash the other side of the box at the audience, apparently to demonstrate the

point on the table where the cards will soon be. I then like to use the following ruse for the return of the three indifferent cards. I have each spectator call 'Stop' as I dribble the cards on to the table. At each point I insert a card, but when the final spectator calls 'Stop' I drop all the remaining cards and place it on top. There is usually some laughter at this point, and I ask, "Oh, did you spot that?" turn the deck over and comment on the face card as being my favourite. "Fine, you cynics, I'll cut the deck to lose that last one in the middle." I then do a convincing tabled false cut, which consists of picking up the deck as if for a Faro shuffle, with thumb and third fingers holding the deck at opposite short ends. The right hand shifts the bottom half of the deck forward while the left keeps the top half still. The bottom half is swung up maybe five inches as soon as it clears the top half, which drops slightly. The right hand's half is then placed down on the table, and the remaining half in the left is placed in top. "Are we happy now?" I ask. Someone says, "Yes." Very few will have noticed that the same face card shows, so I now point it out to them, and repeat the false cut a few times to show that nothing is happening. The attention of the spectators will be increased manifold by this direct challenge to their senses, and I amplify this further by demonstrating a 'real' cut by means of comparison that is just as false as its precursor. This second cut may or may not be an original ploy on my part, I'm not sure, but it's no more than an adapted pass. It looks, however, very disturbing when performed face up. I hold the deck in the left hand and say, "In a real cut, the top half is taken and placed under the bottom half." As I do this, first allowing the spectators to note the same face card, I apparently lift off the top half, but actually bring up the bottom half by means of a pass. The idea of a false cut using the pass is an idea described by Richard Kaufman on his *Pass Video*. The move is performed immensely quickly, and then the apparent top half is swung round and down to the right and replaced under the half in the left. The action is one of slightly exaggerating the cut procedure. Performed face down, this is an unusually convincing cut. Face up, the action is as convincing, but the face card seems to penetrate through the top half as it is

apparently removed. This can be repeated as an illustration of a 'fair' cut, and will deeply bewilder the spectators. They are seeing you apparently fairly cut the deck, yet at the same time the face card is not shifting.

The aim here is to increase the tension in the audience by having them pay more and more intense attention to the cards, so that the final revelation of the cards in the box will come as an extremely powerful one. If all has gone well, one spectator will have her eyes glued to the box and will be doing everything not to look away. This can be a splendid source of humour as you apparently do your best to distract her. The business with the false cut is to have them become mesmerised with the idea of not missing a thing. You are about to build this to breaking point, and then provide a very strong climax.

Finally, cut the deck fairly, and give it a one-handed shuffle in the left hand, about shoulder height and slightly to your left. This is a good time for flourishes. Square up the deck in front of you with both hands, and say, "You see, I must misdirect your attention," as you lateral palm the top card in the right hand. The left returns to the shoulder position and performs a Charlier cut as you say, "As you watch up here, you don't see what's going on down here." With the words, "Down here," waggle the palmed card at fingertips low down in front of you. Apparently replace the card in the deck, but strip it straight back out in a lateral palm again. This is achieved by placing the card a little way into the front of the squared deck, then bringing the right third finger across the front of the card in readiness for the palm. The card is pushed in from the outer left corner with that fingertip, which pushes the inner right corner through the right hand side of the deck. The third finger maintains a grip on the left corner of the card, which is pulled out to the right as the body turns a little to the left to cover the angle of sight.

Repeat the Charlier cut in the left, though you should do it a little lower this time, but still off to the left. If you hold it in exactly the same position, it may remind the spectators to look at the right hand. Immediately produce the card a second time at the right fingertips, and say something like, "So I'm sure you'll watch carefully." Place the deck on the table off to your left, and lift off half of the deck with the left hand, and apparently replace the card on the bottom half, but actually snapping it into a lateral palm in the manner of Mr. Green. Replace the top half defiantly, as if you are making a point of finally inserting the card properly. But as the left hand squares the deck, produce it a third time in the right as you say, "Of course you've all had a bit to drink..." and then place it in there for good. "Back under the box, here we go..." you say with some enthusiasm, and then pick up the deck and perform a series of flashy nonsenses as you say, "There's one... there's two.... and there's, oh..." Look at the box a little disappointedly as you note that they're not where they should be. "I missed!" you exclaim, and look back at the deck. "Hmmm ... they're not here," you say, as you ribbon spread the deck face up. "Well, I'll tell you - I've been cheating," you continue, gathering up the cards for a moment. With your eyes on the spectators you casually and fluidly lap the deck, saying, "I've been using special cards, that you can't see..." As soon as the cards have been released, your hands move forward with the imaginary deck and mime the spread again. The cards have vanished. The reaction to this will be staggering, given that they were trying to watch your hands for minutiae of deception. Maintaining the tension through voice and physiology, pick up the box and open the lid. Hold it out to a spectator in front of you and have him remove the three cards and show everybody.

It will be noted that much of the misdirection comes from exploiting the 'off-beat.' Most of the moves are very bold. On

occasion I have had the cards appear under the spectator's drinks as a climax, one beneath each. However, this tends to shorten the lifetime of the cards considerably, and was not as reliable an idea as I had hoped. I was entertained when one chap absent-mindedly lifted his glass for me to place the card there, yet had no recollection of this a minute later and was staggered by the appearance of his card. The notion of a selected card appearing under an object on the table is credited to Heba Haba Al, the famous Chicago magician.

Because it is essentially a display of (at least apparent) skill, I find it useful in the position I have mentioned as an opening routine, for it is a light-hearted but impressive piece of entertainment that will allow you to take your audience down some darker paths later if you choose. It is visually and emotionally engaging, I believe, and as such, provides a dazzling 'warm-up' to more serious pieces. I hope that the reader is able to glean something from it.

“MAGICALL”

Just a piece of nonsense here that may amuse you. I have seen faked mobile ‘phones on the market that will produce a similar effect to the one described here, but I prefer my own version which I was doing before I saw any of the dealer items.

A spectator selects a card, which is subsequently lost in the deck. The magician fails to find it, and eventually admits defeat. “Hang on,” he says, and pushes the top portion of the deck forward along the length of the deck, and holds it as if it were a mobile ‘phone. He can be heard to dial a number into it, and then puts it to his ear. The spectator hears ringing on the other end. A conversation then ensues, something like as follows:

(Female voice): *Good afternoon MAGICALL, how can I help you?*

(Performer): Oh hello, it’s Derren Brown, I’ve lost the card again.

Again?

I’m sorry, I don’t know what happened.

Right, one moment, just checking for you...

(To spectator) Sorry about this. It can take a while. She gets very –

Hello?

Hi, Any luck?

It’s the Eight of Clubs

The Ace of Clubs

EIGHT. The EIGHT of Clubs.

The Eight of Clubs. Where is it?

In his top pocket. Goodbye.

Thanks, I – (To spectator) Oh, she’s gone. (In mincing, mock-snooty voice) Apparently it’s in your top pocket. Sorry about that.

Well, there we are. The card is obviously forced and the other voice is pre-recorded onto a little digital memo recorder, which is placed in your breast pocket. It will often help if you attach something to the 'Play' button so that it can be activated by brushing against the pocket with your left wrist as you bring the 'phone' in front of you to dial. Depending on the amount of time that you have to record, you can have as much fun as you like. The dialling bleeps and ringing tone are best recorded from a speakerphone. A nice touch is to pause in the dialling and work that into the presentation. Also, as you apologise to the spectator in the middle of the call, place your hand over the 'mouthpiece' as you would with a genuine telephone. I don't know why, but it's funny. It is easy to load a card into the spectator's breast pocket as you bring him close to hear the conversation, or you can find a different production that suits your style. However you produce the card, it should be played down, with an almost apologetic and confused air.

There we are. Many thanks to my good friend Peter Clifford for some of the little touches in this routine. The miscalling of the Eight as an Ace is an old idea from America often associated with Eddie Fechter.

MAGNO CONATU MAGNAS NUQAS

There now follows a description of a few moves and *tours de coquin* that the reader may find of use. Like any of what Mr. Burger calls 'disembodied sleights,' they have no inherent value in the void that I present them here. I mention them as items that I have not firmly incorporated into any one effect and that may be of interest to the performer in the creation of his own splendid magic.

The Velvet Turnover

Here the *spectator* is asked to flip over the top card of the deck, which the magician then inserts into the centre of the deck. The spectator clicks his fingers and is asked to turn over the top card again. To the consternation of all gathered, it is seen to be the same card. Immediately it is re-inserted, and the same deviltry takes place, with the spectator turning the card each time. This continues *ad nauseam* or until the performer can decide on a more original use for this sleight.

The appeal of this alternative to the Double-Lift is that the top card may be turned over by a spectator at the beginning and end of the routine, and also that the move can be repeated immediately without having to reset the position of the card. Also, the exchange happens very quickly and casually on the 'off-beat,' unlike the classic Double-Lift, which necessitates deception at the exact moment of interest, namely the turning face up of the top card. Here, one can

securely ask a spectator to turn over the top card to 'check if it is hers' and then ask her to place it in her pocket, while one switches the indifferent card for her selection in such a way that she will feel that she has never released the card. I think this cannot be performed quite as confidently using the classic turnover.



rhythm of interest and relaxation, so begin by extending the deck in the dealing position in the left hand to the spectator and request that she flip over the top card. Lean towards her a little as you do this. This is our moment of interest. Allow the card to register, and name the selection if appropriate. Push the top few cards to the right a little with the

Here then are details of the full move. Very often, you will have the luxury of being able to perform the half-move that will do the job just as well. Let us imagine that our spectator is seated somewhere to our left. Much of the success of this move is created by the ability to create a strong



left thumb. This casual handling of the deck makes the exchange more disarming, but also facilitates the steal that follows. Now you relax back a little, and in doing so, the hands will come together for an instant as if briefly readjusting the deck. At this point, you can if you wish face the audience quite

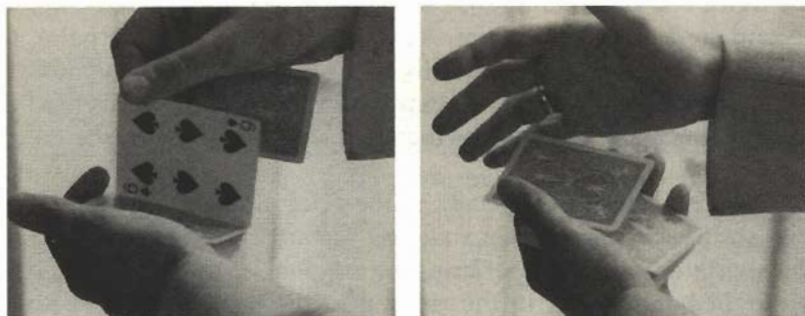
casually for a second and make a pleasant remark. While you do this, use the left thumb and fingertips to pull the top card back in line with the deck and forward, so it projects an inch or so from the outer short end of the deck. Simultaneously extend the card beneath it to the right. The right hand must be in the correct position to accept the second card in a lateral palm. As this card slides into the palm, the deck may be displayed more fully to the audience, with the top card now extended as if to draw attention to it. The right moves a little towards the body and ensures that its card is hidden from view.

This entire steal occurs in the brief moment of relaxation as you shift back to a normal standing position after leaning towards the spectator, and the brief bringing together of the hands passes as the right hand aiding in the shifting of the top card to a 'display' position, jogged forward from the front short end of the deck. During this brief process, you remain turned rather to the left to hide the palmed card from the other spectators. If the spectator happens to be so far to the left that you feel that she would see the steal, this can often be entirely bypassed by looking her in the eye and asking an appropriate question at that moment. Once the right has the card and has shifted back, the moment of danger has passed. While I suggest turning to the audience during the steal, this is only to further enhance the misdirection: there is nothing for them to see during this process.



The exchange of the card now happens during the turning face *down* of the card, a major diversion from the classic ruse. The left thumb pushes the card, which still extends an inch from the front of the deck, towards the right as if it were to be dealt. With the right thumb above and forefinger beneath, take the card about half way down the right long side, ready to turn it face down. The

laterally palmed card in the right is now well hidden by the deck in the left. You now perform the exchange as you turn to the right somewhat, to give a fairer view of the hands to the audience. Flip over the top card and place it flush with the deck. The action of



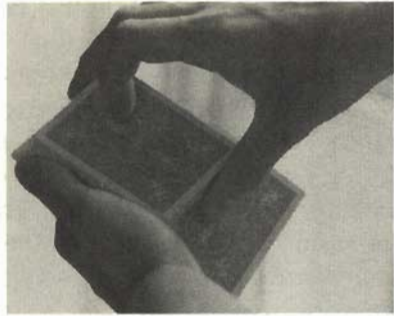
turning the card will bring the palmed card in the vicinity of the top of the deck: it is left in the forward-jogged position occupied by the other card a split-second ago. The right hand moves away. The apparently very fair extension of the card *forward* from the deck is much more disarming than in the classic Double Turnover, where the card traditionally is rear-jogged.

This card can now be taken and inserted into the deck, if one wishes. In this case, the spectator is asked to turn over the top card for the revelation, which provides ample opportunity to laterally palm the second card in the same way during the reaction to the revelation. The entire move could then be repeated.

The 'half-move' that I mentioned would be to simply lateral palm the top card at the very start, then extend the deck to the spectator to flip over the top card. The exchange then occurs in the same way. This provides a very quick and deceptive way to exchange the top card. I have occasionally controlled a selected card to the top of the deck, and then palmed it thus in the right hand. I ask a spectator to flip over the top card to check that it isn't hers, which she does admirably. When she releases the card, I

immediately say, "Hang onto it... that's one down. Put it out of the way somewhere, will you?" As I say this I flip the card face down for her, not bothering to turn to the rest of the audience as I exchange the cards. Also, I gesture for her to place it in a pocket or down the front of her blouse. While this latter choice of holdout may seem a little coarse, it has the peculiar effect of drawing so much of the lady's attention to the amusement that she generates in the hiding of the card, that neither she nor any other spectators think of checking the card to make sure that it is the same one. However, one must pick one's lady well for this sort of thing. I always suggest a couple of places, one being the blouse. This way she can not only choose the less risqué hiding place, but the decision about which one to use again *distracts her attention from the card itself*. These are subtle points, but worth making. Here the switching of the cards happens so fast and so casually that she will happily believe that she held onto the card throughout.

Left Hand Centre Steal



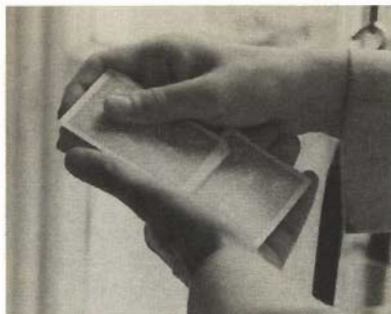
Since writing up this move, I have been informed that it is an adaptation of Professor Loewy's one hand top-palm, published in **Expert Card Technique**, credited there as the Hugard Top Palm. Jerry Andrus and Gordon Bruce (and no doubt others) have experimented along similar lines. There is a similar move in Tenkai's

The Magic of Tenkai, and Marlo's **Side Steal** and Carney's **Carneycopia** also have related moves.

Here a card is glimpsed by a spectator, who then takes the deck. The chosen card however remains classic palmed in the left hand. It helps if the tip of the right thumb is gently licked prior to the selection procedure. If no spectator will oblige, this can be performed in a private place by the performer himself.

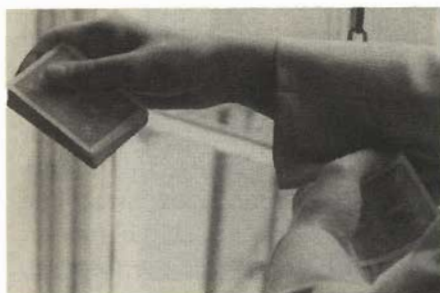
Holding the deck from above in the right hand, dribble the cards into the left in the normal way. Ask that a spectator call 'Stop' or some similar injunction as caprice suggests. When he obliges, thumb the top card of the left pile towards the right and a little clockwise, then turn the hand palm towards him at an angle of about forty-five degrees so that he can see the index of the card. Ensure that inner left corner of the deck is deep in the palm, so that the heel of the thumb comes over the deck as the top card is pushed across. Ask if he wishes to continue any further. Presuming that he replies in the negative, the top half is replaced on the packet in the left, but in doing so, you perform the following action. The right thumb, moist and proud, contacts the centre of the selection and draws a line directly towards your body. The aim is for the card to swivel ninety-degrees clockwise, with the inner left corner acting as the fulcrum, pressing against the heel of the thumb. As you do this, you continue with something approximate to, "Then I must ask you to commit that card to memory." The deck now appears as normal from the front, but from your standpoint the selection lies at right angles to the deck and thoroughly rear- and right-jogged. There should be nothing protruding from the left side of the deck, which allows you the following convincing ploy. Shift the deck in your right hand, and point the outer left corner to the left by turning the hand slightly. The right hand and first two fingers ensure that the jogged card is

not seen. The left hand moves away and gestures openly or moves something on the table.



After this pause, the right hand remains motionless as the left returns momentarily, passing the deck to pull up the right sleeve. In this action, the palm turns upwards and takes the jogged selection into a classic palm. The right hand moves forward and places the deck on the table, and a spectator is perhaps asked to cut or shuffle it. As the right hand lets go of the deck, it should gesture openly as well, as the left had moments ago.

Card Revelation using the Left Hand Centre Steal



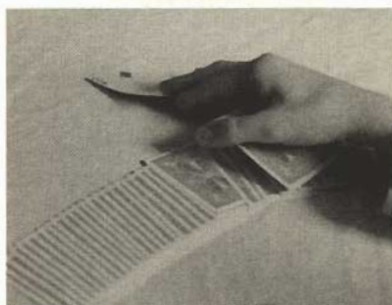
A card is selected and stolen as above, but the right hand ribbon spreads the deck from left to right as the left pulls the sleeve. The performer tells the spectator to run her finger up and down the cards



and to touch any one card that she likes. The right hand is seen to be empty as it gestures for her to do so. Meanwhile the left hand grips the card by the sides of the first and fourth fingers near the far right of the long sides, and then curls the middle two fingers underneath. This is carried out behind the sleeve.



The hand comes back down and the right comes a little in front of it. At this point, the middle fingers extend, swivelling the card to extend from the hand, hidden by the right. The fourth finger releases its grip, and the card is gripped between the first and second fingertips. The right takes it in



Tenkai palm. This brief exchange is done as the performer relaxes and shows interest in the spectator's actions. The right hand then rests on the table, and the spectator touches her card. The left removes it from the spread, and the right comes to take it, just above the spread, still with its palmed card. The exchange about to take place is a Vernon

Switch, which I read in Guy Hollingworth's splendid **Drawing Room Deceptions**. The right first and second fingers clip the left outer corner of the palmed card, freeing the thumb. This allows the

card held in the left to be fed into a Tenkai position directly above the first for an instant. The two left fingers then extend with their card and place it face up on the table. It seems that the spectator has chosen her own card. Enough misdirection from this switch can be obtained by asking the spectator the name of the card that she was thinking of. Given the face down spread of the cards and the position of the right hand, the palmed card can now be dropped onto the spread as the fingers move the face up card forward. The arm obscures the view of the spread, and both hands gather up the spread immediately afterwards. A presentationally simple, if technically more convoluted revelation.

PART THREE

DIRECT MINDREADING

'INVISIBLE COMPROMISE' AND AN APPROACH TO MIND READING

Since making the decision in my early twenties not to pursue a career as a lawyer, I began to earn my living performing close-up magic. I occasionally would perform a stage hypnotic show, but as I had no desire to perform the standard humiliating stunts, I saw the advantage of concentrating on the magic, which was far more commercial. There is little room, I feel, for 'mentalism' as a table-hopping performer. Even as I found myself able to create my own close-up environment more and more, avoiding when possible the inelegance of the banquet hall, the performance of run-of-the-mill mentalism would still have been inappropriate. One must, after all, entertain.

On the other hand, I developed an interest in the use of suggestion and liked the response I received to effects that at least appeared to work through psychological rather than thaumaturgical principles. Soon I had developed a close-up set of 'mental' effects, which would be recognised by us as the more visual area of mentalism: metal bending and PK effects featured heavily. But the idea of centre-tears, billet switches, book tests and the standard fare seemed very out of place. Thus as my interest in the performance of strong, direct and off-beat mental effects developed, it did so without giving any thought to the usual gaffs.

As I have said before, the importance of beginning with nothing but the effect in mind is paramount. When presenting a mental routine, the effect will be in essence very simple. A thought is to move from one place to another. The effects of this ethereal passage may be varied: an object may move or behave unusually, a

person might find herself performing involuntary acts, one person may reveal the thoughts of another or demonstrate some esoteric knowledge. These are simple notions, and they demand very simple performance. They only have value when any physical channels of communication are clearly absent. There may be ways of making small pieces of folded paper psychologically invisible, but I felt that to begin with that familiar currency was compromising too early. I decided to start with the highest ideals and see how far I could move towards them without compromising on those aspects of the performance tangible or visible to the audience. If a spectator is to concentrate upon a word and I am to reveal it, then there is no reason to involve books, however appealing the gaffed volumes or brilliant the handling may be. There is no reason why the subject should not just think of something – anything at all. Compromise can come later, but *not* where it will be visible to the audience. Similarly, if I am able to read all the cards in a deck, then I would wish to do so with a deck, preferably borrowed, shuffled by the audience and untouched by me as I face the other way. At a gathering of magicians, I would rather someone in the audience simply remove their own deck from their pocket and deal them off as I name them.

Examples of ‘visible compromise’ are books, bits of paper and the likes of alphabet cards. ‘Invisible compromises’ would be pre-show work, transmitter equipment, and the advantages offered by the positioning of spectators on stage. The drawing made by a spectator for later duplication is an entirely justified visible compromise, for the only way that the effect can be demonstrated is by having the pictures compared. However, readers that have seen me perform will realise that it is possible to draw a picture that exists only in the imagination of the spectator, with no visible compromise whatsoever. The logic that justifies the compromise of having the picture actually drawn by the spectator can be applied to other areas, in order to make other compromises a little more acceptable – for example, I sometimes do perform a book-test, but I use a copy of the

Yellow Pages, and describe any advertisement they happen to look at. There is more justification here than in the more common book-test, for here I am dealing with primarily visual information, as well as information such as telephone numbers and company slogans. It is the first effect that I remove when I pare down the act for a shorter performance, but I feel that there is enough justification for the use of a book. It does not compromise the effect – it *is* the effect, rather like a drawing duplication but *unlike* the use of a book as a means to select a random word.

It is also the case that mental effects do not immediately suggest variety and up-beat presentation. As far as up-beat presentation is concerned, one need look no further than Andy Nyman to see that such things can be done congruently and brilliantly. To achieve variety without making the routine seem like a magic act, however, is a more problematic area. For if we equate variety with visual interest and different themes, then it is difficult to avoid the visible compromises that I have mentioned. To achieve variety and sustain interest and visual stimulation without visible compromise, one must go back to the very start of the design process and re-examine one's presumptions. At the start of my current set, a female volunteer sits down, drops immediately into a trance and has her hand stick solidly to the table. It will only move when a second volunteer from the audience wills it to do so. As he secretly raises his arm behind the first subject, her arm eerily rises in silent sympathy. This rather beautiful routine was borne out of this examination process, and is, I feel, a very interesting and entirely visual mental effect with no props and no visible compromise. I hope to create further effects through this imaginative process. It is the only way I have found for myself so far to avoid the predictable and trite fare of standard mentalism.

It became clear as I thought along these lines that the methods that I would be using to create the effects would be in the most part very bold and outlandish. Also, they started to become

rather organic in nature: working in tandem with the effect rather than secretly running along beneath it. By 'organic' I mean that I am using psychological principles that are as ethereal as the mind reading I claim to demonstrate, or am perhaps merely stacking the odds secretly in my favour, and improvising from then on. By favouring these techniques (while punctuating them with solid, reliable conjuring principles), the presentation becomes plausible and convincing. I found that I came to enjoy exploring the use of suggestion and such subtleties, and by working from a new starting-point I began to see some excellent new opportunities for extremely convincing deception. The mixture of sure-fire mechanics and sheer showmanship to create the effects is immensely enjoyable to perform. I try and achieve very direct, hands-free methods so that I can concentrate upon presentation and engage myself in the effect.

In performance, I believe that the greatest asset to a mind reader is to be interesting and compelling. Risible pretension (at one end of the extreme) or a stream of comic quips (at the other) can only work against most mentalists, aside from the occasional genius who can carry such things well. It is also important that the mindreader comes across as being more than the sum of his performance, which is why his engaging personality is so important. Everything that I have said about magic performance applies here, and more. The endless discussion and wearisome debate between mentalists concerning the ethics of convincing the audience of psychic phenomena are, I believe, a terrible waste of time. It is not that the issue is worthless, only that the discussion clearly goes nowhere. While most performers worry about the ethics of their performance, they are forgetting about their real task, which is to create elegant and convincing illusions. This should be their primary area of concern. *As the performance becomes more poetic, so the character of the performer becomes more defined, and from this will stem his solution to the ethical consideration of performance style.*

For my own part, I feel that the audience's belief in my mind

reading skills *must* be engaged at some level in order for the effects to take hold and induce a certain responsive attitude. However, what I say that the mind reading skills actually consist of is another matter. I prefer for my audience to come away with a little more fascination for what may be possible than just wondering whether I was fake or not. Therefore my personal choice (and the most sensible and congruent option given my performance character) is to suggest that I will be utilising subliminal and hypnotic principles to create the *effect* of telepathy. Because I am often performing my mind reading alongside hypnotic stunts, this presentation works well for me. But equally, I love watching Geller perform, in the same way that I enjoy reading about the tumbling tambourines of the old Victorian seances. I enjoy well-constructed and exquisitely performed theatre, and would far rather watch a convincing and brilliantly manipulative stage psychic than listen to a generic mentalist perform dull, witless routines in the 'You decide!' manner.

Meanwhile, in the spirit of invisible compromise, let us continue.

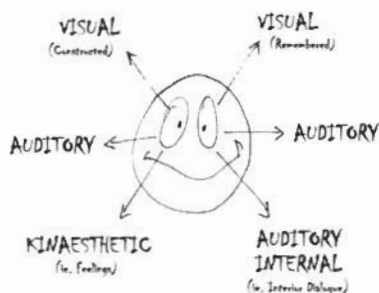
COMMUNICATIVE SUBTLETIES

Aside from the notion of invisible compromise, I would also like to spend some time dealing with the alternative to what one might call 'blind' mentalism: by which I mean that type of performance that could run as a safe and solid routine from start to finish and where the performer needs only to rely on the mechanics of his sleights and props to achieve success. While many of my working routines *are* solid in this way, I will be talking much about the use of subtle cueing and attention to minimal clues from the spectator, and the possibilities of learning to be responsive and adept in this area. If I do not explain a little now, you will read some of the effects as pipe dreams, which they are not. Everything in this book is thoroughly worked through, ironed out and audience tested. On the other hand, it is in the nature of effects that use this type of work that they do not have to be perfectly successful all the time.

This type of work will be impossible unless you *learn to pay attention to what the spectator is doing*. As you become more adept at learning to follow the mental processes of the spectator, you will find that a beautiful range of subtle mindreading opens up before you, enhancing your performance beyond recognition. A good starting point is the area known to Neuro-Linguistic Programmers as 'Eye-Accessing Cues.' NLP is a communication tool that blends aspects of Behaviourism and Chomskian Linguistics into a highly evangelical package. It has built around itself a rather creepy scene and in a rather dubious and unchecked way has become a massive industry in the worlds of trendy management-training and alternative therapies. Having trained with the highly likeable founder of NLP, I find it a mixture of sensible and appealing methods for dealing with low-level pathologies such as phobias and fears on the one hand, and sheer daft nonsense and massive rhetoric on the other.

The Eye Accessing Cues described in the early NLP literature will appeal to many, but have limited use. I describe them here because they do tie in with an area to which I would like the reader of this book to pay more attention: subtle, unconscious movements on the part of the spectator that give you information that she is not aware of imparting.

Study the following diagram:



This shows the eye movements as you see them performed by someone opposite you. The eyes will move up and to the side when she is visualising, straight to the sides when she listens for sounds, down and to the left when she is talking to herself internally, and down and to the right when she is checking kinaesthetically, or paying attention to her feelings. This diagram and the thinking behind it is credited to Richard Bandler and John Grinder, the founders of NLP.

There is no doubt that, to a point, much of this is well observed. If you catch yourself making pictures in your head or watch others as they talk, you will see that these patterns are indeed quite common. It is also the case that we generally sort from left to right when we deal with images showing past, present and future.

This is perhaps tied in with the way we read. So often if one is remembering an image, the eyes will move up and to the left. Constructed images relating to future speculation will generally be placed up and to the right – or can be easily made by staring straight ahead.

If you wish to test this, seat somebody before you (without telling her what is expected), and ask a series of questions that force her to use these internal representations. “What colour was the front door of your last house?” (remembered visual), “Can you hear that clock ticking?” (external auditory), and so on. You can ask for more complex tasks and you should see the sequence of eye movements accordingly: “Picture someone you’re close to and then hear him say your name in an intimate way. Then notice how that feels.”

The trouble with this technique of testing the theory is that once you know the system, it is easy to believe you know what people are doing internally when you may simply be wrong. You may decide that someone made a picture and then checked it with her feelings, but if you are wrong, or if the system is, it would be difficult to tell. One more worthwhile way of testing it, and something that is closer to our work as mentalists is to use it as a lie detector. Here, you ask someone a series of questions about a previous event, such as what he did yesterday. Instruct him, however, to lie at one point. Now, if you ask visual questions, you will force him to access remembered images, and you will see a consistent eye movement preceding each answer. When he lies, however, the eye movement will be the odd one out. He may look up and to the right, or he may look straight at you and answer. Generally the latter is the case, as people will try not to break eye contact if they think you are looking for a lie. I demonstrated this before a group of students after a show recently and after I correctly named the lie, I asked the group if they knew how I knew. One girl answered that when the chap had lied, *he had not maintained eye contact*. Of course this was the absolute opposite of what had

happened. It is very interesting how much people miss these very obvious movements.

It is important not to become dogmatic about the diagram: it is not fully reliable. There is really no substantial support for the specific claims that NLP makes and much of it can be dismissed as vacuous nonsense. But the ideas there triggered in me an interest in exploring these kinds of signals, and now I am pushing my performance closer into these areas.

In order for the techniques that I shall describe here to work, the spectator must be in a responsive mood. Your first task then is to recognise the non-verbal cues of responsiveness as opposed to detachment. This is not difficult to spot. If you ask for a volunteer and one girl raises her hand eagerly and leans forward while a chap half raises an arm while keeping back in the chair, the correct choice is clear. Next you must retain this absorbed state in the spectator so that she responds correctly to your cues. I will do this by sitting close to them, staring right at them, and placing a hand on their shoulder. Sometimes I switch my gaze so that I am focussing *through* them, which can render them a little confused and therefore more responsive.

A good exercise is to tell a spectator to think of a card and then for you to see how quickly you are able to name it. Here you can try and force a card through words and gesture (without using any real cards) and then fish by watching only for minimal cues. Later I will describe two pretty reliable forces, but let me deal with a third scenario here by means of illustration. You have secured an eager volunteer and can tell that she will be responsive. You will try and force her to think of the Seven of Hearts. How? You say to her, "Okay, let's go. There are four suits: Clubs, *Hearts*, Spades and Diamonds. Think of your favourite suit." The word 'Hearts' is slightly emphasised through tonality and a 'soft point' with the hand at the spectator. You have also asked for her *favourite* suit. You

continue, "Then think of a number between one and ten..." you click your fingers to suggest that she do so without thinking, "... for the value. Got it?"

This is the force that I use in 'Plerophoria.' In that effect, however, I also pen read what she writes to confirm the success of the force. Here, however, let us continue with the theme. She now has a card, and the odds are very much in favour of being the Seven of Hearts. You say, "Now, I want you to transmit the card to me. Can you do that? Picture the colour of the card on a screen? Yes? Just the colour..." As you say this, you raise your eyebrows and nod your head, which will push her into responding affirmatively. The aim here is to keep her nodding. "Can you send it to me? Make it bright and colourful and vivid so I can see it clearly." Watch to see if her nodding affirmation is interrupted by that instruction. If it is, she probably has a black card. If she continues to follow along, then presume she went for the Heart. Next say, "Now place the card on the screen. The number... high, yes? High up in the corner of the screen." Here you watch for her reaction to the word 'High.' If she stops and looks negatively at you, then presume that she has a three. You will see her eyes shift to her mental image of the card if there is any doubt in her mind. There should be a little doubt about the Seven, for it is neither high nor low. If she eagerly nods her head when you say, 'High,' then presume that she has chosen the Nine. Now name the card accordingly. If you are wrong, you will only be a little way out, and all will be impressed. If you are very wrong indeed, then shrug it off to those assembled, but keep working at it. It all depends on the choice of spectator and securing a certain state of mind from her. This fishing works a little like contact mindreading: you are feeling where she wants you to go, and noting her resistance.

Hand gestures can also be put to good use. Casually drawing the suit of a card in the air as you ask a spectator to draw one in her mind can be quite effective. Also, ask a spectator to

imagine a clock face in her mind. Draw the circle of the clock in the air with your forefinger and then as you say, "... with the time on it," place your forefinger and thumb at the four-o'clock position in the centre quite emphatically. The key is placing the emphasis with just the right balance between over-subtlety and obvious blatancy. This comes from sheer confidence in using these techniques – they are not for the meek. I use such techniques to try and force the Queen of Hearts that is engraved on my lighter, the Seven of Hearts for the 'Plerophoria' routine, and the Three of Diamonds and the Jack of Spades are forced more reliably as routines in themselves.

I have developed this interest through paying close attention to the non-verbal patterns offered to me by my spectators. Learning these techniques is immensely rewarding, for I develop a genuine power of influence. I am not just relying on sleights and props: I am actually developing the skill that I claim to be utilising. The spectator, in turn, will often report feeling influenced and directed, which will further attest to my skills. I find this more interesting than the standard process where the mentalist ensures that someone feels that she has had a free choice that he could not have influenced. I *want* people to think that I can influence their choices. That, I hope, makes *me* more compelling as a performer, rather than the possibility of whether or not a random event can be predicted.

Once again, let me say that these subtleties are immensely enjoyable to explore, and perfectly workable in commercial situations. I hope that they will enhance your performance in the way they did mine.

YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO BE READING MINDS

Let us think for a moment of the standard mentalism presentation, and ascertain what it communicates. The performer has directed a spectator to think of a piece of information – something that the performer could not possibly know. We, the audience, realise that it is the performer's task to extract that information from the spectator's mind. How will this happen? What does mindreading look like? What is the process that the performer needs to go through to get hold of those words or images or ideas that exist only as mental representations? Is mind reading possible? Are we about to see the real thing?

Well, this is what you will see. The performer will pick up a pad and a pen and start writing, let us imagine, some letters. He will hesitate a little, and then show the word. The spectator will agree that it is correct. Perhaps for added drama the spectator will be asked to say the word before the writing is shown.

Now, to me, this is mind reading with all the mind reading taken out of it. Re-examine the spectators' questions. They relate to the idea of anticipation. They are waiting to see the process of mind reading happen, to see whether or not it works and what it looks like. In the presentation that I have just described, which is fairly generic, *the anticipated process of mind reading does not occur*. What happens is that the performer ends up with the information, and we don't know how. Therefore the answer must be that he read the spectator's mind. In other words, the very thing that we want to see is only implied. We don't actually see the process we want to.

I feel that most mentalists don't perform mind reading. They perform instead the act of writing information down on paper that

they apparently couldn't know. The difference is subtle in description, but enormous in performance. Let us imagine the same effect as described above, but presented differently:

"Stand in front of me. Right there. Now put your feet together and keep your head up like that. Make your back straight too, so that if there was a tube or channel running from the ground up into your head, it would run straight up. Now, just slow your breathing so that it becomes comfortable and regular. No, keep your eyes open! I didn't tell you to close them." The performer brings his face closer to the spectator's, and places both hands on his shoulders.

"Now, I will ask you to tell me the word that you have in mind, but you must say NOTHING. Keep silent from now on. Absolutely silent. Do you understand?"

"Yes"

"No, you spoke. Keep silent. Do you understand? ... Good. Now, say the word to me in your mind." The performer raises his voice and as he talks, delivers a series of short, sudden jerks to the spectator using his hands on the shoulders. "What is it? Tell me the word. What is it? What's the first letter? Ken, what's the first letter? The first letter, Ken - say it to me, tell me..."

It is clear that the spectator is struggling not to answer. "Yes, don't say anything. Tell me what it is. The second letter. SAY IT!!" The performer places his left palm on the subject's head. "THIRD FOURTH. FIFTH. Okay..." Now the performer keeps quiet and stares through the subject opposite him. He slowly removes his hand from the head, and then replaces it. Again, more gingerly, he removes it.

"Condense, condense," the performer says to himself, his gaze now having shifted to the floor in front of him. "Consider. Consider? Considerate. Okay, was the word 'Considerate'?"

The subject answers, "Considerable." The adrenaline of all concerned dissipates, and much applause ensues.

This version of the effect actually allows the audience to see the strange process of mindreading. They now know what it looks like. Many will begin to form ideas in their own minds of how it was working. Mention of the 'channel' coming up from the ground through the spine will suggest ideas to many to do with energy lines and so on. Others will think that the subject is being forced to give off subtle cues by having the word dragged to the tip of his tongue. In this example, presuming it is performed convincingly, and although there is no reason why it should suit everybody's style, there is drama and tension. Therefore the revelation of the word is a hundred times more effective, as the tension suddenly collapses. The forceful nature of the mind reading makes it clear that more is just happening here than bland entertainment. Something real must be occurring, otherwise the performer would not invest so much energy into the process. His bizarre actions *must* be necessary.

I would shake hands with the subject afterwards and give him a consoling touch on the shoulder to make clear to the audience that he is not left feeling uncomfortable. My tone, when I perform like this is very forceful, but plausible. I will sustain long silences.

Most importantly of all, I will believe in what I am doing. This is the vital point. When the generic mentalist stands before an audience and writes things on a board or pad, he is probably not acting in congruence with himself. By this I mean that he will be asking you, through his patter, to accept that he can read minds. This conscious level of communication is giving one message. Yet his

body language and the visible manifestations of his internal states do not suggest that anything of the sort is happening. Indeed, at this level, he is acting like a magician. Therefore we are not convinced. Again, we are not watching mind reading: we are watching a man write down information on a pad.

This business of acting is vital to good mentalism, though hardly ever really involved seriously into presentation. Aside from Uri Geller. You feel that he believes in his own processes. Regardless of whether you wish for your audience to believe in psychic powers (I don't), there is no reason not to make your performance a hundred times more convincing. Later you can then decide what interpretation of the phenomena to encourage. So stop and think. If you were really reading a mind, how would you do it? There are many possible answers, each depending on the style of the performer yet defining it, and each suggesting its own silent script for him to use.

Perhaps the act of mind reading would be like a seduction. You would make someone feel very comfortable, achieve real rapport with her, asking her about her interests or a recent holiday... and then suddenly you would sit up straight and name that word. This is how I perform with a female spectator, or with someone where a more forceful approach would be inappropriate. The audience watching interprets the strange chatty conversation as, *'This is inappropriate, he must be doing something... ah, he must be gently increasing her feeling of comfort and familiarity so that she opens up at some level.'* The logic is exactly that: and then it just pops into your head. Rather than insulting your audience's intelligence, you are playing to it.

Perhaps it would be done through tiny movements of the subject's hands or face. Perhaps through encouraging him to talk about random events and looking for clues in the words that he uses. Perhaps it would be through any means of a thousand. But there

should be something. Looking at a pad and just slowly writing letters shows nothing.

However you decide that mind reading is achieved, and therefore what it will look like, you should then do this *without explaining this supposed 'method' to the audience*. You should just believe, wholeheartedly and unquestioningly, that that is what you are doing. It should be the most serious point in the routine. Every part of you is delivering the same, congruent message.

Another result of this is that the audience will have a sense of how you 'do it.' They will have a process to latch on to, and it will be something more plausible than a stage performer saying that he can read minds. In magic, you state the process like this: "The card goes in the centre of the deck like this, and if I click my fingers – that was the move – it leaps back up to the top. See?" In mentalism, we traditionally do not provide a clear process for the audience to follow. We just say, "Erm..." and then write things down, leaving the audience none the wiser as to how we were able to extract a private thought. The equivalent of a silent Ambitious Card routine. And then we blame mentalism itself for having little entertainment value.

Finally, the more forceful demonstrations will shake the audience slightly, as there is an element of dangerous theatre to them: something vaguely threatening. This will give the audience something powerful to remember. If you are pushing a bottle through a table or a cigarette through a coin, there is a striking visual quality to the effect that will remain in their minds regardless of whether you present it dramatically or in an off-hand manner. But mind reading rarely has such powerful 'snapshots' to remember. You need to provide them in other, subtler ways. One way is through a very stylish performance, and ensuring that the audience can *see* the very skill at work that you profess to own. Whether this is the ability to read minds, or merely 'psychologically direct' a

volunteer, there should be points when you can be seen to be doing exactly that, unless it is important to the routine that such a thing should pass invisibly.

I once owned a die that contained transmitter equipment, which would be used to inform me, via a vibrating pad strapped to my leg, of the number currently shown. I was demonstrating my mind reading skills to a friend, asking him to set the die and then to visualise the face, thinking of each of the dots in turn. The logic that I was using here was that I would be able to see from tiny movements on his face, the pattern of dots in his mind. I also asked him to count through the numbers from one to six, and was able to tell him the correct number. Clearly this would be due to my ability to sense a hesitation or change in emphasis on his part. I performed a series of such tests, each one more impressive than the last. On the fourth occasion, the die fell apart in his hands, revealing a quite impressive labyrinth of microelectronics. He looked at the insides of the cube, and sat for a moment. Outside a dog barked. Then he frowned, and put the lid back on, and we continued the experiment. After a few more correct guesses on my part, he said that he could tell that I was picking up on tiny body-language signals but he couldn't understand what he was doing to give them off. He congratulated me on my hypersensitivity in that area. I asked him later about what he had seen in the die. He shrugged, and said that he guessed it was some sort of ploy on my part – a red herring tossed in his direction. It was clearer to him that I was relying on his tiny signals to receive the information. It made more sense, and was far more appealing, than the embarrassing truth across which he had stumbled.

This was a very intelligent chap. As are all my friends. Those who obey me.

"SMOKE"

Smoking seems to be treated today with the same ruthless fervour which was reserved for masturbation in the nineteenth century. I personally quite like the smell of fresh cigarette smoke, and often find it cool and pleasant to watch, though I do not myself indulge in this popular herb. I do, however, smoke a little during my performances, but do not, as the saying goes, inhale. I believe that a glass of whisky (of which I am very fond) and a cigarette can add a certain old-world panache to the aesthetics of one's performance. Such details are often forgotten. More often than not I will approach a lounge table with a glass of some splendid single malt and sip from it at appropriate dramatic moments during the routines. Certainly when I am 'at the card table' and inviting spectators to sit with me, I have a glass of the nut-brown nectar by my side. During my stage show I have a decanter and offer a glass to my participant.

Reviewing those words it may appear that I am something of a reveller: a dipsomaniacal carouser, a souse, sot or soak who embarrasses the ladies in his audiences with lewd songs and humiliates the men with over-affectionate embraces. Nothing, my charming but hasty friends, could be further from Christ's honest Truth. Though I am no stranger to the shrine of Bacchus during occasional evenings of quaffings and loud 'Huzzah!'s, I remain quite the figure of sobriety during my performances, spurning any more than the gentlest influence of that florid grape or grandiloquent grain. Whilst on the subject, perhaps some performers will be aware of the frustrating tendency of some grateful audience members to purchase one drinks rather than tip in solid cash. At the restaurant

where I currently enjoy residency, a double shot of Dalwhinnie will cost the unsuspecting punter a staggering ten pounds. Once the grateful spectator asked the barman to supply me with a double of whatever I would regularly have. The barman, and may God always smile on him and his loved ones, poured me a quadruple. This act of generosity cost the chap *twenty* of your earth pounds. And in 2000, the year of print, such a sum was worth about twenty pounds. I moan inside as I accept such tokens of appreciation, for I see a ten or twenty pound gratuity simply vanishing, with a grace that even Mr. Hollingworth would find it difficult to capture. At least I remain with something in which to drown my sorrows.

Apropos tipping, may I suggest a subtlety that has worked for me in the past. When, in your final routine, you come to borrow a note and, heaven forbid, float the bugger, perform the following ruse. Wave it before you and say, 'Just one tip...' pause, '..give me your attention completely and be generous with your concentration. So you don't miss this.' And then proceed.

After a delightful afternoon's constitutional down that winding side-path, let us return to our theme. The reader, if he was so eccentric as to have read the introduction, will be aware that this effect is perhaps my very favourite. It has an element of drama that I enjoy, and it is technically easy to perform, allowing one to concentrate on the more important matter of communicating it effectively. Let us review the effect. A deck of cards, familiar to the cognoscenti but to the majority of the laity a shocking and perhaps ominous novelty, is spread across the table, with the request that the chosen spectator burn the image of one of them into his or her mind or minds. She obliges, and thusly a card is committed to her memory.

As if this were not in itself enough, the performer then makes it clear that he will divine the name of that card, if the spectator would be enough of a blessing to clear her mind and concentrate on the card of her choice. The deck is reassembled and left on the table, with a promise from the magician that he will not touch them again. The magus lights a cigarette and relaxes in his seat with an air of authority and *Grand Guignol* that sends a shiver of tension throughout the room, or 'space.' Slowly he does indeed name that card. (Let us imagine that this card is the Three of Clubs). The audience reacts with extreme delight. "But let me tell you, my friends," he continues, "that there is more to this than meets the eye. For I can tell you now that in fact there never was a Three of Clubs in that deck. None of this really happened. I need not remind you that I have not touched those cards."

The spectator who chose the card defiantly insists that the card was indeed there. No, you assure her, blowing a smoke ring, it was not there at all, and this is a good moment to correct any grammatical errors on her part. There will be a tremendous anticipation to now see the deck, so you spread it once again to show that the card has indeed vanished. Immediately you begin coughing and hawking most unpleasantly, and all eyes return to you. The cigarette that you were smoking can be seen to have changed. You remove it and to enormous applause unroll a smoking, charred Three of Clubs. Your reputation as a magician and as a lover is cemented, and many splendid things come your way.

'SMOKE' has its roots in Tom Mullica's *Card is Cigarette* routine. It struck me as potentially a very surprising and elegant change. I thought it would make life more interesting to have the card mentally selected rather than physically taken, and a word on this may be appropriate. When the cigarette is seen to have changed,

there is a gentleness and ethereal quality to the transformation that I feel should be mirrored by a non-physical selection. I should also add that the effect of a card becoming a cigarette belongs to Karl Fulves. His effect 'Card is Cigarette' was published in **Secret Sessions** in 1990.

The Selection and Vanishing of the Card

There are a number of ways of achieving this, but I will be working on the presumption that the deck that the spectator sees contains a cycle of eight cards. Thus her choice is limited. When the cards are spread out again toward the end of the effect, she will be seeing a different set of indices that contain all cards other than the eight. This, I feel, is a very convincing means of having the card selected and then vanish, without needing to know which or where it is.

The method that I regularly employ uses a gimmicked deck. I printed onto blank stock, cards with indices that do not match at the corners. This means that when I spread the cards one way, they will show the rotating cycle of eight force cards. When they are gathered, turned end-for-end and spread again, they will show forty-four cards that do not include the eight. A gimmicked deck is now available that will do this job very well with a little alteration: namely the *Mind-Power Deck* by John Kennedy. I would recommend this item unreservedly for anyone looking to perform my effect.

Another method that I tried for a while consisted of exchanging decks. This allows for the spectator to hold on to the deck after the card is selected, and to spread them out herself any way she wishes in search of what she has been told has vanished. Here, I spread out the cyclical deck and had the selection chosen as normal, while the second rested on my lap. I obtained this deck in

my left hand and held it copped at the edge of the table as my right collected the spread deck, and in the action of squaring that deck, brought the hands together to the table's edge, lapping the deck in the right, and bringing the new deck forward. This is a common and practical switch. This was done as I asked the spectator if she could visualise the card for me. I then gave her the new deck, 'as I don't want to touch these at all.' All that was left was to make sure that she didn't spread them in defiance of my assurance that the card had vanished, until I felt it dramaturgically appropriate to do so. This I would simply do with a warning gesture of my hand every time she'd make to look. In fact, this stalling became a point of comedy in the performance, and heightened the tension.

One should not worry about the spectator seeing her card repeated in the spread. You must, however, instruct her to choose the card quickly whilst you face away. By snapping your fingers as you tell her that she is to 'burn the image of one card into her mind,' you will communicate the fact that she is to do so quickly. The instruction to 'burn the image of one card' will ensure that she chooses a card that she sees, as opposed to thinking of one, but allows you to be confident of this without reinforcing the fact too early that she has to actually see the card and not merely thinking of one. Of course the discrepancy does not work to your disadvantage, for it is important later that she insists that she saw the card.

The naming of the card

Let us presume that the cycle consists of four reds and four blacks, two of each suit:

2D 10D 8H QH 3C KC 2S 7S

You now need to embark on a relaxed fishing expedition to find the card. The presence of the Eight and Seven will create uncertainty on the spectator's part as to whether the card is high or low in value. This, coupled with a bold ploy on your part to begin the procedure will take you to the card very quickly.

Here is how I begin: "Now I would like you to relax and concentrate on that card. In fact, say it to yourself, over and over again – *The Queen Of Hearts, The Queen of Hearts, The Queen Of Hearts...*[If there is no response here, continue without pausing] – whatever it is, and see the card in front of you on a screen. So you are saying it to yourself and seeing it. It's a black card – The Two of Spades"

Here I am using a subtlety suggested by Jerry Sadowitz in *The Crimp*. If you are to guess the colour with a fifty percent chance of being wrong, you may as well throw in a specific card too. The chances are not in your favour of it being correct, but if it is, you have named the card miraculously fast. If it is not, you merely say, undaunted, "But it is a black card." If she responds negatively to this, you have been no more wrong than had you merely guessed the colour. But not only did you give yourself the chance of a miracle, but you can also strike another card from the list of possibilities. In fact, your choices are now only

2D 10D 8H

(3C KC 7S if black was correct)

You need now only state whether you feel the card is high or low to name it exactly. If my guess of black was wrong, I play this up

for comic effect to avoid a serious appearance of failure. "Oh, wait, the mists are clearing. I'm getting a blue card, no – orange, no, a red card. Am I close? Yes, a red one. Look, I really need you to concentrate, otherwise this is impossible. Make the image a little bigger in your mind."

If it is a red card, you must say, "Yes, it's a high value." If the response is clearly affirmative, then the card is the 10D. If the response is unsure at all, immediately name the 8H. Should a 'no' be on the way, call out, "The Two of Diamonds!" loudly.

If you know it to be a black, you declare it to be a low value. Here the Seven is ambiguous, and the Three and King clearly high or low. You respond accordingly to the reaction to your statement, as above.

Obviously, the naming of the Queen of Hearts at the start will often bring success, especially if a responsive lady is chosen as the participant.

The Transformation of the Cigarette

This is achieved boldly and simply. You will need two 10-pack cigarette boxes, one red and one black. Out of each, remove the cigarettes and paper.

Now remove the eight force cards from an old pack. It does miracles to the self-esteem of those old dogs lying at the bottom of the drawer to be used in these effects. Roll them up tightly, lengthwise and with the faces on the outside, so that they resemble cigarettes. Next burn about a centimetre (3/8 inch) off the ends. Place these two sets in the cigarette cases of the corresponding colour (which will be an *aide-memoire* for later), with the burnt ends pointed

upwards. You should ensure that they are not still flaky and unpleasant when you put them in. Add to each box a real cigarette, and by placing it in at an angle, it is easy to keep the rolled cards in place, but you will find that they keep their places surprisingly well. You now have a card index, contained in two boxes. Finally, place a tray on the floor just to the right of your chair. If this will not be hidden from the spectators' view, then place a secret ashtray between your thighs. If, however, you are working on a stone floor, and the spectators are unable to see beneath the table, then there will be no need for a tray or ashtray.

Before you start the trick, pull an ashtray over to you. When



you have begun the fishing and as soon as you know the colour of the card, sit back to relax a little more to clear your mind, and remove your lighter from your pocket. Follow this with the appropriate box. Whilst talking to the spectator, open the box towards you and remove the cigarette. Put this in your mouth and light it, placing the box, still partially open, on the table. All attention will be on the cigarette and the box will be forgotten. Later, when you know the identity of the card (but where possible, before you reveal it), place the lighter away and then the box, but as you place the box in your inside left jacket pocket,



steal the correct card from its place. This can be facilitated by the forefinger entering the box a little as you hold it between thumb and second finger, and feeling for the correct card, in the threefold action of picking it up, looking for a second at the spectator, and bringing the pack across the body to the pocket. Once inside the jacket, the

card is secured, and it remains held as the pack is replaced. The rolled card is palmed, and immediately that right hand comes up to hold the cigarette. At this point, if it has not already happened, the card is named. The audience will react enthusiastically and the box forgotten forever. You allow the reaction to subside and declare that the card was never present in the deck. Play with the tension that this offers, and a cool smoke-ring at this point goes a long way.

Eventually, you spread the deck before you, and all eyes will be on the cards. Your right hand carries the cigarette down beyond the edge of the table, as your left spreads the deck. The right releases the cigarette. If you are working on a stone floor, so be it. Otherwise, drop it into the tray or receptacle that you have ready. All attention will be on those cards on the table. The rolled card is immediately brought between the fingers and placed in the mouth, and both hands are brought into view as you spread the cards a little more. If you find the mate of the chosen card, you can point it out, as if to suggest that it may have been that one that she saw. Then, grab at the wrists of the people nearest you with your hands, and splutter a little. Waggle the rolled card with your tongue and stare down at it in shock. Let the transformation sink in. Remove it, and unfurl it with the back of the card to the spectators. Finally exclaim, "The card you were *thinking of*... the Three of Clubs!"

I have said elsewhere that this effect would have no place in a serious mentalism routine. I *do* perform this during my mindreading sequence, and justify its inclusion with a line of patter. After the spectator sees that the cigarette has changed, I say, "You see, this is all about perception. Seeing what you expect to see. And you did it brilliantly." It still plays like a magical effect to an extent, but if presented in a tongue-in-cheek fashion and placed in the *middle* of a series of mental effects it will provide a nice, visual surprise that will complement the proceedings and not detract from them. It is doubtless dependent upon the personality of the performer as to whether he can get away with this.

It should be noted by the reader who is unsure of how convincingly he can perform the necessary fishing, that if he were to perform this first part rather badly, he could simply follow his naming of the card with, "Well, that seemed difficult – and do you know why? Because there is no Three of Clubs in that deck. I don't know how I was supposed to do that when there is no Three of Clubs in there." He can then proceed, and his stumbling will be seen as part of the crescendo to the final revelation.

"PLEROPHORIA"

Certainty, in our time of rampant hermeneutic relativism, is an elusive creature. Truth, we are told, is dependent upon our meanings, which in turn derive from our cultures. It is meanings that oppress us, as opposed, presumably, to socio-economic institutions. A time once existed when it would have been ridiculous to call the 'truth' adopted by one tribe any more valid than that of its neighbour, but now we seem to live in a society where scientific naturalism is the consensual method of modelling reality. Furthermore, this system claims to be transcultural and universal. Even cultures that are unaware of it can be subjected to it and deconstructed using its methods. It evolves and changes, disproving and altering its conclusions, but given its widespread adoption and universality it is perhaps inaccurate for the relativists to claim that in our society is a hodgepodge of equally valid models of reality. It seems more of an onanistic intellectual game of self-congratulation than a serious diagnosis of the human condition.

The occultation of certainty will, however, allow us an interesting presentational angle for our next trick. The performer describes the feeling of certainty that often occurs when one feels very strongly that the telephone is about to ring and a certain individual will be the caller. He makes it clear that there is nothing esoteric about this experience, after all, there are many more occasions where one may feel that someone is about to ring, and they do not. Yet on those occasions when one's sensation proves accurate, some use may be gained from committing the feeling of certainty to memory. If one can learn to reproduce it, and fully enter this

particular state of certainty, one can demonstrate a knowledge of events outside of one's conscious awareness – and even *cause* the 'phone to ring. Such a procedure can occur spontaneously and be mistaken for some sort of telepathy, the performer continues, but assures the audience that such nonsense should not be believed. It is a state purely dependent on the ability to trigger off an emotional state of utter confidence in the accuracy of one's knowledge. The internal logic of these vacuous statements is accepted, at least for the time being, by our audience.

The performer explains that there is a limit to the application of this process, but that it works especially well when one is playing a game of cards. To have an accurate hunch of the identity and position of cards in the deck after a poker partner has shuffled them is a powerful advantage. A deck is handed to a spectator to be shuffled several times to ensure a random distribution of the cards. The spectator is encouraged to check that the cards are well mixed, and to shuffle as much as she likes.

The shuffled deck is placed on the table, and is given a single cut. The spectator is handed a piece of paper and a pencil. The performer tells her to assume a mind-set of utter conviction and write down a value and a suit on the paper. She shows what she has written - let us imagine that she has written the Seven of Hearts. She is told to turn over the top card of the deck, and it is indeed the Seven of Hearts.

The performer congratulates the spectator, and then turns his back to her. He will be remembered to have remained in this position for the rest of the routine, unable to see the cards. He describes what he feels the next card in the deck to be. "A black card, a high value – perhaps, yes, a picture card." It is turned over by the spectator and seen to be the Jack of Spades. He names the next one with more specificity, and the next, and the next. Soon he is calling out the identities of the cards faster than the spectator can turn them

over. About half way through the deck he stops, to regain his breath. The spectator shuffles the deck again.

Now the performer tells her to cut off from the deck a packet of cards, and place them in her pocket. Continuing to face away, he declares his intention to remove from the deck exactly the same number. He neither touches nor looks at the deck, so he is unable to even estimate the amount. Instead, he tells the spectator to deal cards into his hand, behind his back, and to stop when instructed. Eventually the performer stops her dealing, feeling she has continued too far. He hands her back some of the cards from his hand and declares them to be the same number of cards that she has in her pocket. She counts both piles and confirms his success. *Still* facing away, he interrupts the audience's mystification by correctly identifying all the cards, in order, that the spectator had in her pocket.

The strength of the effect relies on two factors: the frequent shuffling of the deck by the spectator, and the ability of the performer to perform the effect without touching or even looking at the cards. (He does, on a couple of occasions, touch the cards, but not in a way that detracts from these aspects of the effect). Therefore, while his facing away will be obvious, it is important to emphasise in the spectators' minds that they themselves shuffled the deck before each part of the effect. This can be achieved by some form of anchor: Tamariz achieves this wonderfully by asking the spectator to shuffle over his head and behind his back, and then reminds the audience of this later by miming the actions. It suits my style to compliment the spectator on her shuffling skills and to anchor the shuffling with a particular phrase that she will remember. For example, I may refer to her as 'nimble-fingered' as she shuffles, and then tell her to repeat the shuffle to be absolutely sure of the mixing of the cards. 'Equally as nimble-fingered,' I comment. 'Quite dangerously nimble.' Later, I can use the word 'nimble' as a compliment, and it will remind everyone of the shuffling procedure.

Rather like my thoughts on the Cigarette-Through-Coin presentation, I do feel that one must face the issue here that one method for achieving the effect will occur to the spectators – that you have memorised the order of the cards and are merely rattling them off. Therefore, be prepared to deal directly with this. Gently ridicule the suspicion that some people have had that you are somehow able to follow all the cards while *somebody else shuffles them* and in doing so memorise their new order. My fundamental aim in designing this effect was to produce it with deck mixed fairly out of the performer's hands, so this must be played up for all it is worth.

Here then is the working of the routine. Much pleasure can be derived from the fact that much of the secret lies in the most obscure, and forgettable, item used in the presentation: the pad from which the spectator's sheet of paper is taken. Also, it will be of interest that you *do indeed* have a memorised stack, of 20 cards. For those that balk at the notion of memory feats or stacks, please bear with me. The deck itself is impromptu, and the stack (which is extremely easy to remember) will be carried safely and separately in the pocket.

The pad has been adapted to form a shell, which introduces the stack to the deck, and removes the surplus cards moments later. After performing this routine in this way for a while, I saw that Guy



Hollingworth had had a similar idea in his most marvellous effect *The Cassandra Quandary*, quite my very favourite in his book **Drawing Room Deceptions**. Guy's effect is a wonderful and dramatic piece of magic, whereas my *Plerophoria* is designed as a plausible and engaging demonstration of the key to

understanding telepathy. I have avoided ending the routine with a magical climax, and instead have remained true to the theme – this is definitely a mental effect. The reader, however, who is unaware of the *Cassandra* effect, would be heartily recommended to read the book mentioned above. The former is worth the price of the latter.

The shell must hold 20 cards. W. H. Smith in the UK sell little memo-pads in hard covers that are ideal for the task. The blank pad I bought measures 3 inches by 5 inches, and also available is a solid cover for it, that flips over on its outer short side. I'm sure that your local establishment for instruments of scripture and documentation will yield something suitable for the task. Having ensured that the dimensions of the pad are suitable, take the empty cover and cut a rectangle from the underneath, comfortably larger than the cards that it will hold. In place of a regular pad (for the idea of cutting a hole in every page of a pad seemed very unpleasant), purchase a piece of foam-based mounting board from an art supply shop. This should be a little over half a centimetre (1 ¼ inches) thick, which I believe is standard. Minding your fingers, cut yourself a pad-sized rectangle, and from it a hole of the same size as the one in the pad. This is then glued into the cover. On top of the foam-board you must now glue a solid piece of card, again cut to shape. On top of *this*, half of your blank pad can be adhered, and if you can detach the paper cover from the pad and tuck that over the far edge, then it will seem even more authentic. Do what you must to ensure that all is secure, and that the shell holds the cards comfortably. Finally, glue a piece of the cover that you removed across the short end of the hole nearest the hinge side. This is to keep the cards inside when the pad is stored upright in your pocket, and to keep them secure as the pad is handled.

Into the pad you must now place a stack of memorised cards. I shall describe my method for achieving a stack that will suggest only randomness, yet is painfully easy to remember – and then we can turn to the more interesting question of using these

props in presentation. Many cyclical and mathematical stacks exist, and different types offer different advantages and drawbacks. For our purposes it is not necessary that you know the position of any one card, merely the order of the twenty. I use an old idea - may I suggest that you take a couple of telephone numbers that mean something to you. Make any alterations to them so that you have two lists of ten numbers, and that no more of four of any one number occur in total. Most numbers can be reduced to a set of three (the dialling code, or an abbreviation thereof), followed by another set of three, and then a set of four. Imagining the numbers split thus, groups of suits can be applied to the two lists. I have the first three all black (S, S, C), then three red (H, H, D) then the last four in ChaSeD order. I admit that the choice for the last four was only to tantalise magicians. You may need to substitute a number or two to ensure that no cards are repeated in the twenty. When all this is completed, substitute a shortened and marked Seven of Hearts for the top card of the stack (again, altering any other Seven of Hearts in the stack to another card, such as an Eight). I shall give you my stack as an example:

7H 8S QC 5H 6H 8D 2C 10H 7S AD QS 2S KC 9H 8H 3D AC 3H 10S 7D

One would have to count ten cards before the stack was repeated. Also, you are able to have neighbouring cards showing the same suit or value, which is a convincing advantage of this system.

Let us presume that the stack is memorised. It resides in the pad, so that the face Seven of Diamonds is showing. The deck is in the right inner jacket pocket with the face card facing the body. A pen is in the left inner pocket. You have approached some spectators and they are delighted to see you. A deck of cards is taken from its case and handed to a spectator on your right for shuffling. As she does so, you comment on her nimble fingers. Given that her shuffling is mediocre at best, this comment is made in good humour. After she has finished, you say to her and the group, "Despite the

nimbleness of your shuffle, I often come across one flatulent cynic who believes that I am able to follow the distribution of the cards during the shuffle, and therefore actually memorise the order of the deck. So I am going to ask you to pass them to so-and-so, and have him shuffle them too. Ah, even more *dangerously* nimble." Pause while she shuffles, and then reach into your pocket to remove the pad.

You will need to judge the timing here, but as you hold the pad in your left hand, your right gestures for the return of the cards to the table and then goes into the jacket to take out the pen. During this time, you have allowed the cards to dislodge into the left hand and taken them into something resembling a cop position. The right hand places the pen on the table, and then removes the pad from the left. As you take the pad, ask the spectator to your right if she trusts the other spectator's shuffling. Thus the only bad angle for the cop is covered. The right hand places the pad on the table, and picks up the deck. Glimpse and memorise the bottom card. The deck is placed directly on the cards in the left hand, and the entire deck is spread towards the audience without you seeing the faces. This you do as you say, "Good. Because I want you to be happy that this is a very jumbled deck before we start.." The top third of the deck is not spread, but rather pulled back behind the spread a little to hide the surplus cards.

The deck is turned face up and placed in the left hand for a moment. The left little finger breaks into the deck about twenty or so cards up. These are copped again as you ask the spectator on the right to take the cards (as the right places them on the table and the left pulls up the right sleeve to hide the cards) and turn them face down. After placing the cards on the table, the right hand picks up the pad and places it into the left hand, which manoeuvres the cards back into the shell. The right opens the pad and removes a sheet of paper, handing it to the spectator. You also hand her the pen as the left hand returns the pad to the right inside pocket.

All has seemed immensely fair. Nobody will suspect any foul play so far, as all your actions have been above board, and the effect does not appear to have started. However, you now know a stack of 20 cards in the deck, and somewhere in the middle is a short card, which marks the top card of the stack – the Seven of Hearts. The group is asked if they believe in telepathy. I shall briefly give my opening words to the presentation:

“You will all be aware of the situation where you are thinking of someone in particular, and suddenly they call you out of the blue. Sometimes the telephone may ring and you are certain of who it will be even though you had no prior knowledge that they would call you. Well, we are all intelligent people and are aware that there are several hundred times a day when we think of people and they don’t call, or when a feeling of certainty turns out to be wrong. Of course we forget these occasions. But if you pay attention to the feelings of certainty that turn out to be correct, and learn to harness them by memorising them at a physiological and emotional level, you will be able to trigger off the same feeling neurologically at a later time, with the same degree of correctness. There is nothing psychic about this process – it is merely about learning to manage your mental states. This is what I want to demonstrate. There’s a limit to what you can influence with this procedure, otherwise we’d all be millionaires, but certainly in a game of poker it is an enormous advantage to trigger off that feeling of certainty and know for a fact the position of cards in a deck that someone else has shuffled. That’s where I use this skill to my own advantage. But let’s see how well you do before I start.”

The tone has been set, and the last comment was addressed to the spectator with the pen and paper. Tell her to clear her mind, then reach over and deliberately cut the deck at the short card, saying, “I want you to think of a number between one and ten...” Snap your fingers and look at her as you finish saying this, to encourage her to do so quickly. Immediately continue, “... and write

it down on the paper." This she does. You need only pen read the number. Hopefully it is a seven. If she has a thick pen, she will write large. It is very easy to tell which one of ten numbers she has written. Turn away after you have read the number, and ask, "Done that? Good." Turn back and continue, "Now think of your favourite suit – you know Diamonds, Hearts, Spades and Clubs, and draw that there too." The verbal force of the Heart is achieved by a) asking for the favourite suit, b) naming the suits in the order mentioned, c) gesturing at the spectator to emphasise the Heart, and slightly mumbling the last two and d) casually drawing the Heart in the air with both hands as you instruct her to draw it. Again, pencil read to judge your success. You turn away as before as soon as you have the information.

If she has written the Seven of Hearts, or something close to it, have her turn over the top card of the deck and congratulate her accordingly. If she has written, for example, the Six of Hearts, preface the revelation by saying that a couple of cards either way will be allowed. The bottom card of the deck that you memorised earlier will be the bottom card after the cut, so you have another opportunity here – she can turn over the whole deck and see her card. Do not ask her to reveal her card before turning the top card or the deck over. If you know what she has written but are unable to make it fit with either of the cards, you ask her to concentrate on her card while you face away, and slowly you reveal what she wrote.

If she was successful in divining the top or bottom card, pause and allow the effect to sink in. Then offer to continue with the rest of the cards yourself. If you had to divine her writing, now offer to do the same with the deck. Either way, you now begin to read the cards. Apologise and say that you will have to, in the interests of fairness, face away from the cards and therefore from her during the effect. When you are safely facing away, have her turn the first card face up on the table, using those 'famous nimble fingers.' Give a vague description of it: "It's a black card, and a Seven or an Eight

again – am I right?” Become more specific with the next few and pick up speed as she goes through the deck. It is an idea to turn back briefly after the second card has been dealt and named to check that she is dealing them face-up into a pile. Continue with this until the



last card of the stack has been reached. Stop, as if for breath and readjustment, and turn back to the spectator. Gesture for her to take the *remaining* cards and tell her to shuffle them ‘even more.’ “Splendid!” you exclaim, as you pick up the dealt stack and casually false overhand shuffle it yourself. Run the Seven on the top to the face of the packet. When she is done, hold your packet in the

right hand, clipping it with the first and second fingers crosswise near and parallel to the outer short edge. The left hand reaches out and takes her packet between the thumb and forefinger, but near the bottom edge. You will apparently take this packet and hand her your own, but as the hands come together for an instance, the packets are swapped. The outer end of the left hand packet is fed between the right finger and thumb, and the inner end of the right packet is taken by the first and second fingers of the left. Each hand grips the other’s packet and the right hand moves forward and hands the spectator the very same packet that she has just shuffled. This move is a development of a sleight by Dr. Daley, who apparently exchanged the cards perpendicular to this move – i.e. left to right and vice versa. There is also a similar idea by Karl Fulves that Tamariz describes in the video *Lessons In Magic Vol. 1*. I feel that these sideways variants are not as deceptive as performing the exchange ‘forwards.’ Experimenting may convince you of the same.

“Nimble as ever – shuffle these too,” you say as you look her in the eye and make the exchange. Do not shuffle the same stack

again, but rather place it in the centre of the table. As a reason for this elaborate shuffle, I mention that the spectator is performing a 'Las Vegas Shuffle' – separately shuffling each half and then the two together. I add that it is supposed to remove any effects of static from the deck. I think that is something that I heard Chad Long say, and it stuck in my mind. Thanks, Chad. Retrieve her packet when she is ready, with the left hand again, and Zarrow shuffle the two packets together. As this false shuffle is completed, note the top card of the left packet that goes on top of the stack that is fed beneath it. If you know that it is duplicated in your stack, you must lose it from the face. This can be done by slipping it into the middle using the slip-force handling, as you casually slap the pack together a couple of times to show, without saying as much, that no fingers are left in the deck, and nothing protrudes.

Finally place the cards in front of the spectator, for the second phase of the effect. Explain that you wish her to cut off some cards from the deck while your back is turned. After that, you continue, you will attempt to take the exact same number from the deck, without looking. You will achieve this not by any telepathic means, but merely by working with the feeling of certainty that you have described. To ensure that she leaves enough cards for you to do this, tell her to cut off less than half of the deck. As you explain this, pick the cards up an inch or two off the table and dribble them back down so they form a slightly messy pile. This will look, if anything, as if you are making sure that any irregularities in the squared deck do not affect where she cuts. In fact, this is true. Given the introduction of the new stack, and the placement of the short card, it is all too possible that she might cut the entire stack away if you leave the deck neatly squared. Mime for her the action of taking some away, and explain that she is to put them straight into her pocket. Then turn away.

Behind your back she removes some, and hides them in her pocket. When she has done this, bring your hand behind you as if

you were going to try to cut some cards, then stop before you touch it. Explain that if you touched the deck, you could probably guess by feel roughly how many she had taken. And this would confuse you, as you are trying to keep a clear mind. Tell her instead to pick up the cards and to deal them one at a time, face down, into your hand, and that you will attempt to stop her at exactly the number that she has in her pocket. Before she starts, ask her if she feels that there is any way that you could possibly know how many cards she has. For all you know, she herself has no idea. Yet you are going to tap into that feeling of certainty, and see where it stops you. Explain that she herself might even feel a strong sense of having dealt the right number (especially given her earlier success), but that she should not let that stop her dealing. She begins to deal the cards into your hands.

The reader might also like to ponder what is about to happen. You are about to meet the challenge with resounding success. At no point do you look round, nor must you indulge in any real chicanery. The answer is simple, and it is not directly concerned with the stack – this can be done impromptu. What is important, however, is the position of the short card, the Seven of Hearts. Unless you lost the top card after the Zarrow shuffle, it is positioned twenty-one cards from the top. (Position twenty, otherwise). The spectator cuts off X cards from the top, leaving the card in position $21 - X$. Then she deals into your hand behind your back, reversing the order of the cards. You need only stop her at 21, and say that you feel that she has gone too far. $21 - X$ were dealt first into your hand culminating in the short card, followed by the number X itself, to make up the 21 that you have just counted. If, like me, you were away when they did adding, fear not. All you need to do, after you have stopped her, is to reach behind you with your other hand, and lift off all the cards above the short card. Gesture for her to take these, explaining that you believe the number contained there will match her pile exactly. They will.

Now, as you hand her that pile, turn back round. Place the remaining pile in your hand face-up on the table, near you. You will be looking at the point in your stack where she cut, but that need not worry you for a moment. She will count the pile you gave her, one at a time face down onto the table (tell her to do so 'so everyone can see' if she does not) and arrive at a number – let us say twelve. Tell her to count the cards in her pocket, and as she does so, clear away the packet that she has just counted as well as the remainder from the deal. When she brings out the new packet from her pocket, she should now count facedown onto the table. She will, in doing so, reverse her entire pile, and in doing so will bring her part of the stack into its original order. (The throbbing behind the eyes that you are currently experiencing is nothing compared to what I suffered working this out.)

This final subtlety means that moments after she has reacted with wonder that you were correct in your estimation of the number of cards in her pile, you can turn away again and exclaim – “Twelve cards, which if I am correct, are the...” and then rattle off the first *eleven* cards of your stack, plus the extra top card that you noted from the Zarrow. The face card of the face up pile on the table will remind you when to stop.

Rather involved, I'm sure you'll agree, but very clean in the handling and simple in presentation. Your aim is to have them remember that you touched nothing and looked away throughout. You'll find that it really does look like you are doing what you proclaim to be the case. The best of luck.

A Final thought on 'Plerophoria'

I mentioned earlier that my desire in forming the effect was to read the cards from a deck that was shuffled and dealt by the audience, therefore eliminating the possibility of chicanery in both areas. I also mentioned that at a gathering of magicians I would wish to have a member of the audience remove a deck from his pocket, and then to read the cards as he sits in the audience with the pack. This, indeed, was my original desire. I have done this, with great success, by an application of pick-pocketing skills: namely exchanging their own deck for my own, directly in the spectator's pocket. I find someone who I know will be sat at the front (or I do this before the show starts while I chat to people near the front), and then during the course of conversation make the exchange. Before beginning my presentation, I tell him (now that we have struck up a friendly rapport) that I will need to borrow a deck at some point during the routine, and ask him if he has one. He replies in the affirmative, and I ask him if it is a regular deck. He confirms that it is, and I say, "Excellent. That will save some time when I ask for one. Thanks."

When I come to perform 'Plerophoria' during my set, I ask the audience if anyone has a deck I can use, and catch the eye of the spectator, raising my eyebrows. I found from experience that the effect is more convincing if he brings the deck up to the table and places it face down in front of him. I must then stall a little as I talk about certainty, and assure the audience that he is not a confederate, which he will be eager to deny. I always try and do this with someone who has a group of friends at the front that can confirm that he is genuine. The main reason for stalling is to cover the fact that the deck is not going to be shuffled. If the deck is brought out and immediately read, the absence of a shuffle will be felt. If this is done while the spectator is still sat in the audience, the effect will not

be credible. But if he sits with me at the table, an audience will begin to consider other possibilities, and their minds become foggy.

Just a thought.

"PERFECT COIN READING"

The following e-mail came from Greg Wilson (reproduced here with his permission):

It's now time for a little hypnotism. Your eyes are getting heavy, they're getting sleepy, you will reveal that 1992 coin trick, you will reveal that 1992 coin trick . . .

I call it that because the date must have something to do with it, right? I mean, yeah, that definitely has something to do with it. I think. I think I know. I think I don't know. I think I should know. I think I'm not going to know until you write me back. Don't make me come over there and drag it out of you. It's not going to be pretty.

I want to fill this book with effects that fill me with pride and excitement, and represent the best of what I do. But I hate having to reveal this to you. I loathe you all, individually and unflinchingly, for making me do this. However, with the passing of each year, this effect becomes less reliable to perform, so now is a good time to pass it on before it becomes unworkable.

The effect is quite simply that you ask someone to remove a coin from his pocket and hold it in his fist after noting the date. Throughout this you face well away and see nothing. Once this is done, you turn around and touch the back of his fist. You ask him to

visualise the coin – and to make the image bright for a silver coin and dark for a bronze one. In the centre of the image he is to see the date clearly. You pause and appear to flicker in and out of trance. Then you correctly name the coin and the date upon it. This will be enough to absolutely stun the spectator, so you can imagine his response when he forms a fist again over the coin only to feel it bending... and to then see it warped on his palm, *untouched by you*.

The effect is completely impromptu. You do not need to plant a coin on the spectator before the effect. You do not see what he puts in his hand. And, my loves, *you can do all of this apart from the bending over the telephone*. There is no ‘visible compromise’: no procedural clutter. You do exactly as I say. Occasionally it will not entirely work, and this may bother the timid performer, but should represent no problem to the flamboyant and confident Svengali whom you are becoming.

I wish that there was at least a cunningly clever handling with which I could impress you. Nope. The secret revolves around the fact that the overwhelming majority of ten pence pieces in circulation in Britain are dated 1992. No one seems to know this. All you must do is ensure that he removes a ten pence piece while apparently asking for any coin. Please do not venture down the road of equivoque and the like. Merely say, “Do you have a coin on you – like a 10p – take it out note the date on it and hold it in your fist while I face the other way. Tell me when you’re done.” The instructions are complicated enough to keep his mind moving forward, as he takes the ten pence as asked. If he does not have a ten pence to use, he will tell you at this point, and you can abandon the effect. Otherwise, presume that he has one. Turn and face him and slow down, becoming more solemn. Tell him to picture the coin brightly if it is a silver coin, and darkly if it is bronze. As you will appreciate, this begins to sow the idea that you have no idea of the denomination of the coin. Cup his hand in yours, or touch the back of the fist. Name the coin and date. You may wish to name the

denomination wrongly at first and then change your mind. You may also wish to write the information on the back of his fist with a pen: this provides a strong ending that the spectator will not forget.

There *are* things that you can do to make this a little more sure-fire, such as asking a spectator in the front row at your presentation if he has a ten pence that he could lend you later when you ask for a coin – ‘just to save time.’ This is a similar ploy to that described in the addendum to ‘Plerophoria.’ However, the effect is too strong to involve any pre-show work: everyone will think that the whole thing was set up with a stooge.

What if they check all their other ten pences and discover the method? Well, sometimes they do. Greg went home and collected a lot of ten pences and other coins, and found no pattern. Perhaps I was just lucky. You *could* carry with you some eccentrically dated ten pences, but the elegance and simplicity is somehow lost by doing this. I would rather use the bolder ploy of asking questions later such as, “When you were concentrating on the date on that fifty pence, did you find that the image started to flicker?” thus subtly sowing the seeds of false memory as to the denomination of the coin. If they later remember it as having taken place with a different coin, they will have no chance of working it out.

Now, the spectator will look at you dumbly when you correctly name the date, as his brain whirrs around to find an answer. This is an excellent moment to do the following: ask to look at the coin (to confirm the success to yourself), and casually pick up the coin from the palm of his hand and check the date for yourself. Drop *back* into his hand, however, a bent ten pence – with, obviously, a matching date. This can be done quite boldly with a Bobo switch into his own hand, and if the coin is only slightly bent, it will not be apparent to him. It is vital that you make this switch *immediately* after the revelation of the date, to fully exploit the off-beat. Now bide your time a while, and if he starts to examine the coin slap him jovially on

the arm and tell him to relax and enjoy the fact that the world is a place of mystery. Then when the time is right, tell him to make the fist again. Then hover your palm over his fist and emphasise that you must not at any point touch the coin. Look him in the eye and tell him to imagine that the coin is made of chocolate, and that therefore it is starting to become soft in his hand. Insist that he does this seriously: that it is an exercise in suspension of disbelief. Once he is clearly taking part properly, explain that he will start to feel the coin moving and melting in his hand. Tell him to tell you *when he feels it*. This will place the onus on him to pay attention to every sensation – real and imagined – and to at some point confirm that he can feel the coin responding. Do not rush this – play it *absolutely* seriously. Once he agrees that he can feel something happening, play it up to any that may be watching: “You can actually *feel* the coin bending...” Then tell him to open his hand to reveal the bend.

I showed this full routine to Jerry Sadowitz in London, and it absolutely floored him. Which was nice. Whether or not you happen to have a bent coin on you, this is one of the strongest effects to perform for someone – and the fact that it is completely impromptu is a marvellous piece of joyfulness.

Enjoy, you vultures.

"TRANSFORMATION"

My ambiguous relationship with the idea of mentalism stems most probably from the fact that I am not trying to perform mentalism, per se, most of the time, but rather am aiming to push magic into a more interesting area for my audiences. This area is where conjuring and hypnotic skills meet and intermingle. In 'Transformation' the point of the effect is well beyond the adventures of the cards – it is built around a numerological character reading, which is then turned on its head. It allows me to play with some cold reading, but then to provide a more worthwhile message for the spectator and to present her with something rather intimate. For this reason, 'Transformation' has no place in a series of card tricks, and neither is it a piece of mentalism. Rather it is a delicate and, I hope, enchanting piece of magic, which should be quietly performed for an individual once your magical credentials have been established.

I will outline the effect and handling with some brevity, for the cold reading that forms the heart of the routine must come from the reader's own sensitivity to the lady seated opposite, and his own preferred stock of cold reading phrases. I would thoroughly recommend Ian Rowland's definitive work, **The Full Facts Book of Cold Reading** as a guide to learning this skill. If the style and content of the routine appeal to the reader, he will supply his own wording, presentation and ideas. For the less imaginative reader, little will be of appeal here beyond some unoriginal exchanges of cards. Performed fluently and well, however, this is a very touching piece of magic for occasional performance when the time is right.

Covertly remove the two red Aces and the Ace of Spades

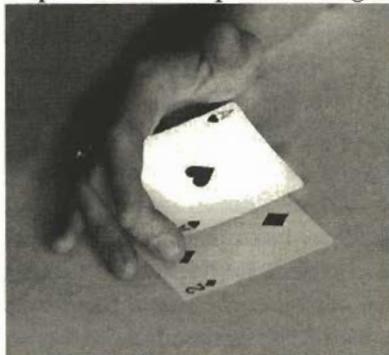
from the deck, and place them so that the two reds are face up with the Spade beneath them face down. Beneath them place a Joker, also face up. Place the packet on your lap propped against your left thigh, with a red Ace facing up on the top. From the top of the deck down the following cards are arranged: a Six, another Six, an Eight, and the Ace of Clubs (this is not entirely necessary, as the description below will demonstrate). This is your preparation.

Place the deck of cards in the centre of the table with some seriousness and introduce the subject of numerological divination with cards. As you talk, bring your right forearm across your edge of the table and rest the left hand on the table in a way that seems casual. You must condition her to seeing your right arm in this position. Gesture occasionally as you talk and show the right hand empty in doing so, then resume its position.

I mention that cards have always been associated with fortune telling since they were designed around the days of the year. The four suits correspond to the four seasons, and the fifty-two cards to the fifty-two weeks of the year. Also, I add, the real enthusiast will note that the total of all the values in the deck is three hundred and sixty-six, the maximum number of days in the year. The ten numbers leading to three court cards correspond to the ten hidden stages of each lunar cycle that culminate in the three viewable, or 'Royal' stages of the moon's journey that we can see. (I say this last part sincerely and they just keep nodding.) It is therefore believed that the cards we draw from the deck tell us about ourselves. As I say this, I deal the top three cards onto the table face up in a row. "Six, six, eight." I say, naming the values. "The neighbour of the Beast." She laughs appealingly, and thus becomes a little more responsive to what we are going to do. I return the cards to the deck, somewhere in the centre. The Ace of Clubs is now on top – its only reason for being here is to keep it out of the way so that she is less likely to take it. You can always put it in your pocket prior to performance if you prefer.

Hand her the deck and tell her to run through it, face down, and to remove any three cards. These she is to place face down on the table in a row from your left to your right. Tell her to keep the rest of the deck out of the way – i.e., not on the table. With your left hand, adjust the position of the three cards a little, the far left first, naming this as the card of the past, the middle as the card of the present, and the card on the right as the one that corresponds to her future. As you touch this card, bringing the left arm across the table as cover, dip the right hand into the lap and take the first Ace in a lateral palm, face up.

Turn the 'Past' card over and bring it towards you in doing so. It should now be face up, not far from the edge of the table, nor from your right hand with its palmed card. Name the card and begin to cold-read about the person's past, relating it to the number and value of the card. Obviously you need only work from the same stock phrases, inventing the relationship to the card, allowing the responses of the spectator to guide you. At a point when she is trying



to remember experiences to match your statements, you apparently turn the card face down again and return it to the row. In fact, the right hand comes to take the card, but the second and third fingers of the right hand propel the card off the edge of the table as the palmed card is brought above it. The palmed card is turned over and brought forward in the same

action. This card is moved forward and placed back in the row. Thus the first card has been exchanged.

The hands gesture as you replace the card as if to say, "Well, that's the first one." They are seen to be empty. Next, the right

returns to its position along the edge of the table, and steals the next card in Tenkai palm as the left turns over the middle card and leaves it in line with the row. Further cold reading is offered about the present, and at an appropriate moment the left hand picks up the card, and exchanges it for the one in the right using the method described in the 'Revelation using the left-hand centre steal' on page 94. At this point you mention in your patter



that this or that quality will move 'into the future' and as you touch the future card with your left hand, the right swings back to the edge of the table and dumps its card into the lap. The second has also been exchanged.

The third card is not exchanged yet. It is fairly turned over, as you prattle on, and then replaced face down with as much innocence. After this reading is complete, you say, "However, what's important is not so much how accurate this reading may seem, for I have no wish to confine you into one view of your evolving personality. Rather, it's your own ability to learn from your past and project what you learn into the future, and to visualise that future in this present and get it in place now, and get more and more of what you want..." As you say this, you mix the cards on the table in Three Card Monte style. The left hand comes across and takes the card on the right and slides it towards the centre of the table edge near you. As this cover is offered, the right hand dips again and steals the last Ace in a lateral palm. The left hand then takes the card on the left and slides it across the table, in front of the centre card, to the far right position. As this is done, the hands cross as the right hand apparently slides the future card nearest to you into the far left position. However, the second and third fingers propel the card off

the table into your lap, as the palmed Ace, still face down, replaces it. This exchange is done in the action of sliding the card further to the left. The chosen card shoots back as the Ace slides forward.

You now have three Aces on the table, with the Spade to your left. Swap this with the centre Ace as you continue this patter line about mixing the ideas of past and future. Please make sure that what you say has integrity. Finish by saying, "In short, it's not what you or I think you are that is of value, for as soon as you label yourself you start missing out on new opportunities. The real magic, the really wonderful stuff, happens when you realise your ability to transform." With this, turn over the cards, showing the Aces. As you turn them, shift their position into an arc, for a nice, apparent finale. Gesture widely with your open, empty hands.

In the offbeat created by this revelation, relax back and steal the Joker in a lateral palm. Once the spectator has reacted, gather the cards up, but do so in a way that the Spade is gathered onto the top. Then drop the Joker unseen and unnoticed on top of that, face up, as your right hand comes forward and slides the cards back towards you. Turn the packet face down in your left hand and say, "And once you know that you can break out of old habits of the past by trying new behaviours, and create much of your future by choosing what you focus upon in the present, you can take all of that and learn that you can find that child-like state of wonder again at all the opportunities available to you, and not take things so seriously..." As you speak, you apparently take the cards in the right from above and take them one at a time into the left hand. In reality you perform an adaptation of a wonderful move of Tamariz's, as follows: bring the hands together and briefly get a break under the top two cards with the right thumb at the inner end. You relax back in the chair as you do this, with the right arm in its default position along the edge of the table. The left hand takes the two cards above the break into something of a dealing position (you will need to clip them at the outer left corner with the side of the thumb). It pulls the two as one

away, forward and off to the left, then returns for the next card. The two in the left go underneath the cards in the right as the left thumb pulls off the next card into the left hand. The left again swings off forward and to the left, and returns to take the last card from the right. As it swings back, the cards held in the left are released and tossed into the lap in the action of taking the last card. The arms cover the dump from all angles. One card is now held in the left, and you lean forward again and provoke interest in the (apparently) three cards in your hand. The hands should come into the centre of the table. Gesturing with the right, hold the card with both hands for a moment and flex it, then reveal it to be a single Joker. Leave it face-up in the centre of the table as you finish your words about wonder and not taking life too seriously.

“Think about it,” I say finally, and normally leave the Joker with the spectator.

The symbolic value of the effect and the aesthetics of the revelations are the substance of the routine. The rest of the deck must be out of view, as the visual appeal is much stronger when apparently only three cards are in play, placed in a row in the centre of the table. The three colour changes are increasingly deceptive, and must be performed very casually. As a final point, this effect is clearly about giving personal meaning to magic – something I have spoken about earlier in this book. It must be handled sensitively, and above all without condescension. It is supposed to be elevating and worthwhile, not an exercise in self-apotheosis on the part of the performer.

TWO VERBAL CARD FORCES

'Verbal Card Force' is something of a misnomer, for to force the mental selection of cards through this method depends upon attitude and non-verbal communication as much as the words you use. The aim of these techniques is to have a spectator mentally select a card, but as you describe the selection procedure you are actually suggesting a particular card to him. Almost all depends upon the selection of a responsive spectator and engaging him in the process correctly – and even then I cannot guarantee you one hundred percent success. You can get this working every time once you learn to use just the right amount of blatancy.

Let us consider the effect: you ask for a volunteer and explain that you are going to try mentally to send him a playing card. He is to see what impressions he receives, and not just guess or choose his favourite card. He *must* follow your instructions and wait to receive it, piece by piece. Now, this is a straightforward effect, and this is *exactly* what you are going to do: effect and method are identical. There is no cheating or chicanery – you are going to coerce him into thinking of the card you wish. Assuming that you have prepared the spectator appropriately so that they understand their task, let us look at two forces which I feel work best for me.

The Three of Diamonds

Sit facing your spectator and pick up a pad and a marker. The following words and actions are to be delivered at a speed that

you will develop a feel for over time, but essentially you are talking forcefully and gesturing directly at him, drawing the Three of Diamonds in the air for him as you do so. This will read a little heavy-handedly, but in performance the talking and gesturing take only *a few seconds*. Please remember this as you read on.

You say, "And to help you, I will make the colour of the card bright and vivid to make it clearer. Okay, I shall draw the card here.' After suggesting thus that the card will be red, you take the pen and marker and clearly and deliberately draw the Three of Diamonds. Do not allow the audience to see what you have drawn, for if this does not work with the volunteer at hand, you should find that a lot of the other spectators would choose the correct card. Now, as you draw the card, you must allow him the opportunity to pen read its identity. This card is fairly easy to do this with, and the squeaks from the marker will aid the process. He knows that you are drawing the card: this is an action that will interest him. Even if he does not work it out at this point, he will have begun to form an idea. Place the pad down and get his attention by touching him on the shoulder. Move a

little closer and deliver the following fairly rapidly.



"Okay, see a screen in your mind...with the four corners [as you do this, you supposedly make the shape of a rectangle before him with your hands, but you do so at an angle so that he sees a diamond], **with the little number, low – the number, low down in the corner** [draw a '3' with your forefinger casually in the lower index corner], **and the things down the middle** [hold up your hand and point your thumb,

forefinger and second finger forward as if each had a diamond on the tip in a line straight down the middle of the card.



Your other hand is held up to obscure the view of these fingers from the rest of the audience, and you jab the three at the spectator as you apparently fumble for the words 'pips' or 'spots' **what are they called? The bam-bam-bam down the middle** [point to each imaginary diamond separately with your forefinger on 'bam-bam-bam' as you turn to the audience to ask what they are called] **Those things, down the middle, on the screen** [Make the diamond shape again]. **Okay, what's the card you can see?"**

I suggest you use an Invisible Deck as an 'out' until this becomes reliable. I use this as a means of selecting a volunteer for a demonstration who will be responsive to the suggestions I will be making throughout the performance. If it does not work on him, I ask who else in the audience *did* see a Three of Diamonds (to facilitate this, it is sometimes practical *not* to obscure their view of your three fingers) and then use one of them.

It is hardly worth saying, but these things do read very badly. In performance, you are bewildering someone a little and then giving them very blatant suggestions to see a particular card. Until you can do this in one flow of words and choreographed gestures, it will feel too obvious and silly. The spectator that you use will have an idea of you directing him to the card, as will the audience. You are actually doing exactly what you say you are doing, and your skill

will be admired in achieving it. Once you develop a feel for this, and the next force described, you will find yourself using these techniques all the time – they soon become second nature.

One final note before I describe the second. Forcing cards in this way was always a dream of mine – I thought it would make compelling magic. For a long time I did not have the confidence in this technique to make it work, so I would fake it: forcing the card some other way and then appearing to use suggestion. People were fascinated by the apparent suggestive wording and considered this to be very strong magic – perhaps because it is plausible yet out of the reach of most people's estimation of their skills. When I was cheating I could, of course do it with any card, and very few words. But because the illusion of using these subliminal skills was so compelling to the audience, I decided to pick a few cards that might be prone to this type of forcing and work out a reliable way of doing it genuinely. These are the results of that work.

The Jack of Spades

This is a different way around the same idea, I prefer the speed and directness of the first force, but the reader may find this more reliable at first and easier to handle. Again, it is presumed that you have first placed your spectator in a responsive mood.

"Imagine a deck of cards. You shuffle them – do this in your mind for me now, and then you separate them into two piles: a red pile and a black one. [You gesture the placing of the red pile to your left and the black to the right, and emphasise the 'black' with a stronger hand movement and tonality.] Now, in your mind only, pick up one of those piles, getting rid of the others [Mime picking up the black pile with the right hand and sweeping away the reds to the left with the other. Turn half away to the right as you do this. Yes, you say 'red'

instead of 'rid' as you sweep the reds away] and spread them out before you. [In the same gesture, mime the cards being spread before the spectator, using the same right hand]. You now have two suits before you – keep the spare, the one suit you like and are most comfortable with, and lose the klutzes, the bums, the others. [This odd sentence should direct them to keep the Spades and lose the Clubs. The word 'spare' makes no sense here: after saying it, carry on with the sentence as if you are correcting yourself.] Now, you see in front of you one suit, with a load of numbers [gesture from right to left in front of him] and three picture cards.[pause the sweep and then continue to show where the court cards are.] Now, we need to narrow it right down, so get rid of one of those groups, so you lose a whole bunch more and now just see a few. [Casually mime the removal of the number cards in the spread. I turn away again here as if I am not interested in what he is doing and do not wish to influence him. Pause to give him time to process the instructions]. Now, you are looking at either a lot of number cards or a few Royal cards. Remove a pair – a couple – so that you leave one on its own, or a spread of eight, depending what you're thinking. [The words 'Royal' instead of 'Court' and the instruction to move a 'pair – a couple' rather than 'two' should push him to remove the King and Queen]. Now, if you have one card left, please concentrate upon it. If you have a whole bunch, think of any one of them. I believe you have in mind the ... [Close your eyes] ... Jack of Spades?"

The next most common choice is the Jack of Clubs, especially amongst magicians. For some reason we prefer Clubs over Spades, in direct opposition to the general public. So if the spectator squirms a little, correct yourself and say 'No, the Jack of Clubs.'

Both of these forces will work or fail depending upon your attitude. You must be forceful, yet casual. It is a useful skill to give very specific instructions in a way that sounds off-hand and casual – the 'Perfect Coin Reading' effect described elsewhere in this book uses a similar idea to direct the spectator to use a particular coin for the effect. Much has been written on methods of psychological

forcing – Banachek's **Psychological Subtleties** comes to mind, but I know from experience that there is a lot of untapped potential in this area if one really works at it. Much depends upon being able to engage the spectator in the right way to make her very responsive to your suggestions, and this can only be achieved if you are able to maintain an honest and compelling rapport with your audience.

Again, I wish you luck with these methods.

FINAL THOUGHTS

A aahhh, my loves, and so we come to the end of a wonderful journey: we have dipped our toelets in the shimmering pool of secret wonder and emerged triumphant. I wonder if this book will affect your performance of magic or mentalism. I wonder, again, about that word 'mentalism.' Let us roll up our collective sleeve of integrity and reach down deep into the raw, foetid effluence of dull, unconvincing effects: past the steaming turds that are billet switches; past the faecal nuggets that are sealed envelopes and 'gaps left for a nail writer;' and deep below that dead otter - that single stinking stool of immense proportions that is the standard book test, or the 'sealed prediction.' Let us together suppress our communal gag reflex and reach far below these vile grotesqueries and feel for the scatologist's true treasure: the shimmering gold that is the purification of all that stinks and smears: a glittering alchemical prize that screams to all those with ears to hear: "*No one cares about your sealed predictions! Put away your nonsense wallets! You are a tiny, ridiculous man!*" The purple splendour of real magic; the delight of wonder; the rich might of awe. Together we will bring this bright goodness to the surface and polish it until it shimmers and dances, beckons and seduces. This we will display to the world and the world will see its goodness, and in its goodness will appreciate its delightful evil.

Laugh at me at school would they? Soon they will all pay. The fools! I'll teach them - I'll teach them to mock me. No, I'll teach them *not* to mock me. Yes.

The best magicians that I have met are actors in their own right, or at least have a personality of successfully applied creativity. They are *artists*. And when a group of artists comes together, the last thing they should do is talk about their art. This kind of behaviour leads only to monstrosities such as writers' groups and other

mincing, ineffectual hellholes. They should talk about life, experience and meaning, for this is where art begins and ends.

Life. Anything else, my weary friends, is touched by the swollen hand of Onan. There is one word to describe our general approach to our art, and that one word is 'auto-erotic obsession.' We all know it. As we shuffle our little decks in the privacy of our rooms, or (for some) in the thrill of the open club-house, our magic books become our pornography, our full-length mirrors become our full-length mirrors, and fanning powder really comes into its own. Furtive, frantic delights that beget nothing. Choose life, ladies and gentlemen; choose, my petals, life. We are arch-creators in a world of wonder and the unfurlors of surprise. We can take people to the edge of their representation of this world and let them glimpse the dark, screaming abyss where their understanding runs out. We present a metaphor: that the map is not the territory, the menu is not the meal, that the interpretation of an event is not the event itself. And as we teach, we learn this for ourselves. And we can make it clearer for others. And somewhere in that lesson is wonder, and somewhere in that cocoon of wonder lies a tiny, mewling, perfect miracle.

As you go and nurture that miracle, and allow your performance to resonate with the integrity and respect that it deserves, and as you learn to take more seriously the task of imparting wonder, come to delight in the feeling of your endeavour becoming more exquisite, more finely-tuned, more perfect as you bring your performance closer and closer to the aesthetic ideal that you set for yourself. So that your magic becomes slowly as you think Magic should be. Set for yourself high standards and do not compromise them, and seek out the fine joy that comes from the moments when you achieve that ideal. And keep it about life.

I wish you every heaving, bloated resoundalment of success. I've been Derren Brown, and you've been splendid. Good Morning.

THANK-YOUS

The following have all been uncommonly splendid in their assistance with the formation or background of this volume. Full French kisses to them all.

Ian Rowland. After a bad hair decade in the eighties, which outstayed its dubious welcome well into the nineties, Ian became the foremost transatlantic TV faux psychic. (Re-reading that phrase it sounds as if women's clothes were involved. They were *not* and Ian stands by this.) In his usual, nauseatingly helpful and generous way, he gave up hours of his busy life normally spent in his local library swigging meths by the radiator, to plough through a manuscript of this book and offer pages of painstaking pedantry and snide side-swipes which he called 'feedback.' Should the reader find any glitches in spelling, grammar or style within these pages, Ian's oversight is to be blamed.

Ian is the author of the Full Facts Book series. I have already mentioned **The Full Facts Book Of Cold Reading**, which is *the* definitive work on the subject. It is huge, up-to-date, and astoundingly comprehensive. Details of this volume and the rest of the series are available from Ian's website, at www.irowland.demon.co.uk

Jerry Sadowitz. Many thanks to my friend, a genius in his fields and host of one of the most innovative series on British terrestrial television, for his time, feedback and input.

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Martin Macmillan. Son of Ron, the face of International Magic in London, and a tremendous source of encouragement as well as

invaluable assistance. I am unspeakably grateful. I'm not crying, I have something in my eye.

Peter Clifford. A good friend and a splendid magician. Peter took the photographs, and regularly has to sit up very late while I humiliate myself into the night with a deck of cards. I apologise unreservedly for not knowing when to put the cards away and just go home.

Ian Carpenter for looking a bit like Frasier and proofreading. Also to blame for any mistakes, and should be contacted directly.

Figaro. For shutting the Christ up sometimes

Nancy. For installing in me such a deep-seated misogyny that I now avoid relationships and have my creative urges free to employ in the formation of better performance.

Ray Frost at Davenports for his encouragement when I was a nipper.

Frank Sinatra

Vanessa Feltz

Cliff Richard

People beginning with H

That Bloke The Other Night Who Said That Thing

The Lord

If I've forgotten anyone then consider yourself thanked – apart from one person who thinks he should be mentioned but whom I have purposefully omitted because he wasn't as helpful as he thinks he was. You know who you are.

CABINET OF MYSTERY

AT LAST!!! A practical method of storing props for the working performer! YOU WILL LOVE this beautiful nasty wood-effect finish cabinet. IMAGINE... you can store, from the top down, all your props in descending order of usefulness. The TOP drawer is designed for cards and two clean red silks. The SECOND houses some brass things, some batteries just in case they work, and a cummy close-up mat. THIRD – a couple of electrical gadgets that you don't use, and a roll of tailor's invisible thread, that sits at the back ,



unwinding itself in the dark, weaving in and out of everything else in the drawer until you come to remove an item and find that everything follows along like a HUGE and gaudy charm bracelet. Also contains some really *embarrassing* old business cards of yours that you made when you were 16. FOURTH drawer – nasty old silks, a very unpleasant thumb tip that's better left alone, and over twelve thousand little brown envelopes with names of things written on the outside, but CONTAINING NOTHING. Some loose keys, and a folded up acre of black Fablon adhesive covering that you cut rectangles out of occasionally when you save money by making and covering your own props. Although you have never kept ANYTHING home-made like this, you can't bring yourself to burn it, which you should along with the mile of velcro and weird little paper-fastener things that you keep, you nerd. FIFTH drawer – Rocky Raccoon. SIXTH – little plastic wallets with 'Esso' on them which you keep just in case you need to put a packet trick in protective casing. Also somewhere in this drawer can be found a hook coin, a folding coin and a coin with another coin in it, all made from coins

now no longer in circulation and therefore useless, but kept in case you ever put together a routine with old coins. "Remember these?," you might say. SEVENTH drawer – nameless, unidentifiable crap that you bought when you were twelve, a plastic finger-chopper and some shoelaces that you keep in case you ever start doing Ring On Rope and want to use some old shoelaces. THE SECRET LOCKING DRAWER!! contained in the base houses a couple of pornographic cards and some nylon stockings, which you kept because you read somewhere that you could pull invisible threads from them that in turn could be separated into more individual threads. Also contains some catalogues with badly-spelt adverts and dodgy pictures of women wearing seventies negligée standing next to stupid things like this one.

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ALSO BY THE AUTHOR

Derren Brown is also an accomplished caricature artist and has exhibited all over the world. Inquiries regarding commissions and purchases should be made to www.derrenbrown.co.uk.



Praise for Derren Brown's PURE EFFECT

"PURE EFFECT opens a rich and significant new chapter in the progress of magical performance and mentalist technique. From the threads of his unique excursions into performance psychology, hypnosis, art and deception, Derren Brown has woven a breathtakingly original and compelling tapestry of magical excellence which could, and should, transform not just contemporary magical performance but also the way that books in this genre are henceforth written and presented. The ideas, approaches and routines in this book are to my mind the most captivating, and disturbingly persuasive, pieces of magical mentalism currently on offer to the deceptive trades. This is a stunning debut, and a brilliant new landmark in the navigation of supreme magical artistry."

Ian Rowland

"Over the years Derren Brown has consistently fooled me with his material and I'm genuinely relieved that this book is now available as the situation is becoming embarrassing. PURE EFFECT is a beautifully written book containing an exceptional blend of close-up magic and mentalism. I believe that PURE EFFECT will have a profound influence on magicians as it will turn close-up experts onto the power of mentalism and vice-versa. I hope that this book is the first of many from Derren Brown."

Jerry Sadowitz

This is, stated baldly, unquestionably the most provocative magic book I have read in a very long time. If I believed in spirits, I could almost hear the gleeful cackling of the late and foresighted Tony Andruzzi. What we have here is an obviously skilled conjuror who stands perched on the cusp of our art, and of the issues facing those conjuring artists who are most demanding, above all, of their art and of themselves. And he is posing the question: How does magic take its place in the cosmopolitan world of the arts and entertainment – not in the abstract sense, but in the bottom-line, real-world sense of arresting the attention of sophisticated, adult audiences, and ultimately of achieving the kind of impact that something loosely called 'magic' should probably hope and try to achieve? And the answer appears to be: By Any Means Necessary.

The one trick that many will be talking about... entitled "Smoke"... I have described to a number of colleagues, who have been captured by its elegance and mystery – as well as by its methodology. That synthesis – of effect and method – creates something larger than the whole – something beyond a simple pairing of known methods for a thought-of-card and cigarette transformation. Whatever that larger thing is, it is what this book is about. And there's a small but significant chance that thing might turn out to be called The Future of Magic.

Jamy Ian Swiss – from a lengthy review in *Genii* (March 2000)

This is a book for the serious thinker who would normally disregard 99% of a magic-book's content.



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