

THE SWAMI

A Look at the Tool & its Construction



Contributions From;

- *Lee Earle*
- *TC Tahoe*
- *Patrick Duffy*

and others

P. Craig Browning

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P. Craig Browning
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Northampton, MA

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Forward

AUTHOR'S NOTE:

When I first started working on this project it was intended to be a simple 16-25 page FREE Introduction text on the Swami device. Before I knew it the project had taken off in an amazing way, transforming into a rather informative and effect packed composition. While it will most certainly create a stir throughout the industry (someone GIVING AWAY this much information) I do hope that it give benefit to the people it was created for; those that are new to Mentalism and seeking to better understand this amazing device.



The “Swami” device a.k.a. “Nail Writer” have been around a very long time; the original Nail Writer being little more than a small piece of lead stuck between the nail & flesh of a person’s thumb, used in the act of covert (secret) writing. The technique being credited to 19th century charlatans associated with the Mediumistic and Psychic industries, but quickly adopted by Carnival pitch artists who employed them in games of supposed chance and weight guessing scenarios.

The first major evolution when it comes to the design of the Swami device was the creation of a small metal sliver – a crescent moon shape onto which a small barrel was soldered for holding the lead. This design was easier to work with for most, in that the lead would be more secure and less likely to fall from the nail position when working. {See: *13 Steps to Mentalism* pgs. 4&5}. But those wishing to use this secret weapon were still unhappy with the concept; mainly due to the fact that all the chief methods kept the writing point at the nail, which created an awkward position for holding the thumb – it wasn’t natural and for many, it would frequently result in mild spasms when more than check or circle were involved. This inspired two other designs that quickly became popular with entertainers.

The Boon Writer was the first such device; a small rubber (plastic or wax) “blister” with a smooth side on which a tacky glue or double-side tape was affixed and on the opposite side, a nub of lead¹. When used, the unit would be stolen out and literally attached to the thumb, usually a bit above the half-way position of the main pad but lower than the tip of the thumb itself; for most this is the more comfortable position for doing the secret writing in that the thumb can rest in a far more natural position.

The Thumb-Tip Writer soon followed in that it was more familiar to those entering Mentalism from the magician’s world and too, the design was far more secure, giving the performer greater confidence when working with it. This booklet will reveal how to make this particular design of the Swami gimmick along with the *Banjo Pick* design popularized in the 1980’s by Mentalist Bob Cassidy

Like the Boon Writer this variation places the lead in the comfort zone noted above, the exception to this rule being when an ink-pen addition is given to it; the basic necessities of a Ball-Point Writer makes it physically more difficult to mount the writing point at the sweet spot

¹ **Boon Writer** – also see “Scarab” or “Bug” writer

we've been discussing, placing it closer to the traditional position though it is slightly between the actual nail positive and the sweet spot. . . and yes, I'll be outlining how to make the ink-based writer as well

In the late 1990s a new variation to the Swami hit the market, one that allowed the performer to replicate the ink and style associated with the popular Sharpie™ brand marker. This *Super Sharpie™* design has proven to be quite popular and in many cases, replacing the Listo-Lead (China Marker) variation most stage performers had relied on over the years due to its boldness and how, from a distance, it can replicate the look of a writing point marker, such as the Sharpie. While I have no hands-on experience working with the Super Sharpie gimmick, I would still encourage those working stage and even public streets as a busker, to seriously look into said variant, given the visual advantages and covert concealment/hold-out that you get with said system.

The Band-Writer is a happy compromise that many performers enjoy working with in that they are secure when adjusted properly and are considerably smaller than the Thumb-Tip style or writer.

Why Use Such an “Out-of-Date” Method?

For starters, it's not “out of date”. While it is quite old, it still has an uncanny sense of power when used in a well thought-out and practiced manner. I emphasize these two things simply because the swami is the sort of thing that can (and has) built careers all by itself; the proficient operator requiring little more than solid Reader's skills in conjunction to Swami Skills to literally start a new religion. This can't be said about many things in the world of Magic but Mentalism has a handful of unique skills that can put such prowess in your hands; I should make note however, your success in using these chief skill-sets does include your ability to be a good Reader of people and understand how to deliver the quality of Reading that inspires the patron to *change their stink'n think'n* and get on with life. – more on that issue shortly, what's important at this point is that you understand what the Swami device allows you to get away with and how complex or simple it can be.

First Important Point . . . you do not need to learn how to write a novel using your Swami. When you first start working with this type of gimmick you need to do little other than make an X, Check Mark or Circle.

This goes back to the issue of planning-out the effects you will do when working with the Swami. Many noted Mentalists will have business cards that have two or three “tests” on the reverse side, bits that can be proven-out by way of a simple check or circling an item (I'll give you a couple of templates at the end of the book). This is a powerful advantage that allows you to deliver an easy *one-on-one* or small group demo that is roughly 6-10 minutes long. Plus, there is the advantage of putting your business card into the hands of people that will share their experience with others. We're talking about solid reputation generating material here.

The great Maurice Fogel had what some refer to as a “*Flash Opening*” in which he did a rapid fire series of apparent Readings on people chosen randomly from the audience. It was staggering and built a monstrous reputation for the man and yet 90% or more of what he did relied on the swami and check-list type set-ups and careful use of certain psychological controls; a demonstration that every newbie with a few months' worth of practice can generate.

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On the opposite side of the coin I am one of several Mentalists that rarely incorporate the Swami device. In my case, I'm far better known for using a *stylus* over an actual writer and in those rare instances in which I do actually "write" it's rarely more than a few numbers and typically nothing beyond those checks, X's and circles (or underlines) mentioned earlier. If and when I do covert writing I'll either "double-write"² or Pocket Write³.



² **Double Writing** – is the act of deliberately replicating something that's being written and doing so at the same exact time. While there are gimmicks that can aid in this type of utility action, the majority of those doing this work simply copy material while feigning the act of searching for details whilst probing a participant's mind or some such. It is certainly a skill that's not to be taken lightly when it comes to learning the technique and the showmanship-based misdirection needed for using it effectively.

³ **Pocket Writing** – is a form of secret writing that is executed within the confines of one's trouser pocket by incorporating a "PW Desk" that holds a collection of Billets (typically secured by robber-bands) and a pencil nub roughly 1 ½ to 2 inches in length; many a performer actually using their swami device as a matter of convenience and less pocket clutter.

LESSON ONE

Position IS Everything!

Before we get too carried away with making a device to all our own you need to decide the best placement for the writing nub⁴; and needless to say, this placement hinges on a handful of issues, starting with the type of writing material you plan on using.

The majority of us will be using “Artist Lead”. I emphasize this because it is a thicker shaft of graphite that can be purchased through most artist supply stores by the stick vs. an entire box a.k.a. *lifetime supply*. This type of lead comes in a variety of hardness values in that the harder quality barely makes a visible line; it is used for laying-out basic designs and dimension elements for an artistic or drafting type project. With this in mind, it should stand to reason that what you need for effective Swami Work is a much softer lead.

Darker										Lighter									
9B	8B	7B	6B	5B	4B	3B	2B	B	HB	F	H	2H	3H	4H	5H	6H	7H	8H	9H
Lead Grade Chart																			
This chart will help you know which softness that's needed for your work and comfort level. The more popular grades being between 8B and 4B																			

The other popular type of “Lead” used with a Swami Gimmick is what’s known as “Listo-Lead” or China-Marker/Wax Pencil Lead. The better form of this to work with comes in stick form as a refill to a mechanical pen designed for the wax filler. This type of “crayon” material is a bit harder than the traditional crayon most of us grew-up with and similarly, writes a far smoother and consistent line which is why it so easily mimics a standard-point Sharpie styled marker; so long as you are working at a distance of five+ feet from your patrons and no one is allowed to physically hold the billet or page you’ve written on, no one is the wiser. Too, you can obtain this type of lead in a variety of colors.

Yes, there is now a Swami System that employs the Sharpie felt type point; the **Super Sharpie™** by Magic Smith is an excellent device that’s quite popular with buskers and stage workers alike. But it is a protected piece of intellectual property and will not be exposed in this text. Rather, we would encourage you to make a purchase of the unit should the idea of using the felt pen marker be more appealing to you over the other, more traditional systems.

Specialty Writers that have been used for generations in some cases include classroom chalk, traditional crayons, lip-stick and a Stylus; typically within the auspices of Séance work, though the Stylus gives us a huge exception, which will be explained later in the text.

Traditional Lead-Based Swami's will be the focus of things for the moment, starting with your understanding as to the kind of lead that’s to be used, where to find it, and how it is normally used so that you have a fair chance at tracking it down.

⁴ **Writing Nub** – this refers to the short piece of artist’s lead, China Marker/Listo-Lead, Chalk, Stylus, etc. that you may employ, based on the routine and handling chosen.

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The illustration to the right, reveals the more common “multi-pack” purchased by professional artists & draftsmen as well as the mechanical pen (holder) that goes with said materials; the lead sticks retailing for between .75¢ and \$1.25 depending on quality and manufacturer. As noted earlier, even if you’re working a full 10-hour shift a day doing nothing but swami work, a pack of leads such as this, will most likely last you through the bulk of your career. You only need about 3/8ths of an inch off a stick of this stuff, to make a proper Swami, an eighth of that length being glued into the holder; the barrel of a *Pop-Rivet*.



Rivets

Before we can complete the above process, there’s a second component you need to know about – Rivets.



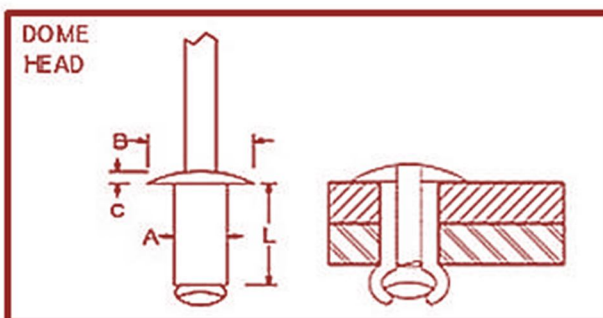
The illustration to the left shows a Copper & Brass “Pop” rivet. There are other metal compositions with the majority being steel variants but this style alongside the aluminum version is the star when it comes to this particular gimmick.

As you can see in the illustration below, the shaft of the rivet (which is a hollow tube with a rounded top) hosts a “bulb” on the one end. When set into a rivet gun (right) the rod is pulled up by squeezing the machine’s handles; this tightening action continuing until a “pop” is heard i.e. the sound made as the shaft breaks from the bulb which is now encased by the outer sheathing of the rivet tube, the rounded cap section, bracing the rivet from the opposite side and so a very solid anchor is made, traditionally binding two sheets of metal together in a seam. In our case however, we are merely creating a device that will receive the lead and serve as a holder.



To get to that point we must find our own *sweet spot* – that position on our actual thumb that feels the most comfortable and natural position for the lead to be placed. Once we have that spot in our mind, we must take the Thumb Tip and visualize where that same point will be when it comes to our gimmick. For most of us this will be between the center of the thumb-pad and the tip of the thumb itself (see illustration on the next page).

Once you’re comfortable in having found that point, you will drill through the plastic at that point, using the proper sized drill. If you are using an 1/8th inch rivet then you will use the same sized drill bit, BUT, do not “ream” the hole out. That is to say, do not run the drill back and forth



through the hole or turn it at an angle while doing said action so as to clear the hole of burs. You want this hole to be a bit tight when it comes to how the rivet fits into it, this tightness will help secure the unit, even though you will likewise glue it into position using clear epoxy.

Once the Hole is Drilled you will first “dry fit” your rivet so as to insure a proper fit. Then you will set the rivet into the gun as per the

instructions, set the rivet barrel into place on your Thumb Tip and then lock it into position⁵.

IF you have a portion of the shaft filling the barrel simply take a smaller drill-bit (that fits the hole diameter of the barrel) and drill it out. You only need to drill down about half the thickness of the barrel in that you only need 1/8th of an inch in depth for your lead to drop down into the socket. Before you insert the lead drop a small bit of super glue into the hole and then the lead; once a dry-fit confirms a reasonably taught, fit.

NOTE: before you begin these procedures you must make certain that the rivet size has a barrel design that will accommodate the lead being used. Like the lead, the hole-dimension of the rivets varies. You will want a lead gauge (most are 2 mm) that barely slides through the barrel when the rod has been removed. You don't want things too tight in that you need room along the sides of the barrel to allow the glue to wrap around the lead shaft; adhering to the lead as well as the barrel's interior wall.

There is an Alternative to the Pop-Rivet and that's a simple two barreled rivet similar to what you find on canvass covers and tents (a.k.a. grummets). Basically, one barrel slips into a shorter but wider barrel and by using a special "pin base" (usually comes with the kit) you can flatten & anchor the two together with a heavy hammer. The problem is, it is difficult to find this type of device in as small a size as you will generally require (unless you plan on using China Marker type leads/crayon) and too, it can be difficult to place the pin base inside the Thumb Tip. However, you can anchor one side of the barrel to the Thumb Tip using clear epoxy. But, I'd take the non-flanged end of the grummet and grind it down by at least half its length so you don't have a lot of it sticking inside the thumb tip, blocking your real thumb. While you do need a reasonable amount of tube with either type of rivet, so as to support the lead, you need to keep what is found inside the TT at a minimum, in that you must push your thumb in quite deep.



Unlike the more traditional use of a Thumb Tip, you will be wearing this one further down on the thumb so that the rivet sits as close as possible to your personal sweet spot (on your real thumb). The fit should be snug, the inner portion of the rivet pressing against the flesh so as to add to your sense of control.

From this point forward, it's a matter of personal practice, something we'll get into shortly. In the meantime I need to point out that the procedure is the same if you are using the Listo styled lead, the difference being that you will need to use a rivet with a wider barrel size that will accommodate the thicker wax stick. Too, you will need to be very cautious when it comes to using Listo-Lead in that it snaps off quite easily when kept in the pocket. Experimentation when it comes to placement or even creating a hold-out that will keep it safe from bumping and general pocket fumbling may be wise.

My personal preference is to place my Swami's and similar gaffs into the small coin pockets such as you find in most Jean type pants. Some dress slack makes have a similar pocket that's hidden within the waist band seam; if there isn't one, you can have a tailor install one or two for relatively cheap. I recently had it done to two pair of slacks and it cost less than \$25.00.

⁵ **Guitar Pick Alternative** – this was suggested by Lee Earle; you can use a metal thumb pick as is used by guitar players, solder or epoxy a rivet into the existing hole, set your lead and voila!

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The other classic “hold-out” for the swami will be found in the traditional men’s sport coat (suit jacket) and is best known as “ticket pockets”. These are usually found in the right front pocket of your suit and again, if your jacket doesn’t have one, they can be easily and cheaply installed. Other methods have included fixing a small rare-earth magnet in the pocket so they are set in steal position and each to find; easily done with shirt pockets, sport coats, etc.

Another practice that I’ve seen when it comes to the TT style of Swami is to cut about half the plastic end off of the Thumb Tip itself, leaving you with the upper-half where the gimmick is mounted. The reason I’ve been given is for the sake of quick identification; so you don’t mistakenly put on a real TT vs. your Swami. I’ve found that the size factor aids in other ways, starting with knowing which Swami I am grabbing. There are times when I am deliberately using different colored leads so I will want to distinguish one from the other. Too, I may be working with my Ball-Point writer as well as a traditional writer, so size gives me a quicker cue as to which is which. While it’s true, the ball-point has a large nub closer to the tip of the thumb than the other, I’ve found that the size and texture differences between the two devices is more effective when it comes to speed and ease of identification.

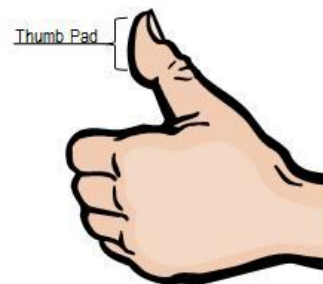
One of my personal habits with this type of Swami is to mount it to a thing known as a “6th Finger” – Quite literally an extra finger that fits in between two of your real fingers, which permits you to do many of the traditional bits associated with the TT but without the classic movement the latter is known for. Too, the 6th Finger tends to hold larger loads, which makes it practical under certain routine conditions.

What I do is cut off the end knuckle closest to the fingertip and mount a piece of lead in exactly the same manner we’ve just outlined. I can steal this and wear it on my first or middle finger without notice, which allows me to more readily do Pocket Writing and other covert writing antics.

The hold-out for said device can be any one of those already noted, but my favorite is a simple strip of ½” wide black elastic penned into the hem of my jacket. A quick poke and I have the device. I likewise use this set-up for my Stylus, which we’ll be discussing next.

The Lee Earle Variation to the Thumb-Tip Swami

To make a Swami of this type, cut (from the area which encircles the pad of your thumb) a 1/4” wide ring from a vinyl thumb-tip. Use a heated coat hanger wire to melt a hole in which you mount a short piece of Listo or Scripto lead.



The Stylus

In my opinion this is one of the sneakiest, most useful gimmicks in all of mentalism when it comes to this type of tool and when used under a well-planned guise. It is so rarely employed that it fools a good majority of supposedly “learned” personalities and because of how it is used, it totally throws the laity for a loop.

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Yes, it can be more complicated when it comes to setting things up and too, one needs to be able to write fluidly; words, numbers, etc. But once you have the technique down, you can do some amazing things, including one of the more “impossible” variations to *Confabulation*, out there.

A Stylus is little more than a very hard piece of plastic that you’ve formed a rounded “ball-like” point, the hole of which is glued to your TT (preferably mounted as per our previous outline). When assembled correctly and given its own special storage box, a Stylus will last you forever (I made my first one when I was 16 and still use it – I keep it in a small velvet “ring box” such as you’d get from a jeweler).

To Use the Stylus, you need to create a special envelope or writing surface in which Graphite type carbon paper is glued onto the facing “wall”, such as the front of an envelope or a sheet of paper resting above your “prediction” sheet.

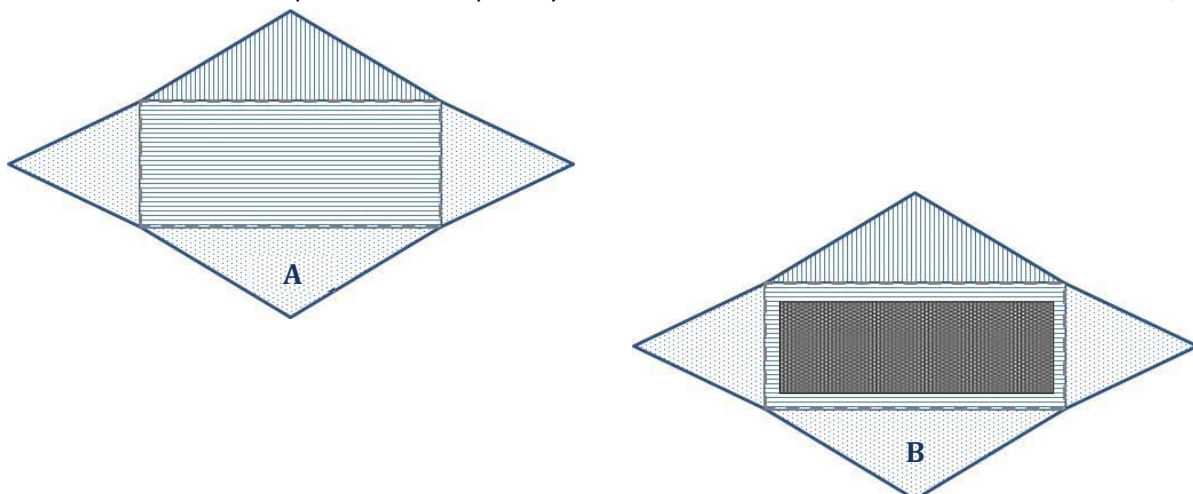
The other requisite is that you understand the geography of your “prediction” page. Allow me to explain;

The prediction page will be composed in a way that leaves large blanks between words that are each handwritten by you prior to the show. This creates a kind of geography that you need to understand once the paper is folded and placed into the envelope, leaving the blanks facing the carbon paper. With a bit of practice you will learn where, on the envelope, to Swami-Write the appropriate information; usually about 3 key points that can be kept within a limited area on the paper hosting the premonition. (Yes, there are some other cheats & convincers that can be pulled but I’m not sharing presently, it’s up to you to get creative and find them yourself).

I’ve already mentioned *CONFABULATION*, which is one of my favorite bits to do with this set-up alongside my version of *Poison Monte*. But you can likewise predict the serial number to any borrowed bill, lottery numbers, information about a person’s car including the VIN Number and License Plate – the sky really is the limit (along with your imagination), so don’t sell this simple device too short. Play with it!

Gluing the Carbon Paper into the envelope is relatively easy though it can be a bit touchy at first.

You will need to open the envelope so you have ease of access. This can be a hint tedious, but



the effort will be rewarded via your performance. Simply steam the seams of the envelope using either a tea-pot or a clothing-iron, it shouldn't take a lot of effort this way, to activate the glue sufficiently to allow it to let go of the opposing surface.

Once opened you'll have a sheet that looks something similar to this (based on a Mead brand security envelope). The vertical stripped area at the top is the stander flap one folds down to seal an envelope, while the lighter shaded triangles represent the panels that get folded into place and thus, create the envelope container.

As you can see in illustration "B" the Pencil Carbon is attached in a manner that covers the bulk of the envelope face. You can use any number of glues to do this effectively but you must make certain that the glue dries in a manner that is still flexible such as your spray-on fabric glues, Rubber Cement or Contact Cement though the latter can prove frustrating because of how both surfaces need to be treated so as to insure proper adhesion.

I will typically use a spray-on glue and before doing so, cover all areas not being sprayed with full sheets of newspaper so as to prevent glue from getting onto other parts of the envelope itself (which will cause problems later on) but most importantly, to keep the glue off my working surface and everything surrounding it.

You can mask off the envelope and working space using blue painter's tape for best results. I like using at least an inch or inch and a half wide tape so as to insure a better hold when it comes to the masking.

The Carbon Panel should be about $\frac{3}{8}$ th to $\frac{1}{2}$ an inch recessed all the way around the main face panel of your envelope, perhaps a bit less if desired. Just bear in mind that the further up the face panel the carbon is set, the easier it is to flash and become noticed by the participant. I'll address this issue in a moment, but think about it as you prepare to secure this part of the gimmick to the envelope.

An Alternative, if you are really good at judging your *envelope geography*, is to use small bits of carbon that are glued to specific areas of the envelope (areas where you'll be using the stylus to write and fill-in the blanks).

Another trick that can be done is to color the interior of your envelope so that all panels look the same. You can excuse it, should anyone notice and ask, as being a kind of security envelope that prevents people using infrared scanners from reading what's written on the inside contents. You might chuckle at that but there are some high tech magic props that use that exact technology and the CIA has been using it since the 1970s; there are even security envelopes that use a thin Mylar similar to the wrapper on Pop-Tarts...

While we're on the subject, there are now colored carbon papers available through Artist Supply companies. I use the Saral⁶ brand which gives me a nice pencil (dark grey/black) as well as white, Yellow, Red & Green. If I'm not mistaken they have other colors available as well.

I have a particular fondness of the white carbon in that it allows me to use dark colored papers. It may seem trivial, but psychologically seeing white writing on a dark paper that's removed from a sealed envelope tends to negate the idea of using a carbon type transfer in the minds of

⁶ **Saral Colored Carbon Papers** – www.saralpaper.com

the average show participant. Similarly, having red or green colored writing showing up on yellow or light orange paper removes said option from the mind when the curious attempt to reconstruct the sequence of events and discover your method.

BTW... your stylus is great when it comes to working Banachek's *Stigmata* or Aaron Smith's *"Ghost Papers"*

~See More on This Technique in the Routine & Appendix Sections~

Thoughts in Ink

WARNING: The Ball Point Ink Swami is exceptionally messy to make, take extreme care to protect clothing, furnishings, and the Thumb Tip device itself.

Dissecting the Pen

1. Using the cheap "stick" styled ball point pens but of a quality brand such as Bic®, you will pull the ink cartridge with the nub from the tube into which it is mounted. The easiest means by which to do this is gentle pressure, perhaps a twist to the left & right while pulling; the entire unit should slide out quite readily. Do be careful not to clamp down too hard on the pliers, it can result in the ball not moving and thus, your gimmick not working and too, it will leave tool marks on the nub, which can cause other complications with use.
2. Because of the 3/8th to ½ inch length of the nub it will be next to impossible to mount the writing point at the "sweet spot" you may be more familiar with (and comfortable at using). The nub protruding about half-way between the actual tip of the thumb and the center of the top thumb pad, perhaps slightly higher or lower depending on the size of the Thumb Tip as well as pen mechanics.
 - a. You must know where and how this fit will be set prior to cutting the ink filled tube. It is my suggestion that you simply experiment with the tip position using an older, stained Thumb Tip and then translate that positioning detail to the new device; drilling a hole into the tip at the desired position and then pushing the nub through from the inside of the device.
3. At this point you want to press the ink tube down and as flat as possible to the inside "bottom" of the TT and then, with a fine point felt tipped pen, mark the point roughly ¼" inside the thumb gimmick on the ink shaft.
4. Now, remove the ink tube assembly from the tip and on multiple layers of newspaper that a sharp, hot blade and cut the tube at the previously marked point. All going well the heat of the blade will sear the plastic closed and prevent ink leakage. You will take other steps to help insure that the ink stays in the pen, the better method I've found I to place a piece of toothpick into the hollow of the tube where you cut it. . . BUT ONLY IF IT DIDN'T SEAL PROPERLY WHEN CUT WITH THE HOT BLADE.
 - a. You can likewise dip this end into some melted wax a couple of times so as to seal it.

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5. You are now ready to secure the nub in its position sticking out the hole in the tip. Being exceptionally careful not to get any on the actual ball part of the nub, use super-glue to secure the nub into place – I suggest Super Glue Gel for best results or a drop of clear epoxy.
6. Using flesh colored medical tape, secure the ink tube to the bottom of the Thumb Tip, making certain to cover the end that was cut, thereby holding the wax plug securely in place.

That's it!

Just make certain you use the right color ink pens when you work your routines.

Pick'n & Grin'n

I'd be amiss if I didn't at least mention another easy to construct Swami device that was first introduced by Bob Cassidy in his book *"Principia Mentalia"* (highly recommended for all new comers to Mentalism, btw), as well as *"The Artful Mentalism of Bob Cassidy"* and later in *"The Resurrection of Dr. Crow"*. I'll not tip too much here in that I've already made a passing comment about it earlier. I will however give you a strong bit of encouragement when it comes to your picking-up any one (or all) of these books for the insights they offer as well as step-by-step details on how to make this rather awesome version of the Swami Device (my personal favorite of all Swami designs).

Another easy to modify device from the musical world is the thumb pick worn by guitar players (mentioned to me by Lee Earle as part of his overview to this project – he's been awesome). Evidently the metal thumb picks fit perfectly in position, in much the way a "Band Writer" would fit. You can set a rivet in the existing hole along the pick and mount your lead in a manner similar to what's been discussed.

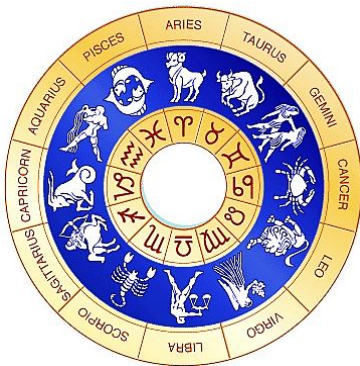


From the Hip

P. Craig Browning

I've mentioned that I'm not one to rely on the Swami for a whole lot of things. In fact 90% of what I do with the Swami centers on business card related demonstrations such as I use when working a room prior to the show or when strolling at a mixer; the bits use one of any number of templates I have for the back side of my business card (see the Appendix section for templates). However, and this is important, not all the routines these business card systems allow me to do, incorporate the swami; one or two will certainly use the device but more than not, you will find variations to Psychological Force techniques as well as billet work set-ups.

The Seer



As the conversation moves towards things Psychic I offer a simple test; a demonstration as to how a studied student of Astrology can accurately discern a person's sign just by having a brief conversation with them. In stating such I remove a card from my wallet and in making the obvious gesture of focus towards one member of the group, jot down something unknown to the rest. I then look up and address the person I was just focused on, *"We've never met before this evening, correct? And so there is no way I could possibly know something as intimate as your birth information, correct?"*

I need you to focus on your Astrological sign; clear everything from your mind and just visualize the image of your zodiac . . . You're the type that always there for your friends; it's as if you are aware of their needs. . . I'm sensing something about movement – momentum of some sort but I can't tell if this has to do with work or some other aspect in your life. I do know that you're concerned about a particular question – a situation that's enveloping part of your life. All I can really confirm for you is that the answer is YES, I must leave it to you to understand what that applies to.

At this point you are seen to jot something down on a small card you have supported by your wallet. . . *I think I've got this right but we won't know until you share with everyone here what you're actual zodiac sign is. . .*

The participant names there sign

After another minute's worth of patter concerning the named sign, you turn the card over and reveal a mark beside the exact sign that was named.

A Few Nuances. . .

Fake making a longer entry as you pretend to mark the card.

Ask not for his sign, but for his birthdate. Then turn to the audience and ask, *"Anyone know what his star sign might be?"* As if you didn't already have the date ranges in small type on your circular illustration.

When someone replies, approach and repeat the info, "*His birthday is June 22 so his star sign is Cancer, eh? Is the abbreviated insight I jotted on that card accurate?*" Hand over the card and wait.

Some of us have a personality that allows them to dryly and openly instruct at the same time, "*Say 'yes'. Nice and loud.*" It's a cute bit but the audience can 'read' both of you and know that your helper wasn't forced in the least.

This sort of reply also encourages your audience to assume you've inscribed his entire birthdate - an even greater miracle. Always provide a way for them to add to the legend.

How to Work It

There's a couple of things going on here, the first is found in that preliminary Reading; if you go through it you'll find a handful of "descriptors" a.k.a. words that describe traits about a person, in this case we have Always, Aware, Movement, Momentum and the word Yes.

Care to guess the name of the young lady we're doing this experiment with? I just told you.

A, M, and Y are the key letters to each of these descriptors e.g. her name is AMY. The method in use comes from Richard Webster's *Psychometry from A-Z*, possibly one of the most important systems you can work with when it comes to doing Readings of any sort, including Q&A bits from the stage.

Part Two of this routine is of course, feigning the act of jotting down your "guess" followed by the secret marking once the participant has named their actual sign.

There is no reason to fear the secret writing part in that you have at least 45-60 seconds of added patter (describing traits associated with the named sign) during which you can easily find where the name is and make your mark. There's tons of room for general misdirection during this patter. Your best move however, is to lower the hand with the card & wallet, to about waist level, turning it so the card faces your body. This way the folks gathered are watching your face rather than burning your hand & related actions – psychologically, when you move something between the solar plexus and waist area, the brain no longer "sees it" . . . it's outside the area of action, which in this case, is your face and voice.

You only need to lower the card for a second or two, which can be part of your natural animation as you talk; using your hands to gesture.

About the Zodiac . . . I've included templates for this bit in the Appendix section as well as information on each Astrological Sign. It is important that every Mentalist know these basics in that it adds to their *validity of claim* within the public mind. While the template offers a Zodiac Wheel you could, if it is easier for you, type up two column list of the sign names with a small block or blank line area for you to check

What About That Blank Space to The Right?

If you look at the template you will see a large blank space in the lower right hand of the slip. This is the set-up for **Acidus Novus**. If you do not know it don't worry, I'll cover how it works in

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the Appendix. Quite simply, Acidus Novus is the first major peek to be found in Mentalism, it was introduced to the world by Al Mann in Vol. 4 as Acidus Plus. Credit for developing the move goes to Florida's Millard Longman, a man that taught me much over the years including one of the most important rules in Mentalism – DO IT FOR REAL!

I'll get into that with my closing words but it's something you should be thinking about as you work on this material.

Midway Swami

Chances are, if you've ever visited a fair or carnival you've seen the guy or gal guessing a person's weight, age or birthday. Well, this is that game the way it's been done for at least 100 years that we know of. Unlike our previous routine you will actually be writing numbers in this case (got to learn it sooner or later and this routine is excellent practice . . . especially if you are doing sidewalk performances).

The card you use can be completely blank or you can divide it into a handful of blocks, allowing you to do the two primary bits + one possibly two other routines.

The handling is the same with the first two bits of business; you use a small "golf" pencil on purpose, the size makes it difficult to write neat no matter who you are. You make your challenge about the age first. Feign writing it down so that your committed and then, ask the young lady or lad to tell everyone present their age . . . you then turn the card over and prove your hunch is correct. So now you want to step things up a bit by discerning the date⁷ they were born. Again, you feign jotting your prediction and follow-up by asking them to state to everyone their date of birth. . . you instantly turn the card over for all to see, your patron verifying the fact that you're right.

Normally this would be the end of the bit but there are some options as noted;

- **Guess Your Weight** – while a classic this bit has lost favor in recent times because of the whole obesity issue, especially in the U.S. Nonetheless, I would leave a block open for doing this bit when you feel comfortable doing it. On the other hand, if you don't think it proper with certain patrons you can use this same block for something else, such as a Psychological Force⁸



⁷ **DATE OF BIRTH** – there is an easy cheat if you're uncomfortable with writing; simply print the 12 months off on your template, this way you can either check or circle the right month. Your pitch being that you can guess the month they were born in vs. the date.

⁸ **PSYCHOLOGICAL FORCE** – I recommend the standard Circle & Triangle force (see Banachek's *Psychological Subtleties* Vol 1) but if you wish to follow this routine up with a book or magazine test, you should look into number forces. I would encourage you to purchase Dr. Bill Cushman's *THE FORCE* in that it goes into serious depth when it comes to this particular focus.

- *Psychological Forces* can be used quite effectively at this point in that the approach is similar enough to your previous actions so as to create a kind of dual-reality that more or less causes people to misremember things, thus concealing methods. In this case you still jot down a thought but in this instance you really do write or draw the “thing” in question. Unlike the previous bits however, you hand the card to someone else to hold so as to prove that you’re not cheating in some way. Now you can do a *Think of a Color, a Flower, etc.* and be perfectly clean. The psychological advantages will prove devastating.
- ***Acidus Novus + One*** – in other words, you leave your space in the lower right corner just as you found in the previous template but without the wordage. This will allow you to shift into a quick revelation bit, which again, shifts the psychological dynamics in such a way as to confound common or singular explanation – people will misremember because it’s all so similar in style. This will leave you one large block in the upper-right section of the card that can be used for other experiments or effects of your choice. I’ve suggested a book test above; you could do the number force and leave room for the patron to write the word from the book or magazine for later confirmation. This would put the card in their hand and out of your control which again, obfuscates the various techniques and guards against, reverse engineering when it comes to the typical lay-person.

Experiment with your layout & routining, I’ve offered a few ideas in the appendix section.

- ***Pocket Change*** – a classic of mentalism; you jot down your thought and then ask the patron to count the amount of change they have on them. Your prediction proves to be true
 - If you can manage to get near a specific mark prior to the pitch, drop a dime or quarter into an alternative pocket. When you write the total they say, add the extra amount to that total. They will say you’re wrong. . . ask them to go through their pockets . . . they find the extra coin and all ends well and you look extra special.



Deli Delight

Andy Levis & Lee Earle



I first encountered this wonderful little gem in the old SYZYGY newsletter published by Lee Earle in the early 1990s. For those having a serious interest in the “Mental Magic” side of Mentalism I can’t encourage you enough to keep your eyes open for the now bound volumes of this publication as well as the “Best of SYZYGY” videos, they are a gold-mine of solid/proven material used by some of the biggest names out there.

Deli Delight started as the brain-child of my dear friend Andy Levis and it was between he and Lee that it evolved into both, a wonderful mystery and a most excellent lesson in Swami Work 101.

Yes, there is a variation to this effect involving a Pizza order – a blatant and commercial sold rip-off. The concept and method is so simple however, it can be applied to a variety of themes, but I’ll leave such things up to your own imagination.

“In my younger days,” begins the Mentalist, “when I had to work for a living, one of my employers was a convenience market chain. It’s not the most challenging occupation, so to keep my mind active; I would play a game with myself. Whenever a customer opened the glass door where the ready-made sandwiches were displayed, I would make an instant guess about which type of sandwich the customer would choose.

“The funny thing is that, after a while, those guesses became more and more accurate. Perhaps it was a subconscious association between the fellow in the Birkenstock sandals and his choice of the vegetarian special, or the big guy in the rodeo hat and the barbecue beef on a bun which he purchased.

Holding up a small paper sack, the performer informs, *“I’ve brought a sandwich with me today, straight from the corner market. Let’s find someone who is likely to enjoy this selection.*

To a man near an aisle, the Mentalist says, *“Sir, what is your occupation? Engineer? I’m sure you are an excellent one, but you don’t fit the profile I’m looking for. How about this gentleman - what do you do for a living? You’re a carpenter? That’s better.*

“The refrigerated sandwiches are made with various kinds of bread. Which would you prefer; white, wheat, rye, sourdough, or whole grain?” The participant announces his preference.

“How about the contents?” asks the performer, *“You have your choice of roast beef, salami, tuna salad, egg salad, barbecue beef, or assorted sprouts.”* Again, the participant names his choice.

“Any lettuce, tomato, onion, or watercress?” the performer inquires. The helper states his wishes.

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The Mentalist goes on, “You can have your sandwich with American cheese, Swiss cheese, or cheddar cheese. Does one of those sound appetizing?” One does.

“Finally,” the performer concludes, “what condiment or sauce would you prefer: ketchup, mustard, pickles, mayonnaise, or BBQ sauce?” One is chosen by the audience participant.

“Let’s recap - you have selected tuna on rye, with lettuce and Swiss cheese. And you want that with ketchup, correct?”

“Would you please step up to the microphone, take the sandwich out of the bag, and tell us what kind of sandwich it is?”

He says, “Tuna on rye with lettuce and Swiss cheese.”

“Wait a moment,” the performer adds, “you didn’t say anything about the condiment. It was ketchup, wasn’t it? Look in the bag.”

He pulls out a single serving packet of ketchup!

Buy a convenience store sandwich which is packaged in one of those triangular plastic containers with the clear plastic panel which allows the customer to see the food inside. Replace the sandwich with something of similar weight & bulk and cover the opening with a piece of mirrored mylar plastic (trimmed from a potato chip bag, the inside of which is the silvery mylar) so the “sandwich” can no longer be seen.

Then attach a label printed as per the example in the illustration. It is sized to fit the Avery 5163, 2 x 4 inch label format.

All it takes is a swami gimmick (boldly employed as you display the packaged sandwich before dropping it back into the bag bearing the convenience market’s logo) to check off or circle the participant’s choices on the sandwich label. The condiment packets are body-indexed (mayo in your left trouser pocket, mustard in your right trouser pocket, etc.) so you can covertly withdraw the appropriate condiment hidden in your hand to deposit in the sack.

Rather than sending the participant back to his seat with the now unrefrigerated “sandwich,” give him an envelope containing gift certificates (two one-dollar bills) good at any participating convenience market for the sandwich of his choice.



BONUS: From Lee Earle’s’ Lecture Notes & Presentation Tips:

I have found that the best type of thumb-writer (Swami Gimmick) for general purposes takes advantage of the thick, crayon-like Listo or Scripto lead. It provides a bold stroke which cannot be missed yet is surprisingly easy to employ.

If you wish to add the ultimate in detail, attach a price sticker over a top corner of the label and perhaps add a small sticker which denotes a “pull date” (the last day the sandwich would be sold as fresh).

{See Appendix for Sandwich Label Graphic}

The Starbuck Swami

Scott Drebus

Our first couple of lessons around the Swami, dealt with the super simple; making a check-mark, underlining a word or even circling an item on a list – SIMPLE! In this variation to *Deli-Delight* my friend Scott Drebus gives you an amazing impromptu bit of business that will drive folks wild.

While at a Starbucks you and some friends get on the subject of “Mind Reading”; your apparent ability to intercept a person’s thoughts.

You suggest an experiment and borrowing a pen from behind the counter (the sort used by the baristas) you ask one of the people in your group or even a total stranger, to simply think about their order or, to make it even more challenging, to think of something a bit more complicated.

Is it Regular or Decaf? You ask, telling them to just think the answer. You study their expression and then make a mark on the cup.

Milk? Any Kind of Milk? Soy? Half & Half? Skim? Again, they only think of the ingredient and you make your mark on the side of the cup.

Flavors? There are a lot of flavored syrups but which one do you like best? Caramel? Chocolate? Butterscotch? Egg Nog? Spice?

Once all the thoughts are “sent” you offer a short reprise emphasizing the fact that you’re committed, you’ve marked the cup with the pen so there’s no getting out of things. Yet, as your test subject names off if item, one at a time and you but nod, affirming their answers, something amazing seems to be happening; your eyes growing wider and wider and your demeanor obviously brimming with excitement.

Once everything is named you hand the cup to someone in the group who pulls down the cuff that covers the area when all the ingredients are listed and sure enough, you were able to accurately name each and every choice.

Method

Obviously you are going to need to have the appropriate swami at the ready, which means that you need to know what kind of pen that location uses on their cups. Most employ a sharpie or grease-pencil, but double-check so your answers have the right look to them.

When you begin the routine you must lower the “hot cuff” down to reveal the ingredient chart used by the Barista. You “Mime” the act of making a check mark as it would apply to each of the things you are questioning. Then it apparently raise the cuff back into place as you recap events. In truth, the cuff remains sitting low so you can easily check off each section as your participant names things off. Then you covertly raise the cuff into place prior to handing the cup to a second group member who lowers or removes the cuff and reads your predictions. By doing things in this manner you add to the psychological dynamics of the routine.

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A Few Notes from Scott:

- The idea of using a Starbucks sleeve is not new to me. I can't remember where I first heard the idea though, but I think it used the Hotrod counting principle and not a swami. I could be wrong. Maybe a magic historian can dig this up.
- I don't present this as a drawn out effect. It's just a real quick, off the cuff, intro piece. Something to make someone stop and go, "Huh?!"
- If you wish to perform more effects, you can use this as a compatibility test showing that you and the spectator are two alike minds, but don't present it as such. Just do it quick and impromptu but follow it up with, "Since our minds seem so attuned, perhaps you could help me with something?"
- The word is "espresso". If you say "expresso" I'm going to hunt you down and splash hot coffee in your lap.
- If your style is less as a magician/mentalists and more as a reader follow this effect with, "*You can tell a lot about a person by how they prefer their coffee. For example, I can tell that you are* [insert brief character reading, perhaps using techniques from my upcoming book "*Scarpomancy*"]. *If you would like to know more* [present business card, or offer a brief reading (cartomancy, chiromancy, numerology, astrology, etc.)]"

There you have it. Play around with it, have fun, but remember, "Less is more."

Scott Drebus has been referred to as, " <i>one of the Detroit performance scene's best kept secrets</i> " (Adam Arcana, Doppelganger Circus Sideshow). Fortunately, he's agreed to share one of his secrets with us.
--

KITSCH-N-THINK

Jeff McBride

Antique Road Show presentation will suite this best.

Presently Tv shows are featuring people who find "treasures or trash" in their attic and basements.

THE MENTALIST HANDS OUT A SEALED ENVELOPE . . .

. . . It reads *"And the Winner is?"*

(This will be opened at the end of our" reality show")

You hold up a China plate, a decorative one, the kind collectors hoard and stow away in barns and attics. It could even be a "Star Wars "series memorabilia plate...the "kitschy-er" the better.

"I saw this "collectors" at a flea market and thought I could make some money on one of those antique road show type reality shows...so I bought it as sort of an investment."

"Did I pay over \$50.00 for this or under \$50.00?"

"Who thinks high...over \$50? A woman raises her hand

What is your guess...?

She says, " \$45.00."

The plate is set on the table, as the mentalist continues;

"Who thinks low, under \$50?"... A man raises his hand

"What is your guess?

The man says, "\$20.00."

The envelope is opened and a sheet of paper is read.

"Neither The Man Nor The Woman Will Guess The Exact Price... BUT The Woman Will Be the WINNER...She Will Be Closest, She Will Only Be Off By \$2.00"

The plate is picked up and on the back of the plate in china-marker is the price \$43.00! Yes just \$2.00 off from the Woman's guess.

Yes The Woman Is The Winner!

Perhaps she wins the plate as a nice yet kitsch gift!



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METHOD

The prediction in the envelope is always the same.

Use your Listo-lead writer to prewrite \$ sign and and.00 so the back of the plate looks like this;

\$ _ _ .00

You will fill in the blanks with a number higher than \$50.00

Instruct your Man and Woman to give their estimates in dollars (no change)

Just make sure you ask the woman first. As soon as she says her number. Use your Listo-lead nail writer to scribe a number \$2.00 higher than the number she mentions. This way the prediction in the envelope is always CORRECT.

THE INTERESTING FEATURE HERE IS THAT NOW THE EFFECT IS OVER AS FAR AS METHOD IS CONCERNED

The man must give a number that is more than \$2.00 away from the woman's "above 50.00 number"

JEFF'S THOUGHTS

The gaff is our thumb-writer with a *china marker* or "Listo-lead" and in all my years I have never seen a Listo-lead" style maker ever used on what it is often used for. China marking! *China Marker* is often called "*grease pen*", "Listo-lead" or even Crayon. The china marker goes on fast and bold, and can be seen from stage with relative ease.

Credits: I fell in love with this routine when I read "*Con-Test*" by Max Maven. Printed in Bascom Jones "*Magick*"

My contribution is separating the plate (where the dirty work is done) from the prediction envelope or card....the real genius is Max!

For Those Who Can't Nail-Write!

From Deckonology by Peter Duffie

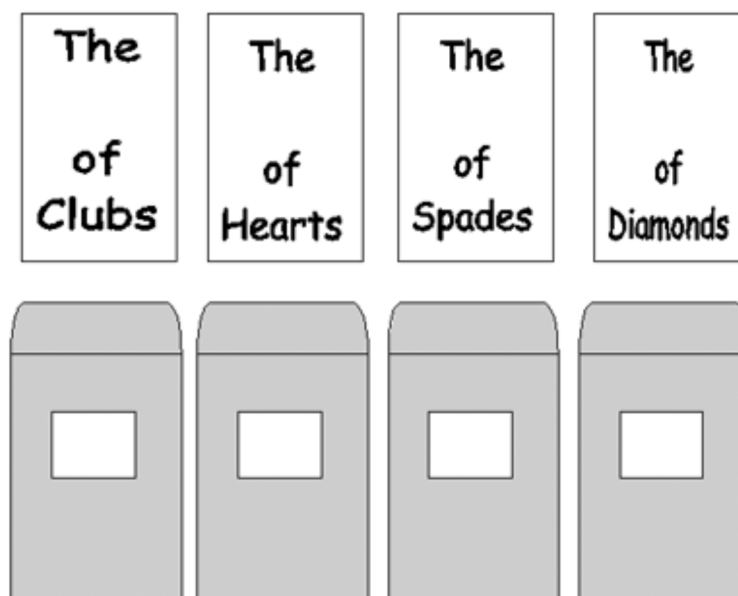
*A spectator names ANY card – say, she names the Two of Diamonds. You bring out an envelope from your wallet. You open the envelope and remove a white card (or the spectator can remove it) which you hand directly to the spectator. She reads out what you previously wrote on the card as a prediction – **The 2 of Diamonds**.*

Although it states that this is for those who cannot nail-write, you must be able to nail-write a single digit or single letter. You can talk about a dream, or whatever. I will leave the presentation to the reader.

Requirements

You require four blank business cards of the large variety and four envelopes into which the cards fit neatly; also, any wallet⁹ that will hold the four envelopes and allow you to pull out any one of the four without exposing the presence of the other three.

The Cards are prepared by writing on them as shown below with the value of the card left blank. Use the nail-writer to write so that everything matches in the end. Each envelope has a small hole cut in its back that should align with the missing value on the cards. Place each card into an envelope and place the envelopes into your wallet in a known order so that you can pull out any suit without fumbling. You should also be in a position to nail-write in the cut-out as soon as you have the envelope – no adjusting.



⁹ **Wallet** – the author of this book recommends something like the Larry Becker VERSADEX Wallet or an Index system such as those sold by Looch that can be used in conjunction with most any “Card in Wallet” type device.

Working

1. With your nail-writer in place on your thumb, bring out your wallet and drop it on the table.
2. Ask someone to name any card.
3. Pick up the wallet with your left hand and pull out the appropriate envelope and hold it in your right hand in position ready to nail-write. Your left hand returns the wallet to your pocket.
4. As the wallet is being replaced in your pocket, nail-write the value of the card into the cut-out in the envelope. It's important that you do not look at the envelope as you write. Rather, you should glance at the wallet as your left hand replaces it in the pocket.
5. Open the envelope¹⁰ and pull out the card for about an inch. Extend your hand towards the spectator and ask her to remove the card. Crumple the envelope and put it away, along with the nail-writer.

Finally ask the spectator to read out your prediction. Take the applause. Leave the card with the spectator as it's no use to you anymore.

"So we have my gate info. By the way, what airline are we flying today?" Someone says "Continental" and you reply, kind of faux-astonished, "Get outta here! That's the airline I flew last time." Pull the sleeve out of your pocket. "Wait a minute, what was that gate again?" and by now you've annotated it on the sleeve. "I wrote my arrival gate so I could locate the baggage carousel with my luggage." What a coincidence.

¹⁰ **The Envelope . . .** Unless it's OK to look. Use a fancy wax seal on the flap side, hold close to person's face and ask, "Can you read what it says? or Can you make out what's embossed?" You're using both hands to hold the envelope steady, right under his nose. – thanks to Lee Earle for this insight.

Nail Files

TC Tahoe

TC is one of my dearest friends in the business and possibly one of the hardest working guys out there, constantly on one cruise ship or another and traversing the jungles of South America in order to learn more about “Magick” and how so much of the world actually understands such things.

What follows are a couple of his brain-children; bits that he’s tinkered with over the past few years while ship-side and having time to contemplate his navel and god knows what else. . .

Have Fun!

ID-ea

All Carnival employees must carry with them a crew ID. These ID’s are carried in holder, (photo #1) that hang around the neck. You can buy similar holders at most office supply stores. I even found one at Wal-Mart.

To start, I cut a piece of poster board to fit into the holder and draw a big question mark on it and hang it around my neck. (photo #2).

Now I call attention to the holder around my neck and explain that it not some new hip hop fashion statement but rather a prediction. I lift the holder as in photograph #3

It is this position that will allow you to use your handy dandy Nail Writer to fill in your prediction. How? Why the back of the holder has been cut out, silly.

This holder can be used for most nail writing routines. I have used it in conjunction with confabulous, with Danny Archers’ *A Weighty Prediction* and others. It, as they say is really only limited by your imagination.

Tip: When you are ready to cut the back, make sure you put in a few pieces of poster board you don’t want your razor-knife cutting into the front panel.

Fly The Friendly Sky’s

You introduce to your audience an airline ticket sleeve. Picture #1

You explain about a recent flight.

“I kept this ticket sleeve because I had a thought on the plane. A thought I will tell you about in a moment, but first I need someone’s help. You don’t have to come on stage and I don’t need to borrow anything from you...”

Let us assume they call out 29.

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"29. Good, Now if you would do me a favor and point to someone you do not know. (They do and you turn to the new spectator / participant) "And would you call out a letter of the alphabet. It can be one of your very own initials or maybe a random letter will pop into your head."

They name a letter, let's assume it's E.

"E? I told you I had a thought while traveling here. Did I mention where I flew in from? Well I came in from Orlando Florida (you will of course change the patter to suit your circumstances) I don't know if you have ever flown US Airways, but to make sure you make it to your flight they write down the gate information on the ticket sleeve. They are usually in a hurry and scribble it fairly quickly... (Hold the sleeve away from your body) I hope you can read this."

Step into the audience and have the nearest spectator read the Gate number into your microphone. It will of course be the number and letter that were named just moments ago.

This is an example of the type of mentalism I love. It quick, easy to follow and you can discard the prop at the end of the routine. As the applause starts I drop the ticket sleeve on the floor and hold my hand out. It is a good pose for the end of a bit and it shows your hands empty.



A Letter from Claire

P. Craig Browning

“I’ve been dabbling with the strange and esoteric for many years now” states the mage “and in my travels I’ve met some rather amazing individual, especially one particular lady that we’ll call “Claire”, an elderly lady well into her 70s if not older who had toured the nation doing demonstrations as a genuine clairvoyant – a spirit medium that was able to catch a glimpse at events both dramatic and mundane.

“Every once in a while Claire will send me a letter that’s not to be opened until a certain point in my evening programs; “The mage removes a sealed letter from within his coat “This is just such a letter, and as you can see, it has a recent post mark and is quite sealed within a security envelope . . . would you mind holding this for me?”

With the letter in the hands of an audience member, who stands so as to keep the parcel in full view the entire time, the mage proceeds by gaining a volunteer from deeper in the group, asking her to stand as he and she have a simple conversation through which a handful of key things are discovered, such as the name of the street she grew-up in, the name of the first boy she kissed and so forth; roughly a half-dozen facts that belong solely to her that no one could possibly know other than maybe her own mother.

As the young lady is invited to the stage the mage retains the letter and after greeting her, recaps the conversation, emphasizing that they have never met nor has she shared any of the personal secrets they’ve discussed, in any way with anyone tied to the show that evening.

At this point the mage hands his helper the letter and an envelope opener inviting her to open the envelop and remove the contents¹¹ and then, she is encouraged to read the letter out loud; every single key-point is revealed along with an accurate description of her physical appearance, her name and if you wish, revelation of either a Tarot or Playing card that even she doesn’t know the identity of at this point.

METHOD

Needless to say we are talking about a version of Shaxon’s famed *CONFABULATION*. Unlike most version though, this one does not require the secret helper; you merely fill in the key information by using your stylist type swami, the letter being written in a manner that leaves sufficient room in key locations where the details are placed. You do however; need to fold the letter in such a way as to leave these spaces exposed to the secret carbon panel inside your envelope. For this reason the key points are usually found within the same paragraph, the exceptions being where you put the name of your patron. There are a few other nuances to consider as well;

- 1.) This will require you to open the envelope and do the reading of the information. The reason is simple, you are going to do more secret writing so that one or two other bits of

¹¹ **Removing the Letter** -- depending on how you have your envelop set-up, you may need to do this part

information can be included; the patron's Name is one such piece; this is a detail revealed early in the letter and which will naturally lay opposite the carbon square when folded.

- 2.) If you are using a regular deck of cards you can easily write in a "freely" chosen card that is set into a P.S. (Post Script) which, due to the fold of the letter, would not be accessible to the carbon – literally folded into the inner side of the document. My personal handling of this is a simple Si Stebbins type stack in which the patron can cut the deck several times and remove her card freely. . . you need but glimpse the bottom of the deck and you'll know the card chosen.
 - a. If Tarot Is Used I would force the card so as to allow you the opportunity to include a brief Reading. As noted in the presentation, they keep the card face-down; they don't even know what it is until the P.S. is read and the card turned to show the match. This is a very powerful climax to the routine.

Yes, you will need to do some serious experimenting and practice before you attempt to do this routine; it is on the advance side of things when it comes to swami work. I've included it here because of the fact that it gives you some idea as to how far one can go using such an elementary tool.

One Other Thing About the Routine. . . your first paragraph can give a description of a particular looking person and in closing that paragraph the wordage reads *"I believe her name starts with an ____ . . . Yes, it's ____"*.

These are the two spots you fill in with a normal Nail Writer that has the ink or lead color that matches that used to write the original letter. Like the card reveal, this is a "convincer" bit of business in that it will throw off those that may be wise to the carbon lined envelope method (which is doubtful, though it is to be found in Corinda's *13 Steps to Mentalism* an amazing number of folks seem to ignore it).



Another Letter from Claire

P. Craig Browning

The gist of this routine is simple enough; Claire has sent a prediction based on a vision of hers warning of a possible danger for the performer or an audience member helping him.

Long before the engagement there has been significant PR done about a dangerous Russian Roulette type stunt the performer will be doing during the show that relies on the Intuitive abilities of an audience member. Long story short this is an Acid Test – a number of beverage bottles are lined up, one of which is shown to have genuine cola within while the other three have a form of toxin/poison/acid in them.

The participant(s) can mix the bottles however they wish, placing them into a set of bottle bags that are secured closed. The bags are then numbered and mixed yet again so that absolutely no one knows where the safe drink lays.

Slowly bagged bottles are discarded till two are left. The participant is given a final free choice as to which will be used – he partaking of the chosen whilst the performer is left drinking from the other. . .

AFTER they have both poured their drinks into simple glass cups and taken their gulp, the letter of Ms. Claire is opened revealing which numbered bottle will have the “drinkable liquid” and which will have the “acid”. . . the magish tossing a coin into both his own glass and that of the patron. . . the patron as he offers applause, sending him back to his seat. . . turning, he notices that the glass from which the patron drank is foaming, bubbling over. . .

“It would seem that old Claire isn’t always right” he says with a smile.

Method

Ok the method is disgustingly simple in this particular version of the routine – ALL of the bottles have the same thing in them (Pepsi or Coke). However, 3 of the bottles have a small Thimble-like tube that sits down into the mouth of the bottle that is painted so as to match the dark glass being used. . . each bottle needs to be a tall and very dark colored yet translucent glass – Green & Brown works best. They each have a label on the front that describes some kind of poisonous beverage with the one being marked as “Cola”.

Each bottle is capped with an old style *Wine Bottle Stopper*. . . these are ornately decorated cork holders that rest on top of bottles typically seen behind the bar or in the kitchen area. What’s important is that all 4 stoppers look the same and too, the corks are tight enough to steal out those previously mentioned little caps/thimbles, which need to nest around the majority of the cork’s body while looking the part (like cork).

The Caps¹² will be just slightly longer than the corks you use in that they will each have a small bit of cotton in the bottom onto which a smell can be added.

¹² **The Caps** described should be akin to the insert used in a *Pea Can* trick

You can get some wonderfully foul smells from <http://shop.dreamreapers.com/> and <http://www.froggysfog.com/> that will work just fine. The idea behind the smells is to offer something rancid that will give a very definite reaction from your participant. HOWEVER, if you have names of poisons on your various bottles, it is wise to use smells that mimic the better known chemicals like Chlorine or things with strong sulfur type smells, etc. If you can make your helpers move and make faces, you'll be able to not just add to the idea that the bottles really do have something nasty in them, but you'll win comedy points. . . even if you need to move the bottle around the front row or so, allowing the audience to smell for themselves. This is a simple but very potent kicker, so use it!

MIX ONE

Your helper mixes the bottles first, keeping the labels turned away from you & the audience so no one knows what liquid is where. . . except for you;

There are a couple of ways built into the set-up that will allow you to follow the Pepsi bottle;

- By Sight – There will be two subtle marks; one on the bottle and the other on the decorative cork topper. They will appear to be nothing other than a blemish caused by manufacturing and will thus, go ignored. You however, can find them at a glance and only you know what to look for (which is why I'm not suggesting a mark of any kind, that's up to you)
- By Weight – The Pepsi bottle is heavier than the other three bottles simply because you have more liquid in it. The participant really won't notice this because it's less than a full ounce in difference, they are nervous and will be uncertain. . . especially in that you are kind of rushing thing so as to create excitement, confusion, etc.
 - The bottles are placed into the "Wine Bags" by your helper, who folded over the tops so you can't see inside the bag,
 - The bagged bottles are handed to you, who will staple each bag closed with 3 staples
- By Sight, Again – As you follow through with the above steps, you will notice the weight difference and in so doing, know which of the 4 bags to stable "backwards"

All of the bag tops will be folded the same way by your helper before they are handed to you. When you staple them you can easily turn the stapler around 180° so that the *prong-side* of the staple is seen on the opposite side of the bag vs. the others.

Why so many checks? You ask.

In recent times my failing memory has resulted in my needing to have extra safeties in place, especially when sight is involved and the marks too subtle for me to read at distance (though others can easily find the marks if they know them¹³).

¹³ **Eye Sight** – Both, Multiple Sclerosis and Diabetes affect eye-sight, causing difficulty in focusing or even seeing at times. Add to this the effects of lethargy and mediation reactions and voila! The need for back-up methods.

MIX TWO

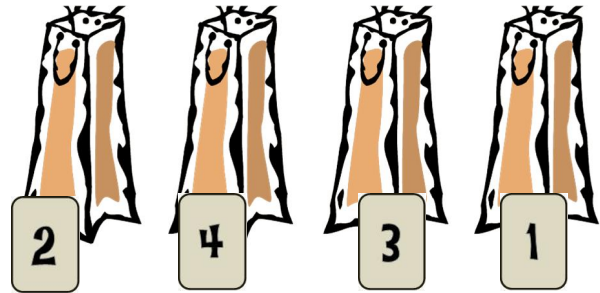
With the bags now secured the guest mixes the bottles around a second time. Obviously you have nothing to worry about at this point in that you know exactly where you're heading, so just watch the bag that has the backward staples.

BY THE NUMBERS

At this point you number 4 business cards and hand them to your helper who can place them wherever they desire, in front of each bag.

Once the are in position you can take your time recapping events while likewise

retrieving the letter from Claire . . . because you know which bag has the Pepsi you have all the time in the world to fill in the information in the letter that makes this so impossible. . . Claire will give the helper's name and brief description just as we did in the original *Letter from Claire* routine as well as the numbered bottle that "will change someone's life"



THE REVEAL

The letter has been handed to your helper so they might read the details as noted in the original routine. As he/she does this you remove a staple remover from your pocket and proceed to pick up the proper bag and remove the staples. . .

. . . keeping the bottle in the bag you remove the cork, take a whiff – raising your eyebrow just slightly, such as a wine aficionado might do. You then pour two glasses of the brew, offering a toast to your cohort. . . After they've completed their first drink you pour two more, this time removing a coin from your pocket that you start tossing about as if flipping for chance. . .

"You're not much of a gambler, are you ___?"

ANSWER

"I didn't think so . . . quickly, Heads or Tails?" – you flip the coin and simply state "Nope, I guess you lost again"

Emphasize "again" as you smile and drop the coin into their glass. . . almost instantly the liquid will begin to fizz and boil, apparently devouring the coin, even overflowing with a toxic foam over the table top.

Let this sight set in with folks as you remove the bottle from the bag (with the label still facing away from them). . . smile as you pick-up your drink with the other hand and as you slowly drink the contents down, you turn the bottle to show that it's in deed, the Pepsi.

THE END

OUTSIDE THE FOLD

A.K.A ONE BEHIND NAIL WRITING by Dr. Bill Cushman

I've been overwhelmed by the support this project has seen by some of our industry's better known talents & personalities but when Dr. Bill extended this piece to the Swami, I was truly humbled; he's one of the most generous thinkers of our strange little world and I've been most blessed having him in my life.

I hope you enjoy this extra-special "lesson" in working with your Swami.

EFFECT:

"Sometimes I get sudden images in my head that don't make any sense. They can come in any form; faces, letters, names, colors, whatever. I usually just forget them.

Every now and then though, something happens a bit later that seems connected to these images. But I can't be sure I'm not just forcing things to fit together after the fact. So I've gotten into the habit of carrying a memo pad with me and writing the images down when they occur.

While I was driving here it happened to me again. I wanted to record these thoughts before I forgot, but I also wanted to be safe. So as soon as the cop behind me turned the corner I got out my pad and jotted down what came to mind."

You remove a memo pad from your pocket.

Pointing out a participant you go on, "I think this has something to do with you. Or at least someone you know. Name the first good friend who comes to mind that I couldn't know and who isn't here tonight."

"David Bukowski"

"Well I sure didn't write that down but this could still have something to do with Dave. Tell me something. How old is he?"

"42"

"42? This is getting more interesting. A color also came to me but I'm not sure what it means.

Does Dave have brown hair?"

"Sort of a dirty blond, but I suppose you could call it brown."

The mentalist turns over the pad, holding it at the tips of his index-finger and thumb and gives it to the participant, hands obviously empty.

"Check this out. I wrote down brown and you say Dave has brown hair. I wrote down 42 and when I asked how old Dave is you told me 42. I didn't get his whole name but I did get his initials, D. B!"

METHOD:

One risk allows for a very clean method for a triple prediction where you can look as you nail-write without it seeming out of place. Outside The Fold is extremely flexible and you can predict information other than the above. When I first shared this with other mentalists, it received a very positive response and generated some interesting alternative presentations.

Of course, standard operating procedure (SOP) teaches that we should master nail-writing without looking, but for those who don't perform full time, this isn't always practical. So One-Behind Nail-Writing is a method and presentation where you can obtain the benefits of using a nail-writer in a way that is "outside the fold" (re: outside SOP on nail-writing) and provides us with another kind of very good example for justifying your gaze.

There is a certain rhythm that gets established, as you shall see, that makes this handling flow very smoothly. Also, though it is a lot easier to be neat with a nail-writer when you are looking, the plot contains a ruse, writing while driving, to explain less than perfect penmanship. In "*Adam's Prediction*," in his wonderful book "*Deep Thought*," Greg Arce uses another subterfuge to justify less than perfect writing. I recommend that you check out both the book and routine.

I like to use a memo pad that fits in my shirt pocket. With your nail-writer, write, "Brown" a couple of lines below where your nail-writer naturally falls when you hold the pad. This way when you nail-write during the effect your thumb will automatically fall where it is most comfortable.

You hit or miss with the hair color FIRST since you have yet to share your earlier impressions. It also happens to be the prediction where the odds are most in your favor. The number of hair colors is less than the range of possible ages, which in turn is considerably less than the number of two letter combinations possible with the name revelation.

So even though you proceed from the greatest to the least number of possible outcomes when asking questions, the revelation is given in reverse order so you end with the most impossible prediction. A few comments about the hair color ploy. I know some people will be uncomfortable with this and want to be 100% correct. In an effect this strong, the possibility of a miss is worth it in my opinion. If you hit, it is all the stronger.

Plus there are some ways to spin a missed color that provide good opportunities to "play" with the participant and/or audience. If you get a "no" to the hair color, you can ask if his eyes are brown or if he drives a brown car. If he's married you can ask if his wife or kids have brown hair.

Finally, if all else fails you can joke, say by asking, "Has Dave been neglecting his lawn lately?" or "Does Dave ever *wear* brown?" Other opportunities to minimize the miss with humor are available and must fit your personality and the circumstances. Also, if one of these guesses (which I ask with increasingly mock desperation) is correct you'll get credited with a hit.

You probably want to vary the hair color depending on where you are performing. Where I live in South Florida, brown or black hair is very common. If it turns out to be black I can comment on my being color blind but at least I knew it was dark.

Last but not least, the handing over of the pad. Simply turn it around with your left hand in a clockwise direction and end up holding the pad in your right hand by the top with your index finger (and middle-finger if needed due to finger size or comfort level) in front and your thumb in back. You are saying your last lines as you dangle the pad in this position. You can even turn

the pad around right after you ask about the hair color or when “digging” for a hit. Again, this is the picture I hope to have the audience remember afterwards.

You then extend your hand forward and let the participant take the pad. This automatically leaves your index finger, and if needed middle finger, naturally covering the nail-writer. Credit goes to Richard Osterlind from his “*Inside the Fold*” for the inspiration for this ending position.

So there you have it. I think this handling allows you to make a three-way prediction in a very straightforward manner that is both astounding and unsettling for the participant and audience. It just seems like nothing happens but asking a few questions and handing over a pad to show you anticipated the answers.

The pre-writing of the hair color allows for the one behind, which I think establishes a nice rhythm and allows for a smooth presentation.

You write on the offbeat and at a moment where it makes sense to look where you are writing under the guise of reading. Your gaze is justified.

One Final Thought, from the fertile mind of Millard Longman¹⁴. You can pre-write just about anything you want that has the likelihood of being able to be spun into a hit. Millard recommends “travel.” You can then ask if Dave has recently taken a trip or is planning on one. If you get a complete objection, simply tell your participant not to be surprised if they find out soon that Dave is going out of town; as usual, another brilliant idea from Millard.

You can find all of Dr. Bill’s eBooks at Outlaw Effects

- Trybil
- Telephone Bill
- Mind Index
- Mirabill
- The Fource
- Suggestabilities
- Dr. Bill’s Bend

¹⁴ **Millard Longman** – credited as the originator of the “Acidus Novus” peek and recognized by the author as being one of his earliest mentors when stepping into Mentalism full-time. For more on Millard’s phenomenal Acidus techniques visit www.mevproshop.com

Yes! This is the place that you will find
added twists, templates and insights
about the Swami as well as other
“Secret Writing” Methods.

Enjoy!

APPENDIX SECTION



Deli Delight

Templates

 <p>Quality Sandwiches</p> <p>Roast Beef <input type="checkbox"/> BBQ <input type="checkbox"/> Tuna Salad <input type="checkbox"/> Veggie <input type="checkbox"/> Egg Salad <input type="checkbox"/> Salami <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Wheat <input type="checkbox"/> Rye <input type="checkbox"/> Sourdough <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Grain <input type="checkbox"/> Lettuce <input type="checkbox"/> Tomato <input type="checkbox"/> Onion <input type="checkbox"/> Watercress <input type="checkbox"/> American <input type="checkbox"/> Cheddar <input type="checkbox"/> Swiss <input type="checkbox"/></p>	 <p>Quality Sandwiches</p> <p>Roast Beef <input type="checkbox"/> BBQ <input type="checkbox"/> Tuna Salad <input type="checkbox"/> Veggie <input type="checkbox"/> Egg Salad <input type="checkbox"/> Salami <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Wheat <input type="checkbox"/> Rye <input type="checkbox"/> Sourdough <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Grain <input type="checkbox"/> Lettuce <input type="checkbox"/> Tomato <input type="checkbox"/> Onion <input type="checkbox"/> Watercress <input type="checkbox"/> American <input type="checkbox"/> Cheddar <input type="checkbox"/> Swiss <input type="checkbox"/></p>	 <p>Quality Sandwiches</p> <p>Roast Beef <input type="checkbox"/> BBQ <input type="checkbox"/> Tuna Salad <input type="checkbox"/> Veggie <input type="checkbox"/> Egg Salad <input type="checkbox"/> Salami <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Wheat <input type="checkbox"/> Rye <input type="checkbox"/> Sourdough <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Grain <input type="checkbox"/> Lettuce <input type="checkbox"/> Tomato <input type="checkbox"/> Onion <input type="checkbox"/> Watercress <input type="checkbox"/> American <input type="checkbox"/> Cheddar <input type="checkbox"/> Swiss <input type="checkbox"/></p>	 <p>Quality Sandwiches</p> <p>Roast Beef <input type="checkbox"/> BBQ <input type="checkbox"/> Tuna Salad <input type="checkbox"/> Veggie <input type="checkbox"/> Egg Salad <input type="checkbox"/> Salami <input type="checkbox"/> White <input type="checkbox"/> Wheat <input type="checkbox"/> Rye <input type="checkbox"/> Sourdough <input type="checkbox"/> Whole Grain <input type="checkbox"/> Lettuce <input type="checkbox"/> Tomato <input type="checkbox"/> Onion <input type="checkbox"/> Watercress <input type="checkbox"/> American <input type="checkbox"/> Cheddar <input type="checkbox"/> Swiss <input type="checkbox"/></p>
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Either scan into your own PC or have scanned at extra-high quality for printing to adhesive back paper. Color tint is optional to you – you may wish to trim your labels tight to the design vs. existing grid lay-out.

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Notes on the Zodiac¹⁵

*In The Scheme Of Astrology Each Of The Zodiac
Signs Supposedly Indicates The Level Of Evolution
Beginning With Aries And Finishing With Your Sign,
Pisces.*

Aries - March 21 - April 20



The first of the Zodiac signs and as a one you are a natural born leader; a person filled with energy, passion and a “take no prisoners” approach to life. You do not allow room for half-measures and do tend to take risks that few others would consider, be it in business affairs or thrill seeking; you crave adventure and anything to get the adrenaline to pump – it makes you feel alive. You are brilliant but impulsive; you’re not afraid of making mistakes or learning about things by way of the school of hard knocks. If you were to focus on the smaller details rather than the big picture, your success would prove far more substantial, this includes of course, your needing to turn down that strong sense of presence and making accommodation for the people in your life and the diversity they offer. You’re natural intensity can come off as arrogance or a lack of caring. The more you learn to ground yourself and get centered the stronger you will become mentally, physically and spiritually – the warrior within will become an expression of wisdom and a thing of honor vs. the carnally focused juggernaut that’s in your nature.

Taurus - April 21 - May 21



The Taurians can be a literal bull in a china shop at times, they are very sensitive, touchy-feely type personalities that take things to heart; especially when it involves issues of justice & honor. The Taurus is a very honorable and loyal individual that’s rarely afraid of hard work; they in fact enjoy getting their hands dirty and doing skilled work that involves their mind and hands. They are detail oriented but at the same time, seek to keep things simple – they actually detest things that are over-done, garish or trendy for the most part, not being overly complimentary when it comes to new clothes, hair styles or things that go outside the practical. While proud they can reveal a bit of “bullheadedness” – a strong stubborn streak; especially when they’ve made up their mind about something, in that they will always follow through and see it through to the end. Taurians love the finer things in life, especially creature comforts and being pampered; having someone to tend to the trivial things in life so they can “tinker” and work on this or that puzzle.

Gemini - May 22 - June 21



Gemini has a natural duality about it which can be interpreted in any number of ways, the more personal being the need to stimulate the mind as well as the body; they are competitive in the athletic world but only when it comes to sports & games that are

¹⁵ **Zodiac Descriptions** are condensed from those given @ <http://www.astrology.com.au/astrology/12-signs-of-the-zodiac/> I would strongly encourage you to pay them a visit.

strategy oriented and therefore challenge the mind at the same time as challenging the body. The mind however is the haven for the Gemini, you seem to hold an interest in all things and even more so when it comes to things unique or just to the side of “normal”. You tend to be a bit of a romantic when it comes to the written and spoken word; a poet, a singer/musician even a thespian be it for vocation or simple fun. The problem with your diversity however, is burn out. You frequently burn the candle at both ends and end up spent, out of fuel and unable to function for days on end – until you’ve have a respite and then it’s back on the go again. For your Life is to be Lived and Experienced in every way possible.

Cancer - June 22 - July 22



Cancer, the fourth sign of the zodiac, is a water sign, which signifies your highly emotional nature; you highly caring, generous and intuitive individual that is highly evolved, even spiritual Water signs are Karmically developed and refined in spirit. Others turn to you when they need a shoulder to cry on — you’ll do well in any of the caring professions. Anyone who knows you will agree that you are one of the best people to connect with if they need advice. Because the Moon’s domain is the night, many Cancerians are night owls. From twilight on, your creativity starts to flow and you feel at home — you have a strong affinity with lunar energies. You are a consummate homemaker. Even men born under this sign express the ‘feminine’ aspect of their character in their love of the kitchen, and activities that make them feel secure in their domestic space. You’re a bit of a magpie though; collecting, scrapbooking maybe even hobbies such as photography so you can keep mementos from life.

Leo - July 23 -August 21



Leo’s totem is the lion, lord of the jungle — full of muscularity, grace and ferocity. This means that your physical appetites and general level of energy are extraordinarily high. You need to be physically mobile and fully engaged in meaningful work and social activities to feel good. The Sun is your ruling planet Leo. You shine as brightly as the Golden globe because you reflect the characteristics of the heavenly body that rules your star sign! Warm, Bright Dynamic Energy and a sense of self-motivation. You tend to be generous and expect others to be as giving and selfless. Oddly, you can seem the tyrant — it’s a struggle of the Leo, being of two minds Try to remember that your strong sense of self can be misinterpreted by others — understatement could sometimes be a more effective way for you to show your loyalty and express your generosity.. When you are feeling upbeat, you carry people away with your energy, and they love you for it. You love sharing your joys and successes with the people you love, and when you do, you are magnanimous — you never give a thought to getting anything in return. There are few star signs who really understand the nature of giving, but Leo seems to have perfected the art.

Virgo - August 22 - September 23



Virgo is earthy and represents the sixth sign of the zodiac. You belong to a group of people known for their perfectionism and highly analytical minds. You have a rather unusual preoccupation of being extremely fastidious and also critical of the world. Some of the people that know you feel as if your standards are way too high to live up to. If only

THE SWAMI

they knew just how critical you are of yourself! You don't really expect any more of others than you do of yourself. And after a time those that hang out or live with you start to learn some vital lessons about the true meaning of work and achievement. You make a wonderful impression with your skillful insights and broad-based knowledge. Simply put, you are a most interesting person to be with.

Libra - September 24 - October 23



You're born under the sign of Libra, which represents the element of air, or the intellect -- a thinker. Libra is the seventh sign of the zodiac, which refers to relationships of all sorts and your connection to the world around you; you love to socialize and tend to be a bit of an extrovert and linguist – an excellent orator & communicator – one rarely at a loss for words and certainly blessed with a gift for gab.

Your love of communication makes you an excellent mediator and negotiator, the problem is, you have it in you to see either side of a given situation, which can make it difficult for you when it comes to deciding which side of an argument to take, especially when you're studied in both.

Your ruling planet is Venus which is known for its softness and ties to things feminine. You're known for your sense of grace and charm as well as a flare for the dramatic for there is most certainly a thespian sat within you; a patron of the arts at minimum, an acclaimed entertainer being the most constant – an individual seemingly suspended at times, in your own make-believe world . . . which does tend to carry over to the bedroom; your frivolities proving an eclectic adventure to say the least.

Scorpio - October 24 - November 22



Magnetic, elusive, sexy, sexual, seductive and determined; that's you Scorpio! You were born under the eighth sign of the zodiac which is referred to by astrologers as a fixed water sign. In a lot of ways icy-water best describes your emotional make-up. It is a cool sense of aloofness that leads many to see you as being insensitive when it comes to the needs or concerns of those around you

In truth you are a very deep and passionate individual and as is true to most Scorpios, more than likely have a ravenous sexual appetite – Scorpio's are known to cause physical injury to their mates simply due to this sometimes insatiable side of their nature. As with all things in life, you are demanding and you expect your lovers to keep up with you and put as much into things as you do. Unfortunately, this singleness of thought is one of your greater downfalls; not only will it burn you out and cost you your own health and sanity if left unchecked, it will bring to you an abundance of broken hearts and shattered dreams as it chases one time lovers and friends, away. . . you simply expect too much of them at times. Yet, you are a formidable ally and one that is not to be toyed with; the dark place within you contains a cruel torrent that is cunning and most cruel when allowed to express itself; it must be kept in check at all times.

Sagittarius - November 23 - December 22



Sagittarius is undoubtedly one of the most positive of the star signs. You were born under the ninth sign, which is ruled by Jupiter. Jupiter's traditional name was Jove,

hence your jovial attitude. You're extremely confident in whatever you do. Being one of the luckiest signs, fortune seems to favor you, whether you plan things or not. That's also the reason you don't mind taking the odd risk or two. You feel as if you can't possibly lose.

Sadly, this realization gives you a somewhat cocky attitude at times which can result in a cruel sort of arrogance; the mind-set that all things come if you but apply yourself ever so slightly, when in truth, your good fortune isn't in tune with the realities known to much of the world. In many ways this is part of the karmic lesson you are here to work on – learning to balance your life and get grounded rather than living with your head in the clouds, distant from things terrestrial. If you are able to couple your farsightedness with compassion you will certainly earn merit in the eyes of others when it comes to the idea of being a humanitarian with vision.

Understand one other thing about your cosmic sense of “blessing” . . . there is a limit to that good luck and for it to endure through your life, you must pace yourself and understand both, boundaries and limits; you are not a “God” or a super hero, you are very much mortal and once you accept that truth and the responsibilities that go with it, you will go far.

Because you do have a sense of what rests over the horizon it is your nature to plan things out and when things aren't well planned or “mapped” as the case were, you find yourself blind and even baffled. You like being above it all and like the arrow in your sign, you prefer taking the direct and least obstructed path for reaching your target. This is a positive trait which will allow you to know tremendous success as the result of a certain degree of risk taking, but risks taken by way of an educated guess and intuition, not blind faith.

Capricorn - December 23 - January 20



Few people are as practical and ambitious as Capricorn. Yours is the tenth sign, an earthy element, which makes you down to earth and matter-of-fact. Caution is your second name and this is due to Saturn, your ruling planet.

Capricorns rarely shy away for hard work, so long as the labor they take on leads them to the goals they have for themselves and their family; and you most certainly tend to know what it is you want and have a fair idea as to how to get it. Because of this tenacity and honorable sense of sacrifice however, you are very protective of both, obtainments as well as your dreams. People that have known you for years will rarely know your heart or mind, these are things reserved for the exceptional few; those that you feel will support you and know joy as you share said destinies as partners, family and friends.

You project a Zen-like nature; quiet and detached on the outside, even to the level of being seen as “suspicious” and overly cautious. This is simply the public side of your being however, you are one with a deep mind and the need to constantly learn and study, even the simplest of things in life. You aren't overly focused on scenarios of instant gratification and carnal accolades but rather, how to create quality and solidity in your life; the idea of being a humble self-sufficient individual who's self-motivated. This can be your challenge however, in that you are content in your own little world and can prove to be aloof when it comes to social and civic interactions.

Like the Virgo, you can be overbearing and demanding; a perfectionist that expects others to invest as much of themselves into things as you will. It actually confounds you, the need so many seem to have when it comes to socializing and frivolity, let alone the dramatics of politicking so as to vey for favor up the professional of social ladders of life.

THE SWAMI

Be kind to yourself and give that inner-child permission to play every now and then; all work and no play can make you a rather rotten person in life.

Aquarius - January 21 - February 19



You were fortunate enough to be born under the humanitarian zodiac sign of Aquarius. You are therefore ruled by electric and progressive Uranus making you forward thinking and self-directed. You're a born revolutionary so no one can tell you how to live your life, and for that matter, you tend to be quite "unique" on that front, leaning more towards an organic mode of being; connected to the earth as well as humanity. This is especially true when it comes to how you process information intellectually and how your spiritual nature influences personal hypothesis – it guards you from outmoded forms of dogmatic thinking and though things can get "out there" from time to time, you are generally pragmatic when it comes to what is what and why. You support the idea of self-sufficiency and independence over life as a sheep that follows and obeys simply because that's what sheep are supposed to do.

Aquarians tend to be creative leaders as well as old souls; it is not unusual to find "Master" influences within their Numerological and Astrological charts. Even their hands will lend indication of greatness BUT, this is likewise a karmic challenge; no one can become an effective leader without first facing their own forge and being molded, and this will happen either by formal education or attendance in the school of hard-knocks itself – life always being a proper and prudent tutor. The challenges and difficult times known to the majority of Aquarians in their younger years are what unlock their creativity and inner-qualities that will allow them to fulfill their role in life as leaders, teachers and guides.

You are not satisfied with the mundane or the stagnate; forward motion and forward thinking is the only course for you, in that you understand that life is mutable and ever changing; in order for humankind to grow, so we must learn to let go of what was, thank it for what it has taught us, while embrace what is now awakening and giving to us a new sense of life alongside adventure.

Pisces - February 20- March 20



There's no doubt that the water signs, Pisces being the final and most mature of them, indicates your spiritually developed character. The ruling symbol of your star sign is the fish and just as the fish lives in the ocean, so too is Pisces suffused with feeling and empathy, the emotions that are characterized by water. You truly are a compassionate and unconditionally loving person.

Though we tend to observe the birth of Jesus as part of the Winter's Solstice season theologians tend to support the likelihood that he was born in the early spring – more than likely, a Pisces, which makes sense when we consider that the fish was the original sign used by his followers and too, how the affinities attributed to this sign echo to us the kind of life and person such a man had to be.

People can mistake your kindness and compassion as a weakness and yet, you are the sort that will gladly fall on that grenade so as to save the lives of those around you. You are a strong soul that will not hesitate to protect others or even endure great hardship when it comes to your sense of honor and principle. This same attitude suggests that you are not the sort to place this

person in one niche and this person in another; to you all people are the same and none stand above or below the rest. To coin a phrase, you see god in all souls.

Be Warned however . . . people will take advantage of this trait and will gladly push you forward as the scape goat or patsy. Too, there are times when such pushing is happening by your own hand and for the wrong reasons; loss of self and purpose and even seeking value in one's self by becoming a martyr, which in truth, rarely serves the greater cause.

You are born to know greatness but not so much carnal greatness. Pisces is the sign of the Messiah – the Spiritual Warrior and Hero. You are akin to Dionysus and Osiris, even Hercules! Your challenge is to comprehend the self, finding your own divine spark and from these things give freely unto the world, not for the sake of personal glory but for the benefit of all others in your life. . . and there will be many.

Know honest humility in life, be forever practical and modest. Live life simply, knowing that your greatness comes from the little things you say or do, not by aggrandizement and pageantry. Your life is the example – the message, if you learn to live according to the parable of the monk (*Chop Wood – Fetch Water*) you will have fulfilled your karmic obligation.

Chop Wood ~ Fetch

A Personal Paraphrasing of the Original Parable

By P. Craig Browning

It all happened many, many centuries ago . . .

A young man decided one day that he would go to the Monastery and seek to learn wisdom so that he might find enlightenment. To his surprise however, the monk at the gate would not allow him to enter, stating that he'd yet to prove his worth. When the boy asked the monk how he might do this, he was told to meditate, and so he did . . . the young man sat at the center of the gate itself and allowed himself to move into a deep trance and so he sat for seven days, never moving a muscle, nor asking for food or drink. His only request was that he may enter something he would ask each evening before the sun had set.

On the 7th night the Master of the Monastery answered the young man's knock at the gate and he complimented the lad for his integrity and obvious commitment but then asked, "Will you complete what you begin?" To which the boy affirmed that he would most certainly fulfill his obligation.

The Master ordered the gate to be opened so the lad could enter. He was taken to a room in which a simple rice mat laid along with a wooden bowl and spoon. He was invited to partake of an evening meal and to clean himself, seemingly a state of total acceptance and tranquility.

As the sun rose the next day the young man was met by one of the Master's best students. He was told that it will be a while before he will be able to sit in on classes as the other monks do but it would be ok if he quietly cleaned in the various rooms while each teacher gave their message. So each day he would go

THE SWAMI

about his duties as a custodian, cleaning each room, sweeping all the living areas and making certain that there was always plenty of water and wood in the kitchen.

The boy never spoke a single word of complaint, he merely carried out his duties and saw to it that all that had come before him were comfortable, well fed and knew no thirst. Yet, his service to these monks would go on for years and even decades.

One particular afternoon one of the monks hurt himself rather seriously when the apprentice was nearby. It seems that everyone witnessed the scenario in a manner as if time itself stopped; the now not so young man and pledge of the Monastery simply touched the injured man with his finger-tip and an amazing glow of radiant light flashed, enveloping the two of them in a golden white light.

As the light faded, the injured monk opened his eyes wide and prostrated himself, bowing to the janitor and calling him "Master". His arm was no longer showing signs of injury, nor did he know any additional pain; the touch of this simple, studious man had healed him.

The head Master of the community came out to witness these happenings and as he saw his pledge touch his various companions, setting an unusual glow around them, he smiled with approval.

"Now that you have found the thing you came her to find, what will you do?" asked the Master.

"I guess" the custodian replied, "I will simply continue chopping wood and fetching water, making certain my fellows are taken care of."

The End

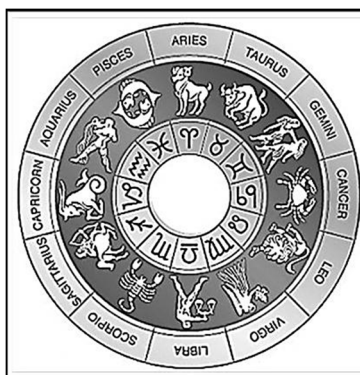
THE SWAMI

While I've shortened this story significantly, it still extends to you more than sufficient insight when it comes to what the young monk had to do in order to evolve mentally and spiritually and thus, find true enlightenment. You see, he was never made a "monk" and never went through the rituals of chanting all day and all night, nor did he observe the fasts or even the self-admonishments; he simply served those that allowed him into their world. He was grateful for the opportunity and never complained; he realized that good fortune had smiled on him even though others might judge his plight differently, in a far more negative fashion.

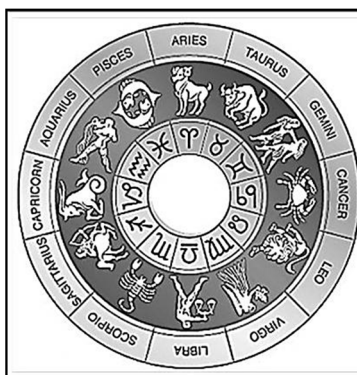
I share this tale with you, here, because it is applicable to your journey as a student in the Magical Arts. As to how the parable relates to your path. . . well, that's something you will have to find on your own, it's not my place to point it out. I will promise you however, this is a puzzle that you can and in time, will resolve and when you do, I sincerely hope that find it within yourself to know the right sense of gratitude.

Be Blessed and Enjoy the Journey!

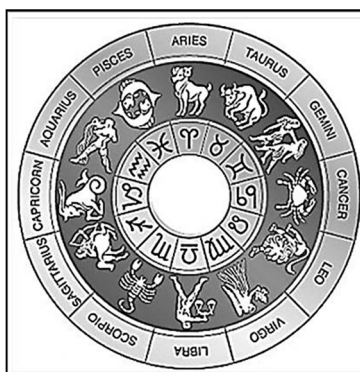




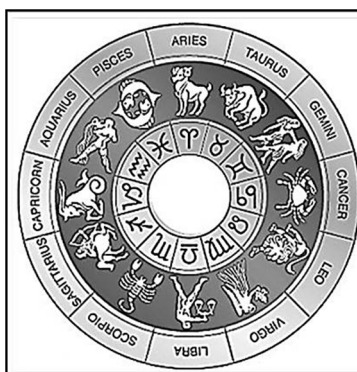
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of the City You Hope
Most to Visit In the
Course of Your Life



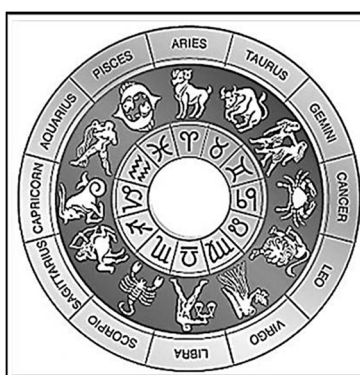
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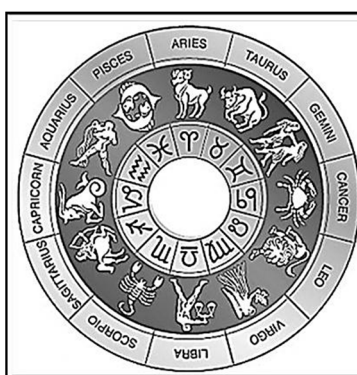
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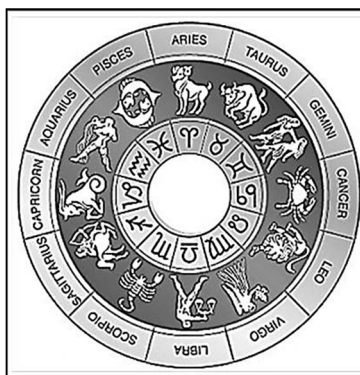
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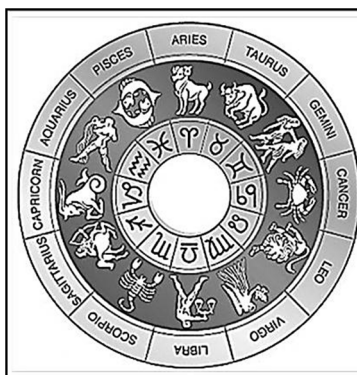
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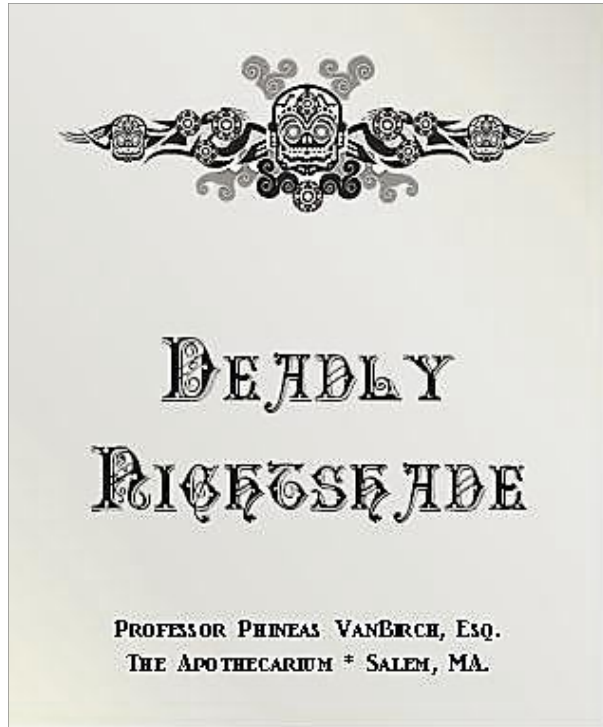


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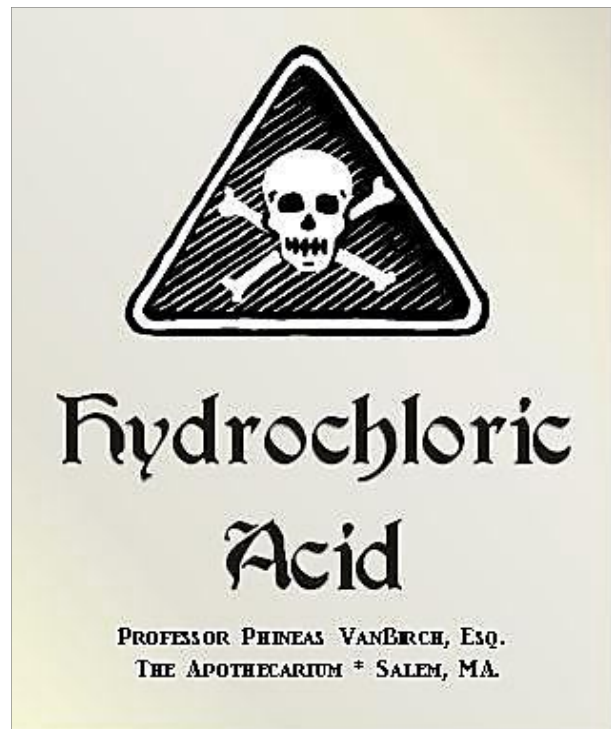
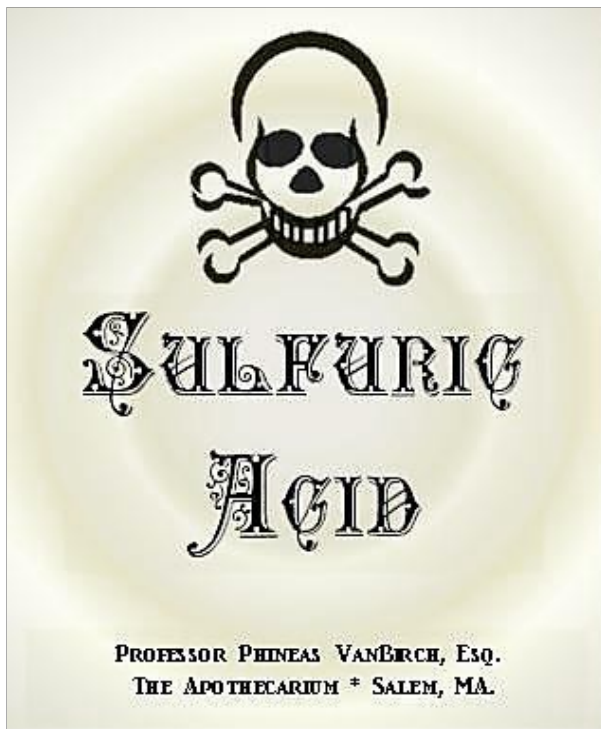
On the Line Below,
Please Print the Name
of the City You Hope
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Course of Your Life

WARNING: This template is not set to any specific form, you will most likely need to make adjustments based on the Business card size you plan using. It is best to have the square framing the two tests about 1/8th and inch in from the edges of your card stock.



Bottle Labels

"Letter from Claire II"



Letter Sample & Lay-Out Details

Tuesday, October 30, 2012

Dearest _____

It's been for too long since we've had our afternoon chats, I trust that all is well in your world and your performances are proving popular with crowds.

Speaking of your programs, it's happened to me again; I've had a dream about you and a performance you'll be doing in the next week or so. I believe it will be for a company that makes parts for aircraft and it will be an awards banquet of some sort... Yes, I see a young man receiving a plaque of some sort; his name is Tom I believe.

Regardless, I want you to be aware of one particular individual in the room; he'll be easy to spot in that he's probably wearing glasses and a pastel colored shirt... I think it's light-blue or perhaps lavender. The name on his label is David, he's in management and his wife's name is Charlotte. For some reason the numbers _____ are important to them... a street number perhaps?

Use this gent in your bottle game, he's got a rather strong intuitive sense about things and will keep you safe. Especially if he mixes the bottles the way I believe he will... the bag is wearing a letter for some reason... I think it's an _____ and in front of that bottle is a number _____.

I really hope my vision is a good one, I'd hate to think I caused you or anyone else harm. But I know you'll do right by me, you always were one of my better students as a child.

Much Love Always

Aunt Claire

P.S. That nice girl that helped you out earlier, the one wearing the red belt, she was thinking about the 8 of clubs.

About the Letter

As you can see in the illustration above and on the following page, there is a 3 ½ inch section in the body of the letter where “blanks” would normally exist. These spots are filled in by you by way of your Swami Stylus and of course, the carbon paper you have glued to the envelope face.

Just so you're certain which is which side, I've provided this small illustration. Do note what the side looks like that has the big red circle and slash sat over it; this is the wrong face when you insert both, your carbon paper and of course, the letter.



IT MUST BE HAND WRITTEN . . . there is no getting around it, the letter has to be written by you and with a colored ink that will best match the carbon being used (which could be graphite carbon, if you're lucky. Of course, that means using a pencil to write the letter but it also means you'll throw some of the wise guys off your trail.

Yes, it's going to take A LOT OF PRACTICE to learn how to lay out your letter so that the spaces are the right size and in the right spots. It means practicing a thing I call “mapping” via which you see how the letter's blanks line-up on the envelope face. This will allow you to guestimate where to apply pressure and fill in the information with your stylus.

THE DESCRIPTIONS & P.S. are “forced . . . sort of.

You already know the kind of people and clothing you are looking for because you describe these people in the top 3rd and bottom 3rd of the letter. You also know what the item is your one helper (from earlier in the program) was thinking of because it was a force that you somehow missed in the revelation . . . Claire comes to your rescue via the letter.

Experiment and practice in how you construct your letters, how much you reveal about people used in the act prior to this segment as well as the segment itself. The real catch is to learn by feel and very limited sight-lines, where to place your stylus on the envelope in order to fill in the correct details at each point.

I've done this routine off and on for over 15 years I believe it's been. It's a fun bit of business and can prove the highlight of the evening. My version of the bit was based on a TV game show in which we used every jingle for every noted game show in TV history.

Have fun with it!

Tuesday, October 30, 2012

Mr. _____

Street Address

City, St. Zip

Dear _____

It's been for too long since we've had our afternoon chats, I trust that all is well in your world and your performances are proving popular with crowds.

Speaking of your programs, it's happened to me again; I've had a dream about you and a performance you'll be doing in the next week or so. I believe it will be for a company that makes parts for aircraft and it will be an awards banquet of some sort. . . Yes, I see a young man receiving a plaque of some sort; his name is Tom I believe.

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I really hope my vision is a good one, I'd hate to think I caused you or anyone else harm. But I know you'll do right by me, you always were one of my better students as a child.

Much Love Always

Claire

Aunt Claire

This central section of the letter is where the key "personal" details you will fill in later can be found. When you fold your letter, this is the panel that goes facing the carbon transfer side of the envelope . . . do pay attention to the writing orientation so as to not add details upside-down

Acidus Novus: *The Grandfather of Peeks*

Some Historical Background (In the Words of Millard Longman)

On October 9, 1978, I ordered a manuscript entitled, “Acidus: A Method For Thought Reading” from the legendary Al Mann. The original method required a specially-folded billet with the writing limited to a particular place on the billet. It also required a one-handed switch of the billet for a dummy.

I studied and practiced the move for a couple of days. Then the idea for an alternate method to peek the contents of a billet popped into my mind. I changed the fold used for the billet, kept the writing restriction, and dumped the switch. On October 30, 1978, I sent Al a letter telling him I had solved the problem of a no-switch billet read.

In Al’s own words, he said:

“I was stunned. I had basked in the belief that Acidus was perfection unsurpassed. Your letter sounds like something from another world!”

Al asked me for the explanation, which I sent him. He then asked if he could publish the technique and of course I said yes. He immediately published it in a book titled “Acidus Plus”, calling the method, “Acidus Novus”. Al gave me full credit in the book and even published a full-page photo of me (I was young and handsome at the time). Although I did not know it then, that publication would make history in the world of Mentalism. Today, virtually all world-class mentalists use my Acidus Novus billet reading method.

In the Foreword to his Acidus Plus book, Al states that he invented the fold on which Acidus Novus is based and published it in the original Acidus book in 1976. Although his fold was similar to mine, it was different in the respect that the second fold was made the opposite way from mine, and his step was inside the folded billet, not outside the billet as mine is.

I first saw the fold I used for Acidus Novus in a book by Robert A. Nelson called “Secret Methods of Private Readers” (revised edition published in 1975, Micky Hades Publications). I don’t know when the book was first written, but I suspect that it was already old in 1975. The fold is on Page 20 and uses a 3x5 index card. In that book, the billet is switched for a dummy. The card was pre-folded so that it would look like the dummy.

Incidentally, I never told Al about this earlier reference – for all I know Al himself was Doctor A, the hero of Nelson’s book.

It has been many years since Al’s manuscript was published, and Al himself passed on in 1999. Seldom does a month go by (and it’s usually more frequently) that I don’t see a reference to the Acidus Novus technique on some Internet forum, or in an instructional book or DVD. I believe it is now time for all Mentalists to have this powerful move in their arsenal. It is, without a doubt, the easiest and most direct of all billet techniques known to man.

AL MANN *Exclusives*

POST OFFICE BOX 144 • FREEHOLD, NEW JERSEY 07728



ACIDUS PLUS

Copyright 1979 by Al Mann
Exclusives

FOREWORD

For years, this author has been in search of some miraculous paper fold for use in billet work so that all the thought-reader had to do was to squeeze it secretly and the paper would turn inside-out and reveal the hidden thought.

A short study was made of Origami, the Japanese paper folding art, with a threat of becoming expert in it in the search for the illusive magical fold.

My correspondant, Millard Longman from Florida made me realize that I already knew this fabulous fold and what's more I had invented it myself and was already in print in my former book 'Acidus.'

All the methods in this book have baffled mentalists everywhere as they looked for the 'dummy' billet that was not there and that necessary 'switch' that was no longer needed.

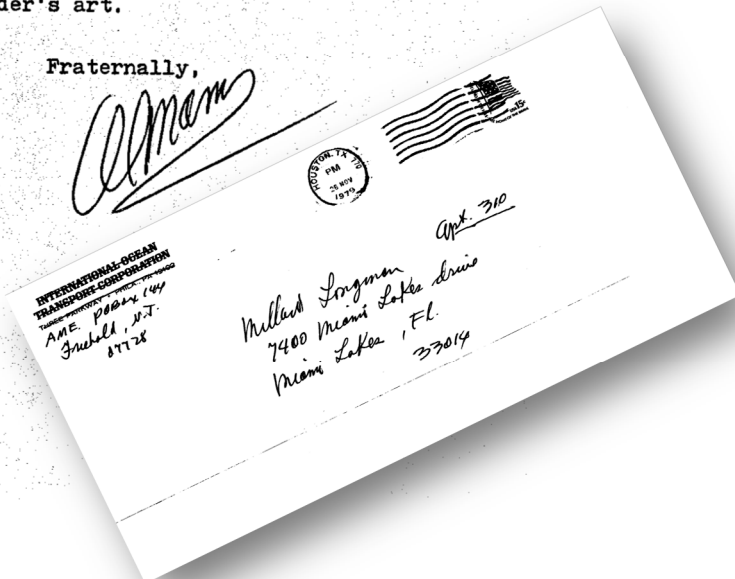
This book exposes the secret move to the fraternity. It is very simple, as fabulous magic should be, yet it is most potent.

Use it well and gaurd the secret for it is this type of straight-forward presentation that creates the perfect illusion of the Mindreader's art.

Fraternally,

c tt/m/kf
f j/tk/kb

6/28/79
To my good friend
Millard
Many thanks
Al



EFFECT

Here's the basic effect as it is described in the original manuscript:

“A spectator is asked to write down their private thoughts on an index card or business card and then to fold the card twice. The performer then takes the folded card, places it against his temple for just a moment, and then passes the still-folded card back to the writer. The performer then proceeds to reveal the thought, letter by letter.

NOTE: No switching, no dummy billets, all done openly with the card always in sight. Only one folded billet is used.

Sounds great and impossible? It is great, but it is not impossible.”

As Al pointed out, two of the strengths of the Acidus Novus method are that there is no switching and the card is in view at the fingertips the entire time. In addition, there is no tearing, and the method requires no funny moves whatsoever – everything appears natural in every way.

THE PAPER

While you may use this method with any appropriate card, such as a 3” x 5” index card or your business card, I have found it is best to use 65 lb. card stock for reasons that will become apparent in a moment. These cards are easily made by starting with an 8 ½” x 11” piece of card stock and then tearing or cutting it into eighths. Each resulting piece will then be 4 ¼ x 2 ¾ inches.

The pieces need not all be exactly the same size, but the closer they are to these dimensions, the better. You can, of course, make the cards any size you like. Bigger cards allow for more writing, but bigger than one-quarter of an 8 ½” x 11” sheet (4 ¼” x 5 ½”) is probably too big, while smaller than one-eighth of a sheet is probably too small.

You should also use colors other than white. I like bright colors such as red, green, and blue. This adds some eye candy to a mentalism show without introducing strange looking props. While the card stock used for the photos in this book was Wausau Astrobrights Cover Stock Solar Yellow, the exact card stock I use is the ReEntry Red color made by the same manufacturer.

The combination of 65 lb. card stock and color makes it impossible to read through the card when it is folded up. This can be a problem when using a white 3” x 5” index card, since you (and the client) can read through such a card.

RESTRICTING THE INPUT

Once you have obtained the proper card stock for the billets, you must next restrict the location on the billet where the client will be allowed to write. In addition, on the reverse side, there must be a place where the client will both print and sign their name on what will become the outside of the folded billet.

THE SWAMI

You should put a line with an X at the beginning for them to write on. This allows you to read their name while you hold the billet in the proper position to make the peek. This is especially helpful when playing to a large audience, since you can identify whose billet you are reading at the moment. The sample billets included with this book show a few ways to do this. These layouts can be printed on an 8 ½" by 11" sheet of card stock and then cut up into small cards.

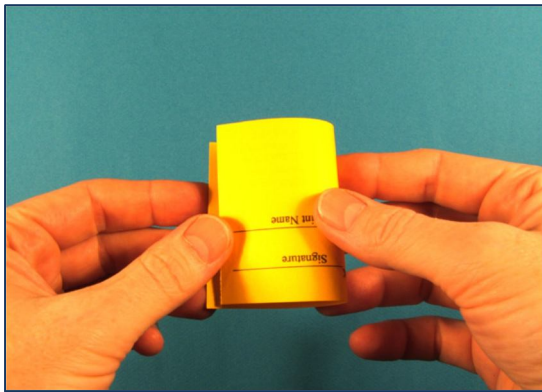
The cards can be made with a computer printer or drawn by hand. You can also make cartoon drawings on the cards to indicate where to write.

THE PRE-FOLD

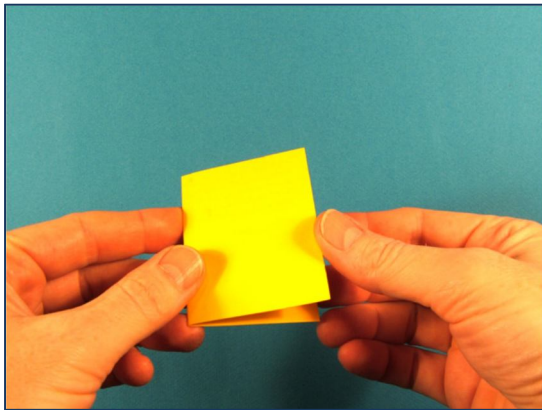
The billet can be pre-folded prior to performance, or folded impromptu. Fold the card as described on the following pages:

LOWER RIGHT CORNER PEEK

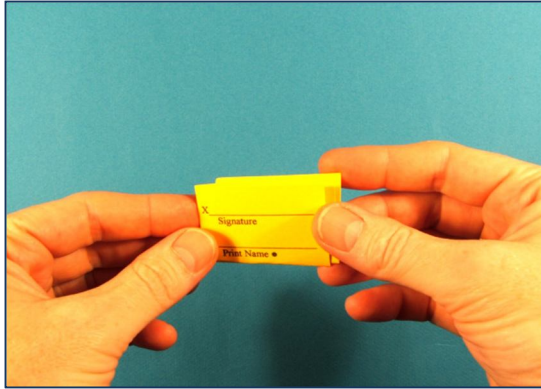
THE PRE-FOLD



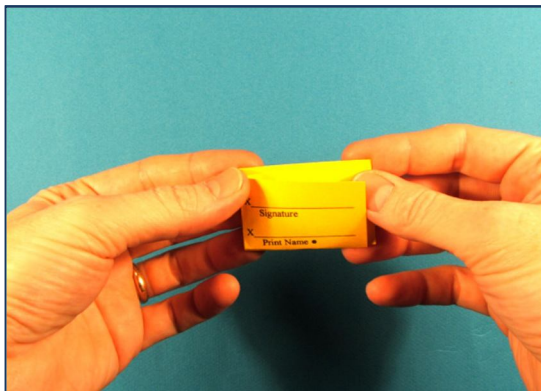
1) Fold the card horizontally from right to left leaving a big step on the left side. At this point, if you're using the sample billet, you'll be looking at the signature area, but it will be upside down.



2) Turn the card over horizontally from left to right.



3) Fold the bottom half up, again leaving a step at the top. You will be again looking at the signature area, but this



THE PEEK GET-READY

Place your right thumb inside the billet between the single layer closest to you and the next layer, and your left thumb against the top left-hand corner of the two layers closest to you.



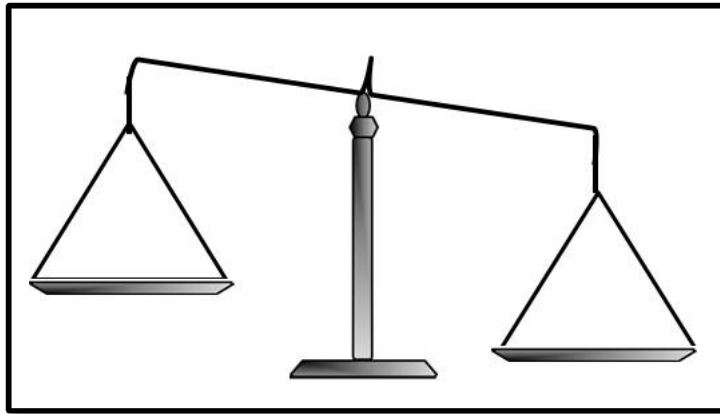
PERFORMING THE PEEK

Push with the left thumb, and you can now see the lower right corner.

Incidentally, this is the original handling of the Acidus Novus Peek, as published by Al Mann. You can see the original publication at the end of this book.

There are numerous ways of using the AN technique, what I've shared here is just the foundation that has been written up in numerous books that cover billet work. An investment into Millard's "Thought Reading with Billets" Vol. 1 & 2 is something I strongly encourage in that you will require little more as your future in Mentalism unfolds. You can obtain these CD & DVD sets through Loren Tindall's mevproshop.com.

More for Your Hip Pocket



Heavy Issues . . .

EFFECT: Patron sums up one particular issue and jots it onto the lower plate of the scale/balance beam. . . the mage is then able to discern that issue but follows by asking the patron to simply think of a second word or thing that might help them change the weight of said issue. . . as they focus the mage jots something down and refolds the card. . . amazingly, it is proven that the discerned thoughts of the mage are on

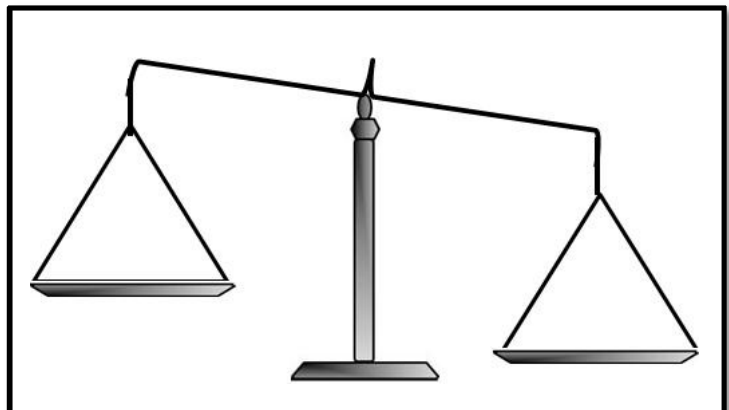
spot to what the client was focused on.

HOW?

Acidus Novus followed by a swami revelation.

Weight of the Soul

EFFECT: after explaining how the ancient Egyptians believed that the soul was weighed against a feather when it comes to judging its worthiness to move into the nether worlds a patron is invited to jot down, in one word, which of the great sins they feel the most guilty over; Gluttony, Debauchery, Drunkenness, Greed, Lethargy, Arrogance, etc.



Playing the God Osiris the mage takes on the role of judge and discerns said sin while offering a short Reading in the process but then, as if something has come to mind, he jots a thought onto the card and refolds it. . . this time he asks the patron to name the sin they believe they are the least guilty of committing. . . the Seer's hunch proves correct.

Again, it's the combination of Acidus Novus & clever Swami work, all stitched within a good Cold Reading.

Thanks to All!

Being allowed the privilege of working with and guiding so many amazing young people in the past few years has been a special joy for me. When I put out the invitation to those I consider to be my peer group however, I found myself overwhelmed and greatly humbled. Unfortunately, there wasn't sufficient room to include everyone's contributions, especially for a FREE book that's supposed to be about introductions to one of the more avoided tools in the Mentalists' arsenal. But thank you and accolades are warranted and I ask that you all remember these people and the many contributions they have already made and still making to this amazing craft we all love and enjoy.

- Andy Levis
- Jeff McBride
- Peter Duffie
- T.C. Tahoe
- Dr. Bill Cushman
- Millard Longman
- Scott Drebus

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If you enjoyed this treatise I would encourage you to check out the other FREE pdf's I've penned as introduction to other aspects of the Mystery Entertainment biz. These are but a few of the titles presently available at my Lulu storefront or Lybrary.com

- MENTALISM: Introduction & Resource List
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