

Ring Report Ring #170 “The Bev and Alouise Bergeron Ring” SAM #99

May 23, 2024 | Archived Famulus, Current Famulus



May 2024

President David Freeman called the May meeting to order and reviewed the magic shows appearing here in the Orlando area.

In his one hundred and third Magic History Moment to our group, our resident magic historian, Phil Schwartz highlighted some of magic's earliest women headliners from Madame Cora de Lamond to Adelaide Herrmann, Mlle. Beatrice, Mercedes Talma, Ionia, Vonetta, Dell O'Dell, Suzy Wandas, Geri Conrad Larsen, Celeste Evans and Melinda Saxe.

He then focused on the group formed by Bess Houdini, Geri Larsen and Jennie Thayer at Brookledge in Los Angeles in 1939, called the Magigals. They incorporated in 1941 with Bess Houdini as the International Lifetime President. Twelve charter members formed the original L.A. and Pasadena assemblies which later grew to more than 15 around the world. The Pacific Coast Association of Magicians featured a magic show by the Magigals in its conventions for many years. By the end of the 20th century, however, increased acceptance of women into the male-dominated international magic groups, made the Magigals a part of history.

Phil showed items from his collection including Vonetta window cards, Magigal programs and other related ephemera.

The theme of the meeting show was “Magic Multiplication effects”. President Freeman led off with a show-and-tell of one of this Multiplying Bottles sets and a set of wooden Multiplying Billiard Balls. Dennis Phillips followed with his set of bottles, plus a table he made which allowed him to move around the standing bottles without tipping them over. He then did a “Perfect Match” effect with jumbo cards where two people randomly selected the same two halves.

Jacki Manna did a cute effect with plastic drinking draws like the “Six Bill Repeat”. She counted four straws and would throw one away into a paper bag and each time she still had four. She ended with many straws in the bag and a giant 6-foot straw.

Steve Nelson had a clever phone app that miraculously predicted a card chosen every time.

Greg Solomon had another bag of clever tricks. He alerted us to a product called “Zig Glue” which beats using double sided tape for any card trick. He had a set of comedy cards where after some math the card selected was the 14 of diamonds and the 3 and a half of spades. He had a classic Supreme effect with “naughts and crosses”, as the English say. We call it Tic Tac Toe. This is where a paper with “x”s and “zeros” is cut, revealing a winning combination. Finally, Greg had a storyline to the classic dollar bill and linked paper clips stunt. Closing out the show, Dan Stapleton did a card trick for one of his popular teaching DVDs. A spectator selected secret card came to the top of the deck.

Dennis Phillips

Meeting policy:

Face masks, if you wear one, will not be ridiculed. We are understanding that some people may be immuno-compromised. We also respect your personal choices.

Stay prepared, healthy, and informed about current Public Health issues and contagious outbreaks.

Be respectful of others and if you suspect you have any contagious illness , avoid group contact.



Dennis Deliberations ...

“The Bev and Alouise Bergeron Ring”

The Rick Thomas Illusion Show

“Mansion of Dreams”

Morse Performing Arts Center April 27, 2024

The Villages, Florida

by Dennis Phillips



L to R: Dan Stapleton, Rick Thomas, Dennis Phillips, Martin Preston, Tara Thomas, Rick's wife.

THE *Sharon*
PERFORMING ARTS
CENTER

ILLUSIONIST RICK THOMAS



"EPIC!"

- New York Times -
BROADWAY

MANSION of DREAMS

I had the opportunity to see the Rick Thomas Show with my friend, Dan Stapleton, and Martin Preston at Rick's recent appearance at The Villages, in Central Florida.

The show props travel in a 45-foot tractor trailer 18-wheeler, and it was parked in the back of the theater at the loading dock. We knew we were going to see a big show.

The last time I saw Rick Thomas was in 2020 at his long-standing afternoon show at the Tropicana in Las Vegas. On that trip we saw Siegfried and Roy and Lance Burton. My late wife, Cindy, was with me and saw all the magic shows and remarked that the one she liked the best was Rick Thomas. She said that his connection with the audience, along with his warm and excellent handling of audience volunteers and humorous light-heartedness made his show the most entertaining.

The Villages theater is an opulent Mediterranean style building. We were seating in the balcony.

Like most modern stage magic shows, there is an upstage full rear projection screen that is used for projecting scenery, graphics, and video clips. The only "drop" that was used was the finale mural in front of the traveler.

The show opened with a video clip of Thomas on a magic awards TV show and Neil Patrick Harris giving him the Magician of the Year Award. That followed by a montage of show clips and his dancers did a short-synchronized series of jazz steps and Rick appeared in the upstage shadows.

He opened with his classic signature dove act. Doves appear, a white scarf is held vertically by his female assistant and the scarf is penetrated by a horizontal red silk that Rick is holding. A candle transforms into a red silk handkerchief and a dove appears. A dove is tossed in the air and flutters down, becoming a white silk handkerchief. The doves are placed in a cage and covered and when the cloth is removed, the cage is gone, and a girl stands up on the table.

He followed with some introductory words about following your dreams and welcomed you to his magic mansion.

He next did the Franz Harary Caterpillar cutting which Franz calls, The Janet Illusion. The girl stands in a vertical box which is turned on its side and many blades divide her. The box is expanded showing that she is sliced in many pieces. Both hands and toes can be seen. The blades are removed and the box collapsed, and the girl emerges unharmed.



Rick called a small boy up from the audience and he performed his signature version of The Chair Suspension.

A shapely girl assistant comes out and lays on a board and the chairs removed, and a solid hoop passed over her while she is floating. The boy poses with all the theatrical moves with the help of Rick. The small boy is embarrassed to wake up the hypnotized girl with a kiss but, to the audience's delight, Rick wakes the girl, and she gives the boy a kiss on the cheek.

One of Rick's running gags is with an animal balloon. He never actually makes a balloon animal but teases with it. "You like balloon animals?" he pulls out a balloon and hands it to the boy and says, "Here make one for yourself!" and walks away and returns with instructions to put the balloon under his pillow and the next morning money will appear as he looks at the parents with a wink. The audience loved the humor.

The next effect was called "Liquid Glass", a long ribbon penetrates in four places through a solid sheet of glass, which is then removed and free from the ribbons.

He then explained that he no longer uses tigers and a video clip was shown with examples from the many years he used them. He donated all his tigers to a wild animal reserve and now raises money for all endangered species by donating the profits from the plush toy animal tigers that were sold in the lobby.

Rick then did an excellent version of the Losander Floating Table with a small girl from the audience.

He closed out the first half with the Wakeling "Sawing a Woman in Half". He had around ten audience members helping on stage and the effect was baffling to them.

After the Intermission he returned to do an effect, he said that his late mother told him to never remove from his show, the Linking Rings, he did an artistic four ring routine to

music. He was standing on a platform with a stage proscenium. After the rings the curtains were extended from the sides of the arch and a large helicopter appeared.



Along with the running balloon gag, he had another gag that he hated card tricks where all you did was pick a card. He did the Invisible Deck and had a spectator merely think of a card and imagine they are turning it over in the deck. In a Jumbo deck on stage from the beginning it was the only card that was turned over.

Next was what he called "The Invisible Man" He set it up with references to the classic 1930s movie and while scenes from the movie played, he was placed in a fancy version of "The Girl Without a Middle" and his middle was made invisible and then visible.



With the help of an assistant with an iPad he projected some card tricks done on a red cloth covered table, the classic Card Warp and physically cutting a deck in two parts and restoring it and finally a borrowed lady's ring vanished and reappeared in an empty card box.

He had a baffling "Fan box" illusion where a woman was seemingly crushed flat and restored



Next began a hilarious unique version of the classic plot where a borrowed watch is destroyed and found restored in an impossible place.

Rick brought down a small stool into the aisle about two rows from the front and instructed an older woman to watch the box and not let anyone touch it and when he asked the audience, "Where is the box?", she was to stand up and put her arms into the air and say, "I have the box!". As they rehearsed her line, Rick added more requirements to body motion. She had to wiggle her hips and then make a circular hip motion. The audience roared with laughter.

He asked an elderly couple, with the man wearing a wristwatch, to come up on stage. Rick said he would make the watch show any time. He asked the man what time he wanted it to say. The man said "6:28". Rick said the way to make that happen was to put the watch in a small red bag and twirl it and add speed because Einstein's Theory of Relativity said that the faster you go, time changes. He had the man stand up and away from his chair and the woman twirled the bag and she hit his chair with the watch. Rick shook the bag, and you could hear the broken pieces. He blamed it all on her, to a big laugh.

He placed it in on a tray and had the woman hold it and the handle fell off the tray and it all dropped on the floor to clanging and a thud, adding insult to injury.

He called “Where’s the box?” and the woman guarding it stood up and wiggled her hips and said, “I have the box!”. The box was brought up and opened and inside was a food can. The volunteer opened the can, with a can opener, and inside was the man’s watch unharmed with 6:28 on the watch face.

Rick had a spectator remove a dollar bill and he was able to tell the first serial number. He then borrowed another dollar bill and tore it into 8 pieces and restored it, but the bill had black electric tape seemingly holding it together which Rick said to peel off whenever the owner wanted.

The final illusion had his female assistant covered with a white cloth, float up 10 feet high and Rick floated up and pulled the cloth off and she was gone.



Rick floated down for the cast bows and goodbyes. He got a standing ovation.

He and the cast then went to the lobby for photos and personal meeting time with the exiting audience.

Dennis Phillips

Note: This was not a “review” and certainly not a critical look at Rick Thomas’ show. I was a reporter, simply recording what was documentable.

I did try to convey the correct impression that most of the audience had and that was that they loved the show.

I could have mentioned that the lighting was a bit too dark for my taste, but it was obvious to anyone who knows theater lighting why that was so. I had to think about it, and I realized that all his background scenery and graphics were LCD projected on the screen. He did not use a self-illuminated LED bright screen, so he had to tone down the illumination in the upstage screen area, so the images could be seen.

As promised; Perfect Match

I did this at the May Meeting and Jacki Manna went home and made a set and it had played well for her.



PERFECT MATCH

You need two spectators to do this interesting trick. hand a spectator 12 half pieces of cards (six regular cards cut in half) with these instructions, "MIX THE PIECES UP AS MUCH AS YOU WANT THEN GIVE AS MANY PIECES AS YOU LIKE TO THE OTHER SPECTATOR. THERE ARE 12 PIECES IN ALL. I WANT EACH OF YOU TO COUNT THE PIECES YOU ARE HOLDING AND REMEMBER THAT NUMBER, PUT THE TWO PILES BACK TOGETHER AND GIVE THEM TO ME, BUT I DON'T WANT TO KNOW HOW MANY CARDS YOU WERE HOLDING."

When you get the pack of 12 half cards back hold them up one at a time so the first spectator can see them and direct the person to remember the half card that was at the number he was holding. (example 1st spectator held 5 and second spectator held 7)

As you hold up first half card say, "IF YOU KEPT ONLY ONE CARD REMEMBER THIS CARD. (hold up second card) IF YOU KEPT TWO CARDS REMEMBER THIS CARD (hold up third card) IF YOU KEPT THREE CARDS REMEMBER THIS CARD (hold up fifth card) IF YOU KEPT FIVE CARDS (which he did) REMEMBER THIS CARD" As you show the cards lay them on the table in a pile. After showing the twelfth card slip it UNDER THE PILE OF 11 CARDS ON THE TABLE as you say, "DO YOU REMEMBER THE CARD AT YOUR NUMBER?" Do not go any further if they don't remember a card. Start over.

Again show the 12 cards as before to the second spectator and make sure he knows the card at his number. Spread the cards before spectator number 1 and say, "PICK OUT THE CARD AT YOUR NUMBER AND SET IT FACE DOWN ON THE TABLE." Turn to the second spectator and say, "PICK OUT THE CARD THAT WAS AT YOUR NUMBER AND SET IT FACE DOWN ON THE TABLE."

Line the two pieces up to form a card without turning them over and say, "With 12 different pieces there are many combinations that could have been made, but wouldn't it be amazing if you both selected the same half card."

TURN OVER THE TWO HALVES AND TAKE YOUR BOW AS THEY WILL MATCH IF YOU FOLLOWED THE DIRECTIONS CORRECTLY.

REMEMBER THE WHOLE KEY TO THE TRICK IS PICKING UP THE 11 CARDS WITH THE 12TH CARD ON THE FIRST SHOWING OF THE CARDS. THIS IS AN AMAZING SELF WORKING TRICK NO MATTER HOW MANY TIMES THE CARDS ARE SHUFFLED BEFORE YOU START.

The Balducci Levitation was popularized by David Blaine on his first TV special in 1996. The special marked a turning point in magic away from the David Copperfield mega stage illusions to street magic.

Joe Turner points out that a VHS tape with "The Cosby Show" star Malcolm Jamal Warner had beaten him to the punch a decade earlier.

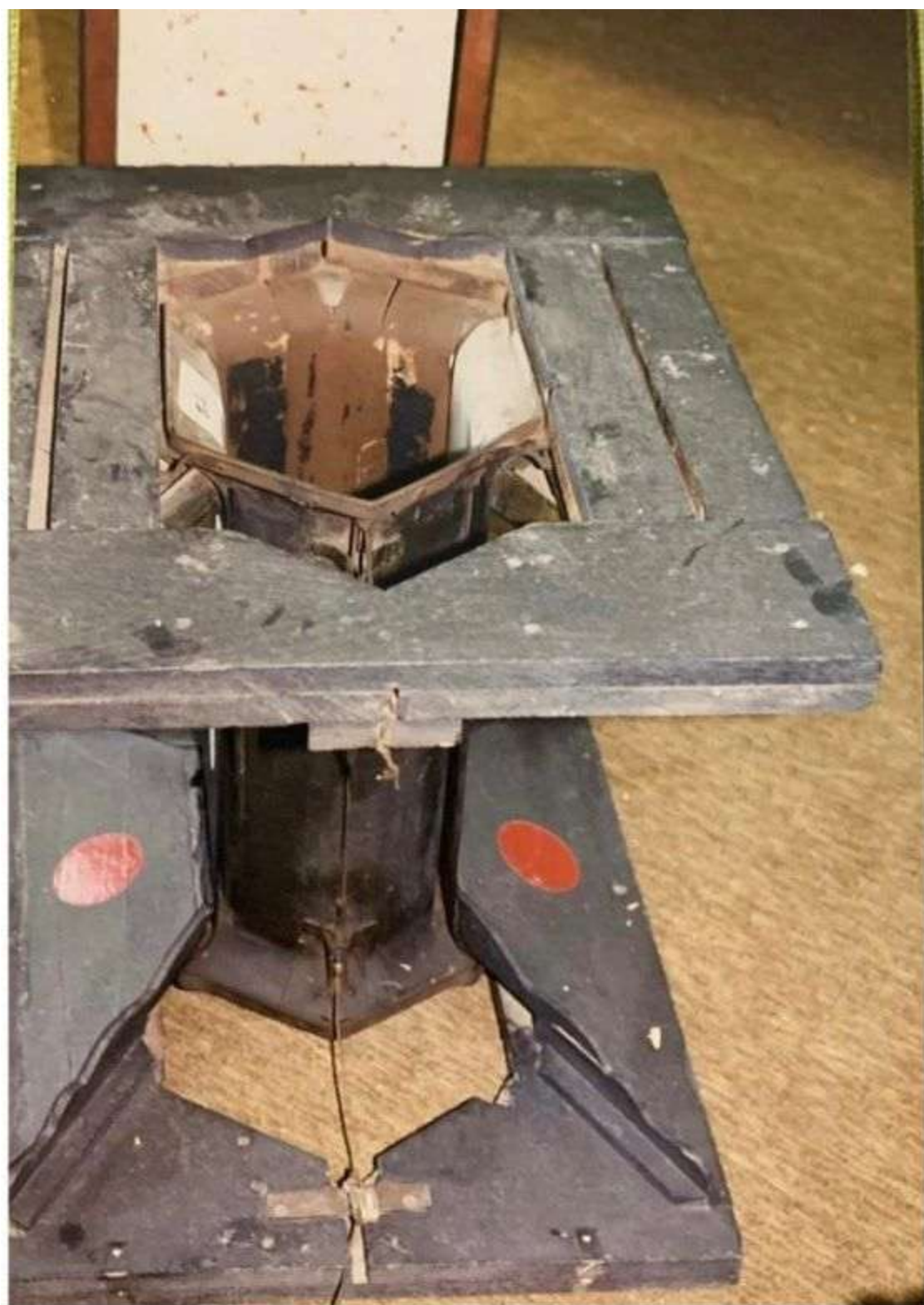
The Balducci is exposed about 9 minutes into the video, now seen on You Tube.

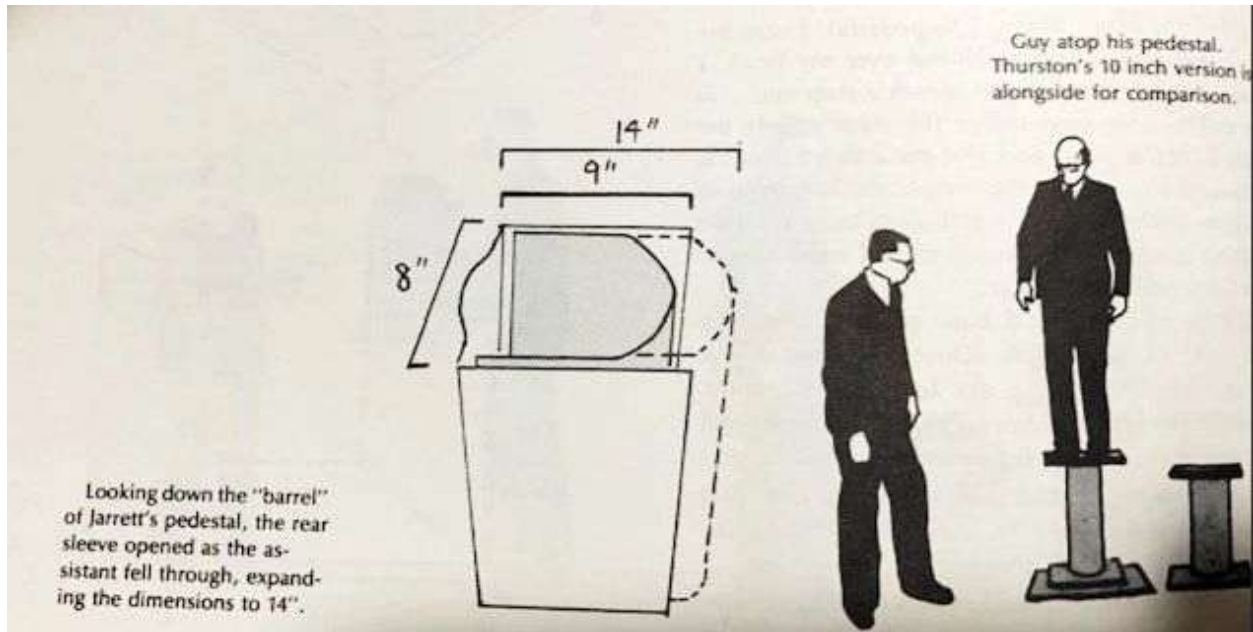
This is the Jarrett Pedestal Base.

You and see the upright "tube" that expands to allow the woman to turn sideways and slide down though a stage trap to get under the stage.

The rear cable expands the tube.

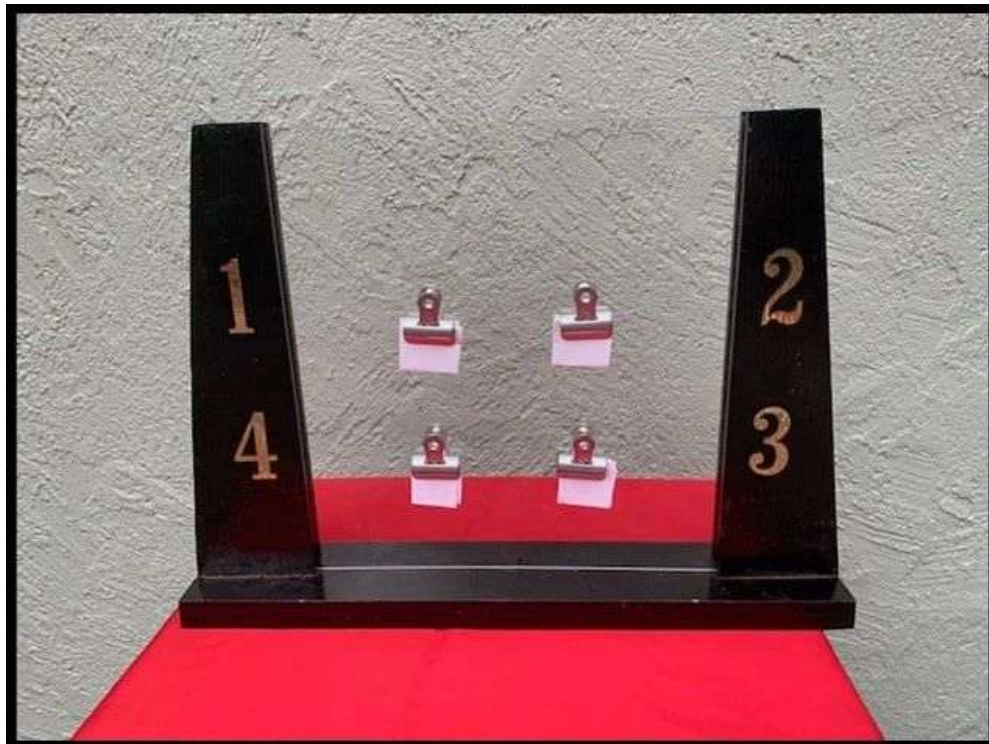
Modern stages in most theaters are not set up for stage traps but in the olden days., they allowed amazing illusions.





Graphic from Jim Steinmeyer's book, "Jarrett".

Clear Voyance

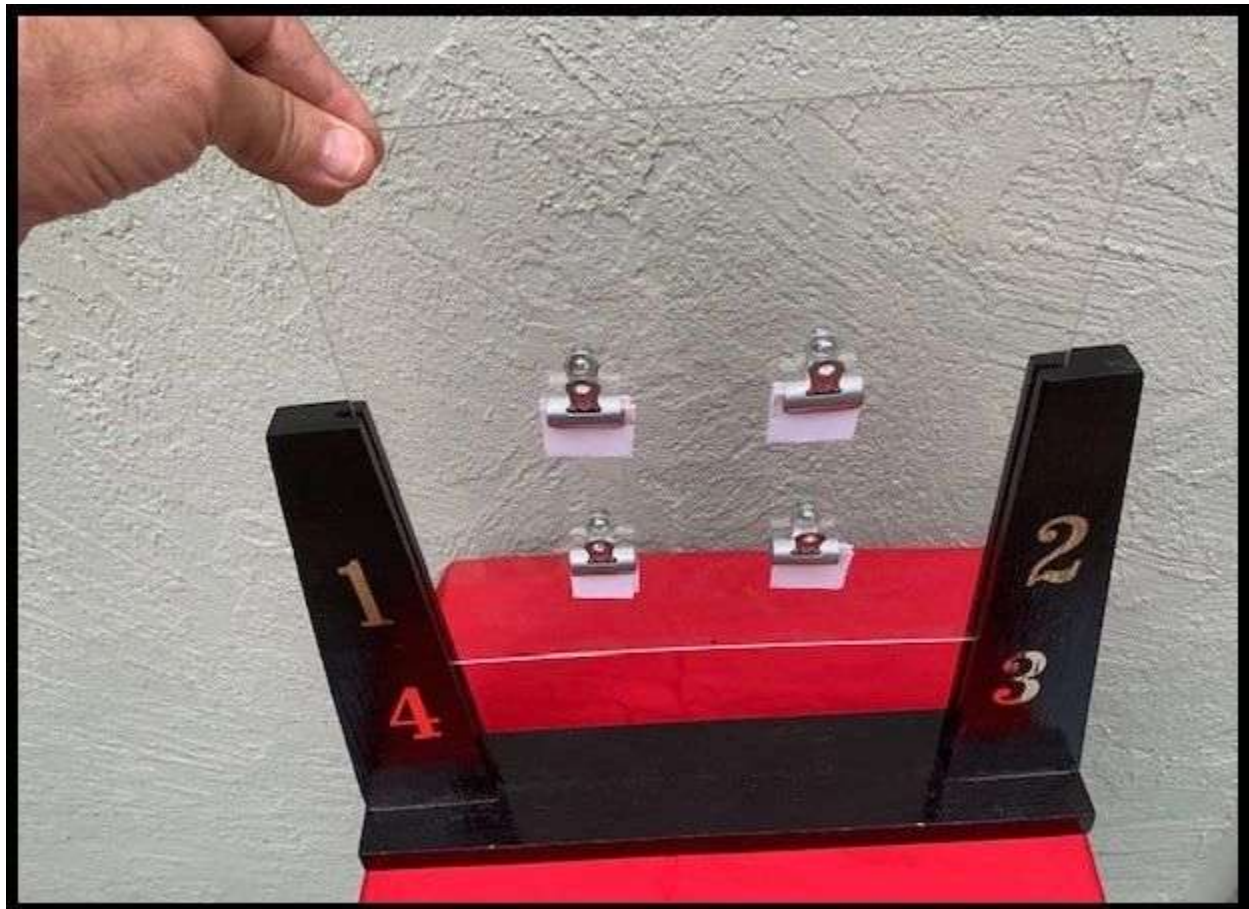


A convincing mental trick that can be presented in a lively manner. A transparent sheet of Plexiglas, to which four metal clips are attached, sits in a wooden frame which has not been prepared in any way.

Four uninitiated volunteers assist you. The first thinks of a number with several digits, for

example, the second a capital city, the third a term chosen at random from technology, science, language, The fourth chooses a playing card, which no-one else sees. Each of them writes down what they have thought of on a sheet of notepaper (billet) and puts it in a small envelope. Their envelopes are attached to one of the clips on the sheet of Plexiglas. In some versions the envelope is omitted and just the folded billet is used.

The plexiglass slides out of the frame so you can have the volunteers put the papers in the clips.



Nothing is switched, the envelopes have not been prepared, there is no special notepaper, no initiated members of the audience or assistants. Nevertheless, you are immediately able to name the card, the number, the capital city and the term, too.

Ingeniously simple and convincing. The pieces of notepaper billet can, of course, be read and checked again at the end of the presentation. All parts are completely normal. The audience may examine the sheet of Plexiglas, the frame, envelopes, clips, and everything. It doesn't matter what terms the members of the audience choose; you seem to know them immediately. Easy to present, no systems! Stunning in its effect and also very entertaining, which is not always the case with mental tricks.

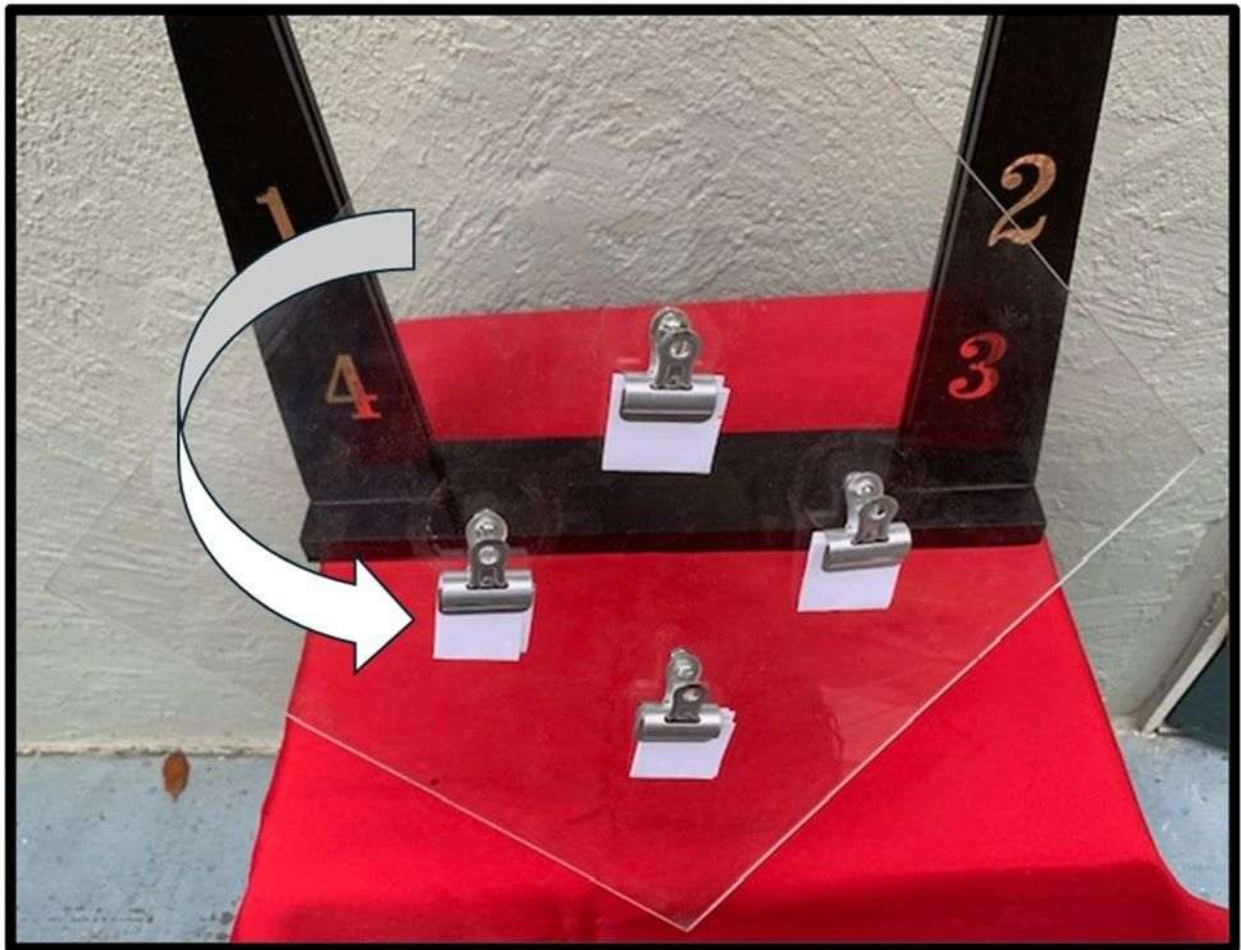
The method is a “one ahead” just like the classic Hen Fetch, Mental Epic. One of the answers must be a force. The easiest force is a playing card but you can use a clear (or net)

forcing bag or even a number force such as the 1089. If you can do some “preshow work” you can obtain a random concept using an impression pad.

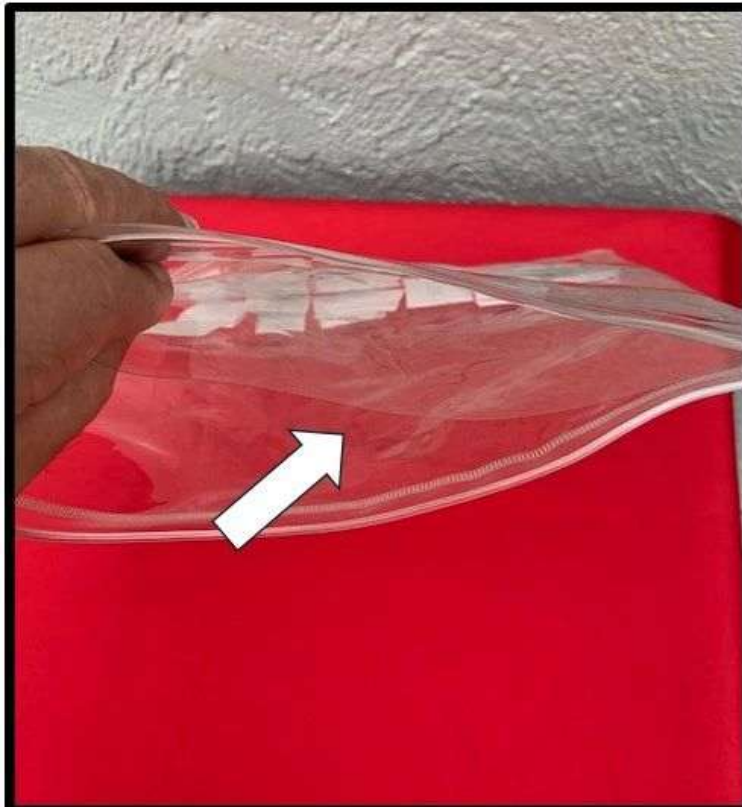
The first billet is filled out with the card that you will force (or the known thought) . On the second billet you write the several digits they told you as in the example above. So, you are filling out the billets with the pervious answer while you are supposedly writing a prediction what they will be saying.

At the end ,when you rotate the plexiglass with the 4 clips , and each answer is at the number where they believe you put the billet as you were predicting what they will say.

In this case, the first answer you wrote and put into the #1 clip becomes the 4th answer which you forced.



My force is accomplished by a homemade clear forcing pouch.



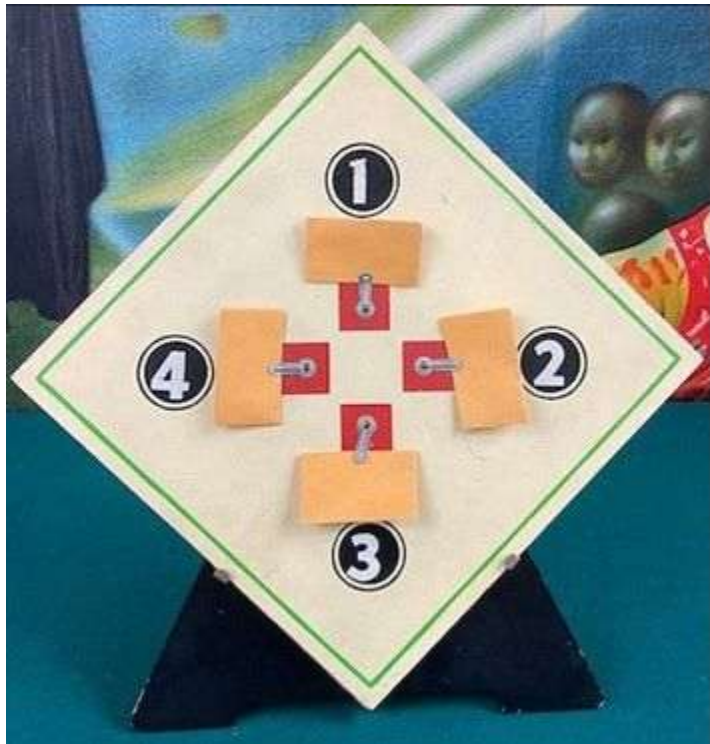
You can see the divider between the side which contains all the force answers and the side with the random answers.

My versions, which I use for the retirement crowd uses a premises of me predicting what old TV shows the four volunteers will select. To make it fun, I use sound clips from theme songs. Available today on You Tube and copied with the free audio program , Audacity! I ask the first volunteer to think of an old TV show that had a dog as the star. I then play the theme from “Lassie” and say, “Do not let the music influence you in any way!” This gets a laugh. I make

my “prediction” and for the next spectator, I have them think of a famous TV family and play the theme from “The Flintstones” and say, “Do not let the music influence you in any way!” This gets another laugh. I do the same thing with a comedy show and the “I Love Lucy theme”. For my force. I show the clear bag with the name of a dozen old TV brands like, RCA, Sylvania, Philco, Magnavox, Muntz, Admiral, Silvertone and so forth. Many of the old timers remember these famous brands and you can remind them of rabbit ears and test patterns and the days of early TV.

There are many possibilities for themes such as the classic dream vacation.

Notice several versions of the one ahead mechanism. On one of the versions, the numbers rotate on an internal wheel.





Dennis