



The Confessions of Dr. Crow

Secrets Revealed

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Introduction

Those of you who have read “The Hanussen Effect,” are already familiar with the enigmatic Robert Delacroix a/k/a “Dr. Crow.” For the better part of a century, he has been a powerful force behind the scenes of modern mentalism.

There of those, of course, who doubt that Crow exists, and refuse to acknowledge that he is the true “Godfather” of our art, but, then again, there are those who don’t believe in the Illuminati either.

The material in this e-book was obtained on a recent visit I made to Dr. Croix’s home in Bayou Delacroix, Louisiana. I had only intended to learn his card stacking system, but was pleasantly surprised when he shared two incredible information-gathering methods with me.

“The Ring Stack” is one of the most fascinating card stacking systems I have ever seen. Don’t think for a minute that it is anywhere near as confusing as it may sound on first reading. It is actually very

simple. According to Doctor Crow, the most important thing is to learn the “Anchors,” because, in mastering them you will find that you can actually visualize the entire stack in your mind, much as it is pictured in the routine.

I found it necessary to describe “The Ring Stack” in my own words (with Crow’s permission, of course) because when Dr. Crow showed it to me it was with deck in hand and I could immediately appreciate the visual nature of the stack without extremely detailed information. Unlike most stacks involving memory, the use of several “Anchors” insures against failure should you forget one or two of them. As Crow likes to point out, “There are many ways to skin a cat, which is a good thing, if you think about it.”

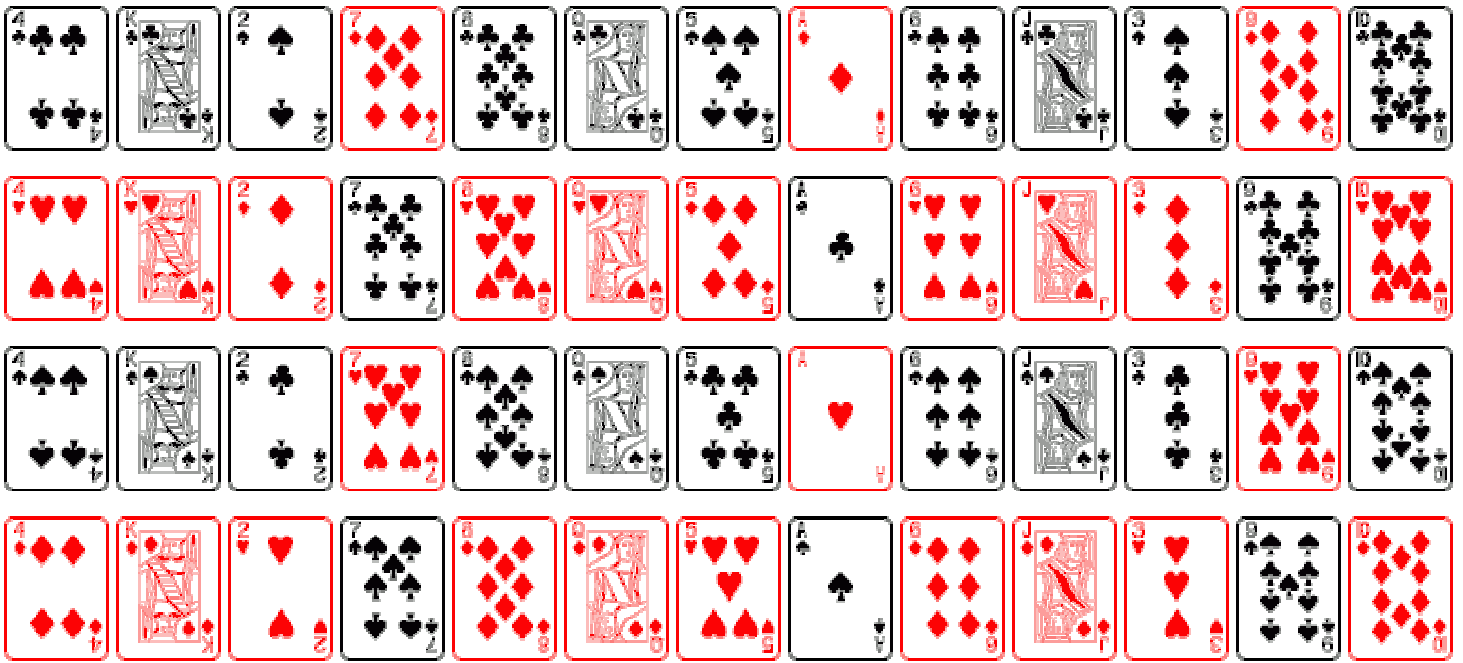
The remainder of this e-book is pretty much in the doctor’s own words.

The Ring Stack

Most cyclical stacks are based on either mathematical progressions (Si Stebbins) or nonsense rhymes (“Eight Kings” and John Mulholland’s “Hungry Jackass.”) While memorized stacks, such as the Nikola, allow for the fastest determination of a cards position in the pack, performers who don’t use the set-up frequently generally seem to avoid the memory route. The mathematical systems, which serve as substitutes for memory, can sometimes be difficult in performance situations. Furthermore, many of the mathematical formulas only allow you to determine the position of a given card, and not the card at a given position.

Hence the “Ring Stack.” It is a new type of cyclical stack, with a few simple “anchors” that allow for the quick determination of a card’s location or the identity of a card at a given number. Unlike other cyclical stacks, it is not based on mathematics or rhymes. Instead, it is based on a few words, some basic (*very* basic) mnemonics and a bit of logic. With a minimal amount of practice, it can be mastered in a few hours.

Here is what the stack looks like:



Refer to the above layout while reading the following and the intricacies of the stack will be easily understood.

The Order of the Suits

The Four of Clubs is the top card of the pack and the Ten of Diamonds is at the bottom. Each of the above rows contains a “bank” of thirteen cards. With the exception of the court cards, the suits follow the standard “CHaSeD” sequence – The picture cards, however, act as placeholders for the suit that is “missing” in each bank.

For example, in the first bank the suit order is: clubs – clubs – spades - diamonds. The second “club” is always a picture card. In the first bank, the picture cards occupy the positions that would normally belong to “hearts” in the “CHSD” sequence. In the second bank, the positions that would normally be occupied by spades contain the court cards from the heart suit. In the third bank, the spade picture cards replace the missing diamonds. In the fourth bank, diamond court cards occupy the “club” positions. Not only does this arrangement disguise the cyclical nature of the stack when the cards are ribbon spread face up, but it allows the performer to immediately know which bank contains any given court card. (All of the club picture cards are in the first bank, all of the hearts in the second, the spades in the third, and the diamonds in the fourth.)

A court card is always followed by the opposite suit of the same color. A heart, therefore, must follow the King of Diamonds. A club must always follow the Jack of Spades. (Again, just keep referring to the layout pictured above for clarification.)

The Mnemonics

Readers who are familiar with standard mnemonic conventions will already be familiar with the following “numeric/phonetic” alphabet as described in Harry Lorayne’s “How to Develop a Super Power Memory.” The following correspondences **MUST** be memorized, but, there are only ten of them and they are easily remembered.

The letters, or, more properly, the *sounds*, “T” or “D” correspond to number “1.” (Just remember that “T” and “D” are written with **ONE** downstroke. “T” and “D” are the same in the numeric alphabet because, except for the fact that one is voiced and the other isn’t, both sounds are formed in the same manner through the action of the tongue on the roof of the mouth above the teeth.)

“N” corresponds to number “2.” (There are **TWO** angles in the letter “N.”)

“M” corresponds to number “3” (There are **THREE** angles in the letter “M”)

“R” corresponds to “4.” (The “R” sounds like **four**.)

“L” corresponds to “5.” (Think of the Roman numeral for “50” – “L.”)

“CH” corresponds to “6.” (Remember, we are referring to *sounds*, not the actual letters. For the purposes of our stack, therefore, “ch” will be considered a single letter. An easy way to remember that it corresponds to “6” is to think of “**six chicks**.” “SH,” a soft “G” or a “J” would also correspond to “6,” because, again, the sounds are all formed in basically the same manner.)

“K,” a hard “C” or a hard “G” corresponds to “7”. (The letter “K” *looks* like two mirror image “7’s” lying on their sides.)

“V” or “F” corresponds to “8.” (Think of a “V-8” engine or the popular vegetable juice.)

“B” or “P” corresponds to “9.” (Think of a “P” written backwards or a lowercase “b” turned upside down.)

“S” or “Z” corresponds to “0.” (Z for **zero**)

Go over these correspondences for about ten minutes or so and you will have them down pat. (I apologize to those experienced mentalists who have used these correspondences for years - just note that I am using the “Zufall/Lorayne” correspondences rather than those used by Hatton and Plate or Nikola. If you wish to use one of the latter systems, you will have to alter the stack accordingly.)

Note that no vowel sounds are contained in the numeric alphabet. This is convenient, for in “The Ring Stack,” the vowels represent the court cards.

The Sequence of the Cards

The “Ring” stack is based on three words, which you must memorize: **RING FELT CHAMPS**. Just think of a boxing “ring” which has “felt” many “champs.” (The sentence is two four-letter words followed by a five-letter word- we consider the “ch” sound to be one letter, remember?)

The consonant sounds correspond to the numbers one (ace) through zero (ten.) The vowels correspond to the court cards.

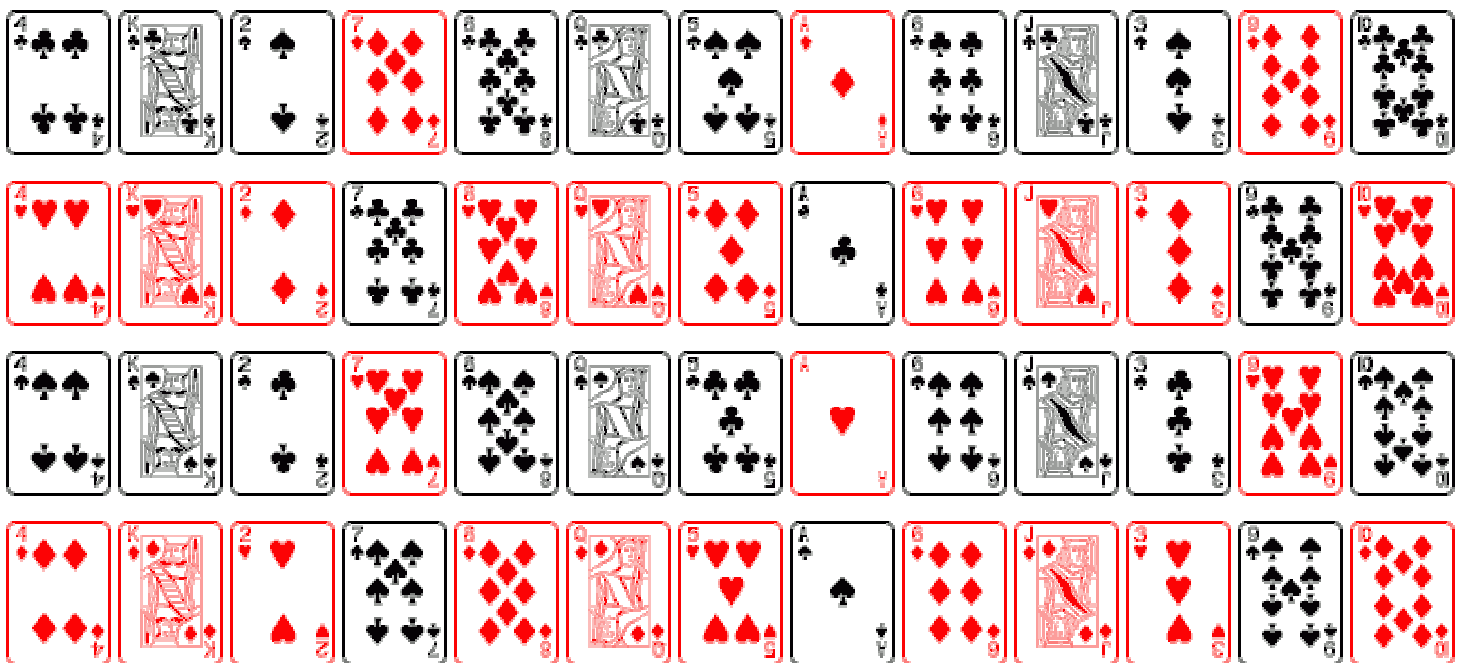
C H S D sequence **R I N G F E L T C h A M P S**
(Clubs Hearts Spades Diamonds) **4 K 2 7 8 Q 5 1 6 J 3 9 10**

I = k I n g E = q u E E n A = j A c k

(Note that “I” is the only vowel in “King,” “E” is the only vowel in “queen,” and “a” is the only vowel in “Jack.”)

Review

Look at the stack again. Make sure that it all makes sense to you before you proceed any further.



The Anchors

“The Anchors” are those built-in features of the stack that allow the performer to determine either the position of a given card or the identity of a card located at a given position. A single anchor, or

combinations of anchors are what enable rapid determination of the needed information. I am going to give you more anchors than you actually need to accomplish your goal. Knowledge of all of them, however, can make the process almost instantaneous - this is what makes "The Ring Stack" unique.

For example, we already know that each bank starts with a four. We can also rapidly determine the position of any card in the bank thanks to the fact that the first two words of the stack are "RING FELT" - both four letter words - followed by a five letter word "(CH)AMPS." Each of these words begins with a card of the same suit that governs the bank - the first card of the bank. Thus, if we want to know the identity of the seventh card in the third bank we would think along the following lines:

The seventh card is the third letter of the second word "felt." (The four-letter word – four-letter word – five-letter word combination – RING FELT CHAMPS, makes this very easy.) That letter is "L" therefore the card is a five. (The third bank is the spade bank – it begins with the four of spades.) There are two ways of determining the suit. Since I know the first letter of each word corresponds to a spade, I can just count forward- "spade, diamond, club," or, I can note that the card preceding mine is a Queen, that the Queen has the same suit as the first card of the bank, and that the card following it is the opposite suit of the same color, as described earlier. Thus, I immediately know that the card is a five of clubs.

Anchor – The Bank Numbers

The final step is to determine the card's position from the top of the pack. Obviously, the first bank of cards occupies the first through thirteenth positions in the pack. The second bank starts at position fourteen, the third at twenty-seven and the fourth at forty. It is an easy matter, therefore, to conclude that the seventh card of the third bank is the thirty-fourth from the top of the pack. Unfortunately, however, this is not the case. The seventh card of the third bank is actually thirty-third from the top. (Count through the stack and see for yourself.) This is an easy mistake to make under performing pressure. It is only natural to **add** the position of the card in the bank to the starting position of the bank. Actually, if you were to take this approach, you would have to remember to subtract one from your final number to arrive at the correct result.

This is a potentially confusing way of doing things which is easily eliminated by considering the first bank to start with zero, the second with thirteen, the third with twenty-six, and the fourth with thirty-nine. Thus, to determine the position from the top of the seventh card in the third bank, we need only add seven to twenty-six to arrive at the correct answer, thirty-three.

(While this may well seem a bit confusing on first reading, it is really quite simple and obvious when you think about it.)

The remaining anchors simply make your task even easier.

Anchor – The Court Cards

As noted, the picture cards, all of which are represented by the second letters of each of the three words “ring felt (ch)amps,” are the same suit as the first card of the bank. The card preceding them is also the same suit, and the card that follows them is the opposite suit of the same color.

Anchor – The Minority Suit Sequence

Note that the “black suit” banks – the first and third, beginning with clubs and spades respectively – only contain three red cards each. Conversely, the “red suit” banks – the second and fourth, beginning with hearts and diamonds – only contain three black cards each. By “minority suit”, I am referring to the three cards in each bank that are the opposite color from the bank suit. (In the first bank, for example, the minority suit is diamonds.) By remembering the word “DuCHeSs” (duchess) you will immediately know that the minority cards in the first bank are diamonds, in the second bank clubs, in the third bank hearts, and in the fourth bank, spades.

Also note that the minority cards are at the fourth, eighth, and twelfth positions - the last letters of the words “ring” and “felt” and the next to last letter of “champs.”

I use a simple memory device to help out here: “I met the Duchess on July 19th.”

July 19th? What, you may ask, does that have to do with anything? Simple, July 19th translates to 7-1-9, the identities of the minority cards!

Examples

Determining the card located at a given position.

What card is 17th from the top of the pack?

That would be the fourth card of the second bank, which is the heart bank. The fourth card corresponds to the “G” in “RING” and is, thus, a seven. Seven is the minority (black) suit of the second bank, and, according to DuCHeSs is a club.

(Of course you could just three forward from the first card of the bank, but once you have the idea of minority suits down, you will no longer even risk a simple counting error.) Note: when you are determining the identity of a card at a given position, subtract (or cast out) all thirteens from the position number. Just remember which bank the card came from.

Where is the King of Diamonds?

It is a picture card and thus is located in the bank that begins with the same suit, in this case, the fourth bank. “I” is the second letter of “RING,” thus the King of Diamonds is the second card of the fourth bank. The fourth bank starts with thirty-nine. Thirty-nine plus two is forty-one, which is the position of the King of Diamonds.

Summary

The thing that makes “The Ring Stack” practical is that it allows many ways, through the anchors, to arrive at the solutions to positional problems. In many cases, you are able to determine the answer instantly. The suit sequence disguises the stack well.

By making the fours into corner shorts, it is an easy matter to quickly locate or obtain any needed card. “The Ring Stack” is well worth the bit of effort you must put into learning it. It is a system you will use always.

Dr. Crow’s Address Book

Dr. Crow’s Presentation:

“Are you familiar with the symbols used by parapsychologists when they test someone’s ESP abilities? Let me show them to you.”

Dr. Crow took a worn address book from his pocket and opened the front cover. On the first page were drawn the five standard symbols used on Zener cards- a circle, a cross, three wavy lines, a square, and a star.

“I want you to just think of one of these symbols. Burn it into your mind and try to project it into mine. Here, take a piece of paper and draw your symbol. I won’t look.

He removed a slip of paper from the inside front cover of the book and handed it to me along with a ballpoint pen.

“Just draw your design right on the paper and, when you’re done, fold it up and hold on to it.”

I did as he said and carefully drew a five-pointed star on the paper, which I then folded into quarters.

Dr. Crow, who had turned his back while I drew the picture, turned toward me and said, “Focus on it. Remember how you drew the image. Draw it again in your mind, line by line.”

He put the address book back into his pocket and came out with a small envelope from which he removed five ESP testing cards. He dealt them face down on the table. He passed his hand over the five designs and suddenly froze over the third card from the left. He turned it face up.

It was the star.

His method:

I have taken one liberty with the above description. Dr Crow didn't use ESP cards. I seriously doubt if he had ever owned, or even seen, a pack. Instead, he used ten cards that had strange metaphysical designs hand drawn on them. Other than that, what he did was exactly as described above. I changed the description to illustrate how a modern mentalist might present the same effect. Any kinds of cards can be used, but not more than eight or ten, for reasons which will be explained shortly.

Since Doctor Crow placed the paper on the back of his address book when he handed it to me to draw the design, I assumed that he was using an impression device. I was interested in seeing how an old fraud like Crow would peek at the impression.

The problem was that he never did take a peek at anything. Not as far as I could tell anyway. After I had finished drawing my design and folded my paper, he simply took the book from me and returned it to his inside jacket pocket.

I was, therefore, puzzled when he turned over the card that matched what I had drawn.

Crow stared at me for a moment and then laughed. "You're wondering how I got the peek, aren't you?"

"That's another trick I taught Hanussen before he went and got himself killed. And, by the way, the method you wrote up in *The Hanussen Effect* was only one of the ways he performed the place and event bit.

This was another. Instead of laying out cards on the table, he would remove five Tarot cards from the envelope. He would stare at them for a while before he revealed the event and place he had his sitter write down at the beginning of the routine.

"Of course you probably already figured that the address book was an impression device, but it is, I think you'll agree, more practical and deceptive than the others you've seen.

"It was my old friend Al Baker who first came up with the idea of using a notebook as an impression device. Fifty years later people are still inventing variations of the notebook idea. But all of them have one serious flaw."

I interrupted the doctor. "Wait a minute, you mean to tell me that you knew Al Baker?"

"Course I did. I knew 'em all back then. They were smart boys, though. They knew better than to mention that they knew me. I had to lay low back in those days.

"Why?"

"Because I was making my coin in the mojo business back then and didn't need to be hanging with magicians and phony mind readers."

"So what was wrong with the notebook impression idea?" I asked.

"Well, think about it. If you are going to have someone write something down, or draw something, and you hand them your notebook, why would you tear the paper out first and then put it on the front or

the back of the book before they started writing? It just doesn't make any sense. It might get by, but in the back of their minds they're going to hear a little whisper telling them that something ain't right."

He had an excellent point, of course. His idea of using an address book was ingenious. He kept a few loose papers in the front of the book and gave one of those to his sitter to write on. Since they weren't part of the book in the first place, there was nothing illogical about him first taking out a piece and handing it to the spectator after placing it on the back of the book.

"What about the peek?" I asked him.

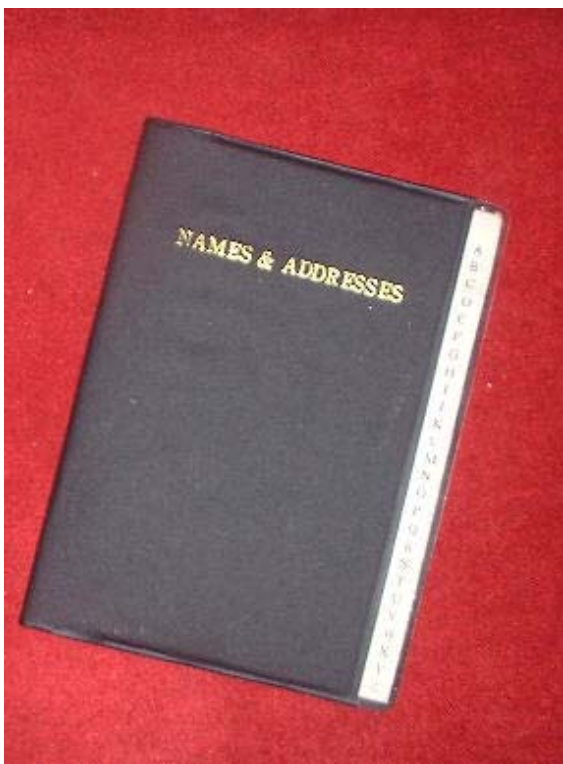
"All smooth and sensical. Right in front of their faces, just the way you like it. About thirty years or so ago, there was a guy in New York City who was doing the basic effect with a pocket size dictionary - it was his variation of Al Koran's "A Word in Thousands." You know, the one where you've got a piece of carbon paper underneath the paper jacket of the book. Anyway, this guy's idea was to put an index card inside the cover underneath the carbon. He'd get the impression on one side of the index card. On the other side, he had the letters of the alphabet printed out. He would put the book into his pocket and later come out with the index card, the letters of the alphabet facing his audience. He would tell them to concentrate on the letters of their word and then he would slowly spell it out.

"Now these approaches half solved the problem, but did you ever ask yourself how many people just happen to carry a pocket dictionary around with them? Especially someone like me. Why would I be carrying a dictionary? I cast spells; it doesn't matter if I can spell "casts."

"Also, what's the point of the index card? Now you and I know what the point is. While he is showing the letters on one side to his audience, he is reading the carbon impression on the other. But, if you ask me, the whole thing seems just too damned contrived. Sure doesn't smell psychic to me.

"Does smell a bit though. What do you think of my version?"

I had to agree it was brilliant. He'd gotten the impression on the face of the envelope that contained the cards! And the address book idea was perfect. That's a common thing for someone to have on him. I got to thinking that with two address books I could work out yet another version of my diary effect, particularly one of the remote viewing variations. I saw right away how that could tie in nicely with the impression idea.



"Now don't go explaining what you did with the remote viewing idea just yet," Dr. Crow admonished.
"Let's keep that to ourselves for a while."

He did give me permission to show you the address book, though. Here is the one I made up:

When I asked Dr. Crow where he bought the book, he answered, "At the dollar store. That's where I get just about everything I need. You need to get the cheapest one you can get with a removable black plastic cover. The plastic is so damn cheap and thin that it lets you get better impressions than you even get with that clip board of yours."

"It's a good idea to fill it up with addresses and phone numbers too," he added.

"Let me see what you put in yours," I asked.

"No way, my man, you get your own numbers!"



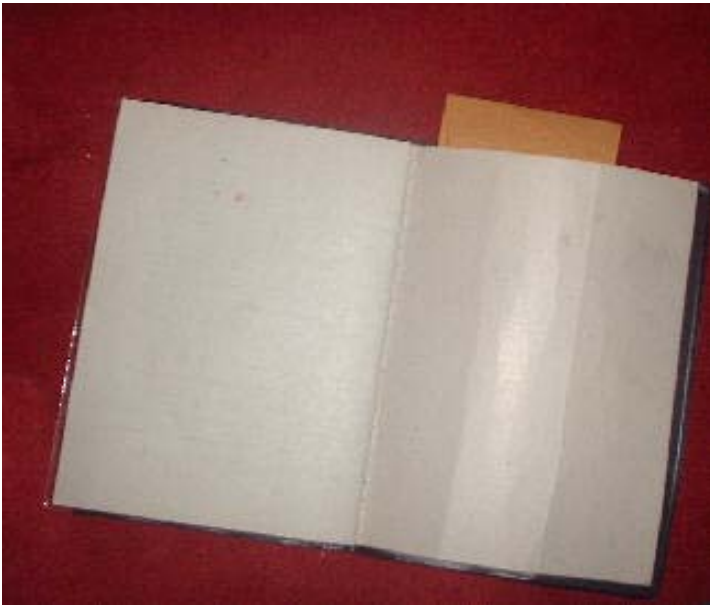
This is the inside front cover of the book. You can see where I have drawn the five ESP designs.

Under the clear plastic on the left you should be able to make out the billet size slips of paper, one of which is used to get the impression.



This is the inside back cover of the address book. The back cover of the removable paper address book has been pulled out of the clear plastic cover on the extreme right. (It is hard to see the clear plastic in the picture, but it is the same as in the inside front cover as shown in the previous picture.

The top of the clear plastic pocket has been separated, with an Exacto knife. This is to allow the envelope to slide freely in and out. If you look very closely, you will be able to see the carbon paper stuck to the inside of the cover. The carboned side is facing you.



Here is the inside back cover again. This time the paper address book cover is back in place under the clear plastic pocket on the right. (It's easier to see the plastic here.)

The envelope is shown protruding from its spot between the plastic and paper covers of the book.

Here is the back of the closed book protruding.



with the envelope still



This photograph shows the billet placed on the back of the address book, upon which I have drawn a star.

You will recall, that after I finished the drawing, I folded up the paper and Dr. Crow took the address book back. He placed it into his inside left jacket pocket, with the back of the book

facing his body. Thus, when he removed the envelope a moment later, the impression was facing him.

(If you put the book into your pocket with the back facing away from you, you will be embarrassed when you remove the envelope, as everyone in front of you will see the impression of the design.

Doctor Crow advises that, if this should happen to you, just send him a stamped self-addressed envelope and he will send you an official "Dumb Ass Certificate.")



Here is the back of the envelope as it looks to the performer when he removes it from his pocket.

This is an actual carbon impression obtained with normal pressure and a ballpoint pen. This should give you a good idea of just how thin the cheap plastic covers are.

By the way, the dollar stores are not the only places that these address books are available. You can also get them at discount stores or at the ever-reliable K-Mart.



Here is what the audience sees you removing from the envelope as you are looking at the impression on the other side.

It is the use of the envelope, rather than an index card, that makes this such a practical device. I asked Dr. Crow if he was inspired by the effect "Confabulation." He replied that he had never heard of the effect but that he made it a habit to get confabulated every Friday night.

The Kiwi Board

When we were done discussing his address book, Crow asked me if I was still selling my impression boards.

“I never could get used to those things,” he said. “Where I live, on Bayou Delacroix, it is so hot and humid that it is almost impossible to keep the covers smooth.”

“But you once told me that you always used clip boards,” I replied.

“I do, but I’ve always favored wax impressions like my old girl friend Fat Annie used.”

(I didn’t question his reference to Anna Eva Faye, who Dr. Crow claims to have dated in the early twenties.)

I replied, “I’ve tried waxing the boards, but if you use enough wax to get a good impression, the paper is apt to stick to the board. I have heard that you can use Lemon Pledge to get a waxed surface, but that only seems to work well on plastic boards. I have noticed that you only use fiberboard models.”

“That’s because they didn’t have no plastic boards back when I started getting impressions. But the Lemon Pledge doesn’t hold a candle to the Kiwi.”

“The Kiwi?”

“Kiwi clear shoe polish. Here look at my board.” He pulled a legal size clipboard from a drawer and handed it to me along with his “secret gimmick.”



This board has already been waxed with the Kiwi polish. It is totally dry and unsticky to the touch. Since the polish is clear, it does not mark or smudge the paper on the board.

The impression is obtained by tilting the board slightly to a cross light.

Even the lightest hand will leave a clear impression of fine writing, and yet it is totally invisible to spectators at a casual glance.

Since I started working with the Kiwi, which, by the way, is equally effective for preshow as well as stage work, I have found it to be a completely reliable and practical method.

If the board is being “read” backstage, it is not necessary to apply more polish before sending it out again. You need only to buff it a bit with a cotton cloth.

These are the secrets that Doctor Crow has permitted me to share with you at this time. As the distribution of this e-book is very limited, you will find the secrets to be extremely valuable.

Use them well.