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A Brief Introduction

Until now, all of my writings about mentalism have included almost equal amounts of theory, presentation, and method. The routines in this e-book, however, are presented in the traditional “Effect/Method” format and it may be argued that some of them cross the line between mentalism and mental magic.

That’s partly why I call them “heresies”. You’ll discover the other reasons as we go along.



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Grandfather's Watch

NOTE: Throughout this e-book I will follow my usual convention of putting the script in bold face type

EFFECT:

The performer exhibits an antique looking pocket watch claiming that it once belonged to his grandfather, a once famous European mind reader.

On the outside of the case is an old photograph of a man wearing uniform bedecked with medals. To his right is the image of what appears to be an owl.

The performer explains, “ **He claimed that the medals were given to him by the crowned heads of Europe. The owl represented his ability to peer into the darkest recesses of the human mind and to capture a person’s most secret thoughts.**

“**He died when I was just a baby so I never got to know him. But on my eighteenth birthday, my mother handed me a small box wrapped in shiny brown paper and tied with twine. She told me that it was from my grandfather, who stated in his will that I was to receive it on the day I reached my majority. She had no idea what the package contained and was as anxious as I was to find out.**

“**It was, of course, this watch. There was a short handwritten note in the box. All it said was ‘When you need me I’ll be there. Why don’t you play a game of Countdown Solitaire?’**

“**That was it - no ‘Happy Birthday’ - no ‘Greetings from the Great Beyond’, and no explanation whatsoever. Just a cryptic note that reminded me of *The Manchurian Candidate*.**

“**I asked my mother if she had any idea what it meant. She told me that my best bet was to do just as the note suggested and play a game of Countdown Solitaire. I had never heard of the game, but apparently he had taught it to my mother when she was a little girl and she showed me how it was played.**

“It was easily the oddest game I had ever seen. At first, it didn’t seem to have any point, but then I realized that it was not the pointless game of chance it at first seemed to be. I was, in fact, an incredibly difficult memory exercise.”

That’s the setup I use for this interesting close-up effect. After showing the spectators the watch, I explain how to play Countdown Solitaire. I ask a spectator to thoroughly shuffle a pack of cards as I explain that aces count as one and picture cards count as ten – just like in Black Jack. I take the cards from him and spread them face up on the table.

“You are allowed to look at the cards for ten seconds and then you must turn them face down. It is very important to pay attention to every card you see.

“You then turn the cards face up, one at a time, dealing each card face up onto the previous one, thus forming a face up stack. On the first card you say ‘Ten’, on the second card you say ‘Nine’, on the third you say ‘Eight’ and so on until you get down to ‘One’. But, if at any time, the value of the card you have turned up matches the number in the countdown – for example, you say ‘Seven’ and the card you turn up is a seven – the countdown stops right there. The seven is left face up on the table and the rest of the cards go to the bottom of the pack.

“This is done four times. When you are finished, you will have four cards lying on the table before you. But they won’t all necessarily be face up – that is because if you go through the countdown and NONE of the cards match the number you are calling, ALL of the dealt cards go face down to the bottom of the pack and the next card on top of the pack is dealt face down onto the table. It counts as nothing – the face down card simply serves as a reminder that there were no matches on that particular countdown.”

This is not nearly as confusing as it sounds in print. If you just take a pack of cards in hand and play the game exactly as described, you will quickly see how simple it is. [I am sure that many of you have already recognized the ancient mathematical card trick I have disguised as a game – the trick is so old that no one seems to remember it. But with the memory twist it fits the theme perfectly and is ideal for this routine.]

“Okay, when you are finished doing four countdowns you add up the values of the face up cards lying before you – remember that picture cards count as ten and aces as one. [Assume that you have finished demonstrating the four countdowns and have an ace, a jack, a facedown card, and a nine on the table.] In this case, I would add up these cards and get a total of twenty-one plus ten plus nine. The face down card is zero. I would then count down to the twentieth card in the pack and deal it face down to the side. (I don’t actually do this – I just gather up all of the cards as I explain how they would normally deal down to the number represented by the total of the four cards.)

“Now you must state the identity of that card. If you’ve observed and remembered all of the cards you have seen and how they have been dealt, you will soon be able to name that card every single time you play.

“At least that’s what my mother claimed her father could do. I told her that it seemed nearly impossible unless you had an extremely quick photographic memory. She smiled and answered, ‘He said he’d be there if you needed him, didn’t he?’

“So I played the game again, but this time with the watch. Here, play a round of Countdown. Spread the cards out before you and we’ll look at them for ten seconds. Now gather them up, turn them face down and begin the first countdown.”

I shuffle the cards as I say the first two lines of the last paragraph. While I tell the spectator to spread the cards out before him, I actually do the spreading. The spectator then plays the game as previously described. When he counts down to the card whose position in the pack is indicated by the four cards left on the table, I tell him to be careful not to turn the card face up.

Once more, I show the pocket watch and then place it, photo side down, on the final card. **“Did you follow the cards carefully? Do you have any idea what card lies beneath the watch? Don’t worry, neither do I. But I do think it is probably a low spade – it might be a four, but I’m not sure.**

“The point is - I don’t have to be. Not as long as I have the watch. I’ll show you what I mean – turn the card face up. Ah – a five of spades. I was pretty close. But like they say, close only counts in horseshoes and hand grenades. Turn over the watch.”

The participant turns the watch over and suddenly realizes that the photograph has changed. Instead of the wise owl, the image of a playing card is next to my grandfather’s picture. It is, of course, the five of spades.

METHOD:

Now before you say - "I don't have a watch like that, how am I supposed to do this effect?" - with a little bit of thought you will see how many different types of watches, locket, cigarette cases, old snuff boxes (visit your local head shop) can be used to produce the effect. The only requirement is that there be a circular area on one side of the case where a photograph can be placed.

If you insist on using the same watch that you see in the photos, you can get similar ones from The Franklin Mint (www.franklinmint.com) They come with a gaudy stone on the outside of the case - a stone whose removal greatly enhances the appearance and apparent value of the watch.

I'll explain how the photograph changes in just a moment, but first I should explain the card effect for those of you who don't know it or who can't remember how it works. It's extremely simple - if you play the game EXACTLY as described, the card that the spectator arrives at when dealing to the final total is the card that was NINTH from the bottom of the pack before the dealing began.

If you wanted to present the effect as a straight memory stunt, you would simply note the ninth card from the bottom when the cards are spread face up just before the dealing begins. Of course, you would pretend that you were carefully noting the position of every card in the pack.

In this routine, I allow the spectator to shuffle before I explain how the game is played. Since I don't actually count down to the final card in the initial demonstration, it is a very easy matter to find the five of spades while gathering up the cards and position it ninth from the bottom. I generally just out jog it from the rest of the pack as I place the dealt cards to the bottom after each count down. I then cut the five to the bottom and run eight cards from the top to begin the shuffling sequence. If the five of spades should happen to be one of the four cards left face up on the table after the initial demonstration, so much the better. Since only the bottom stock of nine cards needs to be maintained, it is easy to give the pack a convincing false shuffle before spreading them face up so that the spectator may play the game.

Obviously, there are several other options available - you can crimp the five, for example, or, if you are using your own deck, a corner short can be brought into play. Whatever method you use, the main thing is to act casually.

The bottom line is that the card is forced. You might think that it would be just as effective to write a prediction before you begin and dispense with the watch entirely.

You would be wrong.

It is the sudden change in the photo that gives the effect its impact. Of course this is heresy from a purist's point of view – mentalists aren't supposed to make things magically transform themselves. In the context of the presentation, however, the effect is not much different from spirit slates and floating tables – two of the earliest 'mental effects' ever devised. (Too often, we forget that the roots of our art are deeply embedded in the early days of Spiritualism and that early "psychical" research was primarily involved with the issue of post mortem 'survival'.)

In the separate file that came with this e-book are two high-resolution photo sheets. One of them has the actual photos used in this effect and you are welcome to use them if you don't care to make your own. If you do decide to use my photos, however, you will be very pleased as spectators marvel at your grandfather's dashing good looks (!)



Now look closely at the following photograph:

This is the way I usually accomplish the effect. The picture of the owl is simply a little cutout affixed to the larger photo with a bit of PostIt Note® Glue or magician's wax. Since the larger photo is covered with a circle of laminate material - available in office supply stores in small sheets designed for do-it-yourself lamination of id cards, certificates, etc - and the photos themselves are printed on glossy stock, it is by no means apparent at a casual glance that the owl is not actually a part of the picture

Alternatively, if your watch has a circular depression or rim which is deep enough, the effect can be accomplished by using two photos - one permanently attached to the watch (or whatever trinket you are using) and the other simply resting on top of it - held in place by just the tiniest bit of wax.



You must be able to remove the duplicate easily and invisibly- too tight a fit or too much wax and you are going to run into trouble. For pure ease of handling, however, I recommend the cutout method. (The supplied photos can be used for either approach. Just cut out the little owls if you want to do it my way.

The photos to the left illustrate my handling of the watch.

Figure 1 shows how the watch is casually shown at the beginning of the routine. While the spectator is playing the game, I casually scrape off the owl card with my left thumbnail. It is so tiny it will never be noticed. (Figure 2)

Figure 3 illustrates the voodoo subtlety I mentioned earlier. Note that my left thumb is covering the area of the photo where the card is located. This is how you casually show your grandfather's face just one more time before placing the watch, photo side down, on the spectator's final card. (The forced five of spades.)

Carrol's Watch

Carrol Priest - "The Amazing Karrol" - was among the first mentalists to join the *Psychic Entertainers Association* after it was founded in 1978. He had an extremely creative mind, and the time he spent in our world was all too short. I feel privileged to have known him.

Among his many interesting ideas was a watch effect that could be done with any borrowed timepiece. Essentially, the idea was to borrow a watch from one spectator, and let another spectator, while holding the watch face down, turn the stem until he felt like stopping. The mentalist then took the watch from the second volunteer and turned it over so he could see the face. The spectator was asked to call out the 'randomly selected' time, which, of course, matched an earlier prediction made by the mentalist.

While Carrol's method was, as far as I knew, a completely new approach, I always felt that this was the type of effect that could be presented far more impressively if several spectators, rather than just one or two, were involved in the selection of a time. To maximize the impact, the effect would have to be performed with a borrowed watch.

The presentation goes like this:

The mentalist requests the assistance of a spectator who is wearing an easy-to-read analog wristwatch. **"No Mickey Mouse watches, please. We are going to set the watch at a random time and if, by chance, it ends up to be six-thirty, Mickey will be stuck in a rather awkward position."** [I imagine there are a few purists who would maintain that this sort of humor has no place in a mental act. But, then again, most of them have day jobs.] Generally, it is best to select a male spectator if you are going to borrow a watch - women's wristwatches can be almost impossible to read.

The spectator is asked to remove the watch from his wrist and to pull out the stem so the time can be reset. **“When you’ve done that, just turn the watch face down and start turning the stem. Since you can no longer see the hands I think everyone here would agree that no one could no for sure what time will be showing on your watch when you stop moving the hands. I want to take this a step further, though. Don’t look at the face of your watch yet – keep the face turned down and hand the watch to the gentleman sitting next to you. I’m going to ask that he turn the hands as well and then, without looking at the face, pass the watch to someone else in the audience.”**

The mentalist has at least five or six audience members turn the stem on the borrowed watch. Up to this point in the presentation, the mentalist has never touched, or even gone near, the borrowed watch. He approaches the audience member who now holds the watch and asks her [it’s best to use a woman for the final participant, for reasons I’ll explain in a moment] if she has any idea at all about the time the watch is now showing. She will, generally, say ‘No.’

“Keep the watch face down but push the stem in so that the time can no longer be changed. I wonder what time has finally been selected after five of you turned the hands. Here, let me see.” He takes the face down watch from her hand and looks at the face. He immediately turns the face toward the spectator and asks her to call out the randomly selected time.

As in the generally presented version of the effect, the time matches a prediction made earlier in the show.

METHOD:

Carrol’s idea was to use a toy plastic watch face that was simply held over the face of the borrowed watch when it was shown to the volunteer. Since the watch belonged to someone else, the person reading the time had no idea what the face was supposed to look like. This is why I recommended earlier that the time be called off by a woman who would be less likely to be familiar with the faces on men’s watches. I know I am most likely completely wrong about this, but it doesn’t really matter, because with today’s computer technology as easy access to high quality printing, the gimmick I’ve developed would have made Carrol proud.

If you took the time to look at the extra files that came with this e-book – presumably to look at the pocket watch pictures of my ‘grandfather’ – you will have already noticed that the other graphic contains pictures of watch faces set at three different times. (The two extra times are provided for repeat shows before the same group.)

The watch face graphics are 30mm in diameter – the exact size of the average man’s watch face. In addition to the graphics, which you can print yourself if you have a decent printer (if not Kinko’s will take your business), you will need a flat 30mm watch crystal. You can either get one from a jewelry store, or, if you like the effect that follows this one – it involves two five-dollar department store pocket watches – you can just use the crystals from them.

The watch face graphic is based on a Timex Expedition, but the logo has been removed. You will need to have it printed on glossy photographic paper. You will then neatly cut it out and glue it to the watch crystal.

[To keep the glue from showing through the glass, use a permanent black marker to draw a thick border around the rim of the glass. Draw it on what will be the inside surface of the crystal. Use the glue very sparingly and the magic marker border will disguise its presence. This is the reason I decided on using a black watch face – it disguises the border very nicely. Also, be sure to polish away any fingerprints on the inside surface of the crystal before gluing it to the watch face.]

The graphic on the next page will give you a good idea of what the finished gimmick looks like and shows how it is handled in performance.





In the center of the graphic is a photograph of the actual watch face included in high-resolution format with this e-book.

While the spectators are passing the borrowed watch around and turning its stem, finger palm the gimmick from your right trousers pocket – or left, if you must (figure 1) A casual glance into your hand is all you need to orient the crystal so that it is right-side up. (It doesn't have to be precisely oriented just yet – you will have an opportunity to fine-tune the adjustment later in the handling.)

Look carefully at figure 2 and note how the right thumb has tilted the gimmick onto its edge. The left hand has just lifted the watch from the spectator's palm and is apparently just passing it to the right hand. (Figure 3 depicts the tilted gimmick relative to the watch with the right hand taken away for clarity.) Note also, how the left hand fingers are grasping the watchband. The first and middle fingers clip upper portion of the band and the lower half is gripped between the thumb and ring finger. This allows the watch to pass smoothly into position underneath the gimmick.

Figure 4 shows the gimmick in place. The right hand is about to turn inward toward the performer's body. The fore and middle fingers have taken the place of the left hand fingers and are clipping the upper portion of the band. The forefinger also holds the upper portion of the gimmick in place over the watch face.

Likewise, the right thumb and ring fingers now clip the lower part of the band and the thumb supports the lower half of the gimmick.

It is during this exchange of the watch from the left hand to the right that you will be able to make any necessary minor adjustments to the crystals orientation on the face.

Turn your entire body to the right in order to show the face of the watch to the spectator – you will actually be standing next to her rather than in front. Lift your hands toward her eyes as you ask her to call out the time. This is rather important – by moving the watch close to her eyes, you are making it difficult for her to focus on the time. She will either move her head back or push your hands away. Either way –you have distorted her focus and made it difficult for her to notice anything other than the time on the watch.

In Carrol's original version of the effect, the gimmick appeared to be a toy watch – it **was** a toy watch as a matter of fact! – but this distortion of focus prevented his participants from ever noticing that something was wrong. Unfortunately, the toy watch appearance scared many faint-hearted mentalists away from the effect.

The gimmick that I use – and which I'm sure you will be using when you realize just how subtle and practical the principle is – looks far more realistic than the original, so the distortion of focus move is probably not as critical as it was in the original version of the routine. But why take chances?

If you think about it for a moment you will see that a gimmicked crystal can be carried on your person at all times, thus leaving you fully prepared to perform a powerhouse effect anytime and anywhere there is an audience.

The Pocket Watch Switch (But it's not another watch effect!)

This is more of a utility item than a specific effect, but I use it most often in a demonstration of dousing with a pendulum.

EFFECT:

The performer, appearing before a small gathering, exhibits a small silver case and explains that it is the weight he uses to make a pendulum.

"I'm sure that most of you are familiar with the use of the pendulum to find water or to detect the sex of a chicken embryo before it hatches from the egg. You may also be aware that many of the soldiers who served in the Vietnam War used pendulums or dousing rods to locate buried landmines. Some say that the rods work due to an interaction with magnetic fields and just as many others explain the movement of the rods as a manifestation of a phenomenon known as IMR - or "Involuntary Muscular Response" In other words, the operator of the pendulum unconsciously makes very small muscular movements that cause the pendulum to swing or turn in circles.

"Since these unconscious movements can actually occur as a response to environmental factors, it has been very hard for science to accept any paranormal explanation for the pendulum or dousing rod effect.

"But environmental cues or purely unconscious movement can hardly account for the success that many modern day doublers have had with map dousing. That's right - map dousing. Instead of going to a particular location to find water, oil or valuable minerals, the douser simply passes his dousing rods or pendulum over a map.

"I realize that seems a little bit illogical, but consider the fact that the United States Navy, during the Cold War, employed various doublers in the Washington DC area to douse maps in order to determine the locations of Soviet submarines.

Since most of this lead-in is true and a good deal of it well known, you will find – if you present this routine seriously – that many in your audience will be nodding their heads in agreement as you discuss the phenomenon.

[Oh – I think that may be another heresy by the way. Very few mentalists discuss psychic or paranormal abilities anymore – let alone claim to demonstrate them.]

The performer passes out pencils and small slips of paper to all of those present. He asks that each of them print the name of a major city or location in the Continental United States (or whatever area in the world is familiar to your audiences and for which you have a large map.)

The spectators are told to crumple their slips into small balls. One audience member is asked to collect all of the slips in a jar, lunch bag, or other suitable container.

The performer opens the metal case and places it on the table, on which is spread a large map of the United States. The spectator who collected the slips is asked to mix them up and to select one slip. He is to place that slip into the case and close it. At no time does the performer ever touch the slips collected from the audience.

“The location in the box is unknown to anyone here,” explains the mentalist as he picks up the box and ties it to the end of a cord. But let’s see if the pendulum can find it.

The rest goes as you would expect. The mentalist moves the pendulum all over the map. It swings slightly in a back and forth motion until it passes over one particular area on the map. At that spot, and that spot only, the pendulum swings in a circle.

A spectator is asked to open the box and remove the “target slip”. He is told to read the target’s name to the audience and it is found to be the very spot where the pendulum swung in circles.

METHOD:

Given the title for this section I would imagine that you have already figured out that a switch of the box is involved. I call the move the “Pocket Watch Switch” because the cases I use are actually gutted pocket watches. I buy them for under ten dollars at K-Mart and put them to all sorts of uses. (Those of you who’ve read my “Theories and Methods for the Practical Psychic” – soon to appear in hardcover from H&R Books – may remember my version of Koran’s ‘Medallion’ effect in which I used the same watch cases seen in the present routine.)

The duplicate case, which resides in the performer's pocket before the performance, contains a crumpled slip of paper bearing the name of a well-known city in the United States. It doesn't have to be an obvious selection such as would be required in a psychological force, but it shouldn't be so bizarre that your audience will begin wondering who could have written it. Generally, someone will always claim to have been the author of the "target" slip.

The switch of the cases takes place just before the performer ties the case to a cord, which he removes from his pocket. It is when he goes to his pocket for the cord that he ditches the switched out case.

The switch itself is unique to pocket watch sized items, although it is clearly at least a distant relative to many billiard ball and coin moves. Each stage of the move is depicted in the following graphic. It shows the move both from an audience point of view and from an exposed angle.

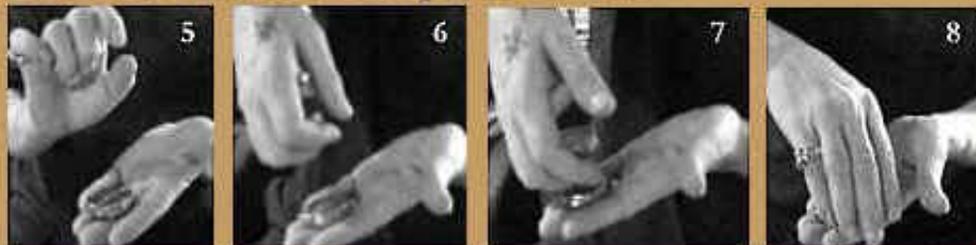
While I use inexpensive watches for the cases, I did try to find a matching pair that looked rather unique. That is one of the main secrets that makes this sort of switch less likely to be expected than, perhaps, switch of the paper slip might be. If your watchcase looks odd enough, and if you tell an interesting story about how it came into your possession, people will never dream that you have two of them. For that reason, it is very important that you DO NOT ask the audience to mark the box for future identification. (!) If you think that a mark on the box would enhance the effect, then MARK IT YOURSELF, like I did to mine. Both of my boxes have identical and accidental looking scratches on their lids. I never point them out and I'd be an idiot if I did. They will notice them without your help - and remember: Things that people discover for themselves are things that they often accept without question.



The Case Switch - Audience View



The Case Switch - Exposed View



Ending Position



WHAT THE AUDIENCE SEES

1. The left hand picks up the case and exhibits it.
2. The right forefinger points at the case as the performer emphasizes that no one could know the name of the location written on the slip within.
3. The right hand picks up the case from the left.
4. Left hand either goes to pocket for cord or first holds watch with right hand to show bottom of box as shown in figures 9.

THE SWITCH

5. This is not an elegant pose; it simply shows how the case is clipped against the upper palm by the right fingers. It remains in contact with them throughout most of the move.
6. The right hand descends to the left. This exposed view shows how the case rests on the fingers. (You could hardly call this a palm – it is simply a very natural position when seen from the front as in figures 1 and 2.) Note how the right thumb is held against the rear of the watch.
7. The backs of the right fingers contact the watch. The right thumb is held out of the way for clarity only. It remains held against the rear of the watch as in the preceding figure holding the watch against the second phalange of the right middle finger – this prevents the case from clicking against the one in the left hand.
8. The right hand moves forward and the left hand begins to turn inward toward the performer's body.
9. The left hand continues to turn downward as in figure 4 and either goes to the pocket for the cord or to the position in figure 9.

As far as sleight of hand goes, this is a rudimentary switch. (About a century ago there were many moves designed for use with pocket watches as they were a common man's accessory and often used in various routines. Nowadays, pocket watch manipulation is a lost art) It is, nonetheless, the sort of sleight that most mentalists would consider to belong the realm of conjuring, thus qualifying this routine to the list of heresies.



Bonus Material

The Halfelope - Sugar or Salt?

EFFECT:

I often perform this impromptu effect in restaurants or places where sugar and salt are readily available. I set it up with a brief discussion of the power of suggestion and then ask my participant to open a packet of sugar and to pour just a little bit onto his palm.

I ask him to taste it in order to fix the taste of sugar firmly in his sensory channels. ("Sensory Channels" - a cool phrase, no?) In the meantime, I have removed an empty manila #3 envelope from my pocket. I buckle it open and, taking the sugar packet, I pour the remainder of the sugar into the envelope and hand it to the spectator for sealing.

"The element which you have personally verified to be sugar is sealed in a container once more. Put the envelope down on the table in front of you and pick up the saltshaker. Pour a bit of the salt on your palm and taste it, just as you did the sugar a moment ago.

"Now fix the taste of the salt in your sensory channels and imagine that it was salt you have been tasting all along. Imagine that earlier, when you opened the sugar packet and tasted it, that you were surprised to find that it tasted like salt. Imagine that as if it were true. Really try to make yourself believe that it actually happened."

This needs to be given a serious buildup and should be presented as if you are really demonstrating a sensory anomaly.

"If you've really got yourself believing that the sugar was salt, you would be demonstrating a very strong imagination and would actually be in a mild state of self-induced hypnosis. Let's give it a test. Open the envelope and pour a bit of the sugar into your palm. Taste it. What does it taste like?"

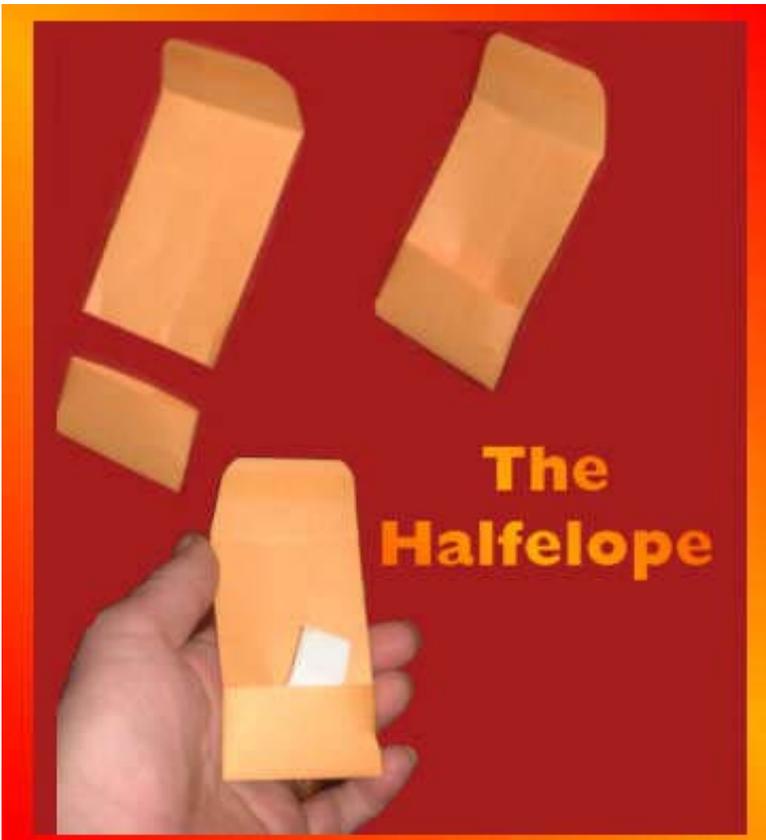
If you have set this up right, the spectator will be surprised that it really tastes like salt!

METHOD:

The reason it tastes like salt is that it really IS salt. The sugar that the spectator saw being poured into the envelope has been switched for salt.

I know that many of you will conclude that the effect could be accomplished with a thumb tip. It could, but I think you will find my approach to be far more convincing. Besides, it will introduce you to an excellent utility device that I have kept under wraps for years.

I call it the "Halfelope" and the following graphic shows what it is and how it works:



The 'Halfelope' is simply the bottom portion cut from another envelope. In the sugar/salt routine, there is already some salt in the whole envelope prior the beginning the effect.

The envelope piece (which is really about the bottom third of an envelope but I didn't like the title 'Thirdalope') is buckle open and slid over the bottom of the complete envelope.

You will have to buckle the envelope to fit it into the gimmick. Since they are both the same width, this will cause the gimmick to permanently buckle open as well. It should be buckled open on the seamed side of the envelope as shown in the illustration.

I have put a billet into the gimmick shown in the picture so that you can see where the sugar actually goes. (And not coincidentally, to give you a hint as to the many other applications in which the gimmick can be used.) Obviously you only pretend to buckle the envelope open before pouring in the sugar, but since the envelope is bent inwards a bit anyway, from the front it will =give the appearance of being buckled open. Just by lifting the envelope by pulling it upwards by the flap with the right fingers, the left fingers keeping the gimmick pressed against the left palm as seen in the picture, the switch is accomplished.

You will find that if the envelope is kept in motion before the switch, its complete face can actually be flashed without the gimmick being seen. Play with this in front of a mirror for a bit and you will see what I mean.

As far as I know, the 'Halfelope' is a new approach to the double envelope concept. Please keep it to yourself and I think you will find it to be a very powerful utility item.

The Golden Key Box

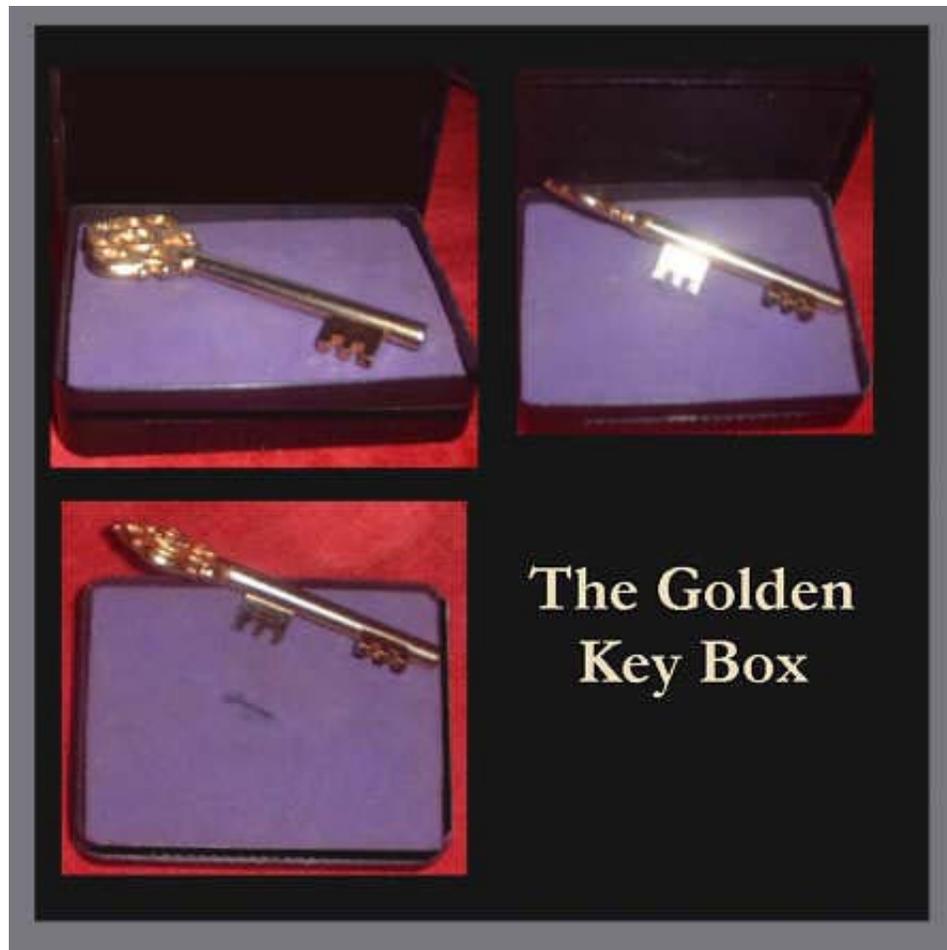
This last item will only be of use to you if you own the very clever commercial effect known as “The Gold Key.” (I believe it was originally released by Chazpro, though I could be wrong given the proliferation of copycat items on the market today.) The effect is that the mentalist shows an antique looking gold key and causes its to move around the shaft and finally to slide to the center. The key may then be freely examined as the secret gimmick that makes it possible has been removed.

As supplied by the dealers, the key comes in a little pouch, which to me seems like an odd place to keep a key. Not only that, but the soft pouch will not keep the gimmick in position if it is kept in your pocket, thus requiring a awkward setup for the effect if you plan on including it in the middle of a routine. Also, the key is never seen in its pristine condition except when it is held in the performer’s hand. This is because there is a permanently attached tooth protrusion at the center of the shaft that is not revealed until the end of the effect. (I call it that because for the life of me I can’t remember what this part of a key is called! Look at the photo and you will see what I mean.)

The “Golden Key Box” was my solution to the problem. (Note that the key effect, when presented as per the instructions, really doesn’t go anywhere and, while very magical in appearance, everyone naturally assumes that it is a special key of some kind. I don’t deny this in my presentation. In fact, I call it –ala *The Twilight Zone* – “the key that unlocks the door of imagination.” After presenting the effect, I tie a string to they key and use it as a pendulum in another routine, thus giving the gimmicked key the context and purpose missing in the original presentation.

The “Golden Key Box” is simply a plastic playing card box painted black. Inside is a piece of rubber foam I cut from an armrest designed to prevent fatigue when you are using your mouse. (Your computer mouse I mean.) It not only keeps the gimmick (a magnetic false tooth attachment - in position when you are not doing the effect - but it allows the audience to see the key lying flat on the surface of the foam - a situation that is impossible without the piece of foam. For at the center of the rubber insert is a small slit which holds the protruding teeth at the center of the shaft securely in place and out of sight.

The photo, once again, will explain all:



Those of you who don't own the key effect might consider purchasing for use as I've described. I realize that many of you probably don't own the effect and, normally, I don't include this sort of thing in my writings. That's why I simply included it as a bonus item. But since using a commercially released magic trick in the context of mentalism is the ultimate heresy, I had no choice.

Good thoughts to all of you.

Bob Cassidy
Seattle, WA
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