

Sacred Chao Productions presents

Extremely Remote

An E-Book by Bob Cassidy



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Introduction

About a year ago, I decided to revamp my act and build it around the premise of “Remote Viewing”. Apart from providing thematic consistency to my presentations, I

also wanted to capitalize on the increasing public awareness and interest in the phenomenon. Over the past year, I have released three of my favorite RV routines, all of which create exactly the same effect, but under different conditions and procedures.

Why, you may well ask, am I releasing yet another Remote Viewing variation? Well I think it is a bit more than a mere variation, but there were two important reasons that led to the creation of “Extremely Remote. The first was simple necessity. Since I had adopted remote viewing as the primary skill of my stage character, it was essential that I devise as many methods as possible for achieving the same or a similar effect under virtually any performance conditions.

The second reason was more personal. Early in 2002, I released part one of *Theories and Methods for the Practical Psychic*. It was the first e-book I had ever written and my first completely new piece of work in nearly seven years. In it, I included my remote viewing routine called “The Moleskine Divination.” Based on the success I had presenting it to paying audiences, I was certain that mentalists would see some merit in the routine.

Some did. Others, realizing that the effect required a set of Royal Heath’s classic “Dye-ciphering Dice” (a seeming sacrilege to purists and an apparent throwback to the “playing cards and dice” approach to mentalism), proceeded to trash the effect in particular and the e-book in general. While I tolerate criticism very well, I honestly believe that the use of the dice in the “Moleskine” effect was entirely logical, interesting and believable. I was determined, though, to recreate the effect without using the Heath dice.

Another complaint about the “Moleskine” effect was that the “book of targets” required quite a lot of work to put together. This, I still believe, was a strong point – the more work it takes to prepare an effect, the less people will perform it, which is fine by me. Who needs the competition?

In “Extremely Remote”, I believe I have met my self-imposed challenge. There is a “book of targets” but it doesn’t take the same amount of work or time to put together. It takes considerably more. Heath’s Dice are not used. It uses regular dice.

I am only kidding. Those of you who stopped reading at the end of the last paragraph wouldn’t understand my reasoning anyway. There is a die involved, but it exists entirely in your participant’s imagination. And the book can be prepared in just a few hours while you are watching *Law and Order* reruns or downloading Microsoft’s latest Critical Update.

In addition to being a very strong routine, I think you will find a lot of use for the utility device that is at its core.

Extremely Remote

This is the RV routine that I carry with me all of the time. If you take the time to put it together you will not only have an excellent impromptu routine, but will be prepared to perform several equally strong effects on the spur of the moment. If you are naturally disorganized (like me), you will also enjoy an additional benefit, as you will soon see.

Effect: (Part One)

Having turned the conversation to the topic of remote viewing, the mentalist offers to give a demonstration. He opens his organizer to a section labeled “Remote Viewing Targets” and shows that it contains almost six hundred locations, including famous buildings, landmarks, bridges, lakes and other geographical points of interest. The list occupies over forty-eight pages and each page contains approximately twelve handwritten and sequentially numbered “targets.” The first target is numbered 111, and the last is numbered 666. He allows a spectator to flip through the pages to verify the number and variety of the entries.

“In an actual remote viewing experiment, the actual target is selected at random. There is any number of ways to do this, from using a sophisticated computer program down to the simple expedient of rolling dice. We could use three dice, for example, to generate a random three-digit number. If we were to roll a five, a one and a four, we could call that five hundred and fourteen. Or, we could change their positions around and get one hundred and forty five or four hundred and fifty one.

“The highest three digit number you could get with three dice would be six hundred and sixty-six – three sixes. The lowest, obviously, would be one hundred and eleven, represented by three ones. Between those numbers are five hundred and fifty-five three digit numbers, each of which has been assigned to a separate target in the book.” The performer allows another spectator to verify the hundreds of different target locations in the book.

“You have to be careful with dice, though. You must be sure they are perfect cubes and are not weighted, loaded, or shaped in any way so that they would tend to favor certain number combinations.

“The easiest way to do this, I have found, is to forego real dice entirely and use imaginary ones. I’ll show you what I mean.”

The mentalist removes several business cards from the organizer, bookmarks the “remote viewing section”, and closes the book. He places it in front of the spectator who is to act as assistant, also providing her with three of the business cards and a

writing implement. [The business cards and pen are not always necessary or desirable, but sometimes they are necessary. See my note below.]

“Here, take this too,” the mentalist says as he pretends to hand the assistant a non-existent die. “It’s an imaginary die. I only have one, so we will have to use it three times. Just play along with me and imagine that it’s real. Look it over, notice that the sides are marked from one to six with spots. It’s a perfect die, but I want you to roll it just a few times to satisfy yourself that it is not weighted or loaded in any way. Go ahead, roll it.”

After whatever byplay seems appropriate, the mentalist tells the spectator to note the number on top of the die. “Don’t tell it to us,” he cautions her. “Just write the number on the back of one of the business cards, and then place the card on the table, number side down.”

He continues, “Now tilt the die or give it a turn so that you are looking at another number.” He has her actually pantomime the action. “You should now see a different number. Write that on a blank business card and then place that card face down onto the first.”

He requests that the participant tilt the die one more time so that yet another number is “showing”, and he has her write this on the last business card which is then placed face down on the other two.

“May I have the die please?” asks the mentalist as he retrieves the imaginary cube and returns it to his pocket.

“Now pick up the business cards and mix them up so that even you do not know which card has which number written on it.”

The mentalist turns his back and walks away as he instructs the spectator to turn the cards over and place them next to each other, thus forming a three digit number.

[NOTE: When I perform the effect, I dispense with the business cards and let the spectator do the whole thing mentally. I feel it is stronger this way as it emphasizes that everything takes place in her mind. You may, however, if the spectator is a bit nervous or inebriated, prefer to have her write the numbers down as described. Be sure, however, to have her hide the cards or destroy them before you turn around to face her and begin your “remote viewing.”]

“You now have a randomly generated three-digit number. It represents a target location in the organizer. Please open it and look up the target. Do not tell anyone what it is, just fix it in your mind.”

Before the spectator even has a chance to locate the target, the mentalist begins to describe the location. He removes a pad and pen from his pocket and makes notes and draws simple pictures. He then gives an exact description of the physical structure

and its geographical location. There is nothing vague about his description – he actually spells out the name of the target.

Method: (Part One)

The routine continues from here with a repeat test done under even stricter seeming conditions in which the performer again succeeds in revealing extremely detailed information before actually naming the target. In the second part of the routine, several spectators assist in selecting the location. A completely different method, which serves to destroy any deductive glimmerings amongst the skeptical, is utilized. But first I'd better describe how part one is accomplished.

Consider the following: no prior preparation is necessary; you have no idea what three-digit number the spectator selects – and you really don't care. The spectators can for see for themselves that there are hundreds of possible targets; and all that's required is the organizer and its usual contents - a pen, some business cards, note paper, etc.

[A word of warning - If you frequently travel by air, be sure to label the section of the organizer containing the locations as "Remote Viewing Targets." DO NOT simply label the section "Targets."]

Interestingly enough, the routine would not be as effective if you were to use a real dice to select the number. The fact that the entire selections takes place in the spectator's imagination effectively covers up the fact that the spectator is given no where near five hundred and fifty-five possible target selections. Carefully reread the presentation. Note that the performer first talks about using *three* dice to select a number. He *implies* that there are five hundred and fifty-five possible numbers that can be formed with three dice. This, however, is not true because the dice do not allow for any numbers containing the digits 0, 7, 8, and 9. The possible three-digit numbers that can be obtained from three dice are really 216 ($6 \times 6 \times 6$).

To further reduce the number of possible combinations, the mentalist subtly switches to a procedure utilizing only *one* "invisible" die. He has the spectator "roll" it freely and then tells her to "tilt" it to obtain two additional *different* numbers. Since the entire procedure takes place in the spectator's imagination, there is nothing suspicious looking about it. The fact remains that no one knows exactly what numbers the spectator is visualizing. But as far as the performer is concerned, it doesn't really matter. His purpose has been to limit the possible choices to 120 targets.

There are really only twenty-one targets, though, because each is duplicated five or six times. The duplications are spread out very well and are not noticeable upon a

casual examination of the list. One of these “force” locations appears at each of the one hundred and twenty numbers that the spectator is able to select.

All well and good. The possible number of targets is only twenty-one. But how does the performer know which of the twenty-one has been selected? Another principle comes into play here, a book test approach that goes back to U.F. Grant’s “True Test”. It has been reincarnated in modernized and very sophisticated forms by some of mentalism’s greatest thinkers, among them my good friends Larry Becker and Ted Karmilovitch. While the present effect is ostensibly a test in remote viewing, it is really a book test in disguise.

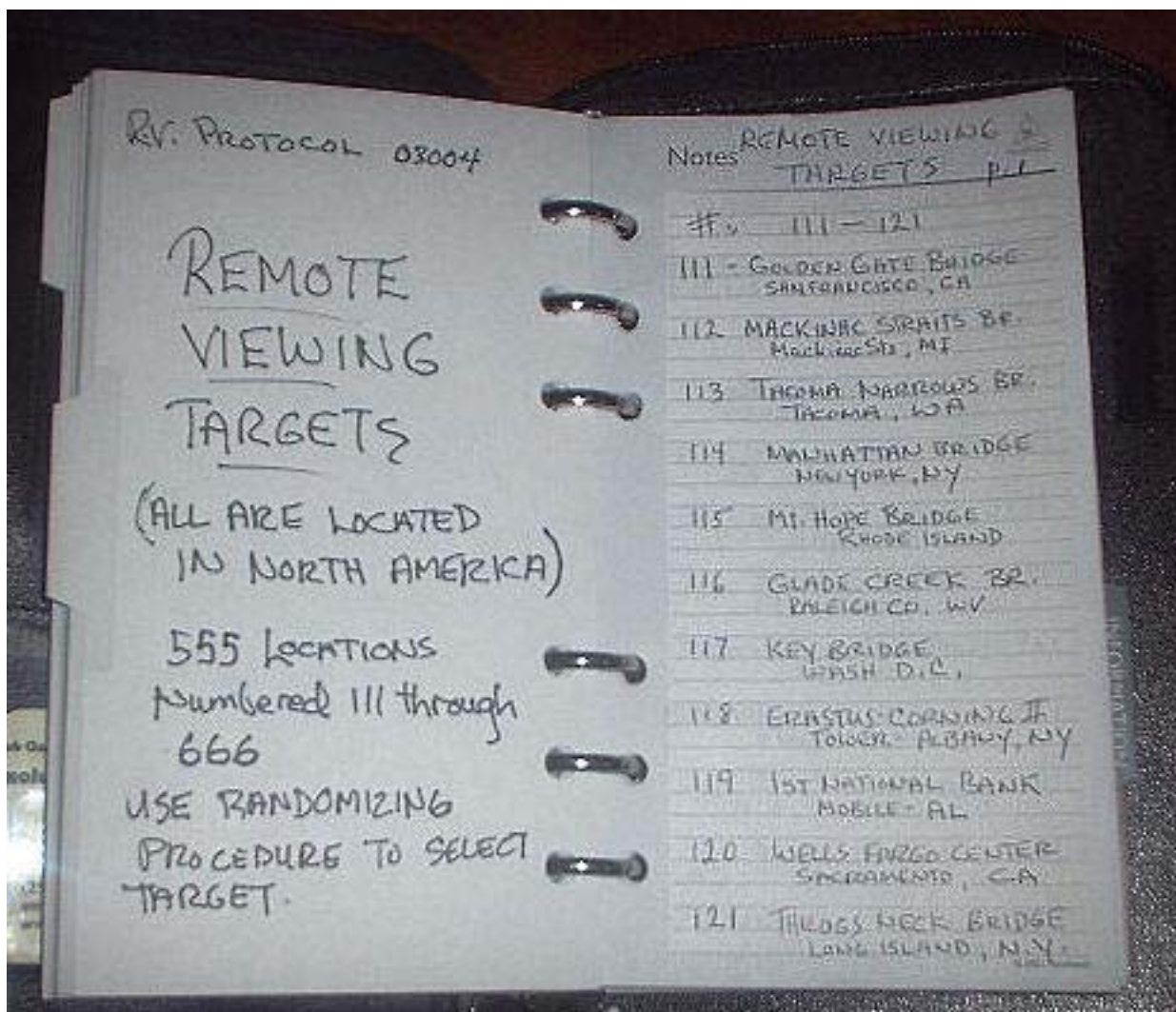
Each of the possible targets begins with a different letter of the alphabet. Only twenty-one letters are used to insure an even spread throughout the list. (You could easily expand the number of force locations to twenty-five if you must, or twenty-six if you are seriously anal retentive. But why remember more than you have to?) All of them are large buildings, which, as you will soon see, provides yet another neat subtlety. I found them all in the Year 2001 edition of *The World Almanac and Book of Facts*. (Which I have always considered to be an essential reference tool for those of us in the mind reading biz.)

After you understand the construction of the list, I will explain how you may instantly determine the exact target without any apparent pumping for the first letter.

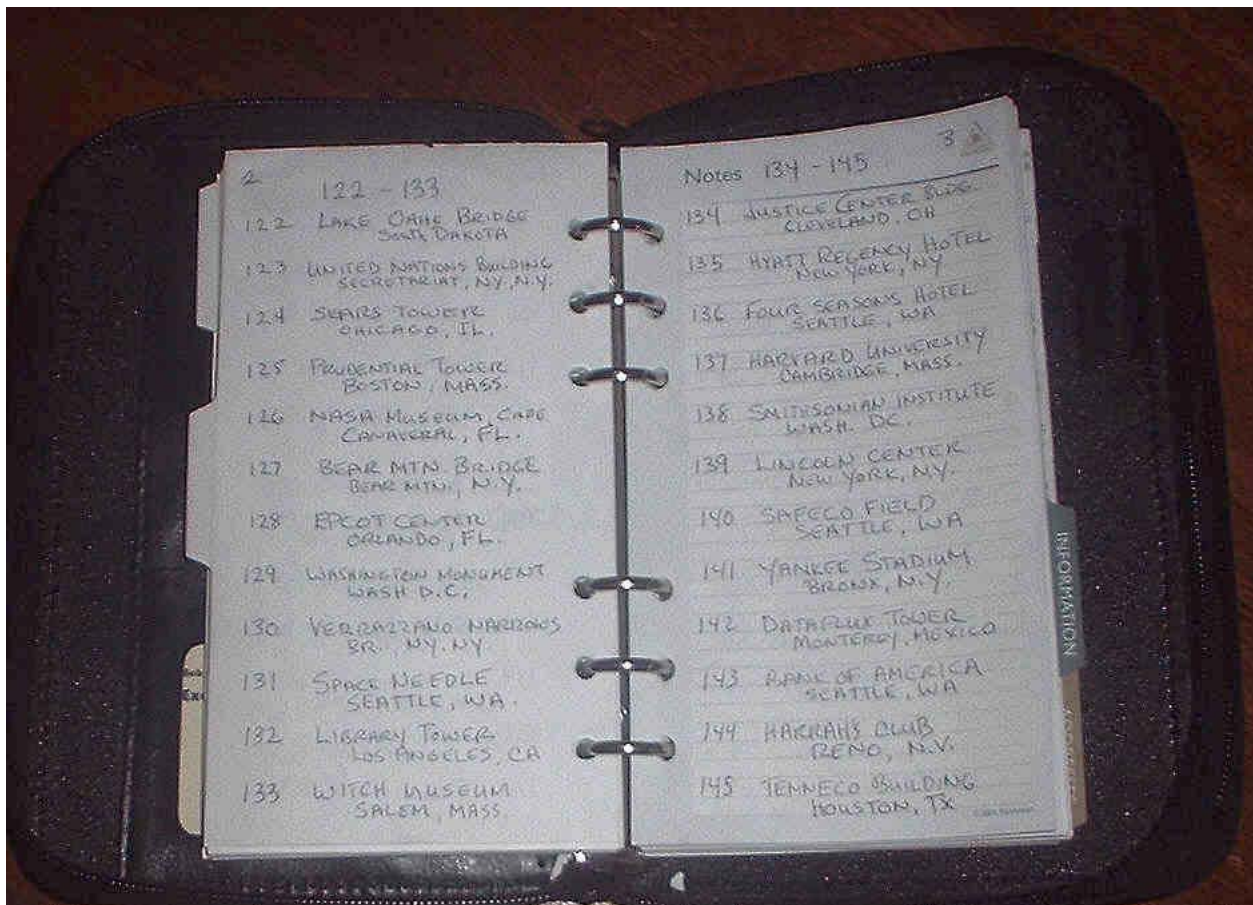
Here are the locations, in alphabetical order:

Aon Center, Chicago, IL
Bank of America Center, Seattle, WA
Chrysler Building, New York, NY
Dataflux Tower, Monterrey, Mexico
Embarcadero Center, San Francisco, CA
Four Seasons Hotel, New York, NY
Gulf Tower, Pittsburgh, PA
Hyatt Regency, New York, NY
Imperial Plaza, Honolulu, HI
Justice Center, Cleveland, OH
Key Tower, Cleveland, OH
Library Tower, Los Angeles, CA
Millennium Place, Boston, MA
NASA Museum, Cape Canaveral, FL
Olympic Tower, New York, NY
Prudential Tower, Boston, MA
Raymond Commerce Building, Newark, NJ
Sears Tower, Chicago, IL
Tenneco Building, Houston, TX
United Nations Secretariat Building, New York, NY
Wells Fargo Plaza, Houston, TX

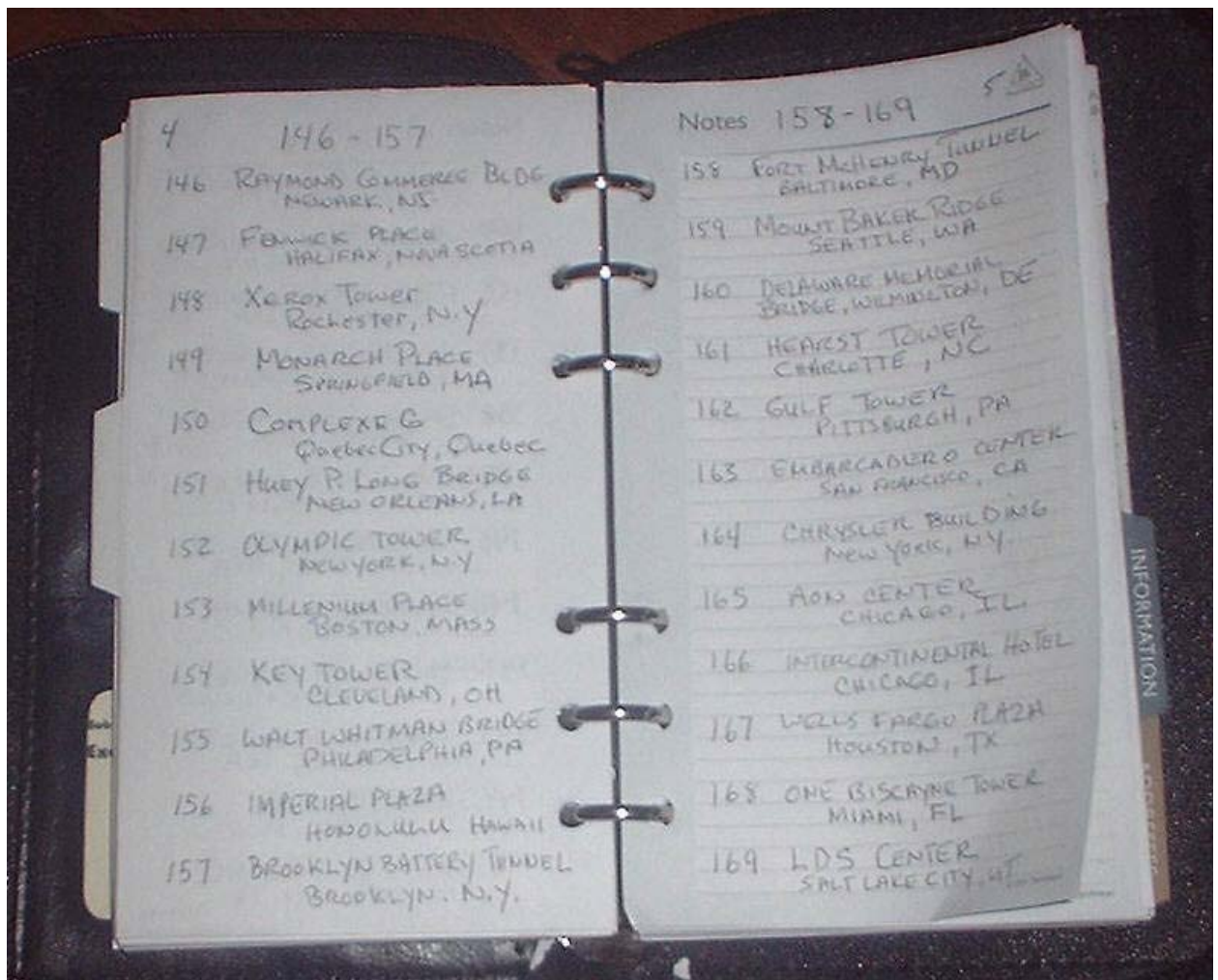
The force locations do **not** appear in alphabetical order in the organizer. I want you to appreciate just how fair the list appears to be, so here is a photograph of the organizer opened to the first page of targets:



Note that none of the force locations appears on the first page of the list. The first force location appears on the second page at position 123, as shown in the next photograph. The other force locations shown below are 124, 125, 126, 132, 134, 135, 136, 142, 143, and 145. There are **eleven** force locations on this two-page spread.



Again, the force locations are NOT in alphabetical order. You can put them in the book pretty much at random for maximum disguise. (Only at the force positions, of course.) Here are the next two pages in the book:



Note that the force locations are 146, 152, 153, 154, 156, 162, 163, 164, and 165. There are **nine** force locations on these two pages. So far, we have reached the end of the fifth page and no force targets have been repeated. The three pages following this page cover the numbers 170 through 205. No force locations appear within this range and those pages are filled with random entries.

[Each page in the book contains eleven entries, with the exception of the first page, which contains only ten. Note the “index” numbers at the top of each page that allow for the rapid location of any number.]

The next force number does not occur until position 213, which is on the **ninth** page of the book. The list begins to repeat at position 214. All duplications, therefore, are separated by at least eight pages, and are further disguised by variations in handwriting, letter placement, and relative position on the page.

The remaining force positions should be obvious to you by now. (If they are not, please go back and reread the effect and method.) But, for the sake of completeness, the remaining force locations for the rest of the list are - 215, 216, 312, 314, 315, 316, 321, 324, 325, 326, 341, 342, 345, 346, 351, 352, 354, 356, 361, 362, 364, 365, 412, 413, 415, 416, 421, 423, 425, 426, 431, 432, 435, 436, 451, 452, 453, 456, 512, 513, 514, 516, 521, 523, 524, 526, 531, 532, 534, 536, 541, 542, 543, 546, 561, 562, 563, 564, 612, 613, 614, 615, 621, 623, 624, 625, 631, 632, 634, 635, 641, 642, 643, 645, 651, 652, 653, and 654.

All of the remaining positions in the book are filled with locations that are bridges, monuments, tunnels, amusement parks, natural wonders and other buildings. Just open up your almanac and start copying. The complete list covers fifty-one pages, or twenty-six separate sheets of paper. It is a good evenings work to put together. The finished organizer, though, is far more than just a prop for this remote viewing routine. But more about that later.

It stands to reason that all the mentalist needs to know to perform a successful remote viewing is the first letter of the target. Here is how that is handled in the presentation. (Remember, I stated earlier that it was important for all of the force locations to be buildings.)

While the assistant is looking up the target, the mentalist immediately begins to vaguely describe a large man-made structure. "There are people inside and it is very big," he might say. "People are taking pictures, so I would guess there are either tourists or newspaper reporters around."

Once he sees that the spectator has located the target in the organizer, he starts to get more specific by saying, "I'm getting a letter. I think it might be the name of the actual target, but I'm not sure." (As I indicated in the presentation, the mentalist is doodling on a small pad of paper as he gets his impressions.)

Turning to the assistant he says, "I am starting to see the name of the target. Can you see it forming letter by letter in your mind? Maybe there's telepathy working here. I am not sure if this is a remote viewing, or if I am getting the image from your mind. But the image is getting clear. And I see a word. I'll just write down the first letter."

He writes something on his pad and asks the spectator, "What is the first letter? Let's see if I got that much right." The assistant says (for example), "It's a 'T'." Without missing a beat, the mentalist says, "No, no. I got a 'b'." He turns his pad around and shows he had printed the letter "b" next to a primitive drawing of a tall building.

"It *is* a 'b'. The location is a building, is it not? A 'b' stands for 'building'," he says emphatically.

The spectator must agree that the target *is* a building. (That's why **all** of the force locations are buildings. This sets you up for getting the letter 'b' later on in the routine. It appears that the performer's impression was correct but that he was getting an image rather than a word. But he has succeeded in deviously obtaining the actual first letter of the target name, so it is now easy to zero in on the correct target. In this case he starts talking about Texas and Sam Houston, and "Could it be San Jacinto?" And then, "No, it's Houston, The City, not the man. It's Ten something. The plaque by the door. Tenneco. Yes Tenneco! I think I am at the Tenneco building in Houston.

"Please, tell us what the target was," he says to the spectator. She responds, "The Tenneco Building in Houston, Texas."

[Those of you who perform Ted Karmilovitch's "The Mother of All Book Tests," (in my opinion, the greatest book test ever devised – with the exception of the one Ted hasn't written up yet!) are probably familiar with other effective ruses for obtaining the needed bit of information. A particularly good approach was devised by Richard Busch and described in his "Mother's Home Companion," and was the primary inspiration for the approach I developed for this routine.]

Believe me, the audience reacts rather strongly here. They usually ask the mentalist try it again. They are either very impressed or they're just a bit skeptical and don't believe he CAN do it again.

The mentalist responds by pointing out that the test, while successful, illustrated one of the problems that come up when remote viewing experiments are not conducted under strictly controlled conditions. "While I am fairly certain that I actually 'viewed' the target, the fact that you knew what the target was allowed the possibility of telepathy to enter the picture. While I normally wouldn't want to try an experiment like this twice, I think I really need to in order to rule out the telepathy problem."

The mentalist's real reason, though, is that this effect is one of the few can be significantly strengthened by an apparent repetition. The method used in the follow-up is one that I rarely use on its own, because it just looks too gimmicky. In this particular routine, though, it is especially appropriate and disarming. It not only makes the conditions seem much tighter, but it also rules out any other theories that may be brewing in the backs of suspicious minds. Conversely, the method used in the first part of the routine effectively obfuscates the blatant swindle pulled off in phase two.

In other words, it is my kind of mentalism.

Effect: (Part Two)

“As I said earlier, when tests such as these are performed under laboratory conditions, they usually use a randomizing technique that is a little more sophisticated than invisible dice.” [Note the subtle use of the plural “dice.” It’s just a little almost subliminal nudge that will cause the spectators to misremember the actual procedure used in phase one.]

“Normally, computers are used. Wait a minute. There’s a calculator in the front of the organizer. That will do as a basic computer.”

This time five spectators participate in selecting a random target. The calculator is cleared and each of the five punches in any two-digit number of their choice, provided that it is over twenty-five. This, the mentalist explains, is to insure that the total exceeds the lowermost target number, one hundred and eleven. The last participant is instructed to hit the ‘equals’ button and to note the total. Since each of the spectators has entered a two-digit number, the highest possible total is four hundred and ninety-five. Thus, the randomly derived total must fall within the range of the target numbers.

In this test, in order to prevent the possibility of telepathy, and to ensure that any successful result could be achieved only by remote viewing, the spectator who totaled the numbers writes the total on a piece of paper and keeps it secret. She does not open the book to check the target. The mentalist, as before, begins to describe things and doodles on his pad, this time saying things like,

“There’s water here. I am on a bridge near a large city.”

[While the urge may be strong, it is nonetheless advisable that the performer refrain from stating that he sees himself peeing off of the bridge. I have used this line many times with great success, but it may have had an adverse effect on my credibility]

“There is a ‘V’ of some kind and something is very narrow. It seems to be the river. Yes, I think the city is New York. There is an Italian sounding name. I also get a number. Four two six oh, or something like that. I don’t know what that means.”

He jots down all of these impressions for future verification by the committee of five participants who will judge the success of his endeavor. When he is finished, he tosses the pad onto the table for all to see and asks the spectator to announce, for the first time, the randomly derived target number. She does so and she is then instructed to look up the target and announce it to the audience.

She reveals that the target was New York’s Verrazano-Narrows Bridge, the longest suspension bridge in America. (If anyone is curious about the numbers the mentalist was receiving, they will be startled should they decide to check an almanac. The bridge is 4,260 long.)

Method: (Part Two)

I can almost hear some of you saying, “There’s nothing new here. It’s just a gimmicked calculator and the total is forced.” And you are almost right. It is a gimmicked calculator, but I suggest there **is** something new here: a credible reason for using the calculator. Innumerable calculator forces have been devised since calculators came into wide usage in the 1970’s.

[A Note to My Younger Readers: That’s right, kiddies, when I graduated high school in 1967, all we had were slide rules. Since it’s hard to see the numbers while smoking weed, these were relatively useless curiosities to all but the nerdy straights who were destined to become fabulously wealthy in the seventies by importing calculators and inventing “Pong.”]

In the pages of Bascom Jones’s “Magick,” the major mentalism periodical of the seventies and eighties, dozens of calculator effects and forces were described. Unfortunately, I believe that many mentalists actually performed them. (As I said earlier, I never much cared for calculator effects, possibly because, at the time, the calculator seemed like such a novelty to me.)

But, even so, I still think that anything that says “electronics” in a mental act gives a dangerous impression to our audiences. Except in effects like this one. The calculator phase of the routine is done almost as an afterthought – a means of ruling out telepathy as an explanation for the mentalist’s initial success. *In this context*, I believe that the gimmicked calculator is significantly more effective than it would be otherwise. Since the audience has already seen the mentalist succeed in getting the location while the spectator was only *thinking* of a target number, the calculator is not perceived to be an essential part of the method. In other words, this is probably one of the only times that people won’t suspect a tricked calculator. It is, therefore, the perfect time to use one.

Principia 134:

(Please write this down in your notebook.)

**“There is a time and a place for everything.
But only the wise know where and when.”**

Here is a photograph of the inside front of my organizer. Look at the calculator. In the old days, it was easy to switch the buttons around. Today it is a lot simpler to find a calculator with black keys and white lettering. Paint out the memory recall (MR) button with flat black paint and use a white Pentel K106 Milky Gel Pen to make it appear to be an “equals” key. Paint out the “equals” key and replace it with pi or a function you would normally only find on a scientific model. Put a small label over the part of the screen where the letter “M” usually appears when you hit the “MR” key. Just add whatever force number you want into the memory before presenting the effect and clear the

display. When the spectator hits the “equals” key, which you helpfully point out to her, your preloaded total appears on the screen.



If you review the presentation of the addition phase in part two, you will notice that the mentalist goes to great lengths explaining that the participants must select two digit numbers greater than twenty-five to ensure that the resulting total will fall into the range of target numbers covered in the list. He also points out that by restricting their individual selections to two digit numbers, it is mathematically certain that the final total will not exceed six hundred and sixty-six. Obviously, these precautions are meaningless because the final total is forced. Psychologically, though, they are extremely important. They reinforce the impression that the selection will be truly random and truly fair.

[Now if they figured out the REAL reason why 666 is such an important number, they would realize that diabolical forces compelled their every move. Such products as Gas-X and Beano can usually relieve these forces.]

Two final, yet important, points:

In the second part of the routine, be sure to force a location that is **not** one of the force targets used earlier. Learn all of the obscure information you can about your chosen location.

Oh, and did I mention, no mnemonics or super power memory are required to present the routine. The names and locations of the twenty-one force cities are lightly penciled on the **second page** of the performer's doodle pad. After he shows the letter 'b', he wrote on the top sheet (along with his doodles and picture of a building) he tears it off, tosses it on the table where it may be reviewed later, and apparently continues to doodle on the second page. Actually, he notes the name of the target building (he now has the essential first letter) and then he hurriedly crosses off everything on the page, as if he had made a mistake. He tears the cue sheet off, crumples it up and pockets it as if it is garbage. He now has a clean pad in front of him upon which he writes his now amazingly accurate impressions.

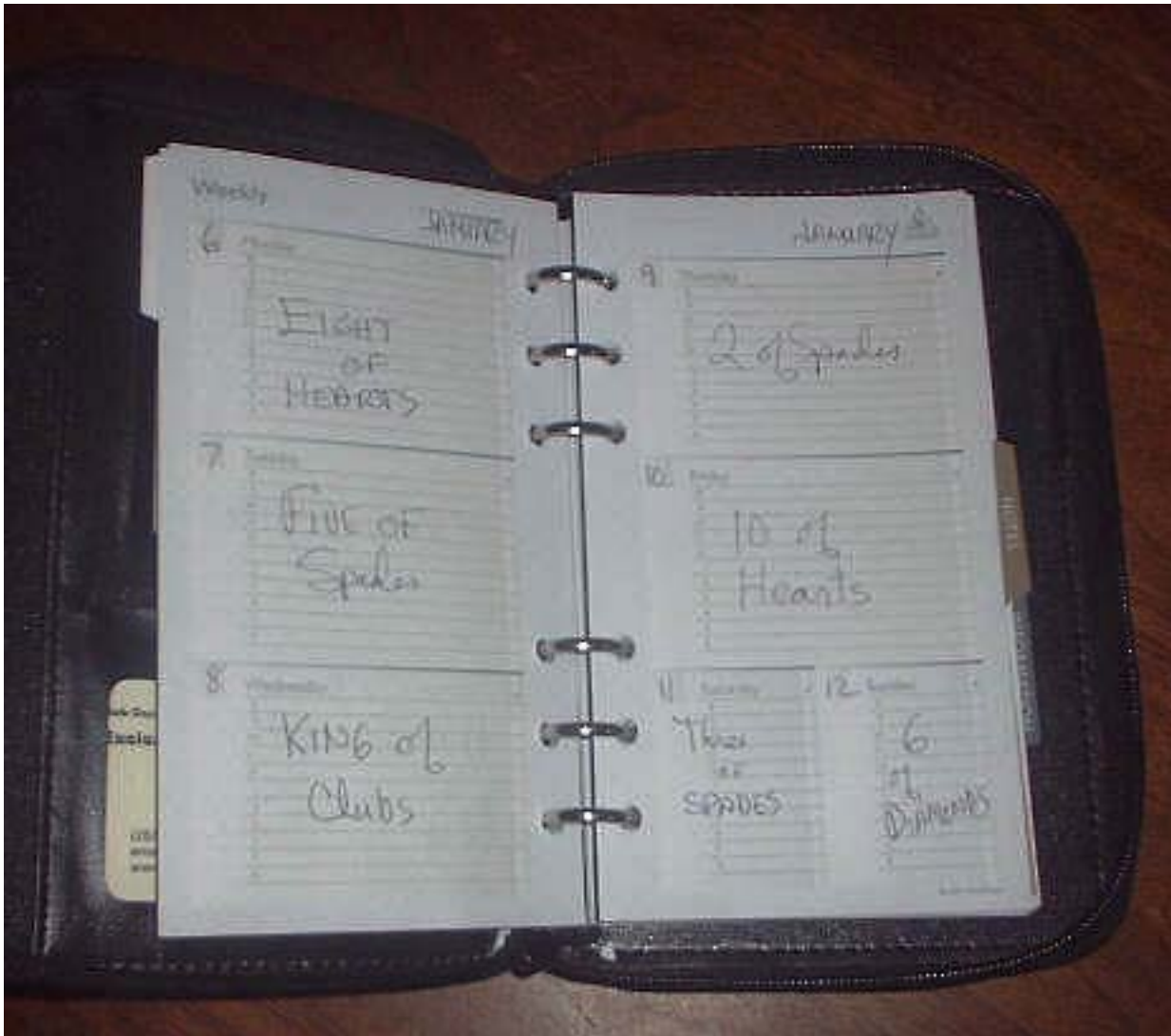
The Organizer

The organizer is something that I carry with me all of the time. It contains my business cards, address book, notes from meetings with clients, etc. It also, however, serves a few other purposes, two of which were illustrated in the previous routine.

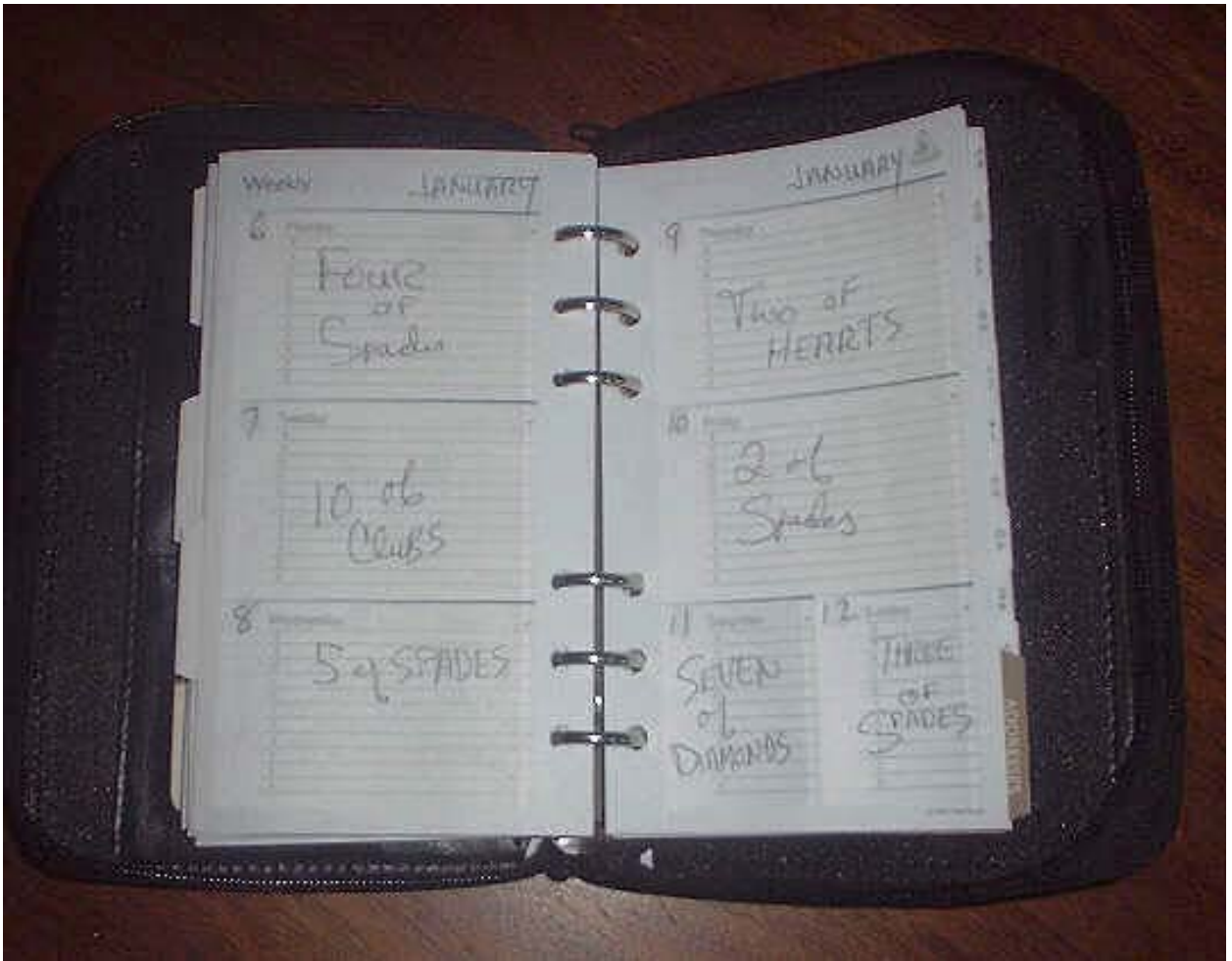
Those of you who perform my "Telepathic Diary" effect (aka "Chronologue") will appreciate how the organizer allows me to perform the effect with only one diary! At least it seems that way. It also has some interesting hidden pockets, which are of use in various effects. The one I use sells for under ten dollars at places like Wal Mart, Fred Meyer, K-Mart, etc. The calculator is included.

Most organizers come filled with lots of crap you will never use. The first thing I did with mine was to throw out the monthly calendar section. I replaced it with another weekly calendar. One is at the front of the organizer and the other is near the rear. The first one is located by the tab marked "calendar" and the second by the tab marked "projects." The calendar near the front of the diary is set up for use as the "odd" diary in the "Chronologue" routine. The calendar near the end of the book serves as the "even" book.

Here are a few photos that show the setup. Note that I have also discarded most of the other junk that came with the organizer.



This photo shows the first page of the "odd" diary near the front of the book. The Remote Viewing list occupies the central portion of the organizer and is followed by the "even" diary pages. Here are the even pages that correspond with the odd pages pictured above:



If you look carefully, you will see that the phone number and address section of the book follows the even diary. Now let me show you what the organizer looks like from the outside and how I have utilized its other features. The next photo shows that the organizer zips shut, and actually has two zippered sections. There are four separate pockets in the organizer, each of which is large enough to hold and completely conceal one of the four jumbo playing cards I use in my presentation of the diary effect. (The one that corresponds to the card written on the date of the spectator's choice is removed from the appropriate pocket)



There is a zippered change compartment in the middle of the right hand segment of the organizer. I leave it to your imagination to guess what I keep in there. Additionally, it is where I keep nail writers (in contact lens cases, of course) billets, pencils, etc.

The outside of the organizer has a pocket designed to hold a cell phone:



As you can see, I have put the pocket to a far more valuable use. You cannot see it in any of the photographs, but in one of the pockets located on the inside cover opposite the calculator, is a spot where I keep my Jaks style peek case.

All of this for less than ten bucks and an evenings work. I doubt that you will ever find an item in a magic shop that will give you so much return for such a small investment.

Does the above picture seem vaguely obscene, or is it just me?

Principium 307.1:

Get Organized! Get Utile!

Since “Extremely Remote” has introduced a very valuable utility device for mentalists, I thought I would include two more utility items which I am sure will be of use to you. The first is a utility bit of business, which can greatly enhance the presentation of any mental effect in which a spectator is asked to clear his or her mind and concentrate. The second is a unique switching device that is easily constructed in a few minutes with readily available materials. I am sure that numerous uses will immediately suggest themselves to you.



The Seeing Stones

As I said, this is basically an auxiliary routine used to enhance another effect. It looks like this:

The performer removes a film canister from his pocket and asks his participant to hold out her hands and to cup them. He removes the cap from the canister and pours its contents into her outstretched hands. Nine or ten polished stones fall into her hands. They are translucent and have a milky quality. Here is what they look like:

[The photograph does not really do justice to the stones. They are actually quite

beautiful and can be obtained in any “rock shop” or rock and mineral outlet store.]

The mentalist explains to the participant that the stones are called “Seeing Stones.”

“In ancient times it was believed that these stones could help a person to clear their mind and to focus their thoughts. It was believed that they also aided in attuning a person’s mind to another’s thoughts.

“But first you must completely clear your mind. Hold all of the stones in your right hand and hold your left hand palm upwards. I will place one of the stones onto your left palm and ask that you close your hand around it. Hold it firmly in your fist and concentrate all of your attention on the feeling of the stone in your hand. It should feel very cool at first, but soon it will start to become warm.

“Imagine that its milky quality is slowly vanishing and that the stone is becoming as clear as the finest crystal. As you imagine the stone becoming clear as glass, so too will your mind begin to focus with rare clarity.

“Now open your hand.”

The participant opens her hand and on her palm lays the stone. It is the same shape and size as before, but its milky quality has vanished. It is as clear as crystal.

The mentalist allows the participant to keep the “Seeing Stone” to always remind her how she was able to achieve perfect mental clarity and focus. (I give her a coin envelope to keep the stone in. On the face of the envelope is attached a specially printed label promoting my program.)

I think you will find that the sequence is just as effective in a large group situation as it is when performed one on one. It goes pretty quickly, so the fact that the change in the stone is not very visible to a large group is not a serious problem. It is an atmosphere effect and, performed properly, the participant’s reaction will provide all the visibility you could desire.

The enlarged photograph below shows the stones at approximately two times their actual size. The stone to the left is what the participant finds in her hand at the conclusion of the sequence.



This routine was inspired by a visit to a rock and mineral store. Polished stones, such as the ones above, sell for less than a quarter apiece. I bought about a dozen “milky” stones and about three dozen clear ones. (Since the clear stones are the ones you will be giving away, you obviously need to have a lot more of them.)

Your first reaction to the effect is probably that a switch of stones is involved. And that is the approach I initially took. I quickly found that it was the wrong approach.

Obviously, this effect would be pretty weak if it were presented as a simple magic trick. As in many effects of this nature, the presentation itself makes the illusion possible. A switch of stones is neither required nor desired. If you were to perform the effect using a basic switch, you would then have to deal with the problem of ending “clean.” The answer, I discovered, was in an old coin vanish you either read about or once performed.

When you remove the canister from your trouser pocket you also pick up a loose clear stone. It is not really palmed in the classic sense. The right hand is simply held in a naturally curved position and the clear stone is held against the second joint of the middle finger with the tip of the right thumb.

The mentalist never mentions the number of stones involved. Nor does the participant have much time to count them. (She is, for the most part, holding them in her cupped hand and listening to the mentalist's story of the "Seeing Stones.") The simple deception occurs when the mentalist takes a stone from the participant's right hand and places it into her left. He actually does not such thing. He simply pretends to take a stone from her hand. The stone he places into her outstretched hand is the clear one, which he has held in his hand from the beginning.

The move doesn't require any unusual skill, although it does require a little practice to make it appear natural. The key is to simply and convincingly "pretend" to take the stone from her hand.

Even if the spectator gets a quick glimpse of the stone as she closes her fist around it, which won't happen if you use your left hand to assist in closing her fingers, the different appearance of the stone will not be immediately apparent. It is the same size and has the same texture as the "milky" stones.

And that's it. The effect is far out of proportion to extremely simple and bold method employed. And that is one of the hallmarks of most "real" magic. The best illusions are completely "in the mind."



The Goblet Switch

Many mentalists and magicians who have seen me work have commented on the brass goblet that always stands on my table. You may already know that I customarily use it as a container in which to burn folded billets and papers.

In *The Secrets of Doctor Crow*, I described how the goblet aids in the presentation of the classic effect known as "skin writing." Here I will show you two very deceptive switches made possible by a minor, and temporary, alteration of the goblet.

I originally purchased my goblet at an import store. Similar goblets are widely available throughout the world. Most seem to be made in India and they sell for less than ten dollars or so. Polished to a shine, however, they are quite beautiful.

The first switch is very simple. In appearance, it looks as if you just drop a folded billet, or several billets, into the goblet. Later you dump them out into your own hand or into a spectator's. The billet or billets have been switched.

The goblet is based on a principle used years ago in a mediums prop known as a billet cup. The principle is more familiar to most magicians as the modus operandi classic water vanishing vase known as "The Foo Can." The principle of the switch is easily understood by looking at the following photographs.



Here is a bird's eye view into the goblet. Because of the flash of my camera, the bottom of the cup shows up in stark contrast to the felt covered "ledge" which is parallel with the table top and approximately half way down in the cup. In use, the ledge is almost invisible against the dark surface of the goblet's interior.



This photograph shows a folded billet lying on the ledge. This paper is substituted for the spectator's in the basic switch. The spectator's billet is dropped into the cup so that it falls into the back side of the goblet, missing the ledge and falling to the bottom. When the performer apparently dumps the slip from the goblet, he simply tilts it so the ledge side of the goblet stays on the bottom – on the side of the goblet facing the floor. The original billet is thereby trapped under the ledge and the dummy falls into view.

The second version of the switch is simply a variation of a principle originally attributed to the late Fred Kaps and still known, appropriately, as “The Kaps Switch.” In Kaps’ original, a folded playing card lies, apparently loose, at the bottom of a small container (commonly a box or an opaque glass or cup.) In fact, the card is attached to the bottom of the cup by means of a short thread. Although it will shake around freely in the bottom of the container, if the latter is inverted the card will not fall out. The performer has a folded card palmed in his left hand. He allows the audience to have a peek into the container where they see a folded card. The magician picks up the container and inverts it over his left hand, which turns palm up directly under the mouth of the container. With proper timing, the illusion that the card was dumped from the container onto the performer’s palm is perfect.

[Special Thanks to Jamie Ian Swiss for the background on the switch. Jamie’s excellent discussion of the switch appears in lecture notes under the title “The Card in the Impossible Location.”]

With a device such as the Billet Goblet, a similar switch offers much more freedom of movement since it is not necessary to fix a dummy card semi-permanently into the container. A folded card, perhaps a prediction, is openly dropped into the goblet. Alternatively, a borrowed and folded bill may be dropped inside. When the time comes to switch the folded item for a similarly folded duplicate stolen from an index or a pocket writer, for example, the performer executes the same moves as in the Kaps Switch. The ledge, rather than the thread, prevents the original paper or bill from coming out of the cup.

In my version of the Goblet switch, the ledge is a very temporary addition to the goblet. It is constructed from a piece of a playing card, a small piece of black felt, and some cellophane tape.



The photos show the relative size of the playing card piece and the felt used to construct the ledge.

The reason I call the ledge a “very temporary” addition to the goblet, is because I burn it up later in the act while using the goblet to catch burning papers in preparation for the “skin writing” effect. Not only does the burning felt and cardboard add some dramatic smoke to the burning, it creates a very nice black ash and soot inside of the goblet which increases the legibility of the subsequent writing which appears on the performers forearm after it is rubbed with the ash. (See *The Secrets of Doctor Crow* for all of the inside work on this classic effect.)

I have also used the goblet, on occasion, to hide shiners that offer me a worms eye view of any object that is casually passed over it. (Like a drawing made on a pad by a spectator which is taken by the performer, who is careful to keep it face down while taking it to his table and inserting it into a large envelope. The reflection is caught in the goblet’s shiner – a medium sized reducing mirror purchased from an automobile supply store- as the drawing is slid into the envelope.)

The only thing I have not used the goblet for is drinking. I am afraid that my liver may no longer be able to handle the effects of Brasso and alcohol.

Until next time,

Good thoughts,

Bob Cassidy
Seattle, Washington
January 6, 2003