



Inside Ed's Head

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Predicted Coincidence – Part 3

Last month we continued the investigation into a “coincidence” trick that was based on ACAAN principles. In case you’ve forgotten the effect I’ve been working toward, here is a brief recap:

Effect

You place a business card face down on the table, display two decks of cards and discuss the probability of having two cards match at a specific number. The spectator names a number and the decks are dealt face up. The card at the specified number is dealt face down. A few more pairs of cards are dealt face up. You point out that none of the pairs of cards dealt face up have matched. You then pick up the business card and read out, “Four of Hearts.” The face-down cards are turned over: they are both the Four of Hearts.

You Said We Could Shuffle The Cards!

You have three choices here. First, forget about shuffling. As far as the spectators are concerned, the decks are in random order, and Alice has given you a random number. It’s unlikely that they’d believe you could control the outcome.

You can false shuffle the cards. As a matter of fact, a push-through false shuffle can help you move the necessary cards from bottom to top as you apparently shuffle the deck before giving it to Bob. If you need to cut twenty to thirty cards, use the markings on the cards to get a break over the desired cut point. Cut these top cards to the right, and riffle the cards together so that at least one card from the right-hand packet falls last. Now do a push-through shuffle, finishing by stripping out the right half, and slapping them down on the left. You’ve accomplished two goals with one action.

If Alice gives you an inconvenient number, it’s best to do your transfer cut first, and finish with a false shuffle and false cut before handing off the deck to Bob. (For more on false shuffles, see the June and August 2016 issues of *Inside Ed's Head*.)

Finally, for you faro shuffle pros, you might want to consider this. Set up deck two (that’s the mirrored deck you’ll be using) by doing a reverse faro.

Spread through the deck outjogging every even numbered card. Strip out these cards and place them on top of the others.

At the time of your performance, cut the cards at the bottom card of your stack and give the cards an in-faro shuffle, with a prominent waterfall finish. This cements the idea of a random deck into everyone's mind. Now do your cut and hand the deck to Bob. Don't do this if you're not completely proficient with the faro shuffle. Fidgeting around with the deck and/or re-cutting it will absolutely destroy the notion of a fair shuffle.

A Boon Sir. How Do You Predict the Card?

I think we're definitely improving, but we have information available to us that we haven't used, the value of the card. If we're using a memorized stack we know it the moment that Alice names her number; it's simply the value of the card at that number. If we're not using a memorized deck, there are other ways to learn it. Depending on how fast you read, you'll know it in a minute or two.

So let's consider the prediction. The first way needs a memorized stack, and some guts. After Alice calls out a number, you casually take a business card and write on it, "You will say, 'Fourteen,' and find the Seven of Hearts." (Of course, you'll use the number she says, and the card at that number.) Place the card off to the side of the table, out of play. As you do this, make a simple comment that you'll use it later. You want to do this in a manner that will get the spectators to forget the exact moment you wrote on the card.

Now hand the deck to Bob and get on with the trick. When the two cards have been dealt face down, and after a few more cards have been dealt, take the business card and give it to someone to read out loud. Then have the face-down playing cards turned face up. Some will be flabbergasted that you've correctly predicted the card. Others will be flabbergasted that you've predicted the card *and* the number. All will be flabbergasted that the match occurred at Alice's number. All in all, there will be more than enough flaggergast to go around.

Now if you *really* want the business card on the table before the effect starts and/or you don't have a stack memorized, you'll need one or two more things. The first is a nail writer (AKA Boon Writer, Swami Gimmick). There are many different kinds of these available. (The following is based on the trick "Impossible Card Divination," on page 40 of the book *A Boon for All Seasons*, by Eric Mason and Barrie Richardson. Barrie previously expressed admiration for some of my work, so I hope he's smiling down on me as he learns of this.)

If you're not using a memorized deck, all you have to do is use a deck where the value of one card cues the value of the next. Since the spectators will be looking at two decks simultaneously, you might be able to get away with a Si Stebbins stack. Personally, I would avoid that and use something like

Richard Osterlind's *Breakthrough Card System*, or at least the Eight-Kings stack, using Simon Aronson's improvement of having the suit of the card immediately following an Ace to a Four be the same color but opposite suit. This way, you will avoid the strict alternation of colors that you'd see with a simple CHSD stack. (For a little more detail on the Aronson alteration, see the April 2012 issue of *Inside Ed's Head*.)

If figuring out the next card seems more of a problem than you'd like to tackle, you could use a deck where the *value* of the card is marked, as well as its stack number. A "Working Performer's Marked Deck," by Ted Leslie, or a "Boris Wild Marked Deck" both have standard Rider Backs, so you can easily add the stack number as well. A deck like this is one hell of a weapon! (Does anyone remember Deland?)

You can also have one deck marked with the value, and the other one marked with the stack number. This way you can use any other marked deck on the market that is readable from a distance. Give that one to Alice, and keep the deck with the stack numbers for yourself.

Have the nail writer easily accessible as you start the trick. Before introducing the decks, take a business card and a pen or pencil that will write more or less the same as the nail writer and pretend to write something on it. Point out to the assembled that you're writing about something you hope will happen. You want them to specifically remember the writing happened at the beginning.

After you've given the second deck to Bob, while he and Alice are dealing cards from their deck, get the nail writer into position. Proceed with the trick to the point immediately before the match is to be revealed. Use the stack number, marked deck or the last card Alice dealt face up to ascertain the value of the face-down card. Pick up the business card, pretend to read it and say, "Before we started, I wrote the number twelve, and the Four of Hearts on this card. So far I've been right, but now comes the tough part. Let's see how you've done."

The misdirection afforded by having Alice and Bob turn over the face-down cards will allow you to write "12" and "4H" on the card, and then put the card face up off to the side. "Reading" the prediction alone will probably sell the effect, but the business card is left in plain sight to fry the doubters.

Bare Bones

I know, that was a lot to read. Here's a summary:

Props: Deck 1 is a deck in a memorized order or in an order where the value of one card can be used to calculate the value of the next, or just any easily readable marked deck.

Deck 2 is the mirror image of deck 1—the same order but from bottom to top. The cards should be marked with their stack position *from the bottom*.

The bottom card is marked #1, the top card is marked #52.

A business card.

A pencil.

A Nail writer.

Procedure: Place a blank business card face-down near you; don't say why. You'll use it as a prediction later.

Give deck #1 to Alice, ask her to name a number; try to make it 26 or less.

If the number is 26 or less, double it and subtract 1. If the number is over 26, subtract 26 from it, double this and subtract 1. *Remember this number.*

Display deck #2. Find the card whose stack number from the bottom is equal to the value you calculated in the previous step. Cut or pass this card and all those below it, to the top of the deck. Give the deck to Bob.

Have Alice and Bob deal one card face up, patter about the unlikelihood of a predicted match.

Continue to have cards dealt face up until one short of Alice's number. As they are doing this, secure the nail writer.

Have the next card from Alice and Bob dealt face down. Ascertain the value of this card from either its stack number, the markings on its back, or the value of the previous card.

Ask them to deal a few more cards face up to show there's still not a match. Pick up the prediction card as they are doing this.

"Read" the prediction, and ask that the face-down cards be turned over for verification. Use the nail writer to write the prediction on the card.

Accept tumultuous applause and adulation.

Congratulate yourself for reading a 3800 word article to learn a trick that can be summarized in just over 300.

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