



It must be
MINDREADING
by

George Anderson

GMH



George B. Anderson at the time he wrote "It Must Be Mindreading". He doesn't look too different now.....just a little distinguished grey around the temples.

Do all mentalists avoid the lean and hungry look? See page 61.

THE FIRST PREDICTION

Or Another Way of Saying "Preface."

Mental magic designed for presentation in deluxe vaudeville theatres is as dead as vaudeville itself.

Let's face facts. You do mental magic for fun or money. If you do it for fun, you do it under close-up conditions without assistants or elaborate equipment—at a card table, in the living room or in a club car. If you do it for money, you do it on a night club floor with people all around you, at parties, or on club dates. Seldom do you perform in a theater seating as many as 1500 people, and your theater stage isn't the one in Radio City Music Hall. It's more often a lecture platform and stage facilities are less than adequate. If you occasionally find ideal conditions, fine—but if your show is practical, it will function smoothly wherever you're asked to do it.

Mental magic is ideal money magic. It lends itself ideally to exploitation, it has a powerful appeal to any adult audience and it builds into an economical show. A competent mentalist can carry a full hour-and-a-half lecture or mental demonstration in his coat pockets or a brief case. He can work alone, with no assistants to pay, and his consumption of equipment is small. Dates can be nearly all profits. And strangely, it's possible to get higher prices for mental magic than for an elaborate show.

Your show must be fresh and modern and intelligent, geared to an age of general scientific knowledge. It can't be a throwback to the vaudeville era.

You must be able to discuss the Rhine experiments at Duke University. You must know about Hereward Carrington and other serious workers in the field of psychic phenomena, and above all you must be able to play the part of a mentalist.

A set of rules guided me in writing this book. Here they are:

1. No confederates or assistants necessary for any trick.
2. No cumbersome or heavy gimmicks.
3. A balance between close-up and platform material.
4. No card effects for platform work.
5. No effects that require elaborate make-ready.
6. No material that hasn't been thoroughly tested.
7. The simplest method, new or old, original or adapted, to achieve the effect.

Some of my pet tricks have been tossed out because they didn't comply with my self-imposed rules.

Throughout, presentation and routine get more attention than patter. I've tried to give patter "themes" rather than a complete script for the trick, because in mental magic more than anywhere else the patter must fit the performer. Presentation, I've learned from commercial radio production, is all-important. A mediocre trick with a good presentation will surpass a superb trick with sloppy production, every time.

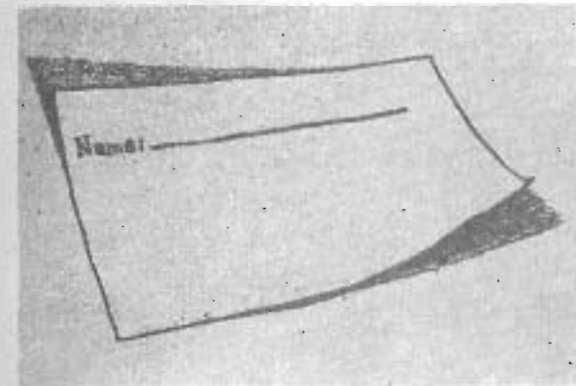
The window envelope, the carbon impression, the thumb-nail writer, the one-ahead, the torn-center slip, the pellet switch and other traditional mental magic methods are the property of the mental fraternity at large, but I think it takes a lot of gall for any writer to present them at this late date as tricks in themselves.

I've conscientiously tried to avoid "lifting," but it's almost inevitable that somebody, somewhere, has been doing some of the identical things herein set forth. No writer on mental magic in this century will turn out a book without leaning, consciously or unwittingly, on the late Ted Annemann—and I want to make my acknowledgement to his genius right now.

George B. Anderson

"NO QUESTIONS WRITTEN"

A New Concept of Question Answering in the
Mental Magic Act



Do a straight magic act and you're fighting your audience. The layman who isn't trying to catch you up, trying to figure out your tricks, must be that guy in the eighth row who's sound asleep. The straight magic act is entertainment, sure, but it's also a battle of wits between the performer and the spectators.

When you get into mental magic, however, you're in another world. Even when you tell your audience that you're resorting to trickery (and let's not go quite that far) nobody wants to believe you. The bulk of your spectators want to believe in spite of the evidence.

And, boy, what a beating their credulity takes in the average mental routine. One glaring fault makes the question-answering act ridiculous to the analytical mind—of which, thank goodness, there aren't too many. If you were actually doing real mind-reading, nobody would have to write questions on pieces of paper. No slips or envelopes would have to be collected in fishy-looking devices and the performer not only wouldn't need to handle the billets or envelopes but he wouldn't bother to do such a thing.

For practical purposes, there are two kinds of question-answering acts, the close-up and the platform. My experience has been that you need different methods altogether for the two kinds of performance and it may be heresy but the method doesn't make much difference, just so it isn't too crude.

That doesn't mean that you can openly read the questions. If you were a real mindreader, you wouldn't need to read anything, and you're playing the part of a genuine telepathist.

My major aim, from the time I did a question-answering act with a shabby little tent show, has been to get away from the

writing of questions. I want my audience to go away saying that I had them think of questions, and I've succeeded, to my own satisfaction, at least. I want no magic props around . . . nothing that's familiar to the audience as magician's equipment. If my routine can come out of my pockets while I'm on stage, so much the better.

Anyone who has ever done a question-answering act knows after the first couple of performances that all questions can be broken down into a few categories. Some of these categories have a few sub-divisions and several of the sub-divisions have a few sub-subdivisions.

Your problem in doing real mental magic will be, first, to get the main category. The rest of the breakdown will be easy. At least it always has been simple for the few friends I've let in on this method of working.

There's considerable material on question answering in this book, because the question-answering act is the backbone of mental magic. In each case, you sell the idea that nobody ever writes down his question. In a few cases, nothing is ever written down or revealed to anyone else.

However, if you're now doing a question answering act in which you use billets or cards and envelopes, you can continue with your present means of getting information while at the same time **TELLING YOUR AUDIENCE YOU DON'T REQUIRE ANYONE TO WRITE OUT HIS QUESTION.**

The basis of this system of question-answering is coming up. I don't like to label things but I want to put a big "Important!" sign on the next paragraph.

"Think of your question," you instruct your audience. "Don't write it down! In order to fix a mental picture of your question firmly in mind, I will ask you to write down a word or phrase connected with the question and then concentrate on it. Pick a word or phrase that makes a mental picture of your question to you. Maybe one word won't convey the proper mental picture. That's quite all right. Use three or four words. Just be sure that your phrase gives you a good mental picture of your question. You know from your school day experience that writing down information is the surest way of fixing it in your mind. My experience has been that it's also the best way of fixing a question in a person's mind with sufficient clarity that the idea of the question can be mentally projected."

There you are. Go back and read that paragraph again. You never ask to have a question written—just "a word or phrase that will fix the question firmly in your mind."

And now, here's another little thing for platform routines that can make all the difference between big-time execution and inferior work.

"One more thing," you continue. "It's obvious that I can't take the time to answer everyone's question. I wish I could, but since it's impossible to do so, we will leave the selection of problems to be solved entirely to chance. That's the only fair

way. The slips of folded paper (or envelopes) will be the basis of selection. Whatever ones I happen to draw will determine the people who get their questions answered."

This is the only really logical reason for gathering up billets or envelopes that I've ever run across, and I think I've tried them all.

One more thing. The idea of having a line at the bottom of the slip designated as a place for the questioner's signature is common knowledge. You instruct your audience to put their initials on the slips, hoping that they'll fill in the "Name" space. If they don't, so what? You identify most of the questions by initials, anyway. On only a few do you try to divine the name.

Your biggest point and one which you can even advertise (although I'd never embarrass another performer by doing it) is "No questions written."

In both the platform and close-up routines which follow this all-important discussion, you rely on the "word or phrase." We'll start with close-up methods and go on to the platform material, but you must understand this basic concept first.

Now for a fuller explanation of answering questions that haven't been written down. I'll quote from actual instances.

A girl writes "Berlin" on her slip. Nothing more. She isn't wearing a wedding ring and she looks like a native-born American. I say to her, hesitantly, "Your question concerns not only yourself but a man." She nods her head. "This man is out side the continental limits of the United States." She nods again and I pretend not to see, in order to make her say "Yes" aloud. Now I'm on much surer ground. Had she said, "No," I'd have said, "He is either outside the United States or is contemplating a trip." How can you lose? But she said "Yes" so I continue, "I don't get this too clearly but he seems to be employed in some branch of the government. Is that correct?" Again she says "Yes." "Either with an army of occupation or a governmental agency overseas."

Almost a cinch, but easy to qualify. With a nod, I continue, "My thought waves don't tell me for sure when he'll return to this country but I see very definitely that he is in—Germany! Is that correct?"

Her "Yes" is almost a sure bet to bring spontaneous applause, which I wave down. "You have a decidedly personal interest in this man," I continue, "and the length of time he spends in Germany is important in the determination of your question. Let me say that he will be there no longer than is absolutely necessary and all you can do is wait."

I ask the girl what her question was and she replies, "Will my fiancée be back from Berlin in time for us to be married by Christmas?"

Another questioner, not wearing a wedding ring, writes "Oil wells" on her slip. Careful—not too much to work on. The first

thought is that she wants to know about an investment but I proceed with caution.

"I get a picture of something entirely foreign to my own personal experiences," I tell her. "A line of endeavour completely foreign to me. I see huge derricks dotting the surface of a dry, rather unpleasant plain. Does that mean anything to you?"

She says "Yes." I continue, "Does this line of work concern you personally or someone in whom you're interested?" An out-and-out question.

"Someone I'm interested in," she acknowledges.

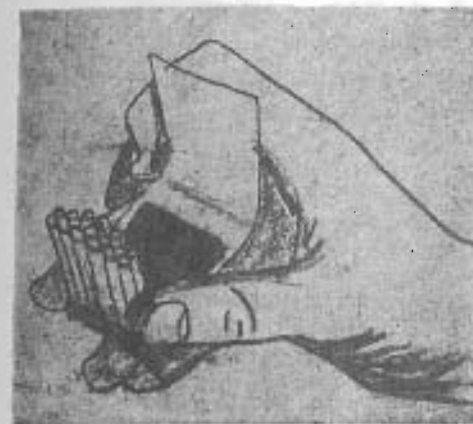
"I thought so," I nod. "It's a man." A safe enough bet and she agrees. "He's something of a gambler, the type of person who will take chances to make money," Equally safe. "As I see it, your interest is financial," She surprises me by saying "No." So I know it must be personal. "Maybe you don't understand me," I say. "Your interest is financial in that you want him to make enough money to be able to marry you. Is that correct?" She says "Yes," and now I'm set. "My dear young lady, oil is always a gamble. The returns, though, sometimes make the gamble more than worthwhile. Frankly, if I could tell you whether or not your sweetheart will strike oil, I would be a millionaire. Unfortunately, I'm a telepathist and not a divining rod. But I can tell you that if determination and hard work and eagerness means anything, he'll be successful. Does that answer your question?" She says "Yes" and I learn later that her question was, "Will Bert's oil well come in?"

You've already noticed that you have to get the subject to talk to you, forcing him to give a "Yes" or "No" answer almost as soon as you start answering the question. Once you get him to talk, the rest is simple—and you'll discover that engaging the subject in conversation makes the whole routine more effective than ever before.

There's a lot more discussion of question-answering under the heading, "Alibi Answers," later on. One evening of this kind of question-answering will give you the feel of it and have you ready to assimilate the "Alibi Answers" material. Admittedly, there's a certain "touch" you have to catch, but once you get it, you'll never have a subject write out a complete question.

We're going from here directly to methods of stealing and reading information. In the first effect, you get an "impression reader" that in the words of the magic dealer is "worth far more than the price of the book." My experience has been that it will actually do a more convincing job than an expensive file board for close-up work. However, for the complete question-answering act, it is not proper. Don't spoil this little miracle by using it for a series of question-answering effects. A mental gimmick is good only so long as it's a convincing part of natural procedure.

"EASY MONEY" MINDREADING



When the Gene Autry radio show which I was writing had to do a remote from Ft. Worth, Texas, a millionaire oil man entertained both our outfit and Earl Carroll's Vanities. Early in the morning, I did some mind-reading. The trick gets its title from the fact that the oil man took me aside and offered me five hundred dollars to answer a couple of questions for him. He wasn't kidding, either.

The gimmick beats a file board all to pieces. It's the most natural thing in the world and the least suspicious looking—the one perfect impression method of getting a message. The money you save is easy, too, because you can make up this super-gimmick for a penny.

You prepare your gimmick by peeling the paper advertising cover away from the cardboard part of the cover on a pad of matches, just as you would peel the back off a playing card—except that the paper match cover peels much easier. Now you cut an opening in the cardboard—an oblong hole only slightly smaller than the space occupied by the 20 matches. You place a piece of carbon paper between the opening and the paper part of the back, impression side facing the opening, and then paste the cover back together with rubber cement.

Even with the match book open, it looks perfectly natural. The carbon is hidden by the matches. But between the matches and the carbon, you insert a piece of cardboard. That's all there is to the gimmick, which is kept in your pocket.

You're ready to perform. Hand the subject a little slip of paper about the usual billet size, but not a slip that's already cut and folded. That idea smells, I think. If possible, tear a slip off a gin-rummy bridge score pad, or even the margin of a newspaper.

The patter's like this. "I want you to think of a question that's important to you, and when I say think, I mean *really* think. Concentrate on it. In order to focus your mind on it, write a word or phrase connected with the question on a slip of paper. Here."

Hand the subject the slip. "As soon as you've written something that will give you a visual mental picture of your problem, we'll burn it." And you pull out a pack of paper matches. "Stand right where you are so that nobody else can know what you're writing. And turn your back to me so that I can't see it, either. Don't ever let me touch the slip, and fold it as soon as you've written the word or phrase. Start writing any time. Oh, wait a minute. You'll need something to write on. Here." You put the packet of paper matches under the slip in his hand. He turns his back and writes.

"Finished?" you ask. "Then fold the slip and drop it into an ash tray. As he does so, you take the pack of matches from him, tear out a match, strike it and hand it to him. You tear out the match with your right hand, holding the open packet in your left. The left fingers, of course, palm out the carbon impression as you hand the lighted match to your subject. All eyes are on him as he burns the slip. If that isn't enough misdirection to make you feel confident about reading the impression, turn your back while the slip is burning.

When the slip is burned, you grasp the subject's wrist and begin getting impulses. The word or phrase written on the slip will usually tip the whole question. The least it can give you is a strong enough lead to pump the whole question from him. Please don't divine the word or phrase written on the slip, because that makes it just straight message-reading—and this is mindreading! Sometimes, after it's all over, I ask out of curiosity just what was written on the slip.

Even with a super-gimmick like this, build-up is everything. I usually make a great to-do about picking my subject, looking the audience over very carefully and doing a couple of actual up-and-up muscle reading experiments to "find a sensitive subject."

When you've finished answering the question, always get the subject to tell for the first time "the exact wording of the question he had in mind, which was never told to anyone and never written down."

With proper window-dressing, the answering of one question this way is far more effective than answering a dozen. If you can't beg off on the ground that you're mentally exhausted, follow with my "Playing Card Mindreading." Which is another story

PLAYING CARD MINDREADING

This is a question-answering effect where the subject doesn't write down a word and doesn't mention his question to a single

person. It has a nice fortune-telling flavor and makes a strong appeal to the not-quite-discredited belief in the power of playing cards to foretell the future.

"Now," you say, "we'll try something old. Muscle-reading is a still-developing science, but the art of reading the past, present and future from cards dates back to the 15th century."

You're shuffling a deck of cards while you patter, and you hand the deck to the subject.

"I want you to think of a question," you say. "A question of vital importance to you—nothing trivial or foolish, because the cards are whimsical and they give foolish answers to foolish questions. Concentrate on your question and remove your key card from the deck. Hold it hidden beneath your hand so that nobody may see it. Oh—you don't know about key cards? Your question, whatever it is, will more closely fit one of these categories than any other: Love, Health, Business or Finance, Travel, etc. If your question concerns yourself, your key card will be the nine of diamonds. If it concerns someone else, the key will be the queen of spades. Remove the proper card from the deck, please.

"Now, if your question deals with love or health, put the two of clubs directly beneath the key card. If it deals with material things, business, a purchase, travel, anything involving money, put the three of hearts directly beneath your key card. Please don't let me see the cards, though."

Have you ever played the popular "Twenty Questions" game in which you're supposed to divine a subject thought of by asking twenty questions? In this case, you aren't limited to twenty questions, but even so you can usually get the question thought of with six or seven cards.

You use a marked deck, and an extremely readable marked deck, because the only thing you need to know is whether each card is odd or even. My method is to block out a part of the center design on the back of all odd cards, leaving the design open on the even ones. On each bit of instruction, you give the subject the choice of an odd or even card. When you glimpse the back of the card removed, you know right away what the answer is.

This idea of applying the Twenty Question game to mind-reading has simplified the "milking" process. You'll not only amaze your audience but amaze yourself at the exactness with which you can arrive at a question which has never been recorded in any way.

TORN CENTER DELUXE

For a strictly impromptu message-reading stunt, there's never been anything to equal the "torn center" dodge which has variously been credited to Ovette, Annemann, Grant, et cetera ad infinitum. Years ago, I decided that there had to be a logical reason for getting the word or phrase in the middle of the paper

billet, and this was what I finally developed. I've used it ever since.

"This circle represents the aura of your mental vibrations. It's small, because no human has yet developed the art of mental broadcasting to any great degree. This second circle, which crosses yours, represents my aura of mental vibrations—slightly larger only because I've knowingly practiced the broadcast and reception of thought vibrations. To insure the success of our experiment, write a word or phrase concerning your question in the space where our mental vibrations meet."

Do not ask the subject to write his question—merely a word or phrase that will focus his mind on the question. Once the word or phrase is written, tell him to fold the slip in half and then fold it again. Take the slip from him, tear it up, drop the pieces in an ash tray (holding back the center fold, of course) and set fire to the rest of the paper.

Now comes the improvement that makes the "center fold" a new trick and a better trick, infinitely better. You FAIL to get the slightest impression of the subject's question. You draw a complete blank.

"That's odd," you say. "I don't seem to get a thing. Evidently you need a better visual mental image of the problem contained in your question. Here—" and you hand him A SECOND SLIP. "Write the word or phrase on the slip again while my back is turned," you direct. "Finished? All right. Fold it up, tear it into bits and burn it JUST AS YOU DID BEFORE."

You're reading the center fold of the FIRST slip while he's writing and burning the second one. The failure followed by a recovery is good showmanship, the misdirection of reading the message while your back is turned and the subject is writing is absolutely perfect—but the improvement goes way beyond that.

I've had many people say, "I'd like to see you do that mind-reading where you turn your back while the question is written, don't touch the slip, and have it burned before you even turn around. They tell me there's not a chance in the world for you to get the message by any known means."

If you already do the "torn center" gag, try this and get yourself a real miracle.

PALMISTRY VERSUS MINDREARING



Here's one of the most barefaced mindreading gags in the world—where nothing is written down and you pump the subject for the whole question. A slight (and very slight) knowledge of the terms of palmistry comes in handy, but you can name your own lines and mounts if you're a good enough bluffer. Why this impresses an audience has always been beyond me—but all I know is that it's consistently regarded as actual mind-reading.

You take the subject's hand. "Concentrate on your question," you say. "This line concerns other people and this line concerns yourself. To best answer your question, which line should we follow?"

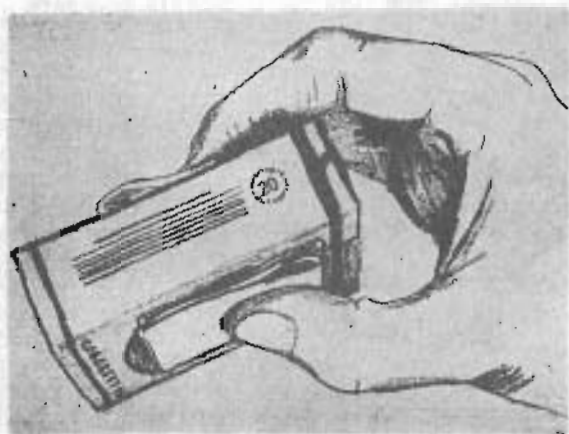
He tells you. "Bisecting this line," you continue, "are four dominant lines representing Money, Health, Love and Travel." Give the lines whatever names enter your mind. "Now," you ask, "Which of these should be followed to come to the answer to your question in the most direct line?"

Once they tell you that, you're in. If it's money, you say, "This line represents the future and this line represents the past. Which one should we follow?" Still another line represents Loss and a fourth line Gain.

You follow virtually the same tack on each of the four major qualifications—and you fish, fish, fish—all the time. If you don't end up giving a perfect answer to the question, you lack imagination.

It ain't what you do but the way that you do it! As in the case of the Palmistry Mindreading, all you're doing is playing "Twenty Questions."

MY BEST BILLET SWITCH



I don't use billets when I'm reading minds—just torn pieces of paper, if you get the distinction. When the subject has folded the paper once each way, however, you'll find it looks just like every other folded slip. It is a billet.

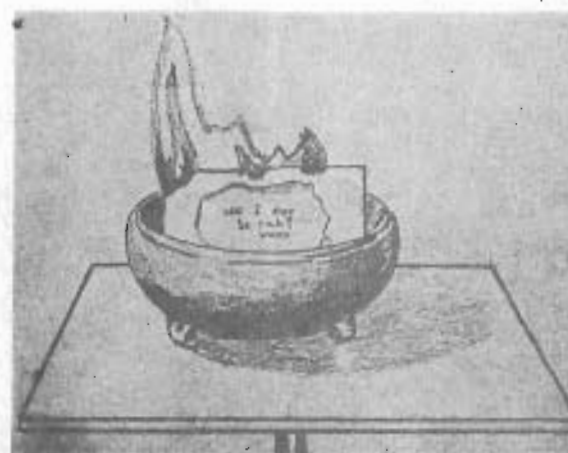
Most billet switches demand too much handling—a movement of the billet from right to left hand and then to the table or to a spectator's hand without any reason.

I have a package of cigarettes in my pocket, together with a torn and folded billet which has a # mark on it, on the side which rests against the pack of cigarettes. I have the writing done on the piece of paper, ask that it be folded once each way and handed to me. While the writing is being done, I light up a cigaret, holding the pack in my left hand with the fake billet beneath. I take the completed slip in my right hand.

"Perhaps we should mark it," I say. "Could I use the pencil, please?" You take the pencil from the writer and make an # mark on the billet, holding it against the pack of cigarets. When the mark is completed, you pull the pack of cigarets away, putting it back into your pocket. Your left thumb holds the billet in place. This lets the real billet drop right on top of the fake one. The billet has been marked and hasn't left sight. In putting it on the table or handing it to a person, you turn your left hand over and the fake billet automatically slides out as you pull your left thumb back and extend the fingers.

It's the perfect billet switch, with a reason for being.

GETTING THE IMPRESSION



A few basic principles have been used for reading sealed messages, ever since the mental act began. Some of the best required assistants, complicated equipment and much advance preparation. Those, for the purposes of this book are out.

Variations of the "one ahead" have been clever, but they've all had a vital weakness—the crudity of opening the envelope and "checking" the question after the mentalist has shown his ability to get the question without opening the envelope. As far as returning the opened envelope to the writer of the question is concerned, it is a time consuming operation which means nothing and slows the pace of the performance. It is a distraction rather than a part of the entertainment.

If you aren't going to open the envelope to "check" it, you have the alcohol impression method in which the back of the envelope is made momentarily transparent by application of alcohol to its surface; the window envelope method in which the card is placed in an envelope whose face is cut completely away except for a quarter of an inch ledge all the way around; the "light" method, in which strong light is applied to the envelope secretly to allow reading the words on the card; variations of the carbon impression, and combinations of the above-mentioned methods. All have their disadvantages. The window envelope is the cleanest, but it necessitates the performer putting the card into the envelope—which is one of those pace-wrecking things that pulls the timing of the act down to a slow walk.

The method I'm going to give you here requires practice—but it's well worth the effort involved because it is simple, effective and sure.

Here's the effect: you pass out envelopes and cards, asking the recipients to think of a question and write on the card a phrase that cements the question firmly in mind. The question-writers are cautioned to turn their cards face down immediately upon completion of the writing, so that their neighbors can't pick up the thought and confuse the mentalist's efforts. Since all questions can't be answered because of time limitations, you explain, the selection of mental subjects will be left entirely to chance. The cards will be sealed in envelopes, the envelopes thoroughly mixed and whatever ones the mentalist happens to draw from the pile will be the ones used. Questions of a personal nature will be answered so that only the writer understands, and all cards and envelopes will be destroyed so that nobody ever sees them. The mental subjects are instructed to slip their cards into their envelopes writing side down and seal the envelopes. The performer and any member of the audience who will help gather up the envelopes which are thoroughly mixed and the performer goes up on the stage. Some alcohol is poured into a copper bowl and ignited. The mentalist turns his head aside from the pile of envelopes, grabs one and immediately places it behind his back. He answers the question and drops the still-sealed envelope into the copper bowl. A second envelope is grabbed, placed without hesitation behind the back and immediately answered. As soon as it's answered, it is dropped into the copper bowl to be destroyed. This continues to the end of the question-answering.

Simple, direct and baffling is the verdict. And clean—so very clean.

The routine is a combination of the window envelope and the one ahead, but it eliminates the bad feature of each.

The only piece of special equipment you'll need is easily prepared. You'll need one of those sharp little knives commonly used by commercial artists. The blade is about half an inch long, slightly curved to a point. The slender handle is metal, usually steel, and the knife is ordinarily a one piece thing. I cut the handle short on mine, for ease of handling, and drilled a little hole in the top of the handle. I also made a little leather sheath to fit over the blade of the knife. This isn't absolutely necessary but it saves the blade and protects you against possible accidents. Through the hole in the top of the knife handle, I ran a length of black elastic. This ties to a trouser loop at the back of the trousers and is just long enough to let the knife hang an inch above the hem at the back of the suit coat. The knife must be razor sharp, and you'll find it a good idea to hone it before every performance.

With the knife in place and one window envelope on the bottom of your envelope stack, you're all ready to do message reading. Cards and envelopes are handed out at random, up until you get to the point where you tell the audience about putting the cards in face down. At this one point, you take a face-down card from the last person to whom you've given one, slide it

into the envelope on the bottom of your pile, moisten the flap and seal the envelope. Now you ask someone in the audience to help gather up the questions and you gather up a number of them, yourself, keeping the window envelope on the bottom of the pile.

Instruct your volunteer assistant to mix his envelopes up "like this" and do an overhand shuffle, bringing the window envelope to the top of your pile where you can immediately read the word or phrase that stares at you from the window. Once you have it, continue your mixing and shuffle it back to the bottom of your pile. Add the assistant's pile to yours and go back onto the stage. Give your introductory patter as you ignite the alcohol in the bowl. Now, grab an envelope at random—and be so haphazard about it that your audience realizes it IS a random selection. Keep your head turned away from the envelope pile while you're taking it and call attention to the fact that you IMMEDIATELY place it behind your back.

Begin answering the question which you sighted on the window envelope. And your hands behind your back are just as busy as your tongue. Cut a big oval in the face of the envelope with the sharp little knife, pressing the torn-away oval back into the palm of the left hand. Once you've finished answering the question, bring the hands to the front, the envelope in the left hand, flap side toward audience. Drop the envelope and the torn-away oval into the blazing bowl from the back, with the flame between audience and the envelope. You have plenty of time to read the writing on the card in what has now become a window envelope. Almost while you're dropping the envelope into the flaming bowl, reach with your right hand for another envelope. You always keep your head turned away from the envelope you pick up, which means that you look toward the bowl. Put the new envelope behind your back and repeat the process of making it a window envelope while you're answering the question you've just read.

Very rarely, you'll come across a blank card—one whose writer hasn't followed instructions—or a card that's illegible. Don't let it bother you at all. Reach nonchalantly for the next envelope and put it behind your back, getting busy with the knife at once.

"Hmm," you say. "I really hesitate to discuss this question. It's of such a delicate nature that I hardly know how to do it without causing embarrassment—considerable embarrassment. I wonder if there's some way I could disguise my answers—no. For your benefit, I'm afraid we'll have to pass this one."

You bring the now-windowed envelope from behind your back, shake your head and toss it into the bowl. You've caught the writing on the card and you're back in the groove again.

Never answer all the questions. When you've answered sufficient, pick up the rest and dump them into the bowl of fire. Maybe the bowl doesn't seem important to you and maybe it

isn't but it seems to me that it adds flash to the performance and helps create an air of mystery about the entire performance.

When you hold a question behind your back, you're doing the one part of the trick that really requires practice and skill. Press the elbow firmly against the sides of the body and keep them that way. The handling of the envelopes behind the back and the cutting away of the oval from the face of the envelope must all be done with wrist and finger movement—movement which is not carried even slightly up the arm. Whatever you do, don't do this routine until you've become proficient enough at the window-cutting to do it quickly, smoothly, and without apparent movement. That's the whole trick.

ANOTHER SEALED ENVELOPE Which I Call "The Bonded Fifth"



It happened in Hollywood. A famous dramatic actress who must remain nameless because she has an abhorrence of letting the public know what an awful fall-guy she is for mind-readers, fortune tellers, astrologists, spirit mediums and anything bordering on the occult, was telling us about the marvelous mind-reader who could set the world right on its ear if he'd only get sober.

After a couple of false starts, she finally arranged for the fellow to give a demonstration of his ability at her house one evening. About twenty-five of us were there.

I saw what she meant about this performer's getting sober. He was a wasted-away little specimen with a nasty look on his face and an almost fanatical gleam in his eyes. He walked to the front of the living room and cleaned things off an end table which

apparently was to serve as his base of operations. From a battered old brief case, he removed a box of manila end-opening envelopes and a couple of packets of cheap cards, the size ordinarily used for business cards. Then he also took out a bottle of very bad and very cheap whiskey and a tumbler and set them on the table. A few chewed and beaten pencils also rolled across the table top.

The little fellow passed out cards and envelopes to everybody and told us to write our questions. We weren't to sign our names or mark them in any way.

He walked back to the table, pulled the cork from the whiskey bottle and poured himself a good four fingers which he took in one gulp. He wiped his sleeve across his mouth and waited for us to finish writing. No apologies for the drink, no nothing. Not even any patter.

"Finished?" he finally asked. "Then put the cards in the envelopes and seal them." We did. The fellow pointed to me. "You gather them up," he directed, "and mix them so I don't know which envelope belongs to anybody."

I did.

"Put them here on the table," he said, pouring himself another drink. I did, watching him like a hawk. There couldn't possibly be any switch. Was this going to be another one-ahead thing?

It wasn't. He picked up one of the envelopes and laid it flat across the mouth of the whiskey tumbler. "Please don't acknowledge your question in any way," he directed. And he started answering a question. The little man came to life and his eyes really blazed. Somewhere, some time, he'd had an education and he knew how to dramatize a question. He picked the envelope up, still talking, still answering the question as he walked among us. He stopped abruptly in front of one of the guests. "This was your question, sir," he said. "Open it and verify it if you like." He walked back to the table before the man had torn up the envelope. Another envelope went on top of the whiskey glass and the same amazing performance was repeated. There was no smell to the envelopes. An alcohol impression wasn't being used, certainly, for there wasn't time for the stuff to dry and no way to apply it. No switch of envelopes. No one-ahead, for sure. And the manila envelopes certainly weren't transparent or even close to it. They hadn't been gimmicked in any way that I could see.

Here was something I had to have. As soon as the performance was over, I began working on the little fellow who was about as evasive as a soundly-drunk and obstinate person can be. Finally, I suggested that we drop in at a bar and he showed his first signs of interest.

After an hour of palaver, I said, "Look—it's great. I want it. How much?" He looked at me with scorn and said, "You think you can buy my secret with money?"

I flattered him awhile longer, and held up the drink order. Just when he was wetting his lips with his tongue and getting a good case of the fidgets, I went over to the bar and asked for a fifth of good bonded bourbon. The bartender took my money and gave me the bottle which I took back over to the table. The mindreader looked at it longingly.

"Yours," I said—"as soon as you give me the gimmick."

He reached for the bottle. "Why, there's nothing to it," he said. "You've done Pseudo-Psychometry, haven't you—one of the great mental tricks of all time (in which I concur). All you have to do is nail-nick the envelopes and hand them out in some kind of order, remembering the order, of course. The envelopes are numbered by a system of nail nicks. The nail nicks are on the flap side of the envelope and go clock-wise from one to, say, twenty-five. Each person represents a number. That's all there is to it. You can't help giving the right envelope back to the right person."

He started to pick up the bottle. "No, no," I protested. "I figured that part out, myself, because Pseudo-Psychometry is one of my favorites. What I want to know is how you get the message."

He looked at me incredulously. "That?" he asked. "You mean you didn't get that?"

"I certainly didn't," I said.

He put the battered brief case up on the table and shoved the bottle of bourbon into it before he pulled out the tumbler from which he'd taken several drinks of whiskey during his performance.

"Nothing but a mirror glass," he said. "I thought you'd catch it. Although it's a pretty fair mirror glass."

I was on the ropes. He put the tumbler down on the table—and he was certainly right—what a mirror glass!

The front half was the usual mirror glass, with the mirror sealed in with plastic cement. The back half of the glass' interior was painted a dead black and a common, dime store "Stubby" flashlight was wedged into it and held in place by a couple of old sponge balls. A stiff piece of copper wire protruded about a sixteenth of an inch above the glass rim at the back and this wire was attached to complete the electrical contact ordinarily made by the button on the side of the flashlight. Press the wire down and you got a light. The wire was delicately adjusted to contact from the weight of a sealed envelope.

He had been using the "light impression" method for his question reading.

"Only have to worry about one thing," he said. "The light angle. Put the envelope down from front to back on the top of the glass. Pick it up to toss out by grabbing the back end of the envelope. Use manila envelopes, yellow, not white—and see that the glass top is above eye level."

"But," I protested, "you didn't ask to have the cards put into the envelopes writing side down. How could you be sure you were going to be able to read the questions?"

His shoulders squared noticeably. "Young man," he said, "if you're going to do question-answering, you must be able to read the writing of others both upside down and backwards. Any way. Printers do it all the time with type. It's really not much of a trick."

He reached into the brief case, hesitated a second between two choices and pulled out his half-full bottle of bad whiskey. The cork popped out and he poured a good four fingers into the trick glass.

"You see," he said, "I really drink much less than it looks like. Actually, only two fingers."

ONE-MAN CLIP-BOARD READINGS

A good many things can be said in favor of the clip-board as a means of obtaining information on written slips, but the big objection has always been the necessity of using assistants. Then there was an imperative need for a "reader"—a faro handbox or something similar to be used in connection with a crystal ball.

Here is a one-man method that works and makes sense. The clip-board is one of the simplest ever designed, the one manufactured by Caesar. Nothing but the paper clip holds the back impression flap in place but presence of the flap is cleverly masked. The flap, the inside of which contains the carbon impression, opens like a door when it's released from the tight-gripping paper clip.

I perforate a sheet of paper down the middle and then make five bisecting perforating lines so that the sheet of paper can be torn into 12 billets. The sheet is clipped to the clip-board and the people who write "phrases to form mental images of their questions" are instructed to tear off their slips and keep them. They are, as usual, instructed to sign their initials to their slips.

With all that completed, the file board is taken back to the front and set on an easel, with a pad of plain white paper put under the clip. The performer, of course, stands to one side—the side which permits him to read all the information written on the now-open impression flap.

He has a black crayon in his hand and prints the initials of the first person whose question is to be answered on the top sheet of the pad, scrawling it in large letters. At the conclusion of the answers, he rips off the top sheet and scrawls another set of initials on the second one.

Standing beside the upright clip board, it is an absolute impossibility for anyone to know whether you're looking at the front or the back of the board. Once you get the swing of this, you can actually do it with people at the sides. Your body masks the slightly opened door on your side and the masking is such

that it can't be detected on the other side. You'll be surprised at how little the door needs to be opened for you to read the carbon impressions.

ALIBI ANSWERS

Some questions must not be answered in the question-answering act, and yet the audience must be convinced that you can do anything. If you're doing the type of act where questions can be sorted before you perform, you can eliminate the bad ones—but that's seldom practical for the one-man act. You have to take them as they come.

One time I was backstage visiting with a mentalist who had made (and, sadly, lost) a substantial fortune doing mindreading on the radio from Mexico. I was new at the game and one of my biggest worries was the "trick" question, the one designed to catch me. I brought up a discussion of the problem.

"Trick questions?" he asked. "They bother you?" He seemed to be astonished. "The way I look at it, the smart so-and-so who tries to mess you up with a trick question deserves what happens to him. Treat him rough and improve your act. What's more, if you treat him rough enough, you're helping the next guy who comes along with a question act."

When this chap advised, "treat 'em rough," he was putting it mildly. He made arrangements to give me a high-sign when he came to a trick question and I went out front to catch the act.

The fellow had more nerve than any mentalist I've ever seen, before or since—and I certainly don't recommend going to the extreme he employed. He'd answered about six questions when he gave me the code sign that he'd come to a trick or catch question.

"And now," he said, "I get the impression of the initials J. T. L. Yes, J.T.L. Would J.T.L. hold up his right hand, please?" A well-dressed, smirking young man held up his hand but the mindreader didn't seem to see it. "J.T.L.," he repeated, impatiently. "Would you hold up your hand, please. I can't seem to find you. Would you mind standing up?" The self-confident young man stood up.

"Oh, yes, there you are," the mindreader acknowledged. "I'm not going to repeat your question for the ears of the audience, because I never like to embarrass anyone. I think, however, that my answer to your question will be perfectly clear. What has happened to you in the past is now of no consequence. It is the future with which you must be concerned. And placing the blame on the shoulders of a certain young lady whose initials I will not repeat but whose identity is perfectly clear to you will be of no value whatsoever. My advice to you, young man, is to go to a reputable physician at once. While your trouble may seem minor to you, I warn you that it can have serious consequences if allowed to go without correction. You'll find that

any good doctor will treat you in complete secrecy and that you don't need to worry about embarrassing publicity."

The young man in the audience started to stammer. He looked like he'd been hit over the head with a hammer. Before he could say a word, the mindreader continued, "Don't argue about it. Just get to a good doctor at once. And now we will proceed to the next question."

I found out after the performance that the young man's question had been the perennial "How much money do I have in my pocket?" He, of course, knew that the mindreader had failed completely—but the rest of the audience was absolutely hanging on the ropes—and I'll bet that young fellow's protestations were never believed in his home town.

Personally, I abhor the whole idea of embarrassing any member of my audience, regardless of what that person is trying to do to me. After all, he's my paid guest while he's in the theater. It's up to me to entertain him regardless of what he's trying to do to me.

After a good deal of trial and error, I worked out a great many answers to catch questions and trick questions. I think they satisfy the audience without putting the performer on a spot and without making the questioner squirm. As you know, I don't have people write down complete questions. "A word or phrase that helps your mind picture the question" is all I ask.

For three performances, I had a stenographer take down my answers whenever I gave her the cue. Later, I filled in the wording that was on the slips. I think this stenographic report makes a valuable reference for any mentalist.

FOURTH AT TANFORAN—"I get the impression that your question deals with money—easy money. Something to do with a wager, is that correct? Thank you. I get the impression of a large enclosure. Thousands of people are looking at—concentrate, please—it's a sporting event of some kind. Think hard. Yes, I see it now. It's a horse race. Apparently the reason for the shadiness or dimness of the impression is that this particular horse race is some considerable distance from here. Would you concentrate on the location of the race, please. Disregard your question and think of nothing but the location of the race for the time being. Thank you. I get the impression of a light brown color card. That's odd. The numeral four. No, no—don't visualize it that way. Visualize it as a whole word—the name of the race track. Ah, that's much better. Perfectly clear. Tanforan! Is that correct? Thank you. (APPLAUSE) Your question has to deal with the outcome of a specific race at Tanforan. The fourth. My dear sir, a number of states have laws specifically forbidding the dissemination of advance racing information, I don't know whether this state has such a law or not, but it's a good law and one I follow wherever I am. And I can give you some good advice in answer to your question. I've never yet read the mind of anyone who made money playing the races for the simple reason that I've never met anyone who consistent-

ly made money playing the races. Why not give the money to your favorite charity instead of wagering it? Please dismiss the question completely from your mind while I try to concentrate on a new mental impression."

FATHER'S WILL—(The woman who held up her hand was young, too young to hazard a guess on whether her father was living or dead.) "I get the impression that this question is of direct concern to you. Is that correct? Thank you. It's a question dealing with the disposition of some money and other tangibles. Yes, I get it more clearly now. It seems to deal with the distribution of an inheritance. Something about the distribution bothers you. Is that correct? Thank you. My dear young lady, I am sure that I could answer your question to your complete satisfaction but I have found it a wise rule never to say anything to encourage family disputes. There are laws governing the handling of wills and other estate matters, and they are good laws. Your lawyer can handle this question much better than I can. And now, please dismiss the question from your mind so that I can concentrate on another mental impression."

(This woman said after the performance that her question was, "Did my stepmother hide my father's will?" Check back and see how well it was handled.)

AGE—(The young man who held up his hand was in his late teens). Young man, you are thinking of a question that deals with maturity. It's amazing how many people want to seem a different age than they actually are. The fifty-year old spinster wants to be regarded as a lively thirty-eight and the eighteen-year old boy wants to be taken for a staid twenty-two. Long ago, I learned that you never make anyone happy by guessing his or her correct age. Nine times out of ten, he'll deny the correctness of your statement. In answer to your question, I'll say that a very mature attitude makes the age of the person in question—and you know who I mean—seem to be greater than it actually is. Think of something else, please, so that I can get the next question.

(Confession: I thought the question was, "How old am I?" Actually the fellow, who came up to thank me afterwards, said that his question was, "Is my girl-friend older than I am?") He seemed to think I'd told him that even if she was, his maturity made it a perfectly happy combination.)

T.B.—"Your question has to do with an illness, is that correct? Thank you. (NOTE: You have to ask this. It could be somebody's initials). A very excellent law prohibits either the diagnosis or treatment of illness by anyone except a licensed doctor. With the many positive scientific methods for diagnosis and the tremendous advances the medical profession has made in the late century, there couldn't be a better law. The illness with which your question is concerned is a serious one, but one that usually responds splendidly to proper treatment unless corrective measures are started too late. Let me say in answer to your question that the doctor deserves the implicit confidence

of his patient. Without cooperation and respect, nothing can be accomplished. Kindly erase the question from your mind so I can tune in on another mental vibration."

MY NAME—(Place for signature on card left blank). Your question actually is beyond either your control or mine. It was answered by your ancestors. It was within your mother's control, sir, to alter the answer but you can do nothing about it. Is that correct? Thank you. The question that seems to be in your mind concerns your name. Let me say that your fears are absolutely without foundation. Your ancestry was above reproach and your name is absolutely correct. You are who you think you are, legally and in every respect. As to the value and the importance of your name, those things are entirely up to you. You can make it a great one or not. And now, please, would you put the question out of your mind? Thank you.

TRIP ABROAD—I get the impression of a vast expanse of water holding a person and that person's objective apart. Is that correct? Thank you. In answer to your question, permit the trite but solid truth that anyone can accomplish anything he desires, providing his desire is really sincere. Determination can bridge that gap, whether it's ocean, as in this case, or flame. In other words, the answer to this question is within the human will. Where there's a will, there's a way. In this case, I think human determination will overcome any obstacles. Does that answer your question? Thank you.

(NOTE: You can't talk about ships any more in questions dealing with trips overseas. Too many people are going by plane.)

HERBERT'S FAITHFULNESS—(Asked by a middle-aged matron). I seem to get a distinct aura of suspicion on this question, suspicion of one who has at least legal right to confidence. I don't want the rest of our audience to know the details of the matter we're discussing, but let me say that this suspicion of which I speak has been responsible for far more trouble than the thing of which the person in question is suspected. Until there is absolute proof to the contrary, and I don't mean circumstantial evidence but solid proof, the happiest solution to the problem is to ignore it altogether. Refuse to admit that it exists and I think you'll find it doesn't exist. Is my answer satisfactory? Thank you. Think of something else, please, so I can get another question.

STOLEN MONEY—(NOTE: Dynamite!) I get the impression of money—quite a bit of money. (NOTE: quite a bit can mean anything). Something seems to have happened to it and someone is suspected of stealing it. Is that correct? Thank you. Let me say right now that the least sensible thing anyone can do is to accuse another of stealing without having actual and incontrovertible proof. Accusations must be based upon fact. And let me say this, for your information—it is usually a safe bet in any community that more money will be lost than stolen during any given period of time. For me to name names would be

grossly unfair, since the ultimate decision in a case of this kind is made by the courts. Nobody, thank heaven, has a right to convict anyone of any crime until that person has had a fair trial. My advice to you is to voice your suspicions to no one except the proper legal authorities. Let them follow through as they see fit. There are people who would enjoy seeing you get into trouble by making unfounded accusations. Don't let them trick you into such a mistake. And if that answers your question, I'll ask you to think of something else so I can get another thought-wave.

You will notice that the answers to all the above questions have been vague, even when they seem to be specific. But bear in mind that these are "toughies," questions which can get you into trouble. Whenever you get a question that looks tricky, make your answer deal in platitudes.

Obviously, an act made up solely of answers like the ones my stenographer transcribed would be a dull thing. But remember that most of your questions will be simple, direct and straightforward. In answering this majority group, be as specific as you possibly can. An acknowledgement early in the answer will usually give you enough of a lead so that you can really look like a miracle worker.

And whenever you're in trouble on a question, remember that you have one final out, a beautiful one. "I'm disguising your question, sir or madam, because I don't want to embarrass either you or the other parties who might ultimately suffer from a public discussion of the problem." That can cover just about everything, and it can satisfy the toughest customer if you handle it properly.

A couple of "plant" questions are always a good thing to have in mind in case you need them to pep up the act—but don't make them so sensational that people know they're phonies. A "plant" question I occasionally use is this, "Hmm. I'm not going to ask the person who's thinking of this question to acknowledge it. Indeed, I should be very much embarrassed if you should either raise your hand or acknowledge it vocally, because I'd like to speak plainly and frankly to you. It's a question that needs to be answered. I may shock you by telling you the truth. Yes, you're quite right—your wife no longer loves you. And now I'll probably make you mad by saying that she did continue to love you long after she should have stopped. You feel injured because she no longer shows you any affection, but it was your fault. You deliberately killed her feelings for you, and I'm sure I don't need to explain to you how you did it. She knows a great deal more about you than you dream she does. And you're entirely wrong about her being interested in another man. You've disgusted her with the whole male sex and unless you go all out to win her back, which will be more difficult than the original job, I warn you, she'll be a man-hater for the rest of her life."

You should have a couple of "Comedy Plant" questions handy for change of pace when you need it, in case none come up. However, the actual ad lib comedy twist nearly always makes more of a hit than the stock answers.

Like muscle reading, the question answering act needs practice that can be acquired only in performance. No other type of magic needs "break-in dates" as much. Three months of practice in front of a mirror won't equal three actual performances in smoothing out your routine. And while a lot of mentalists have gotten by without being good public speakers, I still stick my neck out by saying that the ability to speak well and extemporaneously is absolutely essential. You can build stock answers to fit nearly every question but a patly recited answer will never ring true or be as impressive as the ad lib. And you can't hope to hold the respect of an intelligent audience with bad grammar and poor choice of words.

Because the mechanics of question-answering are easy, don't fool yourself that the question-answering act is easy to do. Done right, it's the toughest act in the world—but the audience response is well worth the effort.

Remember, all the time you're on, that you're doing a dangerous act. Some members of your audience are going to take your answers seriously, and an irresponsible answer might wreck some person's life. Never give advice on investments. Never give any advice, either pro or con, on changing a job. Never give an answer that could cause a family quarrel. Whatever you do, don't diagnose or prescribe for illnesses. Whenever you're discussing a person, whether that person is known to you or not, remember that slander laws apply to public utterances and that a derogatory remark may get you into a lot of trouble.

The real trick in question answering is to be sharply specific about generalities. For the most part, you should try to talk impressively about nothing, and whenever you make a positive statement, you should qualify it.

Further, remember that you're in the entertainment business. You're being paid to bring enjoyment to an audience, so try to give them the answers that will be most pleasant to them. As far as possible, every performer gives the cash customers what they want—and you should be no exception.

Never, whatever you do, make any claims to any special powers. Some performers seem to think that they strengthen their acts by claiming to be supernatural beings, but they actually cheapen themselves and brand themselves as lying frauds. In your opening remarks, explain that you are an entertainer and that the purpose of the act is entertainment, nothing more. The instant you start working "strong," making untrue claims, you become a crook. Personally, I'd much rather be an entertainer.

THE VITAL SPOT In The Question Act

My first experience with a question-answering act was with a tent rep show. If you're too young to know about rep shows, don't worry. They're almost extinct.

I was doing characters and when the boss found out I could do a mindreading act, he told me there was another fifteen dollars a week in it if I'd frame a strong question act for a specialty. That was an unheard of salary boost and I got busy but fast.

The act was terrific in my own opinion. Nobody in the audience had the faintest idea of how I was getting the information and I thought my answers were as good as anything Mr. Anthony puts out today on the radio.

My face was lit up like a Christmas tree when I walked up to the boss after the initial performance "Well," I demanded, "how was it?"

He shook his head. "It was all right up to the finish," he said, "and then it stunk. It didn't close—it died."

There in my unhumble opinion is the major weakness in most question-answering acts. They don't end, they die.

The problem was easy for me to remedy on the rep show, because I had four assistants working with me on the act. But with a one-man act where you've had no opportunity to go over the question prior to actual performance, there's no way to routine your questions.

And your last question and answer must be "sock!" What you say must be strong enough to form a climax to the act, impress the daylights out of the audience and send you off to solid applause. That's the toughest trick in your whole routine.

A plant question is a poor solution to the problem. The writer should be holding up his or her hand while you're talking to make the thing really effective.

The solution I finally hit on has always been perfect for me. Some readers may be irritated that I take this much time to talk about what they'll regard as a trivial thing, but that's their loss. If they're even considering a question act, this is the most valuable single item in the book.

How do you get a sock close for your act? You memorize a few sentimental but sure-fire dramatic poems that deal with each of the general types of question. Then you work your answer around to a dramatic rendition of the poem and take your bow.

On a question dealing with an enmity or misunderstanding, Edgar Guest's "If I Had the Time" makes a terrific close. On a question dealing with personal unhappiness, Edward Arlington Robinson's "Richard Carvel" is effective. These are just examples. I don't know your work and all I can advise is to select poems that fit your personality and that you can feel.

Generalizations are dangerous, but it's a good rule most of the time to close the question-answering act two or three questions

earlier than you planned if you happen to hit a question that looks like a knockout finale for the act.

Keep this always in mind: once you've established your ability to answer the questions, the final build-up is the all-important part of the act.

THE "TRUTH OR CONSEQUENCES" PREDICTION

This effect is to the mental act what the big illusion is to the full-stage magic show. It has the flash proportions of a big illusion (without the cost) and it gives something else you need many times almost desperately to round out your show.

A straight, serious mental act can become an insufferable bore if it isn't broken by change of pace and comedy—and the comedy element presents a genuine problem. The mentalist can inject humor into answering questions and into the handling of subjects, but he cannot be a clown. The minute he tries to become a comedian, he steps completely out of character and spoils the entire illusion.

This is an effect where the audience gets belly laughs and the mentalist doesn't make himself a buffoon. Two members of your audience furnish enough low comedy to satisfy anyone.

You begin by announcing that you're going to write a prophecy, and you can add interest by discussing some of the famous prophets of history. Nostradamus alone can furnish enough material to put an audience on the edge of their chairs. You write the prophecy, seal it in an envelope and give the envelope a wild toss into the audience. Whoever gets it is to hold it for future reference.

"I'm going to permit the audience to pick the subjects to be used in this experiment," you say. "And, to avoid the charge that any plant or stooge is being used, the choice is going to depend on several people. I'd like to have a few people write single-digit numerals on this card, one below the other. Any number from one to ten."

A few people write numbers, and another person adds them up. Let's assume that the total is 37.

"That," you say, "means that the first person will be the gentlemen or lady sitting in the third seat from the aisle in the seventh row, center section."

This person is asked to come forward.

"We need a second person," you continue, "and that person will be whoever happens to be sitting in the third row, seventh seat from the aisle."

This person, too, is asked to come forward.

Now, for the first time, you haul out onto the stage a bench or table containing:

- A seltzer bottle.
- A lemon pie.
- A cream puff.
- A dish of raw, unbroken eggs.
- A clean towel.
- A raincoat and helmet.

"This experiment," you say, "is dedicated to Ralph Edwards and his famous 'Truth or Consequences' radio program. The only fault I have to find with Mr. Edward's terrific show is that he selects the consequences. The victims are never allowed to pick their own stunts. This, I believe, results in considerable frustration on the part of the contestants—and I don't intend to have any frustrated people leaving this theater tonight.

"You," turning to the first person, "are to be the subject of our research in psychological impulses, and you," turning to the second person, "are to be—well, the object, let us say."

You give the raincoat and helmet to the second person and instruct him to put them on. You place him in a specific position and tell him to stay there.

"As the subject," you say to the first person, "you are to inflict whatever form of insanity you care to upon our unfortunate victim. I've given you a wide choice of implements and, of course, I have no idea what particular form of inhibition release will appeal to you. Let your impulses guide you, but use only one of the items. After all, we're trying to do scientific research in the field of mental telepathy—not trying to kill anyone. Obey the first impulse that enters your mind."

He does—and you have a laugh that won't be topped by the best comedian on the bill. As soon as the laughter has died down, ask the person holding the envelope to open it and read what it says. It will be a correct prediction.

You're not through yet, however. "Thank you," you say to the two stooges, "you've been grand sports. And now, just to show you that this IS a serious experiment—do I know either of you? Have I ever been introduced to you? Do I have any way of knowing your names? What I'm trying to get is that we've never met each other. Right?"

You ask each of the participants to put the fingers of his right hand on your temples and to concentrate—and you PROCEED TO TELL EACH OF THE CONTESTANTS HIS NAME!

In passing out slips for an earlier question-answering stunt, you give slips to the third person in the seventh row and the seventh person in the third row. The slips have a place for the name to be written. You don't use these two slips at that time, but hold the names for future reference.

When you get ready to do the trick, you let people write down single digits until the mentally-added total hits over 28. You take the card, and, with a thumb-nail writer, add whatever digit you need to bring the total to exactly thirty-seven. If the total is 31, you write a 6 with your thumb nail writer, etc. Then hand the card to another person for addition.

For your prophecy, you write, "The subject of this experiment will be drawn to a final and absolute choice of the seltzer bottle. He will squirt seltzer in the victim's face. That's the truth and I wouldn't want to take the consequences."

Now, let's elaborate on how you force the seltzer bottle. Of the objects named, it's an almost invariable first choice—but you have to be sure.

"We want this to be strictly impulse," you say. "Pick up any one of the items I've provided."

If it's the seltzer bottle, as it will usually be, you're set. If it isn't, you continue, "Take another item in the other hand. Weigh them carefully in your mind and hand one of them to me." If he hands you the seltzer bottle you say, "Ah—the seltzer bottle. That's a choice arrived at purely by instinct. I don't think I'll have to show you how to use it."

If he keeps the seltzer bottle as the second item—tell him to let his conscience be his guide. If neither of the first two items has been the seltzer bottle, after he's handed you one item, tell him to weigh still another. "I want you to satisfy that impulse without hurrying you." If it isn't the seltzer bottle, you say, "Since none of these three items has suited you, you've arrived at the final and inevitable choice of the remaining item—the seltzer bottle." If it is the seltzer bottle, ask him to hand one of the two items to you.

"You've narrowed the choice to two items," you say, looking at the seltzer bottle and the other item he's given to you. "Which do you want?" A magician's choice, in short.

People won't take this part of it seriously, anyway. You're doing this solely for entertainment. But, with proper buildup, the audience will regard the revelation of names as a positive miracle. It gives a real mental-magic twist to a comedy trick.

A MENTAL ILLUSION

It seemed like a break when I was invited to the radio show sponsor's garden party, because this fellow had a reputation for throwing deluxe whing-dings with nothing skimmed. Besides, the guest list would be strictly A-rating potential sponsors for new shows. I had no illusions about why I was being invited. He wanted to show off his radio show writer.

That angle was confirmed when he told me, "I wish you'd come prepared to do one of your mind-reading things. We're planning a little show." Little? He was buying eight hundred dollar's worth of talent. I was the only unpaid act scheduled, but that was perfectly satisfactory.

One trick and it had to be a knockout. Close to 300 guests, many of them people who might find a question-answering act in bad taste. Something big and flashy and impressive. A mental-type illusion.

Many mentalists have the idea that you can't do big, showy tricks in a mental routine, but I think you can and should. The beautiful part of it is that your illusion need cost but a fraction of what it would cost in straight magic, and it can usually be performed anywhere.

Well, I worked out the trick and it's been a high spot of many a performance since. It was built around a murder mystery, because I wanted to let the potential customers for radio shows know who I was.

Four people were brought up to the impromptu stage to enact a murder mystery. The villain was outfitted in a long moustache and given a dagger. The hero was given a big box of Wheaties to hold. The victim was handed an artificial white lily and the detective was given a Hawkshaw cap and a magnifying glass.

"The actual murder," I pattered, "will take place while the detective and I are elsewhere. I'm going to ask him to escort me to another room where there's no chance of my knowing what happened by any normal means such as sight or hearing.

"While I'm gone and under constant surveillance by one of the best private eyes in the business, the villain, being a particularly evil type, is to get somebody else to do his dirty work for him. In other words, sir, you are to give your dagger and moustache to some person in this audience of about 300. And the victim, naturally objecting to his role, is to give someone else his symbol of doom, the white lily. The people who get these items will naturally conceal them on their persons. I want no help from anyone. Indeed, deliberate help could ruin the whole experiment. I am not to know the identities of either the new villain or the new victim.

"Once they've been selected, the hero is to summon the detective and me back to the scene of the crime. One condition for practical purposes—select a new villain and victim sitting in aisle seats so that we don't have to climb over and discommode a lot of people. Thank you."

I went to the library of the house, guarded by the "detective," and in a few moments we were summoned back by the hero. I explained that I was going to find the victim and the detective was going to find the villain. "So that the hero can have some credit," I said, "he's going after the victim with me." I grasped the hero's left wrist with my right hand. "Don't try to help me," I instructed him, "In any way except by mentally willing that I find the victim."

I rushed down the aisle, dragging the hero behind me. We walked swiftly up and down the two aisles, with me pattering all the time about how the hero was to give me only mental directions. Occasionally, we slowed down and then increased the

speed of our pace. Finally I stopped in front of a man, shook my head sadly and said, "Alas—the victim."

The fellow grinned and pulled the white lily from under his coat. The hero and I took it back to the stage while getting a nice hand.

"The detective," I said, "is going to find the villain. Thanks to modern crime detection, he has the advantage of communication with police headquarters by short-wave radio." I handed him one of the little ten-cent store microphones which have been a popular toy, and took another in my own hands.

Calling Detective Sherlock Vance Flamond," I said. "Proceed at once down the aisle to your right." He did. "Farther. Keep going. Now! Slow down. Three steps ahead. No—back a row. To your left. Touch the gentleman sitting directly to your left. Ask him to give you the dagger." He did, handing the detective the moustache along with it.

As the detective brought the dagger and moustache back up front, I said, "You found the villain! Congratulations on your powers of deductive reasoning. I think you deserve some applause." He got it—and plenty.

You need a big artificial lily, preferably paper rather than cloth. You also need a steel dagger and one of those tiny compasses that sometimes come in prize candy and are usually available for a few cents at hardware or variety stores.

For best results, the dagger should be one solid piece of steel with a steel handle that tapers to a blade. Take it to a jewelry store that has a watch demagnetizer machine. Most jewelers have such a thing. Tell the jeweler that you want the dagger heavily magnetized. If you can't find a jeweler with a watch demagnetizer, any high school science instructor can show you how to magnetize the dagger.

You can palm the compass in your left hand, if you like, but if you wear a ring on your left hand as I do, you'll find this much simpler. I have the compass in my left-side coat pocket with a piece of magician's wax on the bottom of it. When I go out of the room with the "detective," I press the compass to the inside of the ring band, in my left palm.

Don't stop when I tell you that you actually do some muscle-reading in locating the victim—because you really don't do much except keep your eyes open. The lily is both bulky and fragile, for a purpose. You've narrowed the possible selection of victim to people in aisle seats. The bulk of the lily and your opening patter have further narrowed it to men. The only possible place for the new "victim" to hide the lily is under his coat. He's going to be holding himself as if he had a basket of fresh and fragile eggs under his coat.

Muscle reading or contact mindreading isn't nearly so difficult as it seems or looks. "Hellstromism," published by Nelson Enterprises, and Daniel Fitzkee's great book on Contact Mind Reading are both books you should have. They'll give you confidence and smoothness on this but you really don't need them.

Look for a man who's holding a paper lily under his coat and feel the "hero's" reactions. And you'll have a double check. When you've found the "victim," don't stop. Go right on. The "hero" will practically pull you back, but ignore him.

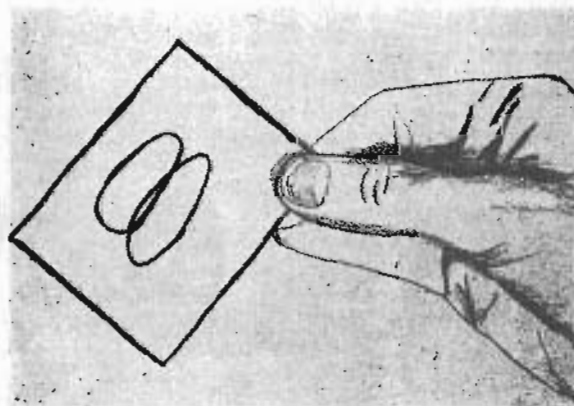
The reason for this is that, all the time you're talking about the problem of locating the victim, you're watching that little compass which is cupped in your left hand hanging at your side. My dagger is so strongly magnetized that it will motivate the compass at a distance of five feet. Even if yours isn't that good, you'll have no trouble at all locating the hidden dagger—but don't indicate in any way that you've found it. Keep right on going and start working back to the man with the lily. This time, the hero will practically pull you. Come to a complete stop. You'll get another definite reaction. Ask for the lily and return to the stage.

The rest is absurdly simple. You simply direct the "detective" to the person who got a reaction from your compass.

Here is an effect that defies explanation. People who know about contact mind-reading will have an explanation for the first part—an impressive explanation that adds stature to you as a performer. But they'll be absolutely baffled by the second part.

Don't be afraid of it. Actually, you'll be amazed at the ease with which you can find that paper lily—and you'll be almost equally amazed at the reason for your audience not realizing how you do it. The thing will stand out like a beacon in a fog.

THE MENTAL ARTIST



Some of you may have bought the great "Thought Pictures" routine marketed by Nelson in which the medium on-stage duplicates pictures drawn by members of the audience. It's a two-person routine and a terrific one. This doesn't duplicate it, but it puts a duplication of drawings into the one-man, no-memory

or code class. And it utilizes another of my variations of the clip-board or file board that I think you'll like.

I make a few quick sketches of simple figures on a slate during my introductory remarks about the picture being one of the finest things to use for mental telepathy. "The pictures should be simple, naturally," I say as I sketch, "for few minds are capable of transmitting complex illustrations. And as I'm no artist, I'm sure I wouldn't be able to duplicate complicated pictures even if I were able to receive them."

The slate is resting on a holder which resembles an artist's easel. I pick up a few loose sheets of 3x5 paper and one of the wooden spring-type clothes pins as I walk down into the audience. I clip a piece of the paper onto the slate with a clothes pin and ask a member of the audience to draw a picture on the paper while my back is turned, remove the paper from the slate and put it in his pocket. I turn around at a signal from the amateur illustrator, take the slate, and move on to somebody else. Five or six pictures are drawn before I return to the stage, put the slate back on the easel, pick up a piece of chalk and ask the first person who drew a picture to remove it from his pocket and concentrate on it. I duplicate the picture. Then I ask another amateur to stand as I duplicate his picture.

As you know by this time, the whole effect depends on the slate. It is the right kind of a file-board. It's used in the trick and has a logical reason for being there. It makes an ideal back-rest for the paper as people draw their pictures, and it is one of the most innocent carbon-impression boards ever used.

The ledge, or outer rim of the slate, made of wood, is narrower on the bottom side than on the top side, a fact which is never noticed. It is wide, for reasons which will be apparent—a full inch on the front and $\frac{3}{4}$ inch on the back.

You start with a piece of tough, thin wrapping paper exactly the size of the top side of the slate rim. I had a commercial artist use a spray gun on the paper to duplicate a used slate surface. He charged me fifty cents to do two pieces of paper. On the back of the paper I cemented a piece of carbon paper, same size as the slate-finish wrapping paper. This piece of paper with carbon on the back was then glued to the inside of the top, wide slate rim.

A piece of prestwood or tough composition board was next cut to make an exact fit with the inner rim of the bottom or narrow slate ledge. The second piece of slate finish wrapping paper was rubber-cemented to this.

The bottom rim was $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch thicker than the top one. The two slate rims were glued together, face to face, with the carbon-backed slate-finish paper in between.

I experimented with a good many different methods for handling the prestwood flap and finally decided that this was most satisfactory from my standpoint: a piece of thin white cardboard was dropped inside the bottom rim and then the prestwood flap put in on top of it, slate-finish side out. Both the flap

and the cardboard were held firmly in place by a little cloth tab, $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch wide and $\frac{3}{4}$ -inch long. The tab should be thick enough to wedge the flap firmly in place, and strong enough to pull it out when you give it a little tug.

The front part of the display easel is in the shape of an inverted V. A cross-bar holds it together and forms a ledge on which the slate rests. Height of the cross-bar depends on the width of your slate-rim. The cross-bar should be affixed to the inverted V at such a point that the outer edge of the top of the slate rim will be held upright by the sides of the stand. A rear brace is hinged to the top of the inverted V to form the third leg of the easel. It has a projecting pin or nail-head near the top, in the right position to hold the prestwood flap solidly in place when the flap is pulled out of the slate at the top.

The flap pulls out and pivots back against the back leg of the easel. It should not pull out more than four inches at most. Your natural position for making drawings on the slate is beside it, so the audience can see what you're doing. And it is perfectly natural for you to be looking at the slate. Looking sideways from the audience point of view, it's absolutely impossible for anyone to tell whether you're looking at the front or the back of the slate.

Your prestwood side is used to demonstrate the kind of drawing you want. Then you pick up six pieces of paper, about 3 x 5, a pencil, and as something of an afterthought, the slate.

The people you ask to make drawings are numbered in your mind from one to six. You can follow a definite pattern through the audience, taking every other person on this aisle, alternating sides of the aisle from front to back. The way I do it, though, is to pick people hit or miss, letting the people who seem to want to do the job make the drawings. This may sound fantastic, but I keep them firmly in mind by mentally painting a scarlet number of each of their foreheads. I look at the person while he or she is folding the completed drawing and form a strong mental picture of the face with the proper number being painted on the forehead.

For the first person, Number One, I clip the paper to the upper left-hand side of the slate, using the spring-type clothes pin, hand the man the slate and the pencil and turn my back 'til the drawing is completed and the paper "pulled loose, folded and put out of sight."

For the second person, the paper is clipped to the exact center of the top edge of the slate. The third person's paper is clipped to the upper right-hand side. "Upper" is designated by the little cloth flap. For participants Numbers Four to Six inclusive, the slate is turned around and the paper is clipped to what then becomes the top edge. The position of the carbon impression now tells you who made each drawing. Some of the drawings may overlap, but that won't give you any difficulty.

You know who made each drawing and can ask that person to rise as you duplicate his art work.

"I want you to mentally direct my hand," I tell each subject. "Give me mental directions line by line. Ah, the first line. Now direct the second one. Thank you. No, please don't think of the completed picture. Visualize it line by line. That's much better."

A blackboard eraser hangs from a string attached to the easel. Don't press too heavily with the chalk. This applies particularly to your introductory sketching. At the conclusion of the effect, you'll find it a simple matter to pivot the flap back into place as you fold the easel and lay the slate on the table.

"DO AS I DO" BOOK TEST

Book tests are always effective mindreading, but the variation in effect has been so slight as to be negligible. Here is a "coincidence" effect that never fails to leave an audience talking to himself. The one advantage to the effect is that it requires a gimmicked magazine which must be changed every month—but the trick is well worth the effort.

Buy three copies of *The Reader's Digest* and one copy of *Esquire* or any large-size, bulky monthly magazine. Cut two copies of *Reader's Digest* right down the spine and tab each page to the corresponding page of *Esquire*. Stagger the points at which the small pages are tabbed to the larger ones, to avoid having a suspicious bulge in the big book.

The gimmicked copy of *Esquire* and the fair copy of *Reader's Digest* are handy. While it would be possible to work a "magician's choice" force of the *Digest*, I don't bother. I start to toss the larger magazine out to the subject, hesitate and toss the smaller one. It's just common sense not to toss a big, bulky, awkward magazine out into the audience, and the thing has never been questioned.

A spectator calls out a page number, line number and word number to me, first. I pick up my magazine, go through the motions of turning to the proper page and counting to the word. Then I pick up a slate and piece of chalk and WRITE MY NAME ON THE BACK OF THE SLATE, which is then propped up on the table in plain sight. Now I take a second slate to the person in the audience, together with a piece of chalk. Another spectator calls out a page number, line number and word number for him. As the page number is called, I say, "Turn to the proper page first," doing so with my faked *Esquire*. On the line number, I count to the proper line, and when the word number is called, I casually close my magazine after getting the quickest possible glance at the proper word.

"Now," I instruct the subject, "while I go back to the stage to get my slate, write your word on your slate and hold it writing side against your body."

I pick up my slate and ask a third person to gather the two slates so that there will be no possible chance for me to see the word my subject has picked.

"Oh, just a second," I say. "So that the audience will know which slate is which, we must both sign our names to our word selections."

The subject signs his name, I write the word of his choice above my already-written signature, and the two slates are passed face down to the third party who immediately holds them up for the audience to see.

With a free, unforced choice of page and word numbers in two entirely different magazines, we've both PICKED THE SAME WORD!

THE "NO-HANDS" BOOK TEST

If it isn't apparent to you that I'm a sucker for book tests, the inclusion of a second one would make it a cinch. They're real mental magic. And here is one that's way above par, because the mentalist doesn't reveal the selected word. He never has his hands on either the book or the dictionary after the start of the trick!

A dealer would handle the description of the trick this way: "A spectator, not a confederate, divines the mentally selected word. No help—a one-man trick. The magician never influences or touches anything held by either the spectator selecting the word or the spectator divining it."

And that's the truth! A spectator is handed a book. If you want to be fussy, you give him a magician's choice of three or four books. Another spectator is handed a dictionary. The fact is established by questioning that neither is a confederate.

Now, a third spectator is given a note pad and a pencil and directed to have each of four spectators write five digit numbers, ie: 29,346, one directly beneath the other. When the four spectators have written their numbers, the assisting member of the audience hands the pad to you. You draw a line beneath the numbers and hand the pad to still another member of the audience who is directed to hand it to another person for addition of the four five-digit numbers.

The "adder" announces his total. You direct the first spectator, "The first two digits of this total, arrived at by one chance in fourteen billion, nine hundred and seventy-three million, the first two digits represent the page of the book to which you should turn. Open the book to the page.

"The third digit of the total represents the line. Hold your finger on the first word of the line, please, and concentrate on that word."

"Now, you've all seen mental telepathists divine a chosen word. It's one of the simplest of telepathic exercises—one of the few which the average performer dares to perform in public, because the percentage of failures is relatively low. But tonight, I propose to go far beyond the usual experiment.

"I have given a dictionary to another member of the audience. The six-figure number, arrived at by pure chance, was what, again?" The "adder" repeats it. "Thank you. The last three digits of that number are what?"

He repeats the last three digits.

To the person holding the dictionary, you say, "Your digits are so and so and so. The first two digits represent your page number. Turn to that page of the dictionary, please. The third digit represents the line in the first column. The first word on that line will be your word. Do you have it? Would you mind calling it out, loud and clear. Thank you."

You turn to the person holding the book.

"What is the word on which you are holding your finger, the word of which you've been thinking? The same identical word? A remarkable telepathic coincidence. Thank you."

If this isn't a feature effect, one of the sensational things that send an audience away scratching their heads, I'm badly mistaken.

There's nothing new about its accomplishment. On the bottom side of a pad of paper, about two thirds of the way down, you draw a line such as you'd draw beneath a column of figures. You take a book and select a word at random, the first word on a line. Let's assume that it's the first word on line 6, page 78. Beneath the line on your note pad, you write, 786. Now, you look the word up in the dictionary. It should be a word that starts with one of the early letters in the alphabet, so that it will be found within the first 100 pages. Let's assume that it's on Page 79, Line 7. Beside the 786, now write 797. Now, above the line, write four rows of five digit numbers that will add up to 786.797. Tear the page off the note-pad and re-write the four rows of five-digit numbers without the total. Try to make the hand-writing look different on each of the four rows. Turn the pad writing side down.

When you get ready to do the trick, hand the pad to a spectator, along with a pencil. Don't worry about his turning it over. He won't, unless you handle it suspiciously. You turn the pad over when you draw the line beneath your own set of figures. The trick works itself from then on out.

The one suspicious part of the trick becomes an incidental, a very minor part of the total effect.

No hands—but brains!

THE HUMAN EQUATION

If you like "Living and Dead" tests for close-up work, which I don't (why are there so many of them?) you can use a subtle part of this trick to make your own "Living and Dead" effect extra-baffling. I use the move for an entirely different purpose.

"There's an Indonesian theory," the patter goes, "that any thing or person with whom you come in contact is changed by

that contact. A part of your magnetism or aura or whatever you choose to call it imparts itself to the object, in varying degrees. Let's test the theory."

So saying, you remove five of your own business cards from your pocket. "These business cards," you continue, "have been in my pocket for some time and so are attuned to my vibrations. I want you to take any one of the five cards and write your name on it. Now put the card in any one of these five envelopes. The card should now be decidedly influenced by your personality. Put each of the remaining five cards in envelopes. Here. I'll seal them."

You lick the flap of each of the five envelopes as soon as your subject has inserted a card. The envelopes, incidentally, may be borrowed, and should be if possible.

"Now," you continue, "while I turn my back, I want you to thoroughly mix the envelopes so that there would be no possible way of my knowing by any human means which envelope contains your signature and consequently your vibrations."

"And here we come to a part of the test where you must have confidence in me. Do you have a coin in your pocket that's been in your possession for some time? I want to use it. No, don't hand it to me, because contact with my hand might influence the atomic makeup of the coin. Hand it to this gentleman here. And you, sir, hold it as lightly and gingerly as possible, at the very tips of your right thumb and forefinger. Try to make as little physical contact as possible with the coin and still retain it.

"Now, let's see—we have one, two, three, four, five envelopes." You riffle-count the envelopes and without a false move hand them to the man whose signature is on one of the cards. He is asked to lay the five envelopes out in a row on the table, either flap up or flap down as he chooses.

"That," you go on, "brings us to the really delicate part of the experiment. We're going to form a human power line. The man who signed the card is to grasp my left wrist with his right hand. I'll do the same thing with the man who's holding the coin." You do so. "Two positive forces," you explain, "the coin and the gentleman who signed the card, are now balanced by two negative forces, myself and the gentleman who's holding the coin. None of us, including the card signer, has any idea which envelope contains the signed card. Isn't that correct?" Both men have to admit it is.

"You holding the coin," you instruct, "are to move it slowly over the five envelopes on the table, back and forth. If our experiment is successful, at some time you should feel a magnetic impulse or shock or—I don't know how to explain it but you'll understand when it comes. At that instant, I want you to release the coin like a hot potato."

He begins moving the coin over the envelopes. The coin drops atop one of them. You instruct him to pick up that envelope, tear it open and examine the card he removes from it. The card contains the signature which is acknowledged.

The envelope location in this effect is a beautiful thing. Everything can be borrowed, including the business cards. No "slick" cards, no shorts, no marked envelopes. It's all in sealing the flaps.

When you lick the flap of the first envelope, the one containing the signature card, you start with your tongue about an inch to the right of the flap point and move your wet tongue clear to the right end of the flap. Then you move the envelope so that you can lick the flap from a spot an inch to the left of the flap point to the furthest left end of the flap. Now you run your fingers over the moistened flap firmly. Seal it tightly. The point of the flap, of course, isn't sealed but is held firmly in place by the remainder of the flap being tightly sealed.

The other four envelope flaps are licked completely across. It is absolutely impossible for anyone, including you, to tell without a certain move which of the envelopes has a loose flap point.

The card signer mixes the envelopes and hands them to you. If the flaps aren't all facing the same way, change them as you talk so that they do. Now, you make a riffle count of "one, two, three, four, five envelopes." You hold the envelopes in your right hand and bend the tops back with your left thumb, riffing them with the left thumb to release them. With the envelopes bent back by the left thumb, the loose flap point will be immediately recognizable, standing out at an angle from the body of the envelope.

Just remember its position, whether it's envelope number one, two, three, four or five. Without a split-second's hesitation, hand the envelopes to the card signer to be laid out on the table. You know the number of the envelope containing the signature card.

The rest is hokum. When the coin-holder's right hand gets over the right envelope, give him a sharp fingernail dig in his left wrist. He'll drop the coin.

MENTAL CARD MAGIC

Nobody loves card magic as much as I do, but when I'm doing a performance of mental magic, telepathy, mindreading or whatever your billing calls it, I prefer to use routines in which playing cards have no part whatsoever.

The phrase, "card tricks," is too deeply buried in the subconscious of your audience. The instant a performer pulls out a deck of cards, the spectator is on guard. He knows that it's possible for a card manipulator to make playing cards do just about anything—and this performer is not supposed to be a card manipulator. I'd say that most of the mental performances I've seen have dropped about fifty percent in effectiveness the instant the mentalist pulled out a deck of cards.

You can get away from the wrong psychological effect of cards by using a Taurot fortune-telling deck and giving a brief

lecture on the origin and history of the cards before you do anything with them. ESP cards can also be used without spoiling the effect you're trying to build. And if you have a straight card effect that's good mental magic and you simply can't force yourself to eliminate it from your routine—use number cards. Your patter then says that you want the subject to arrive at a number by pure chance, without any mental effort, and that once the number is selected, you want him to be able to hold a mental picture of it in his mind. That gives a reason for the cards, and a reason that fits into the type of performance you're doing.

For casual entertainment, mental card tricks are the greatest magic in the world: at the bridge table, at a party, under conditions where you're expected to perform with whatever's handy. But here again, you can convince the spectators that you're a mindreader or that you're clever with cards, all depending on what you do.

Needless to say (or is it needless?) you never indulge in card flourishes, fans or fancy shuffles when you're doing mental card magic. And you never, never, NEVER ask a person to take a card. It's always "think of a card, please."

How? Simplest thing in the world. Fan the deck toward the subject and instruct him to think of any card he sees in the fan. "And please don't change your mind, once you've decided on a card," you plead. "To guarantee that you settle on one mental selection, and to insure against your unconsciously confusing me, please remove the card you've pictured in your mind, show it to some other person and let that person remember it, too."

When the subject removes the card from the fan, you close the fan, idly shuffle the cards, and extend the deck for the card's replacement. You actually had a card selection, and you can control it just as you would in any card trick—but the impression on your audience is entirely different.

If you can do a good mental force, by all means use it. Of the mental forces, I think the riffle with a break that slows the movement of the cards at one particular card is far the best. As a "tune-up" for mental magic with cards, I think the classic R. W. Hull "Mental Discernment" or one of its more streamlined modern copies is ideal. Follow that with "The Power of Gold," from Downs' "Art of Magic," done not as magic but as a mental trick and you'll have your audience convinced what you're doing could be accomplished only by telepathy.

Of all the mental card effects I do, the one that people remember best and talk about most is a simple, direct, easy thing which we'll call:

CARD MUSCLES

This is the old muscle-reading effect with cards where a person thinks of any card in the deck. The cards are spread face up on the table, you grasp the subject's right wrist and instruct

him to point his forefinger. You run his hand along the spread, narrowing the field of movement. Suddenly, your hand begins to vibrate and his forefinger lights on the card he mentally selected.

The trick is all build-up—well, practically—and the effect is real mindreading because it's so simple and straightforward. It's one of the oldest mental card tricks in the world, but there are still some things many performers don't know about it.

If you want to make it simple to the point of absurdity, have the subject show his mental selection to another person, either by removing it or by pointing it out. Then control and glimpse, but if you want it to be a real mental selection, you still have a fairly easy trick.

Spread the borrowed deck in a rather tight fan and instruct the spectator to think of any card he sees in the fan. A few cards will stand out — **AND THE SAME FEW CARDS WILL STAND OUT FOR HIM THAT STAND OUT FOR YOU.**

Once he says he's made his mental selection, turn the fan face up in your hand without disturbing it. Take a quick glance and a few cards, two or three, will hit you in the eye. Immediately start arranging the spread in a straight line on the table top.

Now, if you've watched the person while he was making his mental selection, you should have a good idea what part of the spread is holding his card. In arranging the spread, deliberately cover the indices on a couple of the possible selections.

"To do this properly," you say, "your card must be visible in the spread. If it isn't, I'll rearrange the cards." He says either that his card is visible or isn't. Either way, you've narrowed your field a great deal.

Now, you actually do muscle-reading, which consists of following the impulse from the spectator's wrist movement and continually cutting your field in half. Only you already know pretty well what the card is. If the muscle-reading movements check with your previous conclusions, you let the field narrow to two or three cards and begin vibrating the hand which is wrapped around the wrist. This is done by contracting your arm and wrist muscles and the effect on the subject is startling. Give his wrist a little upward flip, almost unnoticeable, and release it completely. As his hand falls, his extended forefinger will virtually force itself to the exposed face on the mentally selected card.

If you're nervous about doing muscle-reading and don't want him to touch the mentally selected card, you can still do the trick. Have him write down the name of his mentally selected card on a little slip of paper and give it to somebody to hold for checking purposes. Nothing to it. You let him hold the little slip of paper against your pack of paper matches as he writes—and the pack of matches is, of course, the marvelous little impression reader explained elsewhere in this book.

THE ULTIMATE PREDICTION

A "No Smudge" Swami . . .

From the day the old "Swami" prediction effect hit the market, I regarded it as the ultimate in mental effects. To let five different people call out the name of a city, a color, a number from one to 10,000, a famous name in history and a day of the week and then be able to show that you had accurately forecast the selections—what more could you ask?

Yes, the effect was terrific—but the method left a whole lot to be desired. There've been a lot of improvements, and all of them have had glaring weaknesses. Writing with a thumb-nail writer is fine in its place, but this requires too much writing. Carbon impressions look right, and when you have to clip off the end of the envelope and pull your prediction out yourself, hastily getting rid of the envelope, you don't lend conviction. Nice effect, weak method is the verdict.

Here's how my method works, and note how it gets away from every objection. As a matter of fact, for platform work even the effect is an improvement.

To start out, I ask five members of the audience to rise. I look at each one intently and do some scribbling on a card. The card is openly sealed in an envelope and I ask one of the five to come to the platform and write his initials across the envelope flap.

"The prediction is made," I say. "Now, so that I'll have no chance in the world to alter it, I'll put it in my inside coat pocket and button my coat." I do exactly that.

Now, the volunteer on the stage is given a slate and piece of chalk. He is directed to the four volunteers still standing.

"So that I won't have any way of knowing what these people write on the slate," I say, "I'll not only keep my back turned to the audience but will blindfold myself." I do, and start directing the volunteer with the slate. He is instructed to have one person write the name of a city, another a day of the week, a third any number from one to 10,000 and the fourth a color.

With my back still turned, I call him back to the stage and ask him to hold the slate up so that the entire audience can see what's written on it . . . everybody except me. "No," I correct myself, "you can't hold it up. I have other things for you to do. Put it on that easel." He does.

"Has everybody seen the writing?" I ask. "Is it correct? My volunteer assistant hasn't made any change? Very well. Before I turn around or remove my blindfold, please erase the slate thoroughly so that not a trace of the writing remains. You'll find an eraser on the table, I believe. Have you done that? Fine."

Now I face the audience and ask the assistant to remove the blindfold. Next I request him to unbutton my coat, reach into my inside coat pocket and remove the envelope. He verifies his signature on the flap. He tears the envelope open and re-

moves the card. While he holds the card, I read the prediction aloud and he verifies it. Everything is correct.

The basic gimmick stems from Annemann's "Mystery of the Blackboard," an effect that had more merit than most performers ever realized.

To start with, you have an end-opening envelope with about a sixteenth of an inch cleanly clipped off the bottom. With a fine camel's hair brush, you coat the two inside edges of the now bottomless envelope with a hairline of rubber cement. Both surfaces are permitted to dry without contacting each other. The tiny piece originally snipped off the bottom of the envelope is smoothed out and inserted in the bottom opening to keep the two rubber-cemented surfaces from getting together.

Write the preface to your prediction and go through the motions of writing the rest. Put the card into the envelope—using the flap end, of course. Seal the flap. Hand the pencil you've been using to the volunteer assistant and ask him to initial or sign the flap. Keep the envelope in your hands while he's doing this.

Now hold up the envelope so that the writing across the flap is visible to the audience. This means holding it by the bottom edge (which you do lightly and carefully, with your left hand). Pull your coat open a bit with your right hand and insert the envelope in your inside coat pocket the way it logically goes—flap end at the bottom.

The instant the envelope is behind your coat, your left thumb and first two fingers pull the card up halfway out of the envelope bottom. You button your coat.

The blindfold can be the crudest kind of a fake, any trick blindfold that gives you free vision. Don't make a to-do about it and don't emphasize it at all. Just tie it on over your eyes.

The instant your back is turned to the audience, drop the fountain pen which is in your inside coat pocket into the envelope and pull out the card. Do this with a minimum of arm motion, keeping your elbows firmly at your sides but fidgeting a little nervously on your feet as you give the man with the slate his instructions.

Immediately get the card down in front of you, with your back shielding it from the audience. Don't be nervous. You've done your part of the trick and the spectators are interested in what the audience volunteers are doing. Once you get the card, stick it into the front of your buttoned coat a bit and move around, letting your hands go everywhere except up near the coat pocket. At any time that seems convenient, reach with your right hand to the upper left outside coat pocket and remove a short pencil which has been held in place with your handkerchief. You could even remove your handkerchief and use it, if you like.

Now that the trick is practically over, here comes the critical part. You tell the volunteer to put the slate on the easel—and

you make a broad gesture toward the easel as he does, turning your head toward it at the same time.

If you don't get everything on that one quick glance, don't keep looking. When you ask, "Has everyone seen the writing?" make another broad gesture toward it and take a second look. With two chances like that, you can't miss.

While the assistant is erasing the slate, you have ample time to do your prediction writing on the card. I always try to get it done while I'm saying "Is that correct? My volunteer assistant hasn't made any changes? Very well. Before I turn around or remove my blindfold, please erase the slate thoroughly so that not a trace of the writing remains. You'll find an eraser on the table, I believe."

While he's doing the erasing, I emphasize the thoroughness of the job he's to do—at the same time, putting the card back into the envelope, taking the pen out and running my left thumb and fingers along the rubber-cemented edges. The trick is done!

THE POCKET MINDREADER

Solved: The used Razor Blade Problem

For this pocket cutie, you use those tissue thin double-edge razor blades and some cheap cardboard stock cut to business-card size. It must be the kind of cardboard that will peel into two layers, like a playing card. Might as well fix up several while you're doing it. You peel the cards apart, put a razor blade between the two layers, smear the surface with rubber cement and put them back together again.

You put one of the gimmicked cards on top of a pile of plain cards in a little cardboard box which is just large enough to hold them. Remove the lid from the box, hand your subject a card (the gimmicked one) and let another spectator examine the box and the rest of the cards if he likes. All but the card to be used are dumped back into the box, with the lid left off.

The subject is asked to draw a simple picture on his card while your back is turned. He puts the card in the box, drawing side down, and puts on the lid.

At this point you turn around. "Oh," you say, "just a second. I'll need a card, too."

You remove the lid very openly, start to reach for a card and say, as an afterthought, "No. I better not touch the cards. Here. Somebody else remove one for me."

Immediately, you hand the box to a spectator who digs down and hands you a card. With as much buildup as you care to use, you duplicate the subject's drawing.

All there is to it is a little alnico magnet which you palm into your right hand while your back is turned and the drawing is being made. The right hand flattens out and grips the top of the box, lifts it off and hesitates as you remember that you shouldn't touch the cards. The inside of the lid, of course, has picked up

the card bearing the drawing, and the sketch faces you. You immediately put the lid back on the box and hand it to a spectator for the removal of a blank card. As you draw your hand and the magnet away from the box, the drawing falls back into place.

At both the start and the finish, everything can be examined. You actually don't touch the cards. You need such a brief glance at the card in the box-top that there need be no suspicion whatever attached to the one vital move.

I have a little pellet of wax on my alnico magnet, and keep the magnet in my pocket, waxed to the top of the box. In reaching for the box, I remove the magnet and palm it. That way, there doesn't need to be any fumbling around for the gimmick.

The weakest feature of this trick is that you can't repeat it immediately—but you can't have everything.

THE CRYSTAL OF THE FUTURE

(Neither Tried Nor Proven)

At an early age, a manual training teacher told me that I should have my hands blessed. Nobody since then has ever differed with the teacher's opinion but, unfortunately, mechanical efficiency isn't that easy to acquire. My wife learned long ago that if any mechanical contrivance around the house needed repairs, she could either call a repair man first or let me do the job and then call the repair man to mend the original damage plus what I had done.

I haven't built this device. I shudder to think about building it. Even so, I think some miraculous handy man could come up with a mental effect worthy of all-star billing by working this thing out.

The idea began when I saw a "viewer," one of those wonderful little devices used in editing and splicing home movie film. It's a tiny version of a motion picture projector and throws your pictures on a little ground-glass screen not quite as large as a business card. I believe the devices sell for about twenty-five dollars, and they're wonderful aids in editing home movies.

You fix up a little table, one with a top about a foot square, so that the viewer can be concealed on the under side of the table top. A hole is cut in the table top just large enough to expose the ground glass, which must come into direct proximity with the under-side of the hole.

Now, if you want to make it a really slick job, you cover the top of your table with black felt and cut the felt at three sides of the little oblong hole so that it forms a felt flap. Tab one front of the flap so it can be folded back without a struggle.

A little student lamp will be fastened to one corner of the top of the table, focused to throw its light at the place where the hole is. The only reason for the lamp is to have an excuse for the electric cord and plug which extend from the table. Ac-

tually, there's a two-way plug on the under side of the table into which both the lamp and the "viewer" plug.

You also have a good crystal ball and a black base for it, the base ostensibly to keep the crystal ball from rolling off the table. The base isn't as innocent as it looks, though. It's a shell with neither top nor bottom, painted dead black on the inside. In putting the crystal and base on the table, you lift back the felt flap over the viewer and hold it in place with the weight of the base. The ground-glass screen of the viewer is directly under the crystal.

You use two of the tiny 50-foot movie reels with the viewer, together with 50 feet of 16-millimeter film. Each of ten movie shots takes up about five feet. Your shots are of an old white-haired woman, an elderly man in bed, a close-up of human hands counting or riffling a big stack of paper money, a moving train, a doctor's medicine kit being opened and a stethoscope being taken out, a young man with a woman on either side of him and both tugging at him, a policeman running as if in pursuit of someone and firing a gun, a man and woman in an affectionate embrace, human hands putting a letter into an envelope, sealing it and scrawling a name and address on the envelope, and a bride and groom being showered with rice.

For this act, you have to have the questions in your possession in advance for copying on your favorite "reader." You'll copy them in such an order that some questions which fit the movies follow each other in one-to-ten order, although other questions may be interspersed between them and you don't need to fit a question to each of the ten film shots.

You start your act by seeing the answers to a question in your crystal ball, describing what you see and really staring at the crystal as you give the answers. After a buildup on a couple of questions answered in this manner, you remark that many people seem to doubt the appearance of anything in the crystal. You invite a member of the audience forward to see if he or she can see anything. You get the impression of a set of initials and ask a person to hold up his or her hand. Now you invite the volunteer to look into the crystal and to describe what he or she sees.

"An elderly woman with white hair. She's smiling." You stop the volunteer before the end of the five feet of film and thank him. You take a look at the crystal yourself. "I get the impression that this woman is your mother. Your question deals with your mother, is that correct? Thank you. She obviously isn't worried about the problem because she's smiling, as this member of the audience has said." And so forth, to an answer of the question.

Now, people are bound to think you had a "plant" look into the crystal, so you ask for another volunteer. If you don't have questions for the third and fourth shots, you run them off while you're looking at the crystal. Then you get a volunteer to look at the fifth shot. At any time in the act, the crystal and base may

be handed out for examination—if you're quick at covering the ground glass screen with the flap.

The ten shots can be made to fit almost any question that comes up, with a little imagination. The only thing that bothers me is how to control the movement of the film through the viewer. I have an ideal it should be done with a rubber-band motor and a well-hidden brake.

Of course, if you want to use "still" shots, which could also be tremendously effective, you could buy one of those little pocket viewers for 35-mm. color transparencies and build the whole thing, battery and all, into the base of your crystal. All you'd need would be a hidden cog to change the view.

Anyway, I think it's worth developing. One of you handy guys could come up with a real sensation.

A LESSON IN LIVING FROM MAGIC

Fooing around with magic had been my favorite pastime from the time I was 12 years old, but when I was sixteen and finishing my first year at the University of Iowa I knew having fun with magic couldn't bring me in enough money to finance the following year of college. Neither could any other kind of work available to a youngster. Back in 1925, \$50 a month was good pay for a boy filling in somewhere during the summer—and it took \$1,000 to get through a school year in the manner to which I wanted to become accustomed.

Fooing around with magic couldn't get me that kind of money, but I had an idea that magic plus showmanship plus salesmanship might. The school paper had sponsored a 100-hour endurance automobile drive as an advertising promotion stunt, with various merchants paying substantial money to be tied up with the event. The 100-hour car driver made a quick haul which I thought he more than earned. I had no desire to drive a car for a hundred hours without stopping, but I certainly did want the kind of money the fellow was drawing.

Naturally, I thought of the old hypnotism bally where the "professor" drove a horse and buggy through the streets blindfolded. Why not, I asked myself, modernize that stunt and make a newspaper advertising promotion of it?

There were a few drawbacks, the first of which was that I hadn't the faintest idea of how to drive an automobile blindfolded. That didn't bother me much, though, because I'd seen countless dealer ads for X-ray Eye acts, fake blindfolds, etc. I promptly bought all of them and discovered that, for my purposes, one of two things was wrong with every one of them. Either the material used for the blindfolding was not subject to a rigid examination or the blindfolding had to be done in a highly restricted way. I was going to present a challenge stunt and was going to ask a lot of money for it. What I had to have wasn't a trick but a miracle.

Those of my school friends who didn't think I was crazy very nearly went crazy, themselves, blindfolding and rebinding me over a period of weeks. The basic clue to my blindfold method finally came from an ancient book in the university library—but my university courses took an awful beating while I worked to perfect the stunt.

The day after school suspended for the summer, I got on a train and arrived in Washington, Iowa, with slightly less than five dollars in my pocket. There was no doubt about my selling the stunt to the newspaper—I had to and did. Why they ever risked the gamble is beyond me to this day. The only assurance they had that I could do the stunt was say-so. After I'd made the rounds of merchants with the paper's one ad solicitor, and had sold a nice number of tieups at low fees, I called on the theater manager with the idea of doing a little magic act between shows.

I started to describe the as yet unbuilt act to him, but he interrupted me. "What kind of lobbies do you have?" he demanded. I must have looked blank, because he went on, "Your newspaper stunt sounds like a great promotion, one that'll build up a lot of interest, but I know, that if I'm going to get crowds into my theater, any act has to have flashy lobby boards."

Immediately, I started telling him about my lobby displays—which were purely imaginary, and he agreed to buy the act for the night of the blindfold drive for twenty-five dollars. A little nervously, I began hunting for somebody who'd build a really flashy set of lobby boards on credit. The perfect man, an alcoholic but genial banner man on a carnival in a nearby town, agreed to do the job without a down payment. "You haven't got the dough yet, anyway," he said, "so you can't pay me. And if you could pay me now, I'd never get the job out."

It turned out that the fellow had been a theater card and display man, and the job appealed to him. He turned out as glittering a set of lobby displays as I've seen to this day, and I realize now that they were worth many times what he charged me. I picked them up on Wednesday and installed them in the theater, to the delight of the house manager. The blindfold drive and theater appearance were scheduled for Saturday, and it was Friday afternoon before I realized that I had to have an act.

The one trick, I'd really worked out was the blindfold drive and it was hardly suitable for theater performance. Anyway, the customers would already have seen it free. To complicate matters, I saw that the theater manager had advertised, "See Scotty George's Sensational Blindfold Drive. Then See How He Does It!"

I had no intention of exposing anything and stormed into the manager's office ready for mayhem. "Don't get excited, kid," he said. "That and the lobby boards are what you've got for sale." After a long argument, he said, "All right, so I've put you on a spot. You've got to satisfy the audience some way—but a smart performer would figure out a way to do it."

The theater was packed to standing room only, and I had a pitiful bunch of small tricks that I'd tried to give a mental flavor. The act was dead and buried up to the finale, when I asked for a committee to blindfold me to the best of its ability.

I was blindfolded, thoroughly and spectacularly and then walked up and down the aisles of the theater, describing objects and people. After a few minutes of that, I ran down the aisle, up the runway, ripped off the blindfold with dramatic gestures and held it aloft. "And that, ladies and gentlemen," I said, "is exactly the way I do the blindfold drive! I thank you."

There was a lot more applause than I deserved and I had to tell the audience time wouldn't permit an encore. Time? I didn't have an encore trick! I was shamefaced and apologetic when I went to the manager's office to collect my money.

"Don't apologize, kid," he said. "You gave me the best night's business I've had in a year, at least. You drew. To make money running a theater, you have to have two things—something to draw and something to satisfy the people after they come in. It isn't often the same act that does both things. You could have a great act, but you haven't got it yet, so let me give you a tip—don't tell house managers how great you are. You aren't and so many performers have already told 'em that they wouldn't believe it, anyway. But tell 'em about your lobby display and your newspaper bally stunt. That way, you'll deliver what you say you will and there'll be no hard feelings."

With money in my pocket, I jumped from Washington, Iowa, (pop. 5,000 at the time) to Waterloo, Iowa—a busy, live little Iowa city of about 45,000 population. The newspaper management was really alert, and we'd sold about \$400 worth of tieups before I called on Alexander Frank, a great theater man of the old school. He picked the name, "Exposing the Medium," for my act and booked me in for one night, two performances, at \$75. The house was a combination tab-show and movie setup, and I realized that I had to have something resembling an act. A wire to Thayer's brought a Dr. Q rapping hand, spirit slates and a sealed message reading act which I realized immediately was beyond my capacities. I did some intensive work on routineing and patter and thought I was pretty good. A couple of friends were stationed out front for the first performance to give me tips, and they wanted to like my act but try as they might, they couldn't be flatterers. It was a mess, except for the finale, which saved it again. I'd decided that the theater appearance would henceforth cease to be a part of the deal when Mr. Frank came back-stage.

"Will you work again tomorrow night for an extra \$100?" he demanded. "I have to know right away to get it in my Sunday ads."

I said, "I'm going to be honest with you, Mr. Frank. This act isn't good enough."

He laughed. "It gets by," he said, "so who's complaining? If I want to throw away another hundred dollars, should you kick?"

If you draw crowds like this, no theater manager's going to worry about your act."

Apparently theater managers didn't care about your act if you could draw business. If you could prove your pulling power, they were a lot more interested than if you could prove that you had a good show. They were business men, interested in making money on their investment in you.

After the Sunday night show, Mr. Frank and I had a long talk in his office. "You've shown that you can take criticism," he said, "so I'm going to try to help you. You don't need a good act to make money if you can pack a theater—and it's equally true that the best act in the world won't draw crowds without good exploitation. For a kid who isn't dry behind the ears yet, you've got a wonderful sense of showmanship. I can't tell you a thing about that. But if you want an act to go with the pulling power, if you want to give audiences something in return for the money you can talk out of them, I can tell you a lot.

"Magicians—fooeys! They're all alike except a couple of top-notchers. They think being able to do wonderful tricks is all that counts. They don't know how to sell what they have. They'll practice years making a playing card vanish and come back, and they don't even learn how to take a bow. They don't know how to walk on, let alone how to act. And don't kid yourself, a good magician has to be an actor. You're doing mental stuff, but you're not acting the part of a man who can read minds. When you do the blindfold routine, you get along fine because you're really acting the part of a guy who can see while he's blindfolded. Nobody can tell you anything to improve that one.

"But there's people can tell you plenty about other stuff—and they aren't magicians! You don't need more tricks or better ones; what you need is acting! Where you gonna be next week?"

I told him I'd be working in Burlington, Iowa, and he picked up a *Billboard* magazine.

"All right," he said. "There's a tent rep show playing within twenty miles of Burlington. You look up the director of that show and tell him you wanta pay him to produce your act. For ten or twenty bucks, he'll show you stuff that's a lot more magic than your tricks."

And Mr. Frank was right. I found a man who wasn't interested in magic but was an expert at building entertainment. He knew the tricks that made a performance good, the tricks of timing and building to a climax, the tricks you do with your voice and your face.

By the end of the summer, I had letters from theater managers to go with the testimonial letters from newspaper advertising managers. The letters said that the act was fine—but even so, what they stressed was that it brought in money.

By the end of the summer, I'd passed my seventeenth birthday and had grossed well over \$2,000. I'd seen magicians who

knew their magic backwards and forward working for coffee and cake money while a young punk made a good living.

I had no intention of being a magician. Magic was a means to an entirely different end, and a good one. It's helped me all my life. It was a solid magic background that enabled me to turn out my first radio show, "Easy Money," the story of a magician turned rackets detective.

As of this date, I've written more commercially-sponsored radio mystery shows or "hoodunits" than anybody else in the world, and a knowledge of magic has, I think, helped me on all of them. The mystery story writer and the magician are selling the same kind of entertainment and they do the same tricks. In my lecture on mystery stories, I illustrate each of the different types of mystery with a magic trick.

The big difference between the mystery writer and the magician is a matter of buildup and presentation. There aren't as many basic mystery plots as there are magic tricks, but the mystery writer dresses his stuff up and sells it. To the basic plot, he contributes his own particular imagination and style.

I don't listen to radio mystery shows other than my own because I'm afraid I'd be influenced toward imitation. I want my style to be distinctly my own.

Imitation is commonplace in magic. A Tommy Martin does an egg-on-fan trick and you know what happens. Somebody does a magic bar act and booking offices immediately become lousey—and I do mean lousey—with imitations. In writing, the plagiarist is an outcast. In magic, the copyist is encouraged.

I don't object to his doing the same trick that you've seen a dozen times before. What irks me violently is that he does it in the same way, without imagination or style.

When a dealer sells you a trick, he's selling you the props with which to build yourself an addition to your program. Remember that he's sold the same props to many other magicians. What you do with the props is what determines your rating. Style and imagination made Blackstone's dancing handkerchief a thing of beauty, worth thousands of dollars. Assuming that Harry long ago paid a dealer a dollar for the trick, he got a dollar trick and invested creative thought and art in it to bring it to its present value. If you buy the trick and follow instructions, contributing nothing of yourself, it remains a one-buck trick.

No field of magic offers opportunities for showmanship and imagination to equal the mental field. Maybe you're one of the many who sneered at the one mentalist who's really clicked in the last couple of years. Then you'll admit that he didn't click because of his methods or manipulative skill. He has imagination and showmanship and style that are far more valuable commodities than manipulative skill, and he'll continue to make more money than less daring performers who can fool magicians.

A HAPHAZARD BIBLIOGRAPHY

Any magician who's going to do mental magic either for money or amusement needs the best literary background he can get on the subject. My first impulse was to comb through my rather extensive card file and list everything I have on the subject—and then I realized how wrong that would be. Instead, I'm going to list only the things I can easily remember as having been valuable to me.

At the top of the list of mental books, there's no competition for the all-time winner. In my opinion, the Crimmins-edited and Holden-published "Annemann's Practical Mental Effects" wins in a walk. It's more valuable to the average performer than a complete file of Annemann's "Jinx" magazine because it makes the mental material more quickly accessible.

Then there's a slender but potent Annemann volume, "Complete One Man Mental and Psychic Routine," also published by Max Holden. You need it if you're going to do mental magic—particularly if you want to do a routine that doesn't include question answering.

It's my understanding that Max Holden has all of Annemann's material and that he'll eventually publish all of it. Magicians owe him plenty for keeping the genius of Ted's inventive mind alive.

The "Doctor X" and "Doctor Q" books belong in your library, too. They were the first really definitive publications on modern mentalism.

A book that never received the accolades it deserved is Eddie Clever's "Thought Wings Onward." Abbott published it in an inexpensive but good edition and the material in it is superb. It will give you a background and a starting basis I wish I'd had when I got interested in mental magic. In recommending any mental books, I'd have to include this as one of the really fine ones.

If you're going to do mental magic, you need the Hereward Carrington book, too. His "Physical Manifestations of Psychic Phenomena"—and I hope I remember the title correctly—is worth its weight in gold, particularly to the performer who wants to play "quality" dates.

From the files of the Sphinx, you should dig up all the Larsen and Wright mental writings you can find. Those boys turned out material that still stands up as superb modern mentalism.

You certainly should have Fitzkee's "Contact Mindreading" and Bob Nelson's "Hellstromism." Both manuscripts deal with muscle reading, and the mental act that doesn't include some of this is missing the most sensational of all features.

The Roth Memory Course—remember Addiston T. Simms of Seattle, Washington or aren't you that old?—is available in a cheap reprint edition, and it gives you the basic ideas underlying all the mnemonics memory feats. Even at its original price, it's a great investment.

Blue Ribbon Books has a dollar volume, "The Complete Fortune Teller," that's a must for your library. Astrology, Numerology, Palmistry, Dreams—more patter ideas than you can use in a lifetime.

J. G. Thompson, Jr., wrote a book, "This Is My Best," which isn't primarily mental magic but is still one of the best mental books out. I've never met Mr. Thompson but when I see his name on anything in the mental line, I read it carefully and file it for use. He knows his stuff.

While I haven't seen C. L. Boarde's ill-fated Mental Masterpieces, I've heard enough about it from people whose judgment I respect to know that I have to get a copy, by hook or by crook. It's the last word on billet switches from what I hear.

Bob Nelson's "Encyclopedia of Mindreading," while not encyclopedic in scope, is still an entertaining and informative book on the subject, well worth your time and money. He followed it with a paper-backed book of miscellaneous mental effects, the name of which I can't remember but which is good stuff. His "Tips and Wrinkles on the Sealed Question Act" contains a lot of tricky stuff that's priceless to the working performer.

If you can get your hands on a copy of Paul Kara's old manuscript, "Karaism," do it, by all means. It was at least one of the first revelations of many phases of the question act.

Ireland published a book by Charlie Maly, "Celestial Agent," that is an absolute must for the mentalist. It contains material of a type you won't find in most places, all nicely routinized and all made to order for the mentalist. Like "Thought Wings Onward," this is one that deserves to be sales-stimulated.

I don't know whether they're still available, but if your favorite dealer can get them for you, Burling Hull's Fifty Sealed Message Reading Methods and his World's Greatest Mental Effects, the book containing Annemann's Fourth Dimensional Telepathy, are definitely worth owning.

Dunninger's "How to Make a Ghost Walk" is at least as good as anything you'll find on pseudo spiritualism and his "Inside the Medium's Cabinet" gives you still more material on the subject.

The Tarbell course, now available in book form through Tannen, covers the mental field most effectively and belongs in your library, anyway.

"You'd Be Surprised" is another volume that isn't entirely mental magic but which contains more useable mental material than a lot of books devoted exclusively to the subject. Goodrum and Parrish, the authors, know their way around the mental magic field and give you good maps to guide you through the same maze.

You'll want the Nelson Enterprise catalogue in your file, of necessity, along with the Thayer catalogue of spirit and mental effects. The Phoenix magazine scarcely misses an issue without something that you should have. A complete file of it is almost imperative.

In *The Sphinx*, *Genii*, *Linking Ring* and *Tops*, you'll find such writers as Bill Larsen, Hubert Hood, J. G. Thompson, Jr., Rawson, Boarde, Weill, Fitzkee, Dailey, Parrish, Curry, Kains, and a few others. C. A. George Newmann, whose literary output has been limited, knows things about mental magic that he hasn't told anybody. I'd give a perfectly good left arm to get at his notebooks which, from what I've heard, are absolutely stupendous. The payoff on Newmann is that he's made mental magic a successful business operation, and the few things of his I've read made my tongue hang out for more.

Proskauer and Gibson are a creative and writing team — at least from the publication standpoint—worth following closely. Gibson is one of the most articulate writers and one for whom I feel a strong kinship. Like Bruce Elliott, he's in the mystery field. Proskauer and Gibson's "Conjuror's" magazine has a wide variety of material, much of it outside the mental field, but enough that applies to make the publication a great half-buck buy.

Gerald Kosky is another writer who deserves a separate note. The late Joe Ovette was a voluminous writer, and sifting the gold from the dross may be a job, but you'll be rewarded. Eddie Joseph is another whose work deserves your attention.

The late Howard Albright was a prolific writer, and most of his inventions were applicable to the mental field. Like Annemann, he had a gift for creating practical and imaginative effects.

This bibliography isn't even going to mention mental card effects, which excludes the work of such masters as Hugard, Braue, Marlo, R. W. Hull, Al Baker, Allerton—why go on? The list would be a book in itself.

In the field of one-man mindreading acts, I must mention U. F. Grant's one-man mindreading act. A child 10 years old could present it without lousing it up. Hewitt's "Mental Masterpiece" is one of the finest one-man mindreading acts extant. For the ultimate in simplicity in mindreading acts, let me call your attention to M. S. Mahendra's informal method.

"Keeping Mentally Fit" by Joseph Jastrow will be a great help in answering questions properly, as will "The Basic Teachings of the Great Psychologists," by Sargent. Both are available in cheap reprint editions.

"The Thesaurus of Humor" is a book by Jack Knapp which has nothing to do with mental magic, and which I can't recommend in sufficient superlatives. Most of you will pass it up, but it contains basic gags indexed according to subjects. It can make your question-answering bright instead of stodgy.

Julian Proskauer wrote a book, "The Dead Do Not Talk," that you could use almost intact to play hundred dollar lecture dates, if you were enough of a heel to steal another guy's material. It's really good stuff.

"Twenty Stummers with a Nail Writer," a Kanter publication, is something you just about have to have, and luckily it doesn't cost much.

This bibliography isn't at all complete. It contains simply the things I think of quickly and offhand as having been worthwhile to me. I'll undoubtedly think of some books tomorrow that were at least as important to me as anything listed, but I honestly believe that anyone interested in the mental field would have a fine start with nothing but the publications I've mentioned. In the final analysis, nobody can tell you how to project your personality and that's what mental magic depends upon more than anything else.

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

In the text of this book, George Anderson tells of his early life and his experience in radio. Shortly after the book was first published, he began to write for television. Magic was always in his thoughts, and after a few years he created a show for the Bowman Dairy here in Chicago which ran for twenty six weeks. The show featured Don Alan as the star magician, out Don had a child amateur guest, and a grown up pro or semi-pro each week. Also, each week a live show was donated by the Dairy to some deserving group of children, and a professional magician was sent out to perform for them. Often this took the form of money raising for an orphan's home, hospital, needy school and the like.

A few years later, George devised the "Magic Castle" show which again featured Don Alan, and combined magic, puppets, actors and a story theme. This show had a long run and did much to build the fine reputation of Don Alan.

Never very far from magic, in the last few years George wrote, booked, and found a sponsor for the most elaborate magic TV show he had yet tried. This was Don Alan's Magic Ranch. Here Don did close up magic at the reception desk of a Dud Ranch and each week had a different professional magician as guest performer. "Magic Ranch" is still being televised in various cities and has proved to be a most popular show with the public.

We have no doubt that he will be coming up with an entirely new series one of these days, and when he does, it will again be a great service to magic and magicians, feature some worthy professional and provide work for professionals, semi-pros and amateurs....if there is any way that George can swing it.

No other man in magic has done so much to keep magic in the public eye, and we all owe him a heavy debt of gratitude. Many of the magicians who have been hired for local affairs in their own community have been sought out for the job because the sponsor was intrigued by what they saw in one of George's magic TV shows.

The only thing George has not yet done for his fellow magicians (and we sincerely hope he will one day rectify this omission) is to write Volume II of the excellent book you have in your hands.

Further Biolography.....

Since George Anderson compiled the one that appears in this book, a few things have appeared on the market that merit mention.

The great Cordina series, Steps in Mentalism, was a group of thirteen booklets, each loaded with valuable material and information. Each was on a different category of mental work such as The Swami Gimmick, Predictions, Billets, etc. Unfortunately, it was a limited publication and it is not possible to get the individual booklets in the set of thirteen complete. But you can get, for about the same price as the set of booklets, the entire thirteen bound in fine cloth, indexed, and a really beautiful and valuable book. Since these, too, are in limited supply, make inquiry if you are interested.

A new mental book in the George Anderson tradition... up to date, clever, simple, full of impact, is James Auer's "The Spirit is Willing". Like George, he is a newspaper man and writes very well. We can furnish any books on this page and most of those on the preceding pages.

AN ANDERSON DISCIPLE

We just wondered, on page two, if mentalists followed a pattern. Here is the leading mentalist of today, the fabulous and fantastic Dr. Faust... and if one were to put a beard on George Anderson, they might be brothers.



They definitely are kin as far as their approach to their work goes. Dr. Faust was inspired by George Anderson's writings, but his bold methods equal anything George developed. The similarity between the two men is very interesting to note. We regret that a very successful ad agency and television writing career keeps George from making personal appearances.

Dr. Faust, on the other hand, is in that period of his life where the personal appearance is paramount. He is a professional radio announcer and performing mentalist, a combination that keeps him very, very busy. As if that weren't enough, during 1963 he ran for Mayor of his home city, Evansville, Indiana. He lost by a very narrow margin - so narrow that if he isn't doing something important during 1967, he will no doubt run again.

Magicians have seen Dr. Faust do his spell binding act at various magic conventions and gatherings. We were most fortunate in having his complete mental lecture plus the act at our January, 1964, Grand Opening of our new store. (Business kept George Anderson from attending the day Faust was in town

which was a loss to both men.)

In his lecture and act, Dr. Faust brings to life his "Bold and Subtle Miracles of Dr. Faust", and if any one in the audience ever doubted that such high handed methods could be gotten away with, they are firmly convinced after one session with the good Doctor.

We published this popular book after Dr. Faust made such a hit at the Cleveland I.B.M. Convention. Since then, we also have his "Hot News", "Faustastric" and "Jumbo ESP Board", all in the Faust tradition of good, solid mental magic.

We know that somewhere among our readers other mentalists are developing who will sweep the magic world, and amaze and delight audiences with their skill. And we know, too, that they will get bolder, and subtler, and cleverer than their teachers - be it Anderson, Faust, Annemann, or another - and we will hope that they, in turn, will set forth their methods, thus keeping magic, and mentalism, alive, new and vital.

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