"Nothing. It's just, I picked the easiest piece that I could think of. I first played it when I was eight years old, and I played it better then."

<div style="text-align:right">

\- Jack Nicholoson
Five Easy Pieces

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There is nothing easy about magic. It's not easy to define, study, quantify, or perform. Anyone who says otherwise is more than likely selling something. However, as long as it is done in earnest, Magic *IS* fairly easy to communicate. There is a catch, though. Namely that communicating in itself isn't exactly the easiest thing to do. Hopefully, in these pages I'll manage to do just that.

What follows are ruminations on three of my favorite classic effects taken from three classic literary texts. Each piece can be performed as a stand-alone item or strung together, as they are here, for a powerful cohesive set of card magic with a mental flavoring. The three pieces selected for these notes are classic in plot, straightforward in effect and simple in execution. Despite this, they are by no means easy.

Using nothing but a standard pack of playing cards and ones' ability to communicate in earnest, you will appear to execute apparent displays of Coincidence, Clairvoyance, and Telepathy hopefully culminating in a genuine connection between you and your participants. . .

These are three easy pieces,

Fabian

"Playing cards are fascinating. Fortunes have been won and lost. Loves have come and gone on the turn of a single card. There is a mystery and enchantement to playing cards in and of themselves."

- Eugene Burger

To Steal A Thought

Dai Vernon took the East Coast magic scene by storm when he introduced the novel and forever course altering idea of framing pick-a-card effects to think-a-card effects, arguably one of his most important contributions[1] to modern card magic. Why have a card selected phsyically, when you can have someone merely think of a card? It's strong stuff and even more impossible of a propostion to a layperson. How does one in fact find a card that wasn't even physically chosen? Well, in some cases, you don't. It finds itself.

What I consider one of the best effects of this kind is that of Thought Stealer[2] from the *Royal Road of Card Magic*; a spelling location of a thought of card. It offers a truly fair and free choice; albeit as long as it's from a six card stack. While it was Professor Henri Garenne to have first used the spelling revelation in an apparent demonstration with playing cards, it was Dr. Elliot[3] who is often credited as being the first to pioneer the idea of a having a previously selected playing card spelled to as a revelation. Thanks, doc.

Effect

A freely thought of card finds itself by name from within a pack of playing cards in an unerving exhibition of Coincidence.

Set-Up

Begin with the following stack of six cards from the top of the pack downward; Two of Clubs, Six of Spades, Nine of Hearts, Seven of Spades, Four of Diamonds, and Queen of Diamonds

1. Giobbi, Roberto. "Dai Vernon Seminar." 75th Anniversary Genii Bash, 2012. Olando, FL.
2. Braue, Fredrick and Hugard, Jean. "Thought Stealer." *The Royal Road to Card Magic.* Dover Publications, 1948, pp.23-24.
3. "Spelling Card Discovery." *Conjuring Credits, https://www.conjuringcredits.com/doku. php?id=cards:spelling_card_discovery&s[]=spelling.*

followed by the rest of the pack.

While the original description calls for an open removal and tabling of the above-mentioned cards, the following procedure is geared for a much more open and apparently free handling. It also opens up the piece to play before a larger audience whether they be standing or seated.

Handling

With your six-card stack on top of the pack, begin an overhand shuffle and run nine cards to the top of the pack. The simplest and most casual way to do this is to shuffle off the nine cards in groups of three while taking the time to introduce the premise of the effect. In the minds of the audience the effect hasn't even started yet, so just keep a loose and easy nature about you. In-jog the tenth card and shuffle off the rest of the cards. You can now pick up at your in-jog and shuffle off or simply cut and complete.

You now have a stock of fifteen cards on top of the pack, with your initial stack of six running from positions ten to fifteen. Give the pack a light dribble, allowing the cards to loosely coalesce in your hand. Spread off nine cards into your right hand either in one smooth group, or by breaking them up into groups of three. It doesn't matter as long as you end up with a loose spread of nine cards in your right hand. Whatever the case may be, break the pack at this point displaying the spread of nine cards while stating the following,

> *"I'm not even going to have you touch a card. All you have to do is just LOOK at a card and remember it at. Sound good?"*

While stating the following, look your spectator in the eyes and briefly gesture with the spread of nine cards in your right hand. The moment your eyes lock with theirs, lower your right hand to about waist level allowing the group to coalesce and reverse

spread them by pulling back with your right fingers and forwards with your right thumb. It'll take a minute, but after some practice you'll find that they spread quite easily.

In a continuing motion, bring your left hand with the remainder of the pack up and under the reverse spread in your right hand and begin to feed its top six cards UNDER the reverse spread. Ensure that the first card slides as far to the right as possible, stopping only when it meets the crook of your thumb. Stop after the sixth card and bring everything up to eye level, apparently offering your spectator a free choice from an in-the-hands spread.

What we've effectively done in feeding the six cards under the reverse spread is to present our spectator with only six possible options for them to choose from; our initial stack of six cards. Because of the nature of the reverse spread, you spectator will not be able to make out any of the indices of the cards in your hands except for that of the rightmost card from your point of view. That's why it's crucial for that first card that you feed under the spread be pushed as far to the right as possible; it obscures that lone index and replaces it instead with one of your force cards which is followed by the additional five.

All that is left to do is to ask your spectator to commit one card to memory. They can change their mind as many times as they like as long it comes from your bank of six cards, which is why it's important to emphasize that fact that they *have* to see one. Once they've made their decison, close the spread and if you'd like, casually execute a false shuffle or cut of you're preference keeping the top fifteen cards intact. You're now set for the revelation.

As long as our bank of 15 cards remains undisturbed, every card will fall directly on the last card of it's respective last letter. It's important to note that the spelling must begin on the value of the card, followed by the word "of", and conclude with it's approrpaite suit. For example, should they have thought of the Two of Clubs,

you would spell "*Two of Clubs,*" and not "*THE Two of Clubs*". You will never spell the word "the" for any of the revelations, but will always spell the word "of". As long as you remember these details, each thought of card will land on the last card of it's respective last letter.

Notes

Do keep in mind that the bank of six cards can be custom tailored to whichever playing cards you desire as long as they progressively spell to each other. In his seminal The Amateur Magician's Handbook[4], Henry Hay provides numerous charts and graphs as to what letters spell with how many cards. While reverse spreading has been around longer than some may care to admitt, it was vastly popularized as a control by indidvuals such as Piet Forton, Allan Ackerman, Lee Asher, and most recently, Chris Kenner.

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4. Hay, Henry. *The Amateur Magician's Handbook.* Thomas Y. Crowell Co., 1950.

A professor of mine once disapprovingly said that he had seen "good card tricks" before and that he didn't like them. I respectfully told him that I felt he wasn't qualified to make that statement.

Calling You

Bill Simon's Business Card Prophecy Move became an instant classic when it was originally published as a contribution in John-Scarne's *Scarne on Card Tricks*[1] under the title of Double Prediction. It is yet another effect which plays wonderfully with lay audiences, and if one is so inclined, leaves them with the performers calling card. In the years since its publication, Simon's Prophecy Card Move has moved onto a plane of its own being utilized in a myriad of effects. However, it's still a sleight which many seem to overlook due to its simplicity and because of that fact still takes in many well-versed practitioners.

Effect

A spectator helps to identify two pocketed playing cards drawn at random from the pack in an appaerent feat of Clairvoyance.

Handling

The handling is structured to directly follow the previous effect of To Steal A Thought. That is, there should be a lone playing already in use after its revelation. The playing cad, let's assume is the Two of Clubs, will take the place of what would normally be a business card.

At the conclusion of the previous effect, gather the pack together leaving your spectator with their spelled to card, the Two of Clubs. As the effect registers for them and the rest of the group, obtain a glimpse of both the top and bottom cards of the pack. This can be done as you openly spread the pack face-up, or if you prefer, perform an all-around square up and glimpse the bottom card as the pack settles into your hand. In a continuous motion, dribble the pack in a soft arc so as to allow you to see the indices

1. Braude, Dr. Ben B. and Scarne, John. "Double Prediction." *Scarne on Card Tricks.* Crown Publishers Inc., 1950, pp. 105-107.

of the cards as they fall. Dribble down to the last card and gather your glimpse.

Let's assume that you've glimpsed the King of Diamonds and the Three of Hearts, respectively. These are now your force cards which you will force utilizing Bill Simon's Business Card Prophecy Move as follows.

Have your spectator take their initial selection, the Two of Clubs, and instruct them to turn it face-down and insert it for half its length somewhere within the middle of the pack. Now, under the pretense of turning that card face up so as to provide some contrast, you'll the following actions.

Break the spread so the inserted card is on top of the lefthand portion, outjogged and held in place by the left thumb. The right hand turns inward towards you, revolving its packet and clips the outjogged card with the right thumb. The right hand now turns outwards palm up while the left hand lays its portion face down on top of everything, simultaneously squaring the sides of the deck, leaving the inserted card protruding for about half its lenght. Under the guise of seemingly turning a card face-up, you have secretly cut the pack therefore positioning both of your previously glimpsed cards above and below the outjogged card.

Carefully spread through the pack and remove the Two of Clubs along with the card immediately above and below it. These are your glimpsed cards, the King of Diamonds and Three of Hearts. Place the deck aside leaving you with a packet of three cards. Hand this packet to your spectator and instruct them to place one facedown card in each pocket sight unseen. This leaves them with the face up Two of Clubs. Place this card aside for now.

Using the information you've gathered from your peek and some slight fishing, you're now free to reveal each respective playing card from within their respective pocket.

A straightforward reveal works well, however, in framing the effect as a feat of clairvoyance, you might as well take your chances and subtly guide your specatator

Notes

Traditionally, the performer would write the names of both glimpsed cards on a business card to serve as a prediction which would later be revealed. However, in this scenario we replace the predcition with a brief feat of clairvoyance ala Par-Optic Vision[2], which I've always felt has been one of the strongest effects possible in the minds of a spectator. There are numerous ways of executing the Prophecy Move ranging from the likes of indivduals as varied as Rafael Benatar, Justin Highman, Ben Earl, and Jon Carey, just to name a few. However, a handling I encourage to source would be that of a tabled handling[3] by Jim Patton and Bruce Cervon, as published in Genii Magazine.

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2. Annemann, Theodore and Crimmins Jr., John J. "Par-Optic Vision." *Practical Mental Effects.* Max Holden, 1944, pp. 249-250.
3 Cervon, Bruce and Patton, Jim. Genii Magazine, Vol. 54 No. 11, Sep. 1991, pp. 746.

"Yo pense que eras un mago?!"

"Entre otras cosas."

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"I thought you were a magician?!"

"Amongst other things."

Deep Pockets

As is common with some of the best things in magic literature, this wonderful little dodge comes fron an unattributed source in *The Encylcopedia of Card Tricks*[1]. While it's seen print in various different fashions in numerous places throughout the years, it's a dodge that is suprsingly powerful when executed correctly. The best part? It's based on a pure bluff.

Effect
A freely thought of playing card is found to be the only one within the performers pocket in a culminating feat of Telepathy.

Set-Up

Before begining your set, ensure to remove both Jokers and place them facing inwards in either of your pockets. This should be done out of sight from the audience. However, should you forget to do so, it is a simple manner to steal and load them into a respective pocket during the course of the routine. Let's assume that the two Jokers are in your outer-right jacket pocket.

Handling

Once again, the handling is structured to directly follow the pervious effect of Calling You. There should be three cards in play. In this case, the King of Diamonds, Two of Clubs, and the Three of Hearts. Gather the cards and spread them in a small fan with their faces towards your spectator and ask them to think of one.

Once they've made their decision, turn the cards face down and begin to mix them between your hands. Turn the cards with the faces towards you and arrange in them in ascending numerical

1. Gravatt, Glenn G. and Huagrd, Jean. "In His Pocket." *The Encyclopedia of Card Tricks.*, edited by John J. Crimmins Jr., D. Robbins & Co., Inc.,1937, pp. 28.

value under the guise of attempting to guage which selection they settled on. In this scenario the cards would run from the Two of Clubs, Three Hearts, and the King of Diamonds. In a moment, you will use the known order of the cards to create a sort of impromptu pocket index allowing you to produce any of the three cards called for.

While obscuring their faces, place the three cards in the same pocket which contain the Jokers, ensuring that your set of three cards goes IN front of the Jokers and nearest your body. The order of this now packet of five cards, from your body outwards, should be as follows; Two of Clubs, Three of Hearts, King of Diamonds, Joker, Joker.

Look your specatator in the eyes and take a moment to recount some of the things that have happened during this card session. With each moment that you highlight, reach into your pocket and remove a facedown Joker. While keeping its face hidden, give each Joker a glance and a slight look of aprroval before tossing it back into the deck. The aim is to give the impression that you're correctly eliminating the cards they *didn't* think of. Based on your attitude and their own process of deduction, they should infer that you've only one card left. The effect, in your spectators mind, should now be over.

All that there is left to do is ascertain which playing card your spectator has thought of and retrieve it accordingly. This is done simply by asking your spectator. However, the question must be asked in an offhand manner. Once they've announced their card, gently go to your pocket and remove the appropriate card with no hesitation. That does not mean to remove it quickly, just to do so smoothly.

The key in executing the bluff corectly is in treating the revealtion of the card not as a denouemont, but rather as verification which is why there is no heavy emphasis in asking your spectator which

card they chose. Much like the intial phase of Francis Carlyle's Homing Cardt[2], the bluff must be treated in an offhanded yet matter of fact nature.

Notes

Not unlike the old dodge of having a spectator produce their own card from a pockted deck[3], the extraction here must be done without hesitation. However, as stated, the extraction should only serve as as verification. In the mind of the audience, the effect has been concluced between the performer and spectator well before the card is actually revealed.

2. Tannen, Louis. "Homing Card." *Stars of Magic.* Louis Tannen, 1961, pp. 61-64.
3. Tarbell, Harlan. "Selected Cards from Spectator's Pocket." *The Tarbell Course in Magic.* Vol.1, D. Robbins & Co., Inc., 1941, pp. 227.

-Bonus-

Suiting You

There is a certain delight that comes about when you no longer recognize an idea after having tinkered with it; especially when it's based on an idea by a friend. This is one of those ideas based on the work of Minnesota based Magician, Mentalist, Dermatologist, and Editing Guru, Dr. Raj Madhok. What began as a mere customization to make the piece suit my needs ultimately resulted in a completely different effect. It's one of my favorites.

Effect
A freely generated playing by an audience member is spelled to from a tabled deck of cards. The card need not be named up until the moment before it's revelation.

Set-Up

You'll need a set of four pseudo mates. In this case, the Five of Hearts, Eight of Spades, Five of Spades and Eight of Hearts. Essentially, these four mates will both force and spell to their respective cards with the same number of letters. Place the Five of Hearts and the Eight of Spades on top of the pack followed by any eleven random cards. Place the Five of Spades and the Eight of Hearts in positions fourteen and fifteen respectively. While the order of the top pair is unimportant, the order of the final pair is. The final pair will always be placed in ascending order; this will aide you in not only remembering the order of the revelations, but in the apparent fairness of the effect as well. This will become more apparent as we progress with the description of the effect.

Procedure

While introducing the premise of the effect, causally execute any false shuffles retaining your top stock and then swing cut about two thirds of the pack into your left hand and hold a break between both packets. Riffle either the front or side edges of the pack to provide a moment of punctuation. You're about to force the two cards below your break utilizing Charlie's Miller's Table Spread Force[1]. While Raj's original

1. Riser, Harry. "Charlie Miller's Table-Spread Force." *Secrets of an Escamoteur.* Hermetic Press, 2006, pp. 15-17.

handling utilized John Bannon's excellent in-the-hands treatment of the Christ Cross Force, I believe that nothing tops the openness and apparent free nature of this particular force.

Briefly; extend your dealing hand so that the pack hovers slightly above the table. Begin to spread the top few cards off the deck with your left thumb onto the table in a spread. Continue pushing off cards, extending the spread along the table, and ask the participant to call stop at any point. Time your spread as if you were doing a Classic Force so that you reach the break when the participant stops you. After a while, you'll be able to force to your break without even looking at your spectator.

Deal the top two cards immediately following your break facedown to your spectator. Place the remainder of the pack in your hands on top of those on the table while. If you've executed your force proficiently, the rest is a walk in the park as the spectator will now seemingly make the important decisions.

Have your spectator take both cards facedown and mix them. They can do this either in play view or out of sight. Whatever the case might be, have your spectator settle on one card to designate the value and the other to designate the suit of a random playing card. Have them turn each designated card face-up announcing the suit first, followed by the value. They will either end up with the Five of Spades or the Eight of Hearts.

If the Five of Spades is decided upon, spread the pack face down on the table and beginning with the letter "F", spell "Five of Spades" counting one card per letter with your index finger as you move along the tabled spread. This method of counting reinforces the seemingly hands-off nature of the effect and frames everything within the center of the table. Because of your stack, the card will fall directly on the last letter spelt. Once you've arrived at your spelled to card, slowly remove it from the spread and reveal it.

To re-set, replace the spelled-to card in its respective position and gather the spread being sure not to transpose the packets with each other. Lastly, replace the pair of pseudo-duplicates on top of the pack and you're set to go again.

If the Eight of Hearts is decided upon you must keep in mind that it will fall on the card directly AFTER its final letter. Use the tabled count display and re-set procedure as detailed above in order to affect the reveal.

Notes

Sometimes I use a little more devious procedure to throw off those in the know when resetting the stack. Here's how; Instead of using the previous tabled count display, I pick up the entire pack and spell to the Eight of Hearts dealing one card per letter to the table effectively reversing their order. Once I've revealed the card, I drop it face-up on the dealt packet. I retrieve the two-pseudo duplicates from the table and flip them face down on the remainder of the pack in my hands, ensuring that the eight is lowermost card of the pair. I then pick-up the packet on the table and place it on top of the cards in my hands thus reassembling the deck proper and finally turning their selection face-down. Beacuse of the interchangble nature of the pseudo-duplicates, it doesn't matter which set is your force set or your revealation set. The only thing that matters is that they have the correct amount of cards between them and that the revelation set be in ascending order.

Closing Note

While the volumes of which these three pieces are sourced from, that is *The Royal Road to Card Magic*, *The Encyclopedia of Card Tricks*, and *Scarne on Card Tricks*, are fastly available as PDF downloads, might I make the suggestion for procuring a physical copy of each. They are still in print today and are readily available wherever books are sold. They belong on every well-versed students bookshelf; if not for the simple fact that you can't write in, underline, highlight, post-it, or dogear a pdf download.