

Confabulation

“Confabulation: No Wallets, More Predictions!”

Note to Mind Control Purchasers: This version was originally from other books & courses I've released. Although I personally choose to use Jim Tyler's Squeezer for the Mind Control show, I'm including this version here in case you did not want to buy another DVD. Although the scripting in this routine doesn't fit in with the Mind Control show, it will be fairly obvious how to alter it for Mind Control.

The Basic Effect

A sealed FedEx envelope is handed out to someone at the beginning of the program. At the end of the program, that person is told she will be the recipient of a letter of thanks for all of her hard years of work...but the catch is her co-workers will be choosing the details of the letter.

Several questions are asked, such as “the name of a celebrity,” a “yearly salary,” and many more – eight suggestions in all. Once all of the suggestions are made, the FedEx letter is brought by that person to the front of the audience.

The performer has written down all of the details of the audience's suggestions. The person opens the sealed envelope. Inside is a smaller 6”X9” envelope, which is also sealed.

The performer removes from this envelope a small index card for the volunteer to read. She reads it out loud. Basically the card explains to the rest of the audience the fact that the performer has sealed his prediction inside the envelope, stapled shut.

The volunteer reaches into the opened envelope and removes a pair of 4”x 6” index cards, stapled all the way around the perimeter, so that nothing can get in or out. The person from the audience tears this open and removes a folded index card.

The index card is essentially the letter, thanking this person for all of their years of hard work...and all of the audience's suggestions are incorporated into the letter, perfectly predicting everything the audience members have suggested moments ago...when the FedEx letter envelope was still in the audience, safe and sealed.

Introduction

I've always been fascinated by prediction effects in which the audience is allowed to suggest anything in the world and then you show you've predicted it beforehand in a most fair manner.

From David Copperfield's "Graffiti" to the Doug Malloy Prediction Chest, I've loved the concept. The key thing that appealed to me was letting the audience say ANYTHING. The prediction of cards or the choice of something from a list the performer provided did not appeal to me at all....it had to be ANYTHING the audience cooks up.

Additionally, I personally avoid headline predictions, which in many ways are actually easier to predict than something an audience member says in the middle of your show. The reason is simple: with a headline prediction, you can prepare everything the morning of your show in terms of your actual written prediction. With this scenario I've just laid out above, you have to write the prediction under the eyes of the audience, assuming you're a one-person show.

The reason I avoid headline predictions is that, for me at least, they play flat. I've used them and while they are absolutely amazing to most audiences, there really is no emotional connection and besides that, no room for comedy.

When I was first getting into Mentalism, I kept hearing about this "Confabulation" effect by Alan Shaxon. I then ordered the manuscript from Hank Lee's but it never came, after months of waiting.

I then purchased a program from Atlanta-based magician Dave Dee. Dee was the guy who essentially started the "magic marketing craze," giving access to hundreds of magicians to incredible marketing secrets, allowing guys like myself to actually make a living doing this stuff.

Over the next few years (until Dave and I had a bitter falling out) I bought a lot of his stuff. While the marketing stuff was terrific, most of his actual performance material was complete crap. His "reading" and "drug awareness" shows in particular were extremely poor. He really hit paydirt with his corporate motivational program called "Success Magic," which was a marketing and performance license for doing corporate motivational programs.

The program itself was so-so, but the finale was his adaptation of the Shaxon-style prediction. While the method was terrific, Dave's presentation was as dry as dirt and while it got a good response, it really needed a face lift in terms of presentation.

I then stumbled across a VHS tape series called "***The Desert Brainstorm Series***," in which a series of mentalists including Lee Earle, Larry Becker and others got together and shared several presentations and methods to Mentalism and mental magic.

On one of the tapes, a guy by the name of Mark Strivings presented an effect called "*Confabulous Vacation*" in which he took the Shaxon prediction idea and used a

Himber-style wallet to ring in his prediction amongst a stack of other mock index cards.

The method was good, but I really preferred Dave Dee's. I like the innocent impossibility of the prediction being sealed in a FedEx envelope and out in the audience before the routine begins. While I'm sure it plays well for other performers, pulling the prediction out of a wallet that I've had on my person the entire time just lessens the effect in my eyes.

Still, in his handling, Mark had predicted several items, around six, increasing the impossibility of the effect, I think. The suggestions given by the audience members for details of this made up vacation generated a lot of laughter from the studio audience. Judging by their honest laughter and true exclamations of amazement, it was by far the best effect of the whole series.

By comparison, Dave Dee predicted three items to create a fictional sale for a sales presentation. Again, it played, for me at least, incredibly dry.

I then decided to use Dave Dee's method to predict up to eight items, increasing the 'wow' factor. I also decided to use a more light-hearted style of presentation, closer to what Mark Strivings used. I used Mark's "vacation" idea and truthfully it's my favorite presentation. My "vacation" presentation is actually a lot different from Mark's, but in the interest of not looking like a copycat in this manuscript, I decided to share another presentation I developed with this methodology.

I made up the plot of this imaginary letter of thanks that someone would receive in the room. Let's face it – in any corporate group, some of the people are going to feel underappreciated. Since most of my work is for corporate holiday parties, this idea of honoring someone and giving the person this bogus 'gift' plays very strong. In fact, when I work for a corporate client for the first time, I always use this routine...always.

For repeat clients, I use my incredible "Mother of All Predictions," (available at www.professionalmagicproducts.com) but first-time clients get what you are about to read. It's been my closer for at least ten years.

I also noticed that Oz Pearlman used this idea of the stapled prediction idea in his "Into the Abyss" DVD, so this idea of stapling a prediction shut and finding a way around that has been used by other performers.

One final note: I added some psychological touches to Dave's original method (which he himself culled from a number of sources) and changed one aspect of the physical handling quite a bit.

In the routine section, I am going to cover the physical handling of the routine during the show. In the following section, called Details, I will cover the construction of the

gimmicks as well as finer points of the physical handling, thoughts on psychology and more.

The Routine

For this routine, I'll write this as though I'm presenting it to a group of school teachers. This opens up the questioning in ways that will allow you, dear reader, to see how easily you can customize this for different groups.

If I have not done so previously in the show, I hold up the FedEx envelope and exclaim that "someone in the audience" will receive a letter of thanks for all of their hard work...but first, I want to give this envelope to someone.

Sometimes I pick a person at random, sometimes I'll ask my client for a suggestion, either before the show or right during the show and still other times, I'll throw a paper ball into the audience and select someone that way.

Either way, I approach the person and say, "Hi! What's your name?" Let's say she answers with Sheila.

"Great, Sheila!" I say. "I'll need you to hold onto this sealed FedEx envelope. It is sealed, correct?" Once Sheila confirms it's sealed, I say, "Hold onto it and don't open it yet, because this will be needed at the end. That's called 'foreshadowing.'"

I then return to the stage and from my case I remove a small notebook (which also has a folded note card on it where I will be writing the details of the prediction) and pen. I explain, "Sheila's getting that letter from a student in the future, thanking her for the great job Sheila has done teaching him or her, but I need everyone hear to help with the details of that letter. First, Sheila, is your name S-H-E-I-L-A?"

Sheila confirms this as I write down her name in the notebook. Each time I write down the suggestion or details of the prediction as dictated by the audience, I am double writing, meaning I am writing it twice – once in the notebook and once in the proper spot on the folded note card.

(AUTHOR'S NOTE: Double writing isn't a sleight of hand thing at all...you just do it. It really comes down to eliminating your 'magician's guilt,' and just doing it. To cover the second writing, I will usually ask a follow-up question of whoever just gave me a suggestion. It might be something like, "What made you think of that?" Of course, if the person gives a funny suggestion, I will ad-lib a funny response, or if the audience is really laughing, I'll just do my double-writing as everyone's laughing. Talk about easy! From here in the script, every time I write something, assume I am double writing and offering a

comment or suggestion as needed to cover the double writing. This will save me more typing.)

I continue: "We'll need a date that Sheila receives this letter. I don't care about the year, just the month and day. Sir, would you stand, please?"

The gentleman I selected stands. **(AUTHOR'S NOTE: Get a person speaking from the audience to stand up. Their voice will carry better.)**

"Sir, what's your name?" **(AUTHOR'S NOTE: Before you ask him for his suggestion, ask him his name or some other question. This looses him up and gets him speaking more clearly. I picked up this suggestion from Richard Osterlind on the "Corrinda's 13 Steps" DVD set from L&L. GREAT tip. Asking him his name first and THEN the suggestion increases the likelihood he'll speak more loudly the next time. For the remainder of this presentation, assume I ask each person to stand and then give his or her name first or some other question before I get to the suggestion. This saves me quite a bit of typing.)**

"March 10th," is the man's suggestion.

"Great!" I say as I record this in the notebook. "Now we need a subject. Regardless of what Sheila teaches here in school, I need a school subject that Sheila has helped this student with...Miss, what subject has Sheila helped this student?"

"Psychology," is the answer.

"Wonderful!" I say, writing that down. "Now we need a job title! What job is this fake kid gonna have when she grows up?"

"Guitar Player," is the suggestion.

"Great! Jimmy Hendrix, look out!" **(AUTHOR'S NOTE: At this point, the laughter starts as the audience members may start 'challenging' some suggestions for being silly, not silly enough, or whatever. Usually, the further into the routine we go, the more outrageous the suggestions get. It's a lot of fun and makes the 'journey' to the climax a lot more interesting.)**

"I need a yearly salary! But I want it to be very specific!"

"\$100,025.00," is the reply. This by the way was a REAL suggestion. Here's how I ad-libbed, just to give you an idea of how 'loose' this can play.

The audience is laughing and I increase the laughter by looking exasperated. "100,025.00?" I say, "That's very specific! I can picture this person talking to their spouse at home...'Honey, you don't have to worry, I got that raise!"

After the laughter subsides, I continue, “Now we need a celebrity! Because this person does their job so well, we need a celebrity who has hired this kid.”

“Brad Pitt!” someone shouts. More giggling in this room full of (mostly) ladies.

I sigh and dejectedly say, “No one ever suggests Angelina Jolie for me,” as I write down the name. I continue, “Now this student lives somewhere REALLY cool! It could be anywhere on the planet, anywhere in the universe, it could be someplace made up – we could send him to the Death Star with Darth Vader!” (**AUTHOR’S NOTE: Yup, I actually say that during the show. I am a NERD.**)

“Buffalo, NY!” This causes all kinds of laughter because the presentation was held in Buffalo, NY!

“Finally, we need a name for this child. Now, this child was given a really weird name...this child was named after a famous celebrity!” (**AUTHOR’S NOTE: I added this in within the last year to encourage more creative names and more laughter. Until then, I occasionally got stuff like ‘John Smith.’ Really!**)

“Alfred Hitchcock!” comes the answer.

“Fantastic,” I say, writing this down. “Now, I have to tell you folks, I perform a lot. I might do six, maybe seven shows a year.” (**AUTHOR’S NOTE: Yes, that actually gets a laugh for me!**)

“As a result of my oh-so-busy schedule, I often forget just where I put that FedEx envelope or, as I prefer to call it, the Envelope of Mystery. In a moment, when I count to three, I need the person holding the Envelope of mystery-“ here I look right at Sheila – “to stand up and shout, “I’VE GOT IT, I’VE GOT IT, YOU FOOL, YOU FOOL!”

There is much laughter here as everyone starts to turn and look at Sheila, which is just what I want. (**AUTHOR’S NOTE: I got this basic idea from a Renaissance Festival juggler who was getting a volunteer to hand him a bag of props. I can’t remember exactly what he said, but I got my “you fool, you fool,” from a very old Bill Cosby stand-up comedy routine.**)

“One...Two...Three!” As Sheila stands and shouts, I’m ditching the index card I’ve been doing the double writing on into my case and in one motion I’ve come back out with a pair of scissors. Everyone’s looking at Sheila, so no one notices a thing and even if they were to watch me, I’ve got it easily palmed. (**AUTHOR’S NOTE: Don’t worry, I’ll be going over the physical handling again in a later section, but I wanted to include the ‘ditch’ here for you to get a sense of timing.**)

“That’s great! C’mon up here Sheila!” Sheila joins me onstage and I position her carefully RIGHT in front of my case, so I use her body to block any view of me grabbing my folded index card. It also keeps HER from seeing what I’m doing, but her attention will be completely diverted.

Sheila takes her place and I say, “Now, you’ve been holding onto that envelope the entire time, correct? In fact, it’s been sealed, in your possession BEFORE I started asking anyone for their suggestions, right?”

“Right,” Sheila confirms.

“Sheila, I need you to open that FedEx envelope right now...just pull that rip cord at the top with that tab, got it?” I carefully walk her through this because I really have to control her actions now.

Once Sheila has the envelope open, I ask her to remove the 6” x 9” envelope inside. Once she does so, I take the FedEx envelope and toss it carelessly into my case behind me. I’m at this point establishing myself as being “tidy” and eliminating trash, which is important when it comes to ditching the upcoming gimmick.

“Sheila, is that envelope also sealed?”

As Sheila nods, I nonchalantly remove the envelope from her hand and deftly put the notebook into her hand. (***AUTHOR’S NOTE: This needs to be done without comment. Just do it.***)

I then casually direct her attention to the notebook in order to direct her away from the envelope. I engage her in the notebook as I say, “Oh, I almost forgot - before you open this envelope, I need you to read what I’ve written and make sure I actually wrote down everything everyone in the audience suggested...” I then read out loud, over her shoulder, a suggestion or two as I cut a ¼” strip off the top of the envelope. I then, using my right hand, ditch the scissors into my case (going behind Sheila) and immediately pick up the ditched folded note card. With it casually palmed, I then nonchalantly reach into the envelope, stuff the folded index card deep into the package and then remove the 3” x 5” index card that’s keeping the two rubber-cemented larger 4” x 6” index cards separated.

(AUTHOR’S NOTE: Again, I’ll go over the gimmicks later, but I wanted to include the physical handling in the script so you get a sense of timing.)

By this point, Sheila is done reading the notebook notes. Here, by having her read these notes, not only does it distract her from what I’m doing with the scissors, but it also takes away a possible solution to the whole thing in the minds of the audience – ‘Oh yeah, he really did write down everything in that notebook!’ I also want to once again reinforce all the suggestions in the minds of everyone so the revelation will be more amazing: everyone remembers the suggestions clearly.

Once Sheila is done, I hand her that index card I just removed from the envelope.

“Sheila, inside the envelope are two things – the first is an index card telling everyone what I did yesterday. Please read this out loud,” I ask. As Sheila reads the card out loud, I am continuously running my thumb and first two fingers of each hand back and forth over the top of the cut open envelope, over the two pieces of cardboard, making sure that the rubber cement is now free to seal itself because the index card separating the two is gone.

To give you an idea of how this looks, imagine your finger positioning as you seal a zip lock baggie – you’re running both of your thumbs on one side and forefingers and second fingers of both hands on the other side, back and forth over the top of the bag, making sure it’s sealed. That’s essentially what I’m doing.

Done casually, the audience, if anyone notices at all, sees that I’m just “fidgeting.”

For completeness sake, here’s what’s written on the card Sheila is reading out loud:

“Yesterday at 9:07am, I, Cris Johnson, wrote down the thoughts of several spectators on an index card. I then sealed this card between two pieces of cardboard with a ring of staples so that nothing can get in or out.”

This has now done two things: given me ‘motivation’ for having that card in the envelope and explained the impossibility of the situation for the audience.

Once Sheila has finished reading the card out loud, I take it and the notebook from her. It’s time to do the big build up.

(AUTHOR’S NOTE: Time to step in with a couple of notes. First, the point in the script where I take the 6” x 9” envelope from Sheila and say, “Before you open the envelope, I need you to read the notebook...” Notice I say before YOU –as in Sheila – open the envelope. After that, I never mention again who, or when the envelope was cut open. Visually, the scissors are there and their use is motivated, but by mentioning that she will open the envelope and then never addressing it, I’m increasing the likelihood that the audience will ‘skip over’ that in their minds.

Another important point: Although I had that quick gag about ‘foreshadowing’ in the beginning of the routine, I never once say that I’ve predicted anything nor does the envelope necessarily have a thing to do with this whole business.

The first time the idea of a prediction is directly addressed is by Sheila as she’s reading the index card out loud. By that point, the dirty work is done and I’m just holding the envelope waiting for Sheila to finish so I begin the big build-up. I feel

that if I mention a prediction too soon, Sheila – and the audience – is going to be burning me big-time.

Granted, some audience members begin to put things together before that, but by me not mentioning anything early on, I'm not setting up a 'challenge.' That's important. Back to the finish of the routine.)

“Sheila, inside this envelope is the stapled package described. Just to assure everyone, YOU are taking out the sealed package from the FedEx envelope that has been in YOUR hands. Please reach in and take the package.” As she takes it, I'm right at her side, making sure she doesn't 'get ahead' of me in the handling.

“Sheila, look at it, the staples are all the way around, right? Flip it over, there's no gaps or slits anywhere, right? Great, could you hold it to the light?” As she holds it up, I point to, but do not touch, the shadow we can both see of the rectangle inside.

“Okay, Sheila...you can see that shadow of something, right? That's a folded something. Tear the package in half, right here.” Now I motion to her to tear the package in half, roughly half way through. (***AUTHOR'S NOTE: I direct it specifically to the spot where I want her to tear because I don't want her deciding on her own to tug on the top of the package and reveal the rubber-cemented staples.)***)

She tears the package and hands me the half without the folded card. “Sheila, see that? I need you to take that folded card – I do NOT want to touch it. Later you can confirm with everyone that YOU tore open the package and YOU removed the folded card.” I then take the other half of the stapled package and toss it into the case behind me. Out of sight, out of mind.

“Sheila, unfold it. I am NOT going to touch it, but I am going to read this over your shoulder. Try to keep a poker face.” This line gets a laugh because by this time, Sheila has in fact started reading the card...and her eyes usually widen and her jaw drops.

I then read over her shoulder:

“I'm sorry it's taken me so long to write to you, Sheila, but I've been really busy, so getting this on March 10th isn't really prompt. Your helping me with psychology has helped me land my dream job! I'm a guitar player and because of that, I now make about \$100,025.00. guess what? I also have as a client the famous Brad Pitt! I also have moved to someplace very exotic – Buffalo, NY. Thank you again for your help. Sincerely, Alfred Hitchcock”

At this point, I pause and give the audience a smile. The room immediately explodes into applause. During the applause, I thank Sheila and escort her back to her seat. I

then take my place back onstage, alone, deliver just a few closing words to close the show and that's it.

Details

Materials List

To perform this effect, you'll need the following items:

FedEx envelopes – these are the letter kind that you can pick up at Office Max or other FedEx locations. You'll want the harder cardboard type rather than the Tyvek envelope kind. As an alternate, you can also, if you live in the U.S., use Priority Mail or Express Mail letter envelopes. They're the same size – 10" x 13" I believe.

Quick Note: I like using these envelopes because it protects the prediction inside and it adds a sense of legitimacy. If for some reason you cannot find these envelopes, regular 10" x 13" manila envelopes will work just fine.

6" x 9" manila envelopes – available from most office supply stores such as Office Max, Office Depot, etc. I buy the self-sealer ones with the strip you just peel away to expose the sticky side. I get a much better seal using these rather than using the lick-n-stick ones.

Rubber cement

A pair of scissors – in Dave Dee's original handling, he instructed you to use a small letter opener a little bigger than a silver dollar. I personally found this to be a strange item that not everyone in the audience would be familiar with. I know I had never seen one until he mentioned it. Scissors seem more natural and besides, if you do a cut and restored rope routine earlier in the show, you've established the scissors as being part of your act.

3" x 5" index cards.- I buy the blank ones without any lines. I'm going to be writing VERY small on the card, so the lines would only add visual clutter.

4" x 6" index cards.- it doesn't matter if these are lined or not.

A stapler and staples

A small 4" x 6" notebook – This is spiral bound, preferably with the spiral vertical to the page orientation. I like this set up because I can put the ball point pen I'll be using in the routine right in the spiral, meaning I won't lose it as my case gets jumbled around.

A small bulldog clip

Preparing the Prediction Envelope

To prepare, take two of the 4" x 6" index cards. Take your stapler and across one of the 4" sides of EACH card, staple a single row of staples. I usually get 5 or 6 staples. There's no need to bunch them up. I usually leave a millimeter or so between each staple. These two rows of staples should start roughly an inch from the top of each card. Also, and this is important, the two rows must match. In other words, let's say on one card I wound up with 5 staples but on the other card, I squeezed in an extra staple. Not good. Both rows must match.

Also, if for some reason the staples are crooked or misaligned on one card, then make sure the staples on the second card are misaligned or crooked, too. I do this so much and so quickly that I'm pretty haphazard with the first row, so I then go back and make sure the second row matches.

I think this is a nice touch, having the staples crooked. These two rows will be rubber cemented together to give the illusion of a single row of staples. If they are crooked (matching on both sides when Sheila flips the package over to look at both sides, a little detail like this will register in her subconscious mind.

Once that's done, take your rubber cement and apply a single coat to, on one of the cards, the "straight" side of the staples. Here's what I mean: when you staple a few pieces of paper together, the staple will have its ends poking through the other side and curled in toward the paper, in effect 'clamping' the paper together. Think of it like tiny metal claws. The other side is the "straight" side of the staple and is smoother to the touch.

Therefore, you'll apply a single coat of rubber cement to one of the index cards on the staples' "straight" side. On the OTHER card, you will apply a layer of rubber cement to the "claw" or "bumpy" side only.

Wait for this to dry...then add a second layer and wait for it to dry.

While the two cards are drying, take one of the 3" x 5" index cards and, from the top of the card (held vertically) down write the following in legible text:

**"Yesterday at 9:07am, I (YOUR NAME)
wrote down the thoughts of several spectators
on an index card. I then sealed this card
between two pieces of cardboard with a ring
of staples so that nothing can get in or out."**

This text should take up the majority of the single side of the card. Write neatly, as you'll be relying on a spectator to read this out loud as you finish your dirty work as outlined above in the routine.

Once you've written the text on the card, fold the top inch to two inches of the card back and forth, so that the this top folded portion stays in place when folded over. This card will be used to keep the two rubber cemented rows of staples apart until you put the prediction into the package.

Take the card with it's folded top two inches and lay it, with the top folded AWAY from you, over the now-dried rubber cemented "straight" row of staples. Then place the second index card with the rubber cemented "bumpy" side directly over the first 4" x 6" card, sandwiching the folded 3" x 5" card between the two. There will be enough space between the edges of the 3" side of the folded card and the two 4" rubber cemented sides to stick the two 4" inch sides together.

Now take your stapler once again and staples the two 4" x 6" cards together along the perimeter of the three remaining sides. Once again, you're going to keep about an inch space from the EDGES of the cards, making the perimeter big enough to give yourself plenty of room to eventually slip that folded prediction note card in during the show.

Once you're finished stapling, using your fingers of your right hand (if your left handed, use your left hand) you're going to pry the cards apart at the rubber cemented opening. While in this position, you're going to use your left hand to 'buckle' the cards against the sides, creating 'creases' of stress in the two cards, so if you've done this correctly, a gentle squeeze of the stapled cards along the long sides will easily force the cards to buckle open at the top during the show.

Now take a 6" x 9" envelope. Open it at the mouth and repeat the 'buckling' process that 'creases' the sides of the envelope. If you've done this correctly, you should be able to drop the stapled package, mouth side up, with that folded index card with the folded flap away from you, against the flap side of the envelope.

Now try buckling the envelope with the package inside. The stapled package should open up nicely for you at this point. I always test my packages to make sure they will buckle properly for me before I seal the envelope.

Carefully pull off the self-seal strip and seal the envelope. Drop the envelope into the FedEx envelope or whatever envelope you choose and that part is ready.

I should point out that to date I have never mailed one of these packages to my client. I suppose I could – I have prepared these envelopes up to a month in advance without much of an issue at the show. The biggest reason why I don't is simply the cost...plus, since this is not a headline prediction, there isn't any need.

When packing for your show, I recommend putting this envelope in a place where it will not get crushed. In other words, don't pack this envelope in your show case below your Kevin James bowling ball.:)

Preparing the Actual Prediction

Depending on your handwriting, you may need to practice this part a bit. First, get one of the 3" x 5" inch index cards. Fold it in half, creasing the edges back and forth, so it folds easily. Open the card back up and hold the card in front of you horizontally, with the 5" side uppermost.

Look at the right side of the card, past the vertical fold: this is where you're going to leave blank spots for you to record your specific audience suggestions in the show. I'm going to put the example from the show right here:

"I'm sorry it's taken me so long to write to you, **Sheila**, but I've been really busy, so getting this on **March 10th** isn't really prompt. Your helping me with **psychology** has helped me land my dream job! I'm a **guitar player** and because of that, I now make about **\$100,025.00**. Guess what? I also have as a client the famous **Brad Pitt!** I also have moved to someplace very exotic – **Buffalo, NY**. Thank you again for your help. Sincerely, **Alfred Hitchcock**"

I put the specific suggestions from the example in **bold**, so you could get an idea of where the suggestions will be written.

As you can see from above, this prediction has eight lines. You'll want your handwriting to be the size that will allow you to get all eight lines onto one side of the card. One of the strengths of this routine is the fact that I've predicted so much stuff. (**AUTHOR'S NOTE: I get amazed comments after shows like, "I can't believe you predicted all that stuff!"**)

Practice writing the prediction so you get used to not only getting all eight lines in comfortably on the card but also leave yourself space at the end of each line for the predictions to be written in later, so the handwriting on the card looks like this:

"I'm sorry it's taken me so long to write to you, _____
but I've been really busy, so getting this on _____
isn't really prompt. Your helping me with _____
has helped me land my dream job! I'm a _____

**and because of that, I now make about \$ _____
guess what? I also have as a client the famous _____
I also have moved to someplace very exotic – _____
Thank you again for your help. Sincerely, _____**

Obviously the underlines are there for explanation purposes only. You can, however, write yourself a “master copy” on an index card and include underlines so you can have a visual cue to copy off of when you prepare for the routine. I’ve done this, as I currently use this prediction method for four completely different presentations and I use some more than others.

Now, when you’re preparing this handwritten card, I highly recommend you write it out while standing, with the card being held against that little 4” x 6” spiral-bound notebook.

Why?

Simple – during the show, that’s how you’re going to be filling in the blanks, standing, with the card against that notebook. As a result, you’ll need to make sure the handwriting matches. Obviously, if your seated, you’ll write differently.

Practice this – notice how you press the pen, notice how your handwriting changes based on body posture. It’s a small detail in the larger picture, but if you allow your “Sheila” to take the car with her, people WILL look at the handwriting, as this completely fries people so much that they are looking for any clue as to how this is done.

Put in the practice time – it will reward you later.

Oh, one more thing...depending on the size of your handwriting, you can certainly modify the sentence structure of the prediction to add or take away words as needed. Just leave yourself space for the predictions, without them looking cramped.

Another thing to keep in mind: The card will be folded with the right side folded out, so you can look at the spaces where you’ll fill in the predictions. Having the sentences extend past the halfway fold ensures you have a visual cue as to where each suggestion is to be written.

Once you’ve written your prediction card and folded it, set it aside for a moment.

Notebook Preparation

Open the notebook and, while standing (consistency is key) write out little ‘reminders’ of the suggestions so you don’t lose your place. I write mine on the page with them closer to the right side of the page like this:

- **name**
- **date**
- **subject**
- **job title**
- **salary**
- **celebrity client**
- **location**
- **name of student**

Once this is done, you now have a little 'cheat sheet,' letting you know at a glance not only what suggestions you need but also what ORDER in which they need to be written.

This is a big deal, as it's really easy to lose your place in the heat of the action. During the show, you can just fill in the suggestions next to the dashes in the notebook and then immediately write the same suggestion on the corresponding line on the folded index card.

Once you've written in your 'cues,' take the folded card and using the bulldog clip, secure it to the notebook with the index card folded in half with the right half of the card facing you, writing side up.

The bulldog clip keeps everything in its place until it's time to perform it.

Your preparation is now complete.

At The Show

Although I most often use a very special performing case built by David Charvet Studios, I've also performed this quite often out of a simple briefcase on a table of stand, situated so that the case is roughly waist level or a bit higher. You'll have to experiment with whatever height works for you. I work this routine with the case to my right, with the briefcase opened, the opening away from the audience, obviously using the lid of the briefcase to give me cover.

Since my Charvet table is kind of an oddball thing, I'll describe this being performed out of a briefcase as it will be simpler to explain.

The scissors are placed on the left side of the bottom of the briefcase where I can reach them easily. The prediction envelope is in one of the flaps in the lid of the briefcase. In other words, it's "vertical."

The prepared notebook, with the folded prediction card is on top of the scissors.

When it comes time to perform I hand the envelope out and when I get back to my case, I pick up the notebook and, under cover of the lid, remove the bulldog clip and toss it aside.

I then face the audience, removing the pen from the spiral of the notebook as I begin verbally setting the stage for the routine. I hold the notebook vertically in my left hand, using my thumb to hold the folded card in place, situated just slightly below the first line in which I need to write a suggestion. Then, throughout the routine, I move the card down with my thumb as I need to fill in the later suggestion further down the card.

As I mentioned in the Routine section, each time I get a suggestion, I fill it in on the notebook and as I get ready to fill it in on the note card, I ask a question or do it under cover of a good laugh.

While double writing certainly is not difficult from a technical sense, I have done this effect in VERY close quarters with people almost on top of me. Although my handwriting is very small, it would not be hard for some to discern that writing "Bob," for instance does not need to take nearly as long as I'm apparently taking!

Another thing I use – when the person gives me the suggestion, I repeat it back to the audience (to keep them in the loop if the volunteer was soft-spoken) and it allows me to verbally mention the kind of suggestion.

As an example, after someone suggests "Buffalo, NY" for the location, I might say, "So Buffalo, NY is your idea for the LOCATION?" and I slightly verbally stress the word "location."

Later, when Sheila is onstage with me, she can see and verify that I've written "Buffalo, NY – Location" on the notebook and I sometimes send her back to the audience with the sheet from the notebook torn out along with the prediction card. This may seem like overkill, but my thinking was that by stressing the word "location" verbally, it reminds people that I have to write that particular word too...justifying my additional writing time.

After all of the writing has been done and I start delivering that silly little joke to the audience about me only doing 6 or 7 shows a year, I'm using that line of script to fold the card into quarters along the pre-creased lines, which will allow me to easily palm this card later.

I simply reach in with my right hand and fold the card using my left to keep it secure. I then palm off the card and casually reach into my case, ditch the card and pick up the scissors in one fluid motion as I get Sheila to shout the "You fool" lines to me, which is silly, but an amusing piece of misdirection.

To repeat what I wrote earlier, I use Sheila's body to help shield me a bit as I retrieve the card and secretly stuff it into the opened envelope that I'm holding, with the top buckled open, thanks to the creases I put in earlier.

On occasion, when I open the envelope, I find that the two index cards are stuck together. Maybe the FedEx envelope got squashed, whatever. It doesn't happen often – maybe twice a year and whatever the cause, I'm sure it was something I did.

When this happens, I casually reach in with the scissors I'm still holding, tuck the tips (in closed position) in between the two cards and simply open the scissors. Since the majority of the two strips of rubber cemented rows of staples can not physically touch, this little scissors trick easily fixes the problem.

For details of the routine, be sure to refer back to that section, but I'm pretty sure I've covered all of the details very carefully.

This truly has been my corporate closer for first-time clients for over ten years. It plays incredibly strong, and it lends itself to several presentational possibilities.

As I mentioned, I use a "Dream Vacation" presentation quite a bit. Although my suggestion, script and layout are different from Mark Strivings, I didn't want to replicate the "vacation" idea.

I use the script in this book quite often for volunteer appreciation banquets and school faculty in-service dates. Obviously, if you're not performing for teachers, you can alter the suggestions and script completely...the point is, I wanted to give you one example from my own working set list.

This would play well with a "Dream Date," "Dream House," or maybe a "Date from Hell," or even a "Crime of the Century!" Hey, I think I just gave myself a great idea.:)

This truly is a "worker," and is about the most amazing one-man, real-time prediction method I've ever come across.