

Murder

By Magic:

Secrets

Introduction

Thank you once again for purchasing “Murder by Magic: The ULTIMATE Corporate magic Show!”

If you’re reading this booklet, I’m going to assume that you’ve read the main script book already, so I’ll keep the introductory exposition to a minimum.

This booklet will explain the workings of three of the effects in the show. Two are in the main script book, while the third is in the Alternate Effects booklet. Let’s get right to it...

Whoisit?

This routine is something I have named “Whoisit,” which is really “Who Is It?” which is a take-off on the name “Whodunit?” both a reference to the ‘whodunit’ nature of murder mysteries as well as the name of a barely passable effect called “Whodunit” which is no longer on the market.

The use of the effect is to whittle down the four remaining suspects to one – the murderer. In the “Whodunit” effect, there were three “Innocent” cards and one “Guilty” card. All four were in envelopes and mixed. As the four spectators held the cards, you would wave an ornate necklace over each envelope (or use a PK ring) to determine where the guilty card was.

The concept was fine but in actual execution, it dragged, badly, so I dropped the effect. (The effect also had the appearance of a bloody handprint on another blank, re-useable card, but the handprint was at best a light purple and the ammonia smell pretty much gives away part of the methodology. Bad effect, but it got me thinking...

What I finally wound up using was the simplest of all concepts – marking the envelopes! First, I use four 6 x 9 manila envelopes. The “Innocent” and “Guilty” sheets are colorful, 8 x 11 papers, folded in half, one sheet in each of the four envelopes.

The artwork I use for the “innocent” and “guilty” sheets follows on the next two pages.

Innocent

You've been found INNOCENT! It's important to show your
gratitude by visiting...

www.MotivatingEntertainment.com

...And finding out how Cris Johnson's "\$uccess Magic" will make
your next sales meeting amazingly successful & fun!

GUILTY!

You've been found GUILTY! But you can get your sentence
reduced by visiting...

www.MotivatingEntertainment.com

...And finding out how Cris Johnson's "\$uccess Magic"" will make
your next sales meeting amazingly successful & fun!

The sheets are easily made in any simple graphics program on your computer.

Notice, too the amusing little 'blurbs' at the bottom – it pitches my website (and another program!) in a cute way. Encourage the participants to take the sheets with you. You just may get another booking out of it!

I have similar little blurbs on the “Suspect” envelopes, which I will cover briefly.

The four envelopes each say “Suspect” on them. I print out two “Suspect” 8 x 11 sheets, getting two labels per page.

I then cut the sheets in half and either using rubber cement, a glue stick or double-sided Scotch tape, I'll secure each label to a 6 x 9 envelope.

Then, I'll mark one of the “Suspect” labels so it's different from the others and easily discernable from a few feet away at a glance. (I'll cover my marking in a moment).

The way I get my glimpse at the marking is simplicity itself – I will ask all four suspects to line up just as they would in a police line-up with the suspect envelopes taking the place of the number card suspect 'thingies' they give the booked person to hold as they pose for their mug shots.

I then face the four people and (mostly) look them in the eye as I catch a glimpse of the envelopes, spot the “Guilty” one and move along. As I “examine” them, I make funny comments, some subtle, such as “where were you the day after yesterday?” (Think about it for a sec. It's funny the answers I get!)

Other times I will ask more overt questions, such as “Do you enjoy playing with fire? Do you cheat on your taxes?” or my favorite: “Have you ever ripped those tags off of a mattress?”

Then, in my case, I'll get the 'psychic' involved in the process with my Spirit Table, but honestly, if you want a cheap-o, briefcase version of the routine, just use the envelopes and do the big reveal yourself.

On the following page is the “Suspect” artwork I use. Look at each closely and then I'll cover the “secret marks” I use to spot the “Guilty” envelope.

SUSPECT

Murder By Magic

"You'll Die Laughing"

Cris Johnson

www.MotivatingEntertainment.com

SUSPECT

Murder By Magic

"You'll Die Laughing"

Cris Johnson

www.MotivatingEntertainment.com

I'm sure you easily spotting my markings! The stylized font that I used lends itself easily to just filling in the little 'tails' on some of the letters, specifically the "U," the "P," and the "E." It may seem blatant as hell looking at the page, but onstage, when people are I front of the group who do not want to be there, it ALWAYS passes completely unnoticed.

Additionally, the four envelopes are in the audience for quite a while so from the analytical mind's standpoint, it MUST mean everything is innocent...but the cool thing is that everyone is seated separately, so no one will ever compare the envelopes.

As I said, I print out two 8 x 11 sheets, getting a total of four labels this way. I cut each sheet in half, taking care to make the cut(s) neat and even, so nobody thinks the edges are a key to a mark, which is kinda funny! Only ONE label needs to be altered as I did with one of the labels above. Also, the "Suspect" sheets each have my name, website, and even a cute subhead for the show, "You'll Die Laughing," printed at the bottom. A great rule of marketing is put your name out there in as many ways as possible! These little things cost nothing and may nab you additional shows!

A key point with the fonts and colors I used is that they are amusing, fairly artistic and contribute to the 'flavor' of the show.

That's about it for the "Whoisit" artwork and handling. Let's move now to the big "Plot Twist" prediction...

The Plot Twist

Just for completeness' sake, I'm going to include the basic effect here this booklet, so you don't have to refer back to the script book.

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, our 'chief of police,' is asked to bring the envelope up to the stage once the performer 'recaps' all the people and choices made throughout the show, including the motive, murderer, the three drawings, etc.

The performer has written down all of the details of the show. 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 "Binky The clown," having believed he was going to die, 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, supposedly written by Binky, predicting EVERYTHING that happened during the show...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. (*AUTHOR'S NOTE: I recommend NOT shopping at Hank Lee's, but that's just my opinion.*)

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 12 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 here we’ll be covering the “Binky the Clown” murder prediction.

One quick note - for repeat clients, I use my incredible “Mother of All Predictions,” (available at www.hocus-pocus.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 booklet, I will re-print the entire script, but this time adding different “Author’s notes” to comment on things as we go along. Granted, some of the notes won’t make total sense until I cover the precise workings, but I wanted to include the notes in the body of the script, so you get a definite sense of pacing and timing. The details will follow. Here we go...

CRIS

Ladies and gentlemen, we’re not quite finished yet. Every good murder mystery has a plot twist and here’s this one.

(Cris removes a small notebook and pen.)

CRIS

I gave nearly everyone who helped tonight a card with a name of some sort on it. Would you stand, please?

(Several people stand up.)

CRIS

And the three of you who contributed drawings, would you stand up too?

(Three more people stand.)

(AUTHOR’S NOTE: Get a person speaking from the audience to stand up. Their voice will carry better.)

CRIS

Wonderful...Now first, we had the Chief of Police, who’s been holding onto that envelope. And that was Barb, right?

BARB

That's right.

CRIS

Barb, what's your last name?

BARB

Jones.

(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 or, 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.)

CRIS

Barb Jones...was our Chief of Police for tonight. Then, we had our two detectives. What were your names?

COY

Coy.

VANCE

Vance.

CRIS

That's right. Next, we had our psychic, who was, for tonight, played by Pauline. Pauline, what's your last name?

PAULINE

Smith.

CRIS

Pauline Smith was our psychic. And of course we had John as our coroner. John, what's your last name?

JOHN

Doe.

CRIS

John Doe the coroner...and John, what was the time of death you determined?

JOHN

4:45.

CRIS

And we had three drawings made while I was blindfolded to recreate the search for clues in the old dark house. What were those three drawings again?

(The three people hold up their drawings.)

CRIS

A shot gun...a tire...and a beer bottle. Great! You can all sit down. And finally, we unmasked Bob as the killer. Bob, what's your last name?

BOB

Bigalo.

CRIS

Bob Bigalo, our killer...Bob, just because I'm curious, what was your motive for taking out dear Binky? Just make something up!

BOB

He smelled like onions.

(Laughter)

CRIS

Okay, I can understand that. Now, we've recorded everything for the record. Barb, the chief of police, you've been holding that SEALED envelope since the show began. Would you join me up here, please!

(Barb joins Cris on stage. She's carrying the envelope.)

CRIS

Barb, is that envelope sealed?

BARB

Yes.

CRIS

And you have not tampered with it since I gave it to you in the beginning of the show, correct?

BARB

Correct.

CRIS

Would you please open the envelope.

(Barb opens the envelope by ripping its 'rip cord.' She removes a smaller manila envelope from inside the larger FedEx envelope.)

CRIS *(taking the 6 x 9 envelope)*

(AUTHOR'S NOTE: This needs to be done without comment. Just do it.)

Before you open that envelope, I'd like you to look over the list I made in this notebook, listing everyone who helped out with our recreation tonight. Everyone who played a role, I should remind, was picked at random, either with the foam rock or by our psychic or chief of police. I did not pick a single character in tonight's performance.

(Barb looks over everything.)

(AUTHOR'S NOTE: By this point, she 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 she is done, I hand her that index card I just removed from the envelope.)

CRIS

Barb, inside this envelope are two things. The first is a note from Binky, written before this tragedy. Would you read it into this microphone?

(Barb nods.)

BARB *(reading)*

“I, Binky the Clown, have been MURDERED. I died on the date of November 20th. To aid in the investigation of my murder, I have written the details of the reenactment of my death and the names of those who will assist on an index card. I then sealed this card between two pieces of cardboard with a ring of staples so nothing could get in or out.”

CRIS

Nice job, Barb. Ladies and gentlemen, what this note means is that BINKY knew he was going to be murdered! And we’ll prove it. Barb, I’d like you to reach inside this envelope and remove that sealed package. I do NOT want to touch it.

(Barb removes the stapled package from the envelope.)

CRIS

Look at it...is it sealed all the way around?

BARB

Yes.

CRIS

Good, now tear it in half right down the middle...

. (AUTHOR’S NOTE: I direct her 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.)

(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 her and say, “Before you open the envelope, I need you to read the notebook...” Notice I say before YOU –as in the volunteer – 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: I never usually say that I've predicted anything nor does the envelope necessarily have a thing to do with this whole business. I say, "Binky knew he was going to die," but I leave it at that.

The first time the idea of a prediction is directly addressed is by Barb 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 Barb to finish so I begin the big build-up. I feel that if I mention a prediction too soon, Barb – 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

Also, as she 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." Back to the finish of the routine.)

(Barb tears the envelope in half.)

CRIS

Now remove from it the folded 'something' you can see in one of the halves...see it?

(Barb removes a folded note card and unfolds it.)

CRIS

Now, I do not want to touch it, but I will read it out loud. Remember, everyone who helped tonight was selected completely at random. If I say anything that is not written on this card, stop me, okay?

BARB

Okay.

CRIS (*reading*)

“On November 20th, 2008, I, Binky the Clown will be murdered. During the re-enactment of my murder, the chief of police will be played by Barb Jones. The two detectives will be played by Coy and Vance. The psychic who helped the coroner determine the time of death will be Pauline Smith. The coroner will be played by John Doe. The two of them will determine the time of death as 4:45. Three clues, a shotgun, a tire, and a beer bottle, will be found, which will lead to the arrest of Bob Bigalo, who will claim that my stench of onions was the motive behind my murder. In the end, it beats the five more years of probation I was looking at. Love, Binky the Clown.”

Barb, you can take that with you to show everyone. Ladies and gentlemen, I hope you’ve enjoyed Murder by Magic. Thanks so much and have a great night!

(Cris leaves the stage to thunderous applause.)

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, Binky the Clown,
wrote down the details of my own MURDER
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 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 its 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:

“On November 20th, 2008, I, Binky the Clown will be murdered.
During the re-enactment of my murder, the chief of police will be played by **Barb Jones**.
The two detectives will be played by **Coy and Vance**.
The psychic who helped the coroner determine the time of death will be **Pauline Smith**.
The coroner will be played by **John Doe**.
The two of them will determine the time of death as **4:45**.
Three clues will be found - a **shotgun, a tire, and a beer bottle**,
which will lead to the arrest of **Bob Bigalo**,
who will claim that the motive was **my stench of onions**
In the end, it beats the five more years of probation I was looking at.
Love, Binky the Clown.”

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 several lines. You'll want your handwriting to be the size that will allow you to get all the lines onto one side of the card, meaning you'll have to experiment. 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:

“On November 20th, 2008, I, Binky the Clown will be murdered.
During the re-enactment of my murder, the chief of police will be played by _____.
The two detectives will be played by _____
The psychic who helped the coroner determine the time of death will be _____.
The coroner will be played by _____
The two of them will determine the time of death as _____.
Three clues will be found - _____,
which will lead to the arrest of _____,
who will claim that the motive was _____
In the end, it beats the five more years of probation I was looking at.
Love, Binky the Clown.”

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 you’re 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 clue 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:

- **Chief of police**
- **Two detectives**
- **Coroner**
- **Psychic**
- **Time of death**
- **Three clues**
- **Murderer**
- **Motive**

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, I fill in each name or thing 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 their name or reminds me what they drew, 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 everything again to jog everyone's memories for the show.

Later, when the Chief of Police is onstage with me, she can see and verify that I've written EVERYTHING 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, as a convincer that everything was in fact written in the notebook as I claimed.

After all of the writing has been done and I start talking about getting the chief of police back up, I am folding the card into quarters along the pre-creased lines, which will allow me to easily palm this card later.

I simply reach push the folded card into my right hand with my right hand and 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 Barb back onstage to applause which is a natural piece of misdirection.

I then have her verify that the FedEx envelope is sealed. I ask her to rip it open using the cord/pull-tab provided. Then I ask her to take the 6 x 9 envelope out. It's at this pin that I casually take the envelope (once she's verified that it's sealed) and ask her to check the little notebook and verify that I've written everything down as I said I did. As she is doing this, I have cut the top of the envelope open, about ¼" of an inch, being careful not to hit the package inside.

I then ditch the scissors, using her reading of the card to innocently put the scissors away and while I set the scissors down, pick up the folded card from my table once again and palm it, using Barb's body as a shield, partially blocking Barb's own sight as well as many people in the audience.

By this time, she's done reading the notebook. I then reach with my right hand, card still palmed, into the 6 x 9 envelope. I stuff the folded card into the stapled package and in one fluid motion, remove the index card that says what "Binky" did yesterday. The reading of this card not only gives me the chance to properly seal the two cards together as Barb reads out loud the index card, but it also builds up the resulting effect, too.

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 cannot physically touch, this little scissors trick easily fixes the problem.

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

Regardless of the presentation, 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.

This routine would also 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.

Suspects Psychological Profile

This effect replaces the Human Phone in my main script. As noted elsewhere, it's a psychometry style routine in which the five suspects each write down the way they would each hypothetically kill a clown. The cards are mixed up and one by one I match each card with its owner.

The routine itself is outlined both in one of the videos as well as in written form in the Alternate Effects booklet.

The working is simple. Each piece of card stock is marked. You hand each card stock to each person in order. You turn your back, they write on the card stock pieces, and gathered. The card stock pieces are then mixed. You take them, give them a tap on the table as though you are making the stack neat and tidy and place them face down in a pile.

The line of suspects must remain in order. Because the pieces are marked, you are then able to match the first four card stock pieces to each person. You tell the group of four that if you matched them correctly, to sit, step forward, whatever you'd like. You then dramatically reveal the details of the fifth card stock piece to the last suspect who is remaining.

How, then, do you know what the details of the fifth card stock piece is, that's still face down on the table?

Simple – as you are tapping the pieces of card stock on the table, you glimpse the bottom card and remember the details! No one ever notices. I also make a point to just vaguely describe what is on the card stock – if you're too on the nose, it comes off like a trick.

Marking the cards can be done many ways. In James Biss' book, *Messing with Minds*, he describes his method of marking as simply using a nail nick – that is, each corner to be marked is 'dog-eared' about a ¼ of an inch. You could also simply clip each corner, use a pencil dot, etc. Something simple.

Because there are five suspects and only 4 corners to mark, what I do is nail nick one corner on one card stock for suspect 1, two corners for suspect 2, and so forth for suspects 3 and 4. The fifth suspect's card has no nail nicks.

As you hand the cards out, it's simply a matter of passing the cards out in order and ensuring the line of five suspects stays in order until they've finished their writing.

Don't let the simplicity of this routine put you off – I've been doing it for years and it always plays great.

As always, if anything is not clear, contact me at crisjohnsoninfo@verizon.net.

Best,

Cris

