



# ALLAN ZOLA KRONZEK

## THINK OF ONE

### EFFECT

The spectator thinks of any card. There are no restrictions. She divides the deck into three sections. The performer first divines the physical location of the card, and then names it. This is shocking, as the thought-of card is never touched, noted or removed from the deck.

### REQUIREMENTS

A complete deck and card box.

### PROCEDURE AND PRESENTATION

The method involves navigating your way through branching paths which differ from performance to performance. For the sake of clarity and completeness I have spelled out each of the possibilities and the way forward. Keep in mind that in performance, the effect appears straightforward and uncomplicated. No setup is required, so you can begin by simply asking the participant to "Think of one."

Have the spectator shuffle the deck to rule out any kind of prearrangement. Then take it back and continue: "I'm going to shuffle the cards so you can see the faces, and I want you to look at the cards as they go by. Some may stand out, some not. It doesn't matter. Just look at them."

Overhand shuffle thirteen cards singly from right hand to left, ignoring your hands and watching the spectator as if this has importance [Photo 1]. When you reach thirteen, glance down briefly, remember that card and shuffle off the remainder of the deck as you return your gaze to the spectator. Square up and place the deck face down in front of the participant. You now have a key card thirteenth from the top, for example, the Ace of Clubs.<sup>1</sup>

"Now, think of one. It can be one that you saw as you watched the cards go by, but it doesn't have to be. Any one of the fifty-two cards will do. Do you have a card in mind?"

"Now it's important that you commit to that card and not change your mind. Here's how. I'm going to turn my back, and if the card you're thinking of is a Three, deal three cards onto the table. For an Ace deal one



card, eleven for a Jack, twelve for a Queen and thirteen for a King. Then take only those cards, put them inside the card box and close it. Let me know when you're done."

As you explain this, demonstrate by dealing three cards onto the table in a single face-down packet. Then deal one card (to represent an Ace). When you're sure the participant understands, replace the demo packet back on top of the deck and turn

your back. Make it clear you are not eavesdropping on the counting process. We'll imagine the spectator thinks of the Five of Hearts. Therefore, she puts five cards into the box. When the task is done, turn back and continue.

"Okay, you're committed. Now I want you to cut off about half the cards, but don't complete the cut. I'm going to try to locate the card you're thinking of."

Watch the cutting procedure and remember which is the top half of the deck.

"By the way, did you LOOK at any of the cards? No? So you have no idea WHERE your card is? It could be in this half of the deck, or this half. Or it could be in the box. And obviously I don't know where it is because I have no idea what card you're thinking of. Only you know that. Are you ready? Think of your card."

Shift your gaze back and forth between the participant and the cards, as if trying to figure something out. Using your hand as a divining rod, pass it over the three possibilities, seeking a signal from below [Photo 2.] Then hover over the card box. Look at the spectator, then back at the box. You are surprised that the selection seems to be in the box, since this is the least likely location because it contains the fewest number of cards. But suddenly you change your mind, point to the top half of the deck



and declare with certainty: *"It's here!"*

Get rid of the bottom half of the deck and the card box by pushing them out of frame.<sup>2</sup> They are no longer important. Ribbon-spread the remaining packet face up, indices toward the participant [Photo 3].



*"Have a look. But don't tell me which one is yours. It IS here, right?"*

Adjust the spread so that all the cards are visible. As you do, spot the key card and, counting it as "one," count the number of cards to the top of the deck. Subtract this number from thirteen to determine the value of the selection. In our example, there will be eight cards from the Ace of Clubs to the top card, indicating that the selection is a Five. If the key card is missing, the selection is a King.

Now for the suit. As the participant scans the spread for her card, do the same and note how many Fives are present—there will be zero, one, two, three or four—and their suits. To give yourself time, adjust the spread with your fingertips "to make sure no cards are hiding under other cards [Photo 4]."



Depending on what the spectator says, and what chance provides, you will immediately know the selection, or you will have to fish.

The spectator says, "Yes," her card is there. Act as if this happens all the time. You said it would be there and it is. (If the card is not there, no problem. You will name it momentarily.) What you do next depends on the situation in front of you.

**If the spread contains one Five:** It must be the selection and you can reveal it in any number of astonishing ways. For example, gracefully glide your hand back and forth above the spread, echoing your earlier movements. You might ask the participant to "Take control of my hand with your mind. Guide me to your card, but only with your thoughts." With appropriate theater, zero in on the card.<sup>3</sup>

**If the spread contains two Fives:** I like to use a fishing strategy by Paul Fox. Gather the spread, fan the cards toward yourself, remove one of the Fives and hold it at your fingertips, face inward. Ask, "Are you thinking of a \_\_\_\_\_ card?"

And here you insert the color or suit of the card you are not holding. For example, if you have a black Five and a red one, remove the red one and ask, "Are you thinking of a black card [Photo 5]?" If the answer is, "No," act relieved and says something like, "Oh, good. For a second I thought I made a mistake. What card ARE you thinking of?" When the spectator replies, dramatically rotate the card face up, revealing that you nailed it.<sup>4</sup>

Alternatively, if the spectator replies, "Yes," she was thinking of a black card, smile brightly and continue by correctly naming the suit, saying, "That's what I thought. And it's a Club." The spectator will naturally assume that the card in your hand is black, and a Club. "But this one's a little too high." Exchange the card for the selection and end as you wish. The same procedure applies when both cards are the same color.<sup>5</sup>

**If the spread contains three Fives:** Gather the cards, and fan the packet toward yourself as you peer into the participant's mind. "I'm getting a \_\_\_\_\_ card." Go with the odds and name whatever color there are two of. If correct, proceed with the Paul Fox strategy. If wrong, you know the selection and can reveal it as you wish.

**If the spread contains four Fives:** Gather up the packet and fish. "I'm getting a \_\_\_\_\_ card." Guess red, and if correct use the Paul Fox ploy. If mistaken, make several true statements about the selection, apparently divining this information from the participant's brain. "It's a number card. It's an odd number. It's a relatively low card." Now remove one of the black Fives and continue with the Paul Fox ploy.



Notice that in the above scenarios, the maximum number of incorrect statements you can make is one. And half the time, everything you say is dead on. Now on to the other set of options.

The spectator says, "No," her card is not there. Act surprised. "Really? Are you sure? I rarely miss."

Spread the cards to make sure none are hiding under others and use the opportunity to gather the necessary information. Remember this information, as you will no longer have visual access to it. Scoop up

the spread and put it off to the side, no longer needed. Your divining rod technique didn't work, you inform the participant, so you will now switch to direct mind reading. Stare into the participant's eyes, ask her to concentrate on her card and get to work. If the spread contained three Fives: The missing Five is the selection. *"I see a red card, a heart, a number card. The Five of Hearts."* Or more directly, *"Wow, you're good at this. The Five of Hearts."*

**If the spread contained two Fives:** If both of the Fives are the same color, you know the selection is of the opposite color. You can either correctly state the color (*"I see a black card"*) and fish for the suit, or, fish for the suit first (*"I see a Club..."*). If correct, name it. If mistaken, continue with a flurry of true statements, ending with the name of the selection (*"It's definitely black, a number card, a low card..."*). If the absent Fives are red/black, guess red, and whatever the response, you know the selection.

**If the spread contained one Five:** Go with the odds and guess the color not in the spread. If correct, fish for the suit and name the selection. If mistaken, you know the selection and can end as you wish.

If the spread contained no Fives: Guess red and, if correct, fish for the suit. If mistaken, make a number of true statements about the card (number card, odd card, low card, etc.) before guessing the suit. This is the worst-case scenario, rarely happens and isn't all that bad. Moreover, you can pretty much negate the wrong guesses by using the Karrel Fox revelation, as follows.

#### The Karrel Fox Revelation

In the above scenarios—when the card is NOT in the spread—it is possible to make two incorrect statements before you know the selection. When this happens, act disappointed, and switch gears entirely.

*"Let's try something different. I want you to SAY the name of your card in your head, over and over. Don't move your lips. Just keep repeating it in your head. Really loudly. The blank of blank, the blank of blank, the FIVE OF HEARTS!"* Naming the value without any fishing comes out of left field and is very strong. And if the spectator has been playing along and silently repeating the name of her card, the revelation feels like mind reading.

## COMMENTS AND CREDITS

Every performer will have his preferred ways of revealing the selection. Acting and attitude are important. The audience should see you doing something in the way of process, even if it's just staring into the participant's eyes, or hearing voices in your head, or lighting up when the message gets through.

This effect is easier to do than this description suggests. When the selection IS in the spread you can delay searching for the relevant cards until the packet is in your hands. This gives you more time to figure things out, should you need it. However, the faster you can assess the situation the better, as you want to avoid the appearance of thinking or studying the spread. When the selection is NOT in the spread, you need to quickly spot and accurately remember which of the correct-value cards is missing (not difficult to do with practice), and then to close the spread and put it off to the side.

John Bannon published a reimagining of "Think of One" (AK-47 from Destination Zero, 2015) in which he credits British mentalist Hector Chadwick with the "commit yourself" gambit. While it seems likely that others have thought of this as well, the wording was useful and I immediately added it to my presentation. John kept the idea of stowing the cards in the box, but then took off in a different direction.

"Think of One" has its methodological roots in Bob Hummer's "The Mindreader's Dream." Hummer's effect used two key cards and a contrived dealing procedure, but got the ball rolling. For a thorough exploration of this principle and its progeny, see Jon Racherbaumer's eBook, *Dreamwork: The Mindreader's Dream*.

1. This method of setting the key card makes psychological sense within the context of the routine. Another option is to count thirteen cards to the table as you demonstrate how the spectator will deal "seven cards for a seven, one for an Ace, five for a five..." Return the dealt cards to the deck, glimpsing the face card as you do, and you're set.

2. The discerning observer surely understands that if the performer knows how many cards are in the box, he will know the value of the selection. That's why, rather than ignoring the box, you first draw attention to it. The spectators are intrigued. Is this the moment the performer will discover how many cards are inside? But just as the audience thinks they have arrived at the crux of the matter, you abruptly get rid of the box, along with half the deck. What seemed central now seems irrelevant. The cards in the box clearly have nothing to do with the method. No one ever thinks about them again. When performing for a group, have the counting and boxing done out of sight, beneath the table or in the participant's lap. The last thing you want is for EVERYONE to know the value of the thought-of card, which would clearly diminish the impact of the effect. And finally, be sure to push the card box to the side, rather than picking it up, lest someone suggest that you can determine the number of cards in the box by weight. Another favorite revelation is to count the card's position from the nearest end. Square up, false shuffle, spread face down and find the card divining-rod style. You can also scoop up the cards, remove the selection and place it face down on the participant's palm. Or reveal the information bit by bit. Often, the strongest revelation—the one that gets the most expressive reaction—is to simply blurt it out. "I'm curious. Why did you think of the Five of Hearts?"

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4. According to psychologists at McGill University and the University of British Columbia, when subjects were asked to think of a card, the bias was in favor of red cards. Thus, when using the Paul Fox strategy, it makes sense to remove the red card from the fan and ask about the black card. The most popular mental selections in the study were the Ace of Spades and the King, Queen and Ace of Hearts. Source: [www.psychologyofmagic.org](http://www.psychologyofmagic.org)

5. You can, of course, leave the spread on the table and ask one fishing question. Regardless of the answer you know the selection.

