

Time Will Tell

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About 10 years ago, I published this routine in my *Second Storm* lecture notes. I recall both Jon Racherbaumer and David Regal taking an immediate liking to it. It's a simple impromptu effect using a deck of cards and a participant's watch. Although it has some restrictions on the exact time you can perform it, the effect plays very well when the time is right.

Effect: Three random and unknown cards are placed face down on the table. The participant places his watch onto any card as the performer turns his head away. The performer holds the watch to his ear to see if "time will tell." The magician verbally reveals the name of the selection. Not only that, all three cards are turned face up to reveal the exact time of day.

Setup: There is a very small set-up that can be casually arranged at a moment's notice. First, you must glimpse the time displayed on a participant's watch. Suppose it is 3:25. Arrange three cards on top of the deck that match what the time will be exactly two minutes from then (3:27). It's an easy matter to cull these cards during conversation. For this example, bring any Three, Two and Seven to the top of the deck (in order from the top down). Memorize the suit of each card; Clubs, Hearts, Spades in this case (photo 1).



Method: Introduce the deck and perform any shuffles that do not disturb the top three cards. Cut the deck and maintain a break between the halves. (photo 2). Say, "We



need three random cards." Perform either a Dribble Force or Riffle Force as you ask the spectator to say stop. Once you reach your break, deal the three force cards face down onto the table from right to left (photo 3).



Say, "We also need a small personal object. Can you please remove your watch? Great. Place your watch on any of the three cards as I turn away." As your participant places his watch on a card, begin turning your head, but secretly note which card the watch is placed on. Since you memorized the cards earlier, you now know the name of the selection. If it is placed on the center card in our example, it would be the Two of Hearts (photo 4).



Divination: With your head turned, ask the participant to peek at the card. When he is done, have him place the watch into your hand. Turn toward the audience and hold the watch to your ear (photo 5). Say, "Have you ever heard the expression 'time will tell'? Just by listening, I might be able to read your mind. My senses tell me you chose the (name the card)?" This is a very strong moment. The use of the participant's watch adds an interesting layer.

Time Kicker: Glance at the watch to make sure it's approaching your target time (3:27); stall or move on accordingly. Hand the watch back and ask your participant to turn over the three cards. Say, "There are rare moments in life where the power of time and space converge. What time do you have?" After he says, 3:27, reply,



"Unbelievable! Somehow, the three cards you stopped at show us the exact moment in time ... 3, 2, 7" (photo 6).

Notes: Instead of dealing three single cards onto the table, you can have your participant deal three small piles and stop whenever he likes. Have him remember the bottom card of the chosen packet. At the end, have all three



packets turned over to show the cards at the face. You might have to allow an extra minute for this variation.

It will not be possible to do this effect at every time of day. Times with a zero, one, 11, or 12 are not ideal. You can try using Aces as "ones" but the final display would not be as clear. •