

Wild BUSINESS

BY ROBERTO GIOBBI

TO THE BEST of my knowledge, the original idea on which “Wild Business” is based goes back to the wonderful Dutch magician Flip Hallema. A variation of his idea was published by Jon Racherbaumer in his magazine *Kabbala* (Vol.3, No.3, 1976) which is where I got the inspiration for the present routine. A similar version appeared decades later in Racherbaumer’s *The Wild Card Kit* as “Hand-Out Wild Card” (1992).

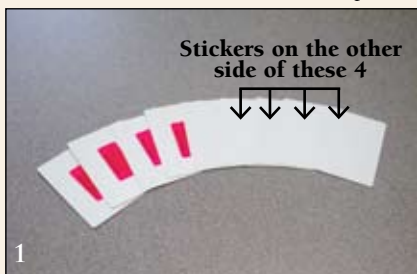
Effect: Nine cards are shown to be blank on both sides. An address sticker (taken from a sheet of labels) is placed on one of these cards. Following the plot of “Wild Card,” a sticker appears on each one of the cards shown empty just seconds before—all the cards are thus transformed into the performer’s business cards, which he hands out. As an additional effect, the unused labels have vanished from the sheet.

Requirements: Nine poker size cards which are blank on both sides.

About a dozen adhesive address labels which usually come on a sheet or a strip. These can be obtained in almost every stationary store.

A small Himer Wallet which is slightly larger than the playing cards it contains.

Preparation: Cut off two strips with about 12 stickers each. From one strip remove all stickers except two. Place one sticker in the middle of each of eight blank cards; one card remains blank on both sides. Set the cards as in photo 1: from top to bottom—four cards sticker side downward, double blank card, four cards sticker upward.



This set-up is symmetrical, so it is easy to remember and it doesn’t matter which way the packet is held.

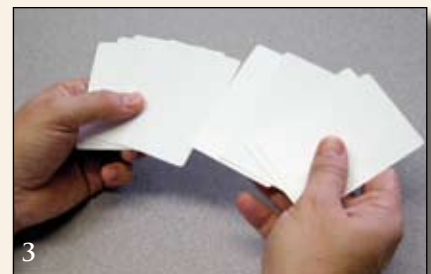
Place this nine card packet into the Himer Wallet. Fold the strips and place one on each side of the wallet. Mark a visible sticker of the full strip in order to identify the proper side of the wallet—we will call this side 1. In my opinion this is better than marking the outside of the wallet. In case the wallet is opened on the wrong side simply close it, make some further introductory remarks and casually open it on the other side. The open Himer Wallet in photo 2 shows the set-up.



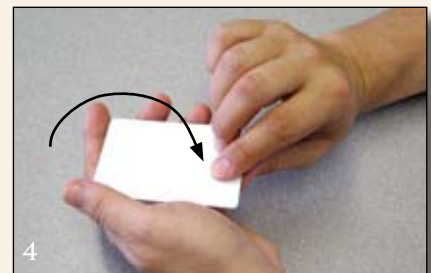
Method and Presentation: This introductory text is used as a prologue. “Have you ever been in the situation where somebody asked for your business card and you had forgotten them or just handed out the last one? Well, I have found an elegant solution to that problem. I have invented what is perhaps the most efficient way to produce my own business cards.” Open the Himer Wallet on side 1, remove the nine-card packet, and hold it in left-hand dealing position. The right hand places the still open wallet on the table to your right.

The four top cards are spread into the right hand without altering their order. The handling should be open and deliberate to give the impression that all cards could be shown while just showing the “faces” of the top five—due to the nature of the cards, the five-card packet in the left hand can be

slightly spread (photo 3): “Of course being the business cards of a magician, they are magic business cards. They are white on one side ...” Square



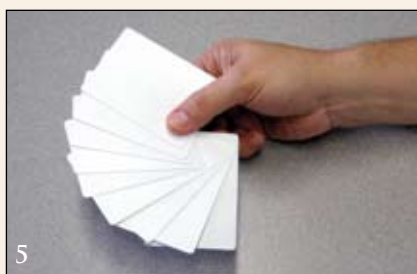
the cards without changing their order and slowly turn the packet end over end (photo 4) as you continue, “... and on the other side they are completely unprinted.”



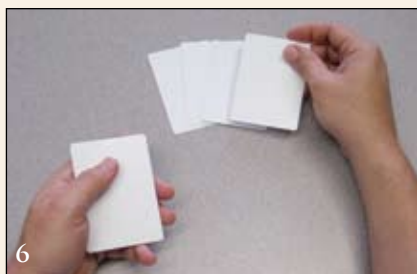
Using the same handling as before, spread the top four cards into the right hand and place them back onto the five cards remaining in the left hand in an unsquared condition. By turning the hand back and forth at the wrist, the cards are casually shown blank on both sides. In the patter I never use the word “blank” as this is a technical term used by us magicians and might therefore suggest special cards—the condition of the cards is referred to as “white” and “unprinted.” Turning the packet end over end rather than flipping it over sideways takes a little longer and makes the turnover of the packet clearer, even magicians won’t think you are using a “move” to show both sides blank. This is the all important initial situation that Ascanio always emphasized

in his lectures and it is important to make it crystal-clear to every spectator. When the stickers later appear on the faces of the cards, the effect will only be as strong as the conviction established now that the cards are blank on both sides.

Casually (as opposed to meticulously) fan the nine cards, not too much, not too little, making sure the stickers don't flash. Hold the fan in the right hand and show it on both sides (photo 5 and 5A) as you ask a spectator, "Which side do you prefer, the white side or the completely unprinted side?" This phrase becomes a running



gag anchoring the condition of the cards and helps the spectators to convince themselves more deeply each time that both sides of the cards are shown blank. Whatever side is chosen, turn the packet over so that the named side is on top, then place the top four cards in an overlapping row on the table (photo 6) as you say,

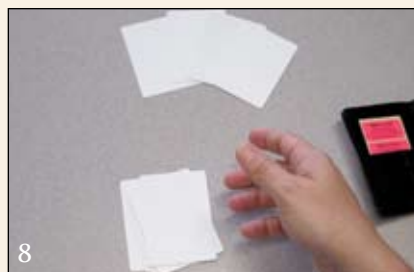


"Good. That's the better side anyway." Of course your audience might find this comment amusing since it obviously doesn't matter which side is used, a thought which hammers in the false reality.

Immediately flip over the remaining five cards in the left hand, saying, "Of course it doesn't matter. The cards are as white on this side, as they are completely unprinted on the other side." Push (don't spread) the cards into the right hand one at a time without reversing their order (photo 7) and



turn this hand a few times at the wrist. This shows both sides of the unsquared packet to be apparently blank. Performed with precise carelessness (possible only if you have Latin blood and were born in Switzerland) this fools even cognoscenti. Casually move the bottom double blank card to the top. All of this must not look as if you wanted to prove anything, but should merely be interpreted as gestures accompanying the text. Place these five cards unsquared on the table (photo 8).



Take the full strip of stickers from the wallet which is still open on the table. Ask a spectator to choose one sticker, "Each one is a unique piece, as you can see. Which one do you prefer? This one? You're right, this is the best one." Obviously all stickers are the same and people can see this, so the patter will amuse the audience but at the same time lock the fact in their memories that the strip was filled with similar stickers. Remembering this condition is obviously important, since the final vanish will be merely as good as their conviction that the strip was full in the first place.

Remove this sticker from the strip, asking the spectator whether he really wouldn't prefer a different one. Then pick up the top

card of the five-card tabled packet—this will be the card which is blank on both sides—and place this sticker in the middle of one side which you allow the spectator to choose (photo 9), saying, "... on the white,

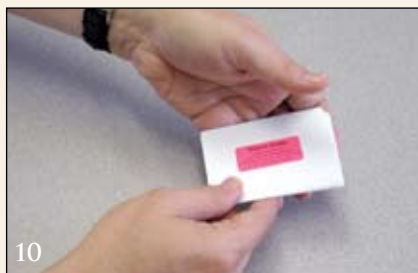


or on the completely unprinted side? You're right, this side is much better ... because of the contrast." Thanks to the repeated use of this line, the previously anchored condition of the cards will pop up in the audience's minds and help them to further convince themselves that the cards are completely white. Replace the card, with the sticker showing, on top of the unsquared pile. The strip with the remaining stickers is replaced into the wallet, which is closed as soon as attention is brought back to the tabled cards. This minute delay will make it harder for any spectator to remember which way the wallet was closed, an important detail, like all details of course, because you will be opening the wallet on the other side shortly.

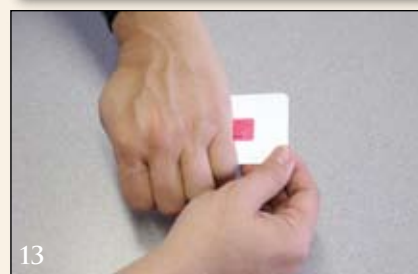
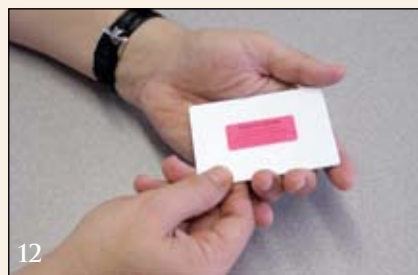
Pick up the packet and hold it in left hand dealing position—the top card shows a sticker, the remaining four cards are sticker side downward and the audience believes them to be blank.

Say, "If I place this card on top of this packet ...," and using Dai Vernon's "Through the Fist Flourish," push the packet through your left fist without changing its orientation; lay it on the fingers of the left hand, turn the hand palm down over it, and push it through the fist (photos 10 and 11). Continue, "... and push it through my fist in this manner, you know what happens?" Spread the cards widely, showing that nothing has happened, then square them again, "Nothing—absolutely nothing has happened."

Using the moment of humorous relaxation created by this "miss," repeat Dai Vernon's "Through the Fist Flourish," but this time secretly turn over the packet; lay it on the palm of the left hand, turn



the hand over, and push it through the fist (photos 12 and 13). Due to the fact



that the top card looks the same, nothing has apparently happened. Ascanio would have called this an “action of apparent continuity;” here it is more of a situation that extends a false assumption just long enough for even the intelligent spectator not to connect the real cause with the following effect, which is thus delayed. Snap the fingers, saying that more authority is necessary, making this the seeming cause of the effect, and reverse count the cards into the left hand one by one, showing that a sticker has now appeared on every card except the last one—this is the first effect.

During the count, obtain a break beneath

the second card from the top. Turn the top two cards over as one, showing the top card to apparently be blank on both sides and say, “All cards have a sticker, except this one. This is still white on one side and completely unprinted on the other side.” Again, these words remind the spectators of the original blank condition of the cards and make the effect stronger. As a general principle it is often a good idea to wait a few seconds when the effect has been achieved, then briefly recall the initial situation. (So, after changing a copper coin into a silver, you could say, “Wow—that was a penny just a few seconds ago, right?”)

Place the four “printed” cards on the table so that their condition is clearly visible (photo 14). The single card, apparently still blank, is used as a “magic wand”



to flip over (toward the audience) the four cards initially tabled in an overlapping row (photo 15)—a sticker has appeared on each one; this is the second effect! Stop the applause before it subsides to keep the curve of interest at its peak. And continue with the next step.



Say, “Only this card is still white on one side and unprinted on the other side. But it doesn’t matter ... if I do this ... it also gets a sticker.” By using Jerry Andrus’s spectacular flourish “The Twirl” (*Andrus Deals You In*, 1956) show that the last card has now also a sticker on it. A description of my handling of Mr. Andrus’s beautiful flourish is in *Card College 4*, chapter 54, which

is entirely dedicated to unusual flourishes. Alternatively, and to keep the Gestalt of the previous handling, you can push the card twice through your fist, apparently showing both sides blank, on the third push turn the card over, which brings the sticker side into view and creates the effect. This looks quite magical.

After a short pause introduce the epilogue: open the Himber Wallet to side 2—two stickers are still showing as before when you closed it. It took me quite a while to understand why it is better to leave two stickers on the strip and delay the vanish of the stickers to outside of the wallet, rather than opening the wallet and immediately showing the empty strip. This is to avoid the effect that the stickers vanishing takes place inside the wallet, which would make the wallet the cause of the effect and therefore draw all the attention to this gimmicked prop. The correct way to do it, I think, is this: Take out the strip, hold it in front of your body and unfold it completely—only now and here does the effect take place—showing that all stickers except two have vanished (photo 16), proving that the law of material compensation, which you have invented, has been respected (fourth effect and finale).



Lest I forget ...

Complete deception and therefore complete surprise at the moment of the effect can only be attained if the audience is convinced that all the cards were blank on both sides to begin with. In order to obtain this result, careful attention must be given to the choice of words and idea construction as well as to the carefree and open handling. Words and handling are bearers of verbal and non-verbal communication and ideally complement, not contradict, each other.

Again, remember not to speak of “blank cards,” but use language familiar to laypeople, such as “white,” “unprinted,” “empty

cards,” or anything else that makes sense to a layperson.

This effect could be performed with normal blank business cards made of cardboard stock. For ease of handling, however, I advise using blank cards manufactured by playing card companies. Using poker size cards will allow for more tolerance in the displays since the white area is larger than with bridge size cards.

Although this effect uses playing cards,

curiously it will not be perceived as a card trick by the spectators. This may be an advantage in the opinion of some of my readers.

The “Wild Card Theme” is used in a most logical way compared to most other presentations. All props are together in one wallet and it makes sense to carry them in such a way and place. This is another advantage compared to most so-called packet tricks.

All cards can be examined at the end.

Personally, I don’t advise demonstrating this because your attitude may provoke a challenge situation and challenge is not magic as the great Dai Vernon used to say. However, the cards can be handed out as business cards, prolonging the effect in time for the assisting spectators. The line I use is: “If you have any questions you can give me a call any-time—please send an e-mail after 2 a.m.”

(This effect can be seen on the DVD *Roberto Giobbi—Taped Live! At the 7th British Close-up Magic Symposium*).•

A TECHNIQUE FOR MORE CREATIVITY IN MAGIC

Mind Mapping

BY ROBERTO GIOBBI

IN THE COURSE of one of my lectures I ask who thinks he’s creative and, not surprisingly, few raise their hands. The reason is that many confuse the ability to be creative with the ability to invent things—they are not the same. Every good musician is creative: take a classical concert pianist who is playing Beethoven—he has neither thought up the composition nor has he changed or adapted it, but he interprets the piece creatively and thus becomes a creative performer. The same holds true for a typical actor or an opera singer.

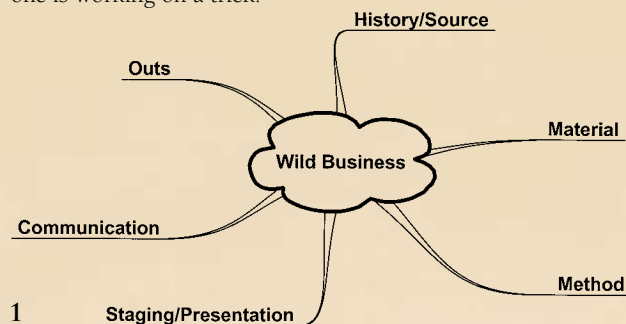
In magic there are few inventors, the rest of us have to put up with being a fine interpreting performer, although admittedly with more artistic freedom to adapt an original idea than a concert pianist. But how do you become a fine creative performer? This is an important question. And as is usually the case with important questions, there are different answers.

In this essay I would like to offer one possible answer to this question in form of a method which has been very useful for me, a creative model for everybody who thinks he or she is not (yet) creative. It goes back to the Englishman Tony Buzan, who hasn’t invented the principle on which it is based either, but who has considerably refined the technique and made it popular through his many seminars and writings. (The original method can be found in: Buzan, Tony, *Use Both Sides of Your Brain*, E. P. Dutton, New York 1985. Meanwhile you’ll find numerous works dedicated to the method and its many applications. For a concise but very practical booklet I recommend: Gelb, Michael, *Present Yourself!* Or see one of the latest editions with additional ideas, such as: Buzan, Tony & Barry, *The Mindmap Book*.) The method has been known in the past decades under the name of “Mind Mapping,” but only few in magic seem to have used it actively and regularly for their

work. I started talking about it in my seminars and lectures in the late 1980s, specifically in connection with a trick I call “Wild Business,” which is explained this month in *Genii*.

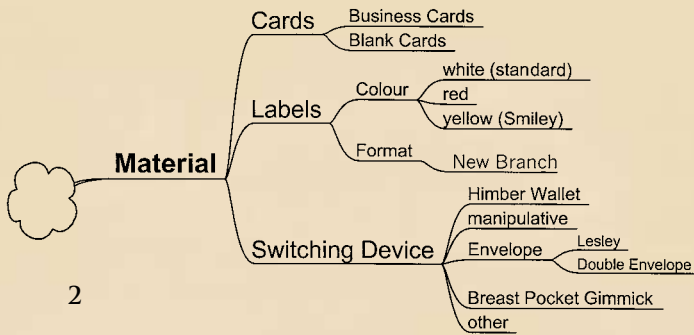
After many years in magic I would say that the *study of magic* can be reduced to one sentence: recognize problems and find elegant solutions to them. I would like to explain how I have done this with the trick “Wild Business,” and in the process you will understand and learn the technique of “Mind Mapping.” If you read the description of “Wild Business” here, or watch its performance on my DVD *Taped Live!*, you’ll find it easier to follow, but it is not necessary.

In figure 1 you can see the title of the project in the center and each main branch that leaves it defines a major category of a problem that seeks a solution. Most of the categories in “Wild Nudist” are basic problems that will apply to many other tricks, the starting situation almost always being similar, at least when one is working on a trick.



The next step consists of working on each problem area (branch) individually by dividing it into possible sub-branches

attached to the main branch. In figure 2 I have taken the main branch “Material,” which is a problem area that has to be dealt



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with in practically every trick. In “Wild Business” the materials used will be cards, stickers, and some sort of switching device for the stickers. Let’s look at the sub-branch “Switching Device.” In the manner of a brainstorm, I have listed various possibilities, one sub-sub-branch for each—a little later, when all ideas have been gathered, we will make a decision to which of these possibilities we are actually going to use, but not yet. Some branches, such as “envelopes,” may themselves offer further possibilities, each written on a sub-branch of its own and one of which might eventually be chosen or not.

The search continues: by coming up with original ideas, by talking about the idea with friends, or by researching books, magazines, films, lecture notes and any other possible source, you find new ideas. Each time you hit on a useful idea, you either add it to an existing branch or create a new branch. You already get the idea that so-called creativity is also a question of working hard, sometimes it is equally important or even more important than what we call “talent.” I feel that Edison was quite right when he said: “Genius is 1 percent inspiration and 99 percent perspiration.” Obviously it gets scary when genius, hard work, and passion all come together in a focused effort, as with masters like Dai Vernon or Juan Tamariz, but that’s another story. In the meantime, we should find comfort in what Picasso once said when he compared genius to talent: “The poor have to work.”

Figure 3 shows the almost completed Mind Map. It contains practically all the results of the research and creative work for the trick with the exception of “Disaster Script” in the branch “Outs” as well as “Script” in the branch “Staging/Script”—I’ll leave these as possible subjects for future essays.

On one hand this affords an excellent overview of the surface and deep structure of the trick or any subject treated. On the other hand it allows for making decisions at this point which can obviously be changed at any time in case it is found out that they don’t work as well as assumed. With mind mapping this is no problem at all, because you now use one of the other solutions you’ve already come up with, or you add a completely new solution to the map. In my example, the solutions for which I have

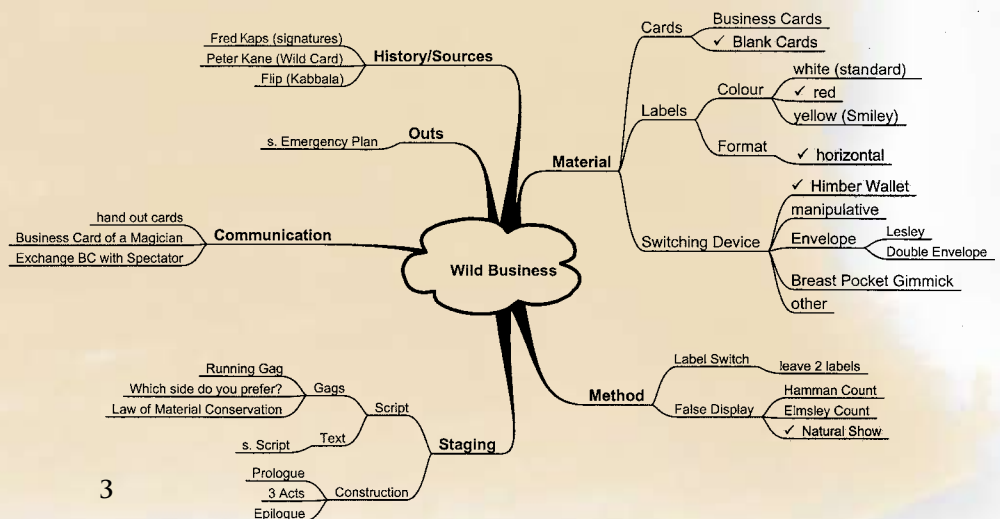
opted are ticked off and highlighted—on paper and in certain software you can do this in color. Due to the possibility of connecting various branches, you can see that the choice of a Himber Wallet automatically solves the problem of where to store the cards and the stickers, a welcome bonus. The method and staging of the trick has thus become the result of personal reflection and individual decisions—and isn’t this precisely the necessary first step, the plan, to creative interpretation in the conception and performance of the trick?

Among other things you will recognize that mind mapping is not a linear hierarchical method as it is often seen in scientific papers (1., 2., 3., then 1.1, 1.2, then 1.1.1., 1.1.2. etc.) but that it reflects more of a chaotic procedure in the best sense of this term. You can add at any time a main or secondary branch as well as connect various branches with each other without losing clarity and overview. Especially if you write by hand, Mind Maps are in my opinion and experience superior to the standard structured hierarchical, chronological lists.

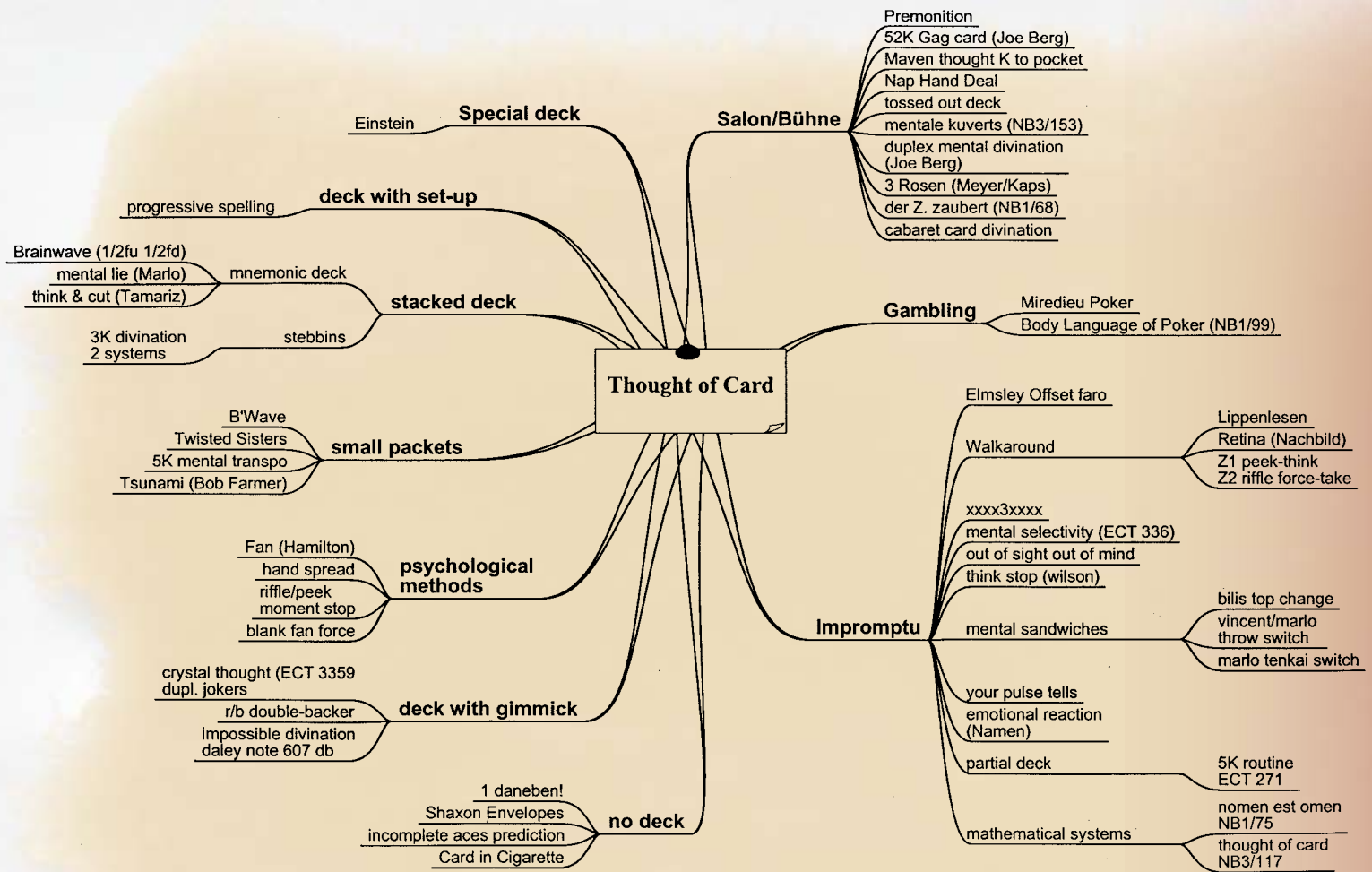
In order to increase and above all to individually adapt the playful aspect of this method, you may add colors and symbols at any point. This makes everything very personal and pleasant without sacrificing clarity and overview.

Personally I do all my mind maps by hand on paper that is letter-size or even double that. For large projects that may take several months, I’ll use A1 format which is the size of the sheets used on flip charts (about eight times the size of a normal letter-sized sheet). And remember that a mind map is something very personal that nobody else needs to see nor to understand except you, so you can and should do them any way you like. When I use mind maps in a lecture situation and I want to show them via overhead projector or Power Point and a beamer, as I did on my DVD *Roberto Giobbi Taped Live! At the 7th British Close-Up Magic Symposium*, as well as in publications such as this essay, I will use a software like Mind Manager—the illustrations of this essay have been done with it (see www.mindmanager.com).

In this essay Mind Mapping has been used to find a personal interpretation for an effect like “Wild Card.” It can, however, be used to structure historical research on a certain topic, to prepare



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a talk, to organize a meeting, to solve a sub-category of problem within a specific effect (e.g., “Communication in Cards Across,” “Staging of Ambitious Card,” etc.) or almost any other large or small subject. I hasten to add that although Mind Maps are versatile and flexible, in some occasions they won’t work, or not so well—you’ll find out for yourselves. Still, I find it amazing what I have been able to do with such a structurally simple technique.

To close I would like to add that I have conceived all my *Card College* books using Mind Mapping. For volumes 1 and 2 and 3

and 4 respectively, it took me about half a year of almost daily work to arrange all the chapters, techniques, tricks, principles, and theories into a Mind Map, there being hundreds of branches and names in each map. But then the book was practically done—it only took me about 3,000 hours to write, to reread the texts several times, to pose for the illustrations and to make the layout, which was pure diligence—the essential creative work of structuring the chapters and defining their content had already been solved with the Mind Map. •

DALEY’S VARIATION OF JACK MERLIN’S

Gambler’s Exposé

ROUTINE

AS INTERPRETED BY ROBERTO GIOBBI

NOTEBOOKS are a literary genre and there are some really worthwhile publications, such as *A Writer’s Notebook* by W. Somerset Maugham or the *Sudelbücher*

(Waste Books) by Georg Christoph Lichtenberg (a favorite of Juan Tamariz). In magic, published notebooks are rather scarce, although many of us will have per-

sonal ones. One of the classic notebooks, still obtainable if you search a little, are *Dr. Daley’s Notebooks*, edited by Frank Csuri and originally published by the Gutenberg