

The Twelve Card Thought Transposition



This is the second trick I saw Edward perform, and I have described the effect it had upon us at Northampton in the Introduction. Edward probably spent more time teaching me this routine than any other, and as I have mentioned, I demonstrated it during my Hoffmann Memorial Lecture to The Magic Circle on 14 December 1951, as a tribute to Edward's memory. The presentation I used was one that gradually developed as Edward and I discussed the trick face-to-face and in correspondence, and I can say that he approved of what follows.

I shall quote *verbatim* from the Lecture, and it is a pleasure to recall that my two assistants were His Honour Ernest Wethered and Peter Warlock, both Honorary Vice-Presidents of the Magic Circle.

[To Ernest Wethered]: Will you take out twelve cards from the pack, please, Ernest. I suggest that you choose inconspicuous spot cards like sixes, sevens, eights, and nines. It has been suggested that the only conceivable solution of what is to follow is that I rely upon certain prominent cards such as the Queen of Hearts and the Ace of Spades being mentally chosen, so if we use twelve very ordinary spot cards such a possibility will be out of the question. I do not want to see the faces, but I would like to know that there are exactly twelve cards: 1-2-3-4-5-6-7-8-9-10-11, and 12. You are only just right!

Now, as I show you the cards one by one, please think of any card you wish. I shall only show you about half the cards so you must make up your mind fairly quickly. One ... Two ... Three ... Four ... Five ... Have you thought of one yet? ... Six. Good. These six cards containing the one of which you are thinking, go into your tumbler and your keeping. [To Peter Warlock]: The rest of the cards ... one, two, three, four, five, and six go into your tumbler, Peter.

[To Ernest Wethered]: I want you, Ernest, to imagine that it lies within your power to cause the card of which you are thinking, and the identity of which

nobody else can possibly know, to leave your tumbler and travel invisibly to this one. I know it seems impossible, but try nevertheless ... wish it to happen. It could, I suppose, be called wishful thinking. Did you feel anything? No? May I see if it has gone? One, two, three, four, five, six. No, not yet I am afraid. Try again ... wish really hard. I only wish I could help you more adequately. Take the pack in your right hand and let me hold your left hand. Now you alone know the card, so you must wish it to go, and I will wish your wish to come true.

[*To Ernest Wethered*]: Will you give me the cards one by one, please, Ernest. One ... Two ... Three ... Four ... Five ... oh! One has gone, then? [*To Peter Warlock*]: Will you, Peter, please count yours. Seven? So one card has in fact gone across. But is it the correct card? [*To Ernest Wethered*]: You merely thought of a card ... Will you tell us for the first time what it was? The Eight of Clubs? And it is not amongst these five cards? [*Lecturer names cards.*] [*To Peter Warlock*]: Will you call out the names of your cards? The Eight of Clubs? Will you hold it up so that all may see that the thought-of card has passed from tumbler to tumbler? Thank you.

Edward sent me the working details of the routine in his letter of 13 January 1946:

In my Twelve Card Trick there are three sleight-of-hand processes used — the change of one packet of five cards for another and two kinds of false-count, one to count five cards as six and the other to count seven cards as six. With regard to the change I found that my initial difficulty lay in retaining the five cards passed back into the right hand, as I took the others away. That is why I worked out the holds I now use.

Invite a spectator to remove twelve inconspicuous cards from the pack, say sixes, sevens, eights, and nines all mixed up. Avoid picture cards unless you use all the picture cards, which is quite a good idea. Take the cards in the right hand in a face-down packet in the dealing position, and as the cards are squared up form a break above the bottom two cards.

The cards are held in the right hand, perhaps a little higher up in the hand than in the more usual dealing position. The bottom edges of the cards rest on the little finger, whilst the first finger holds the break between the tenth and eleventh cards. As each card is taken in the left hand to show to the spectator who has been invited to think of one, the growing loosely squared packet in the left hand is raised up to the eye level as each new face card is shewn. Five cards are shewn in this way, and counted aloud as "One ...

Two ... Three ... Four ... Five", and then (as the crucial move about to be described is made) "Have you thought of one yet? ... Six". The spectator always thinks of his card before the sixth is shown to him, because he has been told that he will only be shown "about half the cards", coupled with a warning that you would like him to make his mind up fairly quickly.

As you say "Have you thought of one yet?" the left hand holding the five cards comes down to the right hand, apparently to take yet another card on to the face of the roughly squared packet. With a movement like the top-change, however, the five cards in the left hand are exchanged for the five cards in the right hand above the break. The two cards below the break remain in the right hand. The move is made by pushing the five cards held between the first finger and thumb of the left hand on to the right little finger. The right thumb grips these cards between itself and the right little finger, while the left first and second fingers seize and carry away the other five cards in place of those deposited in the right hand (see photo).



I can on most occasions manage the change quite effectively without these holds, but on the hundredth time I bungle it, which is why I worked out this method. The cards are held quite securely in this position, and cannot be dragged out accidentally as the change of the two packets of five cards is made. There is a slight natural movement by the right hand each time a card is taken, which causes the five cards to move forward a little, bit by bit, which helps to prepare for the change. The support of the little finger under the cards also enables them to be held in an almost vertical position, which in itself hides the actual change. The move is very deceptive, for the audience see exactly what they would have seen if a sixth card had actually been taken as an addition to those already in the left hand. The face card of

the packet in the left hand changes, and the face of the bottom card of those remaining in the right hand (the lower of the two cards below the break) remains unchanged.

Once the change has been made the six cards apparently containing the thought-of card (really five cards not containing the mentally selected card) are dropped into a glass tumbler which a spectator holds. The remaining seven cards, which contain the thought-of card, are false-counted as six and dropped into a second tumbler in charge of another spectator. The trick is now accomplished although from the point of view of the audience it has only just begun.

In the second series of false-counts to show that there are still six cards in each tumbler, due to the spectator's initial failure to think hard enough (?), it is of the greatest importance that the cards are handled delicately, showing beyond all doubt that the hands are empty and that no secret move can possibly take place.



The last paragraph of the verbal presentation makes clear, I think, the highly effective way in which Edward showed that a card had vanished from the first packet, by inviting the spectator to hand him the cards one by one, the performer counting aloud up to five as he receives them. This dramatic disappearance is the first magical climax. The second, emphasized by the routine and presentation, is the discovery that the other tumbler contains seven cards. The third and final climax is the admission by the spectator that the card that has moved across in this incredible way is indeed the card of which he merely thought.