

HEART OF THE CITY

We begin with a card trick. Basically, a signed card appears inside a genuinely sealed envelope that was on the table before the trick began. This remarkable feat requires no palming, special cards, apparatus, or difficult moves — just subtlety.

The routining here is a little indirect, detouring before it proceeds to the *denouement*. While this is necessary to the trick's construction (the idea is to lead the spectator down a garden path of sorts), the climax is reasonably consistent with the supposed premise. However, some attention to the structure of the presentation is required. Here, as in all of my magic, I wanted to retain the element of surprise. I was not after the mundane surprise of some "impossible" feat, but the Twilight Zone surprise of both something impossible and *unexpected*.

WHAT

A card is selected, signed, and lost in the deck. Confirming that the spectator has an unusually high degree of intuitive power, the performer announces that he will conduct two tests: a test of his own, and then of the spectator's, intuitive powers.

To test his own intuitive powers, the performer calls attention to three cards he has previously removed from the deck. The spectator then cuts to a random card. It proves to be the Queen of Spades. The performer apparently correctly intuited which card the spectator would cut to: the three prediction cards are the three other Queens!

The spectator is given a much harder test of her intuitive abilities. The performer displays a genuinely sealed envelope, opens it and shakes a single card from it. The spectator is challenged to intuit the card's identity. The performer gives her a few clues: The envelope was genuinely sealed and on display before the trick began. This is a magic trick, and he is a magician. The spectator had selected and signed a card. . . .

The spectator is led to the inevitable conclusion that, impossible as it may seem, the card is the signed, selected card. And so it is!

SMOKE

HOW

While this routine can be done completely impromptu, the deluxe version requires some simple preparation. Before performing it, seal the Queen of Hearts inside a normal opaque letter envelope. That's all.

Beginning. Place the envelope ostentatiously on the table and begin your act. You can precede this routine with any number of effects, as long as they do not use the Queen of Hearts. To perform "Heart of the City," spread through the deck and transfer the remaining three Queens to the top. Do not let your audience see the cards' faces. Arrange the Queens in this order from the top down: Clubs, Diamonds, Spades. Turn the deck face down and spread off three cards. Take the three-card spread from above with your right hand and square it against the deck. As you do this, unload the lower card (Queen of Spades) on top of the deck. Place the two (apparently three) card packet on the table.

Shuffle the Queen of Spades to the bottom of the deck. Have a card selected and signed. You now must control the selected card to the second-from-the-top position and the Queen of Spades to the top. I use the highly effective Hindu (or Jinx) Shuffle Control, which follows.

With your right hand, take the deck by the rear narrow end and raise it to your left fingertips. With your left thumb, pull the left edge of the bottom card down slightly and, with your right thumb, get a break above it. Now begin pulling small packets of cards off the top of the deck and into your left hand. This is the usual Hindu Shuffle. Have your spectator stop you sometime during the shuffle. When she does, have her replace her selected card on top of the left-hand cards.

Now, you apparently finish the shuffle onto her selected card. However, on the first "take" of the shuffle, steal a small packet of cards off the top of the left-hand section onto the bottom of the right-hand section. You don't need to hold a break because you already have one above the Queen of Spades. Now, continue to shuffle until you reach the break, then toss the last packet on top. The Queen is the top card and the selected card is directly under it.

Now the fun begins:

"Raquel, do you believe in coincidences? Neither do I. [or, 'So do I.'] Isn't that a coincidence?"

"Do you believe in ESP? I knew you were going to say that. What about intuition? Do you believe in intuition? I had a feeling you did [or 'didn't']."

"I'm thinking of a number between one and ten. What number do you think I'm thinking of? Right! Your intuition is pretty good. Probably even better than mine."

"Raquel, tell you what I'm going to do. I am going to conduct two tests. A test of my intuition and a test of your intuition."

The First Test. Place the deck in front of the spectator and give her the following instructions.

MIRRORS

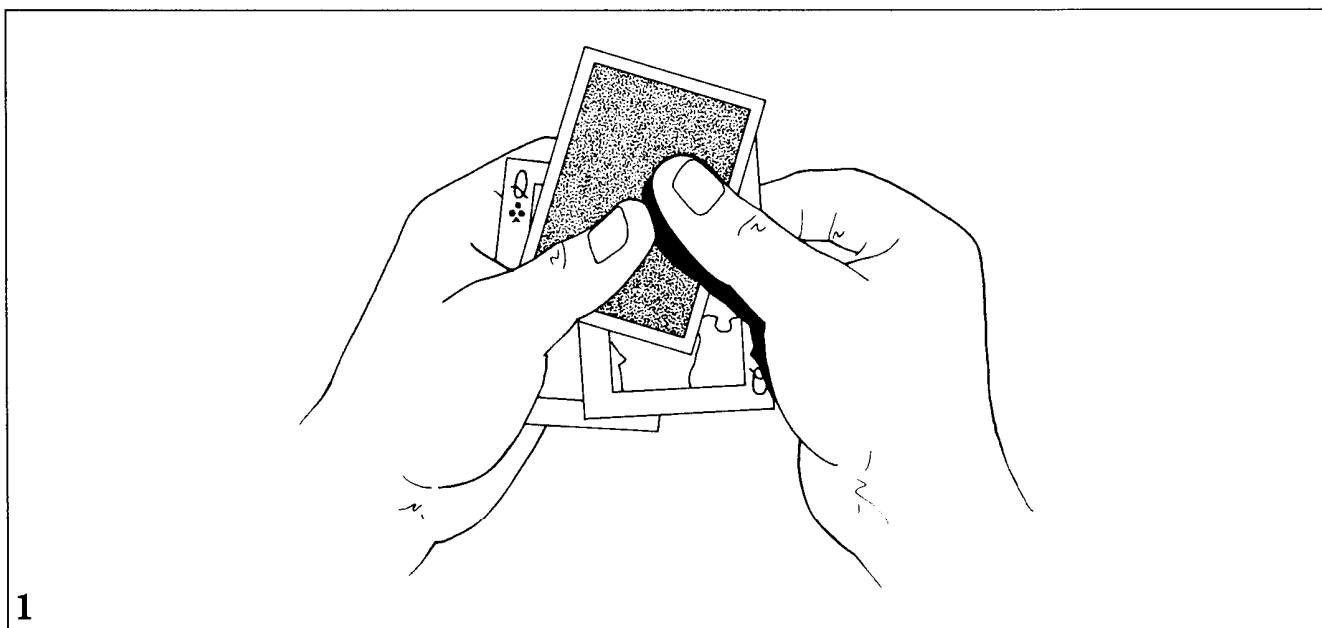
"Raquel, I'd like you to cut off less than half the cards. That's good. Now turn the whole packet face up . . . and put them back on the deck. Okay. Now cut off more than half, turn them over — good — and put them back on the deck."

This is, of course, Ed Balducci's Cut Deeper Force. Pick up the deck and spread through the face-up cards until you reach the face-down cards. Call attention to the first face-down card as the card the spectator supposedly cut to. Remove the face-up cards and place them face down on the table. Keep the face-down cards slightly spread.

Now cleanly turn over the first face-down card. It is the Queen of Spades. Square the spread into left-hand dealing position. As you do, get a left pinky break below the second card from the top (the selected card). With your right hand, from above, lift the face-up Queen of Spades and the face-down selected card as one. Drop them onto your prediction packet. Place the left-hand cards onto the tabled others and set the deck aside.

Pick up the prediction packet and spread it, showing a face-up Queen of Spades and three face-down cards. Square the cards back into a packet. You will now show the packet as consisting of all four Queens via my Discrepancy City Display (from *Impossibilia*).

"It's more than a coincidence that you cut to the Queen of Spades, because my three predictions are . . . the other three Queens and you cut to the only possible card that would match."



Turn the packet over, grasp it by its right side, and give it an Elmsley Count into your left hand. (See the notes on this right-to-left hand handling of the Elmsley Count.) Three Queens and one face-down card will show. Outjog the face-down card as you come to it on the third beat of the count. (See Figure 1.)

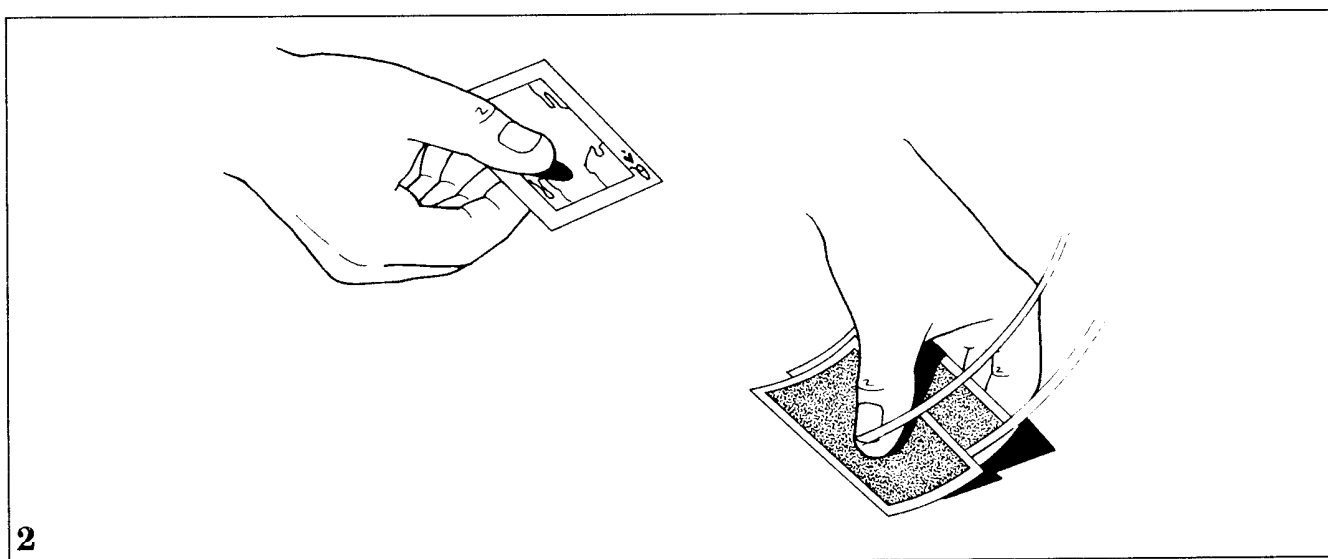
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In a continuing action (coinciding with the words, "*only possible card*"), grasp the outer right corner of the outjogged card with your right thumb on top and forefinger underneath. Remove the card and turn it face up. It will be the Queen of Spades. Flick the outer left corner with your left thumb. Place the Queen, face up, back on top of the packet.

This display, though discrepant, is *very* convincing. The face-down card commands some visual attention and the immediate display of its face takes the heat off the Queen that is seen twice. This effect should get a strong reaction.

The Second Test. As you acknowledge the success of the first test and start to explain the second, casually drop the Queen packet face down on the table and spread it from left to right. If you have been following along, you know that the fourth card of the Queen packet, the one on top, is the signed, selected card. However, due to the circumstances of the routine and the Discrepancy City Display, your audience should have no doubt that the packet contains all four, and *only* all four, Queens.

(If you like, you can display the Queens one more time, using Marlo's Oloram Subtlety, as you place them on the table. If you do, the selected card will be the *bottom* card of the spread. The mechanics and the handedness of the upcoming switch will change slightly, but you'll be able to figure it out.)



Pick up the envelope and show that it is genuinely sealed. Tear off one end and tip the card out face down onto the table.

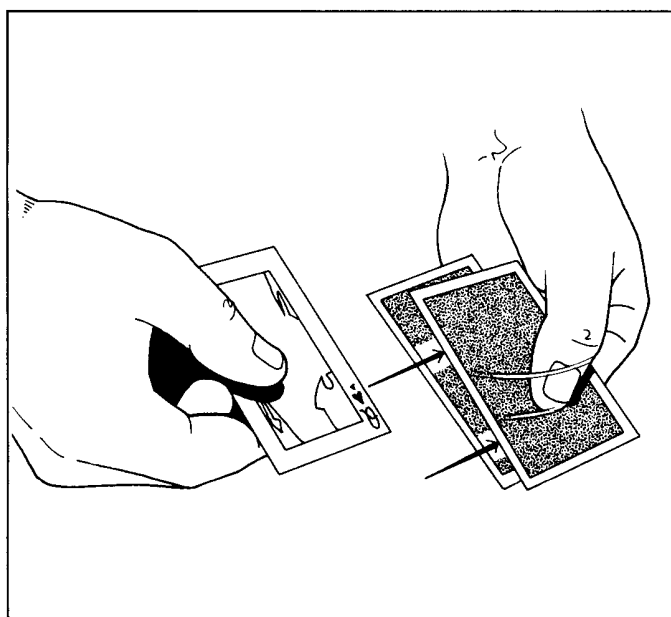
"I hold in my hand a sealed envelope. Inside this envelope is a single playing card. I put the card in there so long ago, I don't even remember what card it is. No one knows the identity of this card."

Because of the nature of the routine so far, your spectators will think the card is part of the test. They will not associate it with the signed card at all — at least not yet.

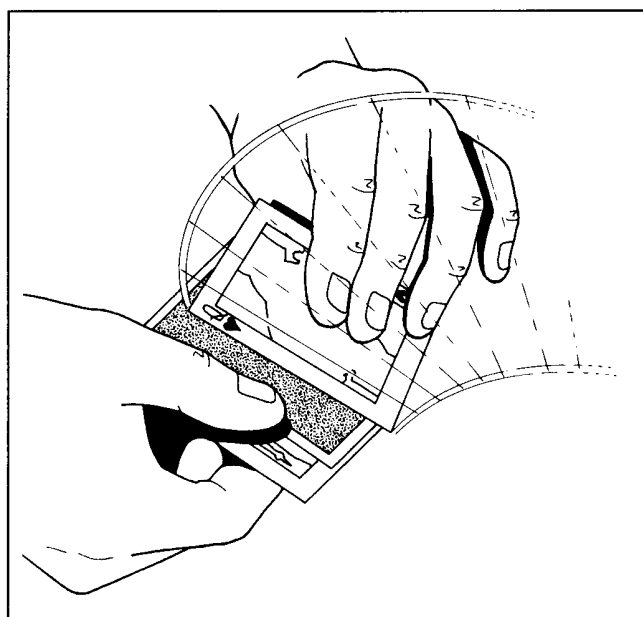
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"Raquel, since this test is so difficult, I want you to combine your intuition with that of the four Queens. . . ."

As you speak, do the following switch: With your right hand, pick up the top card of the Queen packet by its right side with your thumb on top, fingers below. Similarly, with your left hand, pick up the second card along its left side. Flip the left-hand card face up and exchange it with the face-down right-hand card. Without pausing, use the face-down left-hand card to scoop up the tabled card (which came from the envelope). (See Figure 2.)



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Move your left hand from the table back to your right hand. As you do, pull the upper card of the pair to your left. (See Figure 3.) Deposit the lowermost card of the pair (which is now spread to the right) on top of the face-up Queen in your right hand. It is nipped and held by your right thumb at the center of its right long side. Without pausing, your left hand turns palm down and places its second card (a face-up Queen), spread to the left, on top of those in your right hand. (See Figure 4.) Drop the three-card spread onto the table. Now pick up the remaining two Queens, turn them face up and slide one under each side of the tabled spread.

For all intents and purposes, you've apparently sandwiched the unknown card between the Queens. Done rhythmically, the switch is extremely deceptive. It is a previously unpublished Marlo move, appearing here by his gracious consent.

" . . . and see if you can guess the identity of the card. But before you do. . . . First, remember that the sealed envelope was in full view the entire time. Second, remember that this is a magic trick, and I am a magician. Finally, remember that you selected a card earlier. You know, the one with your name on it. . . ."

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If the trick has been sold properly, it will gradually dawn on your spectators that the unknown card — the one they just saw come out of the sealed envelope — is going to be the signed, selected card. But it's too late. All the dirty work is done. The deck has been out of play for a long time, and there's simply nothing to reconstruct.

Have your spectator name her selected card. Let her remove the unknown card from between the Queens and turn it over. Make an appropriate comment about her uncanny ability to select the card that was in the envelope the whole time.

MORE

Impromptu. This routine is strong enough to carry off the clear impossibility of the sealed envelope. In fact, you can place the sealed envelope inside something else; for example, your wallet. But you don't have to: This routine can be done completely impromptu by simply leaving the Queen of Hearts in the card box as you remove the deck. Close the box, set it aside, and ignore it as you do some preliminary tricks. The appearance of the selected card in the card box is reasonably impossible.

Wherever the card comes from, you should not simply place an isolated card to one side. The audience should not be aware that the envelope (or the card box) contains a playing card that has anything to do with the trick. Awareness of the envelope is okay, but not awareness that it contains a playing card. If the spectators are aware of the card, they may tip to the eventual climax before you want them to. If that happens, the surprise element is lost and observant spectators may follow the action a little too closely.

Background. An earlier version of "Heart of the City" appeared in a supplement to my lecture booklet *Avant Carde*. The first phase is essentially my "Discrepancy City Prediction" from *Impossibilia*. That routine always had the inherent "freebie" that the Queen of Hearts was not used and I always thought the Queen's absence could be exploited in some way. This routine is the result of my efforts to capitalize on the "Heart" of the "City."

A big tip of the old top hat to Dave Solomon. Dave provided invaluable help with his redesign of the selection phase of "Discrepancy City." His idea of placing only two cards aside, and showing the Queen *before* it is added to the packet, greatly enhances the quality of this routine. My original handling was pretty good, but now I think it's complete.

There are some similarities to Bro. Hamman's routine "The Signed Card" (Kaufman, *The Secrets of Brother John Hamman*, page 47). Comparing the routines, I find two primary qualitative differences:

First, "Heart" relies on a "surprise" construction; the existence of the isolated card is not revealed until near the end of the trick. This prevents the audience from anticipating the eventual climax. Note that the envelope does prove, however, that the card was isolated for the entire trick. On the other hand, "The Signed Card" is essentially a challenge effect. I think it is apparent that, in it, the isolated card will eventually end up being the selected card.

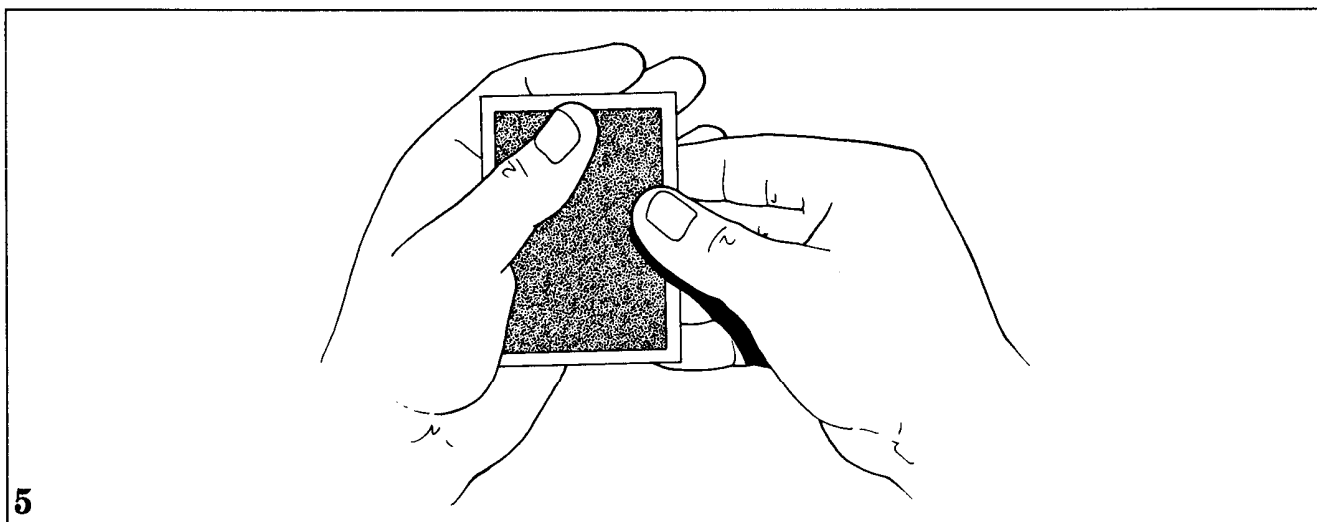
MIRRORS

Second, "Heart" uses the four "other" cards in an essentially separate effect that does *not* involve the selected card. This fact, combined with the highly deceptive Discrepancy City Display, greatly enhances the audience's conviction that the "other" cards are actually the four Queens. I think this better disguises the basic "hide and switch" methodology both routines use. In contrast, Bro. Hamman uses the four "other" cards in a separate effect that directly involves the selected card and uses a psychological technique to cover the boldness of the forthcoming switch.

So, while the underlying method is the same, I think we end up with two different tricks. In any case, I'd like to credit Bro. Hamman with the inspiration for this routine.

On The Marlo Switch. While reasonable persons could disagree, I prefer Marlo's handling to Bro. Hamman's original switch. Marlo allowed me to describe it here on the condition I "get it right." Marlo's original handling contains some subtleties that are not needed in my routine, so I changed it around a bit. For the record, here is Marlo's exact handling of the switch:

Your right hand apparently holds the red Queens in a Biddle Grip. Actually, the upper card of the pair is the selected card; the lower card is the Queen of Diamonds. The Queen of Hearts is face down on the table. Turn your right hand palm up and casually display the Queen on the face of the pair. Turn your right hand palm down and, with your left thumb, pull the top card of the pair into your left hand. This is like a mini-Flushtration Count. With your right hand, turn the remaining card face up and exchange it for the face-down card in your left hand. Use the face-down card to scoop up the tabled card. As you move your right hand back toward your left hand, pull the upper card to the right. Place the lowermost right-hand card, outjogged, on the left-hand Queen. Turn the face-down, right-hand card face up and replace it to complete the sandwich and the switch.



On The Elmsley Count. A brief note for those who aren't familiar with the right-to-left hand version of the count. This is the handling I always use and will be the handling used in the rest of this book. In my opinion, it is the most natural and efficient way to do the count. Take the packet along its right side, with your right thumb on top, fingers beneath. (See Figure 5.) With your left thumb, pull the top card of the packet into your left hand. Now, with your right thumb,

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push over the next two cards as one. The left-hand card is loaded beneath the packet as you clip the pushed-off double card between your left thumb and the base of your left forefinger. The double card is pulled into your left hand on the count of two. Pull the remaining two right-hand cards singly into your left hand in the normal fashion.



CLOCK O'DOOM

"Spectator thinks of a card. Cards are mixed face up and face down. The cards magically right themselves, with the exception of the thought-of card."

"Performer names the card. The card vanishes and appears in the spectator's hands."

"No sleights. No memorization. Nothing added or taken away. No rough and smooth. No angles. A different card each time. Purchaser supplies his own deck."

This is how Bob Farmer described his creation, "Hand O'Doom," to me. Not much to go on, but I set about trying to work out a method. "Clock O'Doom" is what I came up with. Those familiar with Bob's trick, which uses gaffed cards, will see that this method is radically different despite its plot similarities.

While I wasn't even close to discovering the secret of "Hand O'Doom," I am quite pleased with this routine. A lot of magic and mind-reading happen in this trick, but the best part is that virtually all the work is done before the trick starts.

WHAT

"You know, a deck of cards is like a calendar. There are four suits and four seasons. Fifty-two cards and fifty-two weeks in a year. And if you add up all of the pips on all of the cards . . . they total three hundred and sixty-five — like the days in a year. This trick is about time, too. We'll use the cards themselves as a clock. . . ."