

RUMINATIONS

Seth Kramer's

BLANK AMBITION

When I first heard about this ingenious routine, I knew I had to have it for RUMINATIONS. It's too clever. The premise is really rather simple when you start to think about it, but the implications of the premise make this an effect to truly think about. Simply put, imagine doing an Ambitious Card routine with an entirely blank deck. Your first thoughts should be along the lines of "Yes -- good gag." But before you dismiss this as only a gag, really give it a good strong thinking session. What qualities does an all-blank deck have that a regular deck does not? Come on, let's hear those gears cranking ... ANSWER: the deck can be used as a full deck of double-facers and double-backers. Yes, yes. This is beginning to get intriguing, isn't it?

Think about it. Do a double lift with two double blanks. Both sides look alike. Now if someone was to sign one of the inner hidden surfaces, the card would still look blank, but if this double was then used in a color change, the signature would apparently appear magically. Herein lies the the well-thought out methodology.

You start off by coming out with the double blank deck and asking someone to select a card. This will, of course, produce a smile (always a good trick in itself when it can be done bare-handed and without preparation). You must treat this card effect like all your other "Find-a-Card" effects. Look at them with all seriousness, and ask them to remember it and to place it back in the deck. Shuffle the deck and proceed to do any of the following as many times as you like until the giggles start to flow:

1. Tap the top of the deck and show them that their card has returned to the top of the deck.
2. Do a deliberately bad second deal of the wrong blank card, place it into the deck, and show them that their card has returned to the top.
3. Make their blank card reverse itself in the deck.
4. Do a color change and change one blank to another.
5. Ask them to name their card and spell down to it.

After a minute or so of this innocent by-play, offer to repeat the effect. This time let them SIGN their name across the face (or back) of the blank. Now after it is returned to the deck with the signature facing upwards, do a pass or double cut it so it is second from the top. You can now do a turn over of the top two cards as one without revealing the signed

card's face prematurely. After apparently showing both sides of this top card, you can now make the signed card appear on top by simply palming off the top card or by doing a standard color change off the top of the deck. Or you may simply slide the top card aside to show that the signed card has appeared second from the top. Or do a paintbrush color change ...

From here it is easy to do a double turn over once again and then apparently place the top card in the center while leaving the signed card, face down, on top. The signed card can now rise to the top several times in a row. If you do a good, fast, riffle pass or a real quiet but subtle Frazier pass, you could make that sucker jump to the top like lightning, and in full view of the specs. Yeah, that's it, that's the ticket ...

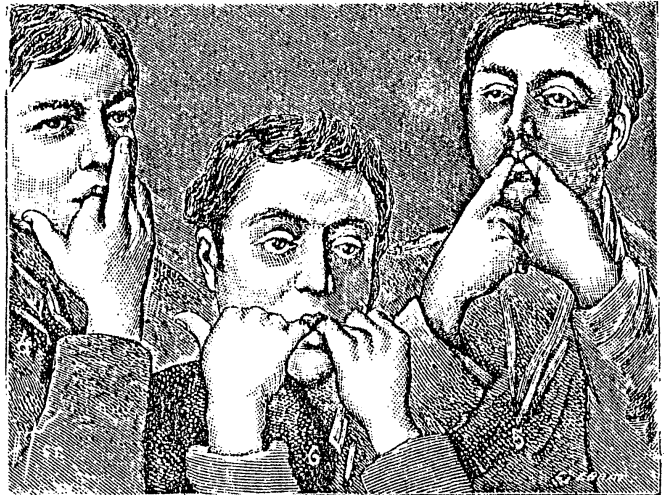
Have someone else remove a blank card and color change the blank to the signed card. Have someone else sign another card and make the two signed cards change places. Or fuse the two signed cards into one card with a signature on each side (a la Yedid's "Signa-fusion").

The effects are truly limitless and the magic is unbelievably strong. Effects which use signed cards typically interest spectators more because they believe the odds of duplicates existing to be impossible. Stronger still is using Seth's idea of having them sign a blank card. I even like the idea of having them draw their own card (see my first column on "Make-a-Card" in

Tannen's Magic Manuscript for more ideas in this vein). The deck can be examined for duplicates as much as the specs desire. Yet the deck is a trick deck full of double-facers and double-backers. They are all their for everyone to see, but no one will see a thing.

Seth usually ends this with the appearance of the signed card in his wallet. It's lightning fast and easy to reset. He also uses a wild method to vanish the selection; perhaps he will one day share it along with his other effects.

If that ending works for you, go for it; if not, think about this entire premise and come up with an alternate handling of your own. Thanks, Seth for an "ambitious" effect.



NEXT MONTH:

STEVE COHEN'S

"TOO PUZZLING !!"