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By Fraser Parker & Ross Tayler

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*“There I go... Let me take control... Let
me take control... The pot is full... of
Secrets to be told...”*

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Introduction by Ross Tayler

Welcome to Ouija.

When Fraser showed me his earliest conception of the idea you're about to learn, I was blown away.

It was typical of his approach: take a seemingly impossible effect, to guess any thought of name or word, with nothing written down – and then to achieve it with pure simplicity. The only adjective worthy of Fraser's methods is 'elegant.'

Now, in a matter of seconds, with no memory work, anagrams or fishing: it was possible to reliably guess a freely thought of name or even a word.

Naturally, I was thrilled.

Yet, there were still compromises. Fraser and I both firmly believed that the method could be simplified further, that compromises could be removed and script reduced to a few simple lines. Over the course of many sessions, texts, performances and discussions – we began to make further headway:

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removing forces, cutting out whispers, eliminating confusion. Subtly altering single words to drastically shift perception.

It finally came together – over a single marathon Skype session, we derived the perfect method. I couldn't be happier with the outcome. I'd like to thank Fraser so much for allowing me to be part of this journey, as I truly believe this method is a revolutionary one in our field.

Fraser credits me as being an equal creator in this project, but I'd like to clarify one thing: Fraser's work was the first Mentalism I encountered. His has been the thinking to most shape my own, so whilst I know he'd be embarrassed for me to refer to him as a mentor, I'll suffice to say I'm exceptionally fortunate to have him as a friend. Resultantly, the true credit here belongs to him, as anything I was capable of adding derives from the thinking I developed studying his material.

So thanks Fraser, and I pray you all enjoy what we have to offer.

Ross Tayler, 2015

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Fraser's Introduction

Welcome to my latest work.

What you are about to learn is something which has undergone hundreds of hours of refinement. This involved a few sleepless nights, a lot of testing of theory, as well as sometimes throwing away entire methods.

This is how it had to be.

I was looking for a simple tool and solution to be able to guess a thought of name, with nothing – no billets, no writing down of anything, no fuss.

The perfect method I envisioned had to be completely prop-less, available to use at a moments notice and only use words to make it work.

I tried many different approaches, some of which will be outlined in this manuscript, and it was only towards the end of the creative process all of the 'pieces of the jigsaw' finally fell into place, perfectly.

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This would have not been possible without the input and help from my good friend Ross Tayler, so I would like to now take the opportunity to thank him, as well as acknowledge his invaluable thinking. Ross is a very clever thinker and is very considerate towards the art form. I predict we will hear a lot more from him in the future and whenever his work becomes available you should get it, you won't be disappointed. This work is just as much his as it is mine.

I am aware the ability to guess any name or word thought of, billet-less, with nothing written down and using words only as your method, is considered the 'Holy Grail' to many performers, who desire to perform mind reading as prop-free as possible. In my opinion, it is not strictly necessary to always perform in this way – indeed on occasion this may not be the best approach. Sometimes it will be better to use a billet or some other classical method to guess a name or word. It depends on the effect, context and your performing environment. For example, if you are on stage you may wish to use a method that is more often than not, 100% reliable. The following billet-less approach is better suited for close up and more casual performances, where a slight chance of failure can be 'brushed away' much more easily. This is not to say the method you are about to learn is not reliable, it is.

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It's just better suited to certain circumstances, so use your own discernment, when and where to perform this. This is a tool, so you can pick it up and use it at a moments notice. That's what I love about it.

The few performers Ross and I shared this with before we decided to release it, also loved it, and noticed especially, the number of possible applications this has; it left all of our heads 'reeling' with the expanse of applications it has. I will leave these 'pieces of gold' for you to discover for yourself when you apply this to your own effects and routines – although I will hint at certain ideas, along the way.

My very good friend Peter Turner said that he has not seen anything like this before. He also has some great ideas on this, as well as his own unique scripting. This becomes even more beautiful in his hands; and I am so privileged to have him as a friend and mentor. I have told him before but would like to also say this in print; I would not still be in magic without you, so thank you for everything, you constantly inspire me to become better at what I do and fully deserve the legendary status you have obtained, in our field.

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I hope you, the reader get as much out of this as my friends and I have and are as pleased with the possibilities this new approach now opens to us.

Fraser, 2015

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Concept

So what is this?

It is a way of guessing any name (or word) your spectator is thinking of, without anything having to be written down. This happens completely prop-less and uses words and perception to make it work. It relies on pure illusion. The fact that the method exists in words means that the deception completely flies past everyone, in performance. They will mis-remember exactly what was said and the effect will therefore become impossible to back-track. That is the beautiful thing about using words as the method; they disappear after they have been said. This method not only fools the audience, but will also completely fool the spectator taking part in the effect. This is due to how events are perceived by everyone watching. There is a slight 'Dual Reality' created with your words – although, the differing perceptions are 'tied up' perfectly by the effect, itself. This will become clear when we get into the actual scripting of the effect.

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A way to think about the following principle conceptually, is to think of it as a billet-less peek or a way of 'peeking' information, not written down.

What happens, is the spectator names a series of random letters as well as letters from a word they are thinking of and with the method which follows, you are able to discern which letters relate to the word and subsequently, guess the actual word they are thinking of.

The reason I use the naming of letters, is because this is the most practical method I found for doing this billet-less. When dealing with letters, it would be too cumbersome to go through the entire alphabet, each time you want to guess one letter. Therefore, I found getting the spectator to name a few different letters at random as well as the relevant letters in their word, was a much easier way of accomplishing this, whilst at the same time ensuring this stayed deceptive.

I was inspired by classic methods and dreamt of a system similar to those found in '13 Steps to Mentalism' and other classic texts that could be translated to a more modern, prop-less approach.

Methods such as muscle reading, sound reading and two-person telepathy codes appealed to me,

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conceptually. I just had to find a way of doing similar things using words, as the method. I thought that muscle reading may be a viable option, if I could find a way of discerning between individual letters. This had been done in the past using a black-board and writing out the letters of the alphabet. The performer would take the arm of the spectator and have them focus on a letter, whilst moving their hand with a pointing finger, over each letter, one by one, and would use muscle reading to cue them into the correct letter. This meant using a black-board or other writing surface, or way of discerning individual letters. It was therefore, not good enough a method, for what I wanted to achieve.

It was this type of thinking which eventually led me to the idea of having the spectator call out letters. I feel this is an acceptable compromise, in terms of method and also from a theatrical stand-point; As it creates a possible pseudo explanation for what it is you are doing, such as reading subtle changes in the voice of the spectator, as well as the self evident reason for having them call out letters in the first place, so that you can better tune into their thoughts. I've even witnessed performers using these presentations in and of themselves, whilst using billets, so I know it is not too much of a compromise, theatrically.

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The whole deception relies on the words you use.

I will first show you how the effect plays and then reveal the method. The reason for this, is so that you can experience for yourself, how fooling the script is, even in print.

Before Your Very Eyes... Performance script

Let's imagine you are in the middle of a set and your spectator is thinking of a name. They have not written the name down anywhere or told anyone who they are thinking of. It exists only in their mind.

The name belongs to a female, who is close to them.

These details can either be guessed early on before going into the effect proper or the spectator can be led to think of a specific person.

I would give the following instructions to the spectator.

*“Okay, if you can abbreviate the name **please abbreviate it.**”*

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[Spectator: "Okay, done that."]

"Can you count the amount of letter in the name, for me?"

They take a considerable amount of time to count the letters before replying with a "yes."

"So this is five or six letters, correct?"

["Six letters."]

"Okay, just focus on the first letter in the name. It is essential you don't say anything else, or give me any information I don't directly ask for."

They nod their head and in the process agree to follow along.

"All I want you to do, is say the first letter of the name you are thinking of and four or five random letters of the alphabet."

"I will look away as you do this. So start naming letters now."

Look away and snap your fingers to suggest they are to begin naming letters. They begin to name

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letters at random.

[“l... n... e... k... m... o... p.”]

“Okay, focus on the second letter in the name for me, now. If you said the first letter somewhere near the start of the letters last time, I want you to say the second letter near the end of the letters this time. If it was near the end then say it somewhere near the front this time, so that there is no way I could guess where you are placing these letters.”

They now list another five or six letters of the alphabet at random. Again, you look away and snap your fingers, for them to begin.

[“n... l... o... i... e... a... t.”]

“Okay, just focus on the name.”

“Is this Lauren?”

They will freak out.

You have just managed to guess the exact name they are only thinking of with little more than three lines of scripting. I know this sounds impossible

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but if you are still fooled and have no idea how this would be possible, then you understand how this feels to those who you will perform this for.

I want you to take a moment to think of how this might work, before reading on. The reason for this, is because once I tell you the secret, it may seem too simple, maybe obvious; so I ask you to appreciate how it is perceived, first. It is its simplicity, which makes it play so well.

This is the perfect solution I was looking for. The method allows for a prop-less name guess, which is over in a few seconds.

It is a tool, which can be used at a moment's notice, in any routine you wish.

Please guard its secret safe and give it the respect it deserves.

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The Secret – Method No. 1

I hope you have spent a few minutes pondering how what you read above may be possible. If not then please take a moment to do this before reading any further. Otherwise, you may not fully appreciate the simple and ingenious solution, which follows.

The method relies on the ability your words have to shift perception; not only for the audience but also in the mind of the spectator. It is all in the words and the meaning your performance creates, itself.

Yes, this is similar in terms of principles, to my previous 'True Mysteries' work. However, it is now applied to the illusion of mind reading, instead of seeming feats of mental influence.

The entire crux of the method exists in the ambiguity of the very first few instructions you give the spectator.

“Okay, just focus on the first letter in the name. It is essential you don't say anything else that would give this away.”

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They nod their head and in the process agree to follow along.

*“All I want you to do, is **say the first letter of the name you are thinking of and four or five random letters** of the alphabet.”*

The scripting in bold is where the ambiguity exists, from the perspective of the audience. To the spectator, it will seem as if you mean for them to say the first letter of the name they are thinking of *first* and then for them to say a few random letters *after* they name the first letter.

So that this instruction is not confused in the mind of the spectator I usually perform the following hand gestures, as I say the above script.

This consists of 'miming' touching the air, as if placing a 'full stop' in front of me, when I say the words “first letter” and then continuing to touch the air a few more times, after where I placed this first 'full stop', to 'drive home' the fact, I want them to say random letters *after* they have *first* named the first letter of the name they are thinking of. This ensures the spectator follows your instruction, without any problems.

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These instructions are obscure enough for those watching who are not taking part, to appear you mean for the spectator to say a few letters of the alphabet at random and to at *some point* say the first letter, so that it stays disguised amongst the other letters.

Ross's Thoughts

Fraser has asked me to include my thoughts alongside his write-up of the method, both to emphasise points I believe to be key and to show how this tool applies to our respective styles.

There are two points I'd like to comment on in this phase:

Firstly, scripting variants. The real click in this scripting was the use of the preposition "and" to control the position of the first letter. We felt this to be the perfect mix of directness and subtlety.

If, however, reliability takes precedent over deceptiveness, you may consider one of the earlier scripts we played with.

Both Fraser and I have had success substituting "and" for the word "then". This is blatant, and the

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instruction for the random letters to directly follow the first letter is very clear. This is very reliable. Deceptiveness, however, is not compromised – as we use the re-frame explained in the next portion. This cements the illusion and creates a false memory of the proceedings. This is bold, but don't be afraid of it, it's just a subtle change that can make a difference in reliability if that's something you need.

Secondly, I wanted to make some comments on the gestures Fraser describes. Until you start performing this, you can't begin to understand how much of a difference this makes to the reliability of this effect. DO NOT dismiss this. Communication, remember is 70% non-verbal, so to maximise our clarity we must not restrict ourselves to 30% of the whole picture. I perform the gestures slightly differently to strengthen the division between their thought of letter, and the random letter. I first make a strong gesture with my right hand whilst instructing the spectator:

“When I snap my fingers I want you to say this letter (gesture with right hand)”

As the spectator is reading left to right, they will see this hand as indicating the start of a list from their perspective. They will also associate this hand with

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the first letter in their mind.

This hand then remains fixed in the air as the left hand comes up next to it, and bounces (this is the best adjective I can find to describe this action) to the left, signifying the other letters as I mention them in the script:

“and 5 or 6 other letters at random (hand bounces left).”

As the hands are subtly labelled as representing the two sets of letters, their proximity to each other will be perceived as representing the relationship between the positions of the letters. This adds a great deal of clarity to proceedings. The few who were able to acquire my 'Circle Force' manuscript before it became unavailable may recognise these actions as similar to the 'Ruler-Force.'

The Re-Frame and the Second Letter

The audience has a different perception of what is taking place to the spectator. However, the following scripting re-frames the meaning of your first instruction for the spectator as well as cementing the illusion for everyone else watching. They will cause everyone involved to believe there is

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no way for you to know where the spectator placed the first letter.

“Okay, focus on the second letter in the name for me, now. If you said the first letter somewhere near the start of the letters last time, I want you to say the second letter near the end of the letters this time. If it was near the end then say it somewhere near the front this time, so that there is no way I could guess where you are placing these letters.”

These words suggest to the spectator and everyone else watching that you meant for the spectator to say the first letter of the name they are thinking of, at a *random position*, amongst the other letters they name. This causes the spectator to re-think the meaning of your first instruction. They will feel as if perhaps they misunderstood your initial instruction, but due to your previous line, they will remain silent

*“Okay, just focus on the first letter in the name. **It is essential you don't say anything else, or give me any information I don't directly ask for.**”*

They will not protest, at this point. The fact, you

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also move along swiftly with your script ensures they do not have time to question whether they have followed your instruction correctly, or not. This may happen subconsciously or they may even think this through consciously. It really doesn't matter as long as you continue with your scripting as if nothing has gone wrong. They will assume you don't know they have not followed your instructions correctly and therefore also believe there is no way you could know the actual placement of their first letter.

In fact, it now appears to be in a more obscure place, which would make it harder for you to guess.

The illusion is perfect.

They dismiss their mistake as not being important and in the process create the illusion in their own minds that it is impossible for you to guess the first letter (or its placement amongst the other letters).

The beautiful thing about this second letter phase is the scripting both naturally 'ties up' the illusion perfectly on its own, and also helps you discern the second letter of the name they are thinking of, at the same time.

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Ross's Thoughts

Some performers may consider adding a more blatant re-frame after the first set of letters have been named. This would be done like so:

“So there’s no way I could know which of those letters you were thinking of is there? Great, so focus on the second letter of this name...”

This is not necessary, however it may be helpful in cementing false memories. Do not give the spectator time to answer your question, just plough through.

Second letter phase

I will repeat the second letter scripting here, for clarity.

“Okay, focus on the second letter in the name for me, now. If you said the first letter somewhere near the start of the letters last time, I want you to say the second letter near the end of the letters this time. If it was near the end then say it somewhere near the front this time, so that there is no way I could guess where you are placing these letters.”

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What this script does, is 'forces' the position in which the spectator places the second letter. We know that in the first phase, they placed the letter in the first position. Therefore we are controlling where they place the second letter, whilst making the process seem even more fair.

It will seem as if we mean for the spectator to adjust where they say the second letter to a different position to randomize their choice. This also, indirectly suggests they said the first letter at a completely random position in the first letter phase. It is this suggestion that cements the illusion for everyone watching, as well as for the spectator.

What the previous script in fact does is cause the spectator to say the second letter somewhere near the end of the second group of letters. They will usually place this letter second from the end of the list of letters, they now name.

Another wonderful thing about this method is the fact that you can tailor it to include however many letters you want. If you want the spectator to say more than five or six letters then it is a simple matter of instructing them to do so. This will not hinder the method in any way. It will still work as

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described and will become even more deceptive. I personally, only stick with five or six letters, in total. I feel this is enough to 'get the job done' and still be deceptive enough.

Now, it is simply a case of 'trying' the possible second letters the spectator places near the end of the letters they name, with the first letter you definitely know, in order to work out the name they are thinking of.

There will only be a few possible combinations of names this could be, each time you perform this. In fact, sometimes this will be easier than other times. You will often be down to only two possible names. It is for this reason we have the following principles to use along side the main method, to enable you to be able to accurately guess the name thought of.

Abbreviation Ploy

You may have noticed that there were a few lines of scripting preceding the main part of the method just described.

These are additional ploys we always use in conjunction with this effect, to ensure we are able to accurately guess the name being thought of.

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I usually use these principles before going into the name guess proper but they can also be used at the end of the process, if you so desire.

The first principle we use is to get the spectator to abbreviate the name, if at all possible.

This is a principle used in the 'Billet-less Name Guess' from 'Bigger Fish 2' by Peter Turner.

It is a way of narrowing down the possible names, although it may not seem it, which is why this is such a perfect little principle to use. This works by asking the following question, to your spectator.

*“Okay, if you can abbreviate the name **please abbreviate it.**”*

This is more of an instruction, which will cause the spectator to either easily find a shorter version of the name they are thinking of and give you confirmation they have done so, or they will struggle to find one. It is really easy to see, when this happens.

If you are still unsure whether or not they have abbreviated the name, then just simply ask them.

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In either case, you now know whether they are thinking of a shorter version of the name or not and this gives you a further clue to use later on, when guessing the name.

The next ploy we use, is the following principle from my good friend Michael Murray. It is a thing of beauty.

CUPs (Comparative Uncertainty Principle) by Michael Murray

The basic idea behind CUPs, which Michael has very kindly allowed me to explain, in its simplest form, is for the spectator to count the amount of letters in the word they are thinking of, mentally. It is then possible to estimate how many letters are in the thought of word based on how long it takes the spectator to complete this task.

“Can you think of how many letters there are in this name?”

The fact that you ask the spectator if they can do this ensures they respond verbally, when they have completed this task. It is their answer which cues you into when they are finished counting, which in turn allows you to guess how many letters are in

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the word they are thinking of.

If they complete the task quickly then you can safely assume they thought of a shorter word of perhaps three or four letters. If it takes them a little longer then this will most likely be, four or five letters and if it takes them a considerable amount of time, you can assume it is a much longer word; longer than five letters.

I watch how long it takes for the spectator to complete the instruction and then guess an amount of letters.

“So this is four or five letters, correct?”

I always guess an amount and one above that amount, to not be too perfect. This usually causes the spectator to actually tell you the amount of letters and will make you seem close, most of the time. If they don't tell you the amount of letters on their own, then simply ask for the amount.

This is why we use this ploy after the previous ploy of getting the spectator to abbreviate the name and not the other way around, otherwise it would throw out the amount of letters we are fishing for.

The answer they give will be invaluable when it

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comes to guessing the name, so remember it.

Repeat it Ploy

It is rare that you will find yourself in this position but sometimes even after using CUPs and getting the spectator to abbreviate the name, you will still be left with two possible names.

This is where I would employ a ruse I first read in 'Pure Effect' by Derren Brown.

Say you have gone through all of the above process and you are now in the position to try to guess the name the spectator is thinking of. You know the first letter is a 'J', you have the two possible second letters, 'a' and 'e' and you know it is four letters long. The two most common possible names this could be are 'Jane' and 'Jean.'

“Okay, just repeat this name to yourself over and over... like... Jane... Jane... Jane.”

What this line does is allows you to take a guess on the most common name out of the two. If they are thinking of 'Jane' in this example, they will freak out, you will be able to tell by their reaction that you are correct and can stop there. If they are not

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thinking of 'Jane' then your words will seem to be an example of how you want them to concentrate on the name and it will not look like you are just guessing. To get this to work, it is important you place a pause before and after you say the word “like”, so that the correct context is created for the apparent guess.

Ross's Thoughts

I'd be tempted to use this method to fish for the second letter rather than the whole name. This is simply to avoid throwing out a name which is so close, as this may lessen the impact of a revelation – as it feels like you're building up. I feel a spectator would be far more surprised if you asked them to “repeat the second letter over and over again in your mind... like... e... e... e...” then came out with the name “Jane”. This is personal opinion.

If two names were phonetically similar, such as the above example, I may just throw them out together, as if they're basically the same name:

“So is this like Jane or Jean?”

This way the revelation comes in one go.

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Guessing

I usually just guess the most common names I feel most people will go for, when performing this. This can be made even more sure-fire by limiting their choice of name, from the start. This will depend on the effect you are performing and will not always be possible. For example, you can get the spectator to focus on a friend from their childhood. This will usually lead them to think of a less obscure name. They will apply the restriction themselves, without realising this is what they have done as they will want to make their choice easier. Then it is simply a case of researching the most common baby names for whichever demographic and age group you are performing for, to be able to easily think of and guess the names they may be thinking of. In fact, I suggest doing this anyway and researching each of the common names for each generation you perform for. It is easy enough to find these lists online and to spend some time learning possible names, to make guessing effortless.

Most of the time it will be easy to guess the name due to how this effect is structured and the possible letters you are presented with. There is a small chance this can go completely wrong and you won't be able to accurately guess the name. Even in this

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worst case, you will still be very close. The first letter will always be correct and the name you guess will therefore sound very close, to the spectator. They will usually give you credit for being close, even if you don't get the name exactly right.

If you are dealing with an obscure name or want a little more security, you can repeat the second phase with the last letter of the name and simply shift where the spectator places this letter, back to the front.

I prefer not to have to repeat this phase and would opt for a guess, in this circumstance. I would simply get the spectator to focus on the last letter in the name and 'throw out' the most likely letter I think this could be. And if I were wrong I would just ask the spectator for the letter. This doesn't seem to be able to help you in any way, as you apparently don't know the first or second letters.

This guess of the last letter can also be used to 'peg' any word thought of however this is out of the scope of this manuscript. I will leave it to you to explore this possibility.

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Method No. 2

The following method is really just a variation on what has already been taught. It is an earlier version of this. The only difference is a slight adjustment of scripting of instructions for each phase. There is a little more mental work involved, although both myself and my friends have been able to guess names this way.

It acts as a great 'out' and method to fall back on, if for any reason you realise the spectator has not followed your first instruction correctly, when performing the previous version of this. This can be transitioned into seamlessly, whenever the spectator queries your instruction for them to say the first letter of the name first and random letters afterwards, without anyone being the wiser. It is very rare that this will become a problem but when it does, you will now know what to do.

Instead of having the spectator place the first letter of the word they are thinking of at the start of the letters they name, you genuinely give them a free choice to place it wherever they wish.

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*“So just focus on the first letter of the name. All I want you to do is, say five or six different random letters of the alphabet and **at some point**, say the first letter of the name you are thinking of.”*

This will cause the spectator to more often than not, say the first letter near the middle of the letters they call out in either the third, fourth or fifth letter position. The reason for this is because psychologically, placing it near the beginning or end of the letters they name, would seem too obvious to them, so they are more likely to place it amongst the other letters to make guessing the letter harder. This in fact, makes guessing the letter even easier.

Therefore, all you have to do is remember these three middle letters and adjust where they place the second letter, with the following slight change of scripting.

*“Okay, just focus on the second letter of the name. If you said the first letter somewhere near the **middle** of the letters last time, say the second letter somewhere near the **start**, this time. If it was near the start then say it near the end, **so on and so forth.**”*

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These words displace the second letter from the middle of the letters they name to somewhere near the start, this time. The words “so on and so forth” added onto the end imply there is much more choice than there actually is.

I understand this may seem more difficult to use reliably, as there are more letters to 'carry' mentally. However, this is a pure form of the previous method and may be preferred by some. I would use this as a back up and only perform it this way when needed or if I want to perform the same effect twice, for the same group.

Ross's Thoughts

For me, this is an 'out'. On occasion, if your instructions are unclear or a spectator is a touch slow, they will ask for clarification (this has happened to me even after explicitly silencing them, so be prepared.) This clarification may go something like this:

["So wait... you want me to say the letter first and then some other letters?"]

Now it may be possible to just confirm this and then re-frame afterwards. However this might be

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pushing the line a bit. Instead, correct them (if it suits your character, a slight joke here is very disarming):

“Ha-ha, no, that would just tell me the letter! Just say it somewhere in the middle, so say a few letters, then your letter, then a few more. That way I can’t tell which it is”.

This is delivered casually, as if it were your intention all along. You’ll also see how this scripting actually further controls where they’ll position the letter. In my experience, this is usually the third or fourth letter, if this script is delivered as written.

You’re now smoothly into the second method, and nothing appears to be off-course.

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Method No. 3

Using Life Equation Halved by Fraser ala Peter Turner ala Annemann

For those who want a less bold and more 'sure-fire' approach to this effect, here it is. Ross and I have both used this version to great success early on and even come back to it occasionally. The only difference with this method to what has come before is the fact a number force is used to obtain the first letter.

This force of a number is translated into a position and this is where the spectator is instructed to place the first letter, amongst the other random letters they say. This is how we were doing the name guess for a long time before we hit upon the much simpler versions you have already read.

It is an update on the 'Life Equation' by Peter Turner, which is itself an update on an old number force found in '101 Methods of Forcing' by Annemann. What Pete was able to do was add scripting to the original force, which made it infinitely more deceptive, so that it can now be performed successfully on a modern audience. This

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version required the use of a calculator. I wanted to be able to force a number quickly, without the need for a calculator.

I took his scripting and streamlined it even further, so that it became possible to force a number easily in a close up setting, in a matter of seconds, in a way that it wouldn't be possible for your audience to back-track. This used another principle of Pete's. A whisper used to disguise the mechanics of a trick relying purely on linguistics to make it work. This is an aspect of the 'Bob Principle' by Peter Turner.

This is not meant to replace the original 'Life Equation' but to simply offer a cut down version of it.

Here is the full script.

*“Think of your **year of birth for me**, just focus on the **last two** digits. There is no way I could guess this **number**. I could estimate it but that is all it would be: an estimate. Just so that there is no way anyone else who knows you can follow along and give any information away...”*

This is where you lean in and whisper the rest of the line.

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*“I want you to **add** this **number and your age together...**”*

Then lean back out and give the spectator a little time to process your instruction before moving on.

“So you end up at a completely different number. This number is personal to you and surrounds your life and nobody else's. Therefore, it would be impossible for me to just guess this number.”

What this scripting does is force the spectator to arrive on the number 115 (for the year of writing). This number will be the same for everyone you perform this for. The number increases for every subsequent year after the year of writing; and will be one less if the spectator has already celebrated their birthday that year. It is easy to adjust this number by simply asking if the spectator has already had their birthday either during the performance, or if you want to hide it more effectively then ask way before you go into the effect.

The whisper hides half of the process, which ensures others watching will not be able to back-track the method by trying the sum with their own

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date of birth and age, as they don't know the second part of the equation. The scripting is what fools the spectator, so effectively. It seems as if this number is based on their personal details, which are different for each person and because of this they will be convinced the number they arrive at is also completely random.

I now convert this number into a letter position, with the following script:

“Okay, just focus on the highest digit out of this 3 digit number, forget the rest of the numbers.”

“I want you to say a different random letter of the alphabet each time I touch you on the back of the hand and on the touch which corresponds to this number, say the first letter of the name you are thinking of.”

“For example, if you are thinking of the number 1 you would say the first letter of the name on the first touch, if this is the number 2 it will be on the second touch, number 3 the third touch, so on and so forth.”

“Otherwise, just say a different random letter of the alphabet when I touch you.”

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The reason you touch the spectator on the hand in this variation, is to ensure they can count along mentally and not lose track of when to say the first letter.

This first letter can then be applied to the second phase scripting from the previous method and combined with all of the other ploys, to allow you to guess a name – completely prop-less.

Ross's Thoughts

The method above is much closer to the original idea with which Fraser approached me. I'm sure you can see why it got me so excited, whilst also acknowledging the need for progression.

This method does, however have merit for several reasons (which I'll allow you to assess for yourself), and thus is worthy of some additional comments.

I love Fraser's 'Life Equation' variant, however as my own residency is in a bustling Mexican restaurant, in which sober customers are an exciting oddity: I learned the hard way that asking spectators to do maths, even with a calculator, can be a recipe for disaster. That's not to negate the

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efficacy of this method, just to restate that methods must be context-appropriate.

Resultantly, when I began performing this method prior to it's evolution – I would utilise a pack of cards to force the number.

Now before you all go red and pop, I agree that playing cards have no place in this effect. Therefore I've ensured that, as far as the audience is concerned, they do not. This is achieved as follows:

A low-valued card is forced upon the spectator. I'd use a 2 or a 3 to prevent them from losing count. Ensure they remember this card, and have it firmly locked in their mind. Once I see they've done this, I apparently change my mind:

“Actually, put that back, let's do something a little more interesting.”

As a result of this line, the audience no longer care about the card, and do not perceive it as playing a role in the effect to follow. The participant, however, will still remember their card.

I now have the participant focus on the name of someone they care about deeply, but that I couldn't possibly know. This forces them away from thinking

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of anyone in the group, whilst placing emphasis on the value this individual holds for them. You'll see why this is significant in a moment.

I now proceed:

“Each time I touch you, I'd like you to name random letters of the alphabet. But don't give the game away by changing your tone of voice, if you say any of the letters in the name of this special person. Actually, to be safe...”

At this point, you lean in to deliver a whisper. The whisper is as follows:

*“To make sure you don't give the game away, I don't want you to say these letters at **any random** position, as you may surprise yourself. Instead, I'd like you to say the first letter of this name at the number of the card you were thinking of. So if this was a 2, say the first letter in the second position, if it was a 5, in the fifth position and so on. Also, so no one feels awkward, you're not thinking of anyone here are you?”*

This final line justifies the whisper. As they say no, you laugh it off, gently:

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“Ha-ha, okay – but you see why I had to whisper that?!”

Turn to the audience:

“I was worried he might be thinking about someone here, but it’s fine, no one needs to feel like they’re second-best.”

This is not how we traditionally justify whispers. It will be forgotten, as it doesn’t appear to be related to the effect. We’ve also set up a lovely secondary deception.

Turning to the participant, we say:

*“So as I start touching you, name random letters as we said – and remember not to say the first letter at **any random** position in case you surprise yourself and give the game away.”*

You’ll see that by repeating language, we are reminding the spectator of the instructions whispered to them. They will understand this to mean they should only say the letter at the numerical position, whereas the audience will perceive it as an instruction never to say the first

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letter. This layers the deception.

The method now continues as normal.

One other point I'd like to mention is how I choose to deliver the touches:

I prefer to sit to the participant's right, and tap their right knee with my fingertips. Naturally, I only do this with someone of the same sex wearing trousers, or in the case of performing for a female I would touch their shoulder or some other appropriate place, covered by clothing. It is important when building rapport with your spectators that you don't do just the opposite by touching them inappropriately. The reason I touch the spectator at all, is both because I find this more aesthetically pleasing, and because I feel that tactile elements work to establish rapport and control. This is a point of small relevance, but I felt it worth inclusion.

Final thoughts

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There you have it: a billet-less way to guess any name (or potentially, any word), without anything having to be written down, in as efficient a manner as possible, using nothing but words and perception.

I am really proud of this method, as is the co-creator of this effect, Ross Tayler.

I will leave you with his thoughts, to close. All that I ask is you respect this, for what it is and do not share this method with anyone else. It may be a simple idea but it is one of the best ways of doing this currently available to us, as we continue to push the art forwards.

Thank you for purchasing this manuscript. It is you that makes it possible for me to continue to create and write.

Fraser.

Ross's Final Thoughts

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I sincerely hope you've all gained a great deal from this manuscript. Fraser and I are exceptionally proud of what we have created here, and are delighted to be able to share it with you in its current form.

Once you understand that this is essentially a means of knowing a thought of item in an unrestricted list of items, I'm sure you'll find many ways in which to apply the essence of this script, from astrological signs to living and dead tests – all prop-less and impromptu. Don't shun the possibility however, of combining this approach with more traditional methods and principles; such as one ahead, cold reading and logical disconnects, to create some utterly clean, powerful and believable Mentalism. Fraser and I can't wait to see where this principle will be taken!

Do not be afraid to go out and try this. It will work. In the very worst case: if you mess up the script, or just can't think of a name, then where are you? The answer is in the exact same position as you're in right now – resorting to a billet or other classical method. And best of all, you've just added thirty seconds of great presentation, which looks exactly as it does when you do it for real!

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I'd like to thank Fraser one last time for involving me with the development of this idea: from his fantastic seed, into the beautiful tool it now is. I'm privileged to have you as a friend, man.

I truly believe this to be a revolutionary method in our art. So please, go out and perform it, enjoy it, and adapt it!

Ross.

P.S. I've just been told that I have to credit my beautiful girlfriend, Bryony, as my muse and inspiration. So, um, yeh – thanks beb.

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Peter Turner – Thanks for always being there as a friend and mentor and for teaching me how to refine my ideas. As well as being a constant source of inspiration, for me to become better at what it is I do. Also, for allowing me to teach some of your work in my own.

1. 'Name Abbreviation Ploy' from the 'Billet-less Name Guess' in 'Bigger Fish 2' by Peter Turner.
2. The 'Bob principle' from 'Devil in Disguise' DVD by Peter Turner.
3. The 'Life Equation' from 'Bigger Fish 2' by Peter Turner.

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'CUPS' from 'A Piece of My Mind' by Michael Murray.

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