

# Trace Elements

## What?

A participant chooses a card which he places face-down on the table while the performer's back is turned. The performer claims that the card will leave some kind of after-image on the table. The card is removed and replaced in the deck. The performer turns back around and studies the space on the table where the card was placed and names the card. This is then repeated with even more impossible conditions.

## How?

The deck is stacked in Si Stebbins (or any know set-up).

Bring out the deck, shuffle it and place it on the table. Ask the participant to give the deck several complete cuts. Explain the premise of what you are about to do, including some pseudo-scientific nonsense about all matter leaving a tiny indelible imprint on other matter it touches. Claim that you have trained your eyes to be able to discern these after-images. Indicate the spot on the table where you want a card to be placed and turn away, averting your head and eyes.

Invite the participant to cut the deck once more, remove the top card, secretly look at it and then place it face down on the table on the indicated spot. Have him count to ten, so that "the card and table have a long enough contact", and then tell him to replace the card in the middle of the deck and place that to one side.

Now turn around and make a big deal about studying the spot on the table where the card was placed, moving around the table to view the spot from several different angles. As you do this you have ample opportunity to glimpse the top card of the deck, which tells you the name of the selection. Slowly reveal the colour, the suit and then the value, apparently seeing the exact number of spots or the picture if it's a court card.

This is then repeated but the second time, have the participant place the card down onto the table for 10 seconds *without* looking at it. Before you turn back around, he removes it and still without looking at it places it into his pocket. Now turn around and seeing that the deck is still on the table, say that you had meant for him to place the deck back in the box, so you simply do that yourself, glimpsing the top card as you do so.

You are still able to identify it without anyone knowing what it is.

As an alternative presentation try this: have the participant place his iPhone screen side down on the table. Whilst your back is turned, a card is selected and placed face-down on the phone for 10 seconds, then removed and lost in the deck. Turn back around ask the participant to unlock his phone and hand it to you. Scroll through his apps for a second, close the phone and announce the card. Done for a tech-savvy person, this will drive them mad and they will think you have access to some secret functionality of their phone that you don't know about... This is the way I ALWAYS perform it by the way.