

## ***Second Thoughts by Christian Grace***

### **Effect:**

You hand a deck to a spectator, for them to shuffle to their little heart's content. You jot down a card on a blank business card, and place it face down on the table, openly declaring that you won't touch it again until the very end. Privately, they think of a number between 1 and 20, then whilst your back is turned, you display the top twenty cards of the deck, counting aloud as you go, inviting them to remember the card at their number. Declaring that the only way you could determine their card is by knowing their number, you shuffle the cards up, proving that even if you somehow knew their number, it would be near impossible for you to work out their card.

You hand them the shuffled deck, and ask them to deal their number of cards out onto your hand. Miraculously, the card they stop on matches your prediction perfectly! There is, however, something else written on the prediction - a two digit number. They count that number of cards off of the deck, and incredibly, their card is at the predicted position.

### **Method:**

This is a trick I used to call Double Prediction, but Christian Schenk at Card-Shark came up with the far superior name of Second Thoughts. The trick itself is based on a very old principle known as the Automatic Placement Principle, first shown to me by Lloyd Barnes. In reworking it, I've attempted to justify the packed displacement essential to the method.

As well as a paper and pen (or quill) to jot down your prediction, you also need to ensure you're working with a full 52-card deck.

The effect starts with the spectator shuffling the cards as much as they'd like, and I'm going to try and secretly get a peek at the bottom card as they're finishing their shuffle. If I can clock the card in the midst of their shuffle, I'm in heaven. If not, I reframe it as:

*'I'm going to look for a card near the bottom of the pack, but I don't want you to see...'*

I lift up the short end of roughly two thirds of the pack closest to me, but what I actually look at is the bottom card of the deck. Either way, this bottom card will be the card I write as my prediction. I'll write it on the

top half of the card (lengthways), draw a line underneath, and then write the number 29 below the line. This is the second half of my prediction.

It's important to emphasise here that you genuinely aren't going to touch that prediction again - it would make little to no difference if you did, but any additional details (especially ones you get for free) to solidify the fairness of the procedure in the spectators mind are worth including. I also like to place the marker pen on top of the face down card. Whilst this also carries no actual hindrance to me, it subconsciously renders the card tamper-proof as far as the spectator is concerned. A non-toxic alarm system, if you will.

If I've used my 'lifting peek' to get the bottom card, I can now say:

*'Okay, I'm thinking of a card somewhere between 20 and 52, so why don't you think of one between 1 and 20, but don't tell me what it is.'*

If I was able to glimpse the bottom card in the shuffling, I can frame it as a time saving thing:

*'Okay, let's not go too low down. Why don't you think of a number between, let's say, 1 and 20 for me, but don't tell me what it is.'*

For example, let's say that they think of the number 7.

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*'I'm going to show you the cards one at a time, and count. Don't say anything out loud, but just think of the card at your number.'*

You turn your head, and cleanly count through the top twenty cards, displaying the face of each one to the spectator. Let's say the card at position 7 is the Three of Spades. Once I get to 20, I'm going to spread three more cards across whilst I'm talking, almost as an afterthought:

*'I'm hoping you have a card in mind by now...'*

I casually tilt my twenty-three card spread towards myself, get a glimpse at what the bottom card is, and remember it (e.g. King of Spades).

At this point I want to start structuring the effect by reframing the impossibility:

*'Look, you're thinking of a card, and the only way I could know what that card is was if I knew your number.'*

Whilst talking, I spread the cards towards myself, looking for my recently memorised key card (King of Spades), and hold a break just above it. I then square the face up deck around my break, lift off everything above it, turn both packets over, and overhand shuffle the lifted packet on top of the key card packet, stripping off single cards towards the end. The key card should now be on the bottom of the deck, with twenty-two cards above it remaining undisturbed. The top card of the deck should be the predicted card.

You have to be super clear with your instructions now:

*'I want you to pick up the cards, and deal them one-by-one, face down onto my hand.'*

Here is the only real move in the trick. Once they've dealt to their number, you're going to turn over the bottom card of the packet in your hand, but make it look like it's the last card dealt. This is, of course, the predicted card. To do this, you casually tilt your card hand towards yourself, covering the short edge with your two first fingers. This masks what the bottom card is, and also where it's coming from. The first finger of my empty hand contacts this bottom card, and the thumb pushes the rest of the pack into the crotch of my card hand. This allows me to pull out that bottom card, un-tilt my hand, and turn the card over on top of the deck. It is so important this happens on a relaxed moment - I do it after spreading the cards and confirming their number with them. I maintain conversation with them, only looking back at the cards once the bottom card is clear of the pack before I turn it over. It should look completely natural, un-rushed, and confident. It's not a difficult move at all, but it has to be covered by your attitude.

I can now spread the packet on the table, with the predicted card face up on top, confirming this as the card at their position. They can now turn over the prediction, experiencing both the joy of the match, and also the confusion at what the number on the bottom means.

It's now a self working trick, as their card will already be at position 29. I ramp it up by reminding them of the impossibility of what's happened, as well as the fact I haven't touched the prediction. Dealing is really boring, so whilst they're dealing and counting, I'll count with them, so as to bring some energy to the procedure. If I'm passionate about what's going on, they'll feel and inherit that.

When they get to 28, I gently put my hand on their wrist - I want to stop them here. This is doubly important if there's other people watching, as no-one knows his thought of card:

*'For the first time, tell everyone your thought of card...'*

They announce it, and then turn it over. Let them appreciate this moment, and once it starts to settle, I like to turn everything over, just to display how fair everything really was.

Enjoy!