**PREDICTION**

**I Have the ACE of SPADES**

**YOU Have the QUEEN of**

**HEARTS**

**Inside the Bag Is**

**the JOKER**

**PREDICTION**

**FREE WILL ILLUSION**

**Station Script**

Description of the Illusion

The Magician shows the subject **three cards**: a Queen of Hearts, an Ace of Spades and a Joker. There is also a **“Prediction” card** which is **not revealed** to the subject and is kept face down. The Magician shuffles the three cards and places them face down on the table in front of the subject. The Magician asks the subject to point to one of the three cards. The Magician puts that card face down into a bag. The Magician asks the subject to point to a second card. When the subject points to the second card, the Magician asks the subject to slide that card toward the Magician and says, “That is my card.” Last, the Magician asks the subject to slide the last card toward the subject and says, “That is your card.” Then the Magician asks the subject if the subject wants to exchange cards. If the subject says “No” both keep their cards. If the subject says “Yes,” they exchange cards sliding them to each other face down. The Magician says to the subject, “**Do you agree that you selected ALL the cards and moved them and chose your card? I offered you my card and you could have chosen to take it or keep your own?” The Magician asks the subject to agree to those statements.**

The Magician asks the subject to turn over his card. The Magician turns over his card. Last, the Magician asks the subject to turn over the “Predicition Card” and to read the Prediction.)…or… (The Magician turns over the “Predicition Card” and reads the Prediction.)

The key to the trick is there is a very slight **mark** on the back of the **Joker**. When the subject selects the marked Joker, that is the one the Magician places face down in the bag. When both of the remaining cards are turned over, the Magician knows who has the Ace of Spades. If the Magician has the **Ace of Spades**, he picks up the Prediction Card and reads it. If the subject has the Ace of Spades, the Magician asks the subject to pick up the Prediction Card and to read it.

What Is Happening

Neuroscientists refer to this illusion as a classic “**Top-down” illusion** utilizing “**suggestion**.” The Magician “suggests” to the subject that they were in total control of the illusion. The subject was not told ahead of time how the illusion will be carried out and, therefore, the subject’s higher level brain was trying to anticipate what was happening. The suggestion from the Magician, “Do you agree that you selected ALL the cards and moved them and chose your card? I offered you my card and you could have chosen to take it or keep your own?” was planted in the subject’s memory and it is normally accepted without question.

Suggestion:

There are approximately **100 billion neurons** in the Human body and more than **100 trillion connections** between neurons. The length of all the neurons laid end-to-end in the Human body is approximately 60,000 miles (96,000 Kilometers). The average velocity of a neuron’s pulse is 120 meters/second or 275 miles per hour. Billions of pulses are received in the brain every minute. The Human nervous system is just too slow to keep up with all this activity. To adapt to this, the brain constantly “anticipates” what will happen in the immediate future. In our case, the subject’s brain has been trying to predict how this trick will proceed. The **Magician’s suggestion** is likely to be registered by the brain as its best anticipation.

In reality, the Magician told the subject each move to make. The Magician placed the Joker in the bag to make sure the subject did not peak at it. Last, the Magician controlled who picked up the Prediction card and read it; thereby choosing which participant played the part of the person called, “I” on the Prediction card.

Suggestions can play an important part in what we see and believe. Studies have shown that **oxytocin** (sometimes referred to as the “trust hormone”) levels rise in subjects’ brains when they are entertained by magicians. Neuroscientists believe that the affiliation between a Magician and the subjects is affected by these changes in hormones such that the subjects “want” the magician to be successful in carrying out the illusion. If the Magician is successful, the subject is “entertained” and actually receives an **increase in pleasure** (see Sleights of Mind, by Stephen L. Macknik & Susana Martinez-Conde, pp 211-214).