

"FOUR SEASONS" by Jay Sankey

The effect is simple and deadly. 12 small pay envelopes are introduced. Several are opened and inside is found to be a slip of paper with a different month of the year written on it. The slips of paper are replaced inside and the envelopes are given a mix-up. A spectator is asked to, "Think about the season in which you were born. If it was the winter, think of the cold and snow. If it was the spring, think of the rain and flowers. If it was the summer, think of the heat and your favourite flavour of ice cream. And if it was the fall, concentrate on the image of brown leaves falling off trees."

Without a single question, the magician then slowly picks up and pockets 6 of the envelopes one by one, commenting that, "I don't believe you were born during any of these six months." The magician then divides the remaining 6 envelopes into 2 piles and asks the spectator to help eliminate 3 more of the envelopes, adding that, "we will have the best chance of this experiment ending successfully if we all work together." With that in mind, the magician asks the spectator to tell everyone present the date he was born, after which the magician asks everyone to concentrate on that date. The spectator is asked to push one of the two piles towards the magician, thereby eliminating three more of the envelopes. The spectator himself makes the final choice, selecting one of the three envelopes, and when this last envelope is opened a single slip of paper is found inside. Written on it is the month the spectator was born! (Kaboom!!!)

This is precisely the kind of effect the always ingenious Juan Tamariz would devise because, rather than relying on merely one deceptive approach or another, it is a COMBINATION of deceptions, namely the "magician's force" and 6 double-sided envelopes. Here's how it works. (It may take a few paragraphs to describe, but keep in mind: it is very very simple!)

First, you have to make 6 double-sided pay envelopes. Yes, you CAN simply glue six small pay envelopes to the backs of 6 other pay envelopes (facing opposite directions) but not only is there always a chance someone will "spot" the double-edge of the gimmicked envelopes, the envelopes will also not open and lie on the table as smoothly and naturally as they will if you go to the small trouble of making 6 gimmicked envelopes of the more classic double-sided design. (I will describe how to make these at the end.)

To set-up, write the name of the 12 months of the year on 12 slips of paper. Fold them in half or quarters and then tuck them into one side or the other of each of the 6 gimmicked envelopes. You will also need another 6 ordinary envelopes inside of which you place 6 other slips of paper with 6 of the 12 months written on them. With pencil dots, mark one side of each of the 6 gimmicked envelopes so that you are able to not only tell them apart from the ordinary envelopes, but also able to tell them apart from each other. I simply make a single dot in one six different positions on the backs of the six envelopes.

To perform, introduce the 12 envelopes and hand out 3 or 4 of the ordinary envelopes for people to open, remove the slips of paper and note the different months written on the folded slips of paper. Have them fold the slips and return

them to the envelopes. Take all 12 envelopes in your hands and give them a bit of a mix-up. Deal them out onto the table in a line and have the spectator concentrate on the season he was born. Act as if you are getting in touch with psychic vibes and one by one, slowly remove the 6 unmarked (and ungimmicked) envelopes from the row. Put them in your pocket. Apparently removing half of the 12 months based strictly on your intuition is perfect theatre and completely seduces the audience into the premise of the illusion.

Gather the remaining envelopes into two piles such that one pile contains the first six months of the year and the other pile contains the second six months. Have the spectator announce the date he was born and then ask him to push one of the piles towards you. Force the correct pile via a "magician's choice." In other words, if he pushes the pile containing his month, say, "Fine, we've narrowed it down to these three," and if he pushes the other pile towards you say, "Fine, we'll add these to the pile of discards." Either way, pick-up the pile that does NOT contain his birth month and add those envelopes to the other ones in your pocket.

To finish, you once again use the "magician's force." Spread out the three remaining envelopes on the table so that the envelope containing the correct month is in the middle. Ask the spectator to lower his two hands, "down onto two of the three envelopes." If he leaves the middle envelope untouched, say, "Well, you've narrowed it down from twelve envelopes to one," and drag the slide the force envelope back towards yourself. Then say, "I'll put those two with the other discards" and pocket the other two envelopes.

If however, he lowers one of his hands onto the force envelope, pick up the remaining envelope and slip it into your pocket as you say, "Fine. So now we're down to just two." Finally, ask him to, "Lift one of your hands." If he lifts the hand on the force envelope, ask, "Are you sure?" and if he is, pick up that envelope and say, "Alright then. We've narrowed it down from 12 to this one envelope." But if he changes his mind (or initially lifted the hand that is NOT on the force envelope) simply say, "Fine, we'll get rid of that one as well," pick it up and place it in your pocket.

If you need to, secretly turn over the force envelope under cover of transferring the envelope from one hand to the other (as you sum-up the proceedings) and then finish by slowly opening the flap of the envelope, removing the folded slip of paper and handing it to the spectator to unfold.

As for making the double-sided envelopes, all you have to do is trim the very end off one of the envelopes with a pair of scissors (the end opposite the flap end.) This trimming will leave you with an envelope that is essentially a paper tube with a flap. Lay this envelope on the table so that the side with the flap is lying against the table.

Then cut off the entire "back panel" of a second envelope including the flap. Discard the rest of the envelope so you are left with a rectangle with a flap. Trim the slightest bit off both LONG SIDES of this back panel as well as a tiny bit off the SHORT END of the panel (the end opposite the flap). Test the size of this "panel with a flap" by turning it over (so the gummy side of the flap is facing down) and slipping it inside the first envelope through the trimmed end. (They should lie flush together, but if

you need to trim a side or end, now is the time to do it.) Once trimmed, notice how, with flaps folded down, both sides of the envelope look utterly ordinary.

Finally, slide out the "panel with a flap" and apply a small amount of glue along both short ends of the panel, on OPPOSITE sides, then carefully slip the panel back inside the first envelope and press firmly along the short ends. You are done! A perfect double-sided envelope! (Note: I know it may read a little confusing, but follow with scissors, envelope and glue in hand – yep, you better be an octopus! - and it will all come together.)