

# Algol

He knows what you know

**WILLIAM PATRICK**

# Algol

A multi-phase billet routine by William Patrick  
Foreword and Edited by Terry L. Tyson

*“Algol, designated Beta Persei, found in the constellation of Perseus was often called “The Demon Star,” by early astronomers because it seemed to exist and then vanish moments later. It was later discovered that it was a bright multiple star and one of the first non-nova variable stars to be discovered. If you know when and where to look, you can see the star appear to wink as it is eclipsed by another, dimmer star.”*

*~ The Astronomer’s Handbook*

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## **Foreword**

The internet can be at once a wonderful and horrible place to explore. The dark places are notorious and often dangerous, but with vigilance, enlightening and uplifting discoveries can be found. So, it was when I met, via keyboard and monitor, William “Billy” Patrick, brightness returned to the path I was on. After a few exchanges and “fine fellow met” greetings, I was provided the opportunity to read the routine you now own.

I was immediately struck how good it was. Billy’s (I call him “Billy” because I consider him a friend) clear thinking of providing multiple surprises from just a few moves and with few props appealed to me greatly. I am not necessarily a proponent of prop-less mentalism, each performer arms themselves as they see fit, this billet routine can provide a deeply personal and mysterious experience for your participant nearly prop-less. But it is also immensely commercial; one that would have broad audience appeal and lends itself to closeup, walkaround or platform. You can make money with this.

Your personality, performance style, performing venue and scripting approach all come into play here. Billy’s reveals may not be the style I use, but it is a very good and modern approach. SPOILER ALERT: Though Billy has interjected a caveat that you may be doing palm readings once this has been presented, as if that were a bad thing, I highly suggest that you indeed sharpen your skills in this allied art. Prepare to get additional attention, referrals and gigs when you embark on this “post-routine” activity. You could arrive at an event with little preparation, work the entire evening and perform no other “effects” after sharing this routine. People love hearing things about themselves and palmistry is a great way to deliver that.

I would also add that while your business cards could be employed here, I’d prefer to use index cards or other blank stock. Hand your still pristine card out afterwards. Both the billet and your card become mementos of your performance.

Now, enjoy Billy’s breezy, conversational style as he explains this well thought out routine. Imagine that you and he are sitting in a quiet pub. The room is warmed by a crackling fire and the ale cool to the lips. Billy leans in, smiles and excitedly tells you all. Listen carefully and take notes. You’ll want to remember this in the morning.

Cheers!

Terry L. Tyson – California, U.S.A.

## **Algol by William Patrick**

This little cracker is a powerful and fun routine to perform and the reactions are great. I really like doing this walkaround as it only involves two billets and a pen. It's very modular, allowing you to end the routine at any point you choose and still make a big impact.

Your participant gets to have fun guessing a famous person (or other "target") you are thinking of. You then slowly reveal through a variety of psychological tells the famous person they are thinking of. Along the way you reveal their star sign and if the mood strikes you, give them a personalised palm reading.

Two reveals, an entertaining journey for the participant and spectators alike and a reading. What more could you ask for with just two pieces of paper and a little knowledge?

A word of warning, and this warning is not hyperbole, it is just true. If you choose to perform this routine as written below be ready to not perform any other routine for the evening. People will be approaching you for the rest of the evening with a particular request...but more on that later.

Here's what you need. Go grab two billets of your preferred type (business cards, blank business cards, index cards etc.), a pen and your favourite beverage. The beverage is not necessary for the routine, but it's good to treat yourself while learning.

Note: Throughout this manuscript I shall call the participant helping with the effect, "Ann". I feel it adds a little more personality to their role and it is easier to type and spell than patriciant. There, I've done it again. See what I mean?

### **Preparation**

Pre-fold two billets into quarters. One billet is left blank and on the other you write the name of a famous person you admire on the inside of the

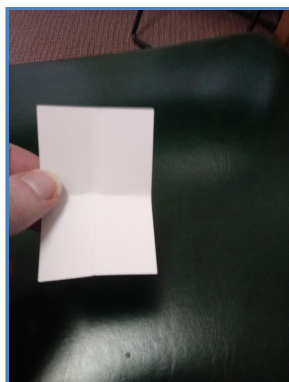
billet. In this case “Tom Cruise.” Hey, the guy never made a bad movie as far as I’m concerned.

Open the blank billet up again, leaving the Tom Cruise billet still folded, and pop both into any pocket along with a pen or pencil. It can be any pocket that is comfortable for you to reach.

### **Performance and Set Up**

Turn to Ann and tell her you feel like she would be perfect for this demonstration. Reach into your pocket and take out the blank billet. The reason you have it opened in your pocket is to quickly differentiate between the two billets in your pocket.

As you take it out of your pocket fold it in half. Since it has been pre-folded, this is very easy to do. Don’t make a move out of it, simply fold it with your fingers as you are taking it from your pocket as illustrated below.



Open the billet and instruct Ann that she will write her **star-sign** along the top. As you say “along the top” you indicate with your index finger an imaginary line across the top half of the writing surface of the billet.

NOTE: If she writes in the centre it really doesn’t matter but it just helps to keep things tidy.

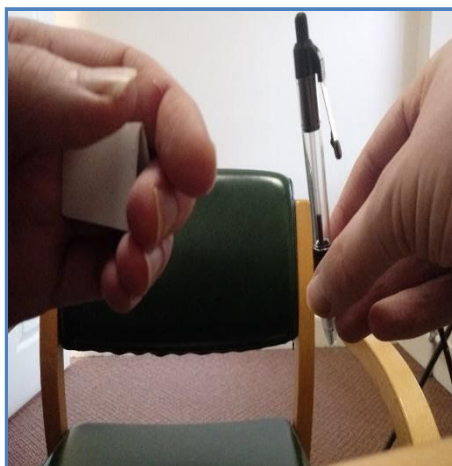
Tell her that writing a thought gives it “cognitive priority” allowing her focus clearly on that thought. “Cognitive priority” is a term that I made up but it sounds good. When she is finished, she is to fold the billet into quarters. Demonstrate this by folding the billet casually. Hand Ann the folded billet.

NOTE: Don’t call it a “billet.” That’s the term we’ll use, but for Ann, it is called a “bit of paper” or a “piece of card.”

Reach into your pocket and take out your pen and hand it to Ann. As you are retrieving the pen, finger palm the Tom Cruise billet. Turn away as she starts writing.

**Pro tip:** *When handing Ann the pen you have the Tom Cruise billet finger palmed in the same hand. As shown in the pictures below, I use my left hand to hold the billet and pen. I then transfer the pen into my other hand to give it to Ann.*

*This transferring of the pen to the other hand is natural. If you watch a person handing a business card from their pocket, they nearly always transfer it to the opposite hand. I think it is to subconsciously prove to the other person that what you are giving them is safe and not a threat. This also provides a natural, reasonable position for the finger palm.*



**Pro tip 2:** *I always use a pen with a push down “clicker.” It really smooths out the process. When you give someone a pen with a cap there can be a lot of fumbling about and theatrically your routine can lose a bit of rhythm. Another important reason is that when you transfer the pen to your empty hand, click the pen to make it ready for Ann to use. You’re just being helpful, right? Well, yes, but the click of the pen also acts like a baby rattle; It draws the eyes and attention away from your billet holding hand to the pen. As you click the pen let your billet holding hand fall to your side. The billet is now safely tucked up in finger palm position and all eyes are on Ann.*

*Okay, back to the routine.*

After about three seconds of Ann writing her star-sign say, “Actually stop writing and put a line through that thought if you wrote anything. I feel it’s the wrong star for you. Could you instead write the name of a star or famous person you admire and fold up the paper.”

They do so.

Now what has happened here is that if you timed it correctly, Ann will have written three or four letters of her star sign. By getting her to put a line through it you are psychologically negating the fact that she wrote that thought. She now has refocused upon a famous person she admires and has written that down and re-folded the billet. However, those few letters will still be visible and will easily allow you to tell what her star-sign is later.

Ask Ann if she is done writing the name of a famous person she admires. Once she says, “Yes,” turn around and take the billet from her. Execute a switch for your billet bearing the name, “Tom Cruise.”

The switch I use has a built-in justification for taking Ann’s billet momentarily which is to make sure the billet will stay closed by creasing

it. This isn't mentioned aloud, but within the action of creasing the billet it is implied.

If you don't have a preferred switch, I will explain the one I use, "The Mediums' Switch," later in this manuscript.

"Ann, place your thought in your pocket," you say as you give her the switched billet. If you prefer you can also drop it in a cup, glass, bowl or any other appropriate receptacle.

Let's recap what has happened.

- Ann has written the first three or so letters of her star-sign and put a line through it.
- She then wrote the name of a famous person she admires and folded up the billet.
- You have switched her billet with your billet which has your thought of celebrity, Tom Cruise.
- Tom Cruise is now in Ann's pocket, but she believes her billet is there.
- Finger palmed in your hand is Ann's billet.

*~Oh, Bert Reese, you and your sneaky billet work, how I adore thee.~*

"Actually, Ann, let's try something. I think you will be good at this," you say this line as if the idea has just occurred to you. As you do you reach into your pocket with the finger palmed billet and take it back out again as if you are just reaching in and grabbing another piece of paper from your pocket. When taking it back out you open the billet half up. This makes it look exactly like Ann's billet when it was taken from your pocket originally, so everything appears innocent. Again this is not a move but done very casually. It isn't necessary to do this but these little subtleties are, I feel, what separates a good performance from a great performance.



You continue, “I am going to write the name of a famous person that I admire and I will give you five tries at trying to pick up who I am thinking of.”

Looking at the others nearby you say, “You can all play along but Ann is the spokesperson with her thoughts.”

As you are saying this you have taken the pen from Ann and are pretending to write the name of a famous person on the billet. In actuality you are reading the first few letters of her star sign and the name of the famous person Ann wrote down. For this example, let’s say she wrote the letters “S,C,O” and the famous person she admires is *Lady Gaga*. You have all the time in the world to read her writing as you are ‘thinking and writing down the name of a famous person you admire’. This is not a peek, it’s a full and easy read with absolutely no heat on the billet. Even the other spectators are not looking as they are going to be trying to guess the name of the famous person you wrote as well!

When you finish pretending to write down your famous name, fold the billet into quarters and hand it to Ann telling her to pop it into her pocket with her original billet.

You are now home free. The rest of the routine is pure showmanship. You can have a lot of fun getting Ann to guess the name of the famous person you admire.

### **The Deductive Reveal**

*You can decide whether you are going to give Ann a very good chance to be right or wrong. See the additional ideas section for a way to increase her chances at guessing your celebrity correctly if that presentation appeals to you.*

So, let’s say that Ann guesses wrong, that’s perfectly fine because along the way everyone has had a lot of fun. Complement her, “You did so well. For your first time that was really impressive.”

“There are certain steps,” you continue, “that can be taken in order to give you a much better chance of picking up on a thought. Let me show you.”

Ask Ann to hold her hands out palms up. Push lightly on her left palm and say this hand represents male. Then push lightly on her right palm and explain that this hand represents female.

“Ann I want you to think of the celebrity you admire most. Don’t say anything. Just think. Excellent. Is this person male?” As you say this push lightly down on her left palm. “Interesting, is the person female?” Push down on the right hand. Ask these questions at least twice. You are acting as if you are trying to read her muscles. After the second round I usually mutter to myself, but loud enough for the spectators to hear, “Wow, your ideomotor response is fantastic.” It will mean nothing to 99% of the spectators but, as before, it adds weight and authenticity to the performance.

“I am almost certain that the person you are thinking of is Female. Would this be correct, Yes or No?”

“Yes,” she responds.

Even though this is a 50/50 shot the reactions from everyone can be quite strong and you will feel a sense of anticipation building with the spectators.

“The same technique,” you continue, “is used by highly trained FBI agents in the field when questioning suspects to see if they are telling the truth. But it has one major flaw. Once the investigator has done it once the accuracy rate drops by about 80%. So, we shall try another method.”

“Stand comfortably, Ann. This side represents a musician,” you say as you indicate generally the left side of her body with your left hand. I always attribute the actual profession of the thought of celebrity, in this case a musician, onto the left side of my participant.

“This side represents an actor,” you say as you move your hand up and down the general area right side of Ann.

“Ann, can you tell me the name of the last film you watched?” you ask. Watch her eyes. 95% of the time she will look up and left. This is a very common physical reaction when a person is recalling information. When she does, you remark to the spectators in an enthusiastic tone. “Did you see that! She looked up and left. That is a definite indication that the person Ann is thinking of is a musician. A person cannot juggle two different thoughts at once so her eyes gave away to the fact that she is thinking of a musician.” Many people will agree with you and this is a great moment as the spectators really feel as if they are coming along for the journey with you.

But what if she looks somewhere else you may ask? Simply state with the same enthusiasm, “Did you see that?! She looked down and right! What I did was a “pattern interrupt” which creates a yin-yang effect in the mind. Ann looked right - Yin, so Yang is to the left which represented a musician. You are thinking of a female musician. Am I correct?”

“Yes,” she says.

Continuing, you say, “Fantastic! You are doing so well Ann. You are a very emotionally intelligent person.”

“Okay we are onto the final and most difficult part. The actual name of the famous person you are thinking of. Could you hold out your left hand, palm up for me please.”

You ask Ann to think how many *blocks* are in the name of the celebrity she is thinking of. “For example William Patrick has two blocks. Robert Downey Junior has 3 blocks. Does that make sense? Don’t say it out loud but does the celebrity you are thinking of have one block.”

Push down on her index finger gently like it is the key of a piano as you say this.

“Does it have two blocks?” you say while pushing down on her middle finger.

“Ahh, there’s a lot of resistance here but just to be on the safe side, does it have three blocks?” you ask while pushing on her ring finger. “No resistance at all. It has two blocks. Is that correct?”

“Yes,” she says.

“So we know it’s a female musician with two blocks in her name. You are doing so well Ann.”

Looking down once again you say as if you just noticed, “That’s a very interesting palm you have. You have a very creative streak which is evident by the writers’ fork. You are very passionate about the people who are close to you and things you care about. There’s quite the adventurous streak running through you. Classic signs of a *Scorpio*, I reckon, but I digress. Can you please think of the initials of the famous person you are thinking of?”

Boom! You have just given her a little reading and casually dropped in that you know what her star sign is. No big deal is made of it by you. I call this a “casual drop” and I implore you to do this if you never tried it. It oftentimes can be more powerful to your audience than a built-up reveal, “ta-da” moment. Luke Jermy and Dunninger employed this bit of performance business quite successfully. For those who have tried this

you understand. When you reveal the star-sign don't ask "*Am I correct?*" Just move along.

"Ann hold up both hands palm out. And think of the initials of this famous female musician. On the palm of your right hand picture the first initial and on the palm of your left hand picture the second initial. I want you to see those initials glowing like flames on your palms," you explain.

Place both of your index finger tips on hers and go through the alphabet. You are 'feeling for resistance' on the hand of with appropriate initial. You now want to move at a nice pace though the alphabet pushing down on the fingers of both hands as you do this. In the case of "Lady Gaga" when you get to the letter G announce that you feel resistance in her left hand.

"Yes, the initial of the last name is 'G,' correct?"

"Yes," she says.

Move along down the alphabet pushing on her right hand until you get to the letter L where you feel the resistance again.

"The first initial is 'L' and the second is 'G' so we have deduced that the famous person you are thinking of is a female musician with the initials L.G."

Offer this information to the spectators and ask them "Any ideas my friends?"

If the name is well recognised, it is staggering the times someone will guess correctly. Let's say a spectator calls out, "Lady Gaga."

Turning to Ann you ask, "Is it Lady Gaga?"

"Yes!"

With great enthusiasm you announce, “We did it!!” Your enthusiasm will be contagious, so get excited. Using your deductive skills, you’ve just plucked a thought from somebody’s mind. That’s a big deal!! You can give the spectator who guessed it a high five, a hug, pat on the back, vigorous handshake or a fist bump. Smiling you say, “I was going to break it down more but you saved me a lot of additional work. Job well done!”

This may read as anti-climactic for the performer. However, it has a powerful impact on the spectators in attendance. They were part of an interesting process and understand that their guess could never have been possible without your amazing deductive powers. The participant and the attending spectators have all been a part of the show. The entertainment value for everyone is truly the most important aspect of the reveal. Because many people are involved and engaged, this is how I perform this routine 99% of the time.

Alternately, if you prefer a traditional reveal where you verbalise the name of the thought of celebrity or the spectators don’t guess correctly after you reveal the initials, you simply carry on with the same process.

Remember, you know the name of the celebrity from the start so you can adjust this part to suit the celebrity’s name. For example, Ann is thinking of “Lady Gaga.” so the next letters in both blocks are vowels.

“Ann, hold out both hands and this time see the second letters of each name written in flames on the palms of your hand.” You turn and address the spectators. “Statistically speaking one or both of these letters will be a vowel so we will use that information to our advantage.”

You say the letter “A” and push down on both her index fingers. Say the letter “E” and do the same. “Wow, the resistance on ‘A’ was strong on both hands. The second letter in both names is the letter ‘A’ am I correct?”

Ann will of course say, “Yes.”

She is also likely to say, “This guy is freaking amazing and very handsome to boot!” I’ve been waiting for a participant to say that last part to me for about twenty years. It hasn’t happened yet, but I live in hope.

You appear to be in deep contemplation, muttering to yourself in a stage whisper, “A female musician with letters ‘L-A’ and ‘G-A’. Hmmm,” Looking up you exclaim, “I got it! The famous person you are thinking of is Lady Gaga. Correct?”

“Yes!”

Take your bows you wonderful mystery art entertainer. You’ve earned it.

The process of deducing the thought of celebrity is fascinating to audiences and when you throw in buzz words like *statistically speaking*, *cognitive priority*, *body language*, etc. they really feel like they are being brought into a secret world. Watch Ian Rowland do a version of this type of reveal in his Penguin Magic lecture. It’s ace.

### **A Word of Warning**

The subtlety of revealing Ann’s star sign through reading her palm is a powerful moment for her. Not only that, but the spectators will remember that you read her palm and almost instantly after you finish the routine at least one spectator will stick out their hand and say. “What do you see in my palm?”

I am not saying the following to impress you but to impress upon you. I have done corporate events and weddings where I was hired to be magical/mystery entertainment. I opened my first group with this routine and for the rest of the evening I ended up reading one palm after the other. This happened so often that I was afraid that the event manager or bride and groom would complain that I didn’t do any magic. But I

received nothing but glowing reviews from these events saying everyone had a great time. No doubt, it's because I gave the attendees what they wanted.

If you do one palm reading be ready to do them for anyone who requests one. If you turn them away, no matter how nicely it's done, it can make that person feel disappointed. And this is the opposite of why you are there. Certainly, this is my opinion based on my experiences.

My advice is that if you don't want to spend 90-95% of a gig potentially reading palms, leave out the palm reading bit completely. Instead say something like, "You are a very creative individual, Ann. You strike me as a passionate person who is very loyal, sometimes to a fault. You are either a Scorpio or a Leo. I'm going to go with Scorpio. Am I correct?"

### **Recap**

For quick reference, let's break the routine down into 5-phases:

Phase 1: The introduction and Ann writing her thoughts.

Phase 2: The naughty work, i.e. the switch of the Tom Cruise billet for Ann's, and you supposedly writing the name of the famous person you admire.

Phase 3: Ann attempting to guess your thought of celebrity.

Phase 4: You reading Ann. Revealing her star-sign.

Phase 5: Revelation of Ann's thought of famous person.

### **Additional Ideas**

#### **Ann Reads Your Mind**

You may want your spectator to "pick up" on the famous person you are thinking of. If you do, simply say something along the following lines as you are handing Ann the billet.

"Put my celebrity in your pocket along with your famous person. He'll like that."



What you are doing is saying that your famous person is a celebrity which narrows it down to basically actors and musicians. You've also hinted that it's a male. With five guesses it's a good bet they will say either Brad Pitt, Tom Cruise, Tom Hardy or whatever are most famous male celebrities are at the time.

### **Dead or Alive**

In order to do this, write down the name of a dead famous person e.g. Heath Ledger on your billet. At the end of the routine you get Ann to take out the billets and mix them, so she doesn't know which billet is which. Ann is instructed to use her intuition and try to select the living famous person. A pendulum is a great tool for this or employ equivoque to assist in the proper selection. To add this on to your routine all you need do is to mark either billet so you can tell them apart.

### **The Artist**

In the right environment, with the right crowd this is a killer. As you are trying to deduce what famous person Ann is thinking of you say that you are a visual thinker and you worked in Kavos, or other popular tourist destination, in 1998 as a portrait artist on the waterfront. You state that you will do a quick sketch of the female musician you believe Ann is thinking of. Take out another billet and draw the illustration below. Turn it around and ask Ann, "Is this the famous person you are thinking of?" This cracks people up. Then you say something like, "Hmm, you're not impressed with my art I see. Neither were the people in Kavos. That's why I only lasted a day as a portrait artist. Oh, well."

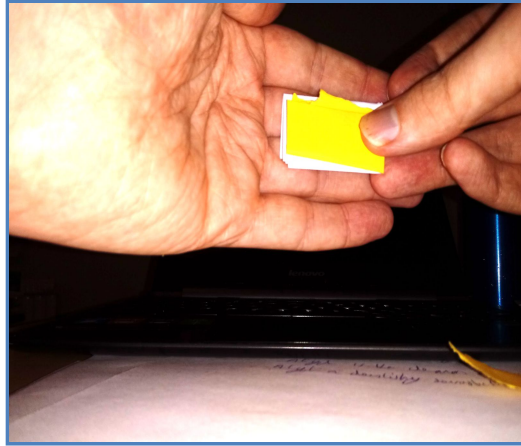


You can then write Lady Gaga above the picture and turn it around to reveal the thought of celebrity. This makes for a very nice memento for Ann. I have people come up to me a year later and show me this billet. They have kept it all that time!!

### **The Medium's Switch**

I really like this switch as it can allow you to subtly show both hands empty while you are making the switch which is pretty cool. Here's what you do. NOTE: I'm left-handed so if you are right-handed simply reverse the following instructions.

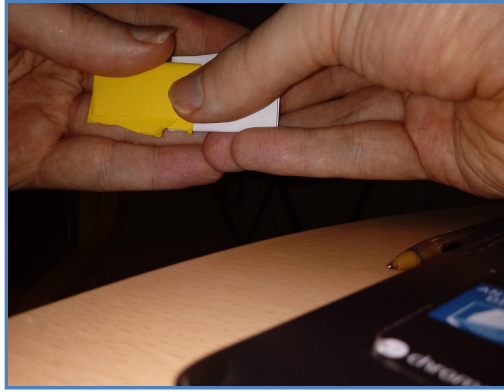
- Have the billet you want to switch, in this case "Tom Cruise," finger palmed in your left hand.
- With your right hand you take Ann's billet, in this case, "Lady Gaga," holding it at your fingertips
- Bring your right hand down to meet your left and place the billet in your right hand (Lady Gaga) on top of the billet in your left hand (Tom Cruise). You want to align the billets as much as possible. NOTE: Lady Gaga is the yellow billet here so you can see what is happening easier.



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- As you are talking about Ann getting five attempts to guess the famous person you are thinking of, take both billets in the right hand as one and gesture with them. Don't make an issue out of this, just casually do it as you are talking.
- Bring your right hand back to the left hand the fingertips of your left hand resting on the fingernails of your right hand as illustrated below.



- Using the thumb of your right hand push Ann's billet into finger palm position in your left hand and retain the Tom Cruise billet in your right hand, as illustrated below.



- With your left hand, run your fingers along the top of the Tom Cruise billet a couple of times as if you are creasing it more. This allows both hands to separate in a smooth and natural manner. See the illustration below. I left Lady Gaga in view for clarity purposes.



- When you are finished creasing, give Ann the Tom Cruise billet to place in her pocket.

When doing any billet switch never look at your hands. Use your eye contact, voice, body language and scripting to make a very smooth switch even more bulletproof.

**Pro Tip for The Medium Switch:**

I first came across this particular way of folding a billet in Allan Ziing's DVD's on billet work. Man, I can still hear that background music of his DVD's playing in my head to this day. Great memories, great guidance.

Not only does this fold allow you a plethora of other advantages; in this case it allows you to show two billets as one much more safely and easily.

Here's what you do; fold the billet once like a book, extending one end just a bit longer than the other. It's like leaving a little lip on the end. The ends are not flush.

Fold it into quarters, once again leaving a little lip. When both billets are folded in this manner, the edges are square, but not perfectly aligned. When holding two billets, it will appear very much like holding just one. I fold all my billets in this fashion, regardless of what switch I use. This method also makes opening the billets with one hand much easier. Many will recognize this technique being employed in other billet switches and centre tears.

Right, you wonderful mentalist you. Start practising this routine, get out there and start performing it and make it your own. Don't let this one gather dust, it is meant to be performed. It really does give powerful results and you can tailor it, add your own flavour and script.

Until we meet in person, I shall raise my glass on this side of the manuscript to your good health and success on your journey in mentalism and in life. I very much hope we will clink our glasses in person in the near future. And I predict we will.

Yours in Mentalism,  
William Patrick (Feb 2020)

### **Credits and Recommended Material**

- I must give thanks to Mitchell Kettlewell for introducing me to his routine called "Thought Backtracking." He credits Nico Heinrich, Fraser Parker and Ross Taylor for being his inspiration. The minute I read it I knew it would sit very comfortably in Algol. I highly

recommend checking out Mitchell's work and if he releases "Thought Backtracking," snap that bad boy up!!

- I also want to thank Docc Hilford. His book "Invisible Stranger" gave me the bones of the idea for this one. That dude really knows his history on the billet workers of the past.
- Bob Cassidy gave me the inspiration for creasing the billet in the Mediums' Switch. It really does help make the move look seamless. I first saw him do this move in his Black Box Cinema DVD.
- Allen Zingg for introducing me to the way I fold billets for the last 15 years or so. It can be found in detail in his "Master Billet Course Vol. 1."
- Ian Rowland's "Full Facts of Cold Reading" is a wealth of information on the art and execution of cold reading techniques. He's a professional writer and it makes understanding this esoteric subject very accessible and structured.
- Thank you also to Terry Tyson who helped edit and clarify points in this manuscript.

### **About the Author**

William "Billy" Patrick has worked as a professional Mentalist in Chicago, Sweden, London and Ireland. He performs regularly doing corporate and wedding entertainment on stage and close-up. He spent five years as a professional Tarot Reader and now runs his own psychological training company. William currently lives in Scotland.

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