

# Deep Clear by Paul Harris



**Effect: You pull out a leather card holder thingy which has some red cards in it and also a blue deck of cards. You do some kind of fakakta trick with the blue cards, during which you ask your spectator to come up with a magic word. Perhaps that word is BUNG. At the conclusion of the stupid trick with the blue deck, you turn their attention to the card holder thingy with the red cards. You slide those cards out of the wallet and spread them to show that each of the cards has a letter written on the back spelling the word BUNG.**

## Review

This is the latest iteration of a trick that Paul has been working on for a couple

of decades now, starting with the Anything Deck which was published in the Art of Astonishment. I've always liked the trick but it's never been one that I do. I likely *will* do this version.

The basic method has always been the same: You have a deck that secretly has all the letters of the alphabet on the back of the cards and—in some manner—you collect the letters you need and then display them in such a way that it seems like you didn't just do exactly what you did (gather the letter cards from the deck that's in play).

The props for Deep Clear work fine and the teaching is okay, although a little weird. The download instructions are done by a guy named Shaun Jay. When I first watched the instructions I thought it was one of those situations where they're like, "We got a *complete laymen* to learn the trick to show you how easy it is!" But it turns out he's a performing magician. He must have either been nervous or he's not a card guy, because he handled the cards in what struck me as a bizarre manner, the way non-magicians do: awkward and tentatively and with a weird claw-like grip. He seems like a nice guy, but I have no clue why Paul Harris Presents chose him to do the instructions. Please bring back Bro Gilbert. Or just drag your ass in front of the camera, Paul, you weird hermit.

Okay, so as I said, I like the trick. You won't be blown away by the method, but it's workable and the price is fair. Is that enough "reviewing" for the review part?

Let's move on to what I find more interesting to talk about: the weakness of the structure of the trick and what I believe the best way to address those weaknesses are.

As I mentioned in the description of the effect, there are two parts to the presentation. There is the opening trick, during which you set up for the finale. And there is the climax where you reveal the spectator's freely chosen magic word.

The opening trick that Paul provides isn't very good. It's a 3 out of 10 *at best*. The spectator selects a card from their half of the deck, it's placed into your half of the deck. You look at the backs of the cards to try and find the card

with their “fingerprint” on it, then you use the plunger principle to reveal the card. It’s a nothing trick.

One of the “fixes” to this problem comes from Dave Loosley. He has changed it so the opening trick is the Biddle Trick. This is definitely an upgrade as far the impact of the initial phase. But the weakness of that initial phase *isn’t the problem with this trick*. The problem is in the *transition* between the two effects. Why are you performing these two together? What is this wallet thing doing on the table?

With the original version, that transition is muddled. With the Loosley variation, the transition is **equally muddled**, maybe more-so. (And you have the additional issue that if the spectator’s look at the letter cards at the end, there’s a chance (not a great one, but a possibility) that they’ll remember those cards as being the exact ones you pulled out of the deck earlier. Not a good look.)

You don’t need to make the initial trick stronger. It doesn’t fix the trick, all that does is make you more comfortable doing the opening phase. What you need to do is *fix the transition*.

The presentation I’m going to give you solves the problem. You will feel no awkwardness during the initial phase. (In fact, I use an even *dumber* trick than Paul suggests.)

And the momentum of the presentation will pull you into the climax rather than having to awkwardly stumble from one trick to the other. The two parts feel of a whole, not slapped together. So it doesn’t invite the question..., “I wonder why he tacked this bad (or average) trick onto this good one?”

## **Presentation**

My friend asks to see a trick.

“Oh, sure. I have something I’ve been wanting to try out. It’s my newest trick.”

I set a leather card holder on the table in front of me. Some red cards are seen inside.



“I’m going to have you think of a word. So just think of any.. wait. Actually, it’s probably best if I do something else first. You’ll see why. Let me see...,” I pat my pockets. “I have a cool coin trick, but I need a half dollar. Hmm... I... will... show...you...,” I say, slowly, as if I started the sentence before knowing where it was going. “Uhm... okay. Here’s what I will do. I’m going to show you the *first* trick I ever learned. So you’ll see my first trick followed by the most recent one. You’ll see how far I’ve come.”

I push the leather holder away from me and into the middle of the performing surface. I get up and get a deck of cards and bring it back. I uncase it and toss the empty case in the center of the table.

“This is a trick I used to show people all the time. Not because it was good, but because I was a kid and I didn’t know any better. I didn’t even really love the trick back then, to be honest. But it was the first trick I learned and it gave me a chance to get a personalized magic word for each of my friends and family. For some reason that was very interesting to me. My mom’s word was ‘Duck.’ My dad’s word was ‘Pork.’ My brother’s was ‘Womp.’

“So I want you to think about what your magic word will be. Here are the rules. It has to be one syllable. It can’t use the same letter twice. It can’t start with the same letter as your first name. It *can* be a made-up word. If it’s a thing, it can’t be anything visible in the room. So, with those constraints, what is your magic word going to be?”

She thinks for a bit.

“Plum.”

“Perfect. That’s exactly right. ‘Plum’ is forever going to be your magic word.”

I then show her the initial trick. As I’ll explain more in the Handling section, I do the rising card using the pinky. But you could do the plunger principle as trick as well. Or anything else you want.

So I’m at the point where I’m running my index finger along the top edge of the deck. “Rise, rise!” I say. I raise my finger, but nothing happens. “Oh, we need to use your personal magic word.” I tap the deck. “Plum!” I raise my finger again and the card mysteriously (?) rises out of the deck.

I put my hand out, as if to quiet their raucous reaction. “No applause. No applause. Just throw money.” I say, quoting something I heard in a movie as a kid.

I offer to show her how it’s done (if it’s not completely obvious). In the process of that, I clean things up between us, removing the wallet and the empty case and setting them aside so we have a clear working surface between us (and doing the load in the process),

After the brief teaching session I set the cards aside..

“I admit, it’s *not* great. What do you want?! I was eight... teen. No, I’m kidding I was just seriously just like seven or eight.

“It truly was more about getting someone’s personal magic word out of them. For whatever reason I loved learning what people thought of. You just never

know what they'll say. My best friend's word was BLIX. Just a nonsense word he made up when I asked him. But he ended up getting it tattooed on him years later. It became meaningful to him in some way."

I slide the wallet toward me. The wallet which seems to have been out of play since the start.

I begin to slide the cards out of the wallet.

"That's the reason I had to show you another trick first, so I could find out what *your* magic word would be. Because, you see, after 25 years of doing magic, that's what my *newest* trick is all about." I turn over the cards revealing:

P L U M



Here are some of the benefits of this presentation.

- By bringing the wallet out alone at first, the implication is that you could conceivably go forward without anything else. The deck is only introduced as an afterthought.
- Showing them your earliest trick and your latest trick is a fairly interesting premise. It suggests a journey without saying much else. It would be as if you saw the latest work of a great painter along with her very first painting. There's an inherent story there. The tricks themselves don't have to be related. The connection is *you*. Not only does this make a bit more sense than jamming together two apparently random tricks, but it also allows for the first trick to not be very good.
- Adding a couple more conditions to what they can choose for their magic word ends up making the requirement that "every letter be different" seem less suspicious. And since these were the rules you came up with when you were a kid, they don't have to be logical.

- In the original handling, you bring the wallet (which you've made no mention of) in contact with the deck right before the reveal. It doesn't look good and the justification is awfully weak. Here the wallet comes in contact with the deck as you "clean up" the scene (clearing a space between you two so you can demonstrate something in regard to the trick you just showed them) and focus isn't brought back onto it until a few moments later when you can draw everyone's attention to it and pick it up cleanly. I think there's a good chance they won't remember you touching it since the trick started.

The way I wrote up the presentation is the way I perform it, where it sort of unfolds as you go along. But if you want something more direct you can just start with, "I'm going to show you the first trick I ever learned and then I'm going to show you the most recent trick I learned."

## **Handling**

My handling of the trick is very different than what is offered in the original. If you don't own the trick, this section might not make any sense or be particularly interesting. Feel free to skip it.

The two primary changes I made are these:

1. I didn't want to use the plunger principle. Not because it's bad, but because it's not completely reliable.
2. I don't like the fact that you have to stare at the backs of the cards to pull out the correct letters during the effect. This may be my own hang-up, but I just don't like putting focus on the back of the cards and then having a revelation where writing appears on the back of cards. Will a real spectator ever put these things together in their mind? I have no clue. I'm just not a fan of it, or of the motivation, "I'm looking for your fingerprint."

In my handling you don't have to look at the backs of the cards. So that means you're pulling out the letters while looking at the faces. You might think that would mean you have to memorize the faces assigned with the letters or be very careful about counting your way through the alphabet as you spread the

cards, but that's not the case. I came up with a way around both those options. We'll get to that in a moment (in the section, "The Alphabet Stack").

Here's what the handling looks like.

The deck is set up the same way as the original except the gimmicked joker is on the bottom.

I give them half the deck. They select a card. As they do this, I get a break somewhere in my half and get a peek of the card above my break. I take their card back from them and put it in the break and set my half deck on the table and shake out my hands. Their card is now sitting below the card I peeked.

I pick up the pack, turn it face-up, and double-undercut the Joker to the back. (I do this so it's not so obvious I know the general location of their card.) Then I spread the deck hand to hand face-up, culling out the letter cards I need (as explained in the next section). If culling isn't an option for you, then just open rearrange them as if you're moving around different options you're considering.

Either way, those cards go to the back of the half-deck. During this, I am looking from their face to the spread and back as if I'm trying to read their mind or something.

I spread back to their selection. "Look at me," I say. And when their eyes meet mine, I pull their card out and move it to the back of the half-deck. This isn't really a "secret" move. It's okay if they know I did something. I just don't want them to know I've identified their card just yet.

I then do the pinky card rise. Failing first and then succeeding after we say their magic word.

I toss their card to them and ask them if they know how it's done or if they'd like to learn. I gather up the card case and wallet which are between us set them aside (doing the load) and lean in to discuss this dumb trick.



They usually have some idea how it's done. So they pick up the card and put it on their half stack and show me what they think I did. If they don't have any idea, I tell them and help them out with the finger positioning.

Now, here's something you don't have to do, but I do it whenever I can. While they are demonstrating the card rise. I just switch the half-deck I have for a normal blue-backed half deck. It is the perfect time for a switch. They are concentrating on their half-deck. My half is going to be out of play the rest of the time anyway. I just put my hands below the table as I lean in or in my hoodie pockets or whatever. It's almost impossible to get caught because their focus is on the cards in their hand. Maybe there is a secondary focus on the wallet on the table. But there is zero attention paid to the cards you hold.

Now I'm free to mess around with my cards openly, or even hand them to the person to reassemble the full deck.

If I'm not at a table or a couch or wearing something that would allow me to do the switch, then I won't, but otherwise I will. It's just nice to have things be so clean.

After we've exhausted any potential fun to be found in the rising card portion, I push the deck aside, turn their attention to the wallet, and take it from there.

## **The Alphabet Stack**

Originally, when I didn't want to look at the back of the cards, I would just use the alphabet cards in order and silently say my way through the alphabet as I spread through the cards face up, one-by-one, and culled them.

That required a bit too much concentration. I wanted it to feel more free. And I didn't want to have to start over if I got lost or end up with the totally wrong letters if I was off in my count.

So I came up with the Alphabet Stack. This seems like something that may have existed before—the sort of thing Lewis Jones or someone would have come up with—but I've never encountered it. Probably because it doesn't have much use beyond this trick.



This is the stack I use for my letter cards. I actually use the reverse of this stack, with the 2 at the back, but you could do it either way. I just chose those orientation so the photo made the most sense from left to right.

What this stack allows you to do is just spread the cards from hand to hand and know where all the letters are without counting them off one-by-one. What little memorization there is, you'll be able to do in a couple of minutes.

Seeing any individual card won't tell you much, but the stack of 26 together in context makes perfect sense.

The idea behind it is simple. Each card kind of looks or sounds like the letter which is on the back of it (with a few exceptions).

Here's the full list:

A - 4 - A four looks very similar to a capital A. (I don't use an Ace here because the Aces are used to represent the letter of their suit.)

B - 8 - An eight and a capital B look similar

C - Ace of Clubs

D - Ace of Diamonds

E - 3 - The E and 3 are mirror images.

F - 4 - Four begins with F

G - 6 - A six and a capital G look similar

H - Ace of Hearts

I - 10 - The one looks similar to the I

J - Jack - Obvious

K - King - Obvious

L - 7 - An L is a 7 turned upside-down.

M - 3 - An M is a 3 turned on its side

N - 9 - NiNe

O - 10 - An O looks like the zero in ten

P - 9 - A nine is like a backwards P

Q - Queen (obvious)

R - 4 - The last sound in a four is R

S - Ace of Spades

T - A 7 almost looks like a capital T.

U - 2 - The band U2

V - 7 - A seven is a rotated V. Or think of seVen.

W - 3 - W is a rotated 3.

X - King - A K is close to an X

Y - 8 - I have no real reason for this. But if you don't know the last three letters of the alphabet by heart, you're too dumb to use this anyway. The 2nd letter of the alphabet is an 8, so I put another 8 at the second to last letter as well. Okay, here's your mnemonic. "WHY (Y) is there an 8 in the Y position?" Done.

Z - 2 - 2 and Z are essentially the same.

It becomes very easy to pick out which card is which letter when you see the whole thing in context. Just keep your eye out for the J K L M section, which I feel sticks out pretty prominently, and you'll be able to get a good sense for where you are in the alphabet.

A few simple rules to keep in mind:

- Aces always represent the letter of their suit, ex., Ace of Clubs is C.
- The 4 *near* the front of the stack (not *at* the front) is the first sound in the word Four. The 4 near the end is the last sound in the word Four.
- When you reach the first 10, you pay attention to the first digit: One = I. The second 10 you pay attention to the second digit Zero = I.

Once they say the word I remind myself of the general areas I'll be looking for the letters.

If they said BARK, I'd think. "Okay, I'll cull the R (4 in the second half of spread) and the K (King in the J-K-L-M section), then I'll cut the A and B to the back."

If they said PORN, I'd think. "Okay, I'll spread until I get to the J-K-L-M section and then cull the N (9), O (10), P (9), skip the Queen, and R (4)."

The only thing that may screw you up is that their selection is in the stack now. But you know exactly where it is, so it shouldn't get in the way that much.

From there you proceed as indicated in the "Handling" section.