Hand in the Air

A blindfold

THE TRICK: The magician is blindfolded and asks a volunteer to raise one of his hands. As the volunteer is holding up a hand, the magician gives him a series of instructions, such as, "Cross your legs," "Count aloud to 20," "Sing a verse of I Been Workin' on the Railroad." Then the magician says, "Now lower your hand." As the volunteer does so, the magician takes off his blindfold, and examines the two hands of the volunteer, pointing to the hand that was held in the air.

THE SECRET: The magician can identify the hand held up because it will be somewhat paler than the other. When a hand is held high for 30 seconds or so, it loses blood and its color is slightly altered. While the difference is slight, it can be detected. The purpose of the series of instructions is merely to prolong the time that the hand is held up, so that it will lose a significant amount of blood.