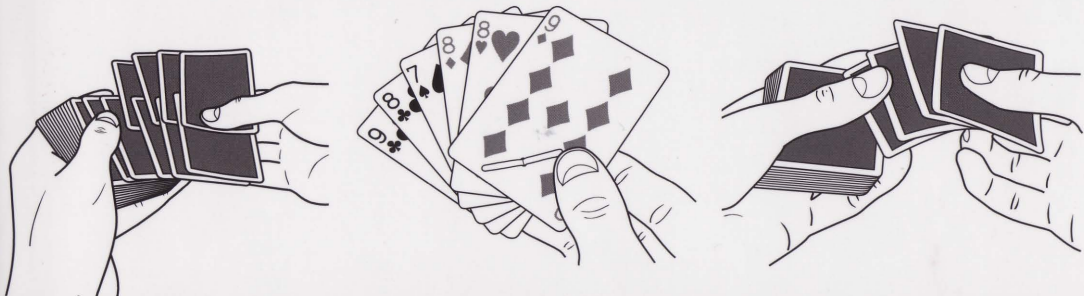


# Handcrafted

## Card Magic



Denis Behr

Versions of the following routines have been published in German language in the magazine *Magische Welt* (published by Wittus Witt, Krefeld): “Oil & Water Finale” (Issue 1/2002), “Plop” (Issue 1/2003), “Oil & Water” (Issue 1/2004), “Magic Monthly” (Issue 5/2006), “A Trick for Allen Kennedy” (Issue 5/2006). “Finding The Way Home” appears in a shorter version in Issue 5/2006.

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Printed in Germany by Joh. Walch GmbH & Co KG, Augsburg.

## Acknowledgments

Unlike S.W. Erdnase, I have not “only myself to thank for what I know.” Quite the contrary: I have several people to thank for, all of whom helped in making this book possible.

First of all there is my friend Pit Hartling. Not only did he write the fine foreword to this volume, he also helped with corrections, ideas, stimulations and constant encouragement and is a reliable lifestyle consultant.

The latter is also true for another friend of mine from Munich, Stefan Wiegard. He is responsible for the pre-illustrative photography on which I based the figures.

Having tried to write the book in English myself, numerous errors had to be corrected. Thanks go to Jason England who helped in editing the whole text. Hopefully I didn't destroy everything with my last-minute modifications.

Greg Manwaring and Stephen Minch also had helpful suggestions what content and language is concerned.

Working with a layout software was another new experience. I have to thank the many people who constantly received e-mails with the latest version of the layout or particular tricks and came back with helpful comments and suggestions.

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# Foreword

by Pit Hartling

I knew the day would come.

It was only a question of time until Denis Behr would finally write a book.

Denis is a thoughtful guy, you know. With well over a thousand titles in his personal magic library he would hesitate to add another book on Card Magic to the lot. The same holds true for lecturing. For years he used to say: "But what could I talk about that has not been said many times before? I don't have much to show, really."

No, Denis would rather quietly continue his studies of mathematics and physics at Munich University, have a good Bavarian "Bier" (or two), happily practice advanced technique, read everything that he could lay his hands on and regularly perform at a nearby restaurant once a week.

If Denis had had his way, this could easily have gone on forever. Fortunately, however, talent has a tendency to push through, so it did not take long for the magic world to take notice.

It all started one day in a small German online forum, when the discussion turned to advanced card moves. Denis unsuspectingly uploaded some short, homemade movie clips, showing what those sleights were supposed to look like. Big mistake!

It was literally a matter of days until some of the clips that were intended as nothing but short throw-away demos (at least one of the original clips was taped in pajamas!) had gone out of control and made their way to all four corners of the world.

A little story to illustrate: A few years back I was happily shuffling along with three teen-aged magicians at a convention in Boston in the middle of the night. As I continued showing off with Denis' material (yeah I know. I couldn't help it) I kept mentioning my "good friend from Munich". At one point I showed them a funny and brilliantly cryptic short message that Denis had sent to my cell phone. It consisted of nothing but numbers, separated by commas and the words "oil and water" (incidentally, you will find that clever set-up and what it is all about on page 53 in this book). When they saw the name of the sender on the display, they cried out: "You know Denis Behr!?" Whether he wanted to or not, Denis had long made the leap over the Atlantic Ocean.

So what about the book?

Simply put, this is strong, strong stuff! I have seen Denis perform "Brute Force Opening", "Plop", "Magic Monthly", and "Oil and Water" (complete with his incredible finale) countless times in real-life performing situations as diverse as sitting on a sofa at a party, at tables in "his" restaurant, or in formal Close-Up-Show settings, and I can fully attest to their effectiveness. With the granted exception of "Gray Matters" this is all material designed for (and evolved with) the use in real live.

The chapter, however, that I predict will stand-out as one of the most important and influential contributions to the study of stacked-deck magic is "Finding The Way Home".

At first sight, the concept elaborated here may be shrugged off as pure academic amusement (and Denis will be the first to agree that it is indeed great fun).

In actual performance, however, those sequences (and the ones you will discover yourselves once you start looking for your own "ways home") are not only entirely practical, they actually add a whole new layer of deception and increase the impact of your stacked-deck work a hundredfold (believe me, I have seen it happen).

Please, do yourself a favour and follow a few of those procedures with a deck in hand. After a few run-throughs, what may read like a monstrous complexity will become easy and be done in a matter of seconds. (On second thought... maybe you should skip that chapter at all. Yeah, forget what I said. That stuff is really nothing. Don't bother.)

It took a while until Denis finally wrote a book. But when he did, he did it right: Not only did he type every word, but he also did the illustrations himself, designed the cover, did the layout, looked up every single reference and finished the job in just under three months. As usual, I have no idea how he did it.

I am very happy that the day has finally come.

And I am sure you will be very happy as well, when you now delve into Denis Behr's "Handcrafted Card Magic".

Enjoy!

Pit Hartling

Frankfurt, April 2007

# Introduction

Being an aficionado of the printed word, it was no question that my first publication would be a book. Most of the material you will read in this volume is material which I perform all the time and which has turned out to be very practical. I am in love with virtually every branch of card magic and you will find that this is reflected in the described effects. The methods run the gamut from sleight-of-hand to stacks, gaffs, mathematics and wordplay.

Why card magic?

What makes card magic so attractive for me, besides the practical issue of packing flat, is versatility in both effect and method.

Concerning the former, there is virtually no effect that cannot be approached with a deck of cards. (Though, admittedly, there do exist some that shouldn't.) It is similar to the piano, which has a comparable exceptional position as a musical instrument. The vast amount of sheet music available for the piano covers every style of every era, and if a pianist falls in love with something that was not written for his instrument of choice – well, he writes a transcription for it. This is always possible, since the piano offers so many possibilities. In the same way, playing cards can travel, appear, vanish, transform, penetrate, multiply, shrink and grow, one can use them to read minds, predict events, perform stunts and demonstrations of extraordinary skill, topological curiosities or mental feats, and yes, one can even play games with them.

On the other hand, having access to an impressive variety of methodological concepts allows the construction of magic that is profoundly deceptive, especially by combining several of them. One has access to a myriad of sleights, gaffed cards and decks, mathematical principles, physical concepts, extern gimmicks, psychological techniques and more. (Take in contrast for example coin magic, which is mostly based on pure manual methods and the occasional gaff.) After all, first and foremost the method has to be deceptive, since otherwise no magic is performed.

You will find a couple of routines in this book that require a stacked deck. Effects that make use of prearrangements can be extremely powerful. The reason is simple: By setting up the deck, you are far ahead of the audience before the trick has even started. Consequently, miracles are possible; especially when they are combined with other principles like sleight-of-hand or even gaffs.

It is true that routines with a stack are often relatively sleight-free. But this does not mean that they are easy. I am not talking about presentation or audience-management, which are a vital part of every magic routine. I am talking about the very physical actions that are required to do the trick. Handling a stack confidently and in a tell-free manner requires practice and experience, but the tools you get on your hands are easily worth it.

If stacked deck work is rather new to you, I hope you find some of the ideas and concepts in this book intriguing enough to start working on this branch of card magic. If on the other hand you are already using large setups, there will be no need to convince you of their value. The principles on memorized deck magic and stack management in some of the following chapters are hopefully interesting for you, too.

If you have any comments, questions or suggestions, do not hesitate to contact me, for example at [contact@denisbehr.de](mailto:contact@denisbehr.de).

So, let's get started!

Denis Behr

Munich, April 2007

# Brute Force Opening

**A**s an opener, there is no routine that I perform more often than this sequence. It has the advantage of quickly getting the spectators' attention with three strong rapid-fire effects. This opening helps to establish oneself as a competent performer worth watching. The routine tends to effectively "knock out" the spectators – hence the title.

## Effect

A spectator peeks at a card in the deck. The magician then places an indifferent card between the palms of another spectator's hands. This card then transforms into the selection. A moment later it changes back into the indifferent card, while the selection is calmly produced from the otherwise empty card case.

## Preparation

None. Simply place the empty and closed card case onto the table. It should sit off to the side with its flap side pointing towards the spectators. You should still be able to reach the case with your right hand while simultaneously palming a card in the same hand.

The performance of this trick doesn't alter the order of the cards, so you can do it anytime with a stacked deck. In the course of the effect, the stack is only given one single cut.

## Performance

Ask a spectator to select a card by using the peek technique.<sup>1</sup> Show the card around to several spectators to include them into the effect and in case the spectator forgets his card. (Remember, this is an opening routine.) After the peek, you are holding a break below the selection and need to control it to the top. You can use your favourite procedure. I like to use a direct and passive method here (which means that from the spectator's point of view the order of the cards remains unchanged, as opposed to a control using a shuffle or cut):

With a shuffled deck I use a side steal.<sup>2</sup> With a stacked deck, I pick up the break above the selection and control the card to the top via a pass.

Whatever you use for the control – do not execute it too early. Pause instead and just hold the break for a moment. Begin the control only when the attention of the spectators is no longer on the deck. This time misdirection after the peek makes it much more deceptive.

You now perform a double lift, showing an indifferent card. After turning the double back down, you give the top card to a spectator and then reveal that the indifferent card has magically transformed into the peeked-at selection. I'd like to go into some detail here to illustrate how the application of Ascanio's theory of in-transit actions<sup>3</sup> helps in choreographing this sequence in a more deceptive way, which makes the transformation much stronger as a result:

The chosen card is on top. Turn over the top two cards as one and display an indifferent card. The double is taken off the deck with the right fingers and thumb and moved to the right (*figure 1*). To take the heat off the double, the left thumb riffles the outer left corner of the deck as you say, "This cannot be your card, since it is somewhere in the middle of the deck." Ask a spectator

<sup>1</sup> See Roberto Giobbi's *Card College, Volume 1* (1996) on page 72, "The Peek Control".

<sup>2</sup> An excellent description can be found in the third volume of Roberto Giobbi's *Card College* (1998), page 759.

<sup>3</sup> If you are not aware of this concept, I recommend that you check it out in the words of the originator. See *The Magic of Ascanio, Volume 1 – The Structural Conception of Magic* (2005), page 67.

to hold out one hand. You want to place the card between the spectator's palms for the transformation. Unfortunately, it is still a double

and you need to go back to the deck for the unload that completes the switch. This weak spot is covered by an in-transit action: To illustrate how the spectator should hold out her hand, you hold out your right hand yourself. To be able to do this, you need to get rid of the card that is held in this hand. So you place the double onto the deck, hold it in place with the left thumb and immediately hold out your right hand as a demonstration

(figure 2). (The card is thereby placed onto the deck in an in-transit action while the main action consists of illustrating what the spectator is about to do. Of course, you ignore the in-transit action

yourself and just focus on the main action.) While the spectator is following your instructions, you calmly turn the double over, take off the top card – the selection – and place it onto the spectator's palm. Let the spectator

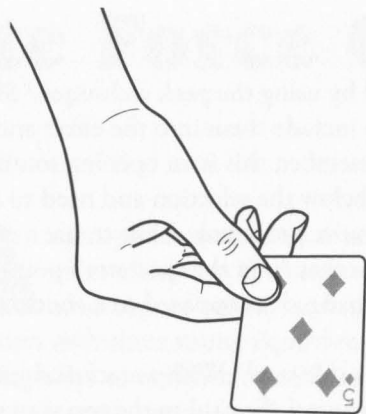


fig. 1

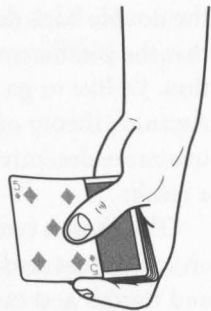


fig. 2

place the other hand on top of it, thus sandwiching the card between both hands. (This way, the spectator has no opportunity to prematurely turn over the card.) You again demonstrate this by holding your hands together yourself. To do this, you place the deck face up on the table in another in-transit action. Thus your hands are empty, which strengthens the transformation by not having the cause of the method in your hands.

Snap your fingers and ask the spectator to turn over both hands and take them apart. The card has changed into the selection. For laypeople, this in itself is a very strong effect (although it may only be a simple double lift to us).

While the spectators are reacting, you pick up the deck and hold it in face down dealing position. Take back the selection and execute a top change (figure 3).<sup>4</sup> Since the effect is apparently over, this is a good moment for this technique.

Before the attention is too low, you bring it back and change the card again into the indifferent card. I like to do the pirouette flourish as a magical gesture here, before revealing the effect.<sup>5</sup>

This second transformation is also very strong since the card was examined just a moment before.

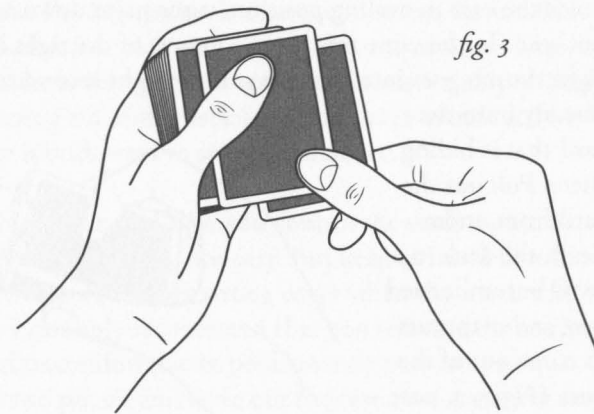


fig. 3

<sup>4</sup> Volume 1 of Roberto Giobbi's *Card College* (1996), page 233.

<sup>5</sup> Volume 4 of Roberto Giobbi's *Card College* (2000), page 1022.



You do not give the spectators a chance to recover before finishing them off with the case finale which I usually throw in very casually, almost as an after-thought. Palm the selection from the top of the deck into your right hand and place the deck onto the table. Your right hand picks up the card case (figure 4) and apparently removes the selection from it. This is a well-known technique by Ed Marlo<sup>6</sup> in which you first place the card aligned on the box as if you

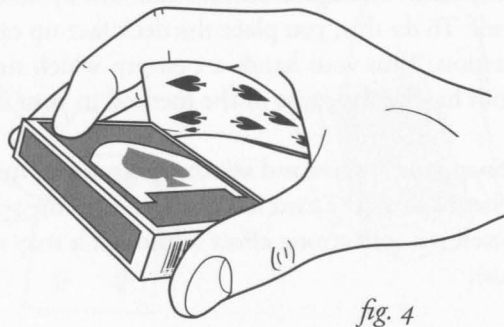


fig. 4

are replacing a palmed card onto the deck. Immediately the left hand, that holds the case in dealing position, turns palm down so the replaced card is not seen. In the same motion the fingers of the right hand open the flap. The right thumb goes into the case and the right second finger underneath it and directly onto the card that is hiding there. Pull out the card from underneath the deck in a swift but unhurried way and it appears to come out of the case. (Figure 5, note that the flap is on the bottom and not the top of the case. Oddly enough, the overall illusion is better that way.)

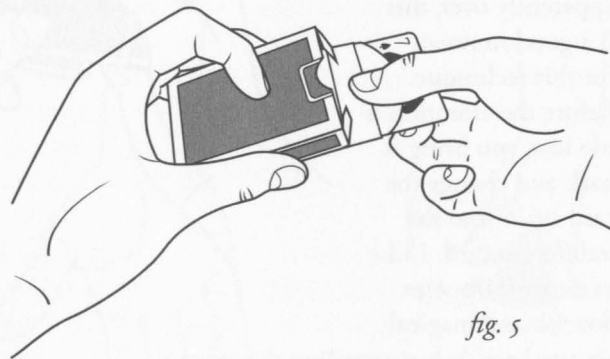


fig. 5

This completes this short routine.

<sup>6</sup> See for example one of the following sources: "Marlo's Card to Card Case" in *Marlo's Discoveries* (1946) or *Early Marlo* (1964) on page 58, "The Card in the Card Case" on page 26 of *The Magic of Matt Schulien* (Philip Reed Willmarth, 1959), *The Magic of Michael Ammar* (1991) on page 152, *The Complete Works of Derek Dingle* (1982) on page 155.

## Remarks

Performed cleanly, every one of the three effects is quite strong. You are barely into the routine before the first effect happens. After this routine the spectators should be eager for you to continue entertaining them.

The peek as a selection procedure has the advantage of being fast and not wasting a lot of time on the selection and replacement of a card. Also, it is completely under your control and cannot be messed up by the spectator which would be especially bad in an opener.

The description of the basic switch with the double lift has taken up some space, but I hope that you appreciate the management of the double lift in a way that provides as much conviction as possible that the indifferent card is in the spectator's hands. The impression is that one moment the indifferent card is face up and isolated in your right hand, and one moment later the card is in the possession of the spectator and your hands are empty. Both the actual switch and getting rid of the deck are placed in in-transit actions (where they belong). Try it both ways to see the difference.

Since this routine uses (depending on how you control the card) a pass, a top change and a palm, it is technically not easy. But keep in mind that the top change and palm are executed under strong cover when the routine is already apparently over. I can only recommend that you rehearse the routine as written and if you feel uncomfortable in performance, you can just quit the routine after one or two phases and leave out the rest. As a matter of fact, when no table is available I omit the final phase or reproduce the card from my pocket.

# Plop

**H**ere is what you can do with this tool, which can be used for a number of applications: You take a deck of cards and spread through some of the cards face down, square up the cards and set them onto the table. Palmed in your left hand remains any four-of-a-kind you wish. Alternatively, you can just control it to the bottom of the deck.

In essence, you can get any named four-of-a-kind under your control without looking at the faces of the cards. And the good news is that the method is impromptu. Well, impromptu if you use a memorized deck that is. But as most stack users would probably agree, an effect that makes use of the stack and doesn't destroy it is filed away as an impromptu effect. Juan Tamariz already published some ideas to bring together a chosen four-of-a-kind.<sup>7</sup> What I describe here requires less thinking and is more efficient. The reason is that you have done the thinking at home already, as you will see. So, let's have a look at the workings.

The general idea is rather simple and straightforward: You will use a spread cull to gather the four cards at the bottom of the deck. Here is how to make this idea workable.

## The Culling Procedure

Since the cards are in memorized deck order, you know the position of every card and in theory could just spread through the cards face down and cull

<sup>7</sup> See *Mnemonic* (2004), pages 104-106. The applications given there can of course be used with the concept I am about to introduce.

the wanted cards while counting as you thumb over the cards. That does not sound very practical however, since the cards may be very far down in the deck and consequently you need to count and think a lot, which makes your evil plans a bit transparent. To solve this problem, it is useful to construct an optimized way to cull out the cards for every one of the thirteen values.

What should this procedure look like? First you cut one of the wanted cards to the face of the deck. This kind of cut, relying on estimation (and a correction in the case of a miscut), is an action to which most practitioners of a memorized deck are used to. But you do not cut just any one of the four possible cards to the face, but the one that assures that the other three wanted cards are as near to the top of the deck as possible. (*Figure 1* shows the desired configuration. The cards of the four-of-a-kind are shaded for clarity.) If you

examine your stack and the distribution of the four-of-a-kinds

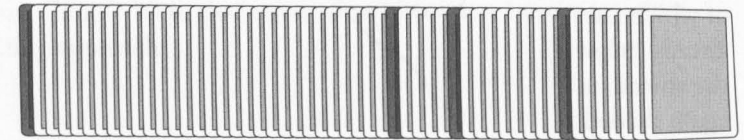


fig. 1

(understanding the order as a cycle), you will find an optimized position for every value, that allows you to cull the missing three cards of the same value as the bottom card to the face of the deck with a minimal number of cards to spread through.<sup>8</sup>

While this seems to be a bit complicated, it is actually quite straightforward in concept if you think about it. One needs to prepare a list in which one jots down the card that one has to cut to the bottom for each value.

<sup>8</sup> For counting cards while spreading through the deck have a look at the appropriately named „Counting Cards while spreading them between the Hands“ in the third volume of Roberto Giobbi's *Card College*, page 510. From Alex Elmsley comes the additional tip to count in a 3-3-2-2-rhythm which consists of a block of ten cards and can easily be done by feel.

To cull the cards in an efficient way, it is useful that in addition to the required starting position of the deck, you also memorize the distances that the three cards you need to cull are apart from each other. So you have a triplet of numbers like (8,9,5) for every value, which gives you the relative positions of the wanted cards. In this example, you need to cull the eighth card from the top,

then the ninth card from there and then the card that is five cards down from there (see *figure 2*, the four-of-a-kind, two cards of which are already below the spread, is again shaded).

By approaching the problem in that way, you do not need to go through the entire stack in your head. You just need to count to the next memorized number, which is both easier and quicker.

To summarize the procedure, you need to memorize two things for each of the thirteen values: The suit that needs to be cut to the bottom and the relative distance of the other three cards from the top of the deck. It is required to commit a list of thirteen suits and thirteen number triplets to memory, both linked to the thirteen values. This is half as difficult as it sounds. I thought about this treatment of the four-of-a-kinds with my friend Pit Hartling, and we arranged the whole list and memorized it while taking a little walk. It really isn't that much work.

If you are using the stack by Juan Tamariz, you are lucky. It has the little-known feature that every four-of-a-kind can be found within a block of 26 consecutive cards. Hence you never need to spread through more than half the deck with this stack. For the Tamariz stack, your list would look like this:

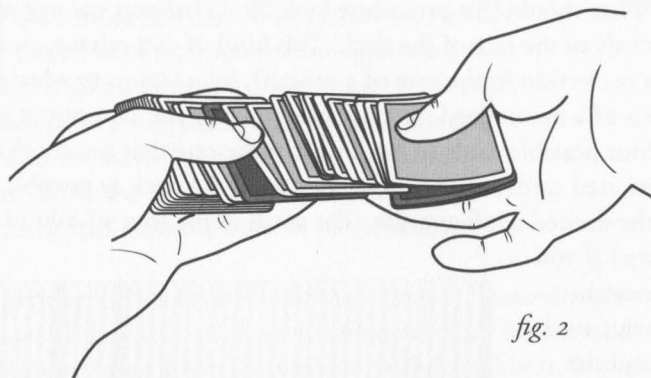


fig. 2

AD (4,8,8)  
 2H (8,9,8)  
 3C (8,9,7)  
 4S (2,11,4)  
 5H (8,9,5)  
 6C (8,9,8)  
 7S (4,6,8)  
 8H (8,7,4)  
 9C (8,9,8)  
 10C (10,4,11)  
 JH (12,4,9)  
 QD (2,15,2)  
 KC (8,5,4)

Why the name "Plop"? Well, that refers to an effect that I use most often with this culling approach:

### **Plop - The Effect**

A spectator takes the deck and places it in the card case himself. The performer takes back the cased deck and asks the spectator for any value. While holding the box at the tips of his fingers, the performer just presses on top of the case and with a "plop" four cards penetrate the case and drop onto the spectator's hand. They are exactly the four cards of the chosen value.

### **Performance**

Have your deck in memorized order and casually false shuffle the cards. Address a spectator with the request, "Please name any number from One to Thirteen." As soon as he complies (let's say he calls out the number Five), you turn away and almost absentmindedly talk to some spectators. "By the way, it is important that those cards are not marked in any way. You see, some people suspect these things, like if this angel looks a bit more to the right that this tells

me something. But that's not the case here. Ok. Can you please check this card case?" While chatting about the playing cards or anything else you decided upon, start spreading through the cards face down to illustrate your point and cull the four cards of the chosen value (Five in this case) to the face of the deck by using the procedure above.

Give the card case to a spectator, so he can examine it briefly. While he is doing this, you palm the bottom four cards – the chosen four-of-a-kind – in your left hand. Hand the deck over to the spectator with the request that he inserts it into its case.

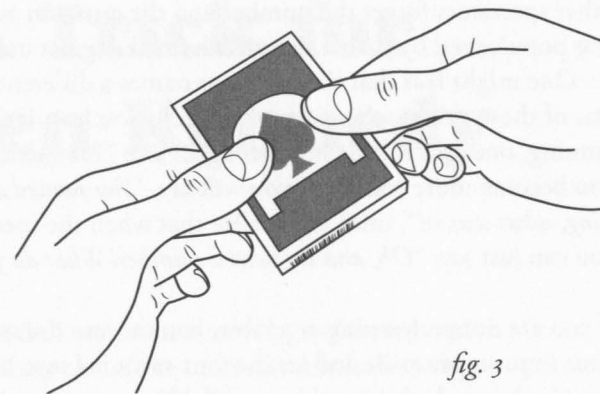
Since you ignored the spectator who chose the number earlier, you now come back to him as if you are asking the question for the first time. *"As you know, there are thirteen values in a pack. The four Aces, four Deuces and so on up to the Queens and Kings. Please name a number from One to Thirteen."* The spectator will now repeat the number (Five in this example) he mentioned earlier. (See also the comments below.)

Take the cased deck back from the spectator with your right hand. *"Ok, then I'll try to find all the cards of your value. You do want the Fives?"* While asking this rhetoric question, you are gesturing with your right hand towards the spectator. To be able to do so, you place the deck in the left hand on top of the palmed cards in an in-transit action. Bring both hands together and add the palmed cards to the case, so they are aligned with the card case.<sup>9</sup> Transfer the case with the cards hidden below to the fingertips of the right hand – first and second finger underneath and the thumb on top. If you keep the case in motion, everything looks fair and the cards below will not be seen. (Of course you hold the bottom of the deck towards the table.) Use the same grip with your left fingers at the left side (*figure 3*). Now you can kind of bend the deck in its case a little to give the impression that you are feeling something about the cards and their positions.

Finally, the right hand takes over the deck, with the four-of-a-kind underneath, in an open end grip, displaying as much of the deck as possible. To cause the four-of-a-kind to penetrate the case, you just take the outstretched first and second finger of the left hand and press onto the case. Simultane-

<sup>9</sup> This is no different from adding cards to a loose deck. Whether you are using the classic palm or the Gambler's Cop, you'll find details on how to handle the replacement in the third volume of Roberto Giobbi's *Card College* (1998), pages 710 and 729.

ously the right fingers are releasing the cards below the case, which fall straight down onto the table. It should look like you are simply pressing the four cards through the deck and case with a single "plop", which is quite surprising.



Take the four cards, spread them out and turn them over to display the four Fives.

Casually remove the deck from its case and spread it out face up, in case anybody doubts that the Fives that fell from the case are really missing in the deck.

### Comments

At the end of the culling procedure, it is an easy matter to down-jog the bottom card of the deck, so you can establish a break above the bottom four cards while squaring the deck and palm them off with either a Gambler's Cop<sup>10</sup> or the classic palm<sup>11</sup>.

When asking for the value the second time, it should appear as if it is the first time you hear it. Initially you interrupt the spectator and apparently miss the information, while thinking of something else. Quite often the

<sup>10</sup> See Darwin Ortiz, *Cardshark* (1995), page 96, or Roberto Giobbi, *Card College, Volume 3*, page 707.

<sup>11</sup> See Roberto Giobbi, *Card College, Volume 3* (1998), page 713. A one-handed Bottom Palm fits quite nicely, too, since the card case can be handed over to the spectator with the right hand at the same time. For an excellent one-handed handling by Ernest Earick, see *By Forces Unseen* (Stephen Minch, 1993), page 85.

other spectators forget the number and the question as well. This concept was popularized by Juan Tamariz, who makes great use of it in his work.

One might fear that the spectator names a different number here. It is one of those things where experience tells you how far you can go. In the beginning, one asks for the number again like “*You named Five, right?*”, when you become more confident you will say, “*You named a number at the beginning, what was it?*”, until you realize that when the spectator is well-chosen you can just say, “*Oh, and we need a number! What do you want?*”

If you are not performing at a table, you can use the spectator’s hands as your impromptu table and let the four cards fall into his hands. This staging can also be used when a table is available.

To restore your memorized deck order, you simply need to return the four cards to their original positions (one of them belongs right to the face). This is not as easy as it sounds, of course.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> See the Appendix of Juan Tamariz’ book *Mnemonica* (2004), page 278, and the thoughts by Eric Mead in *Tangled Web* (2006), page III.

# A Trick for Allen Kennedy

**C**enter dealing has an almost legendary reputation for being one of the most difficult feats in the gambling arsenal. Therefore some routines have been invented in which this deal is only simulated.<sup>13</sup> This is another one from this genre that has a clean look to it since it combines sleight-of-hand with a set-up and gaffs.

## **Effect**

The performer demonstrates his skill in center dealing by repeatedly dealing reversed cards from the middle of the deck.

## **Method Overview**

The method is based on duplicates and the second deal. Instead of normal duplicates, we use four double-faced cards, which allow some convincing displays. In this description, I will assume that you use double facers that display the four Aces on one side and the four Kings on the other side. (Almost any other combination works, too, as you will see.)

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<sup>13</sup> See for example Darwin Ortiz’ “Face-Up Centers” in *Cardshark* (1995), page 155, Martin Nash’s “Command Performance” in *Any Second Now* (Stephen Minch, 1977), Page 284, James Swain’s “Dealing Centers” in *21<sup>st</sup> Century Card Magic* (1999), page 140, *Antinomy* issue 6 (2006) and issue 9 (2007).

## Preparation

Since you are working with reversed cards, the backs should have white borders. A full deck set-up is required. Place the cards in the following order, from back to face, and turn the double facers (DF) so that the Ace-side shows in the same direction as the regular backs. x denotes an indifferent card.

xxxx – DF – xxx – DF – xxx – DF – xxx – DF – xxxx – Ace  
 – xxxx – King – xxxx – Ace – xxxx – King – xxxx – Ace – xxxx  
 – King – xxxx – King – Ace – xxx

One or two Jokers are then inserted at random places.

## Performance

### First Phase

False shuffle the deck without flashing the double faced cards. You can use a tight false riffle shuffle or a false overhand shuffle in which you shuffle off a block of about twenty cards in the first shuffling action. As an introduction, talk about the skill of false dealing the second, bottom and – the Holy Grail – center card. You might even want to briefly talk about Dai Vernon's legendary search for Allen Kennedy and his center deal.<sup>14</sup> Announce a demonstration.

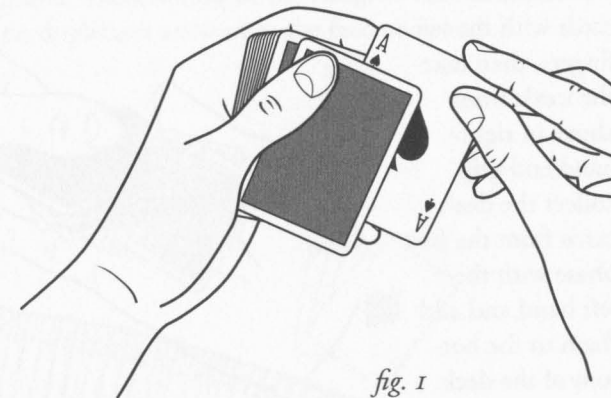
A spectator is asked to spread through the deck and turn over any Aces that he comes across, which he is to leave right where they were – only face down. If you try this yourself, you will see that there is virtually no chance of flashing the double facers when you spread through the deck and reverse

<sup>14</sup> Details can be found in the recently published book *The Magician and the Cardsharp* (2005) by Karl Johnson. Shorter versions of the story are included in *The Vernon Chronicles, Volume 4* (1992), page 166, the December 2001 issue of *Genii*, page 28, and part one of David Ben's *Dai Vernon: A Biography* (2006), page 203.

the Aces – no matter what technique you are using for the reversals. But by letting the spectator do this, you give the impression that the deck is normal and contains exactly four Aces.

Spread the deck out face up on the table. In this display, one clearly sees the four face-down Aces in the spread which looks otherwise fine. Remove the Jokers and place them aside since they are no longer needed. This action again gives the impression that the order of the cards is of no importance and unplanned.

To deal the Aces out with an apparent center deal, square up the deck and place it face down into dealing position. Deal out the cards to four players, executing a second deal on the fourth player.<sup>15</sup> Continue the dealing until the four Aces are dealt (they are the double facers). If the seconds are cleanly done, it looks as if the Aces melt out of the deck face up (see *figure 1* for a stop action).



### Second Phase

To repeat the demonstration, you need to set up the deck first. You are still holding 40 cards in left hand dealing position with the regular Aces reversed at different positions. Give the deck three in-faro shuffles, but do not square up the cards after the third shuffle.<sup>16</sup> Instead, you push the cards in so that the former bottom half ends up side-jogged to the right. This is done by first

<sup>15</sup> A good description for the second deal can be found – as usual – in Roberto Giobbi's *Card College, Volume 4* (2000) on page 936.

<sup>16</sup> For the faro shuffle see volume 3 of Roberto Giobbi's *Card College* (1998), page 687.

pushing this half into the upper half diagonally<sup>17</sup> and then dragging it over into a parallel position with the right pinky from above (figure 2). A light touch is required for this procedure since otherwise the binding of the packets might cause difficulties.

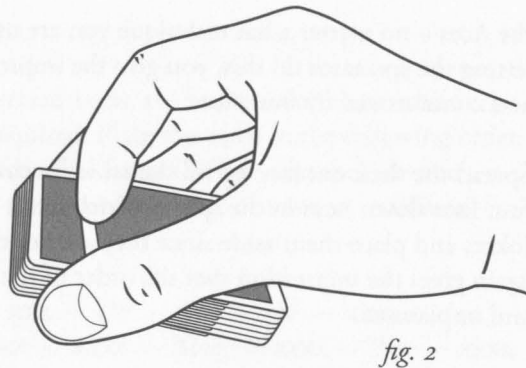


fig. 2

Square the bottom two thirds of the cards with the left fingers, then take the cards from above in right-hand end grip, collect the dealt cards from the first phase with the left hand and add them to the bottom of the deck (figure 3). The deck is now spread out on the table. The four reversed Aces at positions 3, 5, 7 and 9 will remain hidden since they are side-jogged. That is the ribbonspread hide-out by Charles Nyquist.<sup>18</sup>

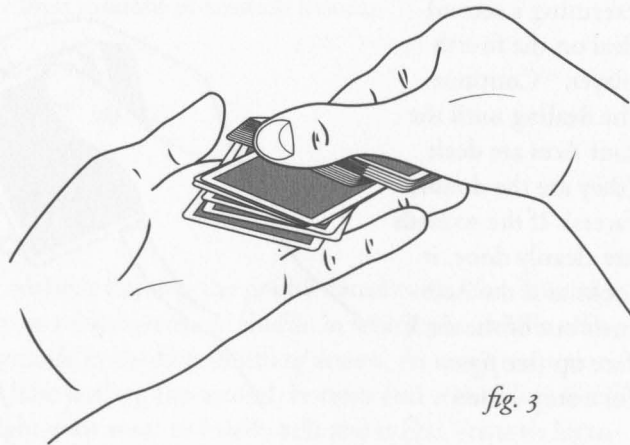


fig. 3

Ok, this was the most difficult part of the routine.

<sup>17</sup> See "The Diagonal Insertion" in Roberto Giobbi's *Card College, Volume 1* (1996), page 69.  
<sup>18</sup> Nyquist published it in "The Ribbonspread Reverse" in *Hugard's Magic Monthly, Volume 6* No. 3 (August 1948), page 450.

Take the double faced Aces that are still lying on the table and insert them into the face-down spread at random intervals. Be sure to place them below the top part where the reversed regular Aces are hidden.<sup>19</sup>

Again, fairly square up the cards and start to deal out two hands of poker. Remark that it becomes more difficult the fewer players are in the game since the center deal needs to be executed every other card with increased frequency.

Deal out the cards and perform a second deal for every second card. Immediately spread out the rest of the cards face up which proves that you were doing what you claimed since no reversed cards or Aces are in sight (figure 4). (Note that the values on the back of the double facers end up in the face down hand of the first player. Those would be the Kings in this description. Performed in this way, no duplicates are seen in the face-up spread.)

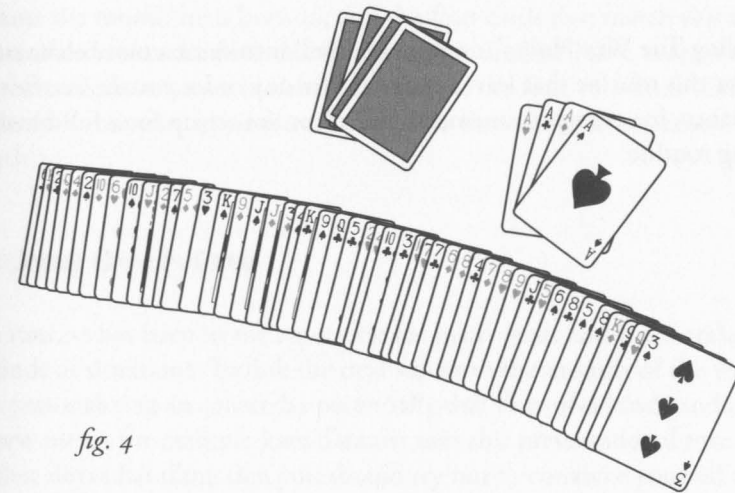


fig. 4

<sup>19</sup> This can even be done by a spectator. The danger is not so much that he himself notices that the cards are double facers, but rather that he inserts the cards in such a way that other spectators can see the backs of the cards. So you can only let a spectator do this when there is no one sitting across from him.

For the clean up, cull the double faced cards (the four Kings) out of the deck face up. If you get rid of those four cards, you are left with an ungaffed and complete deck.

### Remarks

If you like, you can introduce an additional kicker effect by showing the four Kings in the spectator's hand in the second phase. Of course, if you have different values on the backs of the Aces those four cards will end up in front of the spectator and the set-up should be modified accordingly. Also, you need to remember those values to cull them out of the deck for the clean-up.

Instead of removing the double facers immediately, you can use some of them for other effects like the MacDonalds Aces, Ryan Swigert's "Kick Back",<sup>20</sup> or anything else you can think of.

In "Finding The Way Home" on page 46 I will introduce a more elaborate set-up for this routine that leaves your cards in any order you desire after its performance, for example a memorized deck or the set-up for a full-blown gambling routine.

<sup>20</sup> This off-beat routine can be found in Ryan Swigert's booklet *KickBack: The Real Work* (2003).

# Magic Monthly

**T**here are countless four-of-a-kind productions out there. Here's another one.

### Effect

Every value from Ace (One) to Queen (Twelve) can represent a month of the year. March corresponds to the value Three, and so on. A spectator is asked to name the month he is born in, and the four cards that match this month are produced from the deck that the spectator shuffled just a moment ago. Another spectator names his birth month and the four-of-a-kind that was produced a moment ago is transformed into the values of the second named month.

### Method Overview

This routine has been in my repertoire for many years and is a workhorse for all kinds of situations. To link the card values to the months of the year, and thus personalizing an otherwise potentially dull four-of-a-kind production, is no new idea – for example Juan Tamariz uses this presentational ruse. This is a rather direct handling that you should try out to convince yourself that it actually works the way it is described.

The effect itself seems to be quite impossible: From a shuffled deck you produce any named four-of-a-kind and transform it into any other freely named four-of-a-kind. The method reads just as impossible: You secretly cull out the first four cards and produce them. Then you secretly cull out the sec-



a-kind and switch it for the first one. How something like that may work in practice? Well, just read on...

## Performance

### First Phase

There is no set-up. Take any complete deck and ask a spectator for his birth month. While he is answering your question, you almost interrupt him by explaining, *"Of course, you need to know that any month of the year can represent a certain value in the deck... like for example, this Seven here represents July... or this Five would be... well... May..."* During this short monologue you have enough time to use the spread cull to bring the four cards of the spectator's month to the back of the deck. The motivation for spreading through the cards is to illustrate how the values are linked to the month. Remember the suit of the first card you cull under the spread.

Turn the cards face down and establish a break under the top four cards – the culled four-of-a-kind. With the comment *"You look like you have expert shuffling skills!"* you hand the cards to a spectator and in this action palm the cards above the break into your right hand. This remark focuses the attention on the spectator and his shuffling procedure and away from your hands that need to hold out the palmed cards. While he is shuffling, you can also introduce the idea of the effect, namely to produce the four-of-a-kind that corresponds to the spectator's birth month. When the spectator returns the cards, you add the palmed cards on top again.

Ask the spectator again for his birth month, as if you forgot about it, without making a big deal about it. Now you just need to produce the top four cards with your favourite production sequence. Some words about this: I recommend using something that is not too spectacular; no wild flourishes and cards flying around and popping up in the most unexpected places. The fact that you produce a freely named four-of-a-kind from a shuffled deck is

a strong point and easily drowned by too much "visual background noise". I usually produce the cards as follows:

For the first two cards, I execute a simple flourish false cut and then simply turn over the top card.<sup>21</sup> Then I let the spectator choose which one of the remaining suits he wants next. If the top card is the card called for, I simply turn it over. If the other card is chosen, I perform a second deal. If you were not able to remember the order of the cards during the culling process, a glimpse might be necessary here. After another short and simple false shuffle or cut, I turn over the top two cards as one. Apparently I made a mistake since a wrong card is visible. Turn the double face down again and spin it on your right middle finger with the words, *"Well, I just need to turn the time back for five months."* (or whatever the difference between the two months happens to be), before revealing its changed face. This transformation is strong as well as surprising, and the patter about travelling in time in combination with the pirouette flourish<sup>22</sup> is quite amusing.

### Second Phase

While the spectators are still reacting, you ask a spectator immediately next to you for the month that he is born in. This is not an official question and shouldn't really be noticed by most of the other spectators.<sup>23</sup> (In the case that this spectator turns out to be born in the same month than the first spectator, you need to ask someone else.) To control the matching four-of-a-kind to the top, you again use the spread cull and say something like *"Of course, there are no other Nines (or whatever) in the deck as you can see"*. Often you do not really need much patter at this point since the spectators are still examining the four cards you produced in the first phase.

Now you are going to transform the first four-of-a-kind into the second one. Here I use two handlings, depending on the situation and my mood.

<sup>21</sup> For example the "Flip Flap Cut" would be suited, see page 402 of Roberto Giobbi's *Card College, Volume 2* (1996).

<sup>22</sup> This popular flourish is described as "The Pirouette" in the fourth volume of Roberto Giobbi's *Card College* (2000) on page 1022.

<sup>23</sup> For this topic, see the excellent essay "The Performing Mode" by Pit Hartling on page 31 of his book *Card Fictions* (2003).

## 1. Handling – The Clear Transformation:

So you just culled the second four-of-a-kind to the back and the cards are still face up in left hand dealing position. For the following switch, you need to reverse those four cards secretly by using a half pass.<sup>24</sup> The following alternative procedure is a bit more economic: After culling the fourth card under the spread, you loosely square the cards up and in the process pick up a wedge break with

your left pinky between the four-of-a-kind and the rest of the deck, as shown in *figure 1*. You now take the deck from above in right hand end grip and transfer it into normal dealing position. In the process, you execute Ken Krenzle's Mechanical Reverse.<sup>25</sup> (In this technique, the right hand grips the cards minus the cards below the break and moves the deck to the left into dealing position. Simultaneously, the left fingers curl in and the four cards – held between the third and fourth finger of the left hand – turn over in the process and end up reversed below the deck (*figure 2*).)

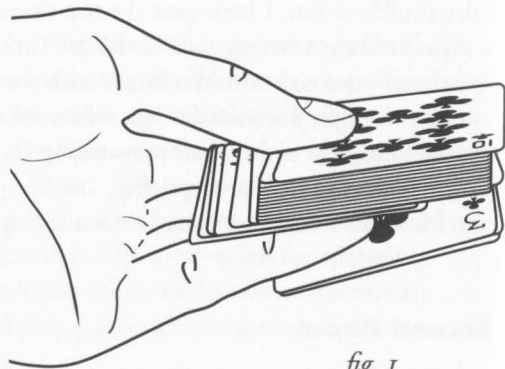


fig. 1

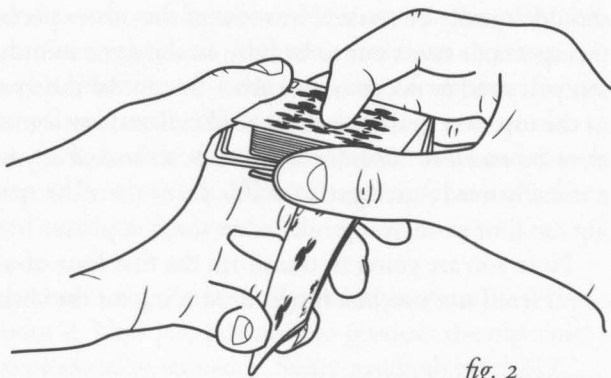


fig. 2

<sup>24</sup> For example, see "The Christ Twist", Roberto Giobbi's *Card College, Volume 4* (2000), page 988.

<sup>25</sup> *The Card Classics of Ken Krenzle* (Harry Lorayne, 1978), page 207.

Briefly hold the deck with your right hand while the left hand turns palm down around the deck and re-grips the cards in dealing position with the faces against the palm. The left hand remains palm down so that the four reversed cards are not seen. Pick up the four-of-a-kind that was produced a moment ago with the right hand and place it face up on top of the deck. The left hand simultaneously turns palm up, so the reversed cards are immediately covered by the cards in the right hand.

The pinky picks up a break below the top eight cards. Since the cards are back to back at this place, you can just press with the left thumb onto the outer left corner of the deck to enlarge the natural break at the back.<sup>26</sup> Fan the top three cards into the right hand and take the five cards above the break underneath those three cards as a single card. The edges of this block should be covered by the three cards as well as possible to disguise the thickness of the block (*figure 3*).

Ask the second spectator again and officially for the month he was born in, as if you're receiving this information for the first time. To transform the cards, proceed

as follows. Turn over the eight cards (apparently four) so they fall face down onto the deck and immediately push over the top four cards with the left thumb. The right hand takes over those cards in a slightly fanned condition. The secure and immediate push-over of exactly four cards needs a bit of practice but looks much better than pushing the cards over one at a time. The cards are apparently never squared onto the deck and remain in motion.

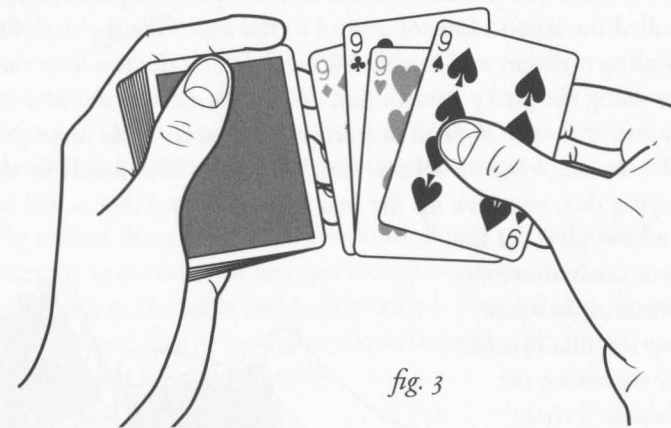


fig. 3

<sup>26</sup> This is the "Auto Break" by Lin Searles.

As a magic gesture, I flick the left long sides of the four cards as in *figure 4* and turn the fan over slowly and dramatically.

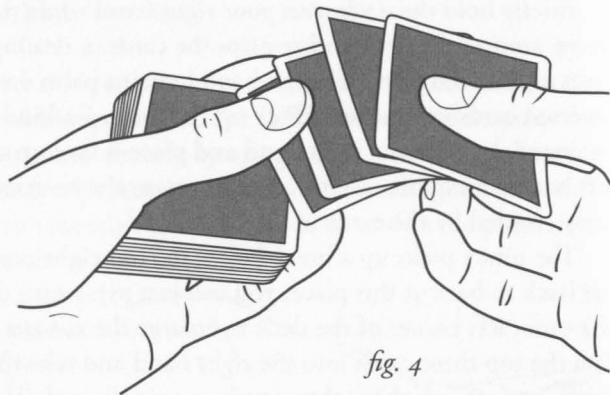


fig. 4

2. *Handling – The Surprising Transformation:*

Here the transformation comes as a complete surprise. Suppose you just culled the second four-of-a-kind to the top. Take the deck face down in dealing position and establish a break below the top four cards (for example by using the pinky count). Say, “Now I found one card at a time, right? Of course, it is more difficult to locate all four cards at the same time. Let’s try just this. In which month are you born? March?... That would be the Threes!” While saying this, you pick up the first four-of-a-kind that is still lying on the table and switch it for the four cards above the break while squaring the small packet by executing the Talazac Switch.<sup>27</sup>

This switch is quick and uncomplicated.

(Briefly: The packet is held in right hand end grip near the right side and is gripped

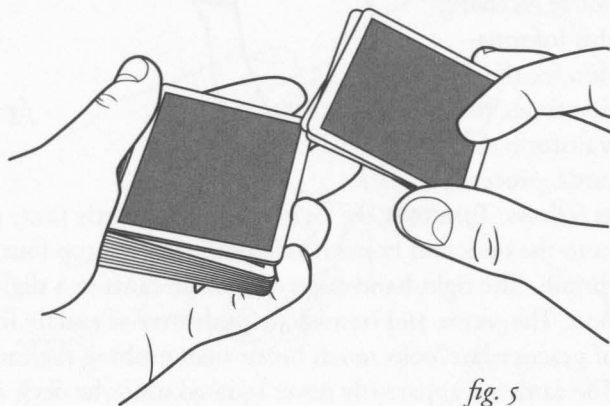


fig. 5

<sup>27</sup> See “The Talazac Switch” on page 842 of the fourth volume of Roberto Giobbi’s *Card College* (2000).

only by the middle finger and thumb (*figure 5*). The packet is apparently just squared above the deck with the aid of the left fingers and thumb. The right third finger and thumb grip the four cards above the break and pull them to the right. The original four cards are left squared with the deck and held in place by the left thumb (*figure 6*).

The four cards in the right hand are then tapped against the deck as a final squaring action. A full length description, with all the necessary details, can be found in the given source.)

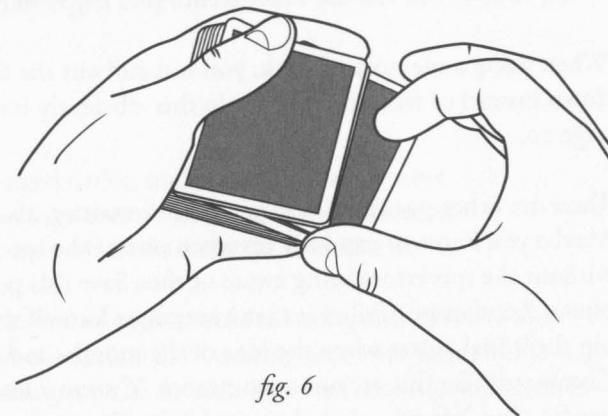


fig. 6

Instantly place the switched four-of-a-kind face down onto the table. The switch is covered by the above patter.

Now you get ready to find the second four-of-a-kind. Begin to wildly shuffle the deck and execute some more or less spectacular and bizarre looking flourishes. Drop the deck to the table and look satisfied. Unhurriedly, ignore the deck and slowly and one by one turn over the switched cards. Surprisingly, this is now the second four-of-a-kind.

This staging of the transformation might read silly, but it is highly amusing and the transformation is very strong. Try it out!

### Remarks

The switching techniques described for both handlings are those that I usually use. The first technique has the advantage that the time in which the

faces of the cards are out of sight (the critical interval<sup>28</sup>) is very short and clean. The work is done before it is expected when you are still holding the first four-of-a-kind face up in the right hand with the second one already underneath.

Of course, you can use other techniques if you like.

When using a memorized deck, you can cull out the first four-of-a-kind face down instead of face up. How to do this efficiently is described in “Plop” on page 20.

There are other possibilities to get the information about the birth months. Maybe you know or can look up when one of the spectators was born, without the spectators being aware of this. Save this person for the second phase. Another possibility is that a spectator himself reveals the month during the initial patter when the idea of the months and values is introduced. Comments like this are not uncommon: “*For me it would be the Fives, how lovely...*” or “*Hmm... I am born in January/November but this value doesn't exist?!*” (Of course, the Aces are for January and the Jacks and Queens represent November and December.) Ignore those comments and use them to your advantage in the second phase. You might even want to directly ask another person in the opening remarks and use this person for the second phase.

For a long time I used a transposition effect in the second handling of the second phase: I did the switch as described, which leaves the first four-of-a-kind on top of the deck. Then I produced those cards again with one of those flashy productions that produce all four cards at the same time. Being confused that this is again the first four-of-a-kind, I turned over the cards on the table which turned out to be of the second value.

This works quite well, too, but I now exclusively use the described handling. I like the situational comedy that arises by the wild shuffling procedure and then completely ignoring the deck and revealing that the previously located four-of-a-kind has now changed, too much.

<sup>28</sup> For the term “critical interval”, see Darwin Ortiz’ excellent book on routining, *Designing Miracles* (2006), page 45.

## Finding The Way Home

**P**rearranged decks, stacks and how to preserve and manage them – a favourite topic of mine – are the subjects discussed in this section.

Effects with stacked decks are, of course, only as strong and effective as the deck of cards appears to be well mixed. Mastering deceptive false shuffle techniques is useful for this purpose. As is an innocent-looking and carefree handling of the cards.<sup>29</sup> Another possibility is to perform effects in which the order of the cards becomes obviously mixed up, but this disarrangement only appears to be guided by chance. That means, the order resulting from such a trick is predictable.<sup>30</sup>

Those tricks can be divided into two groups.

On the one hand, there are effects in which the procedures that change the order of the cards cancel themselves out. The final order is the same as the initial order. An extreme example would be a routine which makes use of eight out-faro shuffles (since it is well-known that a deck of 52 cards is returned to its original order after eight out-faros). Effects of this type can be done with a stacked deck anytime, giving the impression that the order of the cards is constantly changing. Yet the original stack is retained and ready for use after the performance of the effect.

<sup>29</sup> Some excellent thoughts on handling a stacked deck can be found in “Orderly Conduct” in Eric Mead’s *Tangled Web* (2006), page 87.

<sup>30</sup> See also “Actions That Don’t Alter the Order of the Deck While Appearing to Do So” on page 270 of Juan Tamariz’ *Mnemonic* (2004). The remarks there are closely related to the topic at hand.

On the other hand, there are effects in which the disordering of the cards during the routine is not easily reversible. That means, the final order is predetermined but it is not possible to return to the initial order (without trouble). An example would be routines that make use of just one or two faro shuffles or that include a phase in which a part of the deck is dealt out in three or five piles.

(Of course there are also effects that do not change the order of the deck at all and make no special attempt to give this appearance. Every magician working with a stacked deck for some time has some pet effects of this type that he can throw in between routines that depend on the stack.)

Since in the second case the final order is fixed and known, this order can be chosen freely. Thus, the deck can end in the full-deck prearrangement of your choice (like Si Stebbins, memorized stack, stacks for gambling routines, and so on). One just needs to start with a certain order to attain the desired outcome.

How to determine this order is discussed below.

First of all, it is interesting to have a look at some procedures that change the order in a predictable way – controlled chaos, so to speak.

### Possible strategies for rearranging cards systematically

1. Dealing (some or all) cards in packets & Anti-Faro<sup>31</sup>
2. Down-Under-Deal<sup>32</sup>
3. Faro Shuffle (perfect or partial)
4. In-the-hands Anti-Faro (outjogging every other card)

<sup>31</sup> The concept of accomplishing Anti-Faros by dealing the deck in a number of packets was pioneered by Juan Tamariz. See the chapter on the Anti-Faro in his book *Sonata* (1991) on page 90 as well as Appendix V in *Mnemonica* (2004).

<sup>32</sup> This is the well-known procedure in which you alternately place a card below the deck (or packet) and onto the table.

5. Overhand shuffling single cards<sup>33</sup>
6. Reverse counting cards singly or in groups of a fixed amount<sup>34</sup>

**A**n effect which makes use of strategies from this list, which is by no means complete, is suited to lead the cards in any desired order. To find out the order in which the cards need to be at the outset, you just need to go through the whole trick backwards. That means, you set the cards in the desired final order and do all the procedures that change the order in the process of the trick in reverse. Here is an example that illustrates this backwards-technique:

### “The Tantalizer” to Stack

In Hugard and Braue’s classic *The Royal Road to Card Magic* there is a routine called “The Tantalizer”.<sup>35</sup> Therein the spectator chooses a card that is returned to the deck. The deck is dealt into two piles – one in front of the performer and one in front of the spectator. The performer takes up his half and again deals those cards into two piles, alternately in front of himself and onto the half in front of the spectator. By following this pattern, the spectator gets more and more cards while the pile in front of the performer becomes gradually smaller. This is repeated until there is only one

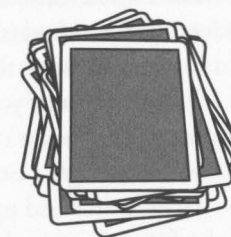


fig. 1

<sup>33</sup> Actually, it is also possible to shuffle off exactly two cards in each stroke instead of one. This technique is described on page 157 in the context of stacking with the overhand shuffle in *Modus Operandi – The Card Magic of Jack Carpenter* (Stephen Hobbs, 1992). While a generalisation to more cards is thinkable, it doesn’t seem practical.

<sup>34</sup> For the latter, Simon Aronson published an idea in his most recent book *Try the Impossible* (2001) in the section named “Triple Trick Tip” on page 260.

<sup>35</sup> In the bound edition (originally published in 1949) you find it on page 124, in the popular Dover edition it is on page 112.

card left in front of the performer and the remaining 51 cards lie in front of the spectator (*figure 1*). Apparently disregarding the laws of chance, the single card in front of the performer turns out to be the spectator's selection.<sup>36</sup>

This effect is entirely self-working as soon as the selected card is controlled to the 22<sup>nd</sup> position from the top of the deck. From there on one just needs to deal the cards out as described above, provided the deal always starts with the spectator.

Suppose you want to end in the Si Stebbins stack after performing this routine,<sup>37</sup> that is Ace of Clubs, Four of Hearts, Seven of Spades, Ten of Diamonds, Two of Clubs, ... (From card to card the suits rotate in CHaSeD-order and the values increase by 3.) To achieve this, you set a deck in Si Stebbins order and work through the routine backwards as follows: Place the Ace of Clubs in front of you and the rest of the deck in front of the (imaginary) spectator. That is the configuration after the performance of the routine. If you walk through a normal performance of the routine, you will notice that the packets that end up in front of the spectator in each dealing round are of the following number, from start to finish: 26 cards, 13 cards, 7 cards, 3 cards, 2 cards. So you first pick up the top two cards from the pile of 51 cards in front of the spectator (without reversing their order) and place them next to the Ace of Clubs. Undo the final dealing round by alternately placing the cards in left hand dealing position; that is, in this case you first take the top card of the pile consisting of two cards, then the Ace of Clubs and then the second card from the former pile of two cards. Put down this packet of three cards in front of you, place the top three cards from the spectator's pile next to it and repeat the process. But this time you start undoing the dealing round by picking up the first card from your pile, not the spectator's. (The last card has to come from the spectator's pile since you always begin the deal on the spectator's pile in the performance. That means that if both piles are of equal size you start the reverse dealing with your pile, otherwise with the

<sup>36</sup> This routine obviously calls for a presentation that motivates the otherwise weird dealing process. See the description by Hugard and Braue, as well as the versions by Darwin Ortiz ("Maximum Risk" on page 80 of *Scams & Fantasies with Cards* (2002)) or Lennart Green ("One in Fifty-Two Bet" on the DVD *Green Magic, Volume 3* (2000)).

<sup>37</sup> Of course, using this trick as a lead-in to a routine requiring a full-deck stack might have occurred to others as well. As a matter of fact, Jason England had the same idea.

spectator's.) Repeat the procedure until all cards are exhausted.<sup>38</sup> The whole pack is now in the following order from back to face:

9D, 4C, 6S, 7H, 3H, 7S, KC, 10S, 8D, QD, 5S, KD, 2H,  
10D, QC, 5C, 7D, 9S, 4S, 8H, AH, AC, JC, JS, 6D, 6H,  
3S, AD, KH, 2C, 10C, 6C, 5D, 3C, 2S, 9H, QH, 4H, 9C,  
QS, 4D, JD, AS, 2D, JH, 5H, 8C, 7C, 3D, 8S, KS, 10H.

The Ace of Clubs is at position 22 and has to be forced. Because it needs to stay in position, one can, for example, pick up a break above it, riffle or dribble force the card and let the spectator return the card at exactly the same position. If you perform the whole routine now as outlined in the effect description, you will end with a deck that is in Si Stebbins order, despite rearranging the cards in an apparently haphazard way.<sup>39</sup>

## Remarks

Suppose you want to end in another stack. The procedure is exactly the same. Just for you to check: The cards are numbered from top to bottom from 1 to 52. Here 1 is the top and 52 the bottom card of the final order you want to have after the performance of the effect. If your desired stack is a memorized one, those numbers would be the usual memorized positions (stack numbers). In this case the set-up from back to face is as follows:

52, 13, 51, 14, 50, 3, 49, 15, 48, 12, 47, 16, 46,  
4, 45, 17, 44, 11, 43, 18, 42, 1, 41, 19, 40, 10,  
39, 20, 38, 5, 37, 21, 36, 9, 35, 22, 34, 2, 33,  
23, 32, 8, 31, 24, 30, 6, 29, 25, 28, 7, 27, 26.

You force the card with the number 1.

<sup>38</sup> At this point the cunning card shark will realize that he can save some time by systematically reversing the order of some packets and faro shuffling them together. (For more details on this, see below.) The not-so-cunning card shark may ignore this footnote.

<sup>39</sup> Note that Darwin Ortiz' version on page 80 of *Scams & Fantasies with Cards* (2002) makes use of a memorized deck in another way. It starts with the stacked deck and uses its order to control the card to the 22<sup>nd</sup> position. After the performance, the stack is lost. In my opinion, the effect is not worth sacrificing a stack for. The evil plan to use it as a springboard into a stack is more pleasing to my odd taste.

Strictly speaking the card does not need to be forced. It can be a free selection that is exchanged with the card at 22<sup>nd</sup> position.<sup>40</sup> After the effect, you just need to change those two cards back. Most of the time, however, this is more cumbersome than a force (the freedom of the choice might only be of interest to fellow magicians). Nevertheless, it is useful to have this possibility at hand in case the force fails or the spectator insists on selecting some other card.

### A Trick for Allen Kennedy

The center deal demonstration described on page 27 is another candidate for this approach. You deal out cards several times and perform faro shuffles – two items of the list above. Just work through the routine backwards as in the “Tantalizer”-example to find out the initial order.

In this case a general formula is difficult to give since the Aces have to be removed from the stack and ignored for the time being. Thus the order depends on the position of the Aces. As an example, if you want to end with the memorized deck by Juan Tamariz and use four double-faced Aces that show the cards with stack numbers 1 to 4 on their back, you need to stack the cards as follows, from back to face:

52, 47, 42, 50, DF, 46, 42, 49, DF, 45, 40, 48, DF, 44,  
38, 5, DF, 13, 21, 29, 37, 43, 12, 20, 28, 36, 1, 11,  
19, 27, 35, 39, 10, 18, 26, 34, 2, 9, 17, 25, 33, 7,  
8, 16, 24, 32, 3, 6, 15, 23, 31, 4, 51, 14, 22, 30.

For other stacks this order changes according to the positions of the Aces and you have to go through the routine backwards yourself to obtain it. This is just a matter of two or three minutes.

The double facers are in this case especially easy to cull out, since they literally jump out to you if you know your stack well.

<sup>40</sup> You can find two excellent methods to exchange two cards by Juan Tamariz and Áriston on page 339 of *Mnemonic* (2004): “To Exchange the Position of Two Cards Without Altering the Rest of the Deck”.

**N**ow we want to go one step further. It is all well and good if one can secretly reach a full-deck set-up by the performance of an innocent routine that obviously changes the order of the cards. However, it would be even nicer if one could work with a stacked deck and then obtain the necessary set-up right in front of the spectators by means of a shuffling sequence, so that one can follow with one of those order-changing routines and is right back in the stack after its performance. This is definitely not possible with every effect. For example, there is no such “way” (as I will call this kind of procedure from now on) into the set-up for “A Trick for Allen Kennedy”.

Things are different for “The Tantalizer” though.

### Way into “The Tantalizer”

Suppose you have a stacked deck and want to perform “The Tantalizer” and retain your stacked order after the routine. To do this, the cards have to be rearranged in a special way. The way I will describe here leads you into the inverse stack which means that after the performance of the effect the order of the cards is reversed with 52 on the back and 1 on the face of the deck. Like that the procedure is shorter. (If you want to retain the original stack, the way is similar. One just needs to reverse count some more cards. You can work out the details for yourself with this way as a starting point.)

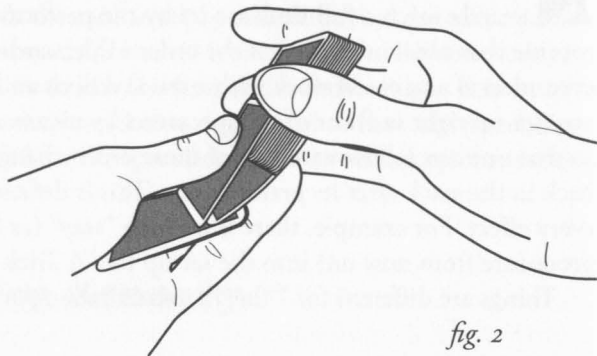
Proceed as follows:

1. Hold the cards face up in dealing position and pick up a break above and below the fifth card from the face.
2. Execute a slip cut into the top break, thus transferring the top card of the deck into this break. Let this break drop.
3. Repeat the slip cut into the remaining break.
4. Cut the top six cards to the back of the deck and turn the cards face down. Re-grip the cards with the right hand in the position for an over-hand shuffle, faces towards the right palm.
5. Perform six consecutive milk-build shuffles,<sup>41</sup> each time shuffling off the

<sup>41</sup> See for example Roberto Giobbi’s *Card College, Volume 4* (2000), page 916.

top and bottom card simultaneously (*figure 2*). Throw the rest below (!) those 12 cards.

6. Cut the bottom card to the top and turn the pack face up.
7. Shuffle off the top 13 cards singly and face up, thus reversing their order. Throw the remaining cards on top and reposition the cards face down in dealing position.
8. Cut off the top 13 cards (you can retain a break in the previous step) and in-faro shuffle them into the rest.
9. Perform another perfect in-faro shuffle with the full deck.



Now you can force the 22<sup>nd</sup> card (which is the card with stack number 52) and perform “The Tantalizer”. You will end in the inverse stack.

### Remarks

Granted, this way looks rather daunting at first sight and it seems to be impossible to do all this casually while chatting with the spectators along the way. But in informal situations this works surprisingly well, and if you actually try it out a couple of times, you will see how swiftly the work is done. Done without hurry, one needs less than half a minute.

In principle one could also use this way to get back into the stack after the routine instead of using it prior to its performance. But this is not recommended since it can easily look like you are restoring the order of the cards which was destroyed by the trick. This is exactly what we want to avoid!

There is one exception to this rule. You can use this routine as a substitute for an anti-faro. For this application, you perform the routine without any preparation by forcing the 22<sup>nd</sup> card and following the dealing pattern to locate the selection. After the routine is finished, you execute the first eight steps of the above way, but with the face-down deck. Be sure to use some time-misdirection before starting this shuffling procedure. You have given the original order one anti-faro.

“The Tantalizer” is outstandingly suited to preserve a set-up of 13, 26 or 39 cards. In this case you don’t need to do the first six steps of the way. (This holds true for the anti-faro applications as well.) For retaining the bottom 26 cards, for example, one just needs to control the selection to the 11th position in the top shuffled half, execute one in-faro shuffle and start dealing. It doesn’t get any more convenient. Again, the order of the partial stack will be reversed at the end.

**H**ow does one find those ways? The answer is very simple: By searching for them. That is no joke either.

The following approach has proven to be helpful. Choose an order that is very easy to recognize visually for your final order, like for example new deck order (that is, all the cards from Ace to King, separated in the four suits). Go through the routine backwards with this stack and thereby arrange the cards in the order in which the deck has to start, so that you end with your desired stack (which for the time being is new deck order). Ribbon-spread this deck on the table and study its order.

Try to somehow get another deck, also in new deck order, in this order. You might have many failures while attempting this before you finally do find an elegant and practical way – if at all. Once you found a way, it can be transferred to any given stack.

It is not unusual to spend quite a few hours on the floor with several decks spread around oneself, in the tireless search for interesting orders and possibilities to get from one to the other. You do not need to be embarrassed to spend your free time like that... Just don’t tell anybody.



Another category consists of sequences that cancel each other out and can be inserted into existing routines. From now on I assume that we talk about a memorized deck. One thing that obviously nullifies itself is the combination of a faro shuffle with an anti-faro. It becomes interesting if one breaks up this perhaps too obvious connection a bit more:

1. Execute an in-faro.
2. Take the deck face down in dealing position and deal the whole deck out in four piles, from left to right, turning the cards face up in the dealing process.
3. Collect the packets from left to right by placing the leftmost packet on top of the second pile from the left, this combined packet onto the next one, and so on. This corresponds to a double anti-in-faro.
4. Perform another in-faro.

The deck is in its original order. The in-faro is in this case preferable to the out-faro since the face-card of the deck changes several times.

A possible presentation would be to ask a spectator to think of a card he sees while you deal the cards out into four piles. After finishing the second faro you put down the cards and ask for the name of the mental selection and find it via improvisation.<sup>42</sup> Because of the dealing process you throw the spectators off and lead them into thinking about all kinds of false solutions that are going to be dead ends.

The connection of faro and anti-faro is broken up even more in the following sequence which consists of two separate effects. Since the cards will be reverse counted in small packets as well as dealt into packets, I call it

<sup>42</sup> This is a classic application of the memorized deck which was, among others, explored by Ed Marlo ("Fingertip Miracle" in *Faro Notes* (1958), page 33), Michael Close ("Jazzin" in *Workers* 5 (1996), page 60) and of course Juan Tamariz ("Mnemonicosis" in *Mnemonic* (2004), page 97). Have a look at those sources if you have no experience with this concept.

## Packet Trick

Again you need a decent presentation to justify the incorporation of the various dealing and shuffling procedures. I give you the outline of a presentation that does just that.

1. Execute an in-faro.
2. Force the bottom card of the deck.<sup>43</sup>
3. Say that you want to try a memory feat by determining the identity of the missing card by looking at all the other cards.
4. Hold the deck face-down in dealing position and deal the deck into four packets from left to right and turn the cards face up while doing so. Tell the spectators that this dealing procedure is your personal memory system. When all cards are dealt, name the selection and place it onto the fourth pile.
5. Collect the packets from left to right by placing the leftmost packet on top of the second pile from the left, this combined packet onto the next one, and so on. Take the assembled deck face up into dealing position.
6. Throw alternating two-cards- and three-cards-packets onto the table on one heap until you have thrown 25 cards on the table like that (figure 3). The next

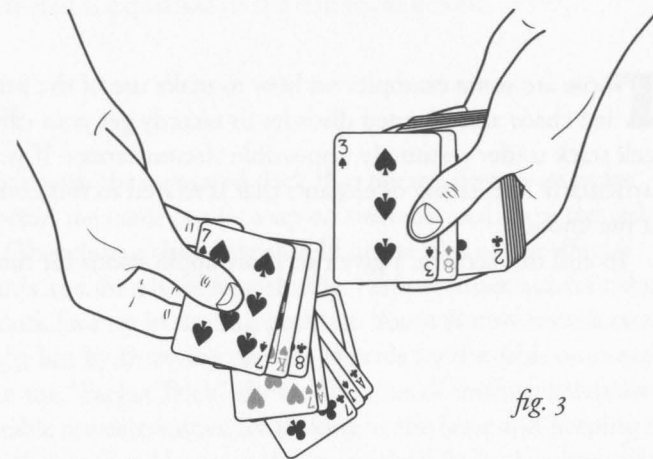


fig. 3

<sup>43</sup> You can also allow a free selection from a hand-to-hand spread and slip the bottom card into the selection's position by an under-spread procedure. In this case you need to exchange those two cards back again after the routine and to glimpse the card two cards away from the selection to learn its identity.

card (it is stack number 1) is thrown singly and then you again start with alternating two-cards- and three-cards-packets. The last card is again a single card. While doing this, another spectator is asked to think of one of the cards he sees. This throwing sequence is done rather swiftly and should look haphazard. Pushing off packets of two and three cards is easily done by touch.

7. Square up the cards and perform an out-faro.
8. Let the spectator name the suit of his thought-of card.
9. Now throw alternating four-cards- and six-cards-packets face down onto one heap. Apparently you are feeling for the cards of the named suit. The last packet will consist of only two cards. Now the deck is back in its original memorized order.
10. Let the spectator name the value as well and instantly name the position of the card (its stack number). This is a surprising effect since a moment before you were throwing the cards all around rather haphazardly and yet are now naming the exact position of the thought-of card. As an alternative, you can also improvise to the thought-of card instead of just naming its position.

**T**hose are some examples on how to make use of the principle of controlled chaos and planned disorder to secretly get your cards into a full-deck stack under seemingly impossible circumstances. If you find something particularly interesting or elegant, that is related to this concept, be sure to let me know.<sup>44</sup>

To end this section, I give two more applications for this concept.

<sup>44</sup> A way to rearrange a packet of 13 cards so that it returns to its original order after a down-under-deal was already published by Dai Vernon. See "Dual to the Death" in *The Vernon Chronicles, Volume 2* (1988) on page 14.

## Red-Black Division into Stack

This is a rather weird idea. As the finale to a card routine, the whole deck is lying on the table, separated into red and black cards. (An Oil and Water routine might fit.) Using this situation as a starting point, I want to get into the memorized deck by using a shuffling procedure. Since the deck separation is a strong finish by itself, it is not suspected that one uses it as a spring-board into a full deck stack.

While the idea can be applied to some other stacks, this will be described with the Tamariz stack.<sup>45</sup>

The set-up from back to face is as follows (the numbers refer to the stack numbers of the Tamariz stack):

48, 44, 37, 34, 18, 10, 1, 45, 40, 31, 22, 15, 7,  
50, 43, 27, 24, 16, 4, 30, 47, 36, 33, 21, 13, 9,  
52, 39, 29, 23, 14, 6, 49, 42, 26, 35, 19, 11, 2,  
46, 41, 32, 20, 12, 8, 51, 38, 28, 25, 17, 5, 3.

The deck is thus separated in red and black cards. If you do not use the Tamariz stack, you have to experiment a bit to find a suitable set-up. How this order is constructed is explained in the comment below.

## Performance

Perform any routine with the separated deck that doesn't destroy its order. As a finale, you spread the cards out face-up on the table and show the red-black separation. (This climax obviously should fit the plot of the effect.)

Pick up the cards and do a brief false shuffle. Perform three out-faro shuffles and take the deck face up in dealing position. You will now reverse count the cards not singly, but by throwing packets of cards on the table onto each other much like in the "Packet Trick" above. The sizes of the heaps that are thrown onto the table are determined by looking at the faces and keeping in mind that this procedure should restore the memorized deck. An alternative

<sup>45</sup> For certain stacks like Si Stebbins in which there exists a red-black pattern already in the order itself, the whole concept simplifies greatly.

to throwing the cards onto the table is to spread through the cards between your hands and reverse counting the deck in groups. It is exactly the same procedure like restoring the order after a real overhand shuffle.<sup>46</sup> If you have never done this before, it will feel cumbersome, but after some practice you will be able to do it quicker and quicker.

The Five of Clubs is an exception and should be ignored during this procedure.

At the end, you need to place the Five of Clubs (which ends up third from the top) back at its normal position – number 30.

### Remark

You do not necessarily need to remember or note down this order. Here is the procedure how to arrive at this or an equivalent red-black order from the Tamariz stack or any other stack.

Take the deck face up into left hand dealing, so you are looking at the face of the card with stack number 52. You will now bring the cards in a red-black order that corresponds to the order of a red-black-divided deck that was given three faro shuffles (any combination of in- or out-faros). The red-black pattern from either side of the deck in this condition is 1, 112, 112, ..., 112, 111. (Note the exceptions at the very start and end of the sequence. You might want to perform three faro shuffles with a red-black separated deck and compare the order with this sequence.) This is done by executing Pit Hartling's "Drop Stack":<sup>47</sup>

Throw heaps of cards onto the table from the face of the deck in such a way that the resulting order of the cards on the table has the desired red-black pattern. You basically do a running cut to achieve the order. This might not be possible with every order without displacing some cards. (In the Tamariz stack, I found that I need to displace the Five of Clubs to a position third from the top to make it possible.) But if you take your time and study the order carefully, you should be able to make as little adjustments as

<sup>46</sup> See "Resetting the Entire Stack After a Spectator's Overhand Shuffle" on page 280 of *Mnemonic* (2004) by Juan Tamariz.

<sup>47</sup> See Pit Hartling's *The Little Green Lecture* (1998), page 16.

possible. A good distribution of the red and black cards in your initial stack is helpful.

Finally, do three anti-out-faros or a triple anti-out-faro. The deck is now divided into reds and blacks and ready for the performance.

### Liebenow's Card Peeling

Erhard Liebenow published an interesting card location that looks as follows.<sup>48</sup> A card is selected and returned to the deck. The performer starts a faro shuffle without pushing the halves together. Instead, he leaves the cards in the well-known incomplete faro condition<sup>49</sup>, parallel to the table. The cards are held at both ends with both hands, with the thumbs on top and the fingers underneath. The right and left hand alternately peel the top and bottom cards simultaneously off both sides and drop them onto the table (see

figure 4 to see this process in action). This is continued until only one card remains – the selection.

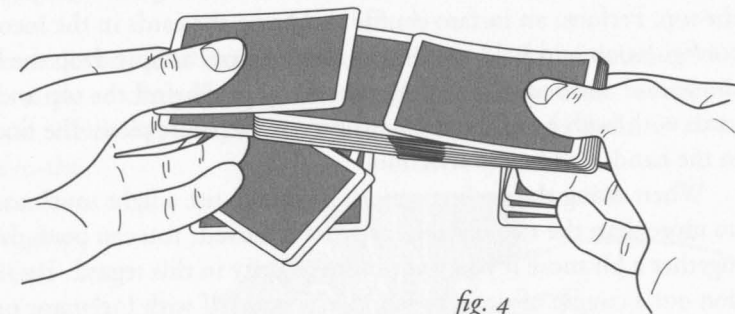


fig. 4

<sup>48</sup> It was first published in the German book *Royal Flush – Kartenzauberei von Erhard Liebenow* (1976) on page 15 under the name "Die Karte in der Mitte" and later in the March 1995 issue of *The Linking Ring* on page 92 ("The Card in the Center"). Thanks to Erhard Liebenow for allowing me to describe the effect here again.

<sup>49</sup> This condition was first explored by Ed Marlo, who published numerous applications in various works like *Faro Controlled Miracles* (1964) or *Marlo's Magazine* 6 (1988). The basic configuration is also listed in Roberto Giobbi's *Card College, Volume 3* (1998) on page 692.

## Method

This revelation has some things in common with “The Tantalizer” described above. The selection simply needs to start at a certain position to come out at the end, and the order of the cards is obviously changed. Consequently, this is another good candidate for the concepts presented in this section.

In the original, Liebenow used a shuffled deck with an odd number of cards and controlled the card to the needed starting position by means of a key card and faro shuffle. (If you use a deck of 53 cards, the selection needs to be controlled to the 14<sup>th</sup> position from the top. You then cut off 27 cards for the incomplete faro that is needed for the peeling procedure.) For most stack applications, a method for a deck of 52 cards is more convenient. To use this location for an even deck of cards, the incomplete faro is no straddle-faro but either of the in- or out-type. The first peeling action therefore is the simple removal of one card from the bottom. This brings the rest in a straddle-configuration in which you can continue with the normal peeling.

In a deck of 52 cards, the selection is controlled to the 13<sup>th</sup> position from the top. Perform an in-faro shuffle and bring the cards in the incomplete faro configuration and hold it as in the above figure. Simply drop the bottom single card and start the peeling process by peeling off the top and bottom cards with both hands alternately onto two separate piles. The final card left in the hands will be the selection.

When doing the peeling action, be sure to use a light touch so that no more than the two desired cards are removed. You can push the cards together a bit more if you want more security in this regard. Try this location out a couple of times to familiarize yourself with Liebenow’s procedure which is both fun to do and fascinating to watch.

Enter a full deck stack.

By now you certainly understand how to work out the required starting order with the backwards technique, so you end in any desired stack after the performance. Here is what you should get when you number the cards from top to bottom from 1 to 52 (in standard memorized deck fashion):

24, 22, 20, 18, 16, 14, 12, 10, 8, 6, 4, 2, 1,  
3, 5, 7, 9, 11, 13, 15, 17, 19, 21, 23, 25, 26,  
51, 49, 47, 45, 43, 41, 39, 37, 35, 33, 31, 29, 27,

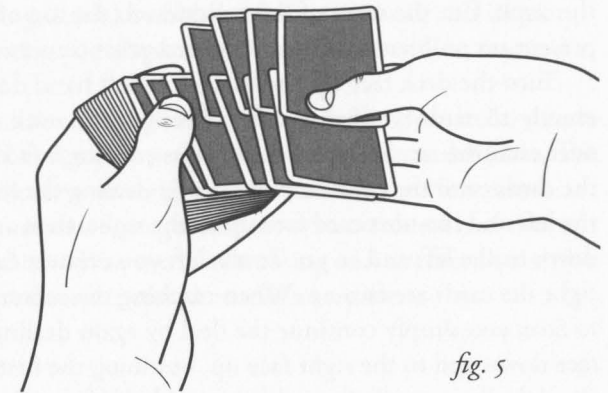
28, 30, 32, 34, 36, 38, 40, 42, 44, 46, 48, 50, 52.

For the performance, you force the 13<sup>th</sup> card (stack number 1) and replace it at the same position. Do the incomplete in-faro shuffle, drop the bottom card (stack number 26) and start the peeling procedure. If you place the half that started with the single dropped card on top of the other half and place the selection on top of the combined portions, you are in your stack order.

By now you are probably wondering: Is there a way so one can reach this set-up with some sort of procedure that is simpler than doing the peeling process backwards? The answer is yes. As a matter of fact, I will describe two ways. The first one is convenient to set up the deck at home or away from the audience (it is in-the-hands and does not require a table), and the second one is incorporated in a little routine that makes use of a memorized deck and a table surface.

## In-the-Hands Way

1. Take the stacked deck in face-up dealing position in the left hand.
2. Cut off exactly 26 cards from the face (guided by a faro check<sup>50</sup> or the stack order itself) and turn them over, so you have a faced deck.
3. Start an in-the-hands anti-faro by outjogging the top card and then every other card until you arrive at the face-to-face division in the center (*figure 5*).
4. Strip out the thirteen out-



*fig. 5*

<sup>50</sup> Here in essence you start a faro shuffle, but strip the half out again and replace it on top and hold a break as if you changed your mind. By this action, you know where you cut the deck. See Ed Marlo’s “26<sup>th</sup> Card Faro Check” on page 11 of *The Faro Shuffle* (1958).

- jogged cards with the right hand and reverse count them onto the rest with an overhand shuffle.
5. Turn over the whole deck.
  6. Again start an anti-faro, but this time begin by outjogging two cards at once and then continue normally with every over card until you reach the center. However, do not outjog the final face down card.
  7. Strip out the thirteen outjogged cards and reverse count them onto the rest.
  8. Turn the bottom 26 cards face down again.

### Home Match

This second way will be described in the context of a short routine with a memorized deck, in which the mate of a free selection is found with the peeling procedure. First I describe the pure mechanics, and then I give a suggestion for a presentation.

Have a card selected by a spectator so that nobody knows its identity. For example, you can give the deck to a spectator who cuts it under the table and removes the top card before returning the deck to you. By glimpsing the bottom card of the pack, you know the identity of the selection because of the stack. Cut the mate of this selection to the top of the deck. This should present no problem to the experienced practitioner of the memorized deck.

Turn the deck face up and place it in left hand dealing position. Cut off exactly 26 cards (guided by a faro check or the stack order) and turn them over onto the remaining 25 cards, thus creating a faced deck. Start dealing the cards onto the table in two piles by dealing the first card face down to the left and the next card face up to the right, then again the third card face down to the left and so on. To the left you create a face down pile, and to the right the cards are face up. When reaching the center where the cards lie face to face, you simply continue the deal by again dealing the cards to the left face down and to the right face up, but injog the first card that you deal on the right face up pile from this second half (*figure 6*).

Take the left pile into left hand dealing position face up and place the right pile on top of it. Cut the top twelve cards to the bottom. Those are the

cards above and including the injogged card.

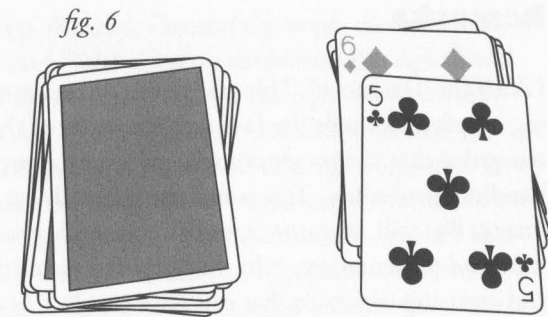
You are in the correct position for the revelation of the mate now. Execute a straddle-faro by cutting off the smaller packet (25 cards) and shuffling it perfectly into the bottom 26 cards. Perform the peeling procedure as usual. This

time, you do not need to worry about any single cards since you are working with an odd pack. The final card will be the mate of the spectator's selection.

That was the handling procedure. You will need some presentational help to justify the dealing. I give you a suggestion that I often use and that might or might not fit you. After the selection, explain that certainly all spectators would agree that nobody can know the card or find out its identity without looking at it. Observe that this is actually wrong, since by looking at the remaining cards one can find out which one is missing, although that is not easy to do quickly. Start the dealing and pass it off as a memory system that allows you to count every value so can find out which four-of-a-kind is incomplete. (The dealing should be finished before anybody can inquire about any details concerning your "system".) Announce the value as you are collecting the dealt cards.

To find out the suit of the missing card, you will locate its mate by another system you invented. Do the card peeling and thus produce the mate. The spectator takes out his selection to verify that it is indeed a perfect match.

This presentation about your strange memory systems should, of course, be delivered tongue-in-cheek. That way it is amusing and the fact that at the end the correct card is produced comes almost as a surprise.

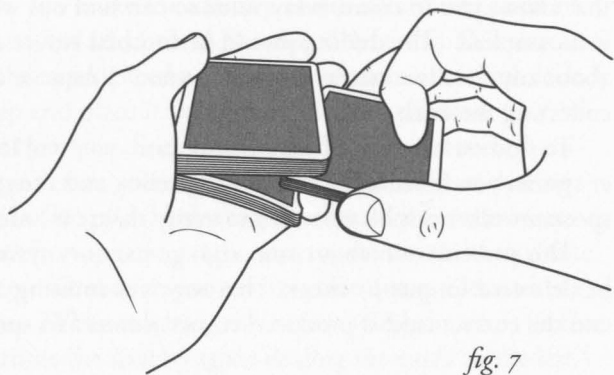


## Remarks

Like “The Tantalizer”, “Home Match” is no first-class miracle, but an amusing by-play that sells the fact that the order of the cards is random. You will recognize that the presentation needs to be especially created to justify the handling procedure. This is not the generally accepted way to create good magic. But still, in some cases this approach produces some interesting effects and presentations.<sup>51</sup> In this case, the resulting routine is a light-hearted and amusing sequence that can have its place between longer routines.

The basic location of the Liebenow Card Peeling can also be used as a faro substitute in a similar way to “The Tantalizer”, which can be used to replace an anti-faro (as outlined above). Let’s assume you need to perform one out-faro shuffle with your stacked deck to produce a desired order. You can now use this routine instead of the out-faro shuffle and sell the fact that you do not have a stack. In this case, the way is quite a bit shorter:

Take the deck face down in left hand dealing position and pick up two breaks below the 13<sup>th</sup> and 38<sup>th</sup> card from the top of the deck (by means of the stack, which hopefully gives you appropriate key cards for you to remember). Thus the deck is divided into three packets. Exchange the top two of those packets by taking the top thirteen cards in right hand end grip and inserting them between the two parts in the left hand into the remaining break which is enlarged by pulling down with the left pinky (*figure 7*). When squaring up the cards, retain



<sup>51</sup> A lot of examples can for instance be found in the work of Juan Tamariz, Lennart Green and Pit Hartling.

the bottom break below the top 38 cards. Transfer the break down by one, so it is now held below the 39<sup>th</sup> card. Take those 39 cards with the right hand in a position for an overhand shuffle, faces against the right palm. Shuffle off 13 single cards onto the packet in the left hand and throw the rest on top. Retake the deck with the right hand and shuffle off 12 cards singly and throw the rest behind (!) them. If you now force the 13<sup>th</sup> card and perform the peeling location as described above, you have in effect performed one out-faro shuffle with the original stack. (Of course, this is not meant to be used as a faro substitute per se. But when a faro shuffle is needed outside the context of a routine, it is a good opportunity to throw in the peeling location.) If an in-faro is required, simply start by cutting the deck in the exact center before going into this cutting and shuffling sequence.<sup>52</sup>

As usual, the procedure reads much worse than it actually is. But you will only realize this when you actually try it out. In special cases (like partial stacks or a transforming a red-black separation into a red-black alternating set-up) the way is even simpler and easily worked out.

Instead of using the peeling procedure to find a selection, I sometimes use it as the climax to an Ace production sequence. There are four-of-a-kind productions in print that use the incomplete faro condition for the production of all four cards.<sup>53</sup> So I use three of those productions and find the final Ace with the peeling procedure. To make use of the stack, one then needs to replace the Aces at their correct positions in the order.

<sup>52</sup> For any deck with an even number of cards, a cut in the center that is followed by an out-faro shuffle is an equivalent to an in-faro shuffle.

<sup>53</sup> See for example Roberto Giobbi’s *Card College, Volume 3* (1998) on page 694.

# A Gambling Demonstration

**B**eing a simple, effective gambling routine which uses a full-deck set-up, this effect is well suited as an example for the concept presented in “Finding the Way Home”. But the routine can stand on its own and despite its simplicity, the effect leaves nothing to be desired.

## Effect

The performer demonstrates his expertise in gambling by cutting to the four Aces. They are again lost in the pack. After a spectator chose any suit, the magician deals out a Royal Flush in this suit to any player desired in a four-handed game of poker. Continuing the deal, the Royal Flush is extended to all thirteen values in numerical order. As a finale, the other four hands are shown to also consist of perfect straights in the remaining suits.

## Preparation

The deck is stacked as follows: From the back to the face there are the four Aces followed by the Kings, Queens, Jacks, down to the Twos at the face. Each four-of-a-kind is in the same suit order, for example the popular

CHaSeD order (Clubs, Hearts, Spades, Diamonds). The bottom card (Two of Diamonds) has a corner crimp.<sup>54</sup>

Cut the deck in the approximate center and you are ready to perform the routine.

Let’s assume you want to do “The Tantalizer” as a prelude to this routine. You need to reverse the order of the deck and go through the procedure that was outlined in “Finding the Way Home” (page 47). Or just stack the deck in the following order:

8H, 5S, 8C, 5D, 9D, 7C, 9S, 4C, 9H, 5H, 9C, 4H, 10D,  
7H, 10S, 4S, 10H, 5C, 10C, 4D, JD, 8S, JS, 3C, JH, 6D,  
JC, 3H, QD, 7S, QS, 3S, QH, 6S, QC, 3D, KD, 8D, KS,  
2C, KH, 6H, KC, 2H, AD, 7D, AS, 2S, AH, 6C, AC, 2D.

The Two of Diamonds, resting on the bottom, is still crimped. With this order, which looks shuffled and can be spread out face-up, you can perform “The Tantalizer” (you need to force the Eight of Spades which is the 22<sup>nd</sup> card) and are then in the starting position for this gambling routine.

## Performance

Say some words about gambling to set the mood. Since the Aces are probably the most wanted cards in poker, you are going to demonstrate your ability to locate them. Briefly false shuffle the deck and set it down onto the table, so that the crimped corner points towards you and is not visible from the front. *Figure 1* shows the deck from the performer’s point of view with an exaggerated crimp.

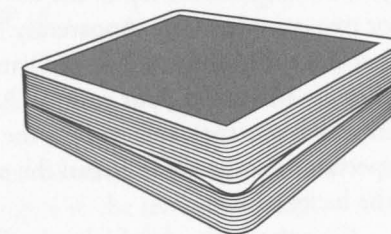


fig. 1

Simply cut off all the cards above and including the crimp with the right hand and turn over the top card of the remaining half, which will be the first Ace. Replace the original top half and square up the deck. Repeat this proce-

<sup>54</sup> See the chapter “The Crimp” in Roberto Giobbi’s *Card College, Volume 2* (1996) beginning on page 345.

ture for the second Ace, but this time reassemble the halves in the reversed order, so the remaining two Aces end up on top.

To achieve some progression in this cutting procedure, the last two Aces are found simultaneously. Cut the top Ace to the bottom with some form of the transfer cut<sup>55</sup> and execute the well-known flourish-toss, in which you hold the deck in the right hand with the thumb on top and fingers underneath. Throw the deck into the left hand but press on the top and bottom cards with the right hand. (Figure 2 shows this as the deck minus the top and bottom cards is about to leave the right hand.) Those cards remain in the left hand due to friction.<sup>56</sup> Those are the final Aces.

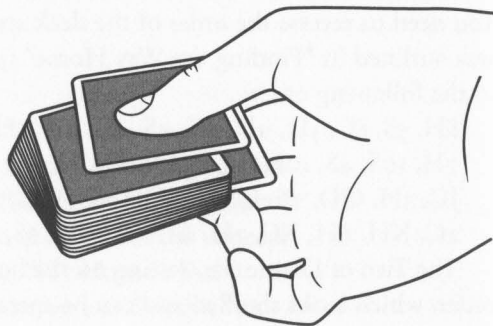


fig. 2

For the next phase, arrange the Aces in their original CHaSeD order and place them back on top of the deck. Ask a spectator to give the deck one or two complete cuts. Apparently he loses the Aces somewhere in the deck, but since the crimped Two of Diamonds is resting immediately above them, they are still under your control. Announce a four-handed round of poker in which one spectator will get the best hand possible – a Royal Flush. Let a spectator choose any suit and the position of the player that should become the lucky winner.

Give the deck a brief false shuffle and cut the crimped card back to the bottom. Now you may need to transfer a couple of cards from top to bottom or vice versa, depending on the choice of suit and player. Since you know the order of the suits, there is not much thought required. For example, if the

<sup>55</sup> See the first volume of Roberto Giobbi's *Card College* (1996) on page 93. An efficient sleight for this purpose would be "The Bluff Cut" which is found in the third volume (1998) on page 514.

<sup>56</sup> For a description as well as a historical discussion of this sleight, see "Der Zwei-Karten-Zi-erwurf" on page 55 of Magic Christian's *Non Plus Ultra, Band 2 – Hofzinsers Kartenkünste* (2004), only available in German at this time.

second player should receive the Royal Flush in Spades, you need to cut the Ace of Spades to a position second from the top and thus transfer one card from top to bottom.

Deal out four hands of five cards each, dealing the cards at the chosen position face up. The chosen hand consists indeed of the Royal Flush in the designated suit.

Remark that in other games like Bridge it is not enough to control only five cards since all cards are dealt out. To illustrate this point, you continue the deal and again deal the cards for the player with the chosen Royal Flush face up in the dealing process. This extends the Royal Flush to a full straight of all thirteen values in descending order (figure 3).

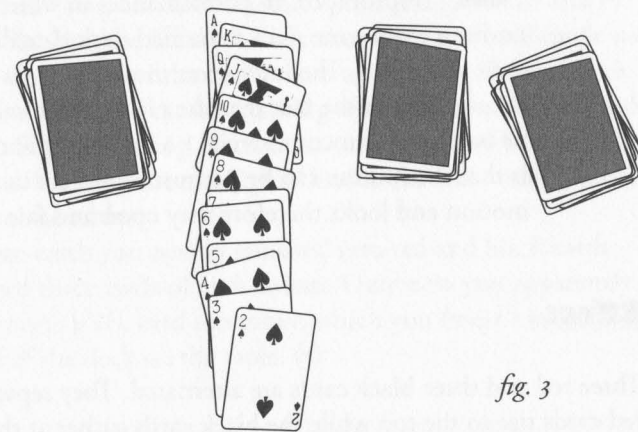


fig. 3

For the big finale, you just need to turn over the cards of the other three players. They are also perfectly ordered straights in the remaining suits.

### Remark

The effect does not require much skill, as the crimped card does a lot of the work. But the straightforward structure assures that even people with little poker knowledge can enjoy and follow every phase of the routine. When finally the whole deck is laid out in numerical order, even the spectators that are completely ignorant to any games have to admit that some sort of effect must have taken place.



# Oil & Water

**Y**et another routine for this plot! This Oil and Water routine can be performed anytime impromptu. In performances in which I have nothing else on me than a shuffled deck, I seldom omit this effect. The impact on the audience is very strong, despite the fact that the plot is often said to be boring and uncommercial.<sup>57</sup> One important reason is that the routine can be performed almost in slow-motion and looks therefore very open and fair.

## Effect

Three red and three black cards are alternated. They separate repeatedly – the red cards rise to the top while the black cards gather at the bottom. As a finale, the whole deck that was shuffled by a spectator also separates into red and black cards.

## Preparation

None. Use any shuffled deck.

## Performance

Hand the deck out for shuffling.

<sup>57</sup> It is not true that laypeople do not like Oil and Water routines. Laypeople do not like bad Oil and Water routines, that's all. And who wants to blame them for that?

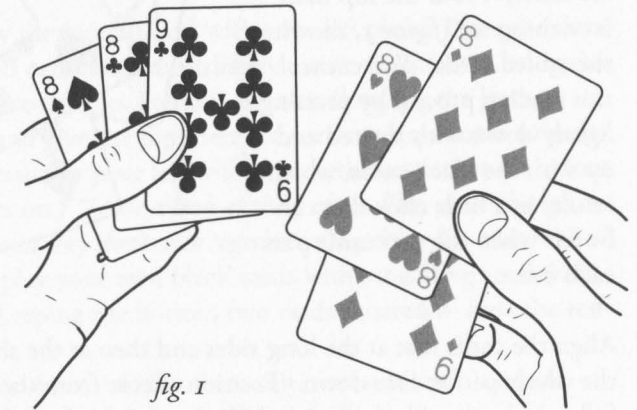
When you take back the cards, fan them out briefly between your hands and cut any red Eight or Nine to a position second from the face, so it is covered with any black card which should not be an Eight or Nine. So from the face there lies any black card, then a red Eight or Nine, followed by the rest of the deck.

Thumb through the deck and remove all black and red Eights and Nines, except the one second from the face. While doing this, you use a spread cull to secretly separate the black cards from the red cards by culling all black cards under the spread.<sup>58</sup> (See also the annotations (1) and (2) at the end of this description.) When you are finished, there should be three red cards and four black cards on the table and the deck is face up in your left hand with a black card on top, then all red cards beginning with an Eight or Nine and then all black cards. Slip cut the top black cover card anywhere into the bottom black half – thus bringing the red Eight/Nine to the face – and place the deck face down onto the table.

Separate the seven cards you openly removed into red and black cards and say that you need three cards of each colour. Only now you apparently notice that you have one black card too many, which you insert back into the top (black) half of the deck on the table. (3)

## First Phase

Take the red cards in the right hand and the black cards in the left hand and while displaying the cards, move them into the configuration as displayed in *figure 1*. (If you want to use the traditional



*fig. 1*

<sup>58</sup> See for example Ed Marlo's "Prayer Cull" in *M.I.N.T., Volume 1* (1988) on page 232, or the description in Darwin Ortiz' *Scams & Fantasies with Cards* (2002) on page 158.

presentation about oil and water, you'll explain here that the red cards are lighter than the black cards and hence always rise to the top.) Now you apparently just put the red cards on top of the black cards and place the whole lot onto the table without aligning anything. In reality, you switch the position of the center two cards during this action as follows. Feed in the top black card underneath the bottom red card. *Figure 2* shows this from the bottom – the red cards have a lighter back colour for clarity. From the top there is nothing see (*figure 3*, showing the tabled cards). You control this feeding process by pressing lightly down with the red and up with the black cards, which results in a little click that can be felt when the two cards pass each other.

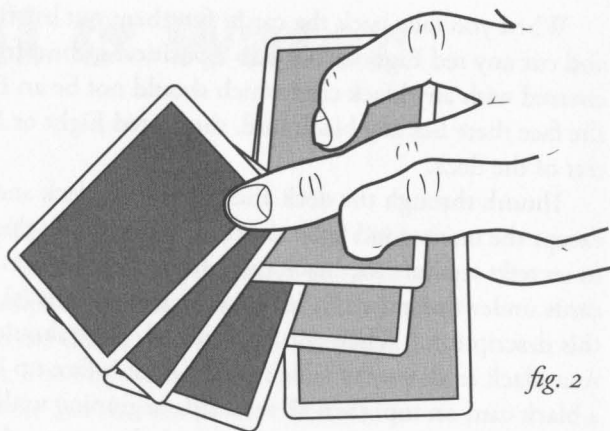


fig. 2

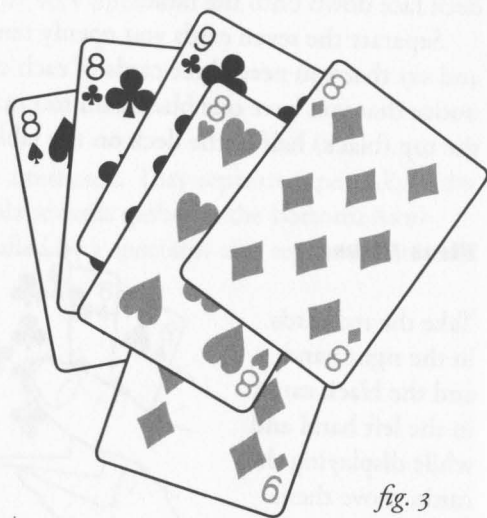


fig. 3

Align the cards first at the long sides and then at the short ends. Finally turn the whole packet face down. (Position check: from the top the cards have the following order: black black red black red red.) Spread the cards out a little and move the top three cards to the right as a block, without altering their order. Begin to alternate the colours by taking a card from the right hand

block (black) and moving it in the center. Next you take one from the left block and place it onto the first card, then again from the right block and so on, until all six cards are put in the center. You can flash the faces of all cards, except the second and fifth card. Apparently the colours alternate, but in reality the top three cards are all red. Ask a spectator to square up the cards and after a suitable pause or gesture to turn over the cards one by one, thus revealing the effect.

While the spectator is turning over the red cards, your left hand gets hold of the deck in dealing position (backs of the cards against your palm) to make room for the cards that the spectator is turning over. In one fluid motion, turn the deck face up and place it into the right hand end grip while in the same action palming the top card (which is the red Eight or Nine) into the right hand with the face against the palm.<sup>59</sup> The right hand sets the cards down to the table, so they are out of the way. As soon as the spectator has turned over the three red cards, you gather them up with the right hand, thereby adding the palmed card in a natural way. Place the now four red cards face up into the left hand dealing position while the spectator is turning over the remaining black cards. (4)

### Second Phase

Establish a break below the top red card with your left pinky. Place the three black cards onto the red cards and immediately cut at the break to bring the bottom three red cards to the top. Fan out all cards (keeping the last two cards squared as one) and give the top three red cards to a spectator to your left. (Choosing a spectator on your left will provide the best cover for a double, as you will see later on.) *“Have a look at those cards. They don’t change the colour if you rub them and they don’t stick together or anything like that, right?”* While talking, you display your own black cards without calling attention to them while always keeping the bottom two cards squared to hide the red extra card. (5)

Turn your cards face down and fan them out once more while again keeping the bottom cards squared as one (this time those are two black

<sup>59</sup> Roberto Giobbi *Card College, Volume 2* (1996), “Topping The Deck”, page 273.

cards) as in *figure 4*. Tell the spectator to take one of his red cards and push it in between your black cards, one by one, so the cards end up in the configuration illustrated in *figure 5*. Since I do not want to fumble around here or point with my right hand all the time, I use the following instructions which lead the spectator through the action and result exactly in the desired arrangement: “Just take one of your red cards face down and push it in between my black cards...

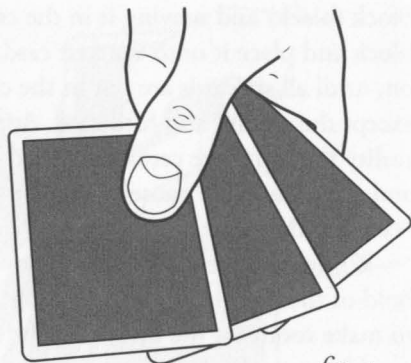


fig. 4

...yes and leave it sticking out for about half its length... exactly... now place the next card between the other two cards... and just put the last card on top. Excellent.” At this point, the spectators believe that the cards are alternating with a high degree of conviction. So don’t destroy anything by moving in a fast or hectic way. Instead, move very slowly and fairly for the rest of

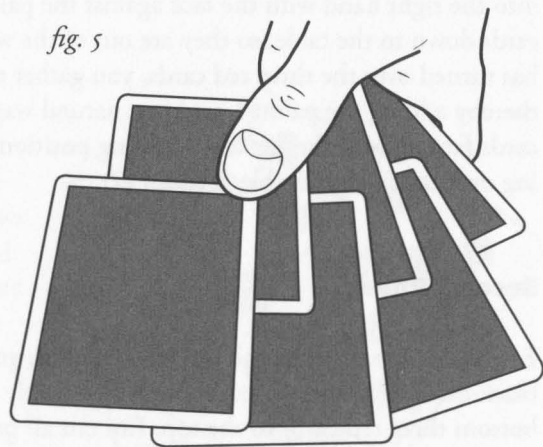


fig. 5

this phase. Square the fanned cards just at the long sides (which means that the red cards are still sticking out for half their length) and place them down onto the table. You can briefly flash the bottom of the packet here. Again ask a spectator to square up the cards completely. After the pause or magic gesture, turn the three red cards over slowly and one by one. (6) Now the effect is apparently over and the spectators should start reacting as soon as you turn over the second card. In this upcoming reaction, you take the final four (apparently three) cards from the table and display them as three black cards

by any false display you know that hides the second card from the bottom.<sup>60</sup> The red extra card should end up at the back of the four card packet. Place those black cards face up on top of the red cards, thus creating a packet with the three black cards on top and the four red cards on the bottom.

### Third Phase

Pick up the seven-card packet face up into left hand dealing position and thumb off the three black cards to the table. Make a little face up fan with the remaining red cards in your left hand, so that the center two cards stay aligned as a double card.<sup>61</sup> This fan should look like the one in the second phase (*figure 4*), but with face-up cards. Take the black cards one by one and place them between the red cards, placing the last card to the bottom this time (see *figure 6*, the

Nine of Diamonds is the double card here). Stress the fact that the cards are alternating since at this point this is hard to refute. Slowly square up the cards and while doing so, injog the second card from the face. This allows you to pick up a pinky break below the top two cards. To show the separation, you use the following handling, which is adapted from an eight card Oil and Water Routine by Arturo de Ascanio.<sup>62</sup>

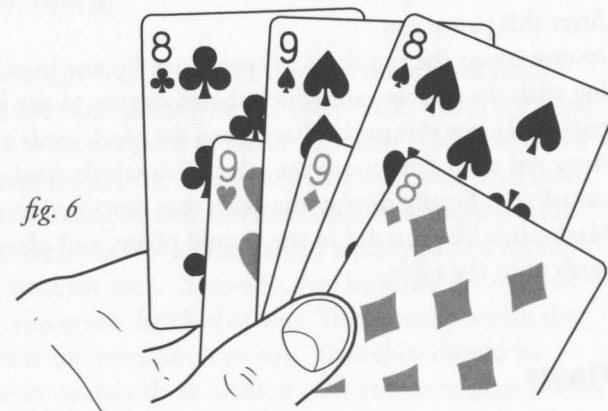


fig. 6

<sup>60</sup> A Buckle Count or Push Off Count fits nicely here (Roberto Giobbi, *Card College, Volume 2* (1996), page 318), as well as a “small Ascanio Spread” with just three cards.

<sup>61</sup> You can, for example, just buckle the bottom card or use the technique „The Ascanio Spread Fan” (Roberto Giobbi’s *Card College, Volume 3*, 1998, page 598).

<sup>62</sup> Echevery Jesús *The Magic of Ascanio, Volume 2* (2006), page 81.

The fingers of the right hand go into the break and get hold of the top double above the break and immediately pull it to the right. In the same motion, the left thumb pushes off the next two cards to the right in a fanned condition. The

situation is shown in *figure 7* and should be created in one fluid motion. Hold the cards like this for a moment, so the picture can sink in. The effect is apparently over, since the three red cards can be seen on top.

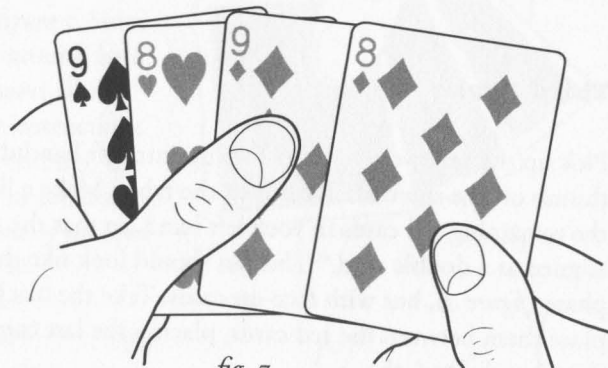


fig. 7

After this pause you reverse count the top three red cards one by one into the right hand, starting with the double card which therefore goes to the bottom of the red card packet. Throw this packet back onto the black cards and thumb off the top three red cards fairly onto the table. This whole display should be done in a casual way. Finally display the cards that remained in your left hand as three black cards like you did in the second phase, and place them with the red cards onto the table.

### Finale

Explain that this phenomenon does not only work with a few cards, but with any number of cards. *“Do you remember that you thoroughly shuffled those cards before we began?”* Wait for a confirmation. *“And they have been sitting here on the table for the whole time, right?”*

Spread the deck out in a wide arc to display the separation of the whole deck which brings the routine to its conclusion.

### Annotations

- (1) If you prefer the Green Angle Separation,<sup>63</sup> you can use this as well to separate the reds from the blacks. In this case you need to start the routine by cutting a red Eight or Nine to the back, instead of second to the face. By this it will end up at the face after the Angle Separation.
- (2) You can also leave out a technical separation at this point by presetting the cards in a red-black-separated order. A short overhand shuffle does not change much and there are also ways to allow a riffle shuffle by the spectator.<sup>64</sup> The errors in the order that might occur can easily be corrected while you take out the Eights and Nines with the faces of the cards towards yourself. The reason why I don't go this route and do a spread cull is simply that this makes the routine totally impromptu and that is how I often perform it.
- (3) Maybe you are wondering why I don't take out just three black cards instead of taking out four and placing one of them back. There are three reasons: First of all, you do not need to count the cards. This makes this phase a bit easier since you have to secretly separate the cards, watch out for specific values while doing so and also hold up a conversation with the audience. To also keep track of which cards I already placed on the table is too much at once for me... Secondly, you hammer the number of the cards into the spectators' heads that way. They usually notice the “mistake” on their own and mention it to you. Thus they should be convinced that there are exactly three cards of each colour in play (which at this point is absolutely true – stress those things while you can). And finally, by taking out some cards and placing one away again, it is harder to keep track which values of each colour are actually on the table. To support this, you should never talk about the “Eights and Nines” but always about the “red and black cards.”

<sup>63</sup> See Roberto Giobbi's *Card College, Volume 4* (2000), page 904 or the manuscript *The Green Angle Separation* by Lennart Green.

<sup>64</sup> See for example Paul Harris, *The Art Of Astonishment, Volume 3* (1996), page 254 (Step One); John Carney, *Carneycopia* (Stephen Minch, 1991), page 234 (further sources are listed here).

- (4) It is important that the spectator turns the cards over himself at this point. This again makes it clear that there are exactly six cards, thus cancelling the method of an extra card which will be used later on.
- (5) Personally, I always chuckle a bit here since the spectator negates the question about any cards sticking together, while this is exactly the case in the cards that I am holding.
- (6) Here again you can let a spectator turn over the top three cards (and then take and display the bottom three black cards yourself, without calling attention to it). But he should not drag the cards out so it becomes visible that there are more cards than there should be. To assure this, you watch the spectator closely in the first phase. If he neatly turns over the cards there, you can trust him again in this phase. If he is too sloppy, you want to do it yourself.

## Remarks

After this full deck separation finale, I always use the short effect “Shake Well Before Using” by John Bannon as a kicker.<sup>65</sup> This results in magically mixing the cards again and is a real eye-popper. If you know this routine, you can easily play around a bit to find a way for making the necessary set-up after the full deck separation. (I start by simply cutting about a quarter of the deck from the face to back before performing the faro.)

For those who do not have much experience with the oil and water plot, I put together some sources. The effect in its modern form was popularized by Ed Marlo,<sup>66</sup> even though the plot of red and black cards separating dates

<sup>65</sup> John Bannon, *Smoke and Mirrors* (1991), “Shake Well Before Using”, page 26.

<sup>66</sup> Ed Marlo, *The Cardician*, page 111 (1953). It is worth noting that Walter Gibson was the first to publish a single-phase routine named “Like Seeks Like” along this plot line in *The Jinx, Issue 91* (1940), page 569.

back to Hofzinser.<sup>67</sup> There are countless routines in print. Some interesting ones are listed in the footnote 68.

<sup>67</sup> It is the 12<sup>th</sup> of the famous “Hofzinser Problems,” the most modern discussion of which can be found in volume 2 of Magic Christian’s series on Hofzinser’s magic, *Non Plus Ultra – Hofzinsers Kartenkünste* (2004), on page 344. At this time, this volume is only available in German language.

<sup>68</sup> Juan Tamariz, *The Magic Way* (1988), page 77 (THE Oil and Water book); Dai Vernon, *More Inner Secrets of Card Magic* (1959), page 20; Christian Knudsen, *Herzblut* (2001), page 358 (a German book); Simon Lovell, *Simon Says* (1997), page 98; Stephen Minch, *Carneycopia* (1991), page 234; Guy Hollingworth, *Drawing Room Deceptions* (1999), page 39; René Lavand, *Magic from the Soul* (1993), page 69; Jon Racherbaumer, *Marlo without Tears* (1983), page 223; Richard Kaufman, *Sawa’s Library of Magic, Volume 1* (1988), page 70; Stephen Minch, *Spectacle* (1990), page 41; Jesús Etchevery, *The Magic of Ascanio, Volume 2* (2006), pages 66, 116.

# Oil & Water Finale

**A**s in any multiple-phase routine, a strong climax is necessary to bring an Oil and Water performance to a worthy conclusion. For this plot, there have been several approaches to achieve this: a very clean slow-motion phase, a reverse phase in which the cards alternate even though they have been seen separated, the separation of the whole deck, some cards vanish or transform, and so on. Some of those solutions work very well, but I have always been looking for this ultimate finale that offers a similar potential as Daryl's "Ultimate Ambition" does for an Ambitious Card Routine.<sup>69</sup> This is what I came up with.

## Effect

For the final phase of an Oil and Water Routine, the six cards (three reds and three blacks) are punched with a leather hole punch. The cards are alternated and a brass fastener is used to permanently fix the cards in this alternated state that can clearly be seen when the cards are fanned out. Yet a moment later, the cards have separated into reds and blacks despite still being stapled together.

## Method

I hope you do not turn the page when you learn that for this effect you need a fully gaffed packet of cards. Instead, take some old cards out of the drawer

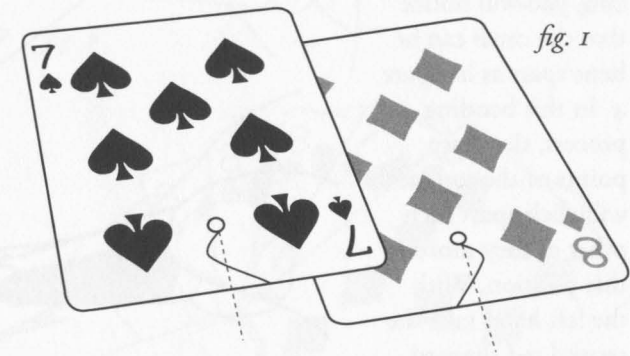
<sup>69</sup> See Stephen Minch, *Daryl's Ambitious Card Omnibus* (1987), page 117, or Daryl's *Ambitious Card Video* for the improved version.

and make a set. This is done in a couple of minutes. You will probably fool yourself with it and later anybody who is not acquainted with the principle at work.

The inspiration for this effect came one evening at the magic club in 1997, where a member performed a dealer's item in which the middle two of four giant cards, permanently riveted together, changed places when the cards were rotated once around their pivot point. While I admired the principle,<sup>70</sup> I found this effect to be more of a puzzle or challenge (much like for example the Imp Bottle) than a magical performance piece. Since at that time I was also studying different Oil and Water routines, I saw the connection to this plot and have used this finale with great success since that time.

You need three red and three black cards, for which I usually use high number cards. (You could as well use four cards of each colour if you are doing an eight-card routine, but for the description I will stick with three.) Punch a hole in all six cards near one short end. See also the figures, in which you can see the correct position for the hole. A leather hole punch works best. The diameter depends on the brass fastener which should fit into the hole easily and then hold all cards securely.

Two of the red and black cards are going to get a cut, so take out a pair of scissors. This cut should look exactly like the continuous line in *figure 1*. Note that the slit in the black cards goes into the opposite direction than the slit in the red cards.



<sup>70</sup> This effect was "Spectacle" (1995, Loren Meier). The used principle is from Tom Seller's "New Principle Card Trick" (1936), in which two cards with rather large slits were used for visual penetration and monte effects. Harry Lorayne, Bruce Cervon and Larry Jennings (among others) published applications of this principle. Many thanks to Reinhard Müller for helping with this credit.

Let's have a look at the preparation of the packet.

Take one red and one black card – both with slits in them – and interlock the cards as shown in *figure 2*, with the black card on top of the red card. (In the illustration, one card is shaded for clarity.) Place both of those interlocked cards onto the next slit black card (*figure 3*) and align all three cards. When you grasp the two outer corners at the slit end, you will notice that the cards can be bent apart as in *figure 4*. In this bending process, the sharp points of the tongues will click apart each other as they move to this position. With the left hand take the second red slit card and place it onto the back side of the three card packet. As you do this, feed

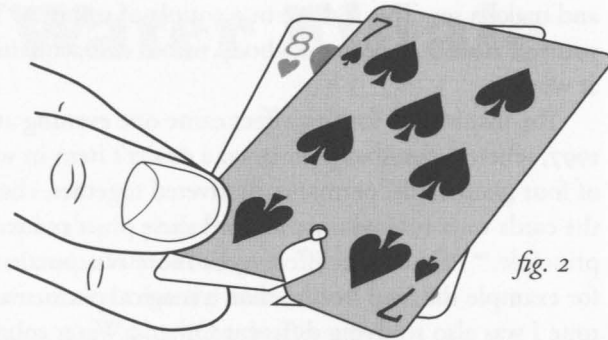


fig. 2

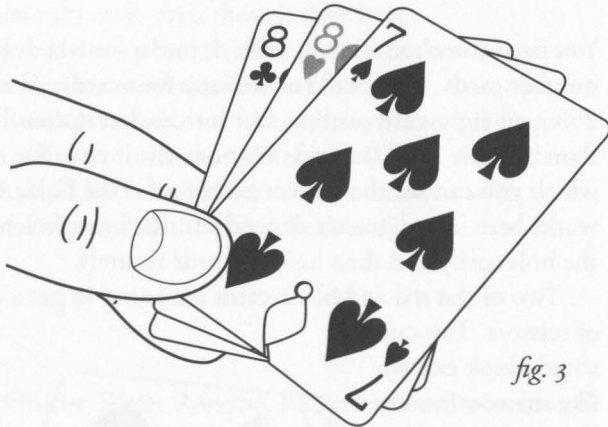


fig. 3

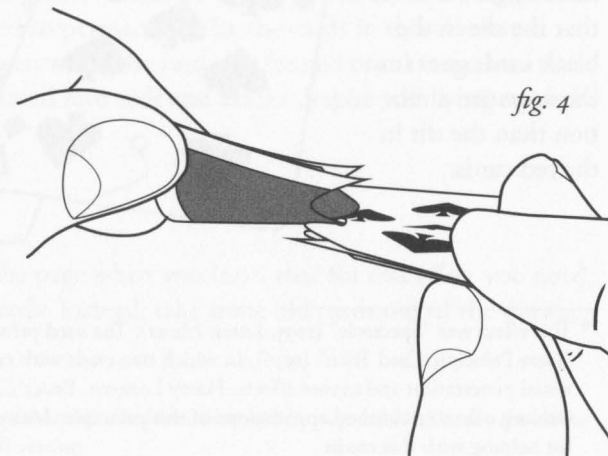


fig. 4

the round part of the tongue of this second red card into the slit, so that it lies above the tongues of the two black cards as displayed in the *figures 4* and *5*. When you did this interlocking process correctly, you should be able to bend the slit parts apart, just as in *figure 4* again.

This was the most difficult part of the whole routine. The two cards with no slits go on top and bottom of the interlocked set (see *figure 6*), which you now fix with the brass fastener. You can fan it out and see the alternating colours as in *figure 7*.

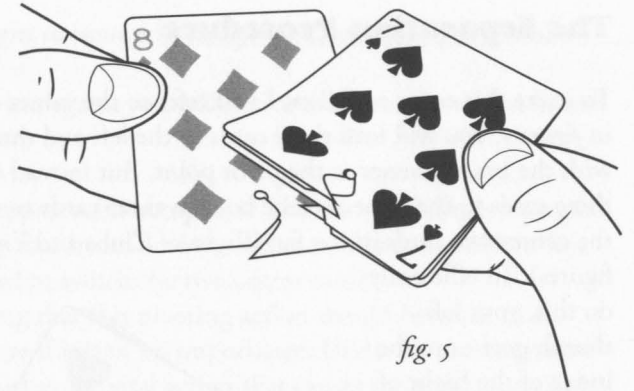


fig. 5

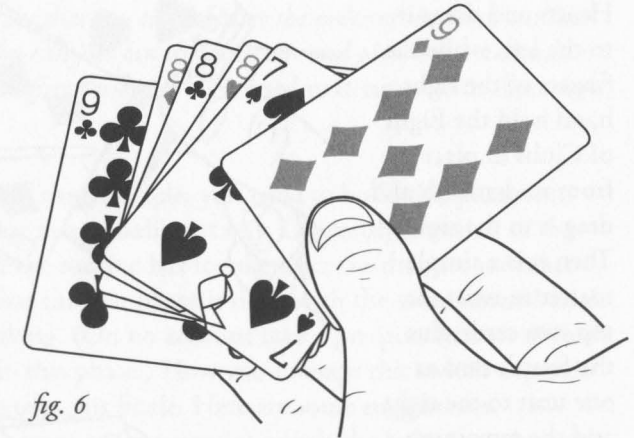


fig. 6

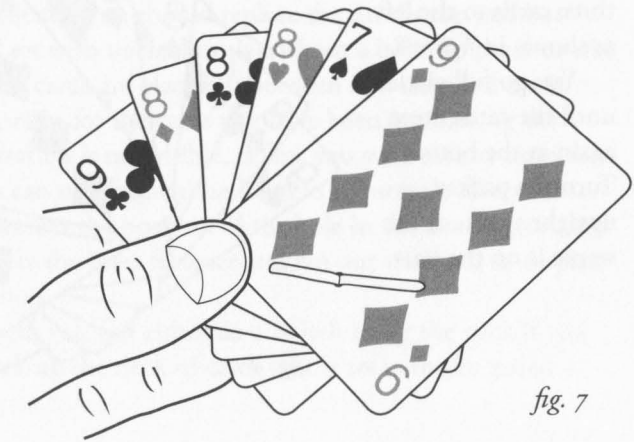


fig. 7

## The Separation Procedure

To make this easier to follow, I will refer to the values of the cards as shown in *figure 7*. You will turn three cards to the left and three cards to the right with the brass fastener as the pivot point. But instead of just turning the top three cards to the right and the bottom three cards to the left, you switch the center two cards in the fan (Eight of Clubs and Eight of Hearts in the figures). To efficiently do this, your left thumb goes onto the index of the Eight of Hearts and drags it to the left, while the fingers of the right hand hold the Eight of Clubs in place from underneath and drag it to the right. Then it is a simple matter to twist the top two cards plus the fourth card as one unit to the right and the remaining three cards to the left as shown in *figure 8*.

You go full circle, until the cards meet again at the bottom. Turn the packet upright again, so the staple is on the bot-

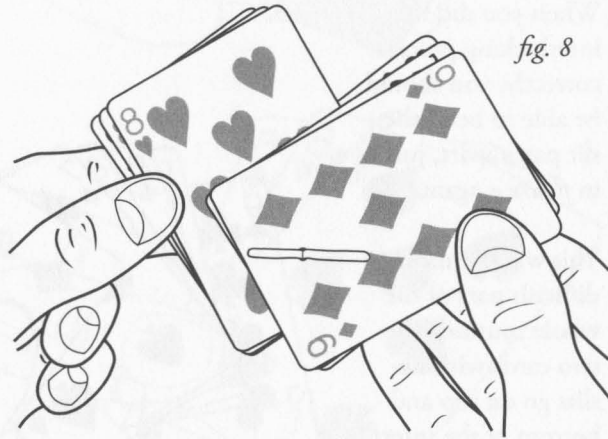


fig. 8

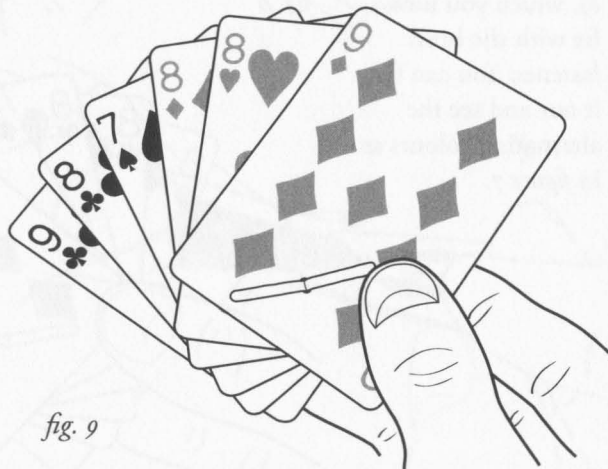


fig. 9

tom. If you feel any slight resistance in this process, just keep going while applying some force.

If you fan the cards out again, you will notice that the colours did indeed separate as in *figure 9*.

This procedure might appear a bit complex at first, but by doing it a couple of times you will notice that it can be done rather swiftly and problem-free. In essence, you just need to switch the two center cards.

It goes without saying that this pivoting action should be made in a casual and playful way, as if it is of no importance. Under no circumstances should this be recognized as the vital action that causes the separation. As I am doing this, I say, "Like that you cannot alter the order of the cards without removing the fastener. You can just fan the cards out and pivot them around which does obviously not affect the order." It is hard to disagree with that, even though it is a lie.

Now that you understand the principle, you need to build this phase into an Oil and Water routine in an intelligent way. Obviously, a switch of the packets in the course of the routine has to take place, so the spectators are under the impression that this last phase is done with the same normal cards that you have used all along. (On no account take a pre-punched set of cards out of your packet to do this phase.) How you manage this switch depends on the routine that precedes this finale. Here are some suggestions.

First of all, since you want to (apparently) punch the holes into the cards right in front of the audience, you should replace the un-slit top and bottom cards of the gaffed set with normal cards without a hole. So the four slit, punched and interlocked cards are placed in between two ungaffed cards. If you later switch this set in for the cards you have been performing the routine with, the preparation is not visible, unless you stare exactly onto the edge with the slits. You can now punch the holes in apparently all six cards (you should try to remember the position of the hole in the already punched cards in the center), apply the brass fastener and fan out the cards to display their alternating condition.

As for the switch itself, you can either do a switch using the pack if you find a motivation to pick up the deck of cards that is set with the gaffed



cards.<sup>71</sup> (You might want to take out the Jokers, so a spectator can try out the leather hole punch.) Or you do a pocket switch, which is easily motivated, since you have to take out both the hole punch and the brass fastener out of your pockets.<sup>72</sup> Just make sure that the set sits safely in your pocket and the interlocked condition is not destroyed. Another possibility is to accomplish the switch with the assistance of the card case. As a matter of fact, that is what I most often do by using a switch that was published by Guy Hollingworth.<sup>73</sup>

If you want to perform this routine multiple times in one evening, you might not want to replace the cover cards of the gaffed set every time. While this remains the best thing to do, it is also possible to use only one or even none replaced cover cards. When the cover cards are already punched, one has to cover the hole after the switch with the fingers all the time and just fake the punching of the cards.

To reset the interlocked condition of the cards, just hold the bottom three black cards in place and pivot the red cards around full circle clockwise. The preparation is constructed in such a way that this brings the original interlocking back and the cards are again alternating.

## Remarks

If in your routine the black cards rise to the top instead of the red ones, just exchange the slit preparation of the two colours as well as the interlock preparation.

<sup>71</sup> See Roberto Giobbi's *Card College, Volume 4* (2000), beginning on page 838.

<sup>72</sup> Adequate switching techniques can for example be found in Stephen Minch's *Collected Works of Alex Elmsley, Volume I* (1994), page 143, Tommy Wonder/Stephen Minch, *The Books of Wonder, Volume I* (1996), page 152, Richard Kaufman, *Secrets Draun from Underground* (1993), page 85, Darwin Ortiz, *Cardshark* (1995), page 87.

<sup>73</sup> See the routine "Reset Blanks" on page 31 of the booklet *Quartet – a fake card and ten routines therewith* (1999).

One controversial subject concerning Oil and Water Routines is whether to use three or four cards of each colour. The visual impression with a total of eight cards is a bit stronger. Yet in my opinion you can have much cleaner phases with three cards each and this counters the relative visual weakness. The routine can thereby be performed almost in slow-motion and appear quite pure, magical and impossible. But of course, you can easily transfer this gaffed set to eight cards if you do not agree with that (actually that was the original version) by interlocking the fifth and sixth card in the same way than the third and fourth card. In the separation procedure, twist all the slit red cards to the left and all slit black cards to the right.

After showing the separation, you can immediately hand out the cards. As long as they remain more or less fanned and are not squared up, the preparation is invisible and not found by laymen and magicians alike. Remember that you punched the hole in the cards that you apparently used already for the whole routine. When you later place away the leather hole punch, you can switch the gaffed set for an ungaffed substitute which you can give away or casually leave onto the table.

# Gray Matters

**W**hile this effect is strong and direct, it is the method that is of main interest in the discussion below. The routine is certainly not for everybody. You know who you are!

## Effect

A spectator cuts a deck, places the top three cards face down onto the table and pockets the rest of the deck. The performer enters the room and divines the three cards. No marks, no questions, no gaffs. The performer doesn't see the face of a single card. The effect can be immediately repeated.

## Method

This is an application of a so-called Gray Code (sometimes called "Bracelet Code" or – actually the accurate term – "De Bruijn Sequence"). In 2000, I studied this principle in some detail and this effect is one of the results.

A Gray Code is a sequence of digits, like 0001110100, with the property that any consecutive block of three digits is unique in the whole sequence. (In general, of course, one looks at different lengths than three, depending on the application one has in mind.) The block 011, for example, appears exactly once: 000**111**0100.

Now let's consider a deck of cards with an asymmetrical back design – a one-way deck. The Bicycle League Back brand is well suited among others. If you orient the back of ten cards according to the above sequence, interpreting one orientation of the back as zero and one as one, you can identify any block that consists of three consecutive cards just by looking at the orientation of the backs since each of those combinations is unique. Fine.

If in addition you want to allow having the deck cut, you need a Gray Code that is cyclic. This means that in essence you can bend the sequence into a circle by putting the beginning next to the end, without losing the uniqueness of the blocks of three digits. Using just the numbers one and zero, one cannot construct such a sequence that has a greater length than eight if you want to look at unique blocks of three consecutive numbers.<sup>74</sup> For 52 cards, you already need blocks of six cards.

The idea for this routine is as follows. I do not use a binary coding system – using just the numbers one and zero – but rather I work to base four, which means I construct a sequence consisting of the four numbers 0, 1, 2 and 3.<sup>75</sup> We use a one way deck and thus have two possibilities to orient the backs. The rest of the information will be coded through the faces of the deck by the red and black faces. So by combining back and fronts with two possibilities each, one has a total of four possibilities for every card. This way, a block of three cards is sufficient for 52 cards.<sup>76</sup>

The Gray Code used in this routine looks like that:

00200301101020130210220230310320331112113213322232333

It consists of the coding for the faces

000001011010011001000001011010011111011101100010111

and the coding for the backs

0010010000010010100110110100110100010011011111111111

<sup>74</sup> A one-way deck has only two possible orientations. Thus the blocks of three cards can only be arranged in  $2 \cdot 2 \cdot 2 = 8$  different combinations.

<sup>75</sup> Almost all Gray Code effects use a binary code as their foundation. If you want to learn more about this topic, I recommend Reinhard Müller's manuscript *Gray Code* that he put together for the Escorial meeting in 1989. It lists a lot of the published work with this principle. Other effects utilizing Gray Codes that are interesting in my opinion can be found in Leo Boudreau's *Spirited Pasteboards* (1987) which deals with only this topic, as well as in T. A. Waters' *Mind, Myth & Magick* (1999), beginning on page 405 and *The Collected Works of Alex Elmsley, Volume II* (Stephen Minch, 1994), beginning on page 406.

<sup>76</sup> Since  $4 \cdot 4 \cdot 4 = 64$ , which is smaller than 52.

But don't panic at the sight of those strange number sequences. The details of their construction won't be our concern, but only how to make the effect actually work.

Take a deck of cards with a one way back design and orient all backs in the same direction. Now turn the cards face up and bring them into the following order, from back to face:

2D, 8D, 6H, 3D, QD, AS, 5D, 4C, AC, 6D, 8C, AH, 7D,  
 QC, 2S, 9D, 4H, 2C, 10D, 8H, 2H, JD, QH, 3S, KD, 4S,  
 3C, AD, 8S, 3H, 4D, KS, 5S, 5C, 6C, 9C, 5H, 7C, JC,  
 9S, 7H, KC, 6S, 10S, 10H, JH, 9H, JS, KH, 7S, QS, 10C.

Look again at the backs and arrange the orientation of the back design in such a way that it matches the "coding of the backs" sequence (00100100000100101001101101001101000100110111111111). That means that all the cards at position 0 are oriented in one direction and all the cards at position 1 in the other direction. The first digit 0 belongs to the Two of Diamonds and the last digit 1 to the Ten of Clubs. The deck is now set for the effect.

You need to identify one orientation of the back design with 0 and the other one with 2 (not 1). It doesn't matter which is which. Then place the cards on the table with the short ends pointing towards you. The back of the top card (the Two of Diamonds) should be oriented to display the value zero.

In the pocket you have a second deck of cards. This deck can be shuffled and on the Joker you glue a copy of the *index 1* that is printed here:

0	1	2	3
02 ♠2/♠8/♥6	01 ♠A/♠6/♠8	00 ♥6/♠3/♠Q	00 ♠10/♠2/♠8
03 ♠3/♠Q/♠A	02 ♠2/♠10/♥8	01 ♥A/♠7/♠Q	01 ♠A/♠5/♠4
11 ♠5/♠4/♠A	03 ♠3/♠A/♠8	02 ♥2/♠J/♥Q	02 ♠2/♠9/♥4
12 ♠6/♠8/♥A	10 ♠4/♠A/♠6	03 ♥3/♠4/♠K	03 ♠3/♠K/♠4
13 ♠7/♠Q/♠2	11 ♠5/♠6/♠9	10 ♥4/♠2/♠10	10 ♠4/♠3/♠A
20 ♠8/♥6/♠3	12 ♠6/♠9/♥5	11 ♥5/♠7/♠J	11 ♠5/♠5/♠6
21 ♠9/♥4/♠2	13 ♠7/♠J/♠9	13 ♥7/♠K/♠6	20 ♠8/♥3/♠4
22 ♠10/♥8/♥2	20 ♠8/♥A/♠7	20 ♥8/♥2/♠J	21 ♠9/♥7/♠K
23 ♠J/♥Q/♠3	21 ♠9/♥5/♠7	22 ♥10/♥J/♥9	22 ♠10/♥10/♥J
30 ♠Q/♠A/♠5	30 ♠Q/♠2/♠9	23 ♥J/♥9/♠J	23 ♠J/♥K/♠7
31 ♠K/♠4/♠3	32 ♠J/♠9/♥7	30 ♥Q/♠3/♠K	30 ♠Q/♠10/♠2
32 ♠A/♠8/♥3	33 ♠K/♠6/♠10	31 ♥9/♠J/♥K	31 ♠K/♠5/♠5
33 ♠4/♠K/♠5		32 ♥K/♠7/♠Q	32 ♠6/♠10/♥10
			33 ♠7/♠Q/♠10

## Performance

To perform, false shuffle the deck.<sup>77</sup> Be careful not to mix up the orientation of the backs here. (Any overhand false shuffle would work for this provided you do not drop any cards.) Give the cards to a spectator and have him give the cards a complete cut. He is asked to take the cards below the table and give the deck some more cuts, then place the top card onto the table, followed by the next card and finally the third. He can put away the rest of the cards.

While he is placing the cards onto the table, you can see whether the individual cards have the value 0 or 2 by looking at the orientation of the back design. Remember those three numbers as a sequence, starting with the first card. So you are remembering a sequence like for example 2-0-0 (*figure 1*).

Have the spectator pick up the cards and fan them out in front of his eyes. Since he removed them from below the table one by one, he reverse counted the cards. When the spectator is now fanning them out, you see (from your point of view)

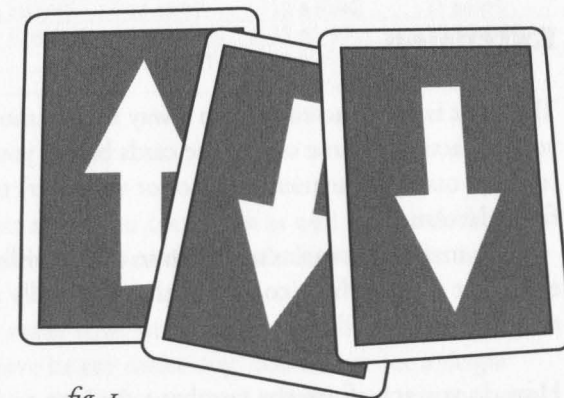


fig. 1

the cards in your memorized sequence from left to right: 2-0-0. To get the necessary information about the coding of the faces, say "Ok, concentrate on the cards... Hmm... Maybe we should try the black cards first since the colour black is stronger. Just put aside the red cards for the time being." This final piece of information is used in the following way: Just note which cards are staying in the spectator's hand – the position of the black cards. Suppose the first two cards are left (black) and the third one is put down (red). In your sequence of three

<sup>77</sup> For this effect the deck should be in use for some time and the stacked deck should be switched in at an appropriate moment.

numbers you now add 1 to the positions of the black cards. In our example (2-0-0) you add 1 to the 2 and the first 0 which gives you the new sequence 3-1-0. You can now forget the old sequence and just remember this new one.

Say that you already have some idea about the cards and that he should concentrate on the red ones. Then you take out the deck with the index Joker to apparently take out the three cards that you mentally received. Actually you sneak a secret look at your index and look up the sequence that you arrived at. The first digit gives you the column in which you look for the other two digits. (In our example you would look in the column "3" and note the cards next to "10" which in this case are the Four of Spades, Three of Clubs and Ace of Diamonds.) The three cards next to this sequence are the ones the spectator holds in his hand.

### Extension

The stack is constructed in such a way that in most cases (more than 80%) you can actually name one of the cards before you take out the index-deck. In those cases, the sequence (3-1-0, or whatever) translates directly into the first selection.

This means you can actually name a card without looking at anything else. That is a nice little convincer that you really are reading the spectator's mind.

How do you transform the number 3-1-0 into a card? The first digit gives you the suit (using the standard CHaSeD sequence):

- 1 : Clubs
- 2 : Hearts
- 3 : Spades
- 0 : Diamonds

For the value, multiply the second digit by 4 and then add the third digit.<sup>78</sup> In our example we have  $1 \cdot 4 + 0 = 4$ . Thus the card corresponding to 3-1-0 is the Four of Spades.

<sup>78</sup> What you are doing here is interpreting the last two digits to base four and transforming them into the decimal system. Obviously.

Let's have a look at another example: 2-3-2. The suit is Hearts. The value comes down to  $3 \cdot 4 + 2 = 14$ . Of course, there is no Fourteen of Hearts in the deck. If you hit upon an exception like this, you just need to look up this hypothetical card in the *index 2* which is printed below. The three cards next to it are the three cards the spectator selected.

Unfortunately, it does not seem possible to construct a Gray Code without exceptions. Aside from the normal values from 1 to 13, the exception values 0, 14 and 15 can occur.

Clubs	Hearts	Spades	Diamonds
1 ♠6/♣8	0 6/♠3/♠Q	0 ♠10/♠2/♠8	2 ♠8/♥6
2 ♠10/♥8	1 ♠7/♣Q	1 ♠5/♠4	3 ♠Q/♠A
3 ♠A/♠8	2 ♠/♥Q	2 ♠9/♥4	5 ♠4/♠A
4 ♠A/♠6	3 ♠4/♠K	3 ♠K/♠4	6 ♠8/♥A
5 ♠6/♠9	4 ♠2/♠10	4 ♠3/♠A	7 ♠Q/♠2
6 ♠9/♥5	5 ♠7/♠J	5 ♠5/♠6	8 ♥6/♠3
7 ♠J/♠9	7 ♠K/♠6	8 ♥3/♠4	9 ♥4/♠2
8 ♥A/♠7	8 ♥2/♠J	9 ♥7/♠K	10 ♥8/♥2
9 ♥5/♠7	10 ♥J/♥9	10 ♥10/♥J	11 ♥Q/♠3
12 ♠2/♠9	11 ♥9/♠J	11 ♥K/♠7	12 ♠A/♠5
14 J/♠9/♥7	12 ♠3/♠K	12 ♠10/♠2	13 ♠4/♠3
15 K/♠6/♠10	14 9/♠J/♥K	13 ♠5/♠5	14 A/♠8/♥3
	15 K/♠7/♠Q	14 6/♠10/♥10	15 4/♠K/♠5
		15 7/♠Q/♠10	

### Remarks

Of course, to achieve a similar effect you could just as well stack a deck in Si Stebbins order and glimpse the bottom card of the deck. But let's be honest, where is the fun in that?

And of course that is not really true, since the test conditions that are met in this effect are hard to achieve in any other way. You do not see a single face, the cards are not gaffed or marked, no stooge is used, and you can stay at some distance to the spectator. Can you think of any other solution for those conditions?

# Epilogue

Marc-André Hamelin, one of the best and most versatile pianists in the world today, mentioned in a television interview – when discussing the music of the little-known composer Nicolai Medtner – that he does not believe in love at first sight, in the sense that all good love relationships have to start with this initial “click”. His reasoning was, that in music one can fall in love with compositions that one initially did not care for by listening to (or playing) them again and again. Having not liked a lot of pieces of music that I now cannot get rid of, I found this to be absolutely true. Growing to know and love certain things can take some time but is usually very rewarding.

In magic, I made similar observations with certain plots and thoughts that I needed more time and thinking to appreciate than others. I always found it extremely unfortunate that when performing for laypeople, in a way it does have to be love at first sight. Unlike in music, spectators are less generous what patience is concerned and seldom want to watch a routine over and over (and maybe even pay for seeing it) until they finally start liking it.

Part of this dilemma is a lack of educated audiences among the laity. That in turn might stem from the fact that magic is seldom considered to be art, except by magicians themselves. Plots like challenge locations, self-referential effects or certain kicker elements, that require knowledge of the classic repertoire to fully appreciate, are most of the time out of place in normal performances.

As a consequence, a lot of the involved and complicated routines that we as magicians can fall in love with as time goes by, can rarely be performed in the real world. Situations in which those things can be done are sessions with other magicians or performances for people that have been exposed to a lot of magic for some reason, maybe because they are enthusiastic about it or maybe because they have friends that practice this art.

While I personally find nothing wrong with including tricks like that in one’s repertoire for just those situations, the routines in this book (maybe except the last one) are in my experience very easy to love at first sight by virtually all types of audiences.

I hope that you try some of the effects in the real world and find that they work for you, too.

Denis Behr

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