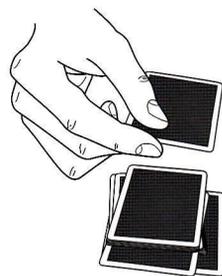


Handcrafted

Card Magic Volume 2



Denis Behr

Handcrafted

Card Magic
Volume 2

conceived, written and illustrated by Denis Behr

Versions of the following routines have been published in German language in the magazine *Magische Welt* (published by Wittus Witt, Krefeld/Hamburg): “Stop It” (Issue 5/2004), “Chaotic Chaos Cut” (Issue 4/2008), “The Green Surprise” (trick insert *kunststücke* that came with Issue 1/2010). The first routine in “Two More Tricks for Allen Kennedy” previously saw print in Stan Allen’s *MAGIC* (Volume 19, No.2, October 2009).

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Acknowledgments

There are several people that helped with this project in one way or another.

My good friend Pit Hartling from Frankfurt gave reliable feedback on the effects and descriptions in this volume. You will find two items in the book that we worked on together. Here in Munich, Friedrich Roitzsch is always available for a beer and discussions about card tricks.

Stephen Minch was not only kind enough to write the fine foreword, but also contributed useful historical information that went into the crediting.

The always knowledgeable Reinhard Müller helped out with some references as well.

While I like good photographic illustrations, I prefer the simplicity and elegance of line drawings most of the time. Thanks go to Daniel Bembé and Simon Pierro, who both took photographs that I required to make the illustrations.

And of course this second volume would not be in your hands without the readers of my first book. So if you are one of them, thank you very much.

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A Slim Note on a Slim Man's Slim Book

by **Stephen Minch**

I first became aware of Denis Behr's existence through the appearance of his "Archive", an on-line index to card magic and sleights. As a reference for the student and researcher, Denis's "Archive" is indispensable, and grows ever more so. It is remarkable not only because of its scope and organization, but also because it is not a wiki-type site built by the accretion of a large group of magicians. It is the vision and accomplishment of one man.

Our mutual interest in the history of card magic inevitably drew Denis and me together. For some time now, through the miracle of e-mail (both modern boon and Sisyphean boulder), he and I have regularly traded questions and answers about historical points of card magic. Neither of us keeps a ledger, but I suspect I am by far the debtor in this exchange. Denis's knowledge of card magic, buttressed by the power of the Archive he has created, place him among the world's best informed in the field.

But had none of this happened, Denis would have entered my world in 2007, when he published *Handcrafted Card Magic*. It is the sort of beautiful little book that exudes quality before the first page is read. You can see the attention to detail in every aspect of its design. And, as I discovered almost a year ago, the book is physically like its author. Well, okay, Denis isn't blue and white, but he is tall and slender, poised and tasteful.

Denis Behr

By the way, he is also very clever and very skilled. When you apply all this—deep knowledge of his craft, passionate dedication to it, attention to detail, cleverness, skill and taste—you get some exquisite card magic. That is what *Handcrafted Card Magic* offered, and you now hold a worthy sequel. This isn't speculation on my part, based on expectations raised. I've examined this material. It is every bit as good as that in its predecessor.

If you are one of those exceptional persons who actually read introductions in books, I thank you for your courtesy and apologize for detaining you. Get along now. What you've really come for is just ahead.

Stephen Minch
February 2011
Seattle, Washington

Introduction

Since my last book came out in 2007, I was surprised and pleased that I received so many comments from people who not only pointed out the errors that crept into the publication, but also told me that they enjoyed the material and could make use of it. This pleasant experience convinced me to put together another volume with my material.

Some of the things that you will read in the following pages were conceived in the last couple of years, but some are actually much older than the first book, but I wanted to hold them back for some reason, like the last item in this collection: “Herbert – The Trained Rubber Band”.

While for most of the material it is not necessary to know the first volume of *Handcrafted Card Magic*, I did include a few items that expand on the concepts of stack management that I discussed therein. So for these sections, especially the chapter “Home Again”, things will probably be clearer if you have familiarized yourself with my previous work in this area.

As in the last book, the methods will vary widely and include stacks, gaffs, gimmicks, boldness, sleight of hand and more. While I am a strong believer in what Max Maven so accurately termed “the aesthetics of the method”, that does not mean that one needs to restrict oneself to a pure ordinary deck. It just means that I, the performer, must like the interaction of method and effect and I can honestly say that in the material presented in this collection I do just that.

While it is true that the method must never be seen by the audience, life is too short to perform tricks in which one does not enjoy the method. That said, do not be afraid – the effects are all quite commercial and easily enjoyed by both laypeople and magicians alike.

When reading other magic publications, I am always interested in the inspirations of the creator and in the crediting of the relevant precursors and related ideas. That is why I tried to be thorough in this regard.

In other magic books, when footnotes are used for additional information and references, I tend to read those notes immediately. Therefore I prefer them to be at the bottom of the page on which they are mentioned and not hidden at the back of the book or at the end of the trick descriptions, where it can be inconvenient to look them up while reading the main text. So as in the last book, I placed all footnotes on the same page on which they are referred to, since that makes it easy to skip them in case one is not interested in the information at the point of reading, but at the same time it is effortless to glance down to them.

If you have any comments or ideas regarding the effects and concepts presented in the following pages, I would love to hear about them. Just write me to the address contact@denisbehr.de

And now take the cards out and turn the page to get started!

Denis Behr
Munich, February 2011

The Green Card

This routine is inspired by Jay Sankey's popular effect "#*@!" (also known as "Paperclipped", which happens to be easier to pronounce).¹ In the course of Sankey's routine, a folded card is switched during the motions of removing it from a paperclip. The switch was originally conceived with a clothespin by Alexander de Cova, which is the object I prefer to use.² Since the switch is executed near the climax, analytical spectators might consider an exchange as a possible solution for the impossibility. Using an odd-backed card makes the method more deceptive because a simple switch will not explain the following effect.

Effect

A folded card with green back color can be seen in a clothespin on the table. From a red-backed deck, a card is selected and signed. After an ambitious card interlude, the performer removes the green-backed card from the pin and unfolds it. Its face is seen to be the spectator's card with his actual signature.

Method

You need a red-backed deck and two cards with a green back (or some equivalent combination of contrasting back colors). Fold one of the green

¹ See *100% Sankey* (Richard Kaufman, 1990), page 36.

² Alexander de Cova discusses the switch and its history on page 111 of his German book *Ein Profi packt aus...* (1992).

cards in sixth with the one-handed classic-palm method.³ This card is placed in a wooden clothespin as illustrated in *figure 1*. The second green card is on the bottom of the face-down red deck. The red-backed duplicate of this card should be removed from the deck. Put the deck in its red case and you are set.

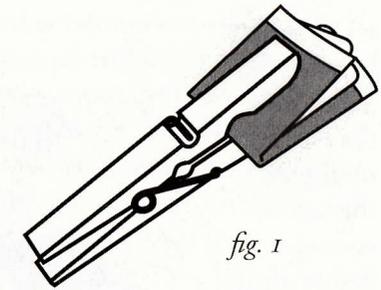


fig. 1

Performance

Place the clothespin with the green card on the table off to the side. This can be done some tricks earlier with the remark that this folded card will become important later on.

Remove the red deck from its case. You need to force the green card without anyone seeing its back. To do this, I use a dribble force with a one-handed stud bottom deal as the *modus operandi*.⁴ Alternatively, you might want to employ a face-up dribble or riffle force with a break above the selection in the middle or some under-the-spread technique. In any case, the card should end up in front of the spectator facing upwards. Give him a pen to sign the face of his selection. Do not worry; there is no reason why he would want to turn the card over. (Do not place the card on top of the deck and hold onto it while the spectator is signing the card, since this is inelegant and quite uncomfortable for the spectator.)

The next actions will control the card to the third position from the back of the deck, again without anyone seeing its back. Fan the deck face up in the left hand and insert the signed card in the middle, but leave it protruding for about half its length. Close the fan with both hands and convert it

³ This sleight is described as "Folding a Card" in *Expert Card Technique* (Hugard & Braue, 1940), pages 305/306. I prefer to fold the card in sixth instead of fourth. The resulting bundle is not only aesthetically more pleasing for me, but also smaller and therefore it seems more impossible to fold a card that small without anyone noticing.

⁴ You find a good description in *The Magic of Michael Ammar* (1991) on page 46.

into a spread between the hands with the excuse to display the lack of control.

Before squaring the cards for good, the right little finger injogs the second card below the selection (*figure 2*). Square the cards, push in the selection and establish a break below the injog. When turning the cards face down, execute a Turnover Pass⁵ to send the selection to where it belongs – third from the top.

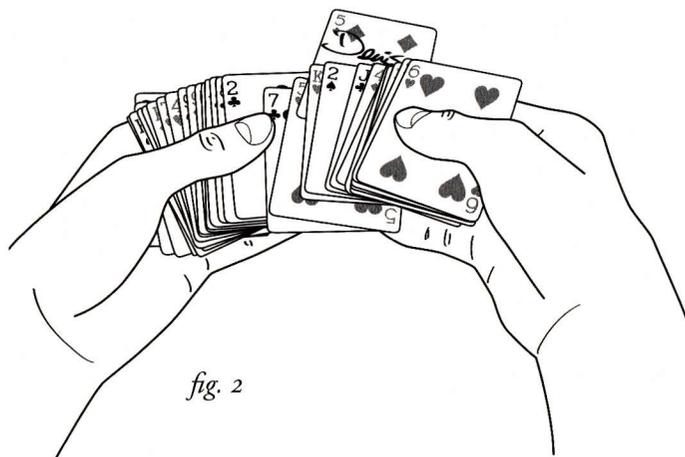


fig. 2

A short ambitious card sequence is now performed that will keep the green back hidden from view.⁶ With the right hand, display the top card to the

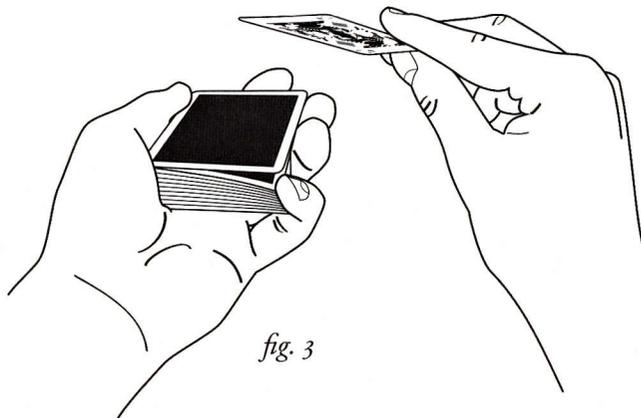


fig. 3

⁵ See for example Roberto Giobbi's *Card College – Volume 4* (2000), page 976. A transfer cut would be an easier (albeit inferior) substitute at this point.

⁶ There are other ambitious card routines that hide the back color of the signed card until the end and you can study those for alternative phases. Jerry Mentzer's routine "Ambitious Red Back" can be found in *Card Cavalcade 4* (1977) on page 76. Two more routines are in Harry Lorayne's *Apocalypse: Phil Goldstein's "Remembrance of Cards Past"* (Vol. I, No. 11, November 1978, page 128) and Steve Rogers and Paul Cummins' "Blushing Ambition" (Vol. 19, No. 8, August 1996, page 2684).

spectators to demonstrate that the chosen card is lost and not on top. Use this opportunity to establish a little-finger break underneath the top two cards of the rest of the deck with the little-finger count (*figure 3*). Replace the indifferent card, snap the right fingers and turn the top three cards over as one. The card jumped to the top. Turn the triple down again and push the top card fairly in the middle of the deck as in *figure 4*. Snap once more and perform a double lift to turn the top two cards face up and to show the selection back on top. The left little finger retains a break below the double.

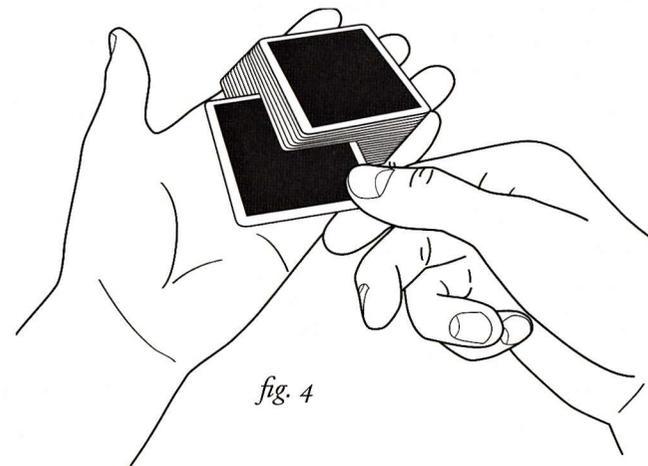


fig. 4

"You might suspect that I put the card in a special position in the middle of the deck. But let's see what happens when you decide where exactly the card is placed, ok?" Transfer the deck to the right hand in end grip. The right thumb is taking over the break below the double (*figure 5*). Set the deck down on the table but hold on to the double as if you picked up just the selection from the tabled deck. Tell the spectator to lift off about half the deck. While the attention is on the spectator cutting the deck, you nonchalantly turn the double face down in the left hand and regrip it in end grip in the right hand. Perform Adrian Plate's

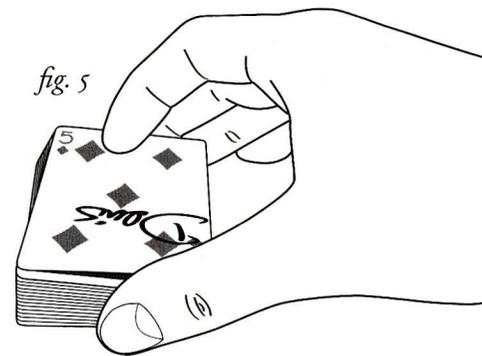


fig. 5

“Excelsior Change”⁷ to apparently take the cards with the left hand while really palming it in right hand classic palm (figure 6). The left hand places the indifferent red-backed card in the middle of the deck where the spectator has cut the deck.

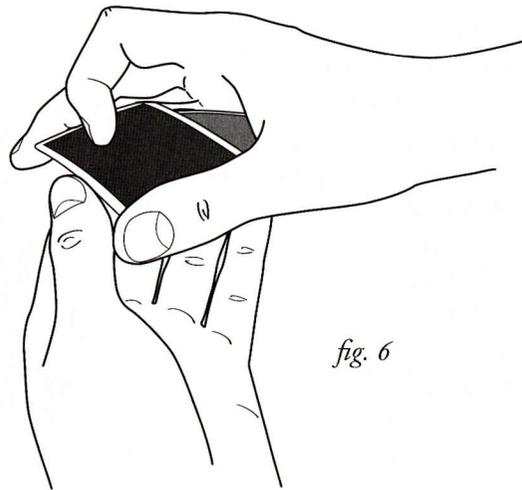


fig. 6

The right hand drops to the side or – if you are sitting – in the lap. Fold the card secretly in sixth with the same one-handed method used in the preparation of the dummy card in the pin. (When standing, it is a good idea to either turn slightly to the right or to fold your arms so that the right hand is out of sight during this maneuver.)

To cover your actions further, the spectator is told to replace the top half, snap with his fingers and turn over the top card. This should provide enough time to fold the card and bring the right hand back into view with the folded card resting in finger palm.

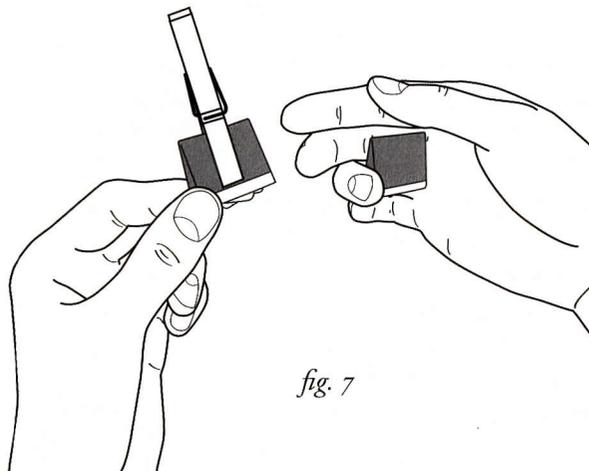


fig. 7

⁷ See *New Era Card Tricks* (August Roterberg, 1897), page 22. Also described as “Palm Change” in *The Expert at the Card Table* (S.W. Erdnase, 1902) on page 148, or more recently in *Cardshark* (Darwin Ortiz, 1995), page 55.

When the spectator turns over the top card of the tabled deck, there will of course not be the selection. (If there is, take a bow and quietly dispose of the finger-palmed bundle.) I make the following remark in good humor. “Well, that’s not good. Tell me, what about my instructions didn’t you understand? But never mind, I said I’ll come back to the card in the clothespin and now seems to be a good moment in need for some distraction.” With these words you direct the attention of the spectators to the card in the clothespin that was never touched by anyone. Pick up the folded card at the corner with the fingers and thumb of the left hand as in figure 7. With the right hand pull the pin off the card, executing Alexander de Cova’s switch while doing so.

For the switch, the right hand approaches the clothespin (figure 7 again) and the right thumb and forefinger grip the pin while the left second finger and forefinger are getting hold of the palmed card at the bottom left corner (see figures 8 and 9 for two different views of this position).

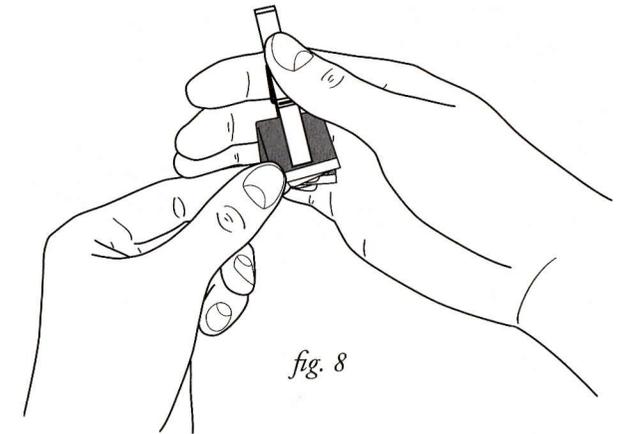


fig. 8

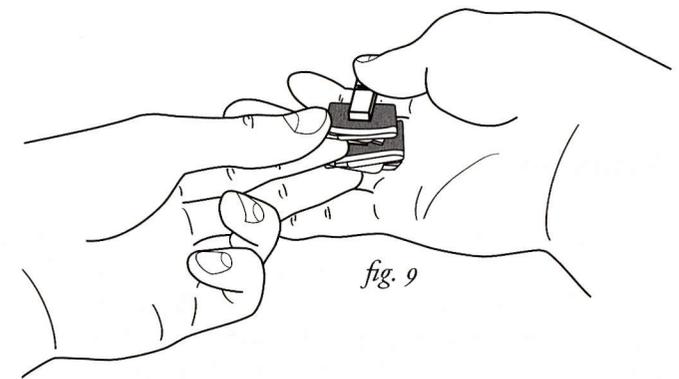


fig. 9

Now pull the pin together with the clipped dummy card out of the left hand grip. The switched-in card

remains between the left fingers as in *figure 10*.

Unfold the card with both hands while hiding the dummy card in the right hand (*figure 11*). Finally present the signed face to the hopefully baffled audience.

The clothespin can be disposed of in a pocket with the dummy card in it or you can leave the dummy behind in right-hand finger palm while the left hand is drawing the pin off and places it on the table.

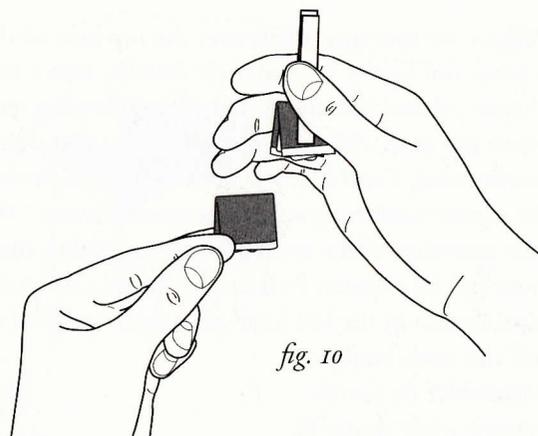


fig. 10

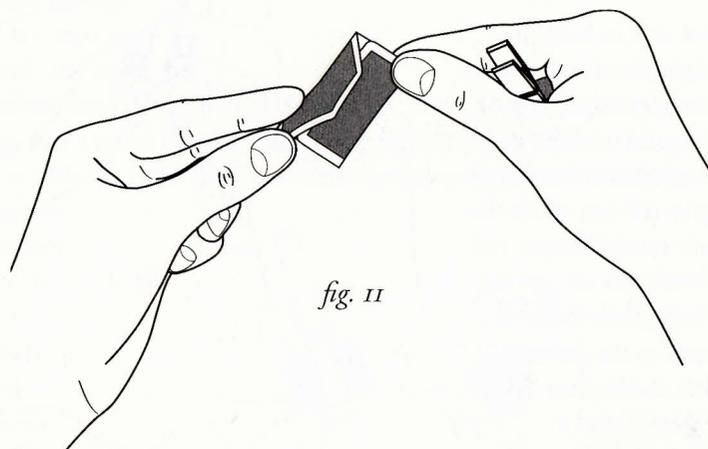


fig. 11

Remarks

It is not so easy to define the effect. Did the face of the green-backed card transpose with the selection, but not the back? Did only the signature jump on an odd-backed folded prediction card? I tried to decide on one phenomenon and make it clear in the presentation but found that it is quite abstract, almost confusing and ultimately unnecessary. Now I simply enjoy

the speechlessness of the spectators. When they first see the signed face of the green card, usually there is silence and one can literally see them thinking.⁸

As an additional subtlety, I like to do the following. When the spectator signs the card lying upright in front of him, it is usually signed at the top or the bottom, which leaves about one third untouched. Before executing the "Excelsior Change", make sure that the signature is near the right hand fingers and the part nearer the wrist is not written on.

That way, when you unfold the card at the end of the effect, you can turn the card towards the spectators before opening the final fold. The spectators see that the value of the card is the same as the selection, but they do not see the signature just yet. Slowly open the final third. This bit of finesse gives the climax just this extra spice.

Instead of actually removing the duplicate of the green-backed card from the deck before the effect, I found it convenient to have it on top and to keep it in the case when the deck is removed in the beginning.⁹ When the deck is replaced later on, you are left with a complete deck of fifty-two cards.

⁸ Darwin Ortiz' effect "The Dream Card" from *Darwin Ortiz At the Card Table* (1988), page 81, shares the same basic effect and you might want to study his interesting presentation that could be used here as well.

⁹ For a practical method to do this, you can consult "Holding Back a Card in the Card Case" in Roberto Giobbi's *Card College - Volume 3* (1998), page 515.

Two More Tricks for Allen Kennedy

Dealing from the center of the deck continues to be a fascination for me, or more adequately: faking it. In my first book I already published a rather elaborate routine with this plot.¹⁰ The following two approaches are impromptu and the effect in both handlings is the same.

Effect

The Aces are distributed face up at four widely separated positions in the face-down deck. When dealing the cards out to five players, the performer deals the Aces to himself face up from the center of the deck.

The First Routine (Pit Hartling & Denis Behr)

Take a shuffled deck and make sure that at least one Ace is in the top third of the deck by a quick face-up spread and an optional cut. Now the Aces are removed and while this is done, you have to remember two key cards and crimp a card at a certain position.

¹⁰ See "A Trick for Allen Kennedy" in *Handcrafted Card Magic* (2007), page 27.

Begin by spreading through the cards face up and counting them while doing so. You need to count exactly sixteen cards, which can be done by counting in groups of 3-3-2-2-3-3, the rhythm suggested by Alex Elmsley. If any Aces are in this section, you place them on the table as you come to them and of course ignore them in your count. Remember the card that you now plainly see on the left-hand section of the spread. It is the seventeenth card from the face.

Continue spreading two groups of four cards for a total of eight more cards (including your first key) and again remember the next card at the face of the left-hand section. This is the twenty-fifth card from the face.

Now spread over five more cards and crimp the inner right corner of the next (sixth)

card with your right third finger as illustrated in *figure 1*.¹¹

Then continue spreading and remove any remaining Aces.

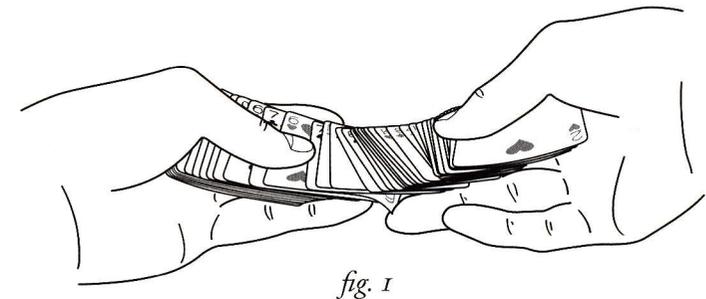


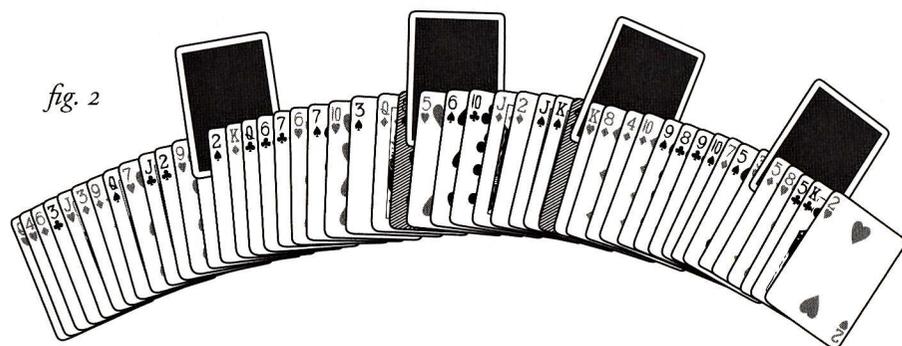
fig. 1

Any Ace that you come to while counting, you remove and exclude it in the count. If everything was done correctly, you have now memorized the seventeenth and twenty-fifth card and crimped the thirtieth card from the face of the deck, all under the pretense of removing the Aces.

Spread the deck face up on the table. The Aces are inserted in the spread face down at seemingly random positions. In reality three of them are placed in very precise positions. From right to left, the first Ace is put sixth from the face by sight-counting five cards in the spread. The second Ace is placed on the face of the first key card and the third on the face of the second key card.

¹¹ This convenient technique can be found as "The Crimp Location - First Method. (With both hands)" in *Greater Magic* (John Northern Hilliard, 1938) on page 46. It is also described in the third volume of Roberto Giobbi's *Card College* (1998), page 561, "The Spread Crimp".

The last Ace is placed anywhere to the left of the third Ace. *Figure 2* illustrates the distribution of the Aces. The memorized key cards are shaded for clarity.

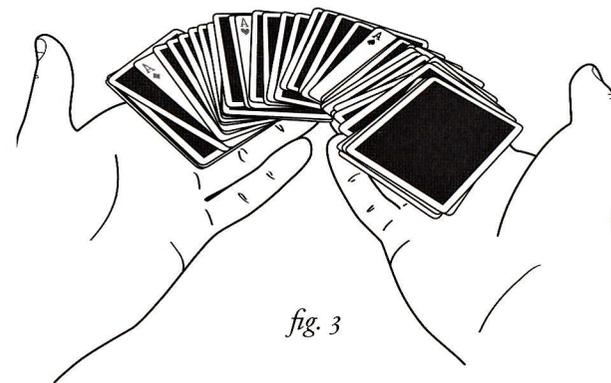


Push the Aces in and cleanly square up the whole deck. Turn the deck face down end for end and place it in left-hand dealing position. The deck's bevel and the left fingers cover the corner crimp at the front at this point. Now you act as if you want to start the deal. But as an afterthought you say: "Now the Aces are face up for this demonstration. In a real game they would of course be face down!" To illustrate your point, you spread the cards between your hands to display the reversed condition of the Aces.

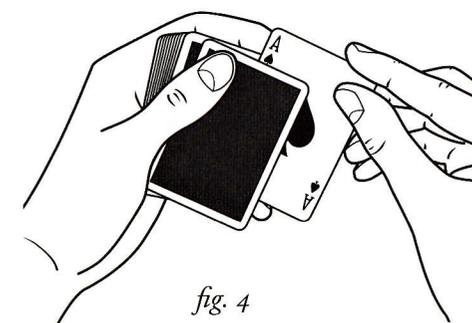
When you come to the first Ace, you steal it underneath the spread.¹² Feed it back into the spread from underneath fifth below the next Ace so that there are four cards between this Ace and the next Ace. (In other words, there are eight face-down cards between the next two Aces and the culled card is inserted right in the middle of those eight cards.)

Spread farther so that three of the Aces are seen widely separated in the deck (*figure 3*). This display is what you want them to remember, so pause for a second and then very fairly square the cards up with an all-around square-up which brings the crimp back to the inner side. Pick up a little-finger break under the crimped card at this opportunity.

"Let's assume that there are five players in the game." With these words you execute a pass, which brings the crimped card to the bottom and the Aces near the top.¹³ The Aces should now be at positions six, eleven, sixteen and twenty-eight from the top.



Deal the cards out for five players, executing a second deal to yourself, preferably of the push-off type (*figure 4*). The face-up Ace will appear out of nowhere and is apparently dealt from the center. The next two rounds are dealt the same way with the words "The next Ace is fifteenth from the top... and the next Ace must be at position eleven... yes", naming any numbers.



Before dealing the fourth round, you say "and the last one is thirteen cards down from the top." Pretend that you sense some doubt about your claim. "Oh, if you don't believe me, we can just check." Start counting the cards into the right hand one by one, forming a spread in the right hand. Beginning with the sixth card, you pull every subsequent card underneath this spread with your right fingers, effectively spread-culling those cards. Count out loud and slowly. The last Ace will indeed appear at position thirteen, just as you

¹² When culling only a single card, I found the finger technique by Ernest Earick an excellent one. It is described on page 28 of *By Forces Unseen* (Stephen Minch, 1993).

¹³ If you prefer a cover pass at this point, simply change the position of the crimp by one in the initial removal of the Aces.

said. This is a nice moment and implies that you knew the position of every Ace before this one as well.

In the small offbeat created by this mini-effect, apparently replace the counted cards back on top of the last Ace, while in fact the culled cards are brought to the bottom of the deck as in

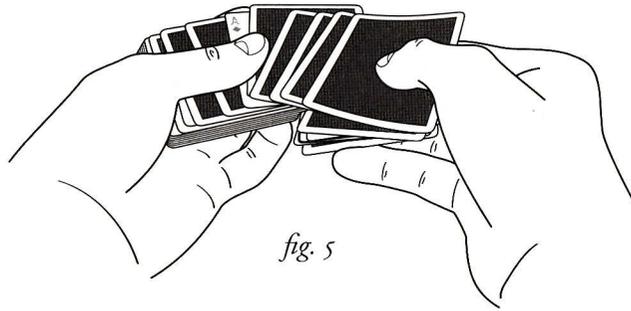


figure 5, and only the first five cards go onto the Ace. This, of course, positions the Ace for the last round. This solution to position the last Ace was conceived by Pit Hartling. Perform the last deal, but after dealing the first four face-down cards you repeat: *“So thirteen minus those four dealt cards makes nine, so I simply deal the ninth card.”* Apparently do just that by doing another second deal to conclude the demonstration.

Variation

It is possible to allow a spectator to place the Aces in the deck himself in the beginning. Of course, you have to pay for this, but for those interested, here is the required handling.

Remove the Aces from a shuffled deck, spread the cards face-up on the table and hand the Aces to a spectator with the request to place them face down at four widely separated spots in the deck. The only requirement is that there should be eight or more cards between them, so if he should place two Aces too close together, simply ask him to separate them a bit more *„to make it more difficult“*.

Secretly count the number of cards between the first and the second Ace from the face and add two to that number. The result is your key number

and all you need to remember. This will be the last Ace's position that you name near the end (thirteen in the original handling just described).

Sight-count to the seventh card to the left of the third Ace from the face and as you gather the spread with the left hand, let your thumb fall on that card. When squaring up, you can take a break above that card. With your left pinky, push the card above the break (the sixth card below the third Ace from the face) a bit to the right and push up on the card's inner right corner, putting in a slight corner crimp. Immediately square everything up and turn the deck face down end for end.

Spread the cards to point out the reversed Aces and secretly cull the first Ace under the spread just as in the original handling. Load the Ace back in the spread four cards below the next Ace and then spread four more cards. Now cull any cards that may still remain between this spot and the next face-up Ace (there will only be a few cards). Those cards are brought to the bottom and out of the way as the deck is squared. From here on, continue as in the original handling and simply replace the number that indicates the position of the last Ace with your key number.

Remarks

It helps to keep the big picture in mind. This is a rather quick and direct demo. The impression that you want to give is that the Aces are placed at four random and widely separated positions in the deck and immediately the cards are dealt from there. If you treat the brief re-spreading of the deck between the hands as an unimportant aside, this is what the spectators will remember.

Executing a cull, pass and second deal might seem like a lot of work just for faking the center deal. But believe me, a real center deal will never look that clean and most of the sleights in this routine are happening when they are not expected.

The Second Routine

This is a very quick and direct handling. The Aces are on the table and the deck is face down in left-hand dealing position with a little-finger break below the top thirteen cards.

To get into this position, you can for example count thirteen cards from the face while removing the Aces and set an injog there, then turn the deck face down, cut at the injog and retain a break under the thirteen cards just cut to the top.

Convert the break into a step by pushing the cards above the break to the left with the little finger and form a fan. Thanks to Dai Vernon's finesse,¹⁴ the step will be visible in the fan configuration of the deck if you know what to look for. That allows you to pick up the first Ace and insert it face up right into the former break at fourteenth position. Leave it sticking out for half its length. The next Ace is placed fifth to the left of the first one so that there are four cards between the Aces.

Give the remaining two Aces to a spectator with the words "You know what, why don't you place the Aces in the deck yourself wherever you want?" Let him do just that but make sure that he inserts them below the two Aces that are already sticking out. Let the fair picture as seen in figure 6 sink in.

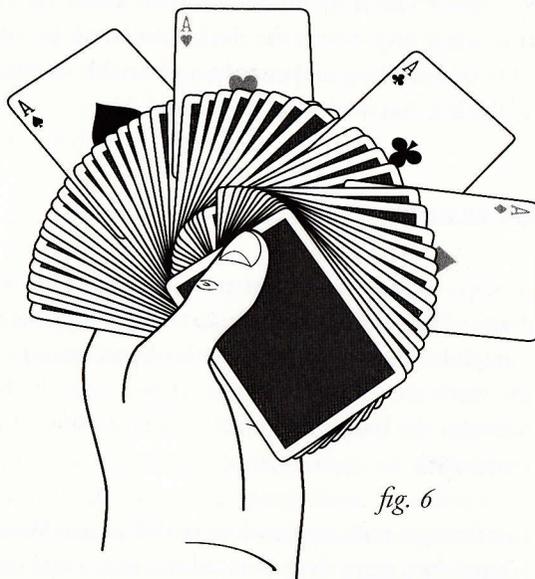


fig. 6

¹⁴ While the finesse can be found in *Expert Card Technique* (Hugard & Braue, 1940) on page 327 as "A Variation", like so many things in this book it is not credited. For detailed descriptions see "Pressure Fan" on page 127 of *Dai Vernon's Ultimate Secrets of Card Magic* (Lewis Ganson, 1967) or "Fan and Step" on page 536 of *Card College – Volume 3* (Roberto Giobbi, 1998).

Start to push in the Aces with the right fingers, beginning on the right. But only push home the first two Aces. The two Aces that the spectator inserted are pushed in only partially so that they remain sticking out about an inch. Close the fan and then push in those two Aces for good, angling them diagonally in the process.¹⁵ The right little finger touches the two cards at the upper right corner and pulls them to the right so that they are side-jogged parallel to the deck. Immediately the left little finger pushes the inner corner back into the deck, which will result in another angle-jogged configuration, but the outer right corners are now sticking out. To lock the two Aces in place, the left second finger moves into the upper right corner between the Aces and the deck. A bevel of the deck hides the jogged condition (see figure 7, where the left third and fourth fingers are moved out of the way for clarity).

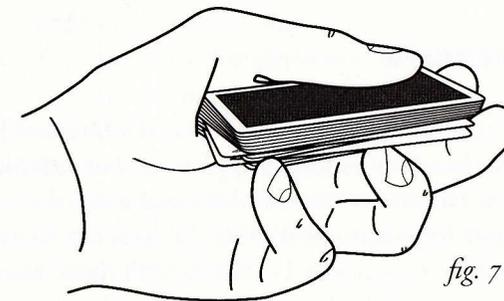


fig. 7

This sets you up for a relatively simple center deal of those two Aces that was devised by Ed Marlo and Martin Nash, in the handling of Guy Hollingworth, whose description should be consulted in the case that you are unfamiliar with the technique.¹⁶

Start dealing the cards for a five-handed game of Poker and when you come to yourself, deal an Ace from the center by contacting the bottom jogged card with the tip of the right second finger and pulling it out of the deck. The left second finger holds the rest of the deck in place. Repeat the center deal for the next round. "The second Ace should be fourteen cards down. Yes,

¹⁵ See "The Diagonal Insertion", *Card College – Volume 1* (Roberto Giobbi, 1994), page 69.

¹⁶ Guy Hollingworth's detailed explanation can be found as "The centre deal" on page 163 of *Drawing Room Deceptions* (1999) and is a technical variant of "The Nash Multi-Center" from *Sleight Unseen* (Stephen Minch, 1979), page 336. However, Marlo preceded Nash with basically the same idea and published it in 1960 in an insert called "Special to the Expert" that came with copies of *Seconds, Centers, and Bottoms* (1959) directly ordered from Marlo. It was later reprinted on page 239 of *The Unexpected Card Book* (1974).

there it is. *The next one... hmmm.*” Pretend that you forgot the position of the third Ace and absentmindedly shift the deck in the left hand to the fingertips and tap it on the table so it is clearly seen that no jogs or breaks are held. Then you say *“Ah, I remember, it is at position twelve.”*

With these words, you start dealing the last two rounds, executing a push-off second deal to yourself each time. The remaining two Aces will be in the proper position and melt out of the deck into your hand.

Remark

If you perform Guy Hollingworth’s “A Gambling Routine”,¹⁷ you can apply this handling to the third phase of this remarkable composition. That way you can save two center deals and make the whole affair perhaps even a bit more impressive by dealing the Aces out face up. Actually, that application was the reason why I came up with the sequence. The cut preceding the insertion of the Aces in Hollingworth’s effect makes it possible to establish a break underneath sixteen cards before fanning the cards which can be your key for the insertion of the first two Aces.

¹⁷ *Drawing Room Deceptions* (1999), page 181.

Home Again

In the chapter “Finding the Way Home” in my book *Handcrafted Card Magic*, a useful concept for the management of full deck stacks was discussed:¹⁸ Effects that include actions that obviously change the order of the cards in a seemingly irreversible way strongly convince the spectators that the order of the cards is random and shuffled. Several applications demonstrated that this does not have to be the case at all. A further example is included in this volume on page 39, “Messy – The Director’s Shuffle”.

This concept can also be applied to isolated techniques, specifically false shuffles and cuts, instead of to complete routines. There are numerous techniques that are executed in two stages. First you shuffle or cut the deck in some way that actually does change the order. Then in a second phase you shuffle or cut the deck again and this cancels out the first phase, so that the original order is restored.

Take for example the classic false overhand shuffle by G.W. Hunter.¹⁹ You start by doing one shuffling sequence that changes the order (shuffling off a block, followed by for example five single cards that are then marked with an injog). Then you follow with a second shuffle that undoes the first one (shuffling the same five cards back into their original position).

¹⁸ See page 41 of *Handcrafted Card Magic* (2007).

¹⁹ See Roberto Giobbi’s *Card College – Volume 2* (1996) on page 259: “Controlling the Entire Deck: the G.W. Hunter Shuffle”. It can also be found under “To Retain the Whole Pack in a Certain Order” in *Greater Magic* (John Northern Hilliard, 1938) on page 167.

To apply the “Finding the Way Home” concept here, you delay the second shuffle by inserting what Ascanio would call a positive insertion.²⁰ The first shuffle is executed in the offbeat without anyone really noticing. Then you wait a little bit, retaining your jog or break. Only then do you come out again, maybe even directing some attention to the deck. “*Let’s try something else. First I’ll shuffle the cards.*” With these words you execute the second shuffle sequence and thus restore the order.

But when the audience missed the first shuffle and notices only the second phase, which so obviously changes the order of the cards, the fact that the shuffle is false is impossible to reconstruct. The symmetry is broken. There are other overhand shuffle techniques where this strategy can be applied and my favorite one is a version of Gordon Bruce’s handling.²¹

For another application, I want to describe a haphazard looking cut that retains the order of all cards.

Chaotic Chaos Cut

This cut simulates a running cut from the hand to the table. It is an elaboration of a technique by my friend Pit Hartling and takes his cut a step further.²² Pit’s technique in turn is based on a popular triple false cut by Frank Thompson.²³

²⁰ In *The Magic of Ascanio – Volume 1* (Jesús Etcheverry, 2005), the used term is “Parenthesis of Forgetfulness”, see page 59. An excellent overview is also in the theory chapters of the second volume of *Card College* (Roberto Giobbi, 1996), page 427.

²¹ The “Gordon Bruce False Shuffle” can be found in Peter Duffie’s *5 times Five – Scotland* (1998) on page 16. (There is some controversy about the shuffle being also conceived by Persi Diaconis.) For an interesting variation by Jerry Sadowitz, see “Climate of Hunter” in *The Crimp*, Issue 64 (2007), page 563. Here Jerry Sadowitz also applies the time delay between both shuffles to increase its deceptiveness.

²² See the “Chaos Cut” in *The Book* (Flicking Fingers, 1998) on page 115.

²³ I believe Thompson’s technique was first published by Karl Fulves in *Six Impromptu Card Tricks* (1982) in the context of a trick on page 45. Fulves later included it in *Combo* (1998), page 22. Another description can be found in *Smoke and Mirrors* (John Bannon, 1991) on page 95.

The deck starts in right-hand end grip.

Begin by executing a swing cut, cutting off about a fifth from the top of the deck with the right first finger into left hand dealing position. Continue by cutting off another fifth from the right hand packet into the left hand and immediately pick

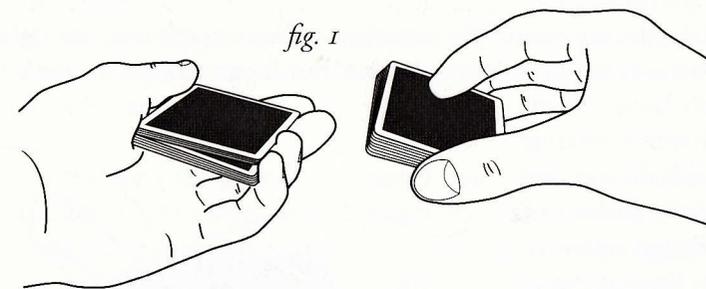
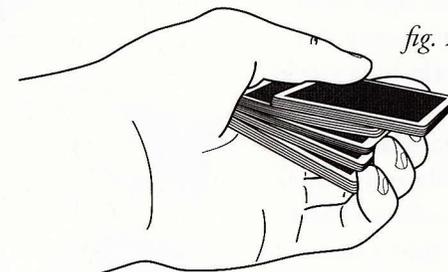
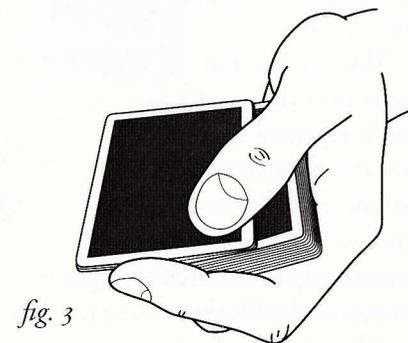


figure 1.

up a break between the two packets with the little finger of the left hand as in figure 1. Repeat by cutting off another fifth to the left and using the left third finger to hold another break below this packet and then do it one more time and hold the next break with the left second finger. Since you are now running out of fingers, the last and fifth packet is simply put on top of the left hand piles, slightly stepped to the right.



The configuration of the pack at this point is illustrated in figure 2. Believe it or not, but from the front the hand looks quite relaxed at this point (figure 3).²⁴



²⁴ It could be worse. Ed Marlo published a multiple peek control in which the left hand has to hold no less than five breaks with three fingers. He writes in *Control Systems* (1952) on page 80: “Thus the second finger is holding two breaks, as is the little finger. Break on card three is held by the third finger.” For some reason this control did not quite catch on.

What was done until now is only the set-up for the actual running cut to the table. Here you basically just take one packet after the other with the right hand and place in on the table, thus restoring the original order. But by applying the idea from Pit Hartling's "Chaos Cut" of inserting slip cuts, you will get a total of nine cutting actions out of it.

Take the top packet (the one that is side-stepped) with the right hand in end grip and drop it on the table. But as you remove the packet from the left hand, the left thumb is holding back the top card of the packet in a slip cut action as in *figure 4*. Next the right hand takes only this held-back single card and drops it onto the tabled pile as if it was a packet of cards.

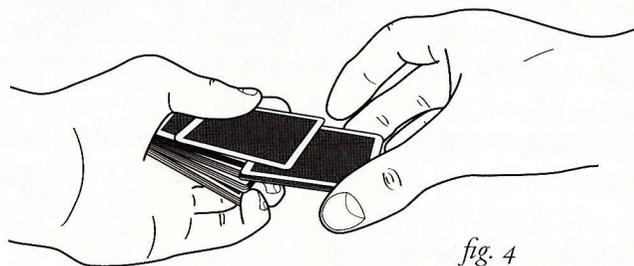


fig. 4

Figure 5 shows this from the audience's perspective.

This slip cut and single-card cut combination is repeated with the next three packets: You cut one packet after the other to the tabled pile, each time holding back the top card with the left thumb and following with the single card. The last packet is dropped on top of everything without a slip cut.

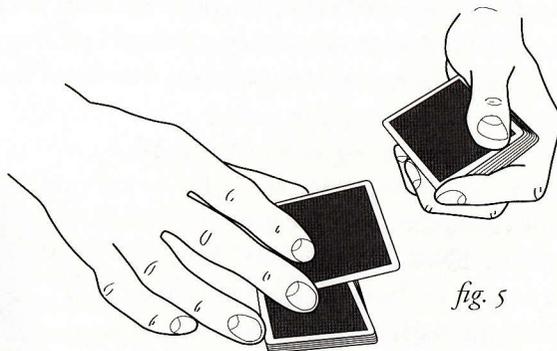


fig. 5

The tabled mess is now in its original order.

Remarks

If you do the whole cutting with a nice brisk rhythm, it looks very chaotic and random. To apply the concept discussed above, you do the set-up running swing cut from the right to the left hand in the offbeat and wait a moment with all the breaks and steps in place. Only then do you move forward again and execute the running cut to the table while everyone is looking. The order obviously changes during this second phase and thus the whole sequence is quite deceptive.

Normally I would not want the spectators to notice that every other packet that is cut to the table is only a single card. I handle the single cards as if they were packets. But in some cases I make a point of those cards being single and call attention to this fact. For example in a poker routine in which I apparently stack the deck while all cards are secretly in place already, I execute the running cut to the table and very openly deal the single cards onto the tabled pile as in *figure 6* and treat them as if those are the cards for the poker hand that I am currently stacking.

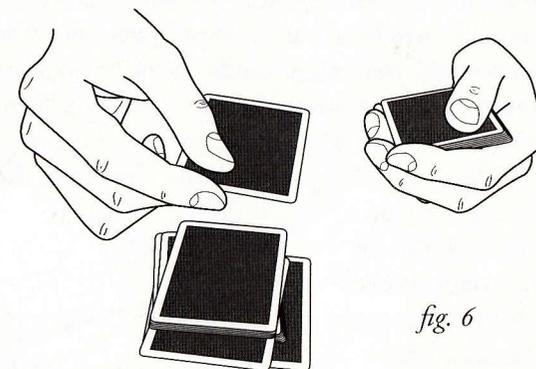


fig. 6

The Plop Replacement

In *Handcrafted Card Magic*, I described a strategy that allows the performer to spread through a memorized deck face down and cull any four-of-a-kind to the bottom of the deck with a minimum of work.²⁵ I did not go into much detail on how those four cards can be replaced into their positions in

²⁵ See *Handcrafted Card Magic* (2007) on page 20.

the stack elegantly. The following procedure is meant to be an addendum and is the method I use to replace the four-of-a-kind, or any four (or less) cards that have been removed from the stack from different positions.

While it seems daunting at first glance, experimentation will show that it is rather feasible.

Suppose for example that the Sixes are removed from the stack and on the table. In your left hand rests the remainder of the deck face up in memorized order minus those four cards. The goal now is to insert those cards into their proper stack position without it becoming obvious that they go into special locations.

The first step is to cut the deck so that one of the Sixes just has to go on top of the deck. (If you performed the culling procedure from "Plop", this position is automatic.) Now you will spread through the deck briefly and establish three breaks at the three spots where the remaining Sixes belong. To achieve this, you will spread from the bottom instead of the top by pushing almost all the cards into the right hand and then spreading them back into the left hand with the right fingers from the bottom of the deck.

When you come to the first location from the bottom where a Six is missing, pick up a little-finger break and continue back-spreading the cards. The third finger picks up a break at the next position and the second finger is available for the third break. *Figure 7* shows how the second break is picked up.

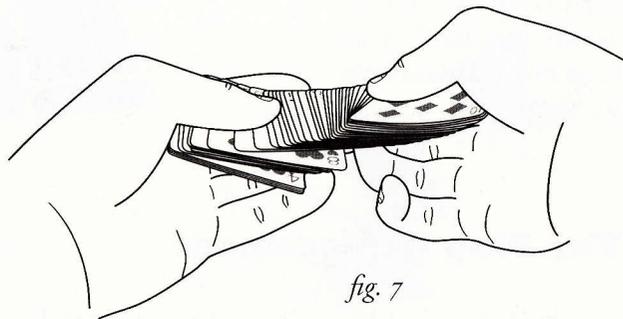


fig. 7

The deck is now in left-hand dealing position with three breaks held by the left fingers. Next you place the Sixes on top of the deck, but in a certain

order. The bottom Six is the one that belongs on the face of the deck. The order of the other three Sixes corresponds to the order of the breaks from the top down. So the Six that is at the very top belongs in the top break held by the left second finger, and so on. Arrange the Sixes in this order and put them on top of the deck. (Again, if you performed the "Plop" procedure and did not change the order of the quartet, this is automatic.) The position of the cards at this point is shown in *figure 8*. As with the "Chaotic Chaos Cut" earlier in this chapter, from the front there is not much to see.



fig. 8

Perform a slip cut, dragging the top Six into the top break with the left thumb, while the right hand removes the packet above this break, see *figure 9*. Slap the top portion back and drop this second-finger break, since it is no longer needed.

Repeat the slip cut, moving the next Six into the next break and finally the third Six into the little-finger break. To finish the cutting sequence, perform a swing cut.

This whole quadruple cut (three slip cuts and a swing cut) should be done in a rather speedy rhythm. All the Sixes are now back into the stack order where they belong.

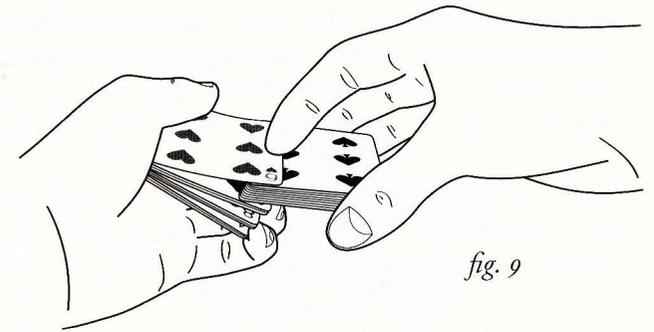


fig. 9

Remark

Keep in mind that from the spectators' point of view, you simply place the four-of-a-kind on top of the deck and quickly lose it in the pack in different positions. The breaks are prepared in advance in the offbeat and the whole affair should be executed with a careless attitude.

Chad Long's "Shuffling Lesson" into a Partial Stack

This is another rather weird application of the "Finding the Way Home" concept that allows you to perform a trick in which the deck is shuffled by yourself and the spectator and still in the end you have a partial stack of up to thirty-three cards. The trick in question is Chad Long's "Shuffling Lesson",²⁶ in which half the deck is given to the spectator and you keep the other half. After you both shuffle the cards and cut them into four piles, you each have a four-of-a-kind on top of the respective piles.

Since this is a specialized item that works only with the Tamariz stack the way I will describe it here, I will also assume that you know Chad Long's routine and keep the whole thing reasonably brief.

The principle is that while the spectator legitimately shuffles the cards in his pile, the performer shuffles his pile by following a preplanned sequence that results in a partial stack which comprises the stack numbers 8 to 38 of the Tamariz stack – a block of thirty-one cards.

The set-up is of course just as big. From the back to the face of the deck, set the cards in the following order (the numbers are the stack numbers in the Tamariz stack):

²⁶ This laymen pleaser is described in *The Art of Astonishment – Book 3* (Paul Harris & Eric Mead, 1996) on page 299 and can even be found in David Pogue's *Magic for Dummies* (1998) on page 207.

16, 25, 30, 8, 17, 26, 31, 9, 18, 27, 32, 15, 19-22, 33-38, 28, 29, 23, 24, 10-14.

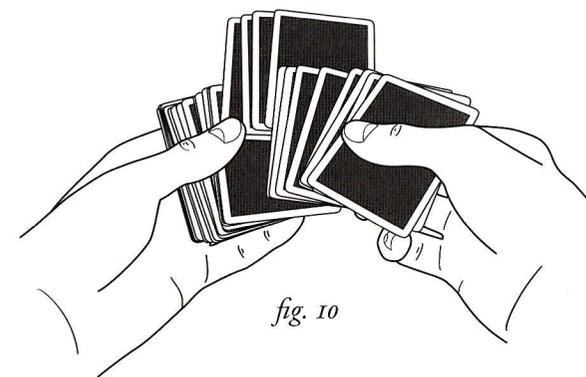
This is followed by the four Aces in any order and finally the rest of the deck.

To perform, obtain a break above the four Aces. All the cards below the break are given to the spectator and you keep the remaining thirty-one cards with the four Fives on top in your hands.

Now the shuffling sequence follows the same outline as in Chad Long's original routine, but you need to follow a strict procedure. As I said, I assume that you are familiar with "Shuffling Lesson". If not, read the original first, otherwise the following might not make much sense. As a matter of fact, I suspect that it will not make much sense either way.

When demonstrating the overhand shuffle, run off the usual four single cards but when you speed up, you continue running eight single cards so in the end you shuffled off a total of twelve cards. The rest is thrown on top.

Now comes the part where you extract cards from the middle and put them on top. This is done here as well, but when spreading the cards between the hands, you spread off exactly eight cards in two groups of four cards each, then outjog the next four cards (*figure 10*) and place them on top. This same open displacement is repeated one more time. All the while, the spectator follows along.



When making the piles now, you form four piles with a special number of cards: The first pile has six cards, the next pile to the right of it has two cards and the two remaining piles have again six cards each. By pushing off the cards with the left thumb, you can easily make those piles so that it does not look like you are counting.

In the end, the remaining cards are dealt onto those four piles from left to right until there are no more cards left.

Now you can present the effect – you have the four Fives on top and the spectator even has the four Aces. When you turn the Fives face down again and collect your four piles from right to left (right pile on top of the next one, the combined packet on the next one and so on), you should have a partial Tamariz stack running from 8 to 38.

Remarks

The routine is not as complicated to remember as it might seem. Do it a few times and you will agree. If you manage to get the Aces of Spades and Diamonds to the top and bottom of your own half, you actually enlarged the stack by two cards which is now running from 7 up to 39 for a total of thirty-three cards.

Once you understand the principle, you can try to adapt it to your preferred stack in case you do not use the memorized deck by Juan Tamariz.

Because the procedure involves so much open shuffling and mixing, a set-up is not suspected after the routine. With the stack that you now have you can perform a lot of effects. A huge section of Tamariz' *Mnemonica* is dedicated to partial stack work and you can have a look there at the plentiful possibilities.²⁷ You can also use some of the strategies described in that book to stack the remaining twenty-one (or nineteen, if you added the two Aces) cards in front of the audience in subsequent tricks.²⁸

A further application of this curiosity can be found on page 53 in "Further Thoughts on the Half Forcing Deck".

For another application of "Finding the Way Home" see the following routine.

²⁷ See the section beginning on page 175 of *Mnemonica* (Juan Tamariz, 2004).

²⁸ See "Setting Up the Deck in Front of the Audience" in Appendix II on page 285 of *Mnemonica*.

Messy - The Director's Shuffle

Pit Hartling & Denis Behr

Not many Triumph routines allow the spectator to shuffle the cards legitimately face up and face down without any restrictions, creating an honest mixture. One is my good friend Pit Hartling's piece "Master of the Mess".²⁹ The original routine that evolved in the one that was finally published in *Card Fictions* did not have this feature. It placed the shuffling in the performer's hands. This precursor is used in the following routine and then the "Finding the Way Home" concept is applied to it.

Effect

The magician performs a Triumph routine with many convincing displays. Even though it seems impossible, a full deck order is retained along the way.

Method

The principle used is that while the cards are really shuffled face up and face down, the distribution is not random. It is done in such a way that the all

²⁹ See *Card Fictions* (Pit Hartling, 2003), page 18.

the groups of face-down cards (and face-up cards) are brought together with faro shuffles. Then they can be turned over as a unit.³⁰

First I will describe the Triumph routine by itself and later the possibility of doing it with a stacked deck will be discussed. For more details on the performance of the Triumph handling, I suggest that you also study Pit's description referenced above.

You need a complete deck with fifty-two cards.

Performance

You start by shuffling the cards face-up and face-down, and the selection will be made later during the routine. This mixing appears similar to the classic slop shuffle,³¹ but it is done for real.

The deck is held face down in the left hand in dealing position. The left thumb pushes off exactly four cards that are taken in the right hand with fingers on the bottom and thumb on top as in *figure 1*. Now the

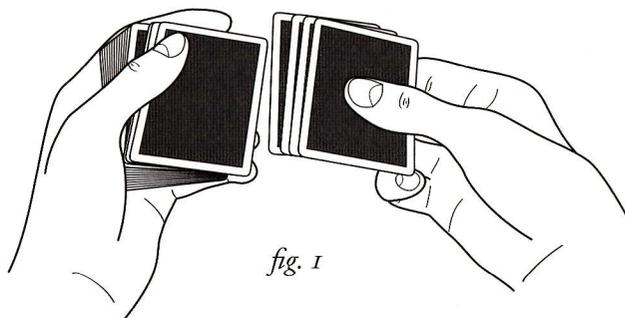


fig. 1

³⁰ This modus operandi for a Triumph effect was first published by Ed Marlo in the routine "76-76-67-67" in *Faro Notes* (1958), page 29. However, Dai Vernon predated Marlo and came up with the same procedure in the 1930s or 40s, as was recorded in *Jacob Daley's Notebooks* (transcribed by Frank Csuri, revised and published in 1971) as entry 37, titled "Vernon's Mix Up Weave Shuffle". The credit to Vernon was pointed out to me by Stephen Minch. While Marlo in *Faro Notes* already suggested the use of a red-black separation as a climax, the concept was used in a more elaborate form with a full stack by Camilo Vázquez in "A Grand Triumph" from *Mnemonica* (Juan Tamariz, 2004), page 139.

³¹ Sid Lorraine's Slop Shuffle was first published in Stewart Judah and John Braun's booklet *Subtle Problems You Will Do* (1937). A more readily available description can be found in *The Royal Road to Card Magic* (1948) under "A Tipsy Trick" on page 195.

right hand turns over while the left thumb is pushing over exactly three cards. Those are taken below the four cards in the right hand (on the "thumb side" of the right hand packet, see *figure 2*). The right hand turns over again and the left thumb pushes off another group of three cards that are put on top (always on the "thumb side") of the right-hand packet (*figure 3*). This is continued in the following way until all cards are exhausted:

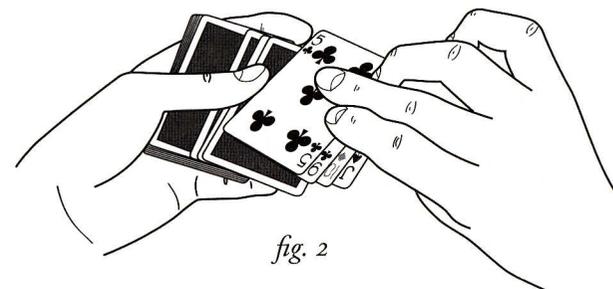


fig. 2

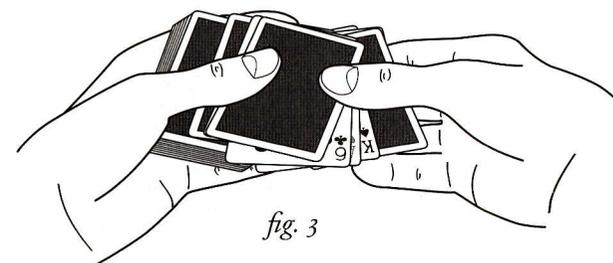


fig. 3

4-3-3-3-3-4-3-3-3-3-4-3-3-3-4.

So the rule to remember is this: You start with four cards, then push off four groups of three cards each and repeat this sequence until all the cards are exhausted. When the last group consists of four cards, you know that chances are good that you did not make a mistake along the way. After doing it a couple of times, you will see that it has a nice rhythm to it and can be done so it does not look like you are counting.

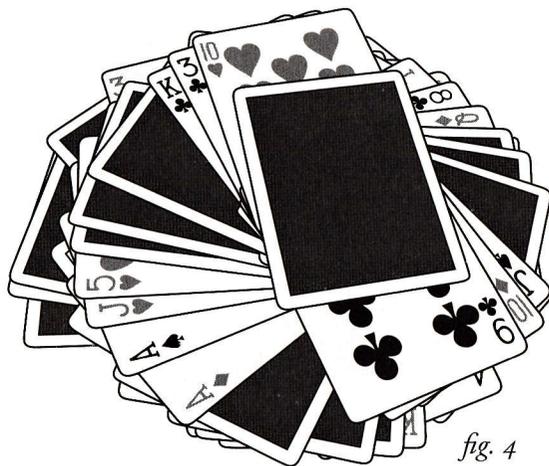
Now you need to turn over the top card, thus turning it face down. You can do this as part of the above sequence by splitting up the last group of four cards into 3-1. Another method is to follow the above mixing with Jerry Andrus' false slop shuffle.³² If you know this bluff face-up-face-down shuffle,

³² See "A Drunken False Shuffle" in *Andrus Deals You In* (1956), page 19. It is also described in Juan Tamariz' *Mnemonica* (2004, page 196), John Bannon's *Dear Mr. Fantasy* (2004, page 146) and Steve Beam's *Semi-Automatic Card Tricks - Volume 8* (2010, page 256).

just perform it by beginning with a single card. Especially after the first mixing, which might have been a tad slower, this haphazard looking technique adds to the deception of chaos.

In any case, the top card is now face down and the rest is following the sequence given above.

Execute an out-faro shuffle and before pushing the cards together, place the unsquarred cards in their incomplete faro condition on the table and twist them to create a circular configuration. This spreads out the cards, appears messy and gives a good display of face-up and face-down chaos, as can be verified in *figure 4*. You can spread the cards quite wide without changing the order of the interlocked cards. Let this picture sink in and then square the cards up and place the deck back into left-hand dealing position.



The selection will now be made as follows. Dribble the cards from hand to hand and ask a spectator to say stop while you do this. He should stop you at any face-down card and you can time the dribble so that you stop just a little bit above the center of the deck. There will be a block of face-down cards. If you miss this range force and the card happens to be face up, repeat the process with the reasonable excuse that you are not allowed to know the selected card. The card is then remembered by the audience, replaced in the same position and a break is picked up above it when the top portion is put back.

You will exchange the selection with the top face-down card using an overhand shuffle sequence.³³ Pivot the deck in a position for an overhand shuffle while transferring the break to the right thumb.³⁴ Now shuffle off a single card, then throw at the break, shuffle off another single card and follow by shuffling off four more single cards. Throw the rest on top, slightly injogged. Pick up the deck for another overhand shuffle, establishing a right thumb break below the injog. Throw at the break, shuffle off four single cards and throw the rest on top. Now the top card is the selection and the former top card is put in the spot where the selection originally was. The order of all other cards remains unchanged.

Give the deck another out-faro shuffle and repeat the spinning display. Pick up the cards and turn the deck over while doing so. The chosen card is now face up on the bottom of the deck. Execute a running cut to the table at two of the natural breaks by cutting off thirteen cards, then another twenty-six cards, followed by the remaining thirteen cards. The cards are back to back at both cutting points, so it is easy to cut directly at those spots.

Pick up the deck and perform a half pass with the bottom twenty-six cards (the two halves are face to face at the dividing point). I perform this sleight as I am asking for the selection and in the action of setting the deck down on the table.³⁵

When you now spread the deck, all cards are face down again except for the selection, which will be the only face-up card.

The face-up card will always be the thirteenth card from the top. Dramatically this is a very good position, because it avoids the problem of confronting the spectators with two effects simultaneously. First you slowly spread about two thirds of the cards face down and the triumph part of the effect is digested. Then, just in the right moment, the selection shows up face up.

³³ This sequence is an elaboration of a technique by Áriston from *Mnemonic* (Juan Tamariz, 2004), page 339, "To Exchange the Position of Two Cards Without Altering the Rest of the Deck".

³⁴ Details on this break maneuver can be found in "The Post-peek Overhand Shuffle Control" on page 74 of *Card College - Volume 1* (Roberto Giobbi, 1994).

³⁵ While the last steps are described rather briefly, they can be found in more detail in *Card Fictions*, where a better cutting sequence is described to replace the running cut.

With a Stack

This effect changes the order of the cards quite a bit, but in a predetermined way. In other words, if you set up the order of the deck in a certain way, you can end up in any desired stack after the performance of the Triumph effect. To find out the necessary starting order, one just has to do the whole trick in reverse once.

But we will take it one step further. It is possible to start in any stack, let's say a memorized deck. Then you do a dealing sequence that changes the order in the same way as if the Triumph effect was done in reverse. After performing the routine, the original stack is restored. That is, I found a way into "Messy" that is the inverse element of the trick, mathematically speaking. This principle is discussed in detail in my book *Handcrafted Card Magic*,³⁶ so let's get straight to business.

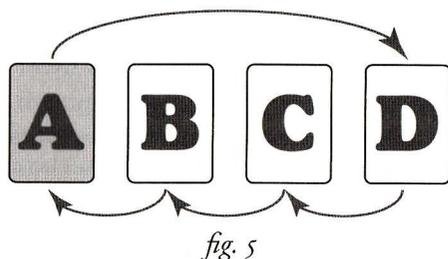
Have your full-deck stack face up in the left hand. Do a running cut onto the table by cutting off thirteen cards face up to the table, another thirteen cards on top of the tabled pile and then the remaining twenty-six cards. (This undoes the final cutting sequence in the performance of the trick.) If you use a memorized deck, you will know the dividing points without any counting.

Now take the deck face down in left hand dealing position. You are going to deal the deck into four piles, turning the cards face up while doing so, but in a special way. Let's assume the four positions in a row from left to right are numbered A, B, C and D from your point of view. The first thirteen cards are dealt in reverse order, starting on A. So you deal thirteen cards like that:

ADCBADCBADCBA.

All cards are turned over and dealt face up.

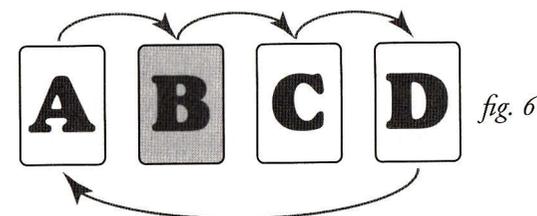
Figure 5 illustrates this dealing pattern for those first thirteen cards. You start at the shaded position A and then follow the arrows.



³⁶ See the chapter "Finding the Way Home" on page 41 (2007).

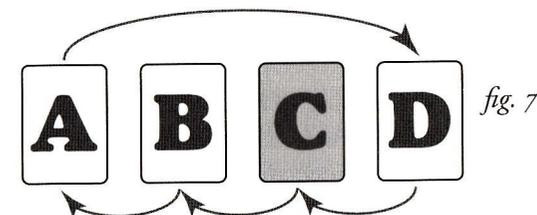
The next thirteen cards are dealt in normal order, starting on the second pile B as in figure 6 (to repeat, always start at the shaded card and follow the arrows from there):

BCDABCDABCDAB.



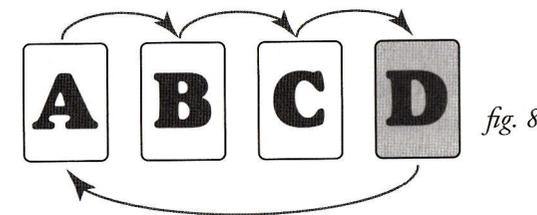
The next thirteen cards are dealt in reverse order again, starting on C as in figure 7:

CBADCBCADCBCADC.



The final thirteen cards are dealt in normal order, starting on D as in figure 8:

DABCDABCDABCD.



Finally, assemble the packets from right to left by putting D on C, those together on B and so on.

If the original stack is numbered from 1 to 52 as in a memorized deck, the order of the cards should now be as follows from back to face:

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

This sounds incredibly complicated, I am sure. But do yourself a favor and try it only once. You will instantly recognize the easily memorized pattern of backwards and forwards dealing and when you have done it a couple of times, you intuitively know when thirteen cards are dealt and can check with a brief glance on the faces. This is especially easy with a memorized deck in which the groups of thirteen cards are easily recognized.

Believe it or not, but when you perform the Triumph routine as described above now, you will be in the same order as you started in. The only thing you have to do at the end is to cut the top thirteen cards to the bottom and exchange the selection (which will then be the bottom card) with the original bottom card of your stack, as those two cards were exchanged in the performance during the control of the selected card. You can do this with the same overhand shuffle sequence done face up, that was used to exchange those two cards in the first place, as described above.

To do this dealing in front of audiences, I suggest the following justification. Do the preliminary triple running cut to the table first. Then force the bottom card on a spectator and place it aside without anyone seeing its face, for example with an under-the-spread force handling.

Say that you plan to do a demonstration of your memory skills: You will find out what card is missing by looking at the fifty-one remaining cards and remembering them all. For this difficult task you deal them out in a special pattern that is your memory system. At least that is what you claim. Then do just that by performing the above dealing sequence, talking about your “system” while doing so.

After that, simply name the missing (forced) card, place it on its proper pile D, assemble the packets and you are set for “Messy”.

That way you can perform the routine at any point in a session with a full deck stack, thus strongly implying that nothing of that sort is in play.

Remark

The dealing procedure can be varied to satisfy certain needs. In the odd case that you read this far, let me elaborate on one such scenario.

Let’s say that you want to end in the reverse order. Then this dealing procedure in combination with the routine “Messy” can be used to migrate into the reversed stack.³⁷

³⁷ Another trick that I often use to get into the reversed stack is “The Tantalizer” with the shuffling sequence given in *Handcrafted Card Magic* (2007) on page 47.

To achieve this, the procedure is only slightly varied. In the initial face-up cutting sequence, instead of cutting off piles in the sizes thirteen, thirteen and twenty-six to the table, you simply reverse the numbers. So you start by cutting a pile of twenty-six cards on the table, followed by thirteen cards and the remaining thirteen cards. Now you do not turn the cards face down but perform the exact same dealing sequence as given above with the cards face up. When you perform “Messy” afterwards, the cards will be in reverse stack order.

(If for some reason you want to deal face down instead of face up with another excuse than memorizing the cards, simply do the cutting face down or alternatively face up with the original packet sizes, then go through the whole dealing procedure face down and perform the Triumph routine. Again you end in the inverse order.)

Why would one want to reverse the order of the stack? Well, there are some memorized deck routines which are best performed in this configuration because it facilitates some of the calculations required in the course of the trick.³⁸

³⁸ Two examples of good routines include Juan Tamariz’ “Exact Location” from *Mnemonic* (2003), page 145, and Simon Aronson’s “Madness in our Methods” from *Simply Simon* (1995), page 194.

Stop It

This is a solution for the classic stop trick. The routine was inspired by a typically bold bluff in an effect by Al Koran that uses a nail writer.³⁹ Here this gimmick is eliminated. It is the combination of principles that makes the routine deceptive.

Effect

After a prediction is written down, the spectator receives the deck and is told to deal cards onto the table one at a time and to stop whenever he likes. He stops exactly at the predicted card. The effect is immediately repeated.

Method

The above description is how the effect will be remembered by the audience. Actually the effect has a third phase and does not always work the first time. Have no fear though and just read on.

You are using a half forcing deck with twenty-six duplicates. Suppose the force card is the Nine of Clubs. The other twenty-six cards are stacked in any system that allows you to quickly know the card at a given position. If you have a memorized deck in your repertoire, simply use the top half of it.⁴⁰ The force card should not appear again in this stacked section.

To prepare the deck for the routine, arrange the stacked half in its proper order and put it on top of the force block. In addition, a piece of paper and a pen should be at hand.

³⁹ See *Al Koran's Professional Presentations* (Hugh Miller, 1968) on page 95: "Card Prediction".

⁴⁰ Something like Si Stebbins could also be used for the top half. Another alternative is mentioned in the remarks at the end.

Performance

First Phase

Explain that it is now time for a prediction – an experiment that might or might not work. This is said to lower the expectations of the audience so that the first possible failure does not hit so hard. You will raise the expectations again soon enough. While talking, you can false shuffle the deck with a simple injog shuffle that retains the order of the top twenty-six cards of the deck. The force block can of course be shuffled. Then set the deck down in front of a spectator.

On a piece of paper you write down the name of a playing card as your first prediction. Make sure to write out the name of the card letter by letter without abbreviating it with symbols, see *figure 1*. There should be room for more predictions underneath. The card you write down should be the card that is about seven or eight cards down in your stack, since the first phase is a psychological stop force. Place the prediction onto the table with the writing side down.



fig. 1

Now tell the spectator to take one card after the other from the top of the tabled deck and deal them face up on the table one by one (*figure 2*). Make sure that he does not deal too fast, otherwise slow him down. After he dealt two or three cards that way, inform him that he should stop dealing

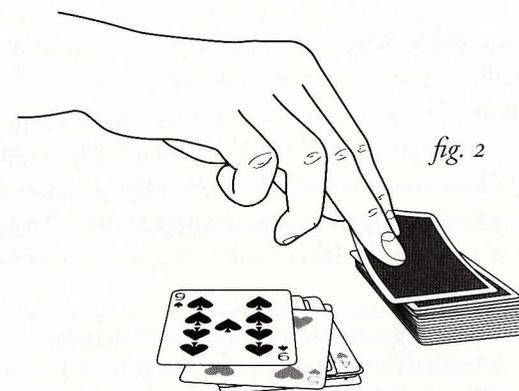


fig. 2

whenever he likes. Eventually the spectator will stop after a couple of more cards.

Now there are two possibilities: Either the stopped-at card or the next card is the one you predicted, or not. In the first case, make the most out of your hit and continue with the second phase straight away. In the second case, you read out the wrong prediction and place it with the writing side up on the table for everybody to see. The card the spectator stopped at obviously does not match. Without making too much fuss about the failure, say that it was just an experiment and that you would like to try again with the following words: *“Well, maybe you were distracted by the faces of the cards while you dealt them face up. Let’s try this again, but this time you deal the cards face down, ok? I will make a new prediction.”*

Second Phase

Replace the dealt cards, thus restoring the stack, and execute another quick false shuffle. When writing the second prediction, openly cross out the first prediction and then, without anyone seeing it, write down the name of the force card (Nine of Clubs in this case) a bit below the first prediction so that there is some space between the two lines (figure 3).

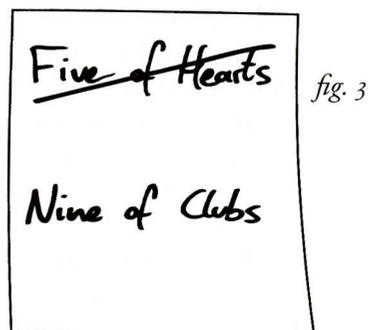


fig. 3

Now the spectator is told to repeat the dealing and stopping procedure, but without turning the cards over. They should be dealt face down. You secretly count the cards and as soon as he has stopped, you pick up the piece of paper with one hand, look at it and say with confidence: *“I predicted the Three of Diamonds. Let’s see where you stopped.”* Here you name the card where the spectator stopped at. You know this card, because you counted the cards and it is a stack.⁴¹ In other words, you are miscalling the prediction.

⁴¹ If you use Si Stebbins or something similar instead of a memorized deck, just glimpse the next card by turning it face up with the words *„You could have stopped at this card, or even later.”* This information will give you the clue to work out the identity of the selection.

The spectator turns over the stopped-at card and you have a match. I usually pick up the card in one hand and the paper in the other hand and show them side by side to the spectators. But because I am moving from left to right, nobody can read the writing on the prediction that is always in motion. Casually place the prediction on the table, writing side up. Nobody will check because there seems to be no way you could know the selection anyway before it was turned over, and the writing was seen to be legitimate in the first phase. And since the card names are written out, the writing is not so easy to read at a glance.

Third Phase

Without waiting too long, you announce another repeat. *“Maybe you are thinking I got lucky this time. But you know what, let’s try this again. I’m feeling good tonight!”* Pick up the paper and draw a crossing-out line in the empty space between the two predictions (figure 4). Apparently you just crossed out the second prediction. While apparently writing the third prediction, you fill in the second miscalled prediction by writing this name right on top of the line just drawn, Three of Diamonds in this example (figure 5). This is the one-ahead principle in action and cleans up the prediction.

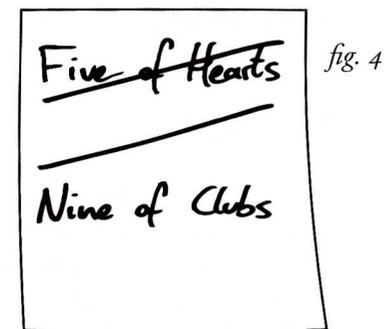


fig. 4

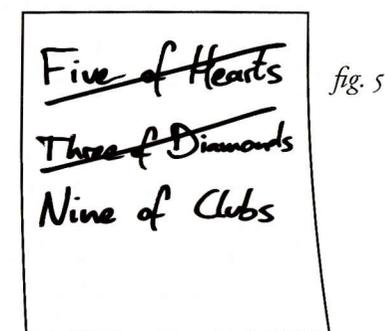


fig. 5

Pick up the deck and give it another shuffle, this time executing the Jordan/Ireland red-black shuffle once.⁴² Briefly, shuffle the cards off in small clumps until you are near the middle, then run cards singly until

⁴² See for example Roberto Giobbi’s *Card College – Volume 5* (2003), page 1119, “On the Red-black Overhand Shuffle”. To minimize the reset time of the effect, I recommend using the handling that is published as “Northern Ireland Shuffle” in Steve Beam’s *Semi-Automatic Card Tricks – Volume 6* (2006) on page 229.

you are sure you are past the dividing point of the stack and the force cards, then shuffle the rest off normally. This will reverse the two blocks, bringing the twenty-six Nines of Clubs to the top of the deck. Set the deck down in front of the spectator once more. Again he deals cards face down one by one and again he stops any time he likes. And again the prediction matches perfectly! Not only this, but the piece of paper with the predictions is now perfectly clean and can be checked and given away.

Without hurry, replace the dealt cards on the rest of the deck and nonchalantly give the deck a face up overhand shuffle, showing lots of different faces before putting it away, taking care not to shuffle into the forcing block.

Remarks

Obviously the spectator should never deal more than twenty-six cards to guarantee a successful conclusion. To ensure this, make him deal in a rather slow tempo and if he deals too fast, slow him down and tell him to evaluate every card carefully. Additionally, because the deck is on the table, the dealing is a bit time-consuming and awkward to execute anyway. And when you stop talking during the deal, the silence feels uneasy and he will certainly not go too far because everybody in the audience is just waiting for him to stop and he is under some pressure.⁴³

If you do not use any stack, you have the alternative to mark the backs of the top twenty-six cards. In that version the shuffling can be done even fairer, since you only need to keep the halves separated. The advantage of the stack is that you do not need to pay any attention to the back of the card before revealing your (miscalled) prediction.

Because you see so many faces and the prediction is a different one each time, a forcing deck is never expected. What makes the miscalling especially effective is the fact that from the spectators' point of view a miscall is no

⁴³ For these and more details in a situation like this, see Roberto Giobbi's excellent tips for the psychological stop trick in the fifth volume of *Card College* (2003) in the effect "Stop!" on page 1276.

solution that explains the effect because the card that is selected is not seen by anyone and so in theory the performer cannot know the selection anyway.

When the spectator deals the force cards in the third phase, he might deal them in such a way that other spectators can see their faces, which of course is not desirable. This problem must already be recognized in the second phase, where he deals face down and the cards are really different. If you think that his dealing style will be a problem later, announce before the third deal: "*This time we make it even more interesting. Take every card from above like that, weigh it carefully, and then set it down.*" To demonstrate, you take the top card singly from above in end grip and drop it on the table in front of the deck. This takes care of the problem, even though the strategy will seldom be required.

Further Thoughts on the Half Forcing Deck

The half forcing deck is a powerful tool and allows some exceptionally impossible looking effects. I first came across advanced applications of this tool in the work of Christoph Borer.⁴⁴ I want to share some more ideas on the handling of this deck.

As with a stacked deck, the use of the forcing block can be delayed by performing tricks in which the force cards are not seen. Here are some examples:

A very good candidate is certainly Dai Vernon's original "Triumph",⁴⁵ in which you can spread half the cards face up during the routine – the regular half of course. And if this half is stacked, its order is retained as well, making

⁴⁴ Christoph Borer published a marvelous book about the half forcing deck with many good handling finesses and effects. If you can read German, make sure to check it out: *Der Stoff aus dem die Wunder sind* (ca. 1992, the second enlarged edition appeared in 2002).

⁴⁵ See *Stars of Magic*, Series 2, No. 1 (George Starke, 1946). In the popular reprint by Tannen's it can be found on page 23.

it an adequate prelude to “Stop It”. Of course, most Triumph versions that are based on a false riffle shuffle can also easily be adapted to a half forcing deck.

You might also want to check out Pit Hartling’s “The Party Animal”,⁴⁶ which also beautifully hides the faces of half the deck while showing the regular cards and retaining their order.

Another trick that lends itself to delay the forcing deck is “The Tantalizer” combined with a faro shuffle, which allows you to retain a stacked order in the regular half as well.⁴⁷

It is useful to keep in mind that you do not need a full deck switch to get access to a half forcing deck after performing some routines with a regular deck. It is enough to switch half the deck. So when there are tricks in which the deck is naturally cut in two rather equal piles, this might give an opportunity to switch one of the halves. A trick where I use this strategy is Chad Long’s “Shuffling Lesson”.⁴⁸ If after the performance you only switch your own half and only then collect the spectator’s piles, the exchange is disguised quite well.

Of course, done that way you have a half forcing deck, but the other half is shuffled by the spectator so that this could not be used in the prediction trick just described. You might however want to consider the following idea that allows you to first perform “Shuffling Lesson” and then “Stop It” by applying “Chad Long’s ‘Shuffling Lesson’ into a Partial Stack” as described on page 36.

There it is explained how one can use Chad Long’s routine and end with a partial stack. Now assume that the packet of cards you place in the spectator’s hands is the forcing block with the four Aces on top! That way you can end all set for “Stop It”, because your half ends in stacked order and the force cards can be legitimately shuffled by the spectator.⁴⁹ (Of course you need to switch in the complete deck before going into “Shuffling Lesson”.)

⁴⁶ It is described in *The Book* (Flicking Fingers, 1998) on page 52.

⁴⁷ For more details on this, see the remarks at the end of the discussion of “Way into ‘The Tantalizer’” on page 49 of *Handcrafted Card Magic* (2007).

⁴⁸ See footnote 26 for references.

⁴⁹ So that I can use the same procedure as described before on page 36 and do not need to remember another handling, I simply use the same stack described there but replace

Shuffled ACAAN

Ever since the glorious descriptions by witnesses of the “Berglas Effect”⁵⁰ performed by the man himself, the Any Card at Any Number theme has become more popular than ever. While its commercial value has been doubted by some magicians, I found that lay audiences do not care much for those opinions and it is a very strong effect indeed. One of my favorite methods has always been the one by Al Baker/Louis Gombert.⁵¹ It is very practical and the deck is not touched by the performer. The following method is based on Gombert and Baker’s conception.

Effect

The deck of cards is shuffled by the spectator himself, who cases the deck and puts it in his pocket. Afterwards a number is named and a card chosen by two different people. The first spectator removes the deck he has in his possession from its case and counts down to the number himself. There he finds the chosen card.

the cards with stack numbers 31 to 38 with duplicates of the force cards, so the force block consists of about half the deck when everything is assembled after the performance of “Shuffling Lesson”.

⁵⁰ While there is a chapter on “The Berglas Effect” in David Britland’s *The Mind and Magic of David Berglas* (2002) on page 527, it only hints at the methods used by Berglas. For a more complete description see *The Berglas Effects* (Richard Kaufman, 2011).

⁵¹ See “A Card and a Number” in *Al Baker’s Book One* (1933) on page 11. Baker was preceded by Gombert in the French magazine *Le Prestidigitateur* (February/March 1928). Gombert’s material was reprinted in French in *Manuel Pratique d’Illusionisme et de Prestidigitation – Volume 1* (Rémi Ceillier, 1935), pages 274-83. This information can be found in *Mnemonica* (Juan Tamariz, 2003) on page 382.

Method

Gombert and Baker's time-proven method can be summarized like that: You give a memorized stack to a spectator. Any number is named. From a second deck you force the card with the corresponding stack number. If the spectator holding the deck counts down, there he finds the matching card.

My goal was to cut down on the size of the necessary stack. If one allows the counting to be made from either side of the deck, one can perform the trick with a half stack of twenty-six cards.⁵² You can further eliminate the very ends by asking for the number in the following way: *"Now name any number between 1 and 52. Or you know what, at the very top and bottom it is too easy and not very interesting, let's make it a number between 10 and 40. What would you like?"* This restriction is not only often forgotten later, but it improves the effect theatrically because a number like 4 or 48 does indeed make the effect less strong – 4 is too near the top and 48 has a count-down that simply takes too long.⁵³ With this restriction and the ruse of counting either from top or bottom, we are down to a necessary stack of sixteen cards at the positions 11-26 from the top.

Now we apply another classic ruse from count-down type effects, namely that only every second card is known and in half the cases you need to turn over the next card instead of the one right at the named number. (This sometimes awkwardly random appearing and potentially unconvincing strategy is motivated in the presentation below.) This cuts down the necessary stack to eight cards.

So here is an approach to perform Louis Gombert/Al Baker's method with only an eight-card set-up. As you will see, this allows a very strong condition: The spectator's deck can be legitimately shuffled by him at the beginning.

⁵² Juan Tamariz published a version like that in *Mnemonica* (2003) on page 207, "A Card and a Number".

⁵³ As a matter of fact, I even use this phrasing when working with a full stack as in the original method by Al Baker, just for dramatic reasons.

Preparation

When you use a memorized deck, proceed as follows. Remove all the cards with even stack numbers from 12 to 26 and put them in order from the top down on the back of your deck: 12, 14, 16, 18, 20, 22, 24, 26, rest of deck. Have a second deck ready.

(In the case that you do not use a memorized deck, you could simply use the Ace through Eight of one suit as the set-up, but the calculations during the routine will be a bit more elaborate. In the description I will assume that a memorized deck is used.)

Performance

Take out the deck with the set-up on top and leave the second deck out of sight for the moment. Palm the top eight cards in the right hand and give the deck to a spectator for shuffling. (See the remarks at the end for a method without palming.) If you are afraid that he might notice the short deck, you can give half the deck to one spectator and the other half to another spectator for shuffling while holding out the set-up. After the shuffling, you take back the deck and add the stack to the top of the deck and give out the card case for examination.

While the spectator looks at the box, you position the eight cards as follows. Transfer five cards onto the stack by taking the deck in face-up overhand shuffle position and running five single cards. Now execute a face-down in-faro shuffle. Since only the top twenty-six cards need to be perfectly weaved, you do not need to worry about cutting at the exact center. (Situation check: The set-up is now distributed in the top half of the deck as in *figure 1* where

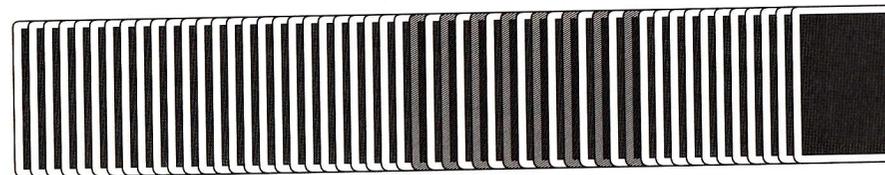


fig. 1

those cards are shaded. Each of these eight cards occupies exactly the position that corresponds to its stack number. So the card with stack number 12 is at the twelfth position, and so on.)

Give the deck to the spectator and have him put it into the case. Ask him to put it in a pocket or somewhere where you cannot reach it for safekeeping. Observe the orientation of the deck in the case, so you know what side of the case has to be up so the deck inside is facing up or down.

Ask a spectator for the number: *"We need a position in the deck now. There are 52 cards, so name any number between 1 and 52. Or you know what, at the very top and bottom it is too easy and not very interesting. To make it more of a challenge, let's make it a number between 10 and 40. What would you like?"* As soon as you hear the number, do not address it any further but get out the second deck and say *"Oh, of course we also need a card. Here, can you select one?"* With these words, you force a card according to the following rules:

- a) The named number is even and in the upper half (12, 14, ..., 26):
Force the card with the corresponding stack number.
- b) The named number is odd and in the upper half (11, 13, ..., 25):
Add one to the number and force this card.
- c) The number is odd and in the lower half (27, 29, ..., 39):
Subtract the number from 53 and force this card.
- d) The number is even and in the lower half (28, 30, ..., 38):
Add one, subtract the number from 53 and force this card.⁵⁴

This is surprisingly easy to remember if you keep in mind that you have to arrive at one of the eight stacked cards either from the top or the bottom of the deck and if it is not a direct hit (that is even from top, odd from bottom), use the next card.

To force the card, nonchalantly spread through the cards face up while talking and cull the card, then do a quick force like the classic force or the dribble force. This is easier if the second deck is stacked or has at least the same eight cards on top, but this is not absolutely necessary.

⁵⁴ Actually one could just subtract the number from 52 and skip the addition of one in the fourth case, but the rule as formulated is easier to remember: Always subtracting from 53 and if it's not a direct hit as in cases b) and d), then add one.

The physical work is done, now you need to present the effect. Depending on the named number, you have to follow one of two different routes:

- a) or c) In these two cases, the card is exactly at the named number and not the next card. Tell the spectator to take out the cased deck and hold it on the palm of his hand. You know whether the deck inside the box is facing up or down. The deck needs to face the correct way, so that you can count down from the top to the number and find the card. So in case a) it needs to be face down, in case c) face up. If it is the wrong way up, simply ask the spectator to turn it over without further comment.

Now by miming the actions, pretend to take out the selected card invisibly and throw it back at exactly the named position from the top of the deck: *"Ok, what was your selection? King of Clubs? Fine, I'll take the King out without touching the deck. Invisibly! Here it is. Can you see it? Well, it's invisible. I will throw it back into the deck at exactly the position you want. What position do you want? 35? Ok. That's it. If we count down from the very top just as the deck is lying on your hand, the thirty-fifth card will be the King of Clubs!"* The spectator uncases the deck and counts down from the top of the deck. Make sure that he does not turn the deck over. Stop him one card before the number is reached and briefly repeat the conditions, especially that the deck was shuffled by himself and you never touched it again. Then have him turn over the card for the climax.

- b) or d) Here the card is not at the named number, but the next one. You handle the situation in the following way. Again the spectator should hold the cased deck on the palm of his hand the right side up as in the previous case and again you mime removing the selected card invisibly. Now the procedure changes. *"And what number do you want? 21? Good, then please with your free hand lift exactly 21 cards off the deck! Invisibly, of course, so just pretend. Did you get 21 cards? Very skillful. Now let me place your selected Eight of Spades right on the top of the rest. And now you bury it by putting your 21 cards above it. Good."* As you see, now it makes perfect sense that once the 21 cards are counted down, the next card must be the selection, since that is

how you playfully mimed it using invisible cards with the spectator. Conclude the effect accordingly with the build-up as in the first case.

Remarks

In the beginning, one can replace the palm with other strategies. For example, you can place the eight cards in a pocket with the card case and have the deck shuffled empty-handed. Then you remove the case from the pocket with the set-up hidden underneath, place it temporarily on the deck in some in-transit action to add the set-up to the top and then have the case examined while doing the placement shuffle sequence.

Or one could palm the cards out of the pocket while removing the case from another pocket and take it from there.

The card is not freely named but selected from another deck. This might not please the Any Card at Any Number purist, but I found that the remembered effect is just the same – any card appears at any chosen number. Try for yourself.

While the spectator counts down, you can quietly pocket the second deck, so it is out of sight and out of mind and usually not even remembered. What is remembered though is the fact that the deck that the spectator pockets was shuffled and not touched by the performer again. This no-touch condition is such a strong point that for me this easily makes up for having to bring a second deck into play briefly for the force.

A Palm-to-Palm Transfer

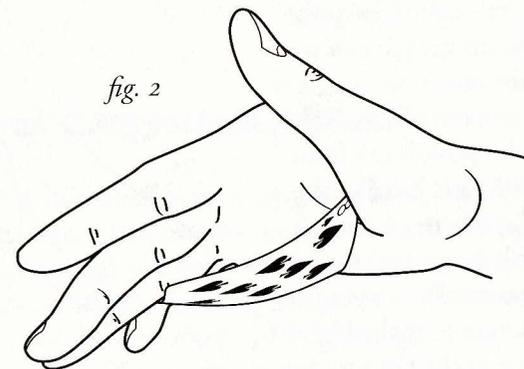
This seems to be as good an opportunity as any to sneak in the description of a palm-to-palm transfer that I enjoy doing. I sometimes use it in the beginning of the routine just described when holding out the set-up of eight cards, since it works well even when hiding a thicker packet. The reason is not so much that I believe that it convinces the onlooker that my hands are cer-

tainly empty, but rather that it is fun to get away with things like that. Not the best reason to do a sleight? I agree and do it anyway.

The technique transfers a card from classic palm to classic palm, but as opposed to for example Dai Vernon's popular solution, the orientation of the card is not changed.⁵⁵ And while I prefer Vernon's sleight for transferring cards from left to right, I use this one for the opposite direction.

In the following description, I assume that you want to transfer a single card from right-hand classic palm to left-hand classic palm. The card is palmed with its back towards the palm and held in standard classic palm position at the index corners.

Slightly flex the palm so that the card buckles outwards and away from the hand as in *figure 2*. This is achieved by exerting pressure between the base of the thumb and the little finger at the two opposite corners of the card. Bring the hands together and insert all four of the left fingers between the card and the right hand. The fingers go into the gap rather far until they cannot go any farther. Both thumbs are on the top and remain visible. The position of the hands and card is shown in *figure 3*. From the spectators' view it looks as if the hands are simply placed



⁵⁵ Dai Vernon's "Hand-to-Hand Card Transfer" is described in the third edition of *Expert Card Technique* (Hugard & Braue, 1950) on page 455.

one on top of the other in a relaxed rest position as in *figure 4*.⁵⁶

Now the left little finger bends inwards and gets hold of the center of the bottom edge of the card. The right little finger lets go of the card's corner then. The right hand moves a bit to the right now, pivoting the card in clockwise direction until it is approximately in classic palm position in front of the left hand's palm. The fulcrum is the left little finger and the force that results in the pivot motion is applied by the base of the right thumb at the top index corner that moves to the right. *Figure 5* shows the end position of this maneuver.

Now the left little finger straightens again while staying in contact with

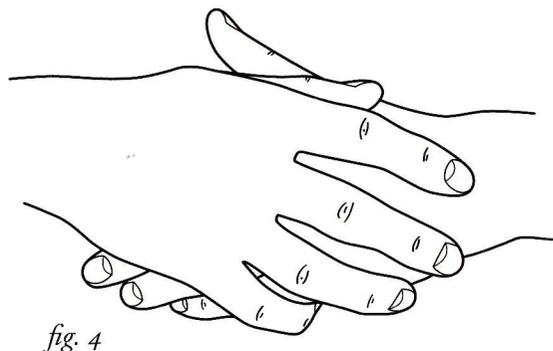


fig. 4

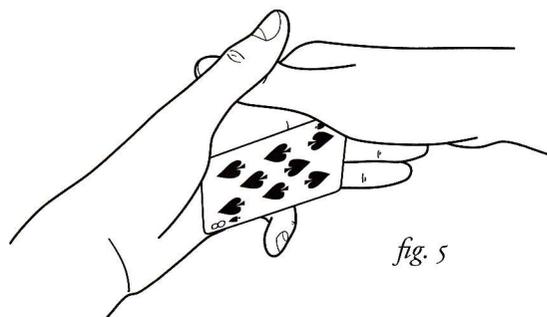


fig. 5

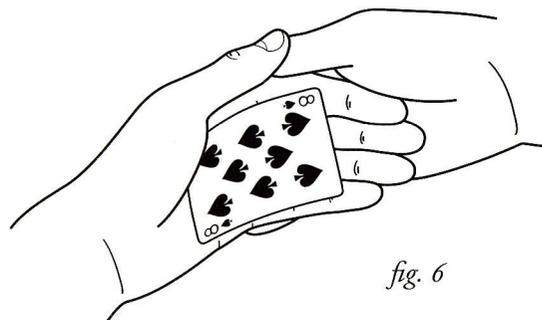


fig. 6

⁵⁶ This position was discovered by other people as well. It is used by Larry Jennings as a rest position while holding out, reversing the movements when one wants to continue, see *The Cardwright* (Mike Maxwell, 1988), page 102. Jennings credits Dai Vernon, who learned it from some gambler. J.C. Wagner uses the same position to transfer a card into the left hand gambler's cop position in "Thoughts on the Gambler's Cop" in *The Commercial Magic of J.C. Wagner* (Mike Maxwell, 1987), page 29.

the card and catches the non-index corner. The card is simultaneously pushed towards the palm with the base of the right thumb and thus ends up in classic palm position (*figure 6*). Afterwards, the right hand turns around and moves into the fork of the left thumb as in *figure 7* to finish the actions that from the front should appear to be a playful and innocent massaging and flexing of the hands.

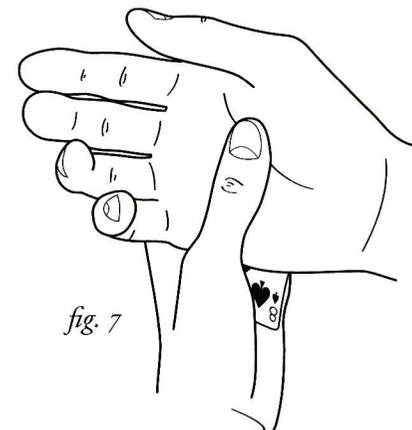


fig. 7

Optional Addition: Cemented ACAAN

Now I apply a devious idea by Christian Scherer from Switzerland, which he graciously allowed me to share here.⁵⁷ This permits the deck to be shuffled by the spectator in the beginning, without you holding out any cards or adding anything to the deck after the shuffle – the spectator really has all fifty-two cards. But after the shuffle you still have your set-up of eight cards intact. This is possible because those eight cards are glued together with rubber cement.⁵⁸

Take the eight cards in their correct order and apply four small drops of rubber cement on the short edges, two on either side, as in *figure 8*. Press the cards together for a moment and then let the glue dry completely. This

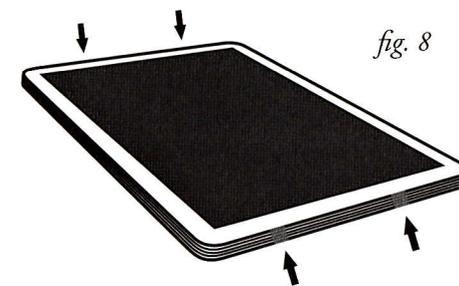


fig. 8

⁵⁷ See Christian Scherer's lecture notes *Seminarheft* (1982) in German language, where this idea can be found in the routine "Scherer Poker Deal" on page 27.

⁵⁸ In the past, cards have already been glued together at their edges with rubber cement for other purposes. See for example Samuel Berland's "Six Card Repeat Mystery" in *The Tarbell Course of Magic – Volume 6* (1954), page 75.

stack is then put in the deck amongst the remaining forty-four loose cards. When you now try to give the deck a normal overhand shuffle, you will notice that the block is not detected by feel at all!⁵⁹

During the performance, you give the deck to a spectator and mime an overhand shuffle. It is best if you have seen him shuffle before and know that this will be the technique of his choice. The spectator will not notice the block. When you take the cards back, cut the block to the top. This is easy since it acts like a (very) thick card. Then shuffle the five single cards to the back and give the deck the in-faro shuffle, just as in the above description. This faro separates the cards in the glued block and gives you a deck of fifty-two loose cards with the set-up in place for the routine.

You will have to experiment a little with the amount of rubber cement used, so that on the one hand the cards stay together safely and on the other hand the glue does not interfere too much with the faro shuffle.

To make the most out of it, be sure that your hands are seen unmistakably empty when you take the deck back from the spectator. Especially magicians will notice this and be puzzled by the subsequent effect. This principle can of course be used for other effects where a faro shuffle is part of the method. Christian Scherer's original application was a very fair royal flush stack from a shuffled deck.

⁵⁹ For another interesting method to keep cards together or under control with honest overhand shuffles by the performer or spectator, see Mr. Crocker's "Xkwizit", which was released in 1921 and reprinted in Theodore Annemann's *The Jinx* (Issue 117, 1940), page 689. A modern treatment of this principle can be found in *The Books of Wonder – Volume 1* (Tommy Wonder & Stephen Minch, 1996) on page 127.

Suit Surprise

Producing all thirteen cards of one suit in order with various spectacular productions has evolved into a neo-classic plot usually called Suit Appearance. Here I want to explain mainly an idea that one can use in such a sequence that breaks up the inherent predictability of the effect.

Effect

The four Aces are taken from the deck and one of them is selected, for example Spades. The performer then produces every card from this suit from the deck in numerical order with an additional surprise in which the three remaining Aces transpose with the court cards in Spades. Another Ace is selected and all Spades transform into the suit of this second Ace.

Method

Producing a full suit can be traced back quite a bit, but in the early references it was not so much a skill demonstration of the performer, but instead cards chosen by the spectators turned out to be all the cards of one suit.⁶⁰

⁶⁰ The first of the Hofzinsler Problems "Choice of Color" describes an effect of that sort. The most current research on this item can be found in Magic Christian's *Non Plus Ultra – Band 2: Hofzinslers Kartenkünste* (2004) on page 317, currently only available in German language. An actual early routine can be found in the anonymously written book *Ein Spiel Karten* (R. P., 1853), page 115, "Die Freundschaft der Karten". In the English translation published by the Conjuring Arts Research Center in 2005, the item in question is "The Friendship of the Cards", page 46. A later routine along this line is Paul Curry's "The Problem Of Card 13" in *Paul Curry Presents* (1974), page 1.

More focus on skill is in the related bridge deals that end with a suit in order.⁶¹ A bit later came routines in which multiple free selections were controlled and produced by several different and usually flashy methods, which became a staple of the bar magic repertoire.⁶²

The combination of those two plots leads us to the Suit Appearance, in which the performer produces the cards of one suit one after the other in ascending order with various revelations. (One can also see it as an elaboration of the four Ace production, going from Poker to Bridge.) The first published version that I know of is the one by Erhard Liebenow from Germany, who writes that he made quite an impression with his routine in his lectures in the United States in the 70s.⁶³ At the same time Ricky Jay featured an impressive and technically more demanding Suit Appearance in his performances and on television.

The effect described here is strongly based on the routine by José Carroll, which has the same structure.⁶⁴ There are two satisfying endings in routines of this type, if one wants to add something after the production of the full suit itself. Either one spreads out the rest of the deck and shows that all the remaining cards are also in perfect order from Ace to King as in the early routines by Ricky Jay and Erhard Liebenow, or one follows José Carroll's composition and transforms the already produced run of cards into a second selected suit.

When I have the presentational choice between a skill demonstration and magic, I tend to choose the latter and so I very much prefer the transforma-

⁶¹ An example is Ed Marlo's "Perfect Bridge Hand" that is part of "Marlo's Miracle Routine" from *Marlo in Spades* (1947), page 16.

⁶² The earliest routine of that type seems to be Edward Victor's "Supreme Control" from *The Magic of the Hands* (1937), page 14. Other popular versions include "Marlo's Discoveries" (originally a separate manuscript in 1946, also part of *Early Marlo*, 1976, page 47), Eddie Fechter's "Eight Selections" in *The Magician Nitely* (Jerry Mentzer, 1974, page 95), Martin Nash's "Nine Times Location" in *Ever So Sleightly* (Stephen Minch, 1975, page 124), Don England's "Seven Card Location" in *Technical Knock Outs* (John Mendoza, 1980, page 49), "Nine-Card Location" in *Darwin Ortiz at the Card Table* (1988, page 89) and Paul Cummins and Doc Eason's book *Fusillade – A Treatise on the Multiple Selection Routine* (2000). In this last book, there are additional references for the interested reader.

⁶³ The routine was published as "Farbskala" in the German book *Grand Ouvert* (1978) on page 61.

⁶⁴ "Suit Appearance" is described in Carroll's excellent *52 Lovers – Volume 1* (1988) on page 137.

tion climax, especially in the given plot in which you already have plenty of opportunity to show off some skill. Additionally, the required set-up is only about half the deck and thus more convincing false shuffles and delays are possible.

I will not describe all the revelations in detail. The focus is on the structure of the routine. While I will write down the list of productions that I currently use, you can easily substitute any favorite sleights that you may care for. There are many routines that you can consult in the case that you are in need of some ideas.⁶⁵

Preparation

From the back to the face of the face-down deck, set the cards in the following order. Depending on how you want to reveal each card, the Two of Spades up to the Ten of Spades will have to be in another sequence.

JS, QS, 5S (face-up), KS, 10S, 8S (face-up), 7S (face-up), 6S (face-up), 4S, 3S, 2S, 9S, KH, QH, ..., 2H, rest of the deck in any order. So the set-up consists of the top twenty-four cards – all the Spades and Hearts, except for the Aces, which are distributed throughout the shuffled portion.

Performance

"Believe it or not, but I am able to find all four Aces from the shuffled deck. Here, I even shuffle some more!" With these words, false-shuffle the deck by using a face-up overhand shuffle that retains the set-up of twenty-four cards in place with the standard injog method. Executing it face up ensures that the cards are seen mixed.

⁶⁵ First of all there are published routines for the Suit Appearance plot. Besides Erhard Liebenow's and José Carroll's routines already referenced, you can consult "Miracle of Thirteen" in *Trend Setters* (Harry Lorayne, 1990, page 226) or Paul Gordon's "Thirteen Times and Out" in *Apocalypse*, Volume 17, No. 8 (Harry Lorayne, August 1994, page 2392). You can also look at multiple selection routines. Several of those are listed in the previous footnote 62.

To make good on your promise, you stop shuffling, spread through the cards between your hands face up and simply remove the Aces as you come to them. This is just a joke with the purpose of demonstrating the shuffled condition of the deck, which can clearly be seen when the Aces are taken out of the shuffled half.

After all Aces have been tabled, turn the deck face down and establish a little-finger break below the top four cards, using the little-finger count.⁶⁶ You now have to force the Ace of Spades without losing a lot of time, so you might just want to place the Aces in a face-down row on the table with Spades being one of the middle two Aces. Ask for any number between one and four (leaving two and three for the spectator) and use the old ruse of counting from the appropriate end, which will hopefully give the impression that the spectator just selected the Ace of Spades, which is then turned over by you.

Pick up the Ace of Spades in face-up end grip with the right hand and collect the other Aces beneath it, so that you end up with a four-card packet in the right hand. Its top card is the face-up Ace of Spades and below it are the other three Aces face down. You will now apparently use the left thumb to peel the top Ace onto the deck and use this action to switch the other three Aces for the cards above the break. This is done as follows using a technique developed by Ed Marlo.⁶⁷

The right-hand packet, held by the thumb and third finger in end grip, approaches the top of the deck, which rests in dealing position. The right third finger contacts the outer right corner of the four cards above the left little-finger break while the right thumb contacts their inner right corner. Now the right third finger pivots the packet above the little-finger break to the right against the right thumb. Meanwhile the left thumb presses onto the four Aces at the outer left corner (they are now approximately aligned with the deck). The right hand lets go of the Aces and drags out the switched-

in packet in end grip (*figure 1*). The switch feels almost like the packet exchange in the middle of the Hamman Count,⁶⁸ just done on top of the deck.

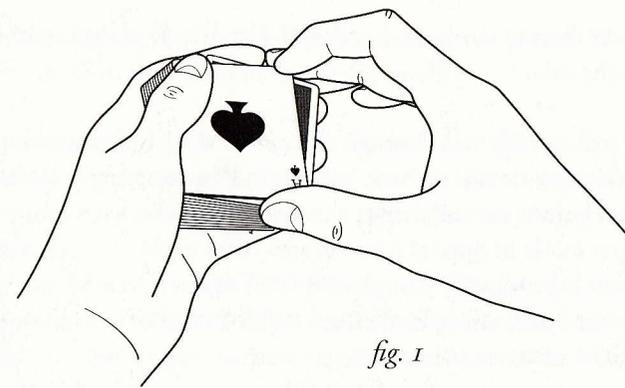


fig. 1

Immediately the left hand moves forward and thumbs the Ace of Spades face up onto the table in front of you and then sets down the deck face up near you. Set the packet that is believed to consist of the remaining three Aces down to your left side and remark to a spectator sitting there “I’ll put the other Aces here so you can watch them, ok?” Before setting them down, you can make a quick three-card Ascanio Spread with the cards face down if you like, which hides the reversed Five between the cards.

“I suspect that you were a bit disappointed by how I ‘found’ the Aces. But I will make good on this by finding all the cards from the same suit as the Ace you selected from the shuffled deck – all the Spade cards. First I need to memorize their positions quickly.” With these words you first give the cards a quick in-jog shuffle, retaining the set-up at the top, and then riffle through the cards so that only you can look at the indices, in the act of apparently memorizing the order of the cards. At this opportunity you pick up a little-finger break below the Three of Spades, which should be nine cards down from the top. Relax and keep holding the break.

“Ok, I think I got them all. You know what, I’ll even try to get them in order. So first I need to find the Two. I think it should be about a fourth down in the deck.” Undercut at the break and use John Cornelius’ “Spring Set” to turn

⁶⁶ Good descriptions are in volume one of Roberto Giobbi’s *Card College* (1994), page 201, and *Darwin Ortiz at the Card Table* (Darwin Ortiz, 1988), page 11.

⁶⁷ See *The New Tops* (November 1956) or the collected reprint *M.I.N.T. – Volume 1* (1988), page 128, “Packet Switches – Second Method”. Another description can also be found in John Bannon’s *Smoke and Mirrors* (1991) on page 90.

⁶⁸ See for example *Card College – Volume 2* (Roberto Giobbi, 1996) on page 320.

over the top card one-handed.⁶⁹ The Two is placed onto the Ace a bit to your right side.

I will quickly run through the rest of the production sequence without complete detail, because as I wrote you can simply insert your own favorite revelations here and alter the set-up of the spot cards in Spades accordingly. After each card is produced, you place it onto the other Spade cards in a spread condition to build a row to your right.

Hold the deck in right-hand end grip and execute a swivel cut⁷⁰ to cut the top half into the left hand. When you replace the bottom half on top, place your left thumb between the portions. The left thumb then drags out the Three of Spades from the middle (figure 2), pivoting it face up onto the deck.⁷¹ Make sure to keep a step between the halves.

The Four, now resting above the break, is produced with Neal Elias' Cutting Discovery⁷² (figure 3), in which

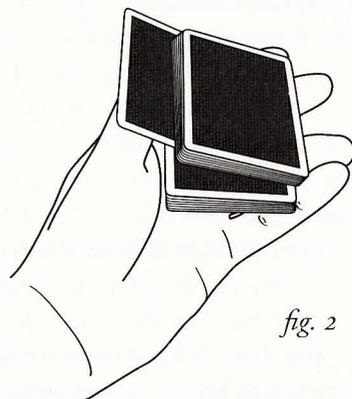


fig. 2

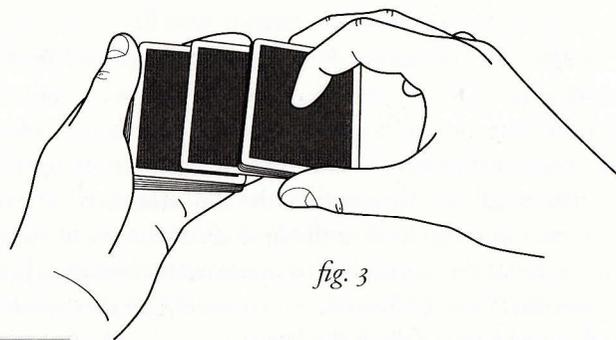


fig. 3

⁶⁹ John Cornelius' flourish turnover of the top card can be found in *The New York Magic Symposium – Collection 1* (Richard Kaufman, 1982), page 53, or in the collection *The Award-Winning Magic of John Cornelius* (Lance Pierce, 2001), page 41.

⁷⁰ This flourish cut by Nate Leipzig is described in the first volume of Roberto Giobbi's *Card College* (1994) on page 173.

⁷¹ This one-handed extraction is published in Ed Marlo's *Let's See the Deck* (1942) on page 8 in the context of "Imitation of Scarne".

⁷² Elias' "Cutting Discovery" is published in *Ibidem*, Issue 26 (P. Howard Lyons, September 1962), page 8. It is on page 593 in the second volume of the reprint of this magazine (Hermetic Press, 2001).

you must actually cut the deck at the break when assembling the halves. The deck is placed onto the table in the position for a riffle shuffle.

Address the spectator from earlier: "Did you watch the Aces? Yes? Well, I don't think you saw me sneak the Five in there!" Spread the "Ace" packet and show the reversed Five of Spades between the other three cards. This surprising appearance is José Carroll's.

For the next card I use Bruce Cervon's Pivot Revelation.⁷³ To get back to the original order, I handle it as follows:⁷⁴ After the unfinished shuffle and cut, the card is pivoted out, but its two corners remain inserted into the two respective halves as in figure 4. Let go of the configuration. Then with both hands pick up the top portions above the face-up Six

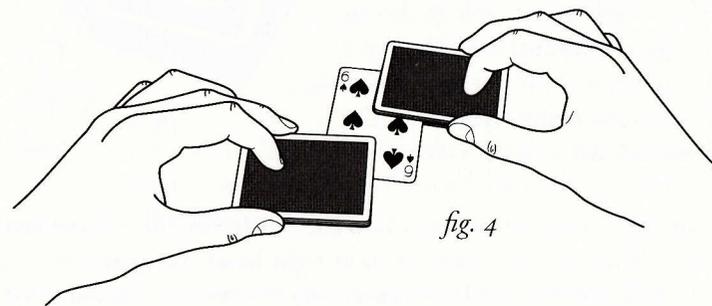


fig. 4

and cut them to the back and front. Place the Six away on the Five, then replace the inner packets onto the outer packets and finally the original top portion on top. The cards are back in order.

The Seven of Spades is produced with Darwin Ortiz' one-handed tabled pop-out cut⁷⁵ with the words "I will do the next card one-handed!" After the production, the deck was cut and rests on the table. Pick it up in left hand dealing position and establish a break between the two portions while setting up the card above the break, the Eight of Spades, for Srechko Howard's pop-

⁷³ Originally from *Genii*, Volume 36 No.5 (William W. Larsen Jr., May 1972), page 228, and reprinted in *The Card Secrets of Bruce Cervon* (1976), page 32.

⁷⁴ See also page 147 in *52 Lovers – Volume 1* (1988).

⁷⁵ "Ortiz Pop-Out Cut" is explained in detail in *Darwin Ortiz at the Card Table* (1988) on page 94. It is a combination of the Piet Forton Pop-Out Move with Erdnase's one-handed flourish cut.

production.⁷⁶ Do this sleight and comment “*Ok, that was my right hand and I am right-handed. But I can do it left-handed as well.*”

Cut the deck at the point where you remove the Eight.⁷⁷ At this point you might want to do a quick injog shuffle, retaining the top and bottom stock of the deck.

The Nine and Ten are now on top and bottom of the deck. Do the old friction toss in which you retain those two cards in the right hand as it is tossing the balance of the deck to the table as shown in *figure 5*. Immediately the right hand throws both cards in the air in boomerang style and each hand catches a card.⁷⁸

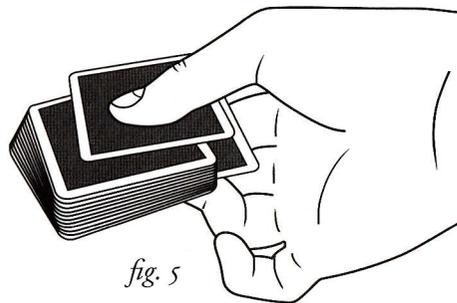


fig. 5

Comment that you want to find the remaining three court cards at the same time. With the deck face down in right hand end grip, swing cut a third of the deck into the left hand, executing the bottom slip cut known as Harry Lorayne’s HaLo cut, in which the base of the left first finger retains the bottom card via friction.⁷⁹ The left hand sets its packet face up on the table (a first Ace becomes visible). Quickly repeat the HaLo cut sequence and finally place the remaining third packet face up on the table as well.

Three Aces are showing on the faces of the three packets. The layout at this point should look similar to *figure 6*. This should come as a surprise, as those Aces are expected to be face down on the left side of the table. Collect the Aces from their packets and hold them face up in your left hand, act surprised and turn the three face-down cards over with the right hand and

⁷⁶ This beautiful revelation is described as “How to Pop a Floating Deck” in *The Art of Astonishment – Volume 3* (Paul Harris & Eric Mead, 1996) on page 247.

⁷⁷ To establish the break as I remove the Eight, I use Dai Vernon’s method in “Insertion of the Cards” from the third edition of *Expert Card Technique* (Hugard & Braue, 1950), page 464.

⁷⁸ This flourish is also used in José Carroll’s routine, *52 Lovers – Volume 1* (1988), page 149.

⁷⁹ See Harry Lorayne’s *Rim Shots* (1973), page 131, or any of his publications after 1973.

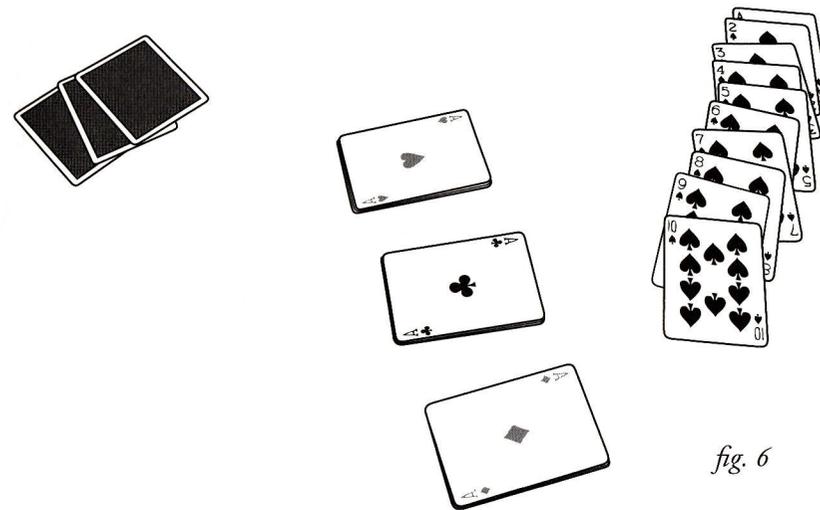


fig. 6

place them to the right on the other Spade cards – they are the missing court cards. “*Didn’t I say you should watch those Aces?*” The left hand drops the Aces face down on the table to the left again.

Assemble the three packets and restore their original order by placing the portion that was tabled last face up onto the middle one and the combined section on the last. The Hearts should again be in order at the bottom of the face-up pile. Pick up a little-finger break above the twelve Heart cards by spreading through the cards face up, which is motivated by a remark like “*And those are indeed all Spade cards that were in this deck!*” Square up the cards and turn the cards face down, while retaining the little-finger break with Tenkai’s well-known pivot break using a step.⁸⁰

The effect is apparently over, but a strong climax is yet to come. The right hand scoops up the thirteen Spade cards and maneuvers them into a face-down end grip, while you call attention to the face-down Aces. “*Now here we have the Aces of the other three Suits, right? Did you watch them this time?*” Since the Aces transformed before, the audience might not be completely

⁸⁰ This is also known as book break and was introduced in *Six Tricks by Tenkai* (Robert Parrish, 1952), page 14. A more readily available description can be found in *Card College – Volume 5* (Roberto Giobbi, 2003), page 1247.

sure whether they are still where they are supposed to be, which provides additional cover for the upcoming switch.

The left hand pins the left edges of the Aces to the table, while the Spade packet in the right hand is used to flip over those Aces as shown in *figure 7*.

When they fall face up on the table, the Spade packet is secretly exchanged for the Heart packet

above the break, using the Le Temps switch.⁸¹ Immediately after the switch, the right hand spreads its switched packet on the right side of the table in the same place where the Spade packet has been before, while the fingers of the left hand spread out the face-up Aces. With any luck, the audience will forget that the Spade cards were picked up for any length of time at all.

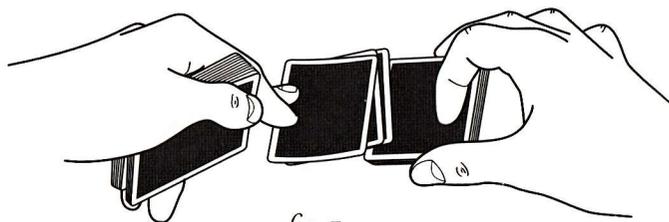


fig. 7

Set the deck down and pick up the three Aces. *“Let’s try this with another Ace. Can you pick one of the cards with your left hand?”* With these words you spread the three cards face down in your hand with the Ace of Hearts in the center and go into an equivoque force of the middle card. In the case that he does not choose Hearts, continue your sentence in standard fashion with *“...and another one with your right hand.”* If the spectator has the audacity to pick Hearts with his other hand, thus confronting you with the worst case of the procedure, turn the remaining Ace face up and throw it on the table, implying that it is eliminated. Then have him shuffle the two cards in his hands some more and then turn over one of his cards, interpreting it as either also eliminated (*“Good, and put it away onto the other face-up Ace.”*) or his final choice (*“Ah, it is Hearts! Very nice.”*).

⁸¹ It is described in context of “Le Temps Four Aces” in *Expert Card Technique* (Hugard & Braue, 1940), page 248. An excellent and very detailed discussion of this switch in a context that is similar to the application here can be found in *The Magic of Ascanio – Volume 3* (2008) on pages 367 and 387.

Slowly wave the Ace of Hearts over the twelve spread-out cards that are believed to be the thirteen Spade cards. Then use the Ace to turn the cards over in domino style or, if the performing surface does not allow this, use it to scoop the cards up and slowly re-spread them face up. Allow the spectators some time to recover.

Remark

In Carroll’s original routine, when he sets about finding the three court cards, three indifferent cards are shown, that are then transformed into the Jack, Queen and King. I was not completely satisfied with the used procedure, which is why I came up with the solution presented here.

The force of the Ace of Spades using the old “number between one and four” is a bit crude, but done swiftly and with confidence it will do the job. Since you will force the Ace of Hearts later with equivoque, doing another equivoque force in the beginning is not the best idea, since its procedure might conflict with the later selection handling.

Actually I sometimes eliminate the force of the Ace of Spades by initially asking *“By the way, what is your favorite Ace?”* If he says Spades, I make use of this coincidence. If not, I reply with *“Interesting, mine is Spades.”* and take it from there. In the case that he names Hearts, I use this information in the end for the final transformation by coming back to his initial choice. *“What did you say was your favorite Ace earlier? It was not Spades like mine, was it?”* Then you eliminate the equivoque force of Hearts before the climax.

Herbert - The Trained Rubber Band

What follows is one of my favorite routines for more than ten years. It is also one of my most requested tricks. In effect, a rubber band named Herbert finds chosen cards. People, after having witnessed the effect, remember it surprisingly well and after months or even years come up to me and ask whether I have Herbert with me. He really steals the show. I even suspect that they like Herbert's card tricks more than my own.

Effect

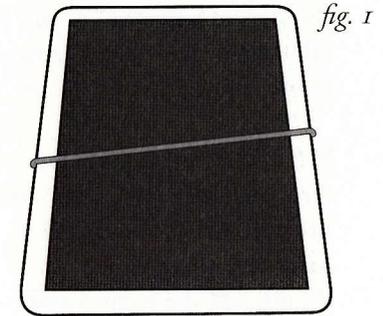
The performer introduces Herbert, which turns out to be an ordinary looking rubber band. After a card is selected and returned, the rubber band is wrapped around the deck. It instantly disappears, only to be found again in the center, encircling the selection.

The effect is repeated with a freely named card, which Herbert finds with the same accuracy, this time even in slow-motion.

Method

This is my elaboration on Hiro Sakai's "Band on the Run".⁸² The effect of a rubber band that is wrapped around the deck, vanishes from there and then reappears around a selected card in the middle was introduced by Paul Harris⁸³ and also made popular by Ken Simmons.⁸⁴ However, those handlings were rather tense because the deck has to be held in the hands tightly and you could not let go of it. Sakai's wrapping technique with its locking mechanism allows the deck to be wrapped and then set on the table and handled freely before the vanish, as you will see in the explanation below with some added details that make the wrapping and the release more reliable. This is what makes this effect so deceptive.

A rubber band is needed that fulfills certain properties. Its color should contrast with the back design of the deck you are going to use and its size must be so that you can easily wrap it around the deck twice, but when it encircles a single card it should fit snugly without dangling around. *Figure 1* shows this situation.



If you want to use a freely named card for the second phase, the deck should be in memorized deck order. That is how I perform it most of the time and that is how I will describe it. Alternative procedures will be mentioned at the end.

Having the rubber band handy and the deck stacked, you are all set.

⁸² This is described in Steve Beam's magazine *The Trapdoor* (Issue 41, 1991) on page 721.

⁸³ Paul Harris' handling was published as a separate manuscript titled *The Inner Circle* (1980). It is also part of the routine "Stretch" on page 147 of *The Art of Astonishment - Book 2* (Paul Harris & Eric Mead, 1996).

⁸⁴ Ken Simmons' "A-Band-Ment" can be found in his book *Riffling the Pasteboards* (1986) on page 1. Simmons published many variations by himself and others in his books *Riffling the Pasteboards Again!* (1987) and *Banded Deck Effects* (1991).

Performance

First Phase

Introduce the rubber band and inform the audience about its unusual skill: It is able to find playing cards. Personally, I give it the name Herbert. After maybe having it examined, set it down on the table and have a card selected that is controlled to the bottom. Since the deck is stacked, its cyclic order must be retained. For that I spread the cards between the hands and have a card removed. While the spectator is looking at the card, I cut the deck at the spot where it is taken out. Then I use Ernest Earick's handling of the Convincing Control⁸⁵ to secretly move it to the bottom without altering the position of any other card. (To motivate the necessary re-showing of the card inherent in this sleight, you can either show the card to other spectators or to Herbert.)

When the card is fairly lost in the deck, the rubber band is wrapped around the deck twice using Hiro Sakai's locking principle as follows. The rubber band is held in the right hand and encircles the thumb and the second and third fingers. Now you encircle the deck, coming from the inner end. More precisely, you encircle all cards except the selection on the bottom, which is broken apart with a little-finger pull-down. See *figure 2* to see this moment. (Since the right hand is covering the deck from

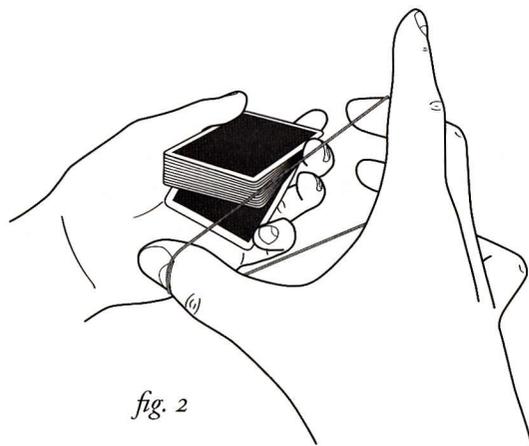
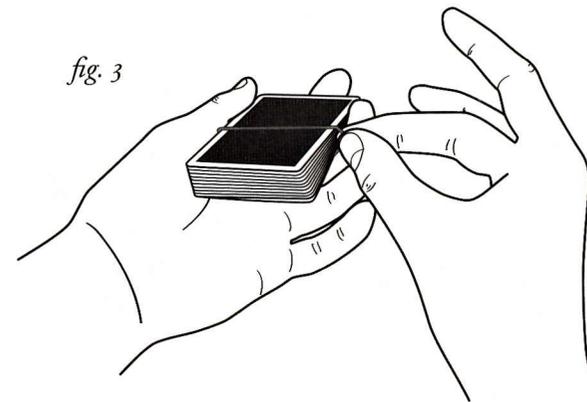


fig. 2

⁸⁵ Earick's one-handed Convincing Control is one of the best handlings of this sleight and can be found in *By Forces Unseen* (Stephen Minch, 1993) on page 83.

the right side, this can easily be done surrounded.) Let the rubber band snap around the deck for the moment.

fig. 3



Now with the right fingers and thumb pull the rubber band to the right as in *figure 3* and insert the right second and third fingers into the loop (*figure 4*). Now comes the tricky part. The left second finger will now grab the top string of the rubber band. To make this happen, the

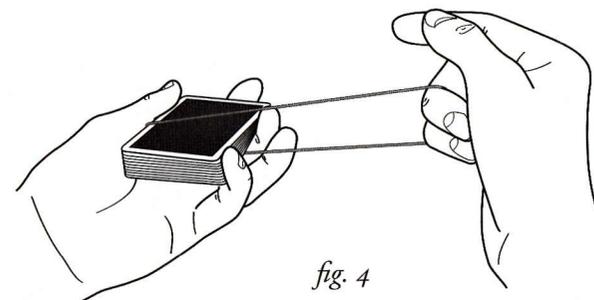


fig. 4

right hand moves downwards below the level of the deck and turns slightly outwards (the technical term for this motion is supination). That way the top string is moved near the left second finger, which grabs it and pulls it underneath the deck as shown in *figure 5*.

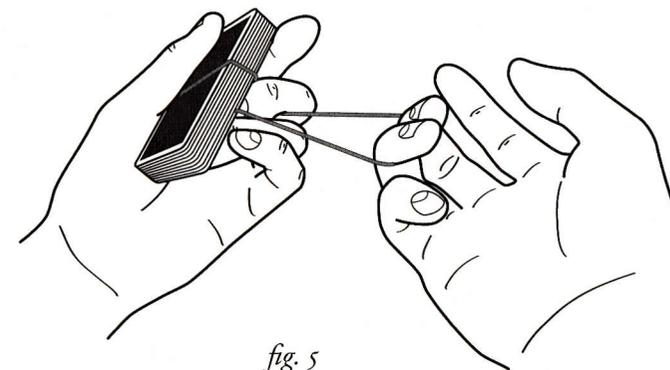


fig. 5

The right hand then returns to its original position and encircles the deck again, this time from the outer end. The string that goes over the right second finger goes on top of the deck and the string below the right third finger goes underneath the deck. Consult *figure 6*, which should clarify this movement. When the rubber band is around the deck twice, let go with your right hand. The rubber band appears to be fairly wrapped around the deck.

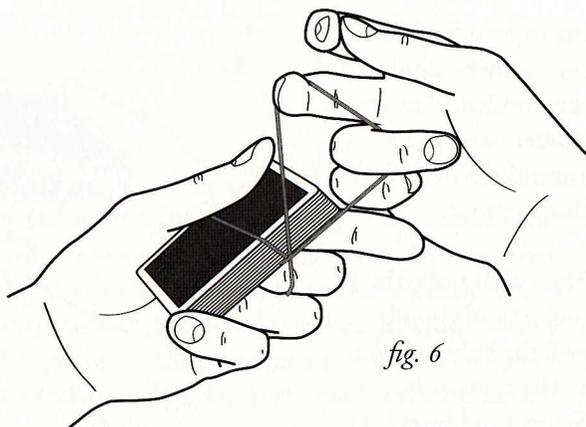


fig. 6

The real situation is shown in *figure 7* in an exposed view from below. As can be seen, the left second finger is holding back a loop. Now this finger is slowly and carefully pulled out of the loop, while the deck is held with the right hand in end grip. The single string that is running right across the selection will hold the loop in place as in *figure 8*, which shows just the face-up deck with the loop trapped in place. If for some reason the tension does not suffice and the loop escapes this string and

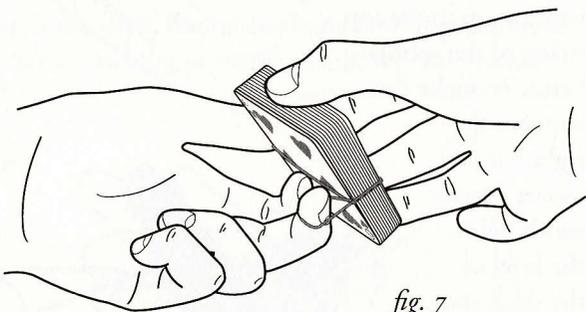


fig. 7

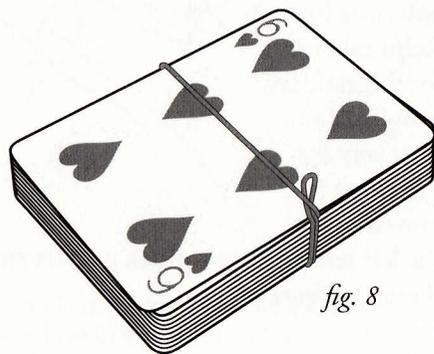


fig. 8

unwraps itself, start again. If the problem persists, see the remarks at the end for trouble-shooting. This whole wrapping sequence is done in about three seconds from start to finish in performance speed.

Now do an all-around square-up with the deck, as if you wanted to display the condition from every side. This brings the loop to the side of the left thumb. The right hand takes the deck and sets it on the table for a moment with the rubber band wrapped around it. This is a convincing display and the spectators really believe that the wrapping is entirely legitimate. After some patter, pick the deck up again and set it back into the left hand, the loop still on the bottom of the left side. You can actually pick the deck up at the two strings running across the top of the deck and move it into the left hand that way (*figure 9*).

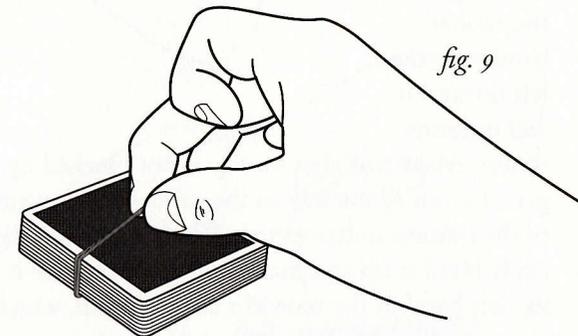


fig. 9

To set up for the vanish of the rubber band you first must set the loop free. This is done with the left thumb by contacting the rubber band on the left side of the deck and moving it forward until you feel that the loop is free (see *figure 10*) and then back again. Retain pressure with the left thumb to hold it in place, so the rubber band does not jump to the right prematurely. The right hand pulls the rubber band up as in *figure 11*

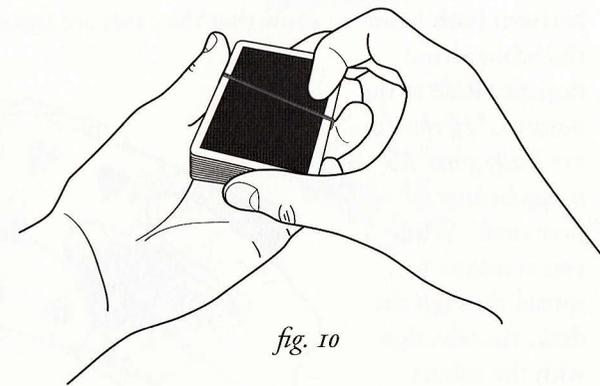


fig. 10

and lets it snap back again to confirm its tightness one last time.

Snap your right fingers and let go of the rubber band with the left thumb. It will instantly vanish. Make sure that its way is not blocked by moving the left second finger a bit out of the way so the rubber band can move to the right and then to the bottom unhampered. This is a very fast disappearance, so you must really build it up and make sure that everyone is watching. I very slightly jerk my left hand in the moment of the vanish, which accentuates the effect and makes it a bit more effective. At this point, the rubber band is only around the selection at the bottom of the deck.

Wait a beat for the effect to sink in and then instantly spread the deck widely between both hands to show that the cards are free again. Make sure that the rubber band does not flash at the bottom. "*Herbert is not really gone. He is just looking for your card!*" While you continue to spread through the deck, the selection with the rubber band around it is moved to the center of the deck. To do

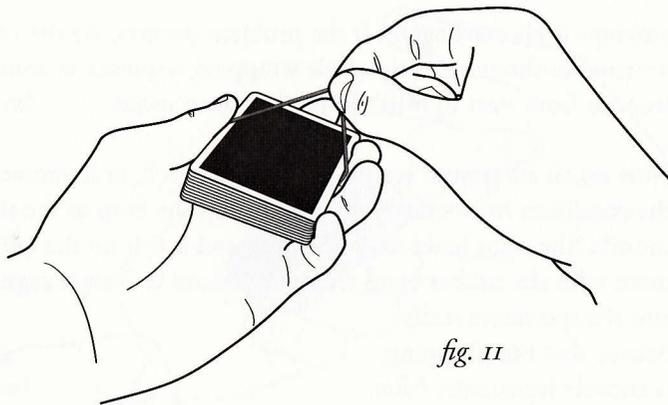


fig. 11

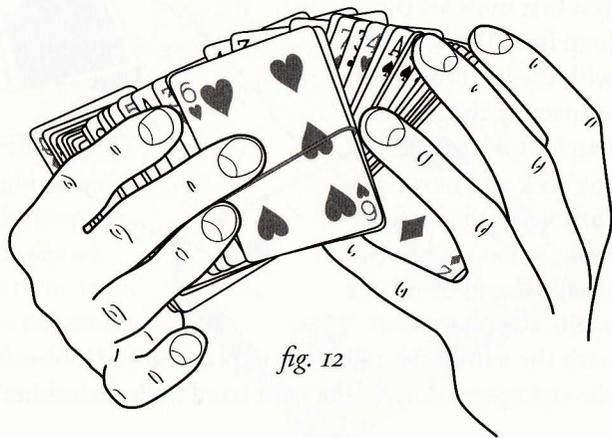


fig. 12

this secretly, a reverse cull is used. The way I do it here, is to change the left hand grip on the cards into a straddle grip, that is the little finger is at the inner side and first finger at the outer side of the cards. Now the right second finger reaches to the left underneath the spread, grabs the banded selection and pulls it to the right. *Figure 12* shows an exposed view from underneath. Because of the friction of the rubber band, the second card from the bottom will be pulled to the right as well. Do not worry about this, this happens automatically. Insert both cards together in the middle of the spread and square the deck.

To present the climax, slowly square up the deck and hold it in right hand end grip. The spectators are allowed to watch the edges of the cards and will see that Herbert is in the middle of the deck as in *figure 13*. Very fairly drop all cards below the banded selection into the left hand dealing position by releasing pressure with the right thumb. Then move the right hand forward and release the single banded card onto the table by again releasing pressure with the right thumb (*figure 14*). I often drop it on top of a drinking glass or on a spectator's hand when no table space is available.

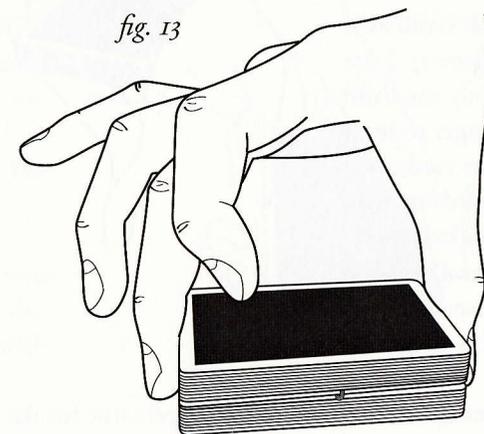


fig. 13

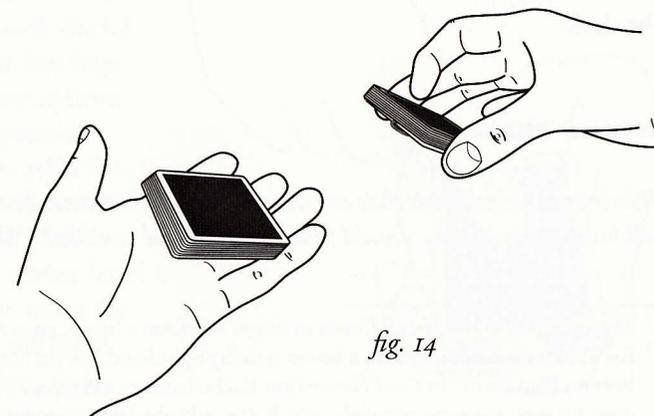


fig. 14

You will now do a little clean-up action. In the reverse cull displacement, an additional card was dragged along. This card is now at the bottom of the right hand packet but should be at the bottom of the left hand packet to be in its proper position in the stack. To restore the order, execute the Kelly-Ovette Bottom Placement⁸⁶

when placing the right hand cards on top of those in the left hand as in *figure 15*. I use only the third finger to lever the card downwards to avoid the cramped hand position associated with this sleight.⁸⁷

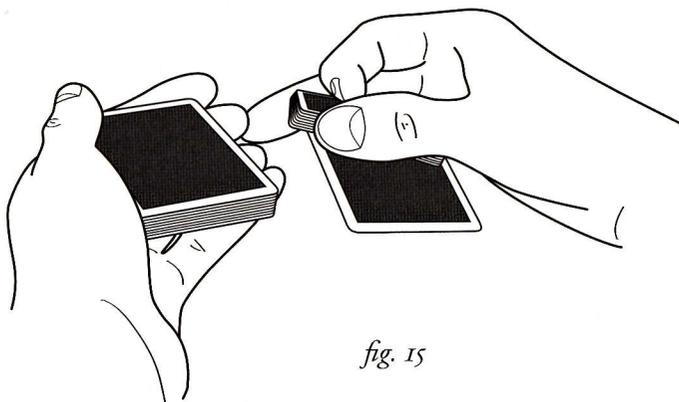


fig. 15

Set the deck down, ask the spectator for the name of his selection and dramatically turn over the banded card to show that Herbert has done it again. After the applause, remove the rubber band and place the selection on top of the deck.

Second Phase

“Herbert can find cards that are not taken out of the deck first. You just need to tell him which card he should find. What would you like?” With these words

⁸⁶ See for example *The Tarbell Course in Magic – Volume 3* (1943), page 184.

⁸⁷ For another solutions to have a better-looking right hand, see Ed Marlo’s “No-Clutch Bottom Placement” in *Card Finesse* (Jon Racherbaumer, 1982, page 134). Guy Hollingworth came up with the same principle, which was published in the second issue of Bill Goodwin and Gordon Bean’s magazine *Penumbra* (July/August 2002) on page 7.

you address a spectator who names any card. Because you have a memorized deck in your hands, you can bring this card to the bottom with an estimated cut and an optional correction. To cover this action, a little joke can add a layer of misdirection: *“What card? You need to speak louder, Herbert has rubber in his ears.”*

With the named card on the bottom, you wrap the rubber band around the deck once more, using the same technique explained in the first phase. At the end, you again remove the left second finger from the loop and do an all-around square-up to bring the loop to the left side of the deck. If you like, you can again briefly set the deck down for a moment.

Explain to the audience that this time you will do it in slow-motion. To do this, you first work the loop free with the left thumb as before (*figure 10* again). Now the vanish is executed in a different manner. Direct the attention to the rubber band and touch the left side with your right first finger as illustrated in *figure 16* from the audience’s perspective. Press down with the right first finger and let go of the band with the left thumb. Held by the first finger, the rubber band will not move. Now move the right first finger to the right side in a fluid motion. As in *figure 17*, the rubber band will

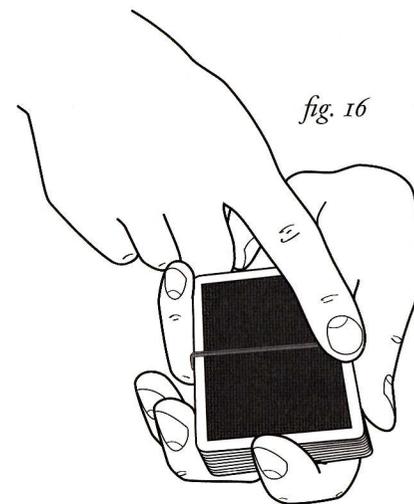


fig. 16

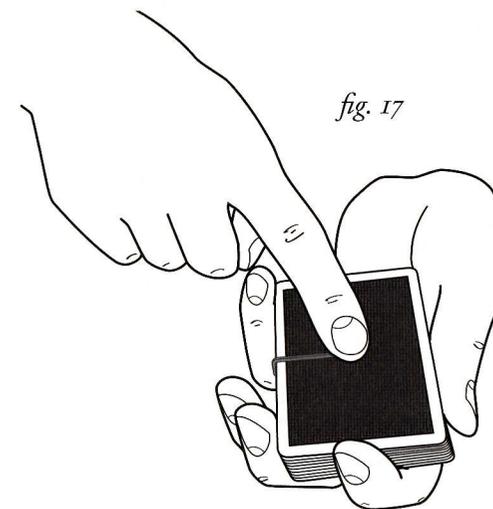


fig. 17

follow along. Make sure that you keep the pressure up, so the band cannot escape prematurely. This vanish is very visual and looks like a trick film.

Pause for a beat, so that the vanish is taken in by the audience. Then end the effect as in the first phase by spreading the deck between the hands and moving the selection to the center of the deck with a reverse cull action. Show the edges of the cards and drop the selection on the table as before. Do not forget to replace the bottom card of the right hand section to the bottom of the left-hand half with the Kelly-Ovette Bottom Placement.

The rubber band has found the card again. Place the rubber band away to end the effect.

“Now I better put Herbert away again. Otherwise he gets all the applause and I don’t really like that.”

Remarks

If you have no stacked deck, there are two things that you can do if you still want to perform the second phase. First of all, you can again work with a physically selected card by controlling either a second chosen card or the same card as in the first phase to the bottom of the deck. The other option is to have any card named and nonchalantly culling it while spreading through the cards face up.

In those cases, the Kelly-Ovette Bottom Placement is of course no longer needed after the banded card is tabled.

In the beginning it might sometimes happen that the rubber band does not lock properly and goes off too soon. You might want to experiment with different brands and sizes of rubber bands if this problem does not go away with practice.

One important point to keep in mind is the position where the rubber band is grabbed in *figure 3*. It should be right at the side of the deck, because then you have more tension on the part of the band that holds the loop than if you would grab the rubber band right at the top.

Also, you can enlarge the loop by pulling down with the left second finger underneath the deck just before working the finger out of it. This is covered by the deck and the right hand.

The rubber band is personified in my patter. Personifying your props is a risky issue.⁸⁸ It is easy to make a presentation like that pretentious, silly, embarrassing, or anything in between. In this effect it works well for me. If it does for you, you need to find out. One of the reasons that it works is that I do not take it very seriously myself but I am talking about Herbert and his skills quite tongue-in-cheek.

⁸⁸ You might want to check Darwin Ortiz’ thoughts on this topic in *Strong Magic* (1994) on page 260 in the chapter “Developing A Style”.

Epilogue

When asked about my reasons for performing magic in general and card magic in particular, in the past I often tried to get out of the situation by mentioning that I just happen to enjoy it with all its performing, artistic, historical and technical aspects and then went on to change the subject. I kept wondering whether I was expected to have some deeper and more profound and philosophical answer to this common question.

Then about seven years ago, I read an interview with the phenomenal Russian pianist Arcadi Volodos. Among other things, he was asked just that perennial question of why he wanted to become a pianist. Volodos' answer was rather short: *"I fell in love with the instrument. That's all."*

After this brief explanation, which I found completely satisfying, he changed the subject.

Concerning the material in this volume, do not be put off by the fact that some of the items require a memorized deck. I often mention alternatives that work just as well. The memorized deck option is often simply the most convenient one for those that use this tool already. Everybody who works with it regularly will agree that all stack tricks are considered more or less impromptu, because quite often one has a stacked deck at hand anyway.

A useful strategy for certain situations, which is adopted by several performers, is to always have two decks with you when you perform. One is stacked and one is shuffled. By performing a short routine that requires two decks (perhaps a coincidence effect in which two selections from different decks match), both decks can afterwards remain on the table openly. Then you can just pick up either the shuffled or the stacked deck, depending on what you want to perform next. Since one deck can be legitimately shuffled, the audience often believes later that the spectators have shuffled all the cards in play in the course of the performance.

I hope that you can find something in the pages of this book that you can actually put into practice and perform for your audiences. I can ensure you that your time will be well spent.

The routines here have served me well for many years in all kinds of performing situations – a fabulous theater named "Krist & Münch" for close-up magic that we are lucky enough to have in Munich, informal situations at the bar or even the Oktoberfest and of course professional performances of all kind.

Denis Behr

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