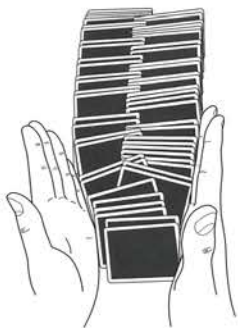
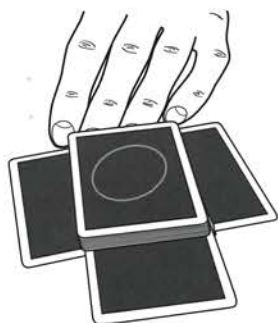
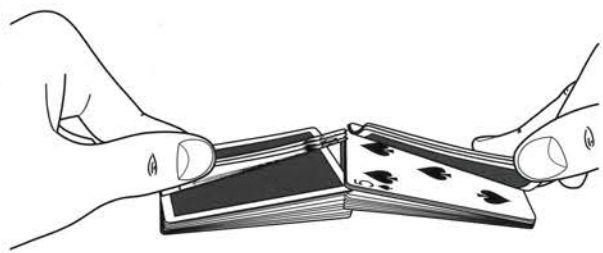


Handcrafted

Card Magic
Volume 3



Denis Behr



Handcrafted

Card Magic
Volume 3

conceived, written and illustrated by Denis Behr

Versions of the following routines have been published in German language in the trick insert *Zaubersalz*, Nr. 45, that came with the *Magische Welt*, Vol. 65, No. 3 (2016, published by Wittus Witt, Hamburg): “On the Bottom Deal”, “Mating Season”, “Mr. Luckiest” and “Photographic Memory”. The routine “The More the Merrier” previously saw print in Stan Allen’s *MAGIC* (Volume 22, No. 8, April 2013). An earlier version of “Routined Arith-Mate-ic” was published as “Mathe-Mate-Ics” in Steve Beam’s *Semi-Automatic Card Tricks – Volume 10* (2015).

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Acknowledgments

This volume was again not a one-man operation.

My friend Pit Hartling provided feedback for the material during its development. Many of his ideas found its way into the tricks, as you will find in the following pages.

Stephen Minch was kind enough to edit a draft of the text of this book. As a result, my attempt at the English language becomes easier to follow and understand. If anything remains unclear, it was some last-minute addition that I squeezed in afterwards.

Tyler Wilson and Pit Hartling both also helped to smooth out the prose.

I am delighted that David Williamson agreed to contribute an introduction to this work. For virtually my whole life in magic, I have been a fan, with some of his material being in my repertoire all these years.

As David often says, in magic we are lucky enough to be able to meet our heroes at gatherings, and in this case one of mine became a friend and wrote something for my book!

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Foreword

by David Williamson

I'd rather be walking my dog or watching Netflix or staring at the wall while shuffling cards, or any other of a dozen mundane things than write a foreword to a book. At this point in my life I don't get too excited about the publication of a new magic book. Is it me or does the magic market seem oversaturated with vanity projects full of filler simply meant to sell quickly and turn a profit? It seems to me that the books that actually enlighten and contribute to the knowledge base are fewer and further between.

When Denis asked me to take a look at his book and consider writing the foreword, I knew that I needed to seriously consider it. Denis is a man with a deep and wide-ranging knowledge of card magic. The online card magic database that he has assembled is a wonder to behold. I haven't met too many people in this world with the type of mind and work ethic that is required to create such an amazing storehouse of knowledge. Add to that the fact that Denis actually performs close-up card magic for the lay public on a regular basis. He has clocked hundreds if not thousands of hours actually performing for real people. He is a serious student of the art who understands the history and context of his offerings to the card magic loving community. So I have immense respect for him.

Based on his first two wonderful books, *Handcrafted Card Magic 1 & 2*, I know that anything he publishes will be solidly constructed, devious and well researched and it will contain interesting nuggets and illuminating references. The book you are holding proves that point. But that's not why I agreed to write this foreword. It's because he made me laugh the first time we met. And the reason he made me laugh was because, as hard as I tried, I couldn't make him laugh!

Denis Behr

It was at a magic convention in Spain. I arrived the night before the convention and noticed a tall German fellow holding a beer. I discovered that he was one of the artists performing and lecturing at the convention. So I did what I always do in these situations when I meet a new person. I hurled as many insults, jabs, quips, puns, and inappropriate comments that I could think of at him. It's my way of breaking the ice and also taking a person's measure by their response.

But he didn't crack! He just stood there with a bemused look on his face, seemed to process whatever ridiculous thing I had just said, and then produced a perfectly devastating retort before taking another sip of his beer. He deftly parried my blunt force attacks with his beer-fueled rapier wit during the entire convention. His stoic exterior belied a wide-ranging, quick-thinking mind coupled with a dark and juicy sense of humor. I laughed a lot that night. I knew I was dealing with a superior intellect.

He confirmed this the next day with his card magic. Just as in the pub the night before, Denis vanquished all foes with a calm and casual demeanor covering for an ingenious, methodical brain. He paired this with an extremely high level of skill with a pack of cards, and the effect was overwhelming.

By the end of the convention he had made a new fan, and I had made a new friend.

David Williamson
March 2018

Introduction

When I wrote my first book in 2007, I was wondering whether it was the right format to use. Digital and downloadable releases were starting to become a more and more common media for publishing instructional material, and the future of printed books seemed uncertain.

Now, eleven years later, books are still published in magic and in most other fields, and there seem to be more than ever. The pleasure of an actual book, that you can hold in your hands, turning its pages, is still something we enjoy. As a book lover myself, this pleases me.

When releasing sleight-of-hand magic, another question is whether video would be a better medium for teaching the material. I believe that, in many cases, seeing something performed does help in learning certain maneuvers. However, not seeing something can also be a benefit. In an anecdote that can be found in *The Vernon Chronicles – Volume 1*, Dai Vernon tells about a meeting he had with Thomas J. Crawford, who published his retention-of-vision coin vanish in T. Nelson Downs's *The Art of Magic*. Vernon recounts that after showing Crawford what he believed to be Thomas's sleight, Crawford refused to do the sleight himself, claiming that the illusion in Vernon's hands was so much better than when he was doing his vanish.

Now, Vernon learned it from a printed description and did not see Crawford's execution. He was trying to achieve an ideal he had envisioned in his mind, and he kept striving towards this goal of perfection. Would he have stopped sooner, had he seen the vanish performed and it didn't look all that good?

Early on, when meeting other magicians, I experienced disappointment when seeing sleights performed that, from their written description, I thought should look much more deceptive. I am uncertain, if I would have worked on them with only inferior examples in front of me. I found that forming an ideal vision through reading can be much more inspiring and motivating when first learning sleight-of-hand.

I am not alone in this observation. Others have expressed similar feelings about the discrepancy between a pursuit of perfection and the sometimes harsh reality one confronts when finally seeing some of the things done. So, when reading the following material, you can at least imagine that it looks good.

In this volume, as in the previous ones, I collected older and new material. As readers of my previous books know, I love stack work, and you will find this reflected in some of the material that follows. But you will also find some impromptu and gaffed items along the way.

When I describe the occasional sleight, most of the time you will only find a citation in a footnote. In that source, you can learn the details of a move, in case it is unfamiliar. I presume some knowledge of advanced sleights and hope the occasional faro shuffle or bottom deal does not scare you. If it does, it may be a good time to face your fears and learn some new tools.

Denis Behr
Munich, April 2018

Routined Arith-Mate-ic

Alex Elmsley was one of the true geniuses of our craft. The books with his collected works are full of original and ingenious material. This item expands on one of his creations, "Arith-Mate-ic",¹ and at the end I give a convenient way to achieve the set-up from Tamariz Stack.

Effect

A spectator cuts off a small pile from the deck and those cards are counted to reach a random number. The performer cuts the remainder into two piles and starts dealing the cards face up from both in unison. When the number determined by the spectator's cut is reached, two mates are found at this position. All other positions are occupied by random cards.

This remarkable coincidence is repeated two more times under increasingly stringent conditions.

Method

The effect, which belongs to the "Power of Thought"² genre, works automatically, thanks to Elmsley's clever stack. The set-up consists of seventeen cards in any order, that do not contain mates. Remove the mates of those seven-

¹ See *The Collected Works of Alex Elmsley – Volume One* (Stephen Minch, 1991), page 328.

² For more information about this plot by Paul Curry, see his "The Power of Thought" in *Paul Curry's Worlds Beyond* (Stephen Minch, 2001) on page 307.

teen cards and arrange them in the same order. Take the remaining eighteen indifferent cards, also in any order, and alternate them with one of the seventeen-card packets. This combined pile starts and ends with an indifferent card. Put either a corner crimp or a bottom-cutting Breather Crimp into the bottom card of this pile and set it on the other seventeen-card packet. The order of the whole deck now looks like this, where X indicates an indifferent card and A-a, B-b, ... denote mates:

X, A, X, B, X, C, X ... Q, X (crimped), a, b, c ... q.

Whenever you want, you can cut off the top thirty-five cards so that only the bottom seventeen mates remain on the table. With this set-up in place, you are ready to perform the routine.

Performance

First Phase

Give the deck a false shuffle and set it on the table. Introduce the topic of coincidence and offer a demonstration. Ask a spectator to cut off a small pile of cards and to place it in front of him on the table: "About a quarter of the deck". As a matter of fact, the spectator can cut off any number from one to seventeen cards for the trick to work. If he does cut off too many, simply stop him and have him cut off a smaller pile.

Now, to count the cards, I spread the spectator's packet cleanly on the table and count with one finger. That way, the cards stay in the same order and everyone can verify the number. Only after the packet has been counted, reach towards the remainder of the deck and cut off all the cards above and including the crimp to the right.³

³ Cutting to a crimp works best by lifting the whole deck and dropping the cards below the crimp by releasing the grip. See also "Cutting to a Crimped Card" in Roberto Giobbi's *Card College – Volume 2* (1996) on page 349 for details.

"You determined a random number by your cut. Now let's see what happens if we count to that number in those packets."

With both hands, start turning cards up from the two piles in unison, as in *figure 1*, counting out loud as you do so. After two or three cards, comment on the random values that show up, and explain the

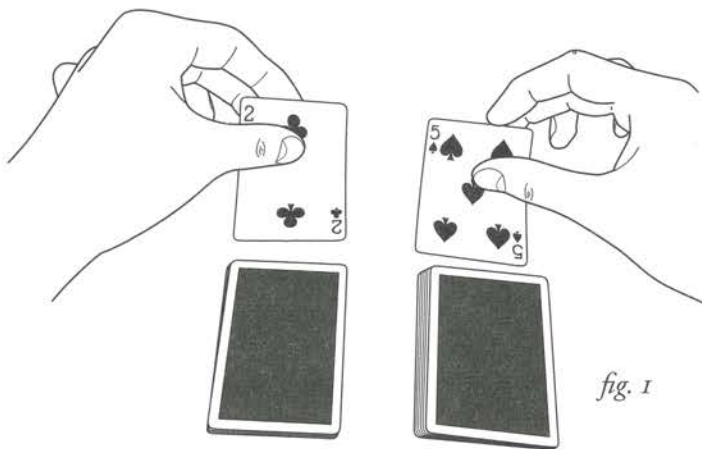


fig. 1

concept of mates, cards that have same value and color. When you do come to the designated number, two mates will show up (see *figure 2*), completing the first phase.

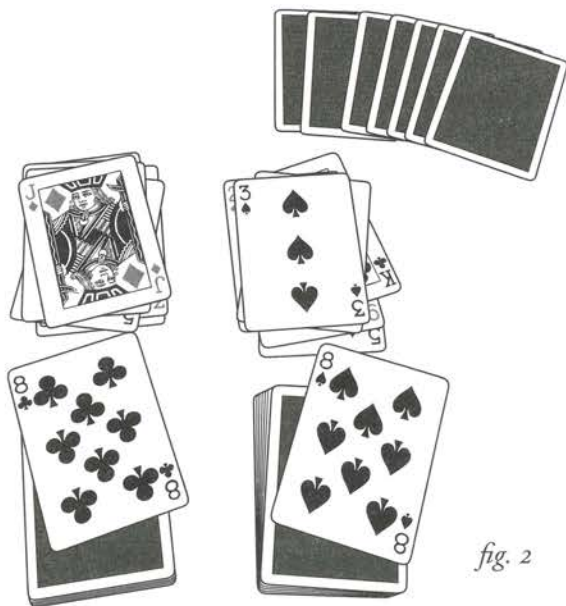


fig. 2

Second Phase

Collect all the cards to assemble the original stack by first replacing the mates, then the dealt cards on top of their piles, and then all piles including the cut-off packet in their original order.

"You might think, that perhaps once I know how many cards you cut off, I can somehow cut the deck at the right place to make this coincidence happen. So let me try this again." Ask the spectator once more to cut off a small pile, but he should try to get a different number. "Now before we count your cards, I will cut the rest." Do so at the crimp.

Then spread the spectator's pile as before and count. This number is again used to count down in both piles to arrive at a pair of mates at exactly the right position.

Replace all cards, so the deck is in its original order.

Third Phase

Give the deck another false shuffle. "I know what you are thinking. You are thinking that perhaps I am so good at estimating that I know how many cards are cut off as soon as I see the packet, without even counting the cards. So this time, I will cut the cards before you cut off your cards." Cut the deck at the crimp as in *figure 3*.

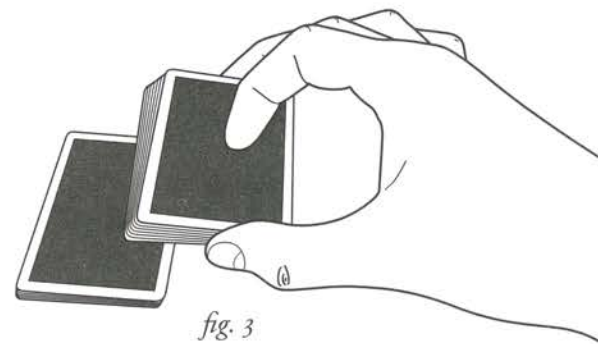


fig. 3

"I will not touch the deck again. I am committed. I left one pile bigger, so you can cut off some cards as well. But you know what, let's make it extra fair: Simply remove cards one by one from this pile until you get exactly the number you want." The spectator will remove single cards from the original upper portion of the deck until he has a number of cards. Again he can go up to seventeen. *Figure 4* shows the situation after this procedure.

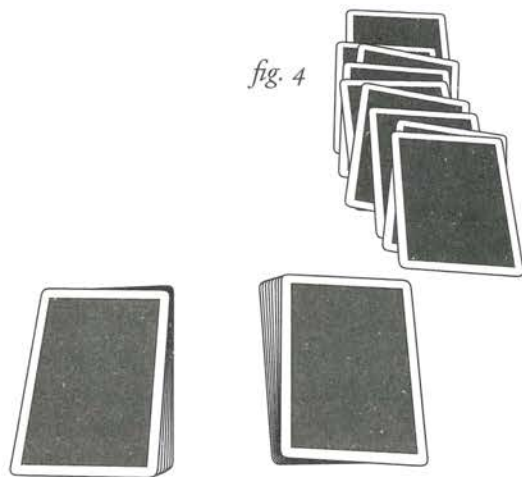


fig. 4

“Are you happy? Do you want to add one more card? Or even put one back? Whatever you like. Okay. I do not want to touch the cards, so please deal down to your number in both piles simultaneously, just like I did before.” The spectator has seen you do this twice, so he will just duplicate your earlier procedure. Stop him one card before the chosen number. *“There is no coincidence here, which is where we would be if you*

had put one card back. But you didn’t, so let’s see what happens at the number you chose.” And when the two cards are turned over, of course they match for the third and final time.

At the end, when you want to reassemble the stack, use an overhand shuffle to reverse the cards the spectator counted off the deck.

Remarks

Elmsley’s brilliant stack does all the work. In the last phase, pointing out the non-matching cards right before the mates are turned up and claiming that these would be the cards if he had chosen one card less, does sound convincing. It is not true, because the count would have started at a different position if one more card were on the original upper pile, but this is hard to see through.

Of course, every phase could be done as cleanly as the third phase, because the trick works automatically. But I use a presentational strategy that Darwin

Ortiz calls “Artificial Progression Through Conservation”.⁴ That means that I make the first two phases deliberately weaker, so the full strength of the method is held back for the final phase, when it is most appreciated by the audience, and other possible solutions have already been verbally cancelled out.

Set-Up from Tamariz Stack

The set-up for the trick is a bit of a drawback in the sense that it uses a full-deck stack that is only good for one routine. The good news is that one can get into the set-up from Tamariz Stack with a simple triple cut. Here is how:

The crimp is in the Five of Hearts. Cut the King of Diamonds to the face of the deck and hold the deck face up. Pick up a break between the Ace and Nine of Clubs. Execute a face-up triple cut onto the table by first cutting at the crimp (between the Five of Hearts and Nine of Spades) and placing this packet

on the table. Then cut at the break (see figure 5), and finally place the rest on top. That’s all. Turn the deck face down and you are ready.

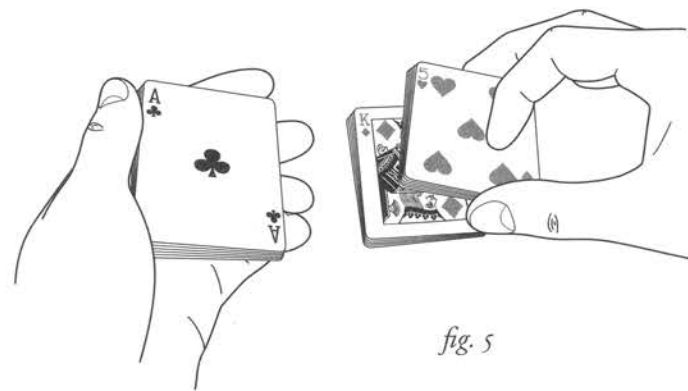


fig. 5

To get back to Tamariz stack, it is the same: Triple cut at the crimp and the King of Diamonds.

⁴ See “Artificial Progressions” in *Strong Magic* (Darwin Ortiz, 1994) on page 181.

It was Pit Hartling, who first suggested using the mate distribution in the Tamariz Stack to build the set-up and this is the fastest way we found. It doesn't get quicker than a simple triple cut. With this knowledge, a trick with a somewhat convoluted set-up becomes basically impromptu for users of the Tamariz Stack.

Extended Gambling Demonstration

This routine combines several impressive gambling skills, but is easy to follow for people who do not play cards. It works well as a closer of a card session. While it is not self-working, the prearrangement of the deck does the heavy-lifting.

Effect

The performer demonstrates how to riffle-cull a named four-of-a-kind. Those four cards are then stacked for a four-handed game of poker. Next a chosen Royal Flush is stacked into a chosen hand. This is followed by dealing the complete matching suit out in order. The other three hands are turned over and turn out to be the other suits in order, completing a new-deck-order layout.

Method

The starting point for this routine was an easy gambling routine that I published in my first book.⁵ I merged my sequence with Darwin Ortiz's modern classic "The Ultimate Card Shark",⁶ which in turn is based on Ed Marlo's

⁵ See "A Gambling Demonstration" in *Handcrafted Card Magic* (2007), page 62.

⁶ Darwin Ortiz's routine can be found in his book *Darwin Ortiz at the Card Table* (1988) on page 73.

“Power Poker” routines,⁷ and I added a prelude in the form of a riffle-shuffle culling demonstration by Roberto Giobbi.⁸ A fun little monster of a routine.

A stack is required. It consists of mostly all four-of-a-kinds in order, except for the picture cards, which lie in a different arrangement on top. All the quartets are in Spades-Hearts-Clubs-Diamonds order. This is the stack:

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

The bottom card, the Ace of Diamonds, has a corner crimp in a non-index corner.

Performance

First Phase – Riffle Culling Demonstration

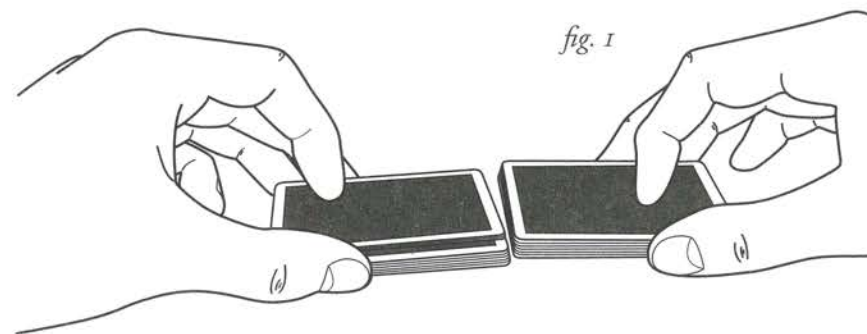
Ask a spectator for any number between one and ten. The picture cards and Aces do not work, so that request will effectively exclude those from being named. Let’s suppose five is named. Cut the deck, so that the Fives are above the center, approximately a third from the top of the deck, and set the deck down onto the table in riffle shuffle position. (Whenever you set the deck down, always do this with the crimp towards you, to hide it from the audience’s view.)

Explain that to control a given value, you do so during a riffle shuffle by riffle up for the initial cut, looking into the cards and cutting right at a card you wish. Do so and riffle up, wait for the Fives to come by and cut off the

⁷ Those can be found in *The Patented Shuffle* (Ed Marlo, 1964), starting on page 12 of the “Effects” section.

⁸ “Dad Stevens, King of the Card Cheats” in *Card College – Volume 3* (1998), page 657. See Roberto’s final notes for the suggestion of doing the effect with a named value.

top half with the upmost Five, the Five of Spades, on its face. Show this Five and set the upper half to the left. “Now if I simply let this Five fall first in the shuffle, I’ve controlled it to the bottom of the deck! Of course, the closer to center one finds his card, the better.” With these words, cut off a small packet from the bigger right pile, set it to the left and hold a break with the left thumb as in *figure 1*, apparently to even out the halves. In reality, this sets you up for a Zarrow Shuffle,⁹ which you now complete by shuffling the right packet into the break. (All you have done is cut the stack so that the Five of Spades is at its face.)



Pick up the deck and turn it over, to show that you shuffled one of the Fives to the face. Momentarily lift the Five off the deck or push it over to the right, so it can be seen that no other Five is below it. Then place the deck back on the table in face-down riffle shuffle position.

“Done this slowly it is a bit obvious, but let me show you how it can be done after some practice. Let’s try for another Five.” The following cut and shuffle sequence will transfer the top three Fives to the bottom. The deck remains in riffle shuffle position on the table. Riffle up with the thumbs and catch a left-thumb break under the top three Fives. The right hand cuts the bottom half to the top (see *figure 2*), maintaining only the previous break. Then the right hand cuts the cards below the break to the right once more, as in *figure*

⁹ This bold get-ready for the Zarrow Shuffle after an uneven cut comes from Juan Tamariz, see “A Shuffle Strategy by Juan Tamariz” in *Card College – Volume 3* (Roberto Giobbi, 1998), page 635.

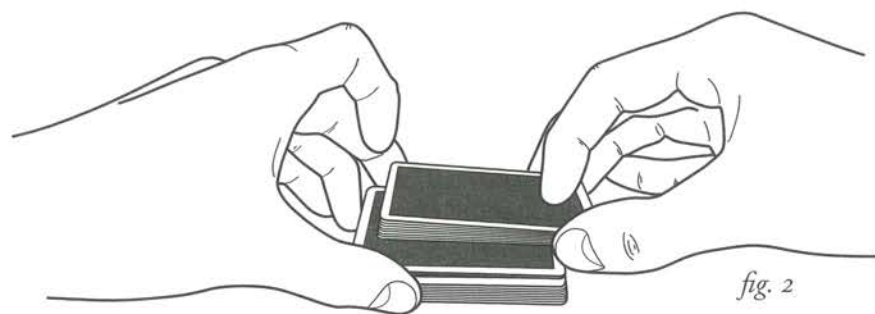


fig. 2

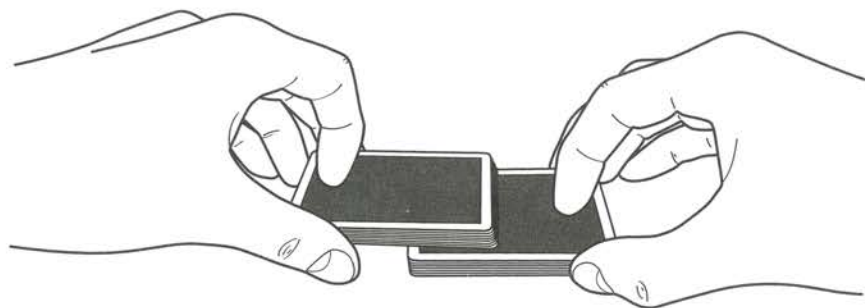


fig. 3

3. You now can give the deck any type of false shuffle that ends with the right-hand half on top of the left half.¹⁰ I do a strip-out shuffle.¹¹

Turn over the deck and deal the four Fives onto the table face up to complete the riffle culling demonstration.

Phase Two – Stacking the Deck

“Once you have gathered the cards you want, you have to make sure they fall into your hand in the deal. To accomplish this, they are arranged during some riffle

¹⁰ Martin Nash calls this type of transfer “Up-and-Down Shuffle”, see *Ever So Slightly* (Stephen Minch, 1975) on page 58.

¹¹ A good description, explaining Charlie Miller’s handling, can be found in *Expert Card Technique* (Jean Hugard & Fred Braue, 1940) on page 67. On my DVD set *Magic on Tap* (2018), I also give a detailed explanation of this false shuffle.

shuffles. Let me show you how that works.” Look at the position of the crimp and cut the balance of the deck so that the crimp is about a third from the top. Set the deck down in riffle shuffle position and place the four Fives face up on top. The Fives will be stacked for a four-handed game using Marlo’s Zarrow Stacking concept,¹² which retains the rest of the stack.

Start by cutting off the cards at the crimp to the right. Riffle shuffle the two portions together as you would to stack the Fives for a four-handed game; that is, you start off with the left hand, shuffle off both thumbs normally, holding back three cards with the left thumb, then riffle off all except three cards from the right hand, see *figure 4*. Drop the three cards on the left, then the three cards on the right.

If you would square the deck now, the bottom Five would be stacked. Instead you are going into Zarrow Stacking by using the thumb to pivot the

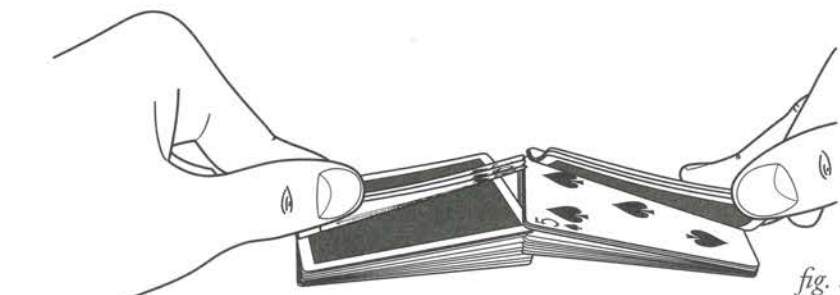


fig. 4

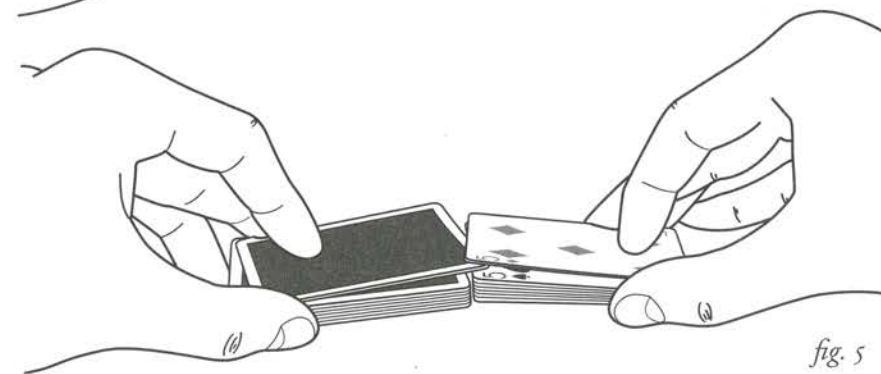


fig. 5

¹² That can be found in “Power Poker”, referenced above.

left three-cards packet slightly forward, around the left second finger, which moves the inner right corner to the right and more into the right packet. Simultaneously, all the interlaced cards underneath are unwoven, as in a normal Zarrow Shuffle (*figure 5*). Slide those unwoven cards beneath the three left-hand cards as a block, while the upper three Fives move to the top. This action is exposed in *figure 6*. When the deck is squared, you have moved only the three cards below the crimp above the lowermost Five.

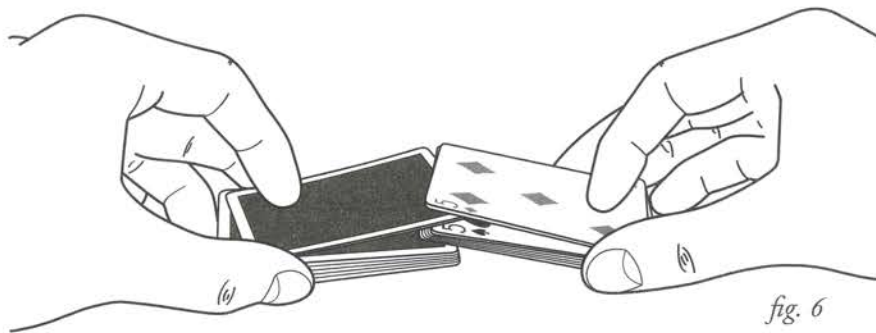


fig. 6

Spread the deck on the table as in *figure 7*, showing the three cards you have just shuffled into the Fives, and explain the stacking concept. Visualizing the riffle stacking process in this way is an idea I have seen José Carroll use, and it makes the process more interesting for the audience.¹³

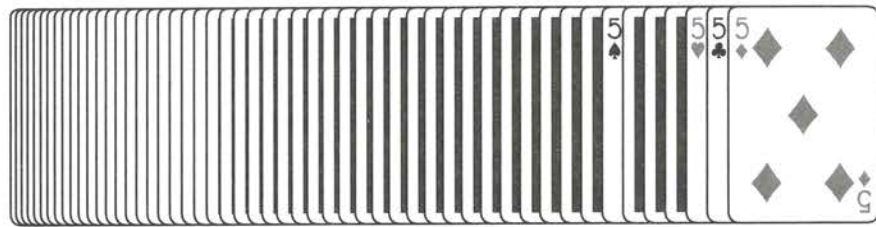


fig. 7

¹³ It is kind of the riffle shuffle equivalent to Jack Merlin's idea of reciting the stacking formula during an overhand shuffle stack as part of the presentation. Merlin published this strategy in *Merlin at the Card Table* (1927), page 3. It was popularized through the "Vernon Poker Demonstration", which can for example be found in *The Dai Vernon Book of Magic* (Lewis Ganson, 1957) on page 223.

Repeat the stacking procedure two more times, stacking the next two Fives, with one difference: On the right-hand side, you are holding back first two Fives, then one Five, instead of three as in the first shuffle. In the fourth and final shuffle, you once more cut at the crimp and, with a Zarrow Shuffle, transfer the right-hand portion under the top three cards of the left packet.

You are done. Deal out a four-handed game of four cards each, and the Fives will be dealt face up into your hand. The other three hands happen to be Jacks, Queens and Kings, but I do not show them. (You can, if you like, turn those hands over and show the fours-of-a-kind, but I do not yet want to tip off the fact that there is more to come.)

Now you have to assemble the deck for the finale. First cut the crimp back to the bottom and set the deck into dealing position. Then collect the three face-down hands from right to left while you pick up a break above the bottom four cards of the deck – the Aces – by buckling them.¹⁴ *Figure 8* shows

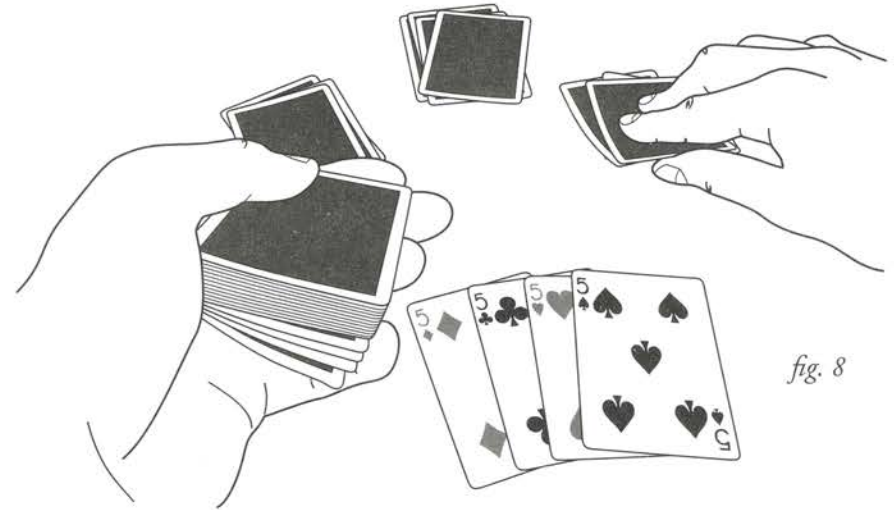


fig. 8

¹⁴ For a proper buckling technique, see, for example, *Card College – Volume 1* (Roberto Giobbi, 1995) on page 212. Personally, I use the left second finger (instead of the more common first finger) to exercise the diagonal pressure.

this moment. Place the assembled twelve cards on top and immediately cut the four Aces to the top, above them.

Turn the deck face up. The Two of Diamonds will be at the face of the deck. You need to pick up a break between the Fours and Sixes to replace the Fives. I do this by quickly spreading the cards between my hands with the faces towards me. I immediately close the spread again once I've got to the right position, picking up a break with the left base of the thumb between

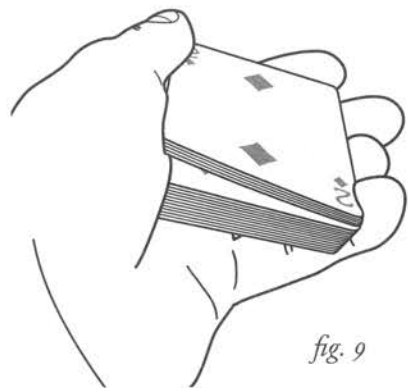


fig. 9

the Six of Diamonds and the Four of Spades, as in figure 9. To cover this action, I explain "While this system works, it takes a while. First you have to go through the deck and locate the cards you want (now you should have your break) and then you have to shuffle them into position for the deal. But I've found a shortcut! I shuffle them into the position for the deal immediately, without first gathering them on the top! Let me show you." Once you have the break, riffle your left thumb down the

face-up deck. You will find that you automatically stop at the break. There, you insert the face-up Fives in their original order (Spades, Hearts, Clubs, Diamonds from back to face) into their original position.¹⁵

The whole deck should now be arranged in fours-of-a-kind, Aces on the back, Twos on the face and all in the same suit order.

Phase Three - Bridge Deal in Three Stages

The deck will be dealt into four perfect bridge hands, but it is sold as three separate effects. Begin by announcing that you will deal any Royal Flush into

¹⁵ This is Rafael Benatar's technique of "Inserting a Card into a Break", see *Card College - Volume 3* (Roberto Giobbi, 1998), page 533.

any hand in a four-handed game. Once a suit and a hand have been chosen, calculate whether you need to transfer three, two, one or no cards from top to bottom or vice versa to make this happen. Since you know that naturally Spades falls into the first hand, Hearts into the second and so on, this is an easy task. Do any transfer cut to get set.

To give the impression that the deck is being stacked for the chosen hand, give the deck a false shuffle. I always use a push-through riffle shuffle sequence. Deal out four hands with the cards in the chosen hand face up - the Royal Flush of the chosen suit is indeed there!

"While this is great for poker, let's say we are playing bridge. You get thirteen cards in that game, so let's see if I can get some more cards of your suit shuffled into place." Give the remaining cards another quick false shuffle and continue the deal, again turning the cards in the chosen hand face up. The full suit will appear in sequential order, creating the layout seen in figure 10.

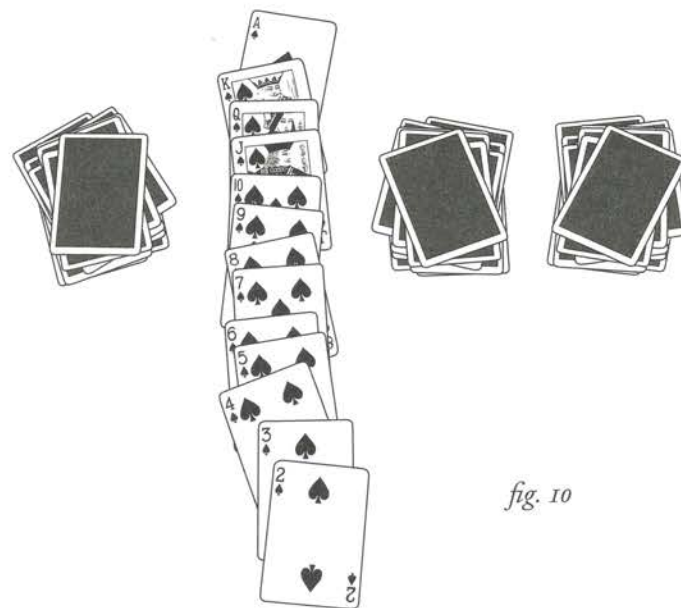


fig. 10

As a finale, show that the other three hands have a full suit in order as well. If you had to transfer cards, to get the Royal Flush into the right position, you will have to undo this correction as the cards are shown. If the top card of one hand had to be transferred to the bottom, I simply use it to scoop up

the pile. If the bottom card should be at the top, you can either leave it on the table apparently by accident, and then replace it on top, or pick up the whole packet and deal the cards out face up, beginning with a stud bottom deal.

Remarks

The routine is quite strong, especially if you switch in the stack for a previously shuffled deck. To further disguise the use of a stack, you can use any of the “Finding the Way Home” applications that I detailed in my two earlier books. For example “The Tantalizer”¹⁶ is a good choice to do directly before this gambling demonstration.

While the routine is not easy, the advanced sleights are mostly tabled riffle-shuffle techniques. I use Zarrow, strip-out and push-through shuffles in this routine, mostly for my own amusement, but you can replace any of these sleights except the Zarrow Stacking.

¹⁶ See “The Tantalizer’ to Stack” in *Handcrafted Card Magic* (Denis Behr, 2007), page 43.

Mating Season

Matching routines have become a classic plot in card magic. In those effects, the mates of several cards are found, and in the end all cards come out in mated pairs. This plot was pioneered by Ed Marlo, who published his influential “A Matching Routine” back in 1964.¹⁷

Effect

A round of poker hands is dealt. Any card in one of those hands is selected by a spectator and placed aside. The performer deals out another round and manages to deal the mate of the selection into exactly the same hand in the same position. This effect is repeated with a full hand, dealing the mates of all five cards into the same hand.

The mates of selections that are freely cut to are located by the performer with lightning speed. Finally the whole deck, which was seen shuffled a moment ago, is dealt out in mated pairs.

Method

Not surprisingly, the routine is based on a stacked deck. The top twenty-six cards are in a random order, and must not contain any mates. The bottom

¹⁷ See Ed Marlo’s *Faro Controlled Miracles* (1964), page 31. Marlo’s routine contained six phases with additional phases in the notes at the end. Other routines of this kind, that are worth looking up, are Martin Nash’s handling “A Matching Routine” (*Ovation*, Stephen Minch, 1980, page 9), “Finally Matched” by Allan Ackerman (*Classic Handlings*, 1999, page 29) and Pit Hartling’s “Cupit” (*The Little Green Lecture*, 1998, page 30).

twenty-six cards are the mates of the top half and set in exactly the same order. Thus the order looks like this:

A, B, C ... Z, a, b, c ... z

It is like a mirror stack in which one half was reversed. I usually call this arrangement Power Stack. This order can be given straight cuts as often as you like. You can get into this arrangement easily from Tamariz Stack, and I give some details about this at the end.

Si Stebbins, Eight Kings and similar cyclical stacks already *are* a Power Stack. So if you have one of those at hand, you are automatically set for this routine.

Performance

Phase One – Poker-Hand Duplication

This phase is based on an idea by my friend Pit Hartling, which I changed only a bit to fit into this routine. Pit was in turn inspired by Al Koran's effect "Double Deal".¹⁸ But it turns out that Ed Marlo also has work along this line.¹⁹

False shuffle the deck and give it straight cuts. Finally have a spectator give the deck a final cut. Deal out five face-down poker hands. A spectator chooses any card in one of the hands. Turn this card over – let's say it is the Ten of Hearts – and repeat its position, so that everybody remembers where the card came from; for example, the fourth card in the second hand (from the left, when spread out), as in *figure 1*. Remove the card and place it face up to one side.

¹⁸ "Double Deal" in *Al Koran's Professional Presentations* (Hugh Miller, 1967), page 119. Koran's method uses a gaffed deck, as actual duplicates instead of mates are used.

¹⁹ See "The Matching Miracle" and especially the section "For Stay-Stackers..." in *The New Tops* (July 1966), page 20. You can also find the article in *M.I.N.T. – Volume 1* (1988), page 246.

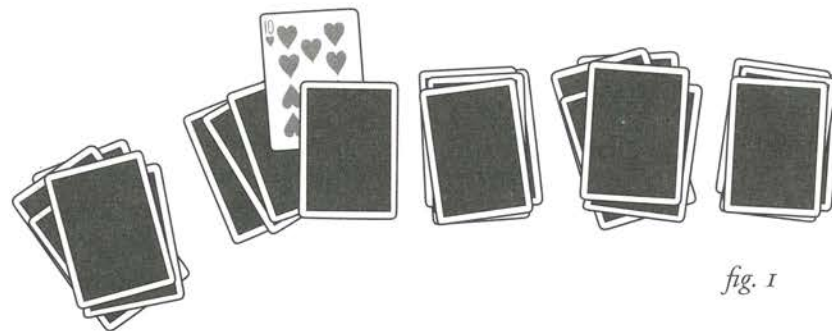


fig. 1

"I will now try to shuffle the mate of your card, the card of the same value and color, the Ten of Diamonds, to such a place that, if we deal out the cards again, it will fall in exactly the same position. The fourth card in the second hand!"

Collect the remaining cards from right to left. Pick up the remainder of the deck, transfer it to the left hand and pick up a break below the top card.²⁰ Place the twenty-four dealt cards, which you have just collected, on top of the cards in your left hand, retaining the break. Cut at the break. The top twenty-six cards are now mates of the twenty-six cards used in the previous deal. Thus the Ten of Diamonds will be where the Ten of Hearts was previously. (As a matter of fact, the mate of every card from the first deal will be at the same position in the second deal.)

Now claim to control the mate to the wanted position by some false cut. Again deal out five poker hands. Locate the chosen position, in this case the fourth card in the second hand, and turn the card over to display that it is indeed the mate of the red Ten, as in *figure 2*. Place both red Tens together off to the side. Collect the poker hands again from right to left and place those cards on top of the remaining cards. This gets you back into Power Stack arrangement with fifty cards, minus the red Tens.

²⁰ My preferred way to establish a break underneath one card is Harvey Rosenthal's "The Pop-Up Move" from *Packet Switches – Part Three* (Karl Fulves, 1977) on page 184. This sleight was reinvented by Daryl Martinez and explanations can also be found on page 92 of *Secrets of a Puerto Rican Gambler* (Stephen Minch, 1980) and page 19 of *Daryl's Ambitious Card Omnibus* (Stephen Minch, 1985/87).

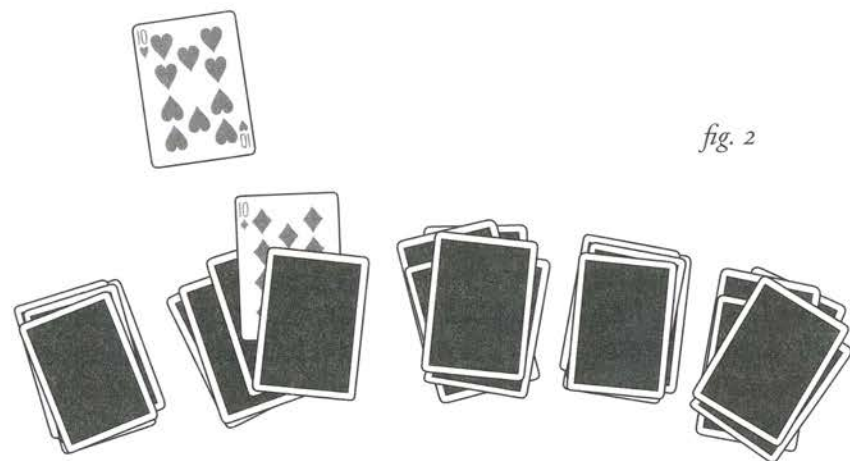


fig. 2

You will now repeat this demonstration of fabulous card control, but with a full poker hand instead of a single card. Again a spectator can cut and complete the cut anywhere he wants, and again you deal out five poker hands, but this time you turn up every card as it is dealt. There are now five face-up poker hands on the table and the spectator can choose any hand he likes. Let's say he decides upon the third hand. Collect the four remaining hands again from right to left, but this time face up. Turn this pile face down and place these twenty cards underneath the remainder of the deck. The chosen hand is put face up off to the side. Re-arrange the cards in this hand in ascending order, with pairs together, if there are any.

Because of the stack, everything is set to deal out the cards again, with the mates in the third hand. Before doing so, however, give the deck a false shuffle or cut²¹ to apparently stack the cards at the right positions, otherwise it would suggest a stack a bit too blatantly. Then deal out five more poker hands, face down, apparently for suspense. Pick up the chosen hand, the third in this case, and turn it face up. Place the cards down one by one and openly arrange the just dealt hand into the same order as the one on the

²¹ I always do the "Chaotic Chaos Cut" at this point, which I published in *Handcrafted Card Magic - Volume 2* (2011), page 30. It is handled as in the pseudo-stacking version described in the final remarks of its explanation.

table to show that you succeeded, see figure 3. The cards naturally come out in the same order, but the rearrangement is done to further disguise the existence of a stack.

Collect the remaining four face-down poker hands from right to left as before. Also pick up the two red Tens from the first phase and place these either above or below the four poker hands. The remainder of the deck is added to the

packet, so that the Tens are sandwiched between the two halves. The two face-up poker hands still on the table and in the same order, are both put on top of the deck. Immediately use an overhand shuffle to run off five single cards and drop the rest on top, thus reversing one of the poker hands to the bottom. If you now examine the deck, it will be in Stay Stack arrangement, which means the mates are in mirror order throughout the deck:

A, B, C ... Z, z ... c, b, a

A Stay Stack can be faro shuffled as often as you like. You can leave blocks on the top and bottom in those faro shuffles, as long as you cut dead center and the cards that do weave alternate perfectly.

Phase Two - Speed Mating

With lightning speed, you will now find the mates of cards to which spectators freely cut. This is a handling of a phase of Marlo's original routine, cited above. Doing it quickly from a face-up spread is a Harry Riser idea, as Michael Close confirmed for me. I've made it even faster, and the speed is what makes this phase strong.

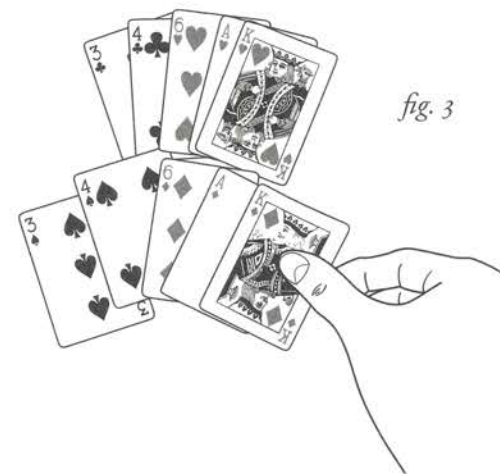


fig. 3

A spectator is asked to cut off a small pile – less than half the deck – and set it down on the table. Point out that the card the spectator cut to, which is the bottom card of his cut-off pile, cannot be known by anyone, even if the cards were marked, since the other cards are covering it.

Spread the rest of the deck face up on the table from left to right. Note the top card of the deck at the left side of the spread. Look for the mate of this card and push out the card to the right of the mate, as shown in *figure 4*. When the spectator turns over his packet, it is seen that you have indeed found the mate of his selection. Place both mates face up to the side. The rest of the spectator's packet is put back on top, completing a fifty-card Stay Stack.

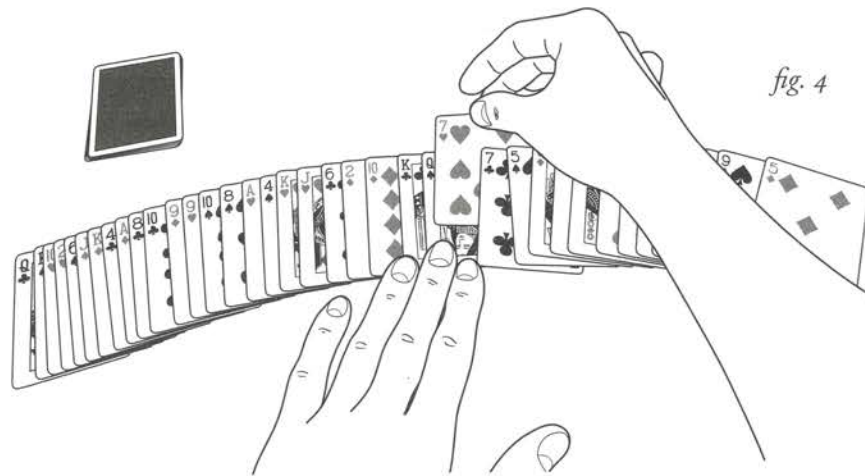


fig. 4

Repeat the effect two times, until three pairs are face up on the table. You can throw in a faro shuffle if you like.

As the speed really sells this location, you can improve it as follows. First, you know approximately where the mate will be, as the thickness of the spectator's packet gives you a clue as to where you should look in the spread. Additionally I like to glimpse the top card even before spreading the cards. To do this, you pick up a break below the top card after the spectator cut off

his pile. Turn over the deck, transforming the break into a step via the book break technique, and glimpse the top card under cover of the right hand, as in *figure 5*. Square everything up and set the deck down face up. You are now way ahead and can look right where you expect the mate to be as soon as the deck is spread. This way, you basically spread the cards and almost simultaneously remove the mate, making the effect both puzzling and impressive.

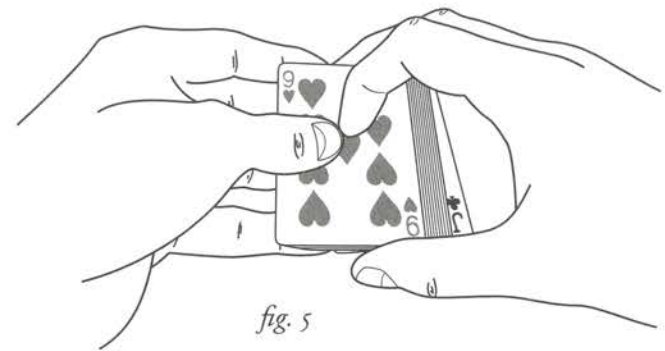


fig. 5

Phase Three – All at Once

Now all cards will be matched while you do absolutely nothing. Or so it seems. This phase was inspired by an unpublished idea of Pit Hartling from 1998. You have three pairs of mates on the table. The rest of the deck is in mirror stack.

Begin a face-up overhand shuffle by running off about ten to twelve cards. The exact amount does not matter. Just remember the last card you shuffled off; for example, a black Ten. Throw the rest of the deck on top, slightly stepped. Faro



fig. 6

shuffle those cards that you have just shuffled off, doing a partial in-faro into the rest of the deck from the back. This will place those cards next to their mates. Do not square up the cards. Hold them face up and push the small packet diagonally into the remainder (see *figure 6*), and then pull them over with the right fourth finger. This pulling-action with the fourth finger is shown in *figure 7* from below. The shuffled-in packet ends up in a position side-jogged to the right, as in *figure 8*.

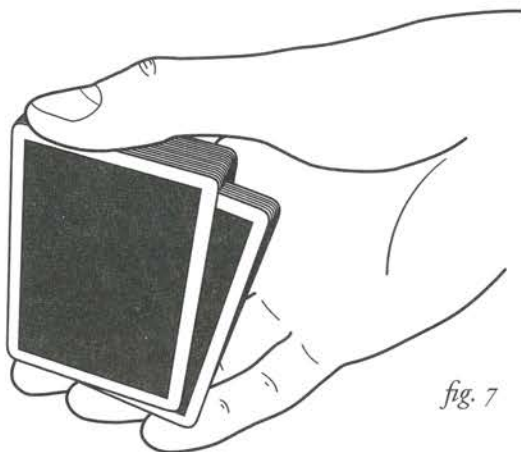


fig. 7

Now spread the deck face up on the table. The side-jogged packet will be hidden in the spread thanks to the ribbon-spread hide-out principle. The leftmost ten to twelve cards are already mated, but this is not yet seen. The rest of the deck is in Stay Stack. This arrangement is now obscured as follows.

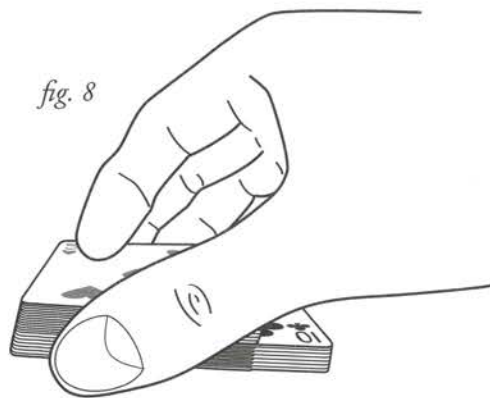


fig. 8

“Some people say that perhaps all the cards are already next to their mates or in some special configuration. But that’s not true, look at this card for example. Its mate is right here, not next to the card itself. It is rather close though, but the mate of this card is way down here.” While saying this, pull out the third card to the right of the center of the mirror stack and slide it slightly to the left, as in *figure 9*, covering the matched middle pair of the mirror stack. Then pull out the mate in the same way. Repeat this for a pair

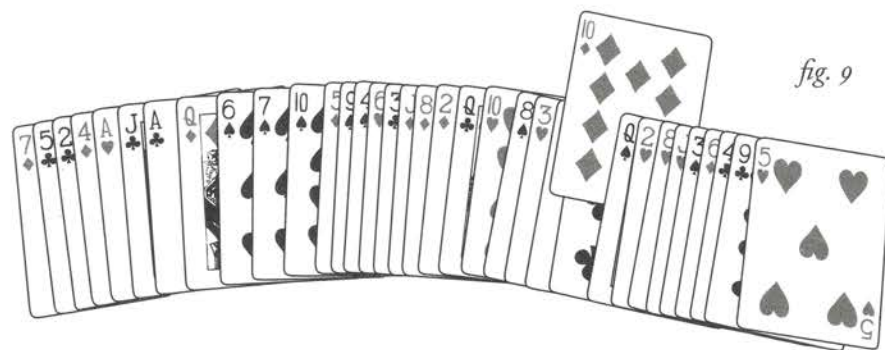


fig. 9

from the mirror stack that is positioned a bit nearer the ends. As you can see in *figure 10*, the arrangement of the deck is effectively hidden, and the spectators can look closely at the spread without seeing a pattern.

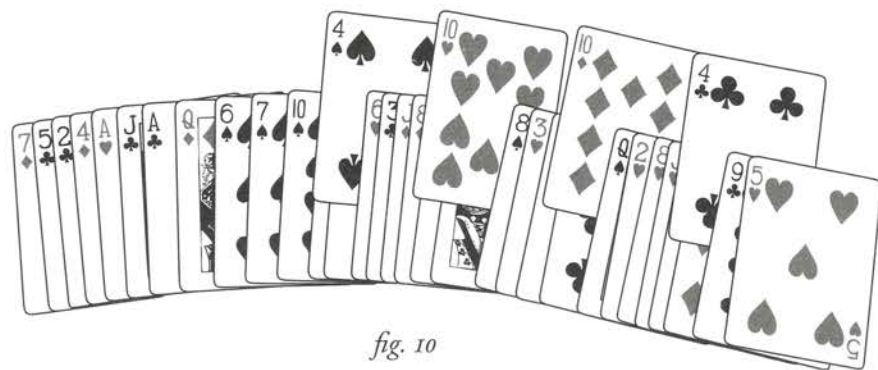


fig. 10

Rattle off the top cards of the deck, the ones that are already secretly paired. *“And here at the top, for example, we have a Five, a Four, a Jack, a Ten, and so on. No mates in sight. But watch!”*

Carefully and slowly push the spread together and square the deck. Move in slow-motion, to make it obvious that not a single false move is made. Take up the deck in left-hand dealing position and perform your favorite magic gesture. Slowly turn over the top card and put it on the table, followed by the second card. A pair of mates has appeared at the top! Repeat the same

with the next pair. And the next pair. This will be a complete surprise, and you will get a reaction after the first pair already. Speed up the dealing and watch for the black Tens you memorized during the overhand shuffle at the beginning of this phase. As soon as you have dealt those Tens, you are left with a mirror stack. Now deal alternating bottoms and tops, executing a bottom deal for every other card. At the finale, all the cards are in matched pairs on the table. *Figure 11* shows the final picture.

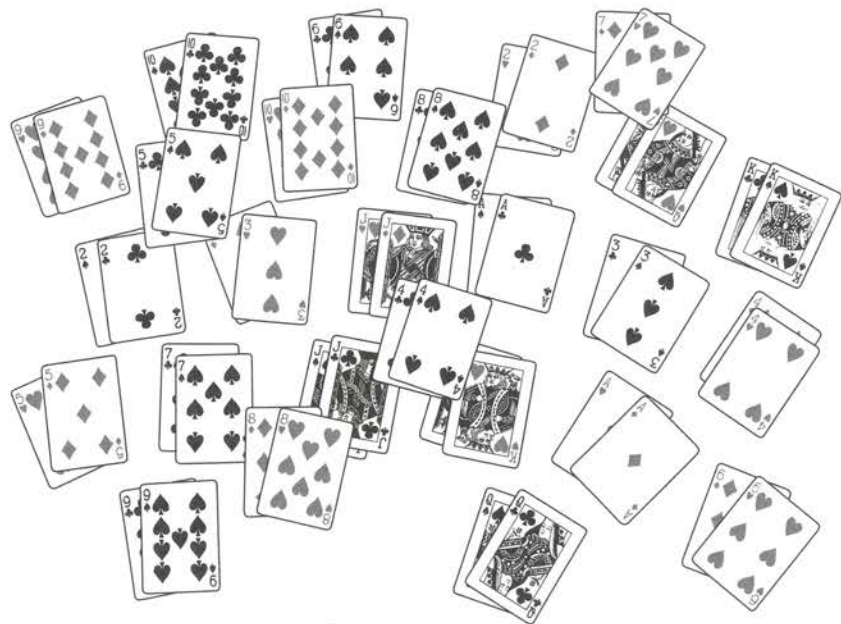


fig. 11

Remarks

Between Phases Two and Three, I sometimes used to perform another phase by Harry Riser.²² In that sequence, a spectator chooses two or three cards in one half of the deck. Those selections end up next to their mates, after the

²² This sequence can be found in "The Riser Repertoire" in *M-U-M*, Vol. 90 No. 1 (June 2000) on page 15.

halves have been faro-shuffled into each other. If you are interested in this, you can look it up in the given reference.

While you have to deal a lot of bottoms, they are covered better than you may think. When you speed up the dealing, the spectators will start to react and applaud.

They believe that the whole deck is paired after seeing the first cleanly dealt pairs. Additionally, the pairs on the table draw more attention than the actual dealing action, further covering the false deals. It is best to use a stud bottom deal,²³ if you have this in your arsenal; see *figure 12*.

If a draw deal is used, a strike technique is a good choice, as it can more easily be done with the necessary speed.²⁴

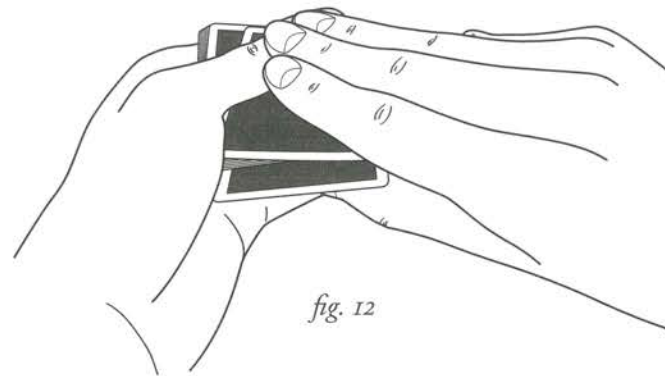


fig. 12

Getting into Power Stack from Tamariz Stack

As the Tamariz Stack can be reached by shuffling from a version of new deck order that is in mirror stack, you can get easily in both mirror stack and Power Stack. The natural way would be to cut the Ace of Clubs to the bot-

²³ Larry Jennings' technique works well and is explained in *Epilogue*, Special No. 3, Part 1 (Karl Fulves, c. 1975), page 259. Another good description of it can be found in *Scams & Fantasies with Cards* (Darwin Ortiz, 2002) on page 62.

²⁴ An excellent strike technique can be found in detail in *Gene Maze and the Art of Bottom Dealing* (Stephen Hobbs, 1994) in the first chapter.

tom, outjog every other card – starting with the top card of the face-down deck – up to the King of Diamonds, strip out those eighteen cards and place them on top. You are now in Power Stack and ready for “Mating Season”.

I found another way to get into position, which avoids the long in-the-hands anti-faro.²⁵ Cut the Nine of Clubs to the face of the deck and take the deck into face-up dealing position. Pick up breaks above the two red Kings and do a triple-cut onto the table at the two breaks. This brings the King of Diamonds to the face.

Still face up, start an anti-faro by outjogging the second card (Five of Diamonds), as in *figure 13*. Outjog a total of eight cards, the last one being the Queen of Hearts.²⁶

The right hand pivots those cards out. These cards are now in-faroed into the deck from the other side, as in *figure 14*. Voilà, you are in Power Stack. This might seem complicated, but if you run through this with cards in your hands, you will find it quite swift and convenient.

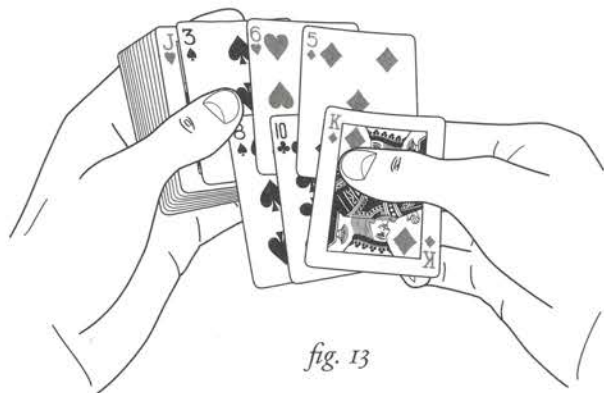


fig. 13

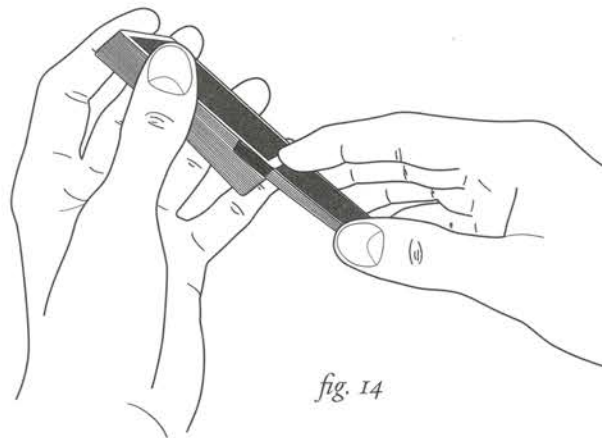


fig. 14

²⁵ Juan Tamariz gives a way to justify the procedure with a location effect. It replaces the outjogging of every other card with a dealing action into two piles. See *Mnemonica* (2004), page 19, “From Mnemonica to Stay-Stack”.

²⁶ Alternatively, you might want to cull every second card to replace the partial anti-faro.

The Dark Force

Sometimes one needs an exceptionally clean and powerful force, in which the freedom of the choice is not questioned and can actually be stressed. Here is an example of such a procedure, which I’ll describe as a utility force.

Effect

The spectator takes the deck underneath the table or behind his back, so that no one, not even he, can see the face of any card. Then he cuts or shuffles the deck, pulls out any card from the center, reverses the card, and pushes it back in, anywhere he likes. He finally puts the deck into its case and keeps it until it is time to reveal the selection. The performer uncases the deck and spreads it with complete fairness. One card is found reversed. It is forced.

Method

The selection procedure of reversing a card underneath the table has quite a history and has been used throughout the literature, albeit usually in a much more restricted form.²⁷ Derren Brown used a selection method of this type in the second episode of the second season of *Trick of the Mind*, which aired in April 2005. It created interest among some magicians. One solution I have seen a few times, that was perhaps inspired by this, uses a deck in which every card is roughed on the back (or face).²⁸ Thus when a card is reversed,

²⁷ For example, the plot “The Magic Thrust” involves a card that is pushed reversed next to a selection underneath the table by the spectator. Many methods can be found in print.

²⁸ The earliest publication I’ve located can be found in Daniel Madison’s e-book *Irreversible* (2007). “Irreversible” was later included in the e-book *Identity* (2008).

it is not visible when the deck is spread face up, as it clings to the card above it. A previously reversed regular card can be forced with this method. While this works, in the odd case that the spectator reverses the actual force card, or inserts his card next to it, you are in trouble. The following method is always successful, no matter what the spectator does.

You will need a full deck of double facers with the same value and suit on both sides, called an SBS deck ("Same Both Sides").²⁹ This deck can be used with any back design, as long as the faces match. Remove the force card from this deck and replace it with the corresponding card from a regular deck. This force card is edge-marked on the ends. The mark is placed at an off-center position, as in *figure 1*. The off-center mark will allow you to identify where the card is in the deck, and which side is up, by looking only at the edge. Place the card face down on top of the deck and you are set.

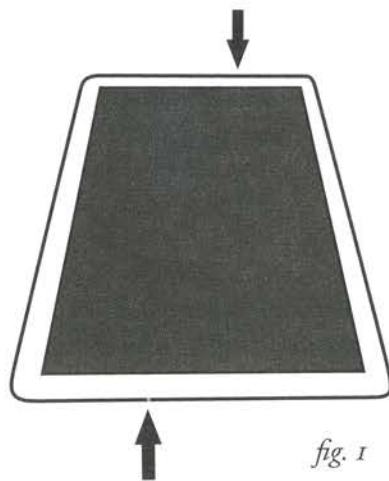


fig. 1

Performance

Remove the deck from its case. You can hold the deck face down, spread it face up onto the table, and also give it a face-up overhand shuffle. During this shuffle, retain the force card at the back of the deck with the slip shuffle, keeping it in place with pressure of the left fingers.

²⁹ They are sometimes called "Mirror Deck". There is a booklet available with applications for cards like this by a variety of people, called *S.B.S. - Same Both Sides* (Lloyd E. Jones, 1973). I found a somewhat related idea in it by Dr. E. T. Prendergast, called "Mental Miracle", on page 15. It forces two cards, but no other faces can be shown, as the fifty remaining cards are double backers. But showing that all the cards are different is not a bad option to have, when trying to accomplish a force under test conditions.

Hand the deck to a spectator and ask him to hold it below the table. (If no table is available or you are in a stand-up situation, ask the spectator to stand on the side, so that no one can see behind him, and hold the deck behind his back.) The spectator is asked to cut and shuffle deck.

"Please reach anywhere into the deck and pull out any card. Nobody knows this card, as no one can see it! Reverse this card and insert it back anywhere you like. Make sure that you really have a free choice. You need not take the bottom or top card, any card is fine." Now give the empty card case to another spectator and ask him to examine it, after which he hands it to the first spectator under the table (or behind the back). Ask that person to place the deck into the case and close it. No face has been seen by anyone, so the conditions are quite fair.

You can ask the spectator to pocket the cased deck at this point. The casing of the deck is best justified, if there is some delay between the selection procedure and the actual revelation of the card. When the time has come, retrieve the deck with over-the-top fairness and empty hands.

Open the case, as in *figure 2*, and look at the upper edges of the cards. The edge mark will tell you which way you have to remove the double-faced deck, so that the normal card will be face

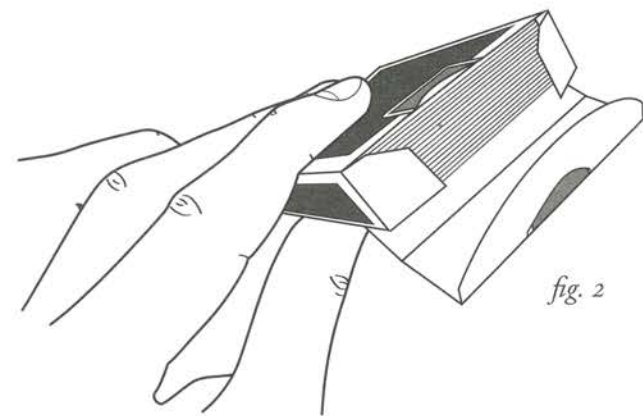


fig. 2

down. Turn the case so that the necessary side is up, slowly slide out the deck and set it onto the table. Spread the cards, still stressing the fairness of the procedure. One card will be face down (see *figure 3*). It is the force card.

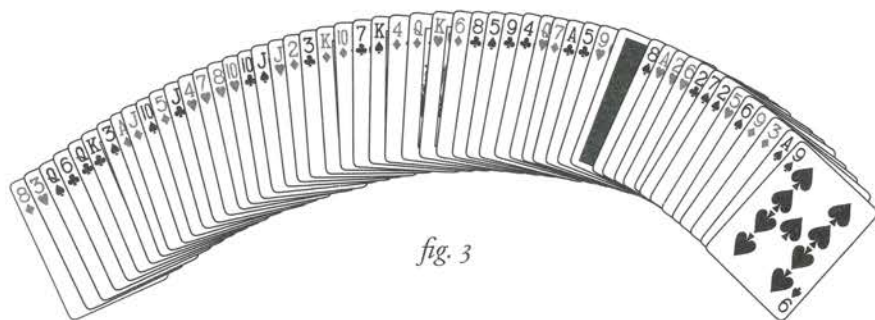


fig. 3

After the appropriate revelation, the force card can be used to scoop up the fifty-one double facers. This allows you to flash the back one more time when replacing the deck in its case.

Remark

You can force any card you want, of course. If you plan to vary the force card, it is a good idea to have two decks prepared for this force. One is a normal deck with all cards edge-marked at the same position as described above. The other deck is the double-faced SBS deck. To force a given card, replace the double-facer with this value with the card from the edge-marked deck and you are good to go.

On the Bottom Deal

Bottom Dealing, like virtually all false dealing techniques, is not an easy sleight to master. A technique that does a reliable job, even with old worn cards and dry hands, is Ed Marlo's "Block Control Bottom Deal".³⁰ Marlo rightly notes in his description of the deal: "*Even dry hands will find this method encouraging.*"

The following is a slightly modified handling of Marlo's technique, as well as two different methods to get into the necessary grip.

The Deal

As with most false dealing techniques, the position of the deck in the left hand is crucial. Start with the deck in regular dealing position, with the upper right corner between the first and second fingers. The bottom few cards are shifted as a block. These cards pivot on the inner left corner, which rests at the base of the thumb, in such a way that the upper right corner rests between the second and third fingers, as in *figure 1* – basically one finger further down than the balance of the deck. This configuration

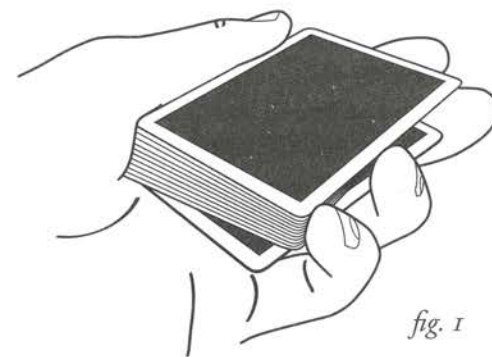


fig. 1

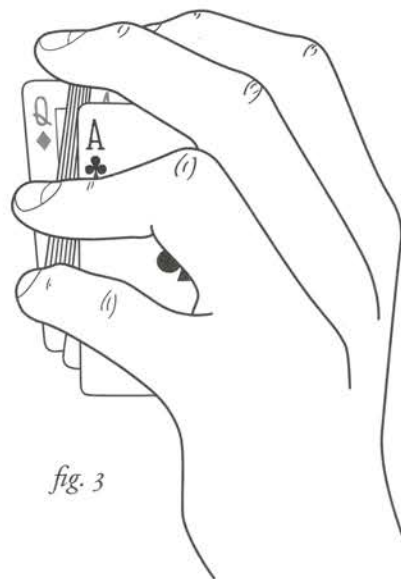
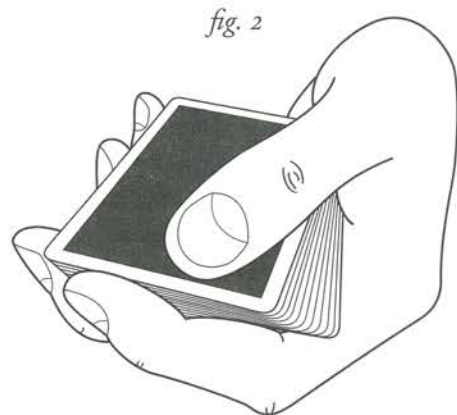
³⁰ See Ed Marlo's *Riffle Shuffle Finale* (1967), page 14 of the chapter "Riffle Finale".

is hidden from the front and both sides by the fingers of the left hand and by beveling the deck to the right over the offset block, as shown in *figure 2*.

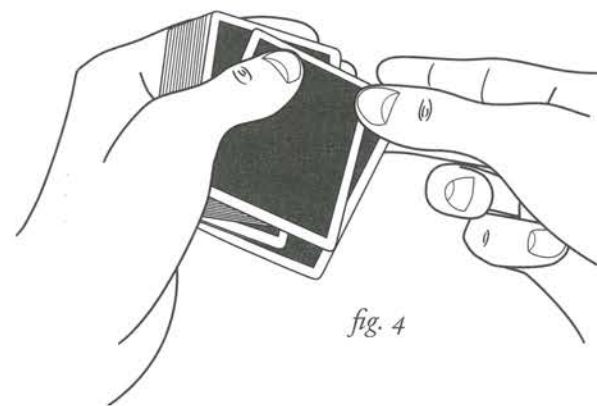
(Marlo uses a slightly different position of the deck and fingers, but I prefer the grip as described above. The basic idea of an offset block at the bottom can already be found as a note in *The Expert at the Card Table*.³¹)

Dealing the bottom card from this position is relatively easy. The left thumb pushes over the top card, as in a fair deal. When you want to deal out the bottom card, the right second finger contacts the bottom card, between the left second and third fingers, and pulls it out. The left thumb pulls back the top card square onto the deck as the bottom card is dealt.

You can further assist the removal by loosening the bottom card before its deal. This is achieved by moving the left third and fourth fingers inward slightly as a unit. This buckles the bottom card a bit and slides it over to the right; see *figure 3* for a view from the bottom. It then slides out



³¹ "Bottom Dealing" in *The Expert at the Card Table* (S. W. Erdnase, 1902), right at the end of the description of the deal on the bottom of page 55. While Erdnase notes that this dealing preparation is not "desirable, or necessary to a good performer", it does help with cards in worn condition.



easily (*figure 4*). To retain control over the rest of the deck, the left first and second fingers keep a diagonal pressure against the left base of the thumb throughout the deal, locking the deck in place. The fact that the bottom cards are

already free of the second finger, because of their shifted position, makes the control of the rest of the deck easier than is the case with bottom deals from a squared deck.

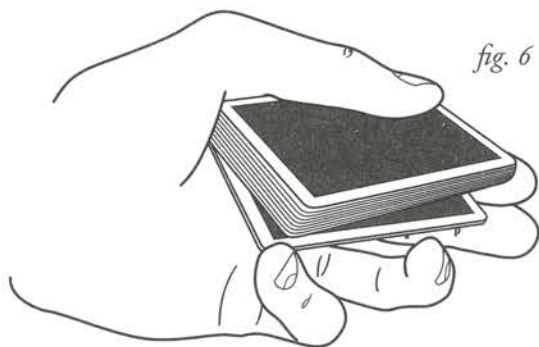
Getting into Position

One way to get into position for this bottom deal is to start with the deck in right hand end grip. The right hand transfers the deck into left hand dealing position. As this is done, the left second finger hits the bottom cards at their outer right corner and holds back a small block (at least the number of cards you plan to deal from the bottom). *Figure 5* shows an exposed view of this. The cards above end up in normal dealing position.



Here is another handling to get into posi-

tion. It is the one I prefer. It uses only the left hand and is based on a one-handed bottom palm technique by Paul Curry.³² In Curry's sleight, the left first finger also locks the deck into place by exercising diagonal pressure from the outer right corner towards the base of the thumb, as described above. Then the left fourth finger moves to the inner right corner of the bottom cards, that are about to be palmed. It pivots them clockwise on the inner left corner into palm position, under cover of the deck. It is not an easy sleight. But only the beginning action is required to get into position for the bottom



deal. The left fourth finger breaks off the bottom few cards and pivots them only as far as needed for the outer right corner to clear the left second finger, thus getting the bottom block into position for the deal. See *figure 6* for this action. A break is not necessary. Simply grab at least as many cards as required.

With this handling, the deck can carelessly be dropped into the left hand and you can get into position for the Block Control Bottom Deal one-handed. A gesture or a comment is all that is needed. You thereby avoid a careful placement of the deck into the left hand, which otherwise might be a tell that something is about to happen.

³² See Paul Curry's *Something Borrowed, Something New* (1941), page 24.

Mr. Luckiest

Darwin Ortiz's *Cardshark* is one of my favorite books on card magic. It is full of strong, original and well thought-out routines. It contains the gambling demonstration "Mr. Lucky",³³ which inspired this extended routine. For informal, impromptu situations, this routine turns out to be one of the strongest things I do for an audience interested in gambling.

Effect

A spectator shuffles the deck. Then the performer deals out a hand of poker for as many players as the spectators wish. The player who is the designated winner receives the four Aces. Again a spectator shuffles and this time deals the cards himself. Nevertheless, the performer gets a Royal Flush!

Method

The basic method is straightforward: First the Aces are dealt into the chosen hand with bottom deals, and in the second phase the performer's hand is switched for a palmed Royal Flush. Below are the details.

This routine makes use of palming and holding out cards. For those that are not comfortable with this strategy, I give some pointers on how to manage these moments at the end of the routine.

³³ See page 167 of *Cardshark* (Darwin Ortiz, 1995).

Performance

The Aces start on the bottom of the deck. Palm the Aces into the left hand. I use either the classic Erdnase Bottom Palm³⁴ or the one-handed handling by Paul Curry.³⁵ When I plan the effect ahead, I often palm out the Aces during a previous trick and keep them under the table until I am ready for this routine.³⁶ This allows you to hand out the deck for shuffling, leaving your hands empty.

First Phase

Give the deck minus the Aces to a spectator, requesting that he shuffles the cards thoroughly. While he does this, introduce the gambling theme. As soon as you get the cards back, place the palmed Aces back on the bottom. (If you had them in your lap, you'll have to get them into palm position while the spectator is shuffling, or add them at the table edge, if the spectators' viewing angles allow for such a maneuver.) To cover the addition, ask, "How many players should we have in our game of poker? Just two, or four, five or even more?"

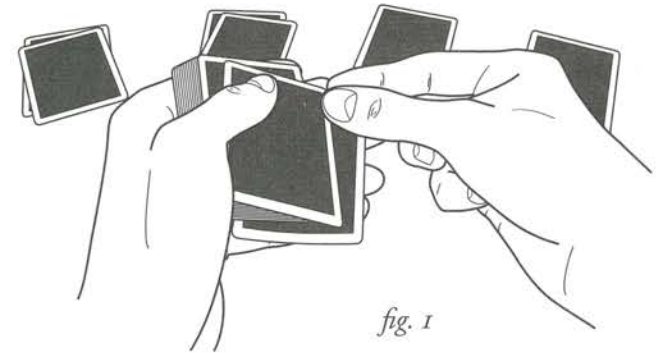
After you have added the cards, immediately set the deck onto the table, a bit away from you, and towards the spectator who just shuffled it. Ask another spectator which player should win. Ideally the spectators forget that you touched the deck during these preliminary questions.

³⁴ "Bottom Palm, First Method" in *The Expert at the Card Table* (S. W. Erdnase, 1902), page 86. It is best to use the handling at the end of the description, which replaces the work of the right fourth finger with the left fourth finger.

³⁵ See Paul Curry's *Something Borrowed, Something New* (1941), page 24. A detailed description of Ernest Earick's handling "Bottom Palm, one-handed" can be found in *By Forces Unseen* (Stephen Minch, 1993), page 85.

³⁶ To control and hide the cards in your lap, you can use either "The Knee Holdout" that is described in Roberto Giobbi's *Card College – Volume 4* (2000) on page 967, or the holdout on the chair that you can find on page 69 of *Ultra Cervon* (Stephen Minch & Bruce Cervon, 1990) and also at the end of this description.

With obviously empty hands, pick up the deck as if you're touching it for the first time, and say to the spectator, "You shuffled the cards, right? And you decided on five players? With the second player getting the winning hand? Well, let's see!" Deal out the number of hands selected, dealing bottoms to the chosen hand, as in *figure 1*. (Since five cards are dealt to each hand, the first round can be dealt fairly.)



You can use the bottom dealing technique described on page 45 in this book.

With a swift rhythm, turn over the other player's hands and make some remarks about their merits. If by accident there is a good hand among them, casually claim that you planned it "to get some money in the pot". Finally turn over the designated winner's hand one card at a time – he has received the four Aces.

Second Phase

You now have to cull a Royal Flush. The suit doesn't matter. Since all hands from the previous deal are face up on the table, you can scan them for Royal Flush cards and stack during the pick-up, while assembling the deck. Leave the four Aces on the table. Any remaining Royal Flush cards must now be culled to the back of the deck using a spread cull. Sometimes this is quite quick and can be done while the spectator's are still processing the first phase. After all, you need to bring only four cards to the back, as the needed Ace is on the table with the other Aces. If you feel like attention is on your actions and that you need to justify the spreading, say something like "As you

can see, there are no additional Aces in the deck. With a deck full of Aces, anyone could have dealt himself some, I guess.”

Now pick up the Aces, managing the Ace of the Royal Flush suit to the face, and drop them face down onto the face-down deck. Casually slip cut the top three Aces to the center, one by one, into an outjogged position that is shifted towards the left. The fact that only three Aces are replaced should not be clear. Pick up a break below the top five cards, the Royal Flush, palm those cards into the right hand (see *figure 2* for an exposed view). The left hand sets the deck onto the table face up. *Figure 3* shows the deck on the table.

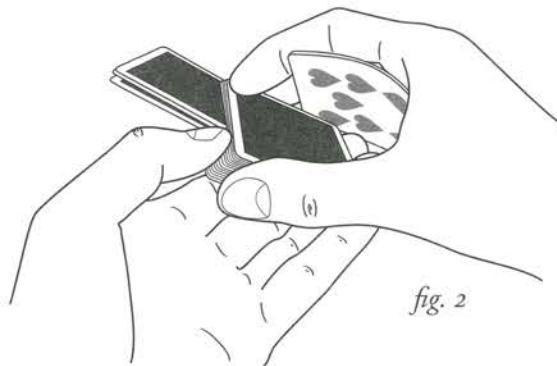


fig. 2

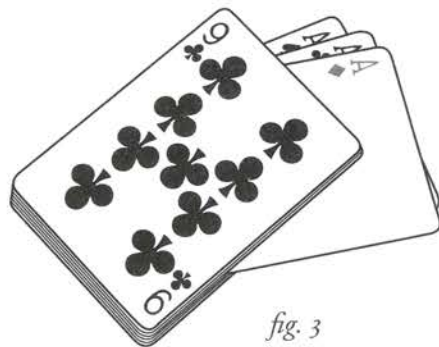


fig. 3

With the left fingers, square the Aces flush and push the deck towards a spectator, saying, “Let’s put the Aces back in different places and we can give this another try. Can you give the deck another good shuffle?” The spectators see the Aces going in – actually only three, but supposedly four. The thought of cards being secretly removed should not cross their minds.

When the spectator has finished shuffling, tell him to deal the cards out himself this time. “As many players as you like, just deal the cards in front of some people as potential players, but make sure you deal one of the hands to me.” After the deal, there will be several poker hands in front of spectators, and one in front of you. You will now switch your hand for the palmed Royal Flush.

“Finished with dealing? Fine, now let’s have a look at the hands. You go first. What did you get?” While the spectators are checking their hands, there will be some action on the table which gives you ample cover for the packet switch you are about to do. With your right hand, scoop up your five cards, laying the palmed cards on top, but slightly to the left of the top card of the tabled hand, as can be seen in the exposed view in *figure 4*. You now have an opportunity to pick up a break between the hands of cards once you have picked the pile up and placed it into the left hand, as in *figure 5*.

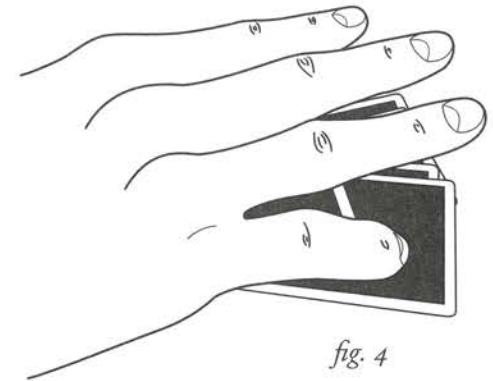


fig. 4

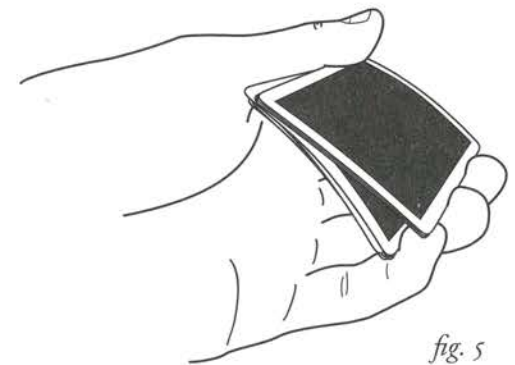


fig. 5

Immediately bottom palm the lower five cards (*figure 6*), take a brief glance at your hand by lifting it with your right hand, and then set it back down on the table, as in *figure 7*.

This seems to be a bad moment for a bold switch like this, but once you try it, you will notice that you have more than enough cover. The spectators are interested in their own hands and the switch is over

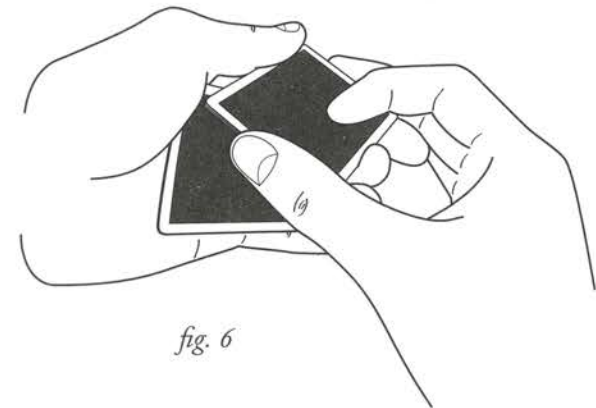


fig. 6

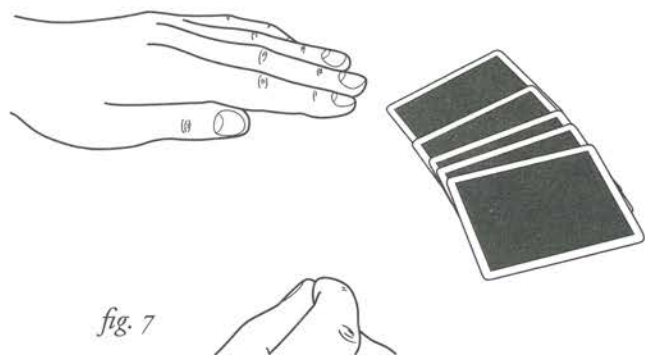


fig. 7

in a few seconds.³⁷ In fact, you will probably have to call the attention of the spectators back to you right after the switch, so that you don't lose the rhythm of the routine.

"Happy with your

cards? Usually you could exchange some cards at this point, but we won't do that here. After all, I'm happy with what I got." With the right hand, pick up the rest of the deck and place it into the left hand to demonstrate the exchange that would occur at this point in a draw poker game. Use this opportunity to replace the palmed cards. Then set the deck down again. (Alternatively, you can get rid of the cards by storing them in your lap for the rest of the routine.)

Turn over your cards one by one to show that you have a Royal Flush. *"Okay, let's play for money now! What?! Now that we've built up some trust here – I'll even allow you to shuffle and deal yourself!"* This final comment again drives home the impossibility and fairness of the final phase and makes sure that nobody would ever want to play cards with you.

Remarks

I usually use this routine when a spectator brings up gambling or cheating with cards. It is strongest when the spectators have some knowledge or experience with card games. But even if they do not play, the effect is striking enough to be easily followed by everyone.

³⁷ There are many packet switches, that can be substituted for the one described. Another good one is for example John Cornelius's "Go For Go Switch" in *The Award-Winning Magic of John Cornelius* (Lance Pierce, 2001) on page 47. If the performing conditions allow, it lapping switches are an option.

To facilitate the bottom dealing in the first phase, you can let the spectator cut off about half the deck after adding the palmed Aces to the bottom. Then stress that you will start the deal exactly where he cut to. Pick up the bottom half only, start dealing and bottom deal the Aces to the chosen hand. Dealing from a half deck makes the false deal easier. When the spectators have decided on six or more players, however, you will most likely run out of cards and will have to continue the deal with the cut-off pile, which might be a bit confusing. So it is best to adopt this strategy only for a smaller number of players.

Managing the Palm

There is quite a bit of palming in this routine. If you do not like palming, learn to love it. It is fun, gives you a pleasant sense of power and also access to card material that would otherwise be out of reach. To manage holding out of the Aces while the spectator shuffles in the first phase, here is a strategy that can be used whenever you have to hold out palmed cards during a spectator's shuffle. Even in surrounded situations with watchful spectators, it does its job well.

Let's suppose you want to palm the bottom four cards into the left hand and you have a break above them. (To hold out palmed cards in the right hand, the sequence is easily adaptable.)

The right hand cuts off the top half and hands it to a spectator on your right side with the request to shuffle the cards. *"Give it a good shuffle, just like a gambling expert would!"* This

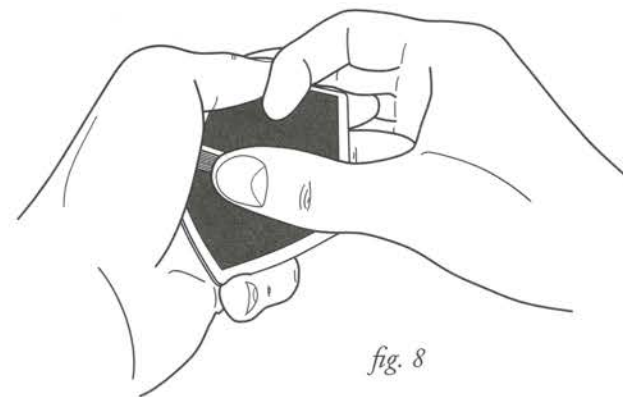


fig. 8

focuses attention on the spectator's shuffling ability. While he is doing his best to satisfy your request, palm the bottom four cards, as in *figure 8*, and set the bottom half on the table. Using your right hand, slide these cards towards another spectator (see *figure 9*) with the words, "Well, you show him how to do it."

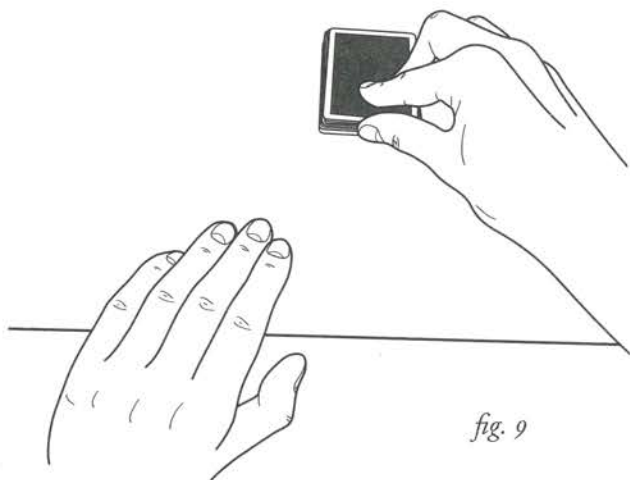


fig. 9

This sets up a playful contest of shuffling between the two spectators and especially your left hand. When the first spectator finishes shuffling, take back his half and congratulate him on his good skill while you add the palmed cards to the bottom. Set this half onto the table. Take the cards from the other spectator and either place them on top or in the middle of the tabled pile, as in *figure 10*, or even riffle shuffle them into the tabled half, keeping the bottom stock in place.

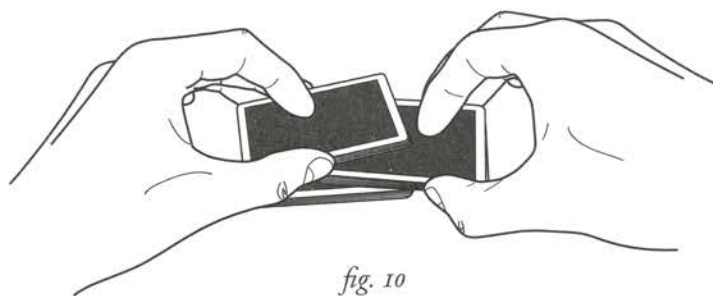


fig. 10

Managing a spectator's shuffle while holding out palmed cards in this way will give you ample cover, so that you can build confidence holding out.

Chair Holdout

At the beginning and in the middle of this routine, it is a good idea to temporarily store the palmed cards in your lap, so that the hands are empty. I use a strategy that I read in Bruce Cervon's *Ultra Cervon* (see footnote 36). It can be done with either hand.

As you are apparently adjusting the chair, cards can be placed between the leg and the chair or re-gripped in classic palm.

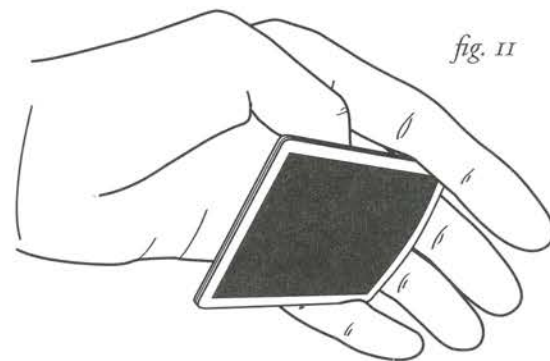


fig. 11

In more detail, palm a packet of cards in the (for example) left hand. Both hands go under the table to the chair to push it slightly towards the back or front. As soon as the left hand is out of sight, use the left thumb to pivot the cards, as shown in *figure 11*, with the first and fourth fingers straddling the sides. Like this, the cards can be pushed between the chair and the left leg, as in *figure 12*. Both hands then go onto the table again.

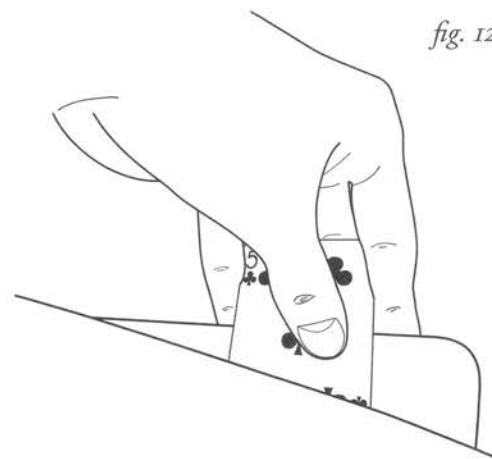


fig. 12

To get the packet back into palm, reverse the process by

again adjusting the chair. The left hand grips the sides of the cards in straddle position as before and pulls them out from under the leg. Then the hand moves down and the seat of the chair levers the cards back into classic palm.

The angles of this maneuver are very good, as you will see if you try it. A jacket can provide further cover, as well as having the chair positioned well under the table when people are sitting at your sides.

Photographic Memory

A few years ago, I read a lot of material by Karl Fulves for my Conjuring Archive project³⁸ and came across a curiosity named “Reconstruction”.³⁹ The effect is simply a challenge location of one card under seemingly impossible conditions. What aroused my interest was the following comment by Fulves in the introduction of his description: *“The effect isn’t new, but I believe the method to be more complex than previously thought possible.”* Now if that doesn’t sound like fun, I don’t know what does!

While the method for Fulves’s location is indeed quite involved, it is also fascinating and diabolical. In my opinion, his effect does not exploit the method’s full potential, so I discussed the principle with Pit Hartling and with his input, a while later I came up with this memory demonstration.

Effect

The deck is shuffled by the performer with the help of a spectator. The magician then claims to have memorized the order of the deck in an instant. To prove this, a spectator displaces a single card in the spread while the performer is looking away. Yet he identifies the moved card when examining the order.

³⁸ See my website www.conjuringarchive.com for this database of magic references.

³⁹ Karl Fulves first published “Reconstruction” in *Ibidem*, issue 31 (P. Howard Lyons, December 1965), page 21. You can also find it on page 83 of Fulves’s *Riffle Shuffle Set-Ups* (1973).

After more shuffling, a spectator removes any card from the deck. By quickly dribbling through the face-up deck, the magician names the missing card.

The cards are shuffled again and about half the deck is cut off. The performer memorizes these cards while the spectator riffles through them. With the magician looking away, a spectator uses his cell phone to take a picture of the face-up spread of cards. Again the cards are thoroughly shuffled and then spread face up. The performer picks out the cards one-by-one at a brisk tempo. When the spectator calls out the cards of the original order in the photograph, the performer turns up the cards and every one matches the called order, proving that the order was indeed memorized.

Method

A memorized stack as well as a trick deck are used. Take a deck of cards in memorized order and shorten all the cards that have an even stack number; that means all the cards at positions 2, 4, 6 ... 52. You can purchase decks that are already cut short and have rounded corners from magic dealers. With one of these and a regular matching deck you can assemble the required deck. If you cut the cards short yourself, make sure to re-round the corners with a 3 millimeter corner rounder, as otherwise the sharp corners will be obvious.

To set up, arrange the cards in memorized order, running from 1 on the back to 52 on the face. Every other card is short. Execute a few in-the-hands riffle shuffles while holding the deck face up. This retains the pairs of cards consisting of odd stack numbers followed by the subsequent even stack numbers on their faces.

Performance

Riffle shuffle the cards in the hands, again face up. Do these shuffles fairly and openly. Instead of ending the shuffle with the typical the waterfall, you can occasionally spread the shuffled and unsquared cards face down on the

table and push the cards together yourself; or even have a spectator push them into each other, as in *figure 1*. You can also give the deck face-up running cuts from left-hand dealing position onto the table, always gripping the packets at the ends.

To add another mixing sequence, place the deck face up on the table and cut it into as many as ten piles, gripping the cards at their ends to make sure that you always lift on a long card. The layout of

fig. 1

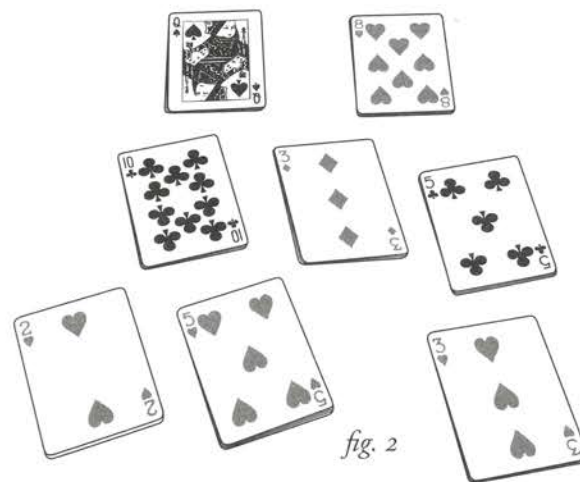
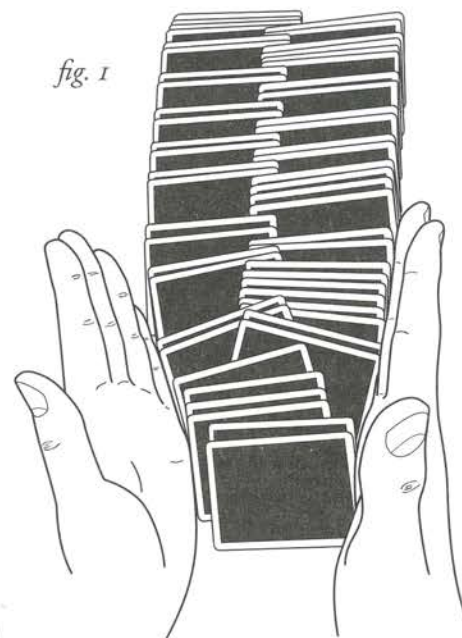


fig. 2

packets (*figure 2*) can then be assembled in any order by a spectator.⁴⁰

First Phase - Move-a-Card

Announce that you want to memorize the order of the shuffled deck. To do that, pick up the face-up

deck in right-hand end grip and start to spread the cards out on the table from left to right. Simultaneously, use the left hand to scoop up the cards

⁴⁰ If all cuts were done correctly, you will see only even stack numbers on the faces of the packets, as those are the short cards. That's a handy visual check that everything is all right.

at the same speed, so that only a small portion of the cards is visible at any given moment (figure 3). It looks impossible to memorize any cards, what

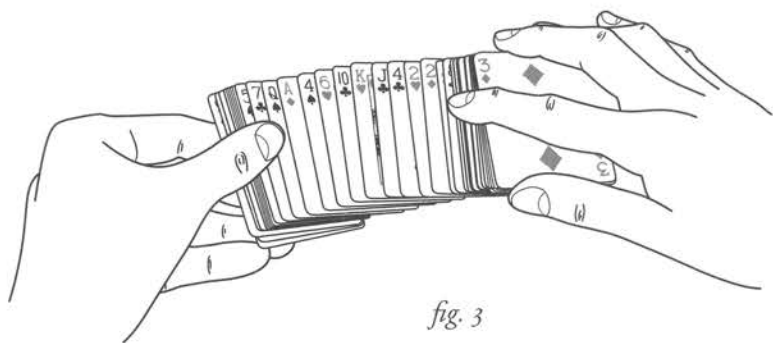


fig. 3

makes it amusing.

*"All done!
Let me
prove it. I
will look
away.
Then
please
remove
any card*

from the spread and insert it somewhere else, okay?" Spread the cards out face up again and instantly turn away. A spectator moves a card to a different position. Ask him to push the cards together into a pile to remove any traces of his actions.

To find out which card was removed, re-spread the deck face up and go through the order in pairs. The deck lies in long-short pairs of the form $x / x+1$, with odd stack numbers x ; for example, 17/18, 35/36 and so on. As soon as you come across a card that does not fit this pattern, you know it belongs to the pair the spectator split when he moved a card to a different position. Look for the other card of this pair, which must be the preceding or following card in the stack sequence, depending on whether the card you first located is odd or even. If one of the two cards of this pair sits right between two cards of another pair, you know it must have been moved there. If both cards are not between two paired cards, you'll have to fish to pin down the moved card. Usually asking about the color or suit is enough.

Once you have correctly identified the moved card, move it back to its original position.

Second Phase - The Missing Card

Riffle shuffle the cards face up as before. Say that remembering the order of the cards is one thing, but finding out which card is missing by looking at the remaining cards is an altogether different skill.⁴¹ To demonstrate this ability, you spread the deck face down on the table and ask a spectator to remove any card as soon as you have turned away, and then to square the rest of the deck to leave no clues.

When you turn around, you pick up the deck and tap it onto the table on one end to square it. This will make the short cards drop to the bottom and you can see the position from which the card was removed, because there will be a thick line on the edge by either two short or two long cards next to each other. Holding the deck face up, casually cut to place this thick line near to the face of the deck. Hold the deck face up and dribble the cards into the other hand or onto the table, claiming that you are looking for which card is missing. While thinking, casually spread the top few cards. You will see the usual pairs and a single card, which will key you to the missing card. If the single card is odd, the following stack number is the missing card. If it is even, it's the preceding card.

Name the missing card. The spectator turns over the card to confirm your assertion, and you replace the card where it belongs.

Third Phase - Half the Deck

Once more riffle shuffle the cards face up and give them a face-up running cut. Dribble the cards face up onto the table and have a spectator call stop. Time it so that you stop around the center of the deck. *"Some people believe that I am not actually remembering the order of the cards, but use some subterfuge. So let me demonstrate my memory with about half the deck once more. Let's take the bigger half, to make it more challenging."* Place the smaller of the

⁴¹ Val Evans describes this basic method as effect number 8 in his "Multieffect Cards", which is also a long-short deck with known pairs. Evans's article was published in the Winter Extra 1936/37 of *The Jinx* on page 177.

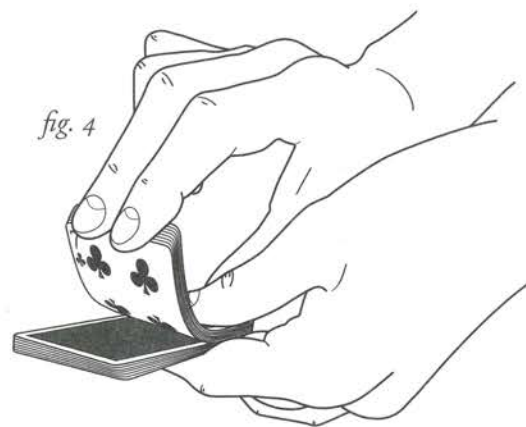


fig. 4

halves to the side and shuffle the bigger half again. Let the spectator push the cards together.

The spectator is now told to take the cards he is holding and riffle up at the front end, while you look into the gap to memorize the order. Demonstrate this once, as in *figure 4*; then give the cards to the spectator and look at them.

“Does somebody have a cell phone camera? We need proof later on of what the actual order is at this point. Please take a picture and make sure you can recognize every card when you zoom in.” When a spectator has his phone ready, spread the cards face up and immediately turn away. But before you turn, remember the very top card of the deck. That will be your key card later. Ask the spectator to push the cards together when he has taken the photograph.

Face the audience again and turn the cards face down. Immediately give them a single face-down cut to bring a short card to the top. (This is a crucial step and if you forget this cut, the ending will fail.) Say that you have to destroy the order, now that we have it preserved on the spectator’s phone. Give the half another riffle shuffle, but with one important difference: Keep it face down from now on. Also throw in running cuts from the hand to the table, also face down.

Once the cards have been obviously shuffled, turn the half face up and spread it on the table. You will now rearrange the cards in the order you have apparently memorized. To do this, you first extract the top card of the order, which is the key card you memorized earlier. Set this card in front of you. It will have an odd stack number. Look for the even stack number that follows this card. Once you locate it, remove this card as well as the card immedi-

ately above it from the spread (see *figure 5*) and place these, squared, onto the first card.

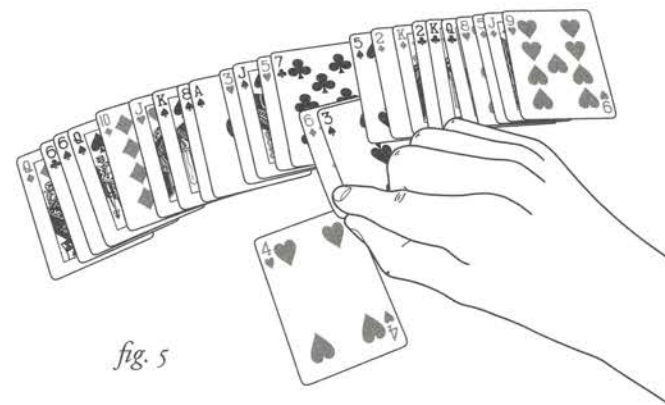


fig. 5

Look at the new top card of the tabled pile, and again search for the even card that follows it

in the stack. Remove this card as well as the card immediately above it, and place them onto the pile. Repeat this until all cards are in the pile. The last card will be a single card with an even stack number.

You have now the original order in front of you, the one you apparently memorized. Turn the pile face down and ask the spectator who

took the photo to read off the top card on the left side from the phone. Simultaneously turn over the top card of your pile – a match. Repeat this with the remaining cards, building a spread, as shown in *figure 6*, asking the spectator to read the cards off as fast as he can. Every card matches, proving your extraordinary photographic memory.

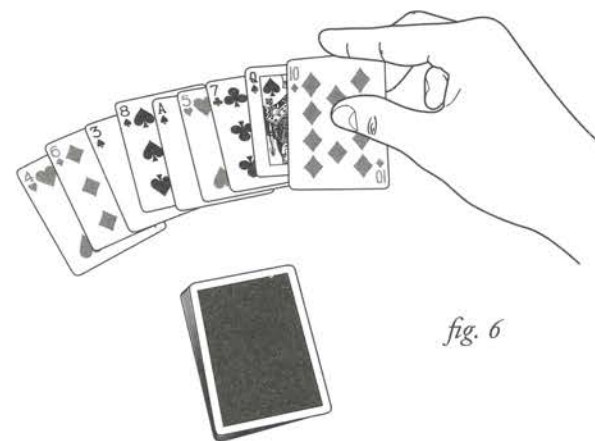


fig. 6

Remarks

The final phase is based on Karl Fulves's fascinating "Reconstruction" principle. Why does this work? First you shuffle all the cards face up, so all the pairs stay together. After taking the photo, you shuffle the cards face down. This splits all the original pairs, but at the same time new pairs are built and remain together. These new pairs consist of one card each from two consecutive pairs from the photographed order. This physically stores this order, as it reveals which pair follows a preceding pair. And since you know the composition of the original pairs, this allows you to reconstruct the whole original order.⁴² The third phase would of course work with the whole deck, but that would take too long.

To take only pairs when assembling the order in the final phase might be a bit suspicious. To hide this, you can do two things. First, if you pull out two cards swiftly in a more or less squared condition, it is difficult to notice they are a pair. And second, I occasionally take only a single card while remembering the card above it. After another moment of thought, remove this second card and continue from there.

The weakness of the method is that only the performer shuffles the cards. So make sure those riffle shuffles are perceived as fair ones, which they are, and incorporate the sequences in which a spectator can push together the riffle-shuffled deck or assemble the cut-off packets.

As a presentation for this memory demonstration, I use Pit Hartling's fantastic plot, which he describes in his routine "Unforgettable".⁴³ In that routine, orange juice is responsible for improving the memory of the performer to make the memorization possible. I replace the orange juice with beer. It is

⁴² The change of the orientation of the riffle shuffle is the key to the final phase. If you wish, you can always shuffle face down. To make this work, you'll have to reverse count the cards right after memorizing the cards in the third phase. You can justify this by claiming you are doing the memorization as you deal. Then deal through the cards in lightning speed, thus reversing their order.

⁴³ This can be found on page 78 of *Card Fictions* (2003). Pit shares some important thoughts on skill demonstrations in general in the opening of his explanation.

probably a Munich thing. (I also perform a variation of Pit's "Unforgettable" itself, and my handling goes under the name "Unforgettably Drunk".) Drink responsibly.

The Overhand Shuffle of a Long-Short Deck

A long-short deck can be overhand shuffled without disturbing the pairs. Try the following: When you have reached a place in the routine where you can riffle shuffle the deck face up, give the deck a face-down overhand shuffle. With the right hand, grip the cards rather tightly and draw cards off with the left thumb at the top edge of the right hand's packet. The left thumb slides across the back of the packet during this shuffling action, as in *figure 7*, to make sure that only a long card can remain on top of the right hand's packet. Because of the long-short preparation, you will draw off only even numbers of cards and retain the set-up.

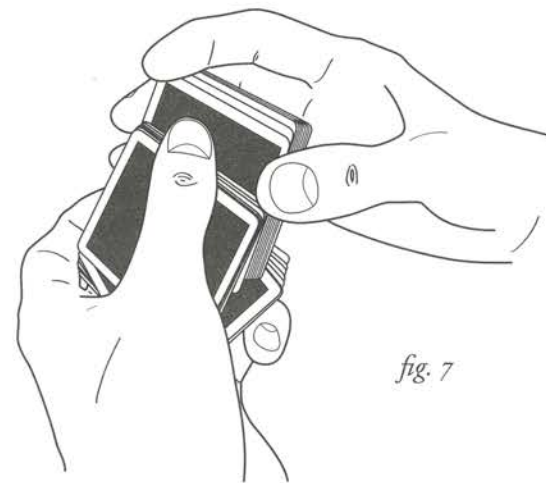


fig. 7

While this is relatively safe, I find that a card too many or too few can occasionally be drawn off.

This is not a big issue with a Svengali deck, but will cause serious trouble in this routine, especially in the final phase. So I usually do not feel adventurous enough to use this overhand shuffle. But it is still a useful technique with less fragile set-ups, and is not too well-known.⁴⁴

⁴⁴ I am not sure who first discovered this overhand shuffle technique. The earliest reference I found is in *Abracadabra*, Vol. 9 No. 255 (May 20, 1950) on page 266 by Douglas Hood.

The More the Merrier

The Multiple Selection plot is a classic in magic.⁴⁵ The routine outlined in this description focuses on the honest losing of the selected cards, which are shuffled into the deck by the spectators themselves.

Effect

Several spectators, up to nine or ten, each select a card. The spectators then shuffle their selections back into the deck in a fair manner. Yet the performer locates each and every card.

Method

This routine requires two decks. One is used for the initial selection of the cards, and the other is switched in during the trick. The selection deck can

⁴⁵ I give an overview of its history and prominent examples in “Suit Surprise” in *Handcrafted Card Magic – Volume 2* (Denis Behr, 2011), page 65. Since then I have discovered an earlier recording of the idea of routining a sequence of different card revelations. It is by Professor Hoffmann, who describes a five-card revelation in *Tricks with Cards* (1889) on page 206 as an optional prelude in “The Fairy Star”. In this routine, the five cards are found by cutting to the first selection, making the second come to the bottom of the deck, changing a wrong card to the third selection, making the fourth fly to a pocket, and the fifth rise out of the pack.

be ungaffed (see the notes at the end), but for this explanation it is a forcing deck and consists of nine different cards repeated six times. This makes a deck of fifty-four cards. If you want to have more or fewer cards than ten selected, adjust these numbers accordingly – for ten selections you would have five blocks of ten cards each.

The six sets of nine cards share the same order and the top card of each sequence has a breather crimp⁴⁶ and a small marking on the back, so that it is easily identifiable when face down.

Arrange the second ungaffed deck with eight of the force cards, in the same order, on top. Exclude from this group the top card that has the crimp in the forcing deck. Hide this ungaffed deck in a jacket pocket. You could also use a back pocket, or hide it in the lap or under the knee,⁴⁷ if you are sitting at a table.

Take out the forcing deck, and you are ready to go.

Performance

Spread the cards face up on the table without giving it any attention. If your nine cards are varied in color and value, it looks like a normal deck at a glance. Pick up the cards and give them a false shuffle accompanied with real cuts before setting the deck down in front of a spectator. Ask the spectator to cut the cards and complete the cut, as in *figure 1*.



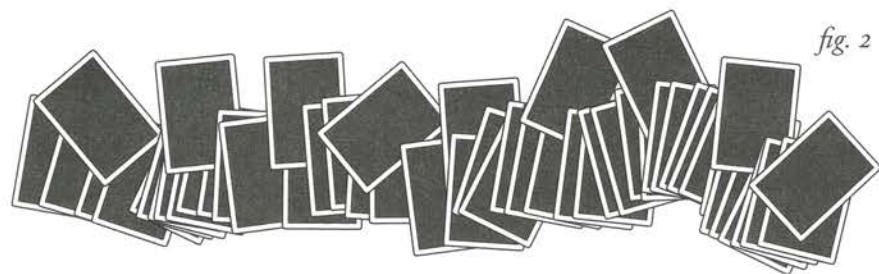
⁴⁶ See “The Breather Crimp” in *The Vernon Chronicles – Volume 1* (Stephen Minch, 1987), page 96.

⁴⁷ See for example “The Knee Holdout” in *Roberto Giobbi’s Card College – Volume 4* (2000), page 967.

Have a look at the top card's back. If the spectator has cut to a breather, which is quite likely since there are six of them distributed throughout the deck, stop right there. If not, have the same spectator, or another, cut again until there is a breather on top. If the initial cut fails, the second one almost always succeeds.

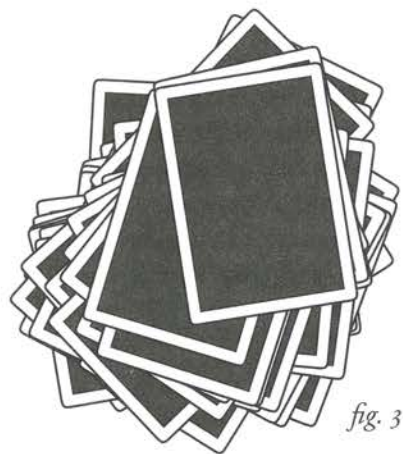
Now that the spectator has determined a random spot in the deck by cutting anywhere he pleases, ask him to take the top card and remember it. Then ask the spectator next to him to take the new top card. Continue until nine people have a card. You must remember the order of the spectators for the subsequent location of the selections.

Spread the rest of the deck face down on the table. After the spectators have memorized their cards, allow them to insert them anywhere into the spread



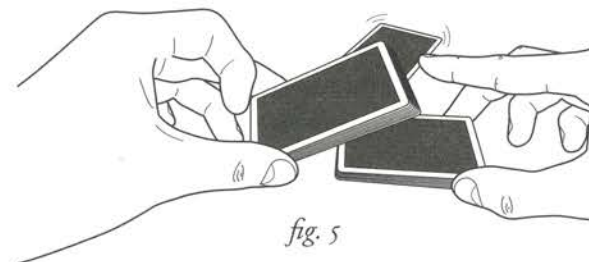
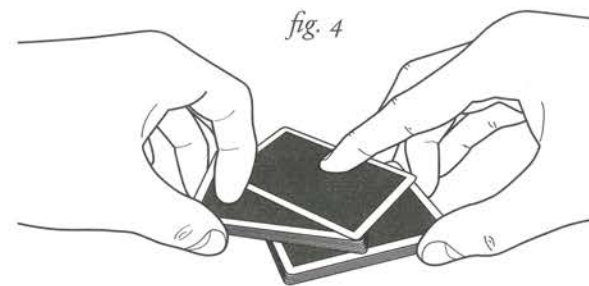
simultaneously. This looks very fair and messy (see figure 2). Gather the cards (see figure 3) and give them to a spectator for shuffling. Stress the fairness of their losing the selections in the deck, since it is one of the strengths of this structure.

Take back the deck with clearly empty hands, casually give it a cut to bring one of the breathers to the top and set

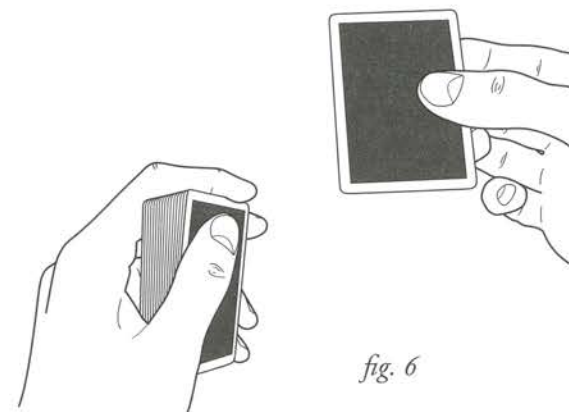


it down in front of you in riffle-shuffle position. Say that you are now going to locate each and every selection.

To produce the first card, which is sitting on top of the deck, I simply have it named and do the Benzais Spin Cut (see figures 4 & 5).⁴⁸ The surprising suddenness of this flashy location right after the shuffling is very strong, since the spectators expect you to go into some more elaborate location procedure to find the card that has so clearly been lost in the deck.



Claim that you are going to find the second card by the sense of touch alone. Look into the air and bring both hands with the deck behind your back, where you quickly pocket it and take out the ungaffed deck from the other pocket. (Or put it into your jacket pocket or underneath the table, wherever the second deck is hidden.) Take the top card in one



⁴⁸ See *The Best of Benzais* (John Benzais, 1967) on page 39.

hand and bring it out with the back towards the audience as you ask the second spectator for his card. As attention is on the card, the other hand quietly comes back into view with the switched-in deck, as in *figure 6*. Turn over and reveal the second card.

Now you are all set to produce the remaining cards in any way you see fit, as they are waiting on top of the deck. After concluding, the first selection on the table is from the forcing deck. If you have not removed its duplicate from the ungaffed deck, simply palm this card out when collecting the selections and pocket it under some adequate pretense.

Remarks

The shuffling after the cards are returned to the deck is what makes this routine strong. But another strength is that you end with a clean, ungaffed deck that can be stacked in any order you wish! Since the deck was just shuffled by a spectator, this is a wonderful position to be in. Of course, your locations then should not alter the order of the deck, and if you want to end in a full-deck stack, the selections in the force deck must be chosen to conform to that stack.

The cards you produce from the ungaffed deck might be arranged in some special order governed by the production sequence you want to use. You can reverse some of them for example, if a location flourish requires this. I like to place one of the cards from the ungaffed deck on top of the forcing deck and leave it behind in the case when I initially uncase the deck in performance. Then I can produce one of the cards cleanly from the card case as one of the productions.

You can look at published routines to find interesting revelations. I listed a lot of sources in "Suit Surprise" in *Handcrafted Card Magic – Volume 2* (2011), pages 66 and 67.

A great collection of sleights as well as a history of the plot can be found in *Fussilade – A Treatise on the Multiple Selection Routine* (2000) by Paul Cummins and Doc Eason. While I first published a version of this routine in

the April 2013 issue of *MAGIC*, Helder Guimarães independently developed a similar structure and published it in his book *Crescendo* in 2015. It is very well thought-out and worth looking up.

If the fairness of the selection procedure is not an issue for you, you can force the cards from a normal deck in any other manner and thus get rid of the gaffed deck.

Haunted Herbert

Animation effects have a different flavor from most card magic. They are very visual and unexpected. In this case, the animation is seemingly brought about by none other than the famous trained rubber band Herbert.⁴⁹

If you have not yet made the acquaintance of Herbert: He is a personified rubber band and self-proclaimed celebrity. This rubber band is trained to find selected cards by wrapping himself around them in the deck. I always perform this trick as a prelude to introduce Herbert, before going into the following routine. So Herbert has already been properly introduced.

Effect

The trained rubber band Herbert is showing a new skill: He can cut the deck to produce not only the selection but the three cards that match its value. The deck slides in three different directions, leaving cards outjogged from three sides. When removed, they complete a quartet with the selection.

Method

A self-cutting deck, animated by a thread, goes back a long way, but most modern handlings are based on Al Baker's practical solution that he published in 1933.⁵⁰ In the same year, Louis Tannen published a gaffed method, in which a thread, which is permanently fixed to one card, goes through a

⁴⁹ I published "Herbert – The Trained Rubber Band" in *Handcrafted Card Magic – Volume 2* (2011) on page 76.

⁵⁰ See "The Pack That Cuts Itself" in Al Baker's *Book One* (1933), page 7.

hole in the center of the bottom half of the deck. As Tannen noticed later, this set-up allows the revelation of more than one card. The upper half can move in as many as four directions and back, leaving the revealed cards outjogged on the respective sides. It was this trick that impressed me when I saw a Dutch television appearance of Fred Kaps, where he closed a beautifully routined and executed card performance with Tannen's deck.

Only later did I find that Edward Victor had published a semi-impromptu handling in the 1940s.⁵¹ The following method is based on Victor's gaff, which is a threaded block of cards that has to be palmed in and out of the deck. His method has a few problems. To understand my solutions to them, I recommend you get a few old cards and follow along. The preparation may seem lengthy, but once everything is assembled, the gaff can be used over and over.

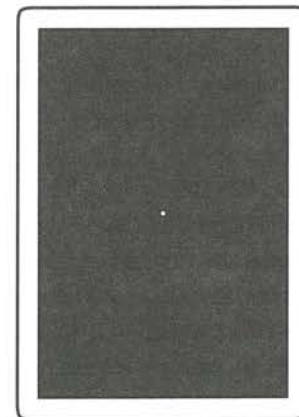
While I give a tabled and an in-the-hands handling, both are done seated at a table, as the animation will in part be activated by the legs. See the comments at the end for further thoughts.

Tabled Handling

Preparation

The gaff is made from five cards. Four of those have a hole in the precise center. The hole can be quite small, so simply take a sharp needle and pierce the center of the cards, as in *figure 1*. The top card of the four has three more holes below the center one, forming a row, as shown in *figure 2*. The fifth card has no holes and is

fig. 1



⁵¹ Edward Victor's "The Haunted Pack" can be found in *Further Magic of the Hands* (1946) on page 16.

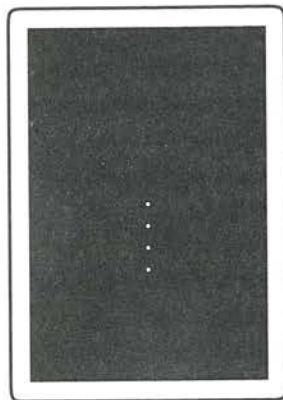


fig. 2

Along with those cards, a piece of dark thread is needed. This is not invisible thread, but strong sewing thread. The one I use I cannot break by hand. Since the thread is never exposed to view during performance, it is better not to risk breaking the thread during the trick. The length of thread I use is about 90 cm but will depend on the hook-up and your body size. One end is free, while the other end is tied to a small steel washer that has been painted black.

The final items required are two magnets. One is a strong magnet, which is fixed to the left side of your right knee underneath the trousers.⁵² A second, weaker magnet is taped to the inside of the trousers, at the bottom of the crotch.

⁵² To fix the magnet in place, I cut off the elastic cuff of some underpants. This cuff ring is doubled and slid over the leg right above the knee. Another thicker washer is used to attach the magnet to the fabric.

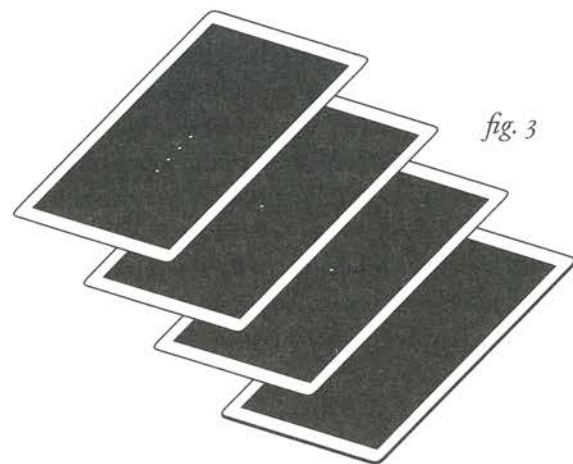


fig. 3

fixed with four short strips of double-sided tape in the corners to the face of the fourth card. (You will have to open this double on one side every time you set up for the effect, which is why the two cards are not glued together permanently.) *Figure 3* shows the whole set, the double card being at the bottom.

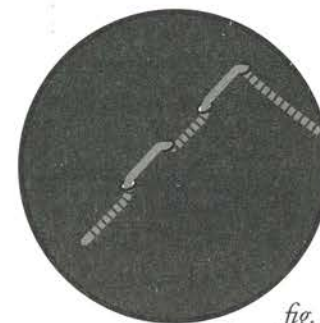


fig. 4

To set up for performance, unstick one end of the double card and guide the thread through the upper card from the face to the back, with the help of a blunt needle. Guide the thread between the short ends of the cards and stick them together again. Use the needle to thread the other three cards, all from

face to back. The card with the four holes comes last. Finally stitch the thread through all the holes of this final card one by one. Pull the thread back until about 2 to 3 cm remain between the upper two cards after the final hole. *Figure 4* shows this. Put aside the needle and set the threaded packet with the four-hole card at the top and the thread trailing from to the inner side of the double card in front of you.

Take out three cards of matching value. Insert one of these between the upper two cards from the front. Be careful that the thread is not pulled out of the four holes. Hold it tight with your fingers while pushing the card flush.⁵³ Push the next card in from the left, between the second and third cards of the gaff; the third card from the right, between the third and fourth cards

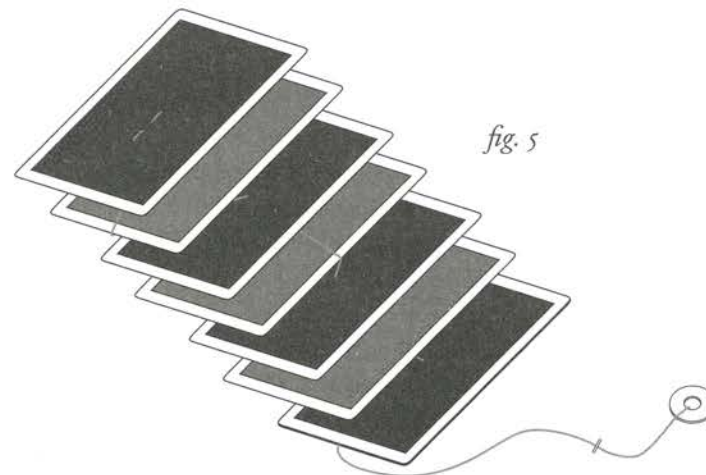


fig. 5

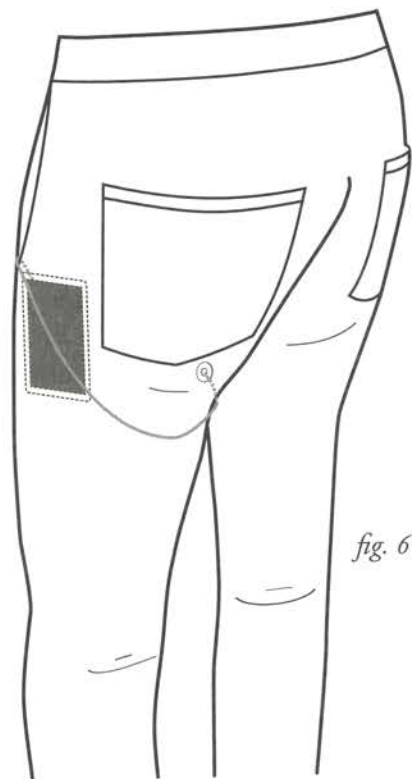
of the gaff. After this set-up, the packet looks as shown in *figure 5*, where the ungaffed three-of-a-kind has a lighter back color for

⁵³ It is a good plan to leave the thread sticking out for some length, and to only pull it tight as in *figure 4* after the first regular card is inserted between the two top cards of the gaff.

clarity. To carry this prepared set without risk of damaging it, I place it in a small paper envelope with the thread wrapped around the cards.

I have all these components in a small plastic case to have all necessary items for "Haunted Herbert" in one place. This case contains the envelope with both the cards and the thread, which may or may not be prepared for a performance already. Additionally, it contains a sharp and a blunt needle, additional thread, the magnets, tape, the leg strap for the magnet and a wire loop needle threader, just in case I have get ready for the effect in bad light.

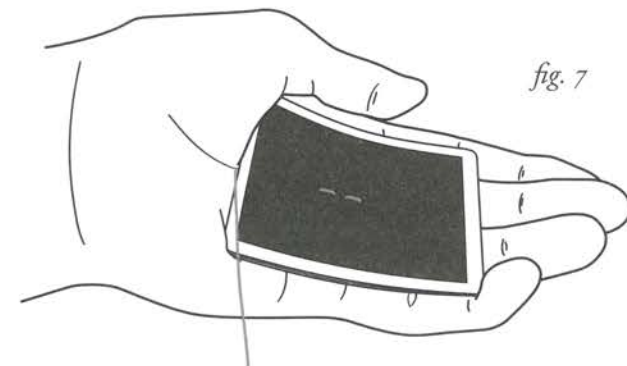
When it is time to set up for the performance, place the packet into your left trousers pocket with the faces towards the outside and the thread coming out of the top end. The packet must not move around too freely, so I hold it in place with a small clothes pin at one side. Bring the end of the thread with the washer out of the pocket, lead it around the left side of your leg and attach it to the magnet at your crotch from behind. Dark trousers are best, so that the thread and washer are masked. This set-up is depicted in *figure 6*. Get the fourth card of matching value to the top of the deck.



Performance

To get ready to perform the trick, remove the packet from the pocket, taking it in left-hand classic palm, as depicted in *figure 7*. The thumb may have to push off the clothes pin, if you are using one. If you are not already seated, now is the time to sit down. While you can add the packet to the bottom of the deck right away, I prefer

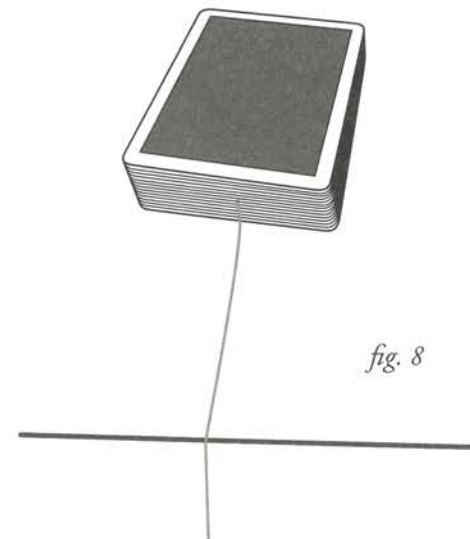
to store the cards temporarily under the left leg, as described on page 57. The washer is still attached to the crotch magnet. The right hand takes it, pulls it off and attaches it to the knee magnet. You might need to shift your weight to the right, in case you are sitting on the thread.



With the cards ready under the leg, I introduce Herbert and perform the first phase of the routine referenced in footnote 49. For this phase I force the fourth quartet-card, which is lost and found by Herbert as described. (This phase can be left out or replaced.) At the end, the rubber-banded selection is on the table face up, and the deck is face down near the edge of the table.

The right knee should be far to the left, almost under the left knee, allowing you enough thread for the following handling. Adjust the chair and re-palm the threaded packet. With the right hand, pick up the deck and add the packet to it. The thread is coming out at the back.

With your right hand, cut about half the cards on the table near the edge and set the bottom half on top. The current configuration of the thread is shown in *figure 8*.



The hook-up can be seen in *figure 9*, but in reality both legs would be underneath the table.

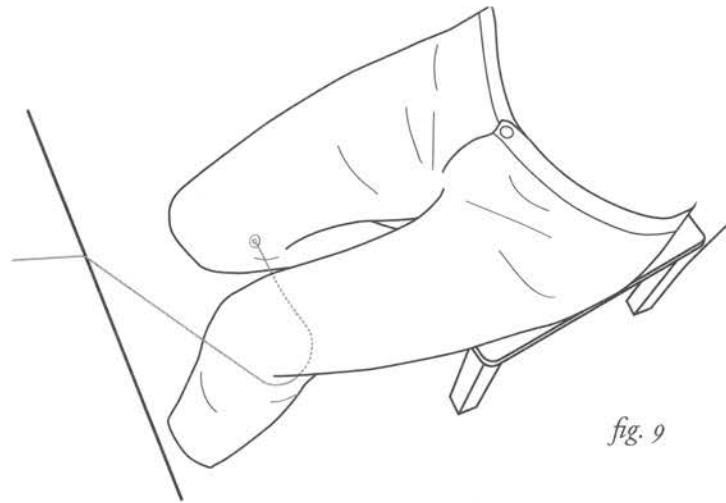


fig. 9

"Herbert really is a well-trained rubber band. And by trained I mean he has been doing a lot of training and working out lately. He is exceptionally strong and can move many times his own body weight. Let him show you. First let's put your card back into the middle."

During this explanation, the right hand picks the deck up and sets it into dealing position. For the best possible cover, the thread is guided between the left third and fourth finger as in *figure 10*.

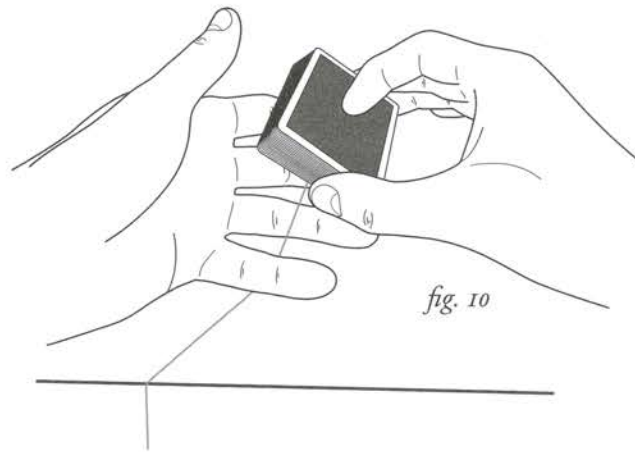


fig. 10

Take the selection from the first phase, place it face-up on top of the deck and drag it into the center by lifting off about twenty cards (you must make sure to cut above the threaded packet in the center) in right-hand end grip

while the left thumb draws off the selection into an out-jogged position (see *figure 11*).

"We had better put it in face down. It would be too easy otherwise." With these words, swivel the card out, as in *figure 12*, and flip it face-down onto the deck.

Now apparently repeat the peeling action, but in reality you lift off about twenty cards again, but only simulate dragging off the selection. The left fingers hold the bottom cards of the upper packet back while the right hand presses down on those fingers and moves to the right. *figure 13* shows this moment.⁵⁴ When this is done swiftly, it looks like the top card has been peeled off. Replace the right-hand packet, spread the cards a bit, and then square everything up, apparently losing the selection.



fig. 11

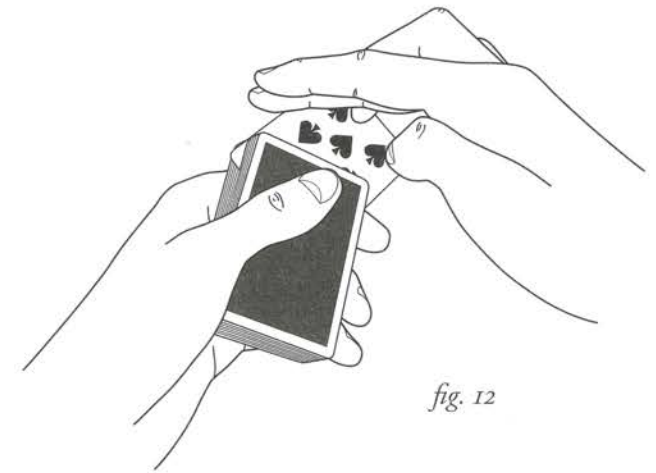


fig. 12

⁵⁴ This fake peeling action was described by Ed Marlo in "Open Hockley" in *Card Finesse* (Jon Racherbaumer, 1982) on page 95. In the same year, an almost identical sleight by Jerry Sadowitz was published as "Slip-Jog" in Stephen Tucker's *Spell-Binder* (Volume 2, No. 20, December 1982) on page 383. This seems to be a case of independent invention.

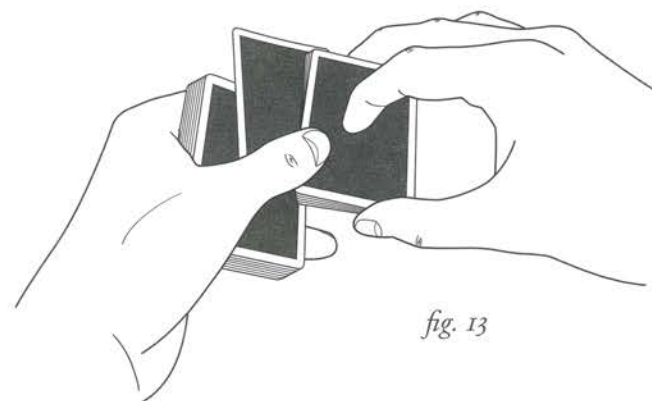


fig. 13

The right hand sets the deck onto the table again. The left hand turns palm down and in a relaxed position rests directly behind the tabled deck. The thread runs through the left second and

third fingers, which touch the inner end of the cards. This position, as seen in *figure 14*, also covers the thread.

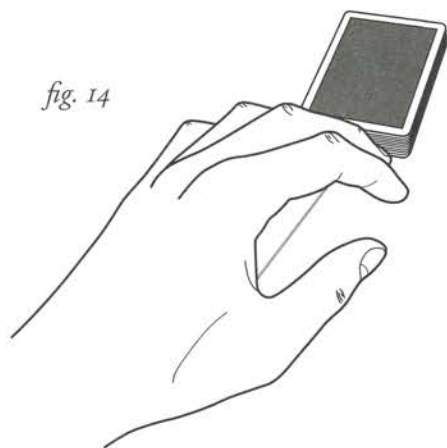


fig. 14

The right hand picks up the rubber band during the placement of the left hand and places it onto the top of the deck. Herbert is now encouraged to perform his stunt. "Ok, Herbert, do your best."

Wait a bit to create suspense.

When ready for the animation,

move the right knee slowly to the right. The upper half of the deck will move to the right and back, leaving a card side-jogged.

At this point, I pause as if this were it. The right knee is moved a bit to the left again and the left fingers push the deck forward a bit toward the center of the table, until the thread is again taut. Now the knee moves to the right again to continue the animation of the deck. The upper half moves first to the left and back, and then to the front and back. The final configuration is illustrated in *figure 15*.

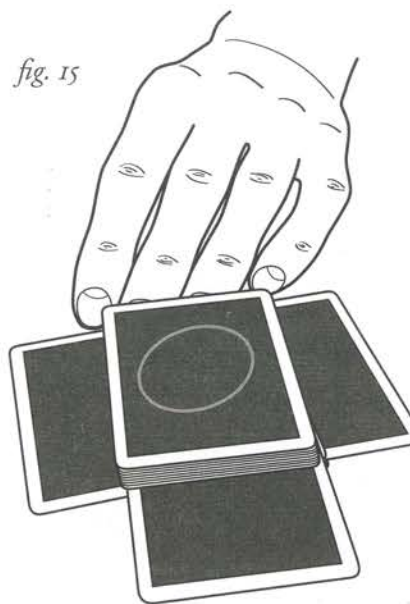


fig. 15

When the deck stops moving, continue to separate the knees as far as you can. This pulls the thread out of the deck completely and draws it under the table. The deck is now free of threads and effectively clean (except for the cards with the tiny holes, of course).

With the right hand, pick up the top card of the deck at the inner right corner and lift it with Herbert on it as shown in *figure 16*. Toss Herbert onto the table and turn the card over. It is the selection. Without a pause, pull out the three protruding cards from the tabled deck, one by

one, turn them face up and place them next to the selection to complete the four-of-a-kind.

This four-card-production is a bit of a bluff, as one card is simply taken off the top. But done with a fluent rhythm and a short delay between removing this card as a tray for Herbert and turning it over, it all seems to make sense.⁵⁵ Immediately spread the deck widely across the table, to make clear there is nothing to hide.

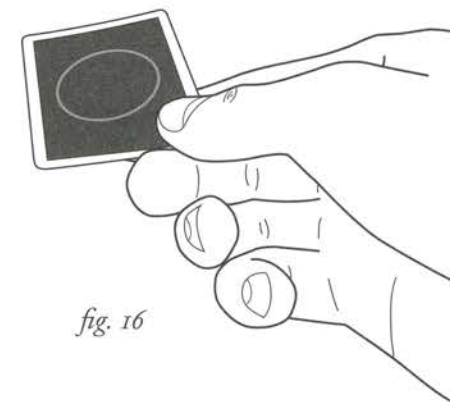


fig. 16

⁵⁵ I adapted this strategy from Fred Kaps's television performance mentioned in the introduction of this trick.

In-the-Hands Handling

If one cannot have the deck on the table during the animation, for example for visibility reasons, it can be done on the hand, as it is done in many Haunted Deck versions. For that, the preparation is the same except that the thread is guided out of the bottom double card of the gaffed set not at the inner end, but the right side.

Thus, when the set is palmed in the left hand in readiness to be added to the deck, the orientation of the thread is as in *figure 17*.

After the addition, the deck is set it down as in *figure 18*, with the thread at the near side. (You can now riffle shuffle the deck, if you take care not to disturb the bottom stock.) Use the right hand to

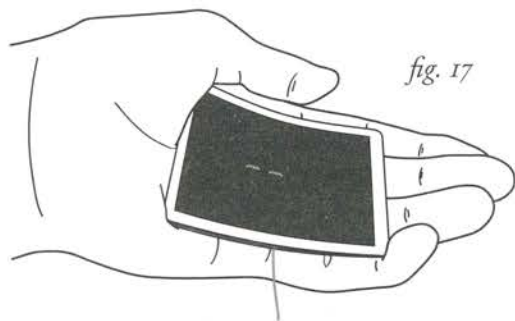


fig. 17

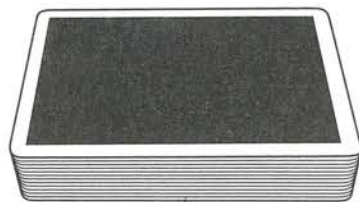


fig. 18

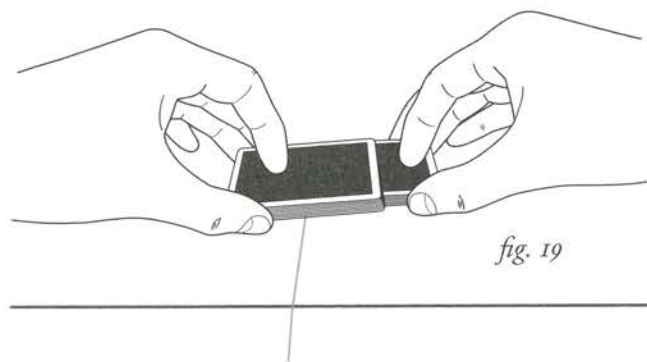


fig. 19

cut about twenty cards from the top to the bottom (*figure 19*). With your right hand, grip the right end of the deck and place

the deck into left-hand dealing position. *Figure 20* shows this process and the position of the thread, which passes between the left second and third fingers towards the back of the left hand. The left hand and arm cover the thread from now on.

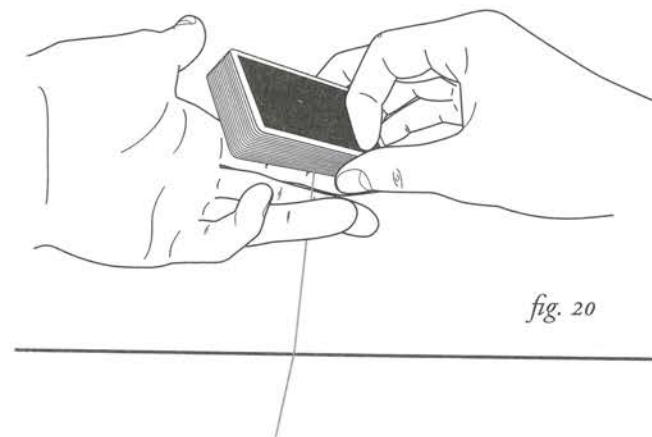


fig. 20

Pick up the rubber band and place it on top of the deck. Straighten the fingers, leaving the deck on the flat hand. If there are spectators on the right,

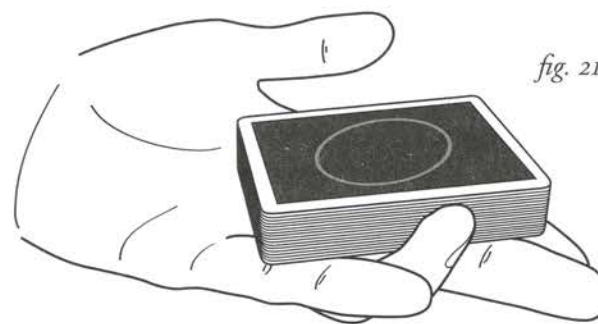


fig. 21

they might see the thread coming out of the middle of the right side of the deck. To cover this, the left third finger can be curled in as shown in *figure 21*. Move the hand forward until you feel that the thread is tight.

Now the animation is executed exactly as in the tabled handling. First the knees move apart to reveal the first card on the right side. (From now on, the vulnerable right side is covered by this card.) Then the hand moves forward

a bit before the other two cards show up. The final movement is illustrated in *figure 22*.

Then again the thread is pulled free and under the table by spreading the knees as far as possible, and the deck is spread across the table.

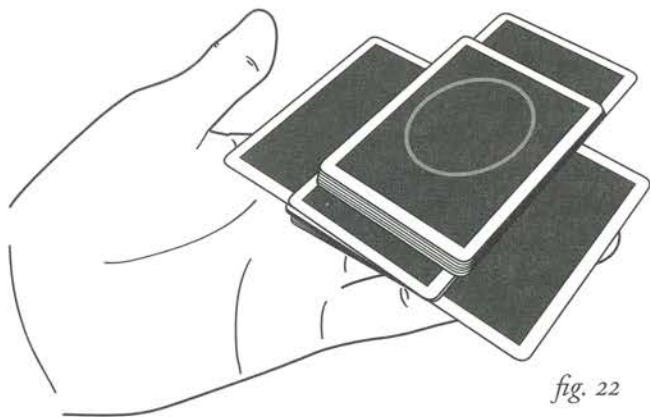


fig. 22

Remarks

What in my opinion makes this effect performable, is the clean ending. Palming out the threaded block, as is required in Edward Victor's version (or even ending with a trick deck, as in Tannen's marketed version) did not feel right, since the heat is on the deck after the animation. My first trials to get the thread to disengage itself at the end were not successful. This was because I palmed in only the unloaded gimmick and tried to insert the selections into it during performance. That resulted in the thread pulling free too early. It was my friend Friedrich Roitzsch, who gave me a lot of helpful input during this trick's development, who made me revisit the problem. With the preloaded cards, the thread release became reliable.

While you cannot push the cards into the threaded packet during performance, the animation is even more surprising this way. One can leave out the rubber band and find another way to present the effect. Instead of a quartet, one can use three (forced) selections.

After the performance, you are left with four gaffed cards in the deck, and a thread attached to your right knee. The cards can be palmed out at an opportune moment. The bottom card of the set is a thick card, so they are easily located. To get rid of the thread, detach the washer with either the left or right hand, and pocket it when standing up. The thread will cling to the trouser and can be gathered up during an unobserved moment.

When I perform this routine in a close-up theater, I simply drop the washer to the floor or in a bag that is standing underneath the table.

The classic single-card Haunted Deck is easy to do standing, as only a short length of the thread has to be pulled. When three cards are threaded, the distance is much greater, and it is harder to cover the movement by simply moving the body backwards and the hand forward. But if you want to go that route, fix the end of the thread to the top of the trousers on your left side, under the jacket. This hook-up allows you to palm the prepared packet out of the left pocket and add it to the deck. One has to start close to the body and slowly move the body back and the hand forward to operate the animation. And the conclusion, the thread comes loose and drops to the trousers.

Epilogue

Martha Argerich is a living legend in the field of piano playing. She is both admired and notorious for her fearlessness and unpredictability in life and her art. In a rare interview she gave a few decades ago, she tells a story about when she was studying piano. Her teacher gave her a number of difficult pieces to learn in a very short time.

“So I brought them all learned; it was not difficult because I didn’t know that it was supposed to be. When one doesn’t know that a piece is very difficult, one learns it easily. If you know already from everybody that this piece is difficult, then you don’t learn it fast.”

I found this a fascinating theory. While there are obviously limits to this guideline, there does seem to be a psychological obstacle to overcome, when a piece of music – or a sleight in magic – is proclaimed to be very difficult to master.

It seems easier to learn, for example, a classic palm, if it is advertised as a necessary, standard sleight, instead of an advanced sleight with which many professionals have serious trouble. A certain balance between truth and belittlement would have to be found here, as not to discourage anyone in the long run.

The classic palm is a good example. A classic procedure is to palm out a selection while someone shuffles the deck, and to replace it again when receiving the deck back after the shuffle. This procedure is rarely seen these days, but apparently was common in the old times to the mid 1900s, when palming was indeed a standard sleight in the arsenal of a conjurer. It can make an otherwise relatively straightforward location much stronger. More than once, I read an effect in an old book and was stumped by the explicit condition that the spectator shuffles the selection back into the deck. Reading further, in the explanation it turned out that the performer was to palm

it out first. But it shows the potency of the strategy: I got fooled simply by a depiction of the perceived reality.

Let’s forget that it is not easy to palm out a selection during a shuffle. Simply do it. Along with some center deals and tabled faro shuffles. To relax, you can play through some of Franz Liszt’s Transcendental Etudes while having a beer.

Denis Behr

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