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# The LINKING Ring

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Roberto Giobbi

ROBERTO GIOBBI

# FEATURES

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# THE LINKING RING

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COVER PHOTO: CHRISTOPH LÄSER, SWITZERLAND

# ROBERTO GIOBBI

## THE GIFT OF THE MAGI

BY WILLIAM E. ("BILL") EVANS  
INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT-ELECT

It's March, 2004, and the scene is the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Cincinnati, Ohio, where I am about to be fooled really bad by the card magic of someone I have never met, but whose reputation has preceded him. The event is Card Clinic hosted by Jamy Ian Swiss and Roberto Giobbi. I am holding a deck of cards given to me as a souvenir by Roberto after his last effect where I did the shuffling and cutting, and I am excited to have these unusual back designs for my collection. After his lecture, Roberto decides he has one last effect to show us. He's looking for his cards and seems to have forgotten that he gave them to me. I, of course, offer them back and he proceeds with the effect leaving all of us in the room shaking our heads in disbelief over the impossibility of the moment. It was later that we learned he had fooled us all with a deck switch, and I had been holding the cooler for him the entire time.

Such is the genius of Roberto Giobbi. His accolades and accomplishments include the many books and articles he has written, including the legendary Card College books, magazines that

have featured his work, and awards he has received, including the Grand Prix at the Swiss Championship of Magic and two FISM Vice World Championships in Card Magic. He is regarded not only as one of the top card men in magic but also as one of the very best teachers. A fantastic I.B.M. Special Edition of *Roberto Giobbi's Introduction to Card Magic*, is now available on the I.B.M. Web Portal for you to download and enjoy. (Login at [www.magician.org](http://www.magician.org) and click on Member Benefits.) Sponsored by the I.B.M. Endowment and Development Fund, this great resource includes over 150 pages of text, photographs, and imbedded video. It is the best beginning instructional course in card magic that I have ever seen. Allowing I.B.M. members to access this material as a free member benefit is an example of his generosity and enthusiasm for teaching magic. His guidance will take even a beginning hobbyist on an enjoyable and satisfying journey. If you are patient and diligent in studying the course, it will enable you to put on an amazing card magic program. With this sound



*At home with his books. PHOTO BY CHRISTOPH LÄSER*

foundation, you will be able to continue your studies on an even more advanced level in what has been called the “poetry of magic.” There is much to learn about the performance of magic in this project that even seasoned performers will find rewarding.

Recently I interviewed Roberto – in person, by telephone, and via email – and proffered the following questions. I think you will find his answers both fascinating and enlightening.

**LR:** Before you begin to teach actual card magic, the opening Lessons 1 and 2 provide a wonderful history of playing cards and practical tips on card magic performance, including, for example, tips on how to remove a deck of cards from its case. Although that premise might seem absurd to some, Michael Skinner did a lot of thinking along these lines as well.

Even in Lesson 3, you spend a lot of time on how to do simple actions in an elegant and precise manner. Many will fail to see the importance of what you have put forth here for the beginner. You touch on this in the Foreword and in the text of these Lessons, but can you expand on the importance of these natural and elegant actions and learning to do them correctly from the beginning?

**RG:** When asked for a definition of virtuosity, the violinist Yehudi Menuhin answered, “Virtuosity is when the artist controls the instrument, and not vice-versa.” In order to do this, it is vital to understand the instrument on one side, and what to do with it on the other side – then to do it in a personal way; that’s the style, the means of expression. Obviously you need something to express, which in magic is afforded by the essence of the trick you

*Left: Publicity photo, 1982.*

*Right: Accepting a Literary Fellowship from the Academy of Magical Arts, 2012.*



want to perform and who you are (the eternal question!). All of this is complex and profound, and for a beginner who is starting his or her journey it is difficult, even impossible, to understand all of this. It takes years of thoughtful practice to climb the mountain of knowledge and skill, in order to at some point be able to look down and oversee what it is all about.

So, how do you master this dilemma? Like in a vicious circle, you've got to break into it at some point, and a good idea is to follow the advice of a teacher in your chosen discipline. In Eastern cultures, to follow the way of the teacher is the acknowledged manner of getting to a degree of competence and later to mastery, whereas in our Western culture, dominated by the visual rather than the conceptual, especially today, many start by buying a few tricks, DVDs, and maybe books here and there without particular knowledge or guidance. The culmination of "the blind leading the blind" has been reached by know-how transfer through the Internet, particularly YouTube and so-called "tuto-

rials" (a heavy misuse of the term). Therefore, to follow detailed instructions of even the most simple operations, such as holding a deck, dealing cards, cutting, and shuffling, is an excellent way to begin one's journey, to build the foundation on which one's Magic Castle can then be erected room by room, floor by floor, wing by wing, until your very own palace shines above Wonderland.

**LR:** The embedded videos are a wonderful complement to the text and photographs to show how the action should look. Although they are no substitute for the text when it comes down to learning details you would miss if you just viewed the video alone, it really helps to see the action after you have learned the details. It's a beautiful compromise you have developed.

**RG:** Although I'm essentially a book person and have grown up on books like most of my generation, and in spite of having been very skeptical about the



*Above: The Teacher. PHOTO BY JULIANE ZITZELSPERGER Below right: International President-Elect Bill Evans and Roberto Giobbi.*

medium of video for years, the shooting of *Card College 1 & 2: Personal Instruction* has convinced me that videos do have some advantages with which no written instruction can compete. They show you that a sleight is feasible, how it “looks” (of course it doesn’t “look,” if well done), and in which way it is managed (i.e., elegantly integrated within a larger set of actions).

The weakness of videos is that the explanation cannot be as detailed – it would simply be too long. This is precisely the strength of a multi-media product such as my *Introduction to Card Magic*, where the Gestalt of a move can be seen in a short clip, and then its elements and sub-structures are broken down through photos and text in their smallest units. These building stones can then be studied individually and reassembled to form the whole, the Gestalt, from which one started in the first

place. When reading, all of this can be done at one’s own leisure and rhythm – and that’s important. Otherwise, there is no pleasure and no transformation of information into skill, the implementation of the latter along with its understanding of how to use it in the context of a trick being the ultimate goal.

**LR:** The overhand shuffle is one of the most important practical techniques for the performing magician, and you cover it in great detail. In fact, you were very generous to include the complete *Card College* description, which leaves nothing out. How did you develop your handling of the overhand shuffle?

**RG:** I learned the basic handling from Hugard and Braue’s landmark book, *The Royal Road to Card Magic*, when I was a boy, and only later found out that it came from Erdnase’s *The Expert at the Card Table*, who had already described the use of the left little finger protruding from the deck’s inner end. This really is the





principal difference that makes all in-jog techniques safe and natural looking.

In *Card College*, however, I didn't simply do a rewrite, a procedure which in the magic literature was typical for centuries, but I analyzed the sleight from scratch, identifying its features and major difficulties, added accurate illustrations, gave several hitherto unpublished suggestions of handling, and then, in the trick section following the explanation of the sleight, I eventually showed how to use it within a very good trick.

A critic once wrote in his blog that *Card College* was derivative. He failed to recognize that there is also a conceptual, pedagogical, and didactic originality which can make a publication innovative. I'm very grateful to my friend, Jamy Ian Swiss, who pointed out this aspect to me in one of our many conversations.

**LR:** On page fifty-eight, you first talk about audience management, and then you go into it in detail in Lesson 10. This is wonderful advice that I hope everyone will read over and over. When combined with visualization of the effect as the audience sees it, it seems to me you have a good basis for developing presentations

*Left to right: A 2001 performance in Bürgenstock, Switzerland, for executives of a large pharmaceutical company. 2011 Magic Symposium lecture. Roberto visits Steve Forte in his private gambling museum in Las Vegas.*

and writing scripts. How do you go about developing presentations for effects?

**RG:** That's one of the questions I'd have to write a book about. But since this would go beyond the scope of this interview, let me say something that is maybe atypical. I agree with my friend and mentor Juan Tamariz, who in his lectures provocatively says, "Presentation is not important." What he means, of course, is that presentation does have its importance, without doubt, but there are two other things which are more important and come first, namely the performer's person and the essence of the effect.

What does this mean in respect to your question?

One, that when looking for a presentation it should be one that comes out of who you are and what you believe in this world. As the classic Greek philosophers taught, we are what we do, but if we do what others do, we are not being our-



good advice on performing card magic just in the description of this one effect. In fact, there is a wealth of information on the performance of close-up magic scattered throughout this project. To me, that's the real value of this material, and that's why it's not just for beginners.

selves. I remember T. A. Waters telling me this when we first met at the Magic Castle, and I never forgot that. This is not easy to understand, especially for beginners, who learn from imitation, an established path. At some point in one's evolution, this path should be abandoned. You can still look at this path, but for inspiration, not for lifting.

Two, the basic effect within the trick in question, as well as the structure of the trick itself, offer clues to the presentation. Thomas Keller, one of the world's top chefs, explains in his book *Ad Hoc at Home*, that salt in cooking is used to enhance the product's inherent flavors, while pepper is a spice and is added on top. This is an excellent analogy for magic. I believe it is first necessary to fully understand what the essence of the trick is and how it can be expressed, without topping it with unnecessary spices, which would ruin the product and eventually the dish. Typical presentational ploys that can ruin a trick, if not carefully dosed, are lengthy texts, stories, and comedy. However, if applied by an inspired artist, they will enhance even the simplest trick.

**LR:** The first effect you teach is "The Mystery of the Triangle." There is a lot of

You really have taken the time to make this project the best that it can be. Can you talk a little about who has influenced your approach to card magic the most?

**RG:** I've always believed that a good teacher should not only give fish, but also and above all teach fishing. This is why I take great care in not only choosing a good technique, trick, or presentation, but I also make a point of naming and explaining the inherent principles that make all of this work. These are polyvalent concepts that, once understood and practiced, will be installed as skills and can then be applied to every trick one studies and performs from then on. This, in my opinion, is true progression and leads to personal and artistic maturity.

I learned this way of holistic and humanistic thinking from my major teachers, Juan Tamariz and Arturo de Ascanio, and it is the way of thinking and the approach of the Escuela Magica de Madrid, not a physical school, but a school of thought precisely founded by the aforementioned Masters of Magic.

**LR:** How do you practice card magic, and what advice do you have to the begin-

ner embarking on this Introduction to Card Magic?

**RG:** I conceived the course to be studied chronologically, and that's the way I advise it should be used. Maybe you can skip the first two chapters and immediately do a hands-on full immersion, but when repeating the course, read the chapter on the history of playing cards as well as the other basic information, as I think a better understanding of the larger context of magic – not only card magic! – can be gained from it.

As for how to practice, well, I wrote a complete essay on the subject in *Card College: Volume 2*, and I can't repeat all of it here. But remember two things: First, make sure you enjoy practicing and make every moment of it a moment of joy in your life. Especially when you have a tough job during the day (or night), thinking about magic, reading a good magic book or magazine, and practicing can be incredibly relaxing and inspiring. Second, whenever you practice try to do one little thing better than last time – and remember that perfection isn't attained when nothing

more can be added, but when nothing more can be taken away.

**LR:** I really liked the “Golden Rules.” There is so much good advice contained in these jewels of wisdom. How did you decide which principles deserve “Golden Rule” status?

**RG:** I have now been into magic since 1973. As of today, that is exactly forty years, and since 1988 I have been a full-time professional performer, author, and teacher. If in this time I hadn't understood what magic is or should be about, it would mean that I had wasted all these years. So it is by looking at the whole of magic and what makes it work – my lifetime experience as well as Decremps's pre-established rules – that I formulated what I called the “13 Golden Rules of Magic.”

**LR:** In Lesson 11, you bring all that you have taught in the earlier lessons together to allow the student to create a card magic program that's quite good. And this result is achievable by the student who may never have performed card magic in his or her life. That's simply amazing. You have

really done a service for our members who might want to do card magic but had no idea of where to start. Thank you for this. Those of us that have been doing this for a while could have used this way of teaching when first starting out. It would have saved so much time in accumulating knowledge.

**RG:** Einstein once said that if you can't explain something complex in simple words or to a child, you haven't really



*Roberto with Juan Tamariz (left) and John Carney.*



*Barbara and Roberto, 2012, in one of Giobbi's two home libraries.*

understood it. This course was a challenge for me to take an immensely complex and profound subject, which is magic with playing cards, and break it down into its most basic components, explain and teach them based on three didactical pillars – text, photography, and video – and at the same time merge technique, presentation, and theory in such a way that it doesn't feel like work, but appeals to the playful adult. I hope I have succeeded. Our colleague I.B.M. members will tell us at some point – maybe by hitting the “donate” button!

**LR:** In the early lessons, you spend time teaching how to hold the cards, shuffle the cards, and cut the cards. These procedures may seem obvious and simple to the uninitiated, but in Lesson 12, you teach techniques that require some of those basic procedures. This is the foundation for advanced sleight of hand, and *Card College* would be the obvious place for the student to continue his work after mastering the lessons of this project, would it not?

**RG:** As you say, this course is just the first step into the fascinating and complex world of card magic. Those who were only looking to learn a few effective tricks and how to properly handle a deck of cards will have all they need. Those, however, who through this course have come to realize that there is a whole universe to be discovered beyond it will be well advised to carefully consider the next steps. Although I never planned this to be so in 1992, when I first published Volumes 1 & 2 of *Card*

*College* in the German original, it seems it has become a standard, a fact which still amazes me.

If one likes books, I recommend getting the first two volumes, as they are really one book split in two for ease of reading. They contain what I think to be the basis in technique, effects, and an overview of the theoretical foundation that make not only card magic but the whole of magic work. For those who prefer a quick access to the subject and video instruction, I recommend my DVD set, *Card College 1 & 2 – Personal Instruction*. Initially I was skeptical about translating the books to video, but I must say that they turned out much, much better than I thought, and many say it is like taking private lessons. I won't argue.



*(Editor's Note: You can order a signed set of the DVDs directly from the author by emailing him at the address contained in the PDF.)*



# Roberto Giobbi

## One-Man Parade

By Roberto Giobbi  
Illustrated by Tony Dunn

PHOTO BY ZAKARY BELAMY

Roberto Giobbi was born in Basle, Switzerland, on May 1, 1959. He has a mathematical and scientific background, has studied literature and linguistics, and is fluent in six languages. Since 1988 he has been working as a professional magician, author, and lecturer. At the World Championship of Magic he won the title of Vice World Champion in Card Magic twice, and as the winner of all categories received the Grand Prix in Switzerland.



Roberto is a leading thinker and author of magic. He is a member of the *Escuela Magica de Madrid*, magic's only Think Tank, with forty members worldwide. He has written essays and columns for over fifty magic magazines worldwide and is the author of the five bestselling volumes of *Card College*, which are the most widely translated magic books in history and are considered globally as the ultimate reference work for card magic.

Roberto also has an international reputation as a teacher. He is a sought-after lecturer and coach for professional magicians and also gives interdisciplinary talks and workshops for industry managers on creativity, communication, and presentation.

Roberto Giobbi is married to Barbara, who also illustrates his books. They have two sons, Rafael (21) and Miro Alessandro (19). Roberto lives and works in Switzerland, near Basel.

To read his new interactive book, *Roberto Giobbi's Introduction to Card Magic*, which combines solid written explanations with video instruction, visit the I.B.M. Web Portal at [www.magician.org](http://www.magician.org) and click on Member Benefits.

## Deck Switches for Magicians

The deck switch is one of the most powerful principles in the whole realm of card conjuring. A good deck switch allows you to introduce decks with the most sophisticated set-ups and all those fantastic special decks with which you can produce effects in the miracle category. You can start and end clean, which is as close as you can come to creating the impossible.

The topic is fascinating but also highly complex, and one that justifies a book. By the time you are reading this *Parade*, my book on the subject, *The Deck Switch Book*, will have been published by Hermetic Press. Here is a synopsis of some of the techniques and tricks described plus some additional comments.

**Categories of Deck Switches:** I have a collection of more than one hundred sixty deck switches, but they can all be placed into one of the following four categories:

**Mechanical Deck Switches**, which require some kind of apparatus to affect the switch, such as a special box (e.g., Fantasios's commercially available "Deck Switcher"), a table, chair, etc.

**Technical Deck Switches**, which require pure sleight-of-hand to switch the decks. Cheats at the card table typically employ these, and you can see some prodigious examples by entering "deck switch" into YouTube.

**Deck Switches Depending on a Trick.** In my opinion, this is the most interesting and useful category for the working magician. It allows the deck in use to be switched for the cold deck either in the course of a specific trick or in the offbeat between two tricks.

**Substitute Deck Switches.** This is a category I discovered only recently which allows you to "openly" switch decks without the audience realizing that a switch has occurred.

Let's now look at a few very practical examples that won't require any special equipment and that can be used almost

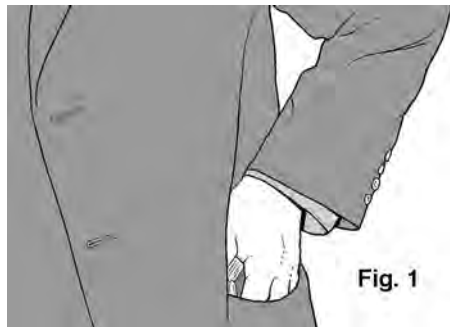
anytime and under virtually all circumstances.

### The Finger-tongs Switch

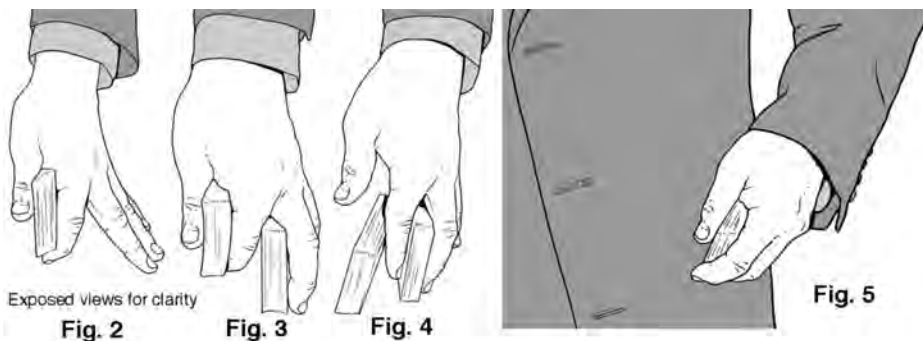
This is a basic handling that is used in many deck switches where the hand with the deck in use is inserted in a pocket and comes out with the cold deck. "The Pocket Search Deck Switch" and "The Ninja Deck Switch," described next, are two examples. The context and management can be very different, but the fingering described here will always be the same.

**HANDLING:** Hold the deck in left hand dealing position – normally this will be face down but could be face up in some contexts. The cold deck is in the left outer pocket of your coat, back towards your body.

Under some pretext provided by the individual trick, slide your left hand into the coat's pocket, sliding along the fabric the heel of the thumb pressing lightly against your body (**Fig. 1**). This ensures that the deck held will be positioned to the right of the cold deck, closer to your body. As soon as the hand and its deck enter the pocket, the left forefinger moves from the outer end to the right side of the deck and takes over control with the thumb, while the middle, ring and little fingers are splayed out as a unit (**Fig. 2**).



These three fingers, acting as a unit on one side, form a sort of "finger tongs" with the forefinger on the other side. Slide the "finger tongs" over the cold deck's upper long side (**Fig. 3**). The finger tongs grip the cold deck firmly, while the deck in use is released by the thumb and forefinger and falls into the pocket (**Fig. 4**).



The hand comes out of the pocket, but as soon as the *thumb* has passed the upper long side of the deck in use, it is placed on top of the cold deck. Simultaneously, the forefinger shifts its position to the outer end, so by the time the hand and deck reemerge from the pocket, the deck is held in standard dealing position and the Gestalt of hand and deck is the same as before (**Fig. 5**).

**Details of Handling.** In most cases – and we will discuss two examples later – this handling will be used in a situation where *both hands* go to the pockets, usually putting something away or looking for an object. In such instances the right hand acts as an additional blocker.

The usual rhythm will be as follows: Both hands go to the pockets, but the right hand precedes the left hand by about one second. Then the right hand comes out of its pocket about a second before the left hand, thus attracting the audience’s attention and affording additional shade for the left hand.

Besides precise fingering, the most important things are attitude, timing, and misdirection. The *attitude* is responsible for expressing unconcerned nonchalance. The *timing* makes the action last barely two seconds – between the beginning of the dipping action and the end of it, when hand and deck are again in starting position, you can count two Mississippi and you’re done. The *misdirection* is activated by looking into the audience and saying something amusing, for a laugh always causes the audience to relax. You can also

ask a question, for a question such as, “Has anybody got a clean handkerchief?” or “Has anybody got a pen?” has great misdirectional power.

Capably coordinated attitude, timing, and misdirection, as well as impeccable technique, will result in the impression that the hand casually dips in and out of the pocket. It will appear to never have happened, like a ninja’s movement.

This grip also works with a partial deck or a small packet, of course – a fact not to be neglected.

### The Pocket-Search Deck Switch

This is what I would call the template for this type of switch as it contains the essential elements of technique, handling, management, timing, and misdirection. Once these concepts are understood, almost any module can be varied, including but not limiting to specially made gimmicks to drop the deck in use and to hold the cold deck.

**EFFECT:** The performer looks for his pen, briefly patting his coat from the outside and eventually finds it in his left inner pocket. In this brief “searching action” the deck is imperceptibly switched.

**SET-UP:** The loose cold deck rests on its side in the left outer coat pocket, back towards your body.

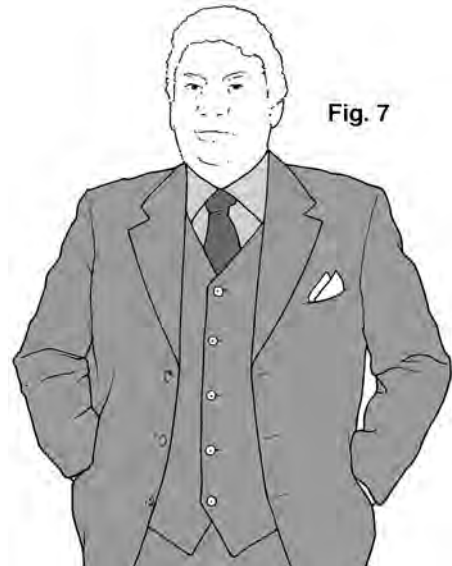
**PERFORMANCE:** The deck is held face down in left-hand dealing position. To give this deck switch a minimal context, let’s assume a spectator has just taken a card, which she is showing around to the others. Say, “Please look at the card and

remember it. I would also kindly ask you to sign it on its face. Have you got a pen that can write on playing cards?" Pause for just a beat, and then continue, "Wait a minute – I have one here!" The time it takes to pronounce these or similar words, dictated by the context of your application, is the time span in which the deck switch occurs.

Here are the mechanics: The right hand starts the movement by going into the right outer coat pocket, feeling for the pen (Fig. 6). By moving first it will attract the audience's attention.



down in dealing position. The left hand also goes straight up, touching the coat from the outside and feels that there is a pen inside (Fig. 9). Now you remember that you always have your pen there, maybe with this silent script: "Of course, here it is!" The position depicted in the figure is held less than a second.



One second later the left hand with the deck in use goes to the left coat pocket with the same intention of looking for a pen, but immediately does the finger-tongs switch described above, seizing the cold deck. For a fraction of a second both hands are in their respective pockets (Fig. 7), for as soon as the left hand enters its pocket, the right hand already starts to come out of its pocket and goes straight up to breast-height, feeling the inside coat pocket *from the outside* (Fig. 8).

Again, one second after the right hand comes out, the left hand re-emerges from its pocket with the cold deck held face

Immediately the left hand opens the left side of the coat, allowing the right hand to enter it and seize the pen (Fig. 10).



Fig. 9



Fig. 10

Take out the pen, and hand it to the spectator, place it on the table, or use it yourself to write a prediction or whatever. The deck switch has been accomplished.

**NOTES:** The best way of doing this well is to understand the Gestalt of the action (i.e., how it looks to the audience). Go through the whole action in your mind, visualizing each sequence and pantomiming it. Consider each action as a word and

the whole as a sentence. Now simply make a grammatically correct, clearly understandable sentence, and you've got it!

Like any other good strategy and sleight, you don't want to use this more than once in the same performance and before the same audience.

Instead of a pen you could be looking for a letter opener to open a prediction envelope. Or maybe you take out a magnifying glass, which will allow a spectator to see what you are about to demonstrate "really close-up." It is also possible to look for something you have in the breast pocket of your shirt. Think about it, and you will come up with several more ideas. Remember, always make it something logical or totally absurd. I don't think it is a good idea to take out something that clearly doesn't belong in the inside pockets, like a handkerchief, which belongs in the trousers pocket.

I have no doubt that most regular performers will have come up with similar ways to manage this switch, which seems to be a natural solution once you have identified the problem. My much-admired fellow professional, Jan Forster, uses a similar handling in the context of a trick he calls "Blitzschnell Plus" (see the January, 2002, issue of *MAGIE*).

### The Ninja Deck Switch

I call this switch the Ninja Deck Switch because, if done correctly, it goes by totally unperceived. I found this switch in my notebook attributed to Dai Vernon, but wasn't able to find a source. It is one of those situational deck switches which I would expect an experienced performer to use. The beginning magician has a tendency to look for clever sleight-of-hand methods, but it is this type of switch that works best in professional everyday situations.

**EFFECT:** At the end of a few tricks the magician looks for the card case, realizes it has been on the table all along, takes it, and replaces the deck. The deck is then placed aside or given to a spectator to hold. In the process, the deck has been switched.

**SET-UP:** The cold deck (loose cards) is in the left outer coat pocket, back towards your body.

**PERFORMANCE:** You have just finished performing two or three excellent card tricks and are holding the deck in use face down in dealing position. Since you've just reached the climax of a card trick, the audience is naturally reacting. They laugh and applaud – this causes an off-beat moment and naturally relaxes their attention.

As the spectators show their appreciation, look into the audience with an appreciative smile – your silent script could be along these lines, “Thank you very much; that’s really kind of you...” Think, “Where is the cards case?” You still look into the audience, but now with a sort of “idle glance” (you look at “nothing” at the back of the audience and express a change in thinking mode – this happens automatically as soon as you internally ask yourself the question). Both hands absentmindedly start their way to the respective outer coat pockets.

“Did I put it in my pocket?” As the hands are in the pockets for hardly two seconds, the left hand executes the “Finger-tongs Switch” explained at the beginning of this *Parade*. Suddenly notice the empty card case, which you had put on the table a little to the side – that’s why you didn’t notice it immediately. “Oh, here it is!” You’re already out – it was merely a dip-in and a dip-out. Put the deck into its card case, and put it aside on the table or give the deck away.

From the moment you start looking for the card case to the moment the deck has been cased maybe five seconds have elapsed. My suggested scenario is without words; in my opinion, it is best to take advantage of the offbeat moment without drawing attention to what you do. Don’t try to “misdirect” with a spoken text, and don’t try to act in a way that won’t come out as being natural. Since most of us are not actors, any attempt at trying to act is destined to utterly fail. The way to succeed is simply to do it.

One question is left to be answered: Why is the deck placed in the card case if it is used again later? I’ll give you three answers:

You are an orderly person, and everything has its place. This is an attitude, and it shows in what you do and what you say. It doesn’t need an explicit explanation, but is coherent with your true personality.

You intend to give the deck away as a souvenir to an assisting spectator. You obviously put the deck into its case, as both belong together. Later you ask for the loan of a deck. (See Bill Evans’ introduction to the interview we did.)

You follow with a trick using another instrument than cards, so you put them aside for the moment. It makes sense to put them in their case, especially if left at the side on the table, in case somebody inadvertently hits them and they fall scattered to the floor.

There are many more answers you can find for yourselves, but as always I believe it is important to ask the question, thereby identifying the problem and finding the best personal solution.

## Because the Cards Know: The A-2-4-8 Divination

This is a very old and simple trick that can even be found in children’s books of magic. However, after having added a few details of handling and performing it for several years in various situations and for different types of audiences, I can vouch for its effectiveness. Although not a closer, it is short and sweet. That’s indeed the kind of trick often needed, as it not only dramatically prepares the ground for a stronger piece to follow, it is also used to ring in the deck which allows that miracle!

**EFFECT:** As the spectator shuffles the deck, he also thinks of any card. The deck is placed in the performer’s pocket, who then produces a card matching the suit of the thought-of card and then a card that matches its value – thus divining a freely

thought of card with the help of the wisdom of the deck.

**SET-UP:** The top cards of the face-down cold deck are Ace of Hearts, Two of Spades, Four of Diamonds, and Eight of Clubs (Fig. 11).

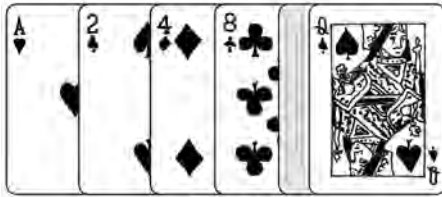


Fig. 11

The deck is placed with the faces towards your body into the shirt pocket, which will be covered by the coat you are wearing. If you are in formal dress and wear a vest, you can put the cold deck in the upper left pocket of the vest. This can also be performed without a coat; in this case, put the cold deck in your right hip pocket in an upright position or behind a soft cardboard separator so it doesn't show through the material. (Jeans are best for this because of the relatively stiff material.)

**PERFORMANCE:** As a spectator thoroughly shuffles and cuts the deck – emphasize this point – explain that after many years of having handled the cards every day for several hours, the cards have become your best friends. If you have not been into magic for long, simply explain that the cards have an inherent power; they know things. The point of this little prologue, which you shouldn't omit, is to give a dramatic justification of why you will not be locating their card but cards that make up the identity of the card.

Take the shuffled deck and apparently place it into your shirt pocket. In reality, drop it into the left inner coat pocket as soon as the hand is hidden from the audience's view. Turning a bit right will help cover any angles. Immediately open the coat where the right hand is seen to "adjust" the (cold) deck in the shirt pocket; turning a bit to your left will better "accidentally expose" this situation.

Ask for the name of the freely thought-of card and announce that the cards themselves will be able to identify the card because the cards know. Regardless of which card is now named, you first extract one of the top four cards, which matches its suit. So if the Seven of Spades is named, reach into the shirt pocket and pull out the second card from the top, the Two of Spades, announcing that the deck will automatically deliver a card with the matching suit to your hand – because the cards know.

Next, the deck will magically deliver to your hand cards that make up the value of the thought of card. You already have a two on the table; to this add the next two top cards, the Ace of Hearts and the Four of Diamonds, which will give you seven as a result ( $1+2+4=7$ ): Seven of Spades!

As a quick trial will prove, the four values (ace, two, four, and eight), depending on how they are combined, can add up to any value from Ace (1) to King (13). Obviously there are four chances out of fifty-two that one of the four "set cards" is the thought-of card, so you have a miracle since you can pull out *exactly* the card they name (this being the reason why I chose to start with the Ace of Hearts rather than the Ace of Clubs as per CHaSeD formula, as this latter Ace will be called less often than the former). And there are twelve more chances out of the remaining forty-eight that you only have to take out two cards, one for the suit and one for the value, which is not a bad result either.

**Expert Finale.** You can leave it at that or proceed to magically transform the "indicator cards" into the card proper. To do this, take out the balance of the cold deck from the shirt pocket and casually run through it with the faces towards yourself, locating and culling the card called out. This can be done on the offbeat without comment or by mentioning that the spectator could obviously have named any other card from the deck. Next pick up the tabled cards, casually square them at the fingertips above the deck and, in the process, steal the face-down top card underneath.

Use the Snap-over Color Change (*Card College Volume 5*, page 1133) or the Flip-flop Change (*Card College Volume 3*, page 747) to affect the transformation – throw their named card face up on the table. Finis.

**NOTES:** Albeit this item belongs to the category of simple tricks, the expert doesn't despise such things, because he knows the difference between a minor and a major miracle, and thereby can judge where and when to do what. A beginner would use this type of trick because he doesn't know any better; an expert uses it because he knows how to do it better. The version described here has indeed fooled several people who were familiar with the basic principle but were misled by the deceptive management.

The "illogical" part of this trick is that cards are produced which are not the spectator's thought-of card. The presentation given takes care of that, and before you change it "to adapt it to your own personality," as the textbooks so often suggest, please retain this strategic idea.

**BONUS:** And here is a bonus as a reward for those who have read so far. The effect is not exactly the same, but similar. Instead of using a cold deck that has the above-mentioned four cards on top, take a deck in memorized order or a deck where you can calculate its position once you know its identity – many systems allow this, but a memorized deck is the most elegant solution.

From the deck in use have one card "thought of" by means of the spectator's peek, retaining a break under their card. Do any one of the known glimpses to secretly gain knowledge of the spectator's card, and then hand it to someone to be thoroughly shuffled and cut. Take it back, and do the switch as explained, apparently placing it in your shirt pocket but in reality ditching it in the inside pocket of your coat. Since you have glimpsed the card, you know where it is in your memorized deck. Assume it is the Five of Diamonds and you know it is the twenty-fifth card from the top (Tamariz stack) – remember that the

cold (memorized) deck has its back towards the audience.

Reach into your shirt pocket and take out less than half the deck – the rule is to estimate five or six cards above the selection's position. You will automatically see the bottom card, which will cue you to the spectator's card position in the remainder of the deck. Explain that you are going to take cards out of the deck and you would like the spectator to think intently of his card. Replace the bunch of cards you just took *behind* the rest in the pocket. This is done just in the way of demonstration and it allows you to imperceptibly cut the deck near the thought-of card. Take the top card and place it face down on the table – it is more effective if you don't look at the cards but at the audience. Keep taking cards out of the pocket and placing them on the table until you hold their card in hand – stop as if struck by a sudden inspiration. Ask for the name of the card and then turn it around for the climax. As the audience applauds, take out the remainder of the deck, add the single card, and you are ready to go with a stacked deck.

Alternatively, you can take out cards until you know that the next card is going to be the spectator's card. Leave it on top of the balance and continue the deal by taking cards from its bottom. Ask the spectator to shout out "stop" at any time – the next card will be his card, because you simply took it from the top.

You can also look at the spectator's lips which will move an instant before "stop" is called, and then take the top card, so you end up holding his very card as he calls "stop" – this requires more performing experience, but is a smash finale.

This is an adaptation of an excellent routine by Argentina's Adrian Guerra – the original can be found in Juan Tamariz's *Mnemonic*.

This ends the "preview" to *The Deck Switch Book*. The book also contains twenty-seven more deck switches to be used in various situations, including several stand-up switches which you can do without a jacket, surrounded, and some even without

pockets, and an extensive commented bibliography. Order directly from [www.hermeticpress.com](http://www.hermeticpress.com).

## The Vacuum Card

**REQUIREMENTS:** For this routine you will need an object that is found in almost any good restaurant and most households and which is used to collect bread crumbs from the tablecloth after eating – for the convenience of this article let’s call this prop a “table cleaner.” **Figure 12** shows such a prop: It is a hand-held device with a hollow portion that receives the crumbs, it is often seen in upscale restaurants. There are many designs and most can be used for this effect.

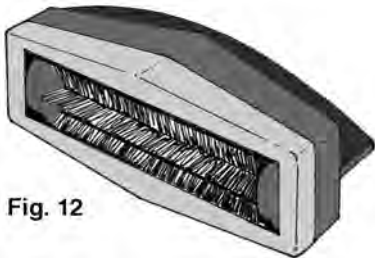


Fig. 12

It is probably best to perform this trick in a place that has such an object, like at home or in a restaurant, since it might look odd to take a “table cleaner” out of your pocket. But then again, such unusual things may be your cup of tea.

**EFFECT:** An indifferent card changes into a previously selected card. It then dissolves into its individual atoms and becomes invisible. A table-cleaning device is used to collect these particles. When it is opened, it is seen to contain the previously selected card in its restored condition.

**SET-UP:** A little preparation is required. Take the cleaning device and load it with the duplicate card, which will later be forced from the deck proper. Let’s assume this to be the Eight of Hearts. If you plan to perform this in a venue outside your home, it should be an easy matter to set it up a little beforehand. Even if you later don’t perform this trick, you will provide your host with an unusual moment at

some point after you’ve left. The great Malini used this type of strategy all of the time, so why shouldn’t you?

**PERFORMANCE:** When you are ready to perform, take the deck and force the Eight of Hearts. Be sure that everybody sees the card, which is just one prerequisite for involving the entire audience. Since the explanation of the numerous techniques available to accomplish this task cannot possibly be within the scope of this short article, I wrote an entire book series dedicated to the subject of forcing cards and to some other subjects pertaining to playing cards. In other words, check *Card College* or any other work at hand for a convenient method. Personally, I favour the Classic Force (*Card College Volume 1*, page 217).

Have the spectator replace the card into the deck and imperceptibly control it to the top. At this point you may add an Injog Shuffle and a False Cut, retaining the top card in its position.

**Miraculous Transformation.** Explain to your audience, “I will take any card from this pack and magically transform it into your card, which is lost somewhere among all the others.” Since you utter these words as you are completing the pack after the final False Cut, it seems perfectly justified to take the card, which the hazards of the shuffle have brought to the top. Therefore, double lift and turn over the top two cards as one to show an indifferent card, maybe the Queen of Spades. Then turn the double card again face down and, with your left thumb, push the top card to the right for half its width. Extend your right hand with the intention of completely covering the card, which you touch with the outer phalanx of your right little finger near the outer right corner (**Fig. 13**).

Pivot your right hand palm down and to the left, pressing the sidejogged top card onto the table. As you do this, be sure to let the *outer right corner* of the card extend beyond the right little finger for a brief moment (**Fig. 14**).

Keep your right hand stationery, smoothly turning your left hand palm down and moving it off to the left the

instant your right hand presses the card against the table. This is at present merely a feint, but will shortly strengthen the deceptiveness of the vanish to be executed (Fig. 15).

Fig. 13

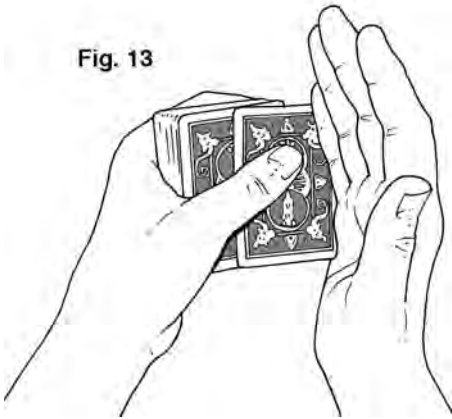
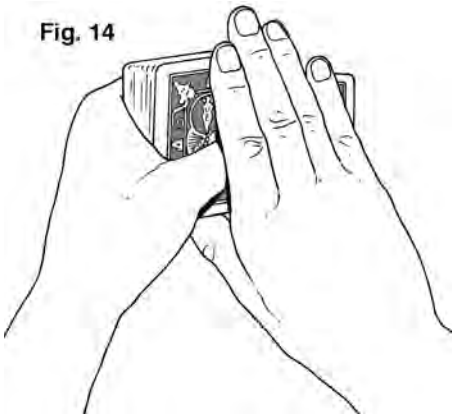


Fig. 14



With your right hand, rub the card against the table for a few seconds as you ask the spectator to name the selection.

When he does so, turn the card under your hand face up to reveal the Eight of Hearts. This is the first effect, and to a lay audience it is a good one.

**Molecular Identity Transfer Plus.**

Once the reaction to the effect has subsided, tell your audience that the transformation just witnessed is of course due to a quick decomposition and subsequent recombination based on the well-known law of molecular identity transfer. (Since I'm the inventor of this law, you may address any questions to me care of the editor.) Offer to repeat for those who don't understand this obvious explanation.

Display the spectator's selection again, and turn it over sideways and face down on top of the deck. Be sure to use precisely the same actions employed for the earlier turnover of the double card. Now comes the actual vanish: Once again, use your left thumb to push the top card to the right, halfway off the deck. With the exact same handling as before, place the right hand over the card and apparently press it onto the table, making sure that the outer right corner of the card projects briefly beyond the right little finger. At the instant you turn the right hand palm down, use the left thumb to pull the card back onto the deck. Immediately turn your left hand back up and move it to the left.

Pretend to rub the card against the tablecloth with your right hand. Raise your hand and show that the card has apparently vanished. As some of my readers will have noticed, you have just performed the "rub-a-dub-dub vanish" from Hugard and Braue's book *Expert Card Technique* (page 307). In my opinion, this is one of the five best card books, the other four being Hofzinsler's *Card Conjuring*, Dai Vernon's *Revelations*, Hilliard's *Greater Magic*, and the fifth is wild.

**Scientific Resolution.** Immediately explain to your spectators that the card has not really vanished but simply dissolved into its atoms, obviously. Therefore it is still there, but they cannot see it. In the (sur)reality of the magician this makes

perfect sense, doesn't it? In order to make the card visible again, you need a special device you have invented – a table cleaner. Depending on your character and presentational skills this may or may not raise a chuckle. However, this is of subordinate importance, since you should find your own way of staging this effect anyway – I'm just giving you an idea of my presentation so that this explanation makes any sense at all.

Eventually, you will prove your statement by taking the table cleaner and apparently sweeping up bits of atoms here and there: "...yes, this is another pip ... and here are the indices..."

Pausing for a beat will allow the absurdity of the situation to be appreciated (we hope). Then take off the lid from the table cleaner or have a spectator perform this task in order to reveal one single card face down. Ask the spectator who previously selected the card to name it in a loud voice. Slowly turn it face up, first towards yourself and then towards the audience in order to reveal what should be quite a surprising ending.

**NOTES:** Replace the duplicate card on top of the deck, but immediately palm it in your right hand, which you use to put the table cleaner in your pocket. Once you try to put the table cleaner in your pocket, you realize it has no business there and remove it; this will provide you with more than enough time to ditch the duplicate. Alternatively, you can palm and ditch the Eight of Hearts from the deck as soon as it has been replaced after the initial force. This will allow you to end clean by simply placing the duplicate from the table cleaner into the deck at the conclusion of this effect.

If your device requires the duplicate Eight of Hearts to be folded or rolled, you won't be able to use it again. In this case, simply give it away at the end of your performance to the spectator who chose the card – don't forget to sign the card and put the date of the performance on it, as it will make for a great souvenir.

## The Very Open Prediction

The effect, usually called "Open Prediction," has been associated for many years with Paul Curry, a truly inventive genius of twentieth-century card magic, who proposed it as a problem in the late 1940s. Many ingenious card workers have tried their hand at it and submitted varied and numberless solutions.

Obviously the concept of the prediction in card magic goes at least as far back as 1584, where a prediction in a walnut is mentioned in Scot's *Discoverie of Witchcraft*, and to 1593, when Horatio Galasso published *Giochi di carte bellissimi di regola, e di memoria* in Venice. Paul Curry's addition then, was to impose the conditions of the presentation, conditions which I have respected in the present piece.

My personal answer offered here has elements that have been used before, such as a double-faced card. The routining and text, as well as the use of a very simple gimmicked wallet and the straightforward handling have been developed independently.

**EFFECT:** A prediction of a playing card is openly placed on the table; let's say the Two of Spades. The deck is shuffled and the cards dealt one by one face up on the table by the spectator himself. In the process, he is asked to leave one single card face down. The Two of Spades does not turn up during the spectator's dealing process. It is found that the card left face down is the Two of Spades from the deck, thus perfectly fulfilling the open prophecy made at the beginning!

**REQUIREMENTS:** Besides an ordinary pack of cards that need not even be complete, you will require a double-faced card and a specially gimmicked wallet. At the end of the performance you will be left with the same ordinary deck, and the dirty "tools" will be cleaned away as imperceptibly as they have been ringed in – the dealer's ads would say that "you start clean and you end clean."

The wallet looks like a simple one-compartment plastic wallet with an opaque back and a clear plastic front, such as it is commonly used to hold a pass or similar customary document. However, the wallet has a double compartment, which is separated from the visible compartment by a plastic wall of the same material as the opaque part (**Fig. 16**). To create the double compartment, simply take a second similar wallet, cut off the borders and stick the back opaque wall into the normal wallet.

Take any card that has a contrasting back – design and color – to the deck you will be using, and place it into the open compartment so that its back will be visible through the clear plastic side. So if you normally use a blue-backed Bicycle deck for performance, take a red backed Tally-Ho card as your stranger card. If you wish, you may insert two stamps, a small photograph of yours, a subway ticket, or any other small item along with this card. **Figure 17** shows a possible configuration. You may seal the visible compartment now with transparent tape, if you wish. Although this is not necessary, strictly speaking, it may facilitate the extraction of the double-faced card later.

For the purpose of this explanation let's assume that the double facer has a Two of Spades on one side and a Nine of Hearts on the other side. Place it into the secret compartment so that the Two of Spades shows when you hold the wallet with the opaque side upward.

The wallet prepared in this way awaits its mission in any easily accessible place, such as in the breast pocket of your coat or shirt.

**PERFORMANCE:** Introduce the wallet with the back of the stranger card showing, holding it in your left hand. Start the prologue, “This is a prediction playing card. It states something that has not yet occurred, but which will happen in the near future. Normally you are not allowed to look destiny in its face before the proper time has arrived. Because if you do that, the same thing might happen as when Pandora’s Box was opened prematurely – pandemonium bursts out. But in the magician’s theater it is possible to get a glimpse of what awaits us without being harmed... hopefully. So let’s look at the face of the prediction card.”

It is logical to turn the wallet over so that the face of the card would point upward. Do precisely that and then take out the double-faced card with the Two of Spades showing. The spectators will think that they are looking at the face of the card, the back of which they just saw. Place the wallet aside where it gets the least attention, and make the two of Spades the center of the spectator’s interest and the source of information.

Take the deck and ribbon spread it face up from left to right on the table. Locate the Two of Spades from the deck, take it out, and hold it in your right hand at its right side, thumb on the face and fingers on the back. “Obviously the deck contains a similar card to the prediction card, which in this case is the Two of Spades.” As a way of illustrating what is being said, scoop up the double facer with the aid of the card in your right hand (**Fig. 18**). Immediately transfer the top card, the double facer, to the left hand, keeping the Two of Spades from the

CUT FROM SECOND WALLET



**Fig. 16**



**Fig. 17**

deck in the right hand. This is done as your body turns to the left. Both hands, comfortably held at a distance of maybe ten inches from one another, will naturally follow the body turn (**Fig. 19**). The turn of the body is justified by addressing the spectators on your left.

**Fig. 18**



**Fig. 19**



Turn back to again fully face the audience as you finish your statement. The card in the left hand is now held slightly above and in front of the face-up spread, subtly suggesting that this is where it came from in the first place. The card in the right hand is held more or less over the same zone of

the table the “prediction card” was taken from just a few seconds earlier. In reality, the two cards have been switched. Since nobody knows what is about to happen and no effect has taken place, yet, it would take a magician’s wife to challenge you on this point (the magician’s wife handling is described in the notes at the end of this text).

Drop the double facer with the Two of Spades showing on the last face card of the tabled spread, all this time taking care not to expose the “dirty side” of the card, obviously. Gather the spread, turn the deck face down and apparently lose the card using any kind of unobtrusive false cut. I like to cut the deck, keep a break, and then double cut to the break.

In squaring the cards you must imperceptibly turn over the bottom card so that the Nine of Hearts side of the double facer is now showing. For this you can use a Half Pass, which is the most elegant method if you can do it imperceptibly, or any other means easily accessible to you. The easiest way might be to use the Braue Reversal in the following way: As soon as you have dropped the double-faced Two of Spades on the face of the spread, gather the latter and, in so doing, obtain a left little finger break beneath the face card. With the left hand take the bottom half, flip it face down, and place it on the right hand’s cards. Take all the cards below the break, flip them face down, and replace them on top. You have thus turned the deck face down and in the process reversed the double facer, which now rests at the bottom of the deck.

**Spectator Deals the Cards.** Explain to the spectator, “Please take the pack, and deal the cards face up like this.” As if to illustrate your instructions, hold the deck face up in dealing position, and deal the first two cards face up one on top of the other on the table. Immediately hand the balance of the deck to the spectator for him to continue the dealing procedure.

You have thus elegantly and imperceptibly gotten rid of the double facer without

taking the risk that its other side might be accidentally exposed, a thing which could happen if you let the spectator do the procedure.

Wait for the spectator to have dealt one or two cards, and then tell him that he must stop as soon as the Two of Spades from the deck turns up. Let him deal another two or three cards, then further instruct him to hold the balance of the deck face down and deal the cards face up on the already tabled cards, for “dramatic reasons,” you might add.

Let him deal yet another few cards, and then tell him that he may leave any card at any point face down and continue the deal until he hits the Two of Spades.

The point of giving the instruction piece by piece is to always maintain clarity and thus interest. If you gave him all the instructions at once, you would risk confusing him and thus losing his attention and maybe also that of the audience.

Let’s assume that after about twenty cards he deals one card face down. He will then continue the deal until he runs out of cards, because there will be no Two of Spades showing. The Two from the deck is the prediction card you have placed aside at the beginning and which the spectators believe to be the red-backed stranger card. The double facer itself has been secretly turned over to show its other side, in our example the Nine of Hearts.

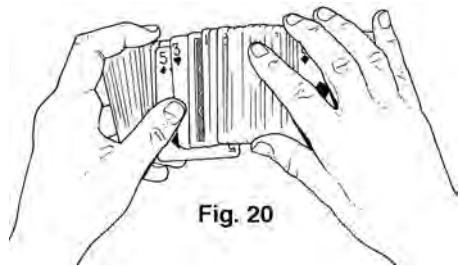
Contrary to what some may believe now, the dealing procedure can be made quite interesting without saying much, but by displaying the proper attitude towards the dealing action and the spectator doing the dealing: Wait yourself for the Two of Spades to turn up, maybe even innocently inquire if the cards do not stick together. After some performance experience with this effect, you will notice that after about half of the cards have been dealt, at least a part of the audience starts to wonder if the Two of Spades will turn up at all, and they will already assume that it might be the card left face down. All of this is very good because it will maintain interest and also

influence in your favor the audience’s perception of the actions to come.

**The Proof.** As soon as the spectator has finished dealing the cards, look him in the eyes and get his confirmation that the Two of Spades “is not in the deck.” When he confirms this, make him notice that although it did not turn up, it could still be in the deck since one card, and one card only, was left face down during the dealing procedure.

It is absolutely logical and consistent with the procedure to spread the deck face up and to point to the only face-down card. Make everybody notice that this is the only face-down card and that no cards are sticking together. This will prevent the spectators from wanting to examine the spread when it is turned face down in just a few seconds, a thing which they should not do.

“Let’s turn the spread over and look at which card you have left reversed.” As you say this, gather the spread from left to right. Assume the card on the left of the face-down card to be the Three of Hearts. Put the tip of your left thumb on the left side of the card immediately to the left of the Three of Hearts as you come to it. Press down lightly with the left thumb and continue the gathering action to the right as you injog this card slightly; **Figure 20** shows this moment. When the deck is eventually placed into left hand dealing position, it is an easy matter for the right thumb to obtain a break above the injogged card and then transfer it to the left little finger.



Turn the deck face down, and in the action perform a Turnover Pass at the break. The Pass is additionally covered by

moving your body to your left, because you now ribbon spread the deck face down. As you spread the cards, the Two of Spades will show face up among all the other face-down cards. Finish by casually spreading the cards, taking care that the last few cards remain together to hide the second card from the top, which is face up.

Push the Two of Spades out of the spread to display its entire face. At this point everybody will think the performance has finished, and indeed the effect has reached its climax.

**The Clean-up.** You will use the offbeat provided by the strong effect to switch the double facer back for the “prediction” of the Two of Spades, which really belongs to the deck. For this you may use the handling already described at the beginning or provide your own method. If you have used the method suggested, your left hand now holds the normal Two of Spades, and your right hand holds the double facer with the Two of Spades showing. Again nothing has visibly happened for the spectator, so don’t run because nobody will be chasing you, to use an expression coined by Al Baker.

Turn the card in your left hand face down, and drop it on the spread; everybody can see that this is the Two of Spades from the regular deck in use. Insert the double facer with the Two of Spades showing back in the wallet, which has been residing with its opaque side upward on the table. As you replace the wallet back into the breast pocket, from where you took it initially, everybody will be able to see the red back of the “stranger” card – everything is at it should be...only you know better.

**NOTES:** As stated above, you can use

an ordinary deck of cards and go into the presentation of the effect at any time you wish. You don’t even have to care much about the brand of the cards, as long as they are poker format and have approximately the same finish as the double facer. My experience has been that, due to the strength of the effect, it may very well be placed at the end or near the end of a program.

The “magician’s wife handling:” You may, if you wish, circumvent the initial switch by simply having the double-faced card in the deck, and place the deck’s Two of Spades in the hidden compartment of the wallet to begin with. “Very Open Prediction” may thus become the first card effect in your program. You could even use the deck for a few earlier experiments without exposing the gimmick.

When you turn the double facer over, the Nine of Hearts will be showing (in our example). There is a very slim probability that the deck’s Nine of Hearts is on the bottom or very near it. This can be readily avoided by spreading the deck to see whether the Nine of Hearts is near the bottom. If it is, simply gather the spread, cut the deck, and spread it again before taking out the Two of Spades.

For an excellent self-working version of this trick, see “The Open Prediction” in Lesson Ten of *Introduction to Card Magic*, an e-book you can download for free from the I.B.M. Web Portal.

Send comments and appreciations to

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## **Parade Contributions Wanted From Rings and Individuals**

We accept single or multiple Parade contributions from individuals. Not only will we accept them, we would sincerely love to have more of them. We also welcome One-Man Parades and Ring Parades. Send them along to the Editor. Address on page 4. Thanks, we look forward to hearing from you!