

The
«Unedited»
Card Magic

of
Roberto Giobbi

The Unedited Card Magic of Roberto Giobbi

(...plus one non-card bonus)

Conceived and written by Roberto Giobbi

Photographed, illustrated and layouted by Barbara Giobbi-Ebnöther

This copy is personally dedicated to

with my very best wishes!



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Foreword

Some believe that forewords are written solely for the author's vanity, others have said that they are seldom read.

The first point harbors a grain of truth, especially for those prefaces written by close friends who cannot help but write nice things, otherwise they have been friends. So I'm writing this preface myself. The reason I do is that I'm not so sure about the second statement. At least I read every foreword. I know of some books I've only read the foreword... seriously.

I would go so far as to say that forewords are a literary sub-genre, and if written well can be beautiful as well as instructive. In a conversation about forewords, prefaces and prologues – it is not so clear what the differences are - my colleague Andino, who has studied philosophy and performs magic, informed me that the Danish philosopher Kierkegaard (1813-1855) wrote a book solely made up of forewords to imaginary books – what a beautiful idea.

This publication is meant as a set of lecture notes accompanying my lecture of Tuesday, 3rd April 2012, given at *The Magic Apple*, Studio City (CA). This is indeed a unique lecture for several reasons. First, although I have done hundreds of lectures over the past thirty plus years, I've never done two lectures the same. Second, and that explains part of the first reason, I have never ever done a lecture tour and will most probably never do. Third, it is given two days after the Academy of Magical Arts, with offices at the Magic Castle, Hollywood, has awarded me their prestigious "Literary Fellowship", this being the reason why I am in Los Angeles in the first place.

Those who learn that I speak six languages are usually quite impressed. However, I hasten to add that I don't consider this to be of more merit than being a doctor, an architect or other specialist, as languages – linguistics and literature - simply were the subject of my studies, and I used to be a translator and interpreter before I decided to devote my life full time to magic in 1988 at age 29.

Furthermore it is one thing to be able to read, understand and speak a language, but an entirely different one to write it. I've written all my books in German, and they were then translated by others. The only exceptions are my latest two books, *Card College Volume 5* and *Secret Agenda*, which I wrote directly in English. These books, however, were edited by my friend and publisher Stephen Minch, whom many consider the best in the business, this being the reason they read so well (I'm told).

So here we come to the explanation of the title of these lecture notes, *The Unedited Card Magic of Roberto Giobbi*, which you might consider a curiosity, and it has to do with the fact that they were written directly by me in English, without anybody except myself (and Word's spelling-check) proof-reading them or trying out the items described therein. You may therefore consider all typos, stylistic clumsiness and mistakes as being an integral part of this work, making them, well, unique. Considering that I was awarded the "AMA Literary Fellowship", these bloomers should enable you to sell them with a profit on Ebay...

To round this off, I would like to extend my sincerest thanks to my wife Barbara, for having taken the photographs, which illustrate these notes, and for the reader-friendly layout she has created, as well as to my friend Brent Geris who has kindly agreed to set up this special lecture and take care of the printing of these notes.

Roberto Giobbi, Muttenz (Switzerland), April 2012

Tally-Ho

Created by Richard Vollmer.

Described by Roberto Giobbi (who has also added a few details)

To my knowledge it was the brilliant Henry T. Christ (1903-1972) who first used names on a card case to produce four-of-a-kind. His solution was strictly mathematical and therefore very interesting from a point of view of method, but also slightly lengthy as experienced by an audience, since you had to go through various counting and dealing procedures. Although various experts tackled the subject, it was Harry Lorayne who published some laypeople-oriented solutions and made the plot popular.

The version you are about to read is based on one of several solutions the ever creative Richard Vollmer came up with. A slightly more elaborate version, where a second set of four-of-a-kind is produced as a kicker-ending, appeared in MAGIC magazine in 2005. I've been doing the version you are about to read for several years now and have added details of handling, but also of psychological and dramatic construction.

Effect

The four Aces are shuffled into the deck, but due to instructions delivered by the case itself, the Aces are found with just one mistake – which is fortunately „magically“ corrected.

Prologue

You need a complete Tally-Ho deck in its case. Smart readers will have little difficulty in adapting the procedures to another card brand, but should be aware that this doesn't justify a republication of this trick, unless other salient features are changed.

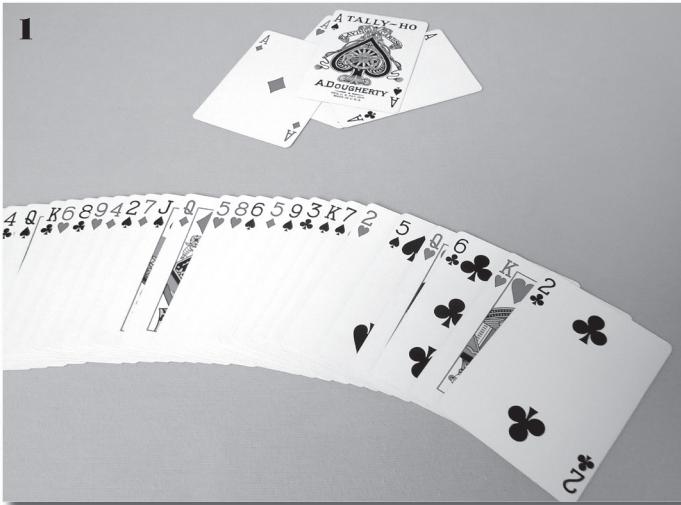
The performer explains that there is a great competition among manufacturers of playing cards, which is why they keep coming up with novel ideas to market their wares. Recently the US Playing Card Company started to give away a free professional magic trick with every deck. Best of all, the instructions are right on the card case itself. Proceed to prove your statement.

As you deliver this prologue, spread the deck between your hands with the faces towards yourself and casually cut any Six to the third position from the face – let's assume this to be the Six of Clubs. This looks as if you just started to look for the Aces. As if it occurred to you only now, ribbon spread the deck face up from left to right on the table, so that the indexes are facing you, explaining, "First, it is very important that there are only four Aces in the deck, no less, no more." Take out the Aces and push them momentarily aside face up, as you tap the ribbon to check for yourself that this is so. In reality you eye count to the sixth card from the bottom of the spread and remember that card. The mnemonics for this, if you need any, is that you set-up a Six, so now you remember the sixth card – very easy (photo 1).

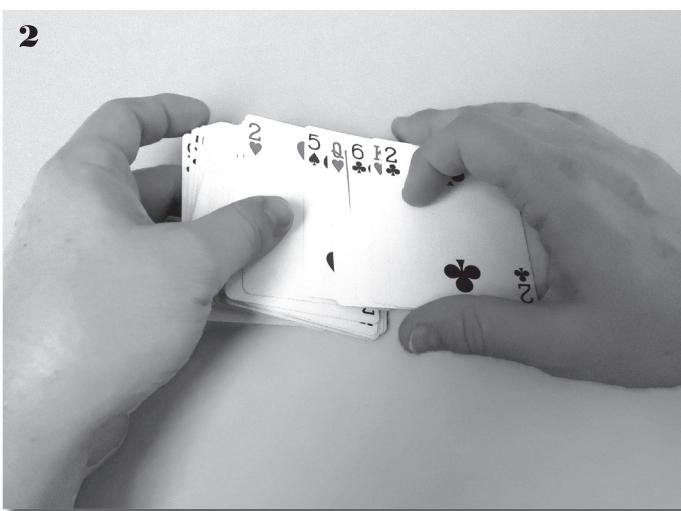
Losing the Aces in the Deck

In the first part of the trick - the "exposition phase" as Ascanio called the part of a trick where the conditions are openly set that lead to the effect - you will apparently be losing the Aces in the deck. Technically this will be done by transfer-cutting each Ace plus a specific number of cards

to the back of the deck. Since this is done four consecutive times, I have given some thought to how to make this whole process interesting and amusing, in order to avoid the potential boredom of such actions. The idea is to lose two Aces, interrupted with an amusing by-play, lose the third Ace, interrupt again by addressing a doubt the audience might have and lose the fourth Ace in the process. Let's see how you like my solution.



Look at a spectator and ask him to name an Ace, for instance the Ace of Hearts. It can be any Ace except the Ace of Spades (see "Lest I forget..."). This will shift the attention from the cards to the spectator and is an excellent moment for gathering up the spread and get a left little finger break under the five face cards. To do so, put your left thumb on the sixth card you just remembered as you gather the spread (photo 2). Continue to push the spread towards the right hand which starts to take the cards in end grip. Photo 3 shows the step in the gathered deck which is still controlled by the left thumb pressing on the lower packet's left side. The right hand takes up the deck in this still unsquared condition in covered end grip, securing the step, and the left hand then changes grip acquiring the deck in dealing position. In the process the left little finger establishes a break at the step and under the five face cards. It is important that the right hand takes the deck *first* in covered end grip *and only then* does the left little finger obtain the break – the fingers of the right hand thus protect the deck's outer end which always opens a bit and is usually a dead give-away for something happening. Such details make for artistic card handling and should not be neglected.





Put the named Ace on the face of the deck and transfer-cut all six cards above the break to the back of the deck, apparently losing the Ace. I prefer to do a triple cut action as described in *Card College Volume 1* (p. 97), i.e. undercut about a third from bottom to top, retaining the thumb break, then cut about half the cards underneath the break to the top, but leaving this packet slightly askew. Eventually cut all the cards above the break to the table and drop the last third on top (photo 4), "I cut the deck twice – actually today, because it's Tuesday, I'll cut it three times!" Again, this is amusing when I do it, but you should find your own way. The idea is to draw attention to the fact that the Ace is lost and at the same time do this in an entertaining way. Pick up the deck, still keeping it face up, and square the cards – as you do, obtain a break below the three cards on the face. Since the deck is held face up, the little finger count wouldn't work well because of the deck's unfavorable curvature. I simply push off three cards with my left thumb, as seen in photo 5, and then pull them back, inserting the pad of the little finger between them and the rest of the deck. This action, which is really minimal, is protected by looking at another spectator, asking him which Ace she would like, and then reaching for it. Put this Ace, which we'll assume to be the Ace of Clubs, on the face of the deck and transfer-cut it to the back of the deck with the handling explained above.

Breaking the Monotony

We have now done the same thing twice, and as in all such cases, it is a good idea to introduce something of interest at this point in order to avoid boredom to set in. Therefore I ask the audience if they have ever noticed *where* the trick is explained on the card case. I then point to the "small print" on the flap of the card case (photo 6). It's a curious thing that even people who handle cards a lot have never noticed this text, let alone read it. So I briefly point out a few words, like „the public“ and „of cards“. As this is delivered tongue-in-cheek, it will not only be amusing, but also give this absurd story the always important coherence, because even fiction must have a logic.

Meanwhile your left little finger has had plenty of time to obtain once again a break below the three cards on the face of the deck. The right hand seizes the next Ace chosen by a third spectator, assumed to be the Ace of Diamonds, and places it on the deck's face. Like you did twice before, transfer-cut the four cards above the break to the back of the deck.

To make sure that the interest is maintained, you introduce yet another aspect, by saying, „Since I'm handling the cards, you might think that some of the Aces are now on top...or near the bottom.

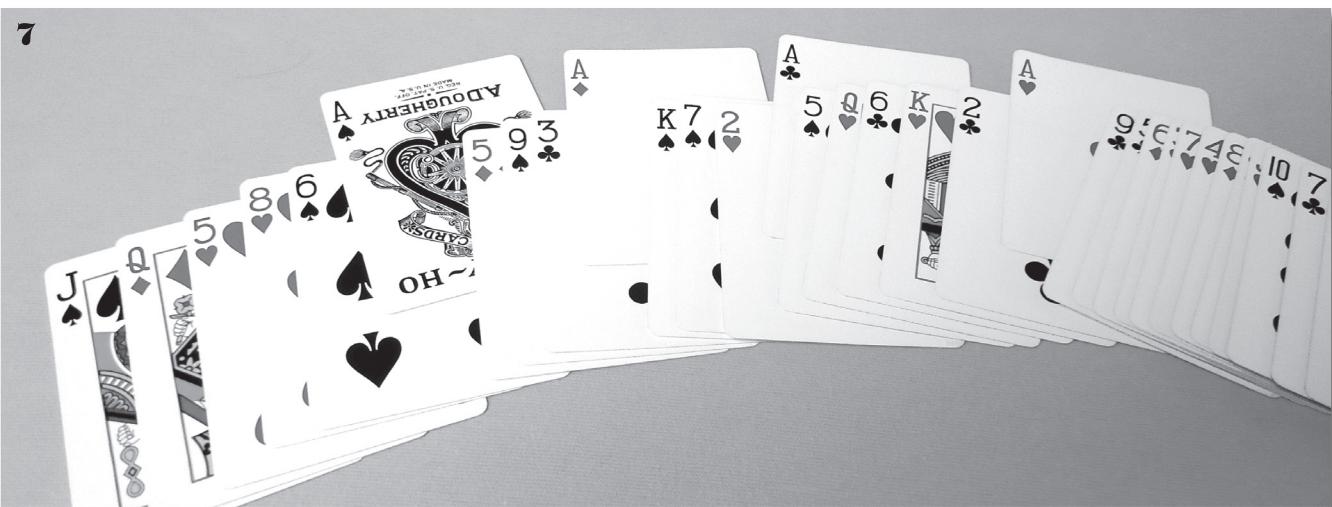


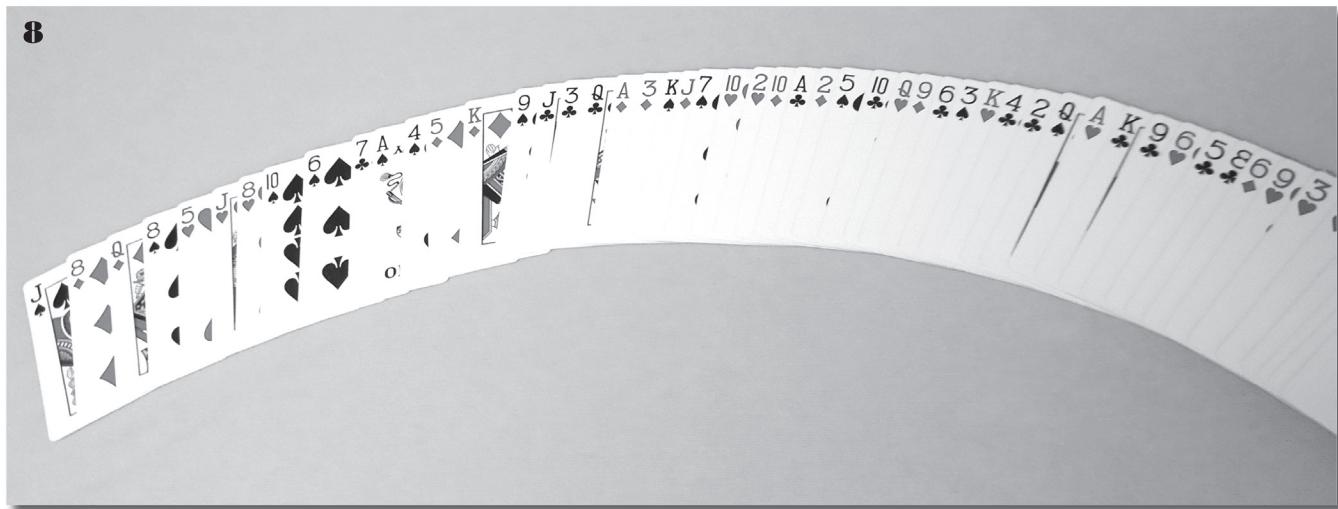
As you can see, this is not the case, although it could have happened by accident." Joining action to words, turn the deck face down and show the top three cards as being indifferent. Replace them, turn the deck again face up and spread the cards on the face, showing that there is no Ace. When you close the spread, retain a break under five cards. This little by-play has not only served a dramatic and a psychological purpose, that of maintaining interest and eliminating a possible solution, but has also facilitated the technical construction of the trick, by allowing you to elegantly establish a break under five cards, something that would have been more difficult to do with a push-off or similar technique.

Eventually take the last Ace, the Ace of Spades, place it on the face of the deck and cut it to the back by the procedure already explained. This ends the first act of the trick. As Ascanio always emphasized, this *initial or exposing phase* should be given careful thought, as the following effects will only be as good as the audience's conviction, that the Aces are completely and hopelessly lost in the deck.

Situation Check & Final Set-up

Reading from above in the face down deck the Aces are now at positions 6 (AS), 10 (AD), 14 (AC) and 20 (AH) – photo 7. Perform a brief injog shuffle, retaining the order and position of the top twenty cards. Immediately follow up with a slough-off faro, weaving at least the top





twenty cards (*Card College Volume 3*, p. 686) – this has the same effect as an out-faro, but is easier and faster to do. The order is now from top down in the face down deck: 10 indifferent cards, Ace of Spades, 7 indifferent cards, Ace of Diamonds, 7 indifferent cards, Ace of Clubs, 5 indifferent cards, Six of Clubs, 5 indifferent cards, Ace of Hearts, followed by the balance of the deck (photo 8). This is a surprisingly complex arrangement. If you consider that it has been reached totally impromptu, you must admit that thinking up this procedure is a pretty brilliant achievement, so much so, that I'm forced to mention this myself (especially because that's Richard Vollmer's merit). I find that combining the injog shuffle with the slough-off faro is more deceptive than doing just the faro.

Alternative idea: To justify the slightly „cosy“ aspect a faro might have to a layperson, I make a humorous situation out of it by saying, „Recently I had an incredibly fussy spectator who asked me if he could shuffle the cards. Here is what he did.“ At this point I do a perfect out faro and ribbon spread the still telescoped cards on the table. „It was only now that I noticed he must have been a Sergeant in the Army.“ Here I point out the perfect weave. I gather the spread and let the cards waterfall into each other, with the waterfall facing the audience, that's important, so that everybody can appreciate that the cards are shuffled, „How is that for a shuffle?“ Obviously this staging really is a matter of taste and it should fit the performer's personality, otherwise it won't be amusing. But as always in good magic, you must identify the problem and then find your own solution – this was just an example.

Setting the Mood

Place the deck thusly arranged in the card case, „Because the explanation is *on* the case, the cards must now be placed *into* the case.“ That's indeed an absurd logic. Furthermore you explain that according to the instructions, the deck must rest for at least 24 hours, as anyone who ever baked a pie will readily understand... For the others, you explain, you have fortunately come up with a quick version. Slam your first on the deck and say, „Done!“

Revelations

Ask a first spectator to take the deck out of the case and hold the cards as if he was dealing Blackjack or Poker. This is layman's terminology for “hold the deck in dealing position”. It's always a good idea to keep in mind that „normal people“ express things differently than we do.

Point to the first term that appears on the front of a Tally-Ho card case, this being "A. Dougherty" (photo 9). Explain that this is the name of the gentleman who has created this particular brand of cards. You may now spell the name, dealing one card for each letter to the table and when you turn over *the next card*, it will be the Ace of Spades (in our teaching example). Doing the spelling yourself in this and all other cases certainly ensures a fast pace and avoids mistakes, however, for my performing style I prefer to ask different spectators to spell out the first three Aces, and I then spell out the fourth and last Ace. This is how I shall explain it and you may then do it the way you prefer. If you place the card case with the writing in front of him and spell with him in a loud voice, there is no option for mistakes really. Having the spectator do the spelling has the additional advantage that the need to turn over the next card rather than the last card of the spell is perfectly integrated into the presentation. Have him spell the name, repeating the name after he has dealt the last card, then say, "Turn it over", pointing to the top card of the deck. When he eventually turns the Ace of Spades over, "A. Dougherty" will show on its face, "See, A. Dougherty is even on the card, proving this is correct." This always amuses the audience and might even bring a first round of applause.



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The first spectator hands the balance of the deck to a second spectator, who is asked to spell „Tally Ho“, because that's the name Mr. A. Dougherty gave to that particular brand of cards. After spelling out the name he turns up the next card, which in our working example will be the Ace of Clubs.

He now hands the balance of the deck to a third spectator, who spells out „Playing“, the word that follows next on the case. He will find the Ace of Diamonds, again by turning up the next card.

Ask for the balance of the deck to be handed to you, "I perform this last bit, otherwise I won't get any applause." Of course you should use your own words, but the idea should be to suggest that you haven't touched the deck up to here, which is certainly true, partially. "I kept the easiest term for myself, so that I can't make a mistake, 'cards'". Spell C-A-R-D-S and then turn the next card over, as did all your assistants, and – oh, my – it is not an Ace. Why you of all people, and just when the spelling was easiest. Just before your audience believes you might be illiterate and have committed a fatal error, point out the fact that the card manufacturer even provides assistance when mistakes are made. Yes, because at the lower right corner of the card case it says, „No. 9“. But that's in *da Vinci code*, of course, for if you turn the case end for end, it can be recognized that the number really is a six. And the wrong card you turned up is...a Six, exactly a Six!

The Finale

Some will think this to be the end of the trick. Far from it, for the best always comes last. Look into the audience, then at the Six and mention that this has to mean something. It won't take long until a spectator suggests counting down six cards. After many years of having performed this, I can assure you that this stalling technique, where you say nothing at all, is more interesting than anything you could say. In case nobody says anything, pretend to hear a remark, „Exactly – you've got to count six cards, you're right.” That's a very good way of getting out of this and similar situations; it is a polyvalent strategy you should remember, but I never had to use it in this trick, as the dramatic construction is so good, that it leads to the proper reaction in an almost compulsive way.

Slowly and deliberately count to the sixth cards – attention: this is the only time in this trick where the Ace is *not* the next card, but the *last card of the count*. When you reach it, stop for a second, and then turn it over as Nate Leipzig once suggested to Dai Vernon, first towards yourself and only then towards the audience, thus dramatizing the revelation of the card, which is the fourth and last Ace. This dramatic turnover is another of those wonderful concepts one should remember for the rest of one's life.

As an epilogue I sometimes add, “And what does all this teach you? Always read the small print!”

Lest I forget...

- I mentioned that the Ace of Spades should be reserved for *last*, so that it appears *first* in the spelling sequence, with a good visual impact. If, however, one of the first three spectators names the Ace of Spades, immediately push it towards him, saying, “OK, you get the Ace of Spades.” And turning to the next spectator, ask, “And which one would you like?” You thus distribute the Aces to them and then simply start with the last Ace named and work back to the Ace of Spades.
- The method, which is all Richard Vollmer's merit, is very elegant. For those who know basic card technique this trick will be easy to do. If you do sleight-of-hand, the real challenge is memorizing the procedural details. Here is a very practical way Richard suggested to remember how many cards you have to cut: simply remember the number sequence 5-3-3-5. Why is this easy? Well, because a deck with a Joker has 53 cards, and the number is a palindrome, i.e. you can read it both ways. The digits of the number refer to how many cards you have to break off each time you replace an Ace. Excellent, isn't it?
- This trick has great audience appeal, for laypeople as well as for magicians. I was surprised that magicians usually like this a lot, although the method is relatively easy and can be followed by most who have been into magic for a while, so it doesn't really fool the connoisseur. Furthermore it is a spelling effect, a category most modern conjurors avoid like the plague. Nonetheless, it is very charming, novel and off the beaten track. I have found that the audience appreciates the very brief explanations I give about the names “A. Dougherty” and “Tally-Ho”, a detail I have added to the presentation at some point. There is something fascinating for people to learn that what they had been looking at for years and ignored does have a meaning and in this case even a cultural history. If you want to learn more about “Andrew Dougherty” (1848-1930) and Tally-Ho, simply enter the terms into your favorite search engine and you'll be surprised what you find.

Seven

In the September 1997 issue of Genii cardician extraordinaire Gary Plants published a trick by the name of „A Four-tunate Choice“. I was intrigued by its simplicity and mathematical working but at the same time by its impact on laymen and magicians alike. I started performing it on different occasions and on the way showed it to Richard Vollmer. Richard will be known to many from his articles in Apocalypse, but above all for his affinity to mathematical card concepts. He suggested the use of a different handling of the anti-faro concept involved in this trick and this automatically led to the use of the number seven rather than four – and seven somehow seems to capture people's fantasy more than four. I have enriched it (I hope) with bits of presentation over the years that add humor, intrigue and interest. Here is the synergistic result of Gary's, Richard's and my own work.

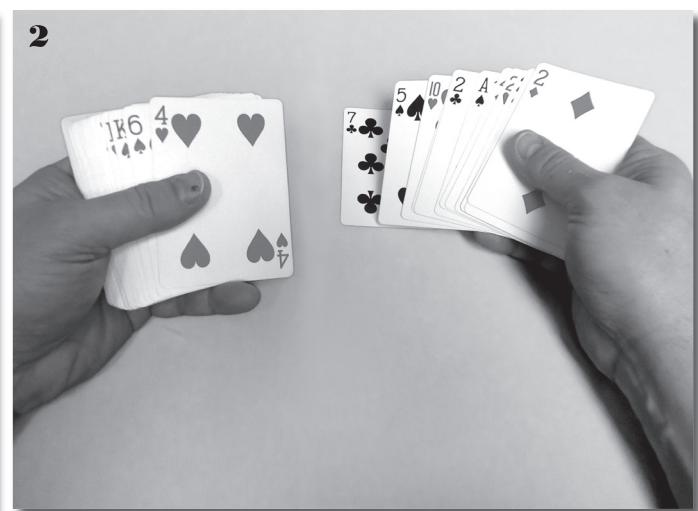
Effect

A chosen card is shuffled back into the deck. The spectator takes ten cards, one of which is his card; he keeps shuffling these cards as long as he likes. The performer has predicted that whenever the spectator stops shuffling the cards, his selection will be at exactly the seventh position from the top of the face-down packet. To the astonishment of all this turns out to be indeed so. And the impact is far stronger than this description might induce you to believe.

Method and Staging

I will first describe a handling that is virtually “self-working”. For those among you, however, who are conversant with sleight-of-hand, I will mention refined ways of handling at the end.

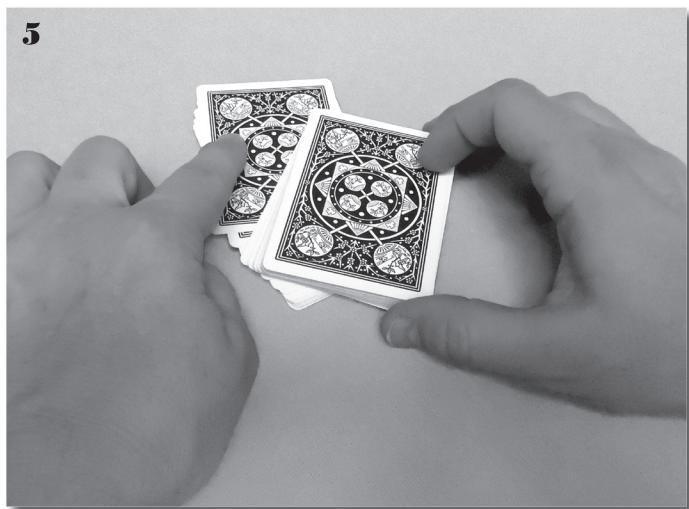
Hand the deck for shuffling and upon taking it back spread it between your hands with the faces towards yourself until you reach any Seven (photo 1). Separate the spread so that the last card of the partial spread in your right hand is the Seven and place the it face-up on the table saying that you are going to explain a little later what its role will be. As you do this, it will be an easy matter to glimpse the card to the right of the Seven, assumed to be the Five of Spades (photo 2). Complete the deck so that it ends up at the back of the face up deck. Turn the deck face down and the Five of Spades will now be on top. You may use any other means of gaining knowledge of the top card of the deck, but the procedure just described is integrated into the necessary proceedings, doesn't require any extraneous movements and is therefore very elegant.



Selection & Control

Place the deck face-down in front of your spectator and ask him to cut it. He will cut off a portion from the top and place it on the table (photo 3). You pick up the formerly bottom half and place it on top of the portion just cut off but at an angle so the two packets can clearly be dissociated from each other (photo 4).

Turn to the face-up Seven and briefly explain that it is the visible proof of a statement you are going to make now before the proceedings even start: you are going to count seven cards from a packet, not three, not five, but exactly seven. Everybody will be puzzled since they have no idea what you are talking about.



Besides opening a narrative loop - a dramatic hook to which we will come back later - it also serves as “positive insertion”, as Arturo de Ascanio called it, because it makes people forget how exactly the configuration of the two packets on the table was obtained. Not leaving anything to chance, you unobtrusively replay the situation by saying that the spectator shuffled and cut the deck. Yes, he really did, but not exactly like this. As we've learned from politicians, we will, however, not bother too much with irrelevant details such as the truth, and proceed to lift off the top half of the two crossed packets. Ask the spectator to take and look at “the card he cut to”, thereby pointing to the top card of the tabled packet (photo 5). The audience believes that this really is the card cut to, while in reality it is the former top card of the deck, in our case the Five

of Spades. This is the well-known “Criss Cross Force” and you will find a detailed description of it in *Card College Volume 1*. Make sure everybody except you sees the card just in case your spectator forgets it, a fact which considerably lessens the enjoyment of the finale which wouldn’t even exist.

Have the spectator replace his card into the deck and shuffle the latter thoroughly so that everybody must be convinced that the selection is hopelessly lost. You couldn’t care less, of course, since you already know the card.

If you think about it, you have just performed a perfect force: the spectator has shuffled the deck, he has determined a card by cutting to it, and then he has shuffled it back. Or so it appears... But the best part is yet to come, as the spectator will control the card for you!

One out of Ten

Take the deck and spread it face-up from right to left on the table so the spectator can see the indices the right way. Ask him to take out any ten cards, *one of which needs to be his card*. Repeat this instruction to make it clear. As he is doing this you look away so you do not see any of the cards.

Take the ten cards back and rapidly count them face-down in a packet on the table, thus making sure he has not deliberately or mistakenly miscounted the cards: “*So here are ten cards, no more, no less.*” Make it look as if you wanted to simply emphasize this point for all who watch – avoid making the spectator look stupid as if he couldn’t count to ten. On the other hand you *must* check, because otherwise your trick won’t work. And casually add. “*And of course one of them is your card.*” As if merely to illustrate what you just said, quickly spread the cards face-up between your hands – I insist that this must be made to look totally coincidental and of no matter to the proceedings (photo 6). Since you know the spectator’s card, it will be an easy matter to establish its position in the ten-card spread. For the trick to work properly, the card has to be seventh from the back, i.e. fourth from the face.

If it isn’t there, you must rearrange the cards by giving the packet a quick overhand shuffle running the necessary cards to bring the selection to the requisite position. Here is an example. Let’s say you’ve noted your card to be the second from the top of the face down packet. Now either casually spread the cards face-down between your hands, and then cut the top five cards to the bottom; or start an overhand shuffle, by running at least the first two cards and then shuffling off the rest, which brings the selection to a position second from the bottom – then run another two cards singly and throw the rest on top. In either case the card ends up fourth from the bottom.

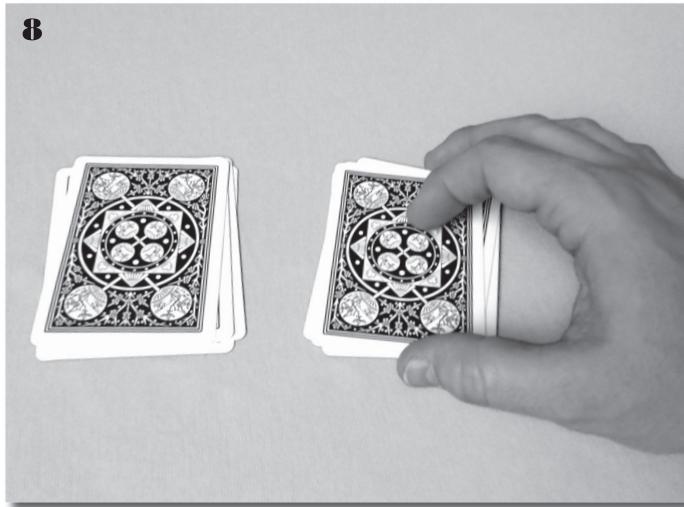
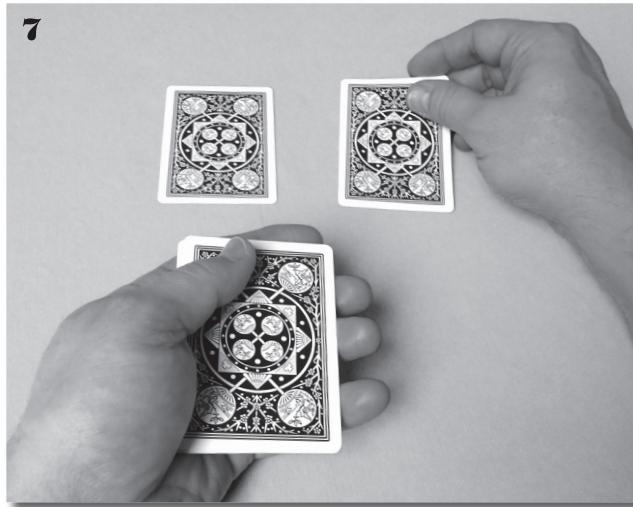


The Game Starts

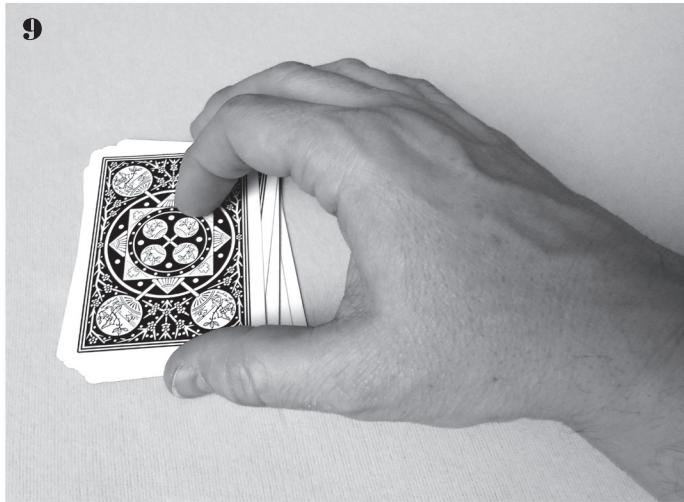
Say that the cards will now be further shuffled to obtain a really mathematically haphazard distribution, which is of course very important, especially in any kind of card game. Explain that the best way to do this is the way they do it in Shanghai at the casinos. If you perform in Shanghai say you shuffle like in Atlantic City. And if you have reason to assume that you have people from both cities in your audience, say that you shuffle the cards as they do in Rheinfelden near Basel – I’m sure nobody has ever been there and cannot therefore prove the contrary.

To do the Shanghai Shuffle – which alliterates better than the Rheinfelden Shuffle – hold the 10-card packet face-down in dealing position and then deal the cards one by one, *alternating*, face-down into two packets, starting on the left and ending on the right (photo 7). Eventually assemble the cards by placing the right packet (photo 8) on top of the left (photo 9). This is very easy to remember, because you deal from left to right, as you do when you are reading (except if you read Arab, Chinese or Hebrew but we won’t assume this, since some don’t even speak their own language...), and you pick up the packet on which you deal the last card, which is the right one, and drop it on the other one, the only other one left being the one on the left, which is a double mnemonic aid for those who appreciate puns.

As you do this, explain that this is the safest way to make sure that all cards are separated and not even a simple pair stays together, which of course is not only important in Shanghai.

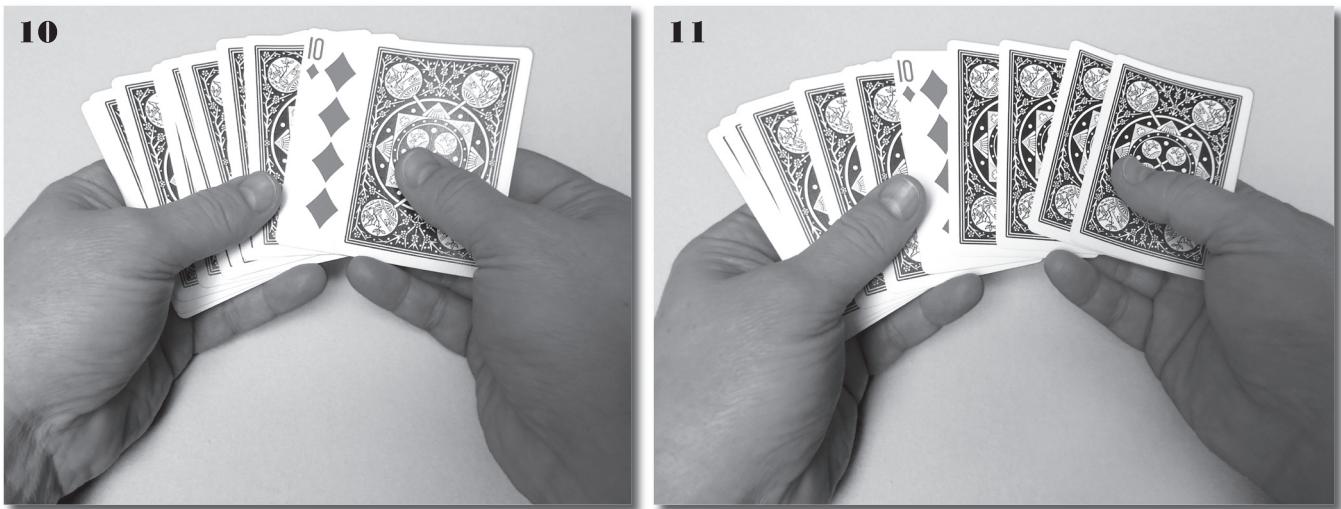


At this point draw attention to the face-up Seven placed aside at the beginning. Say that the power of the Seven is so strong that regardless of how many times the cards are shuffled, eventually the selected card, which is lost in the packet for the moment, will turn up on the count of seven. For those who have no idea of the mathematics of the anti-faro – and we hope that the far majority of our audience is hopelessly uneducated at least about this minor point in life – this is quite a challenge.



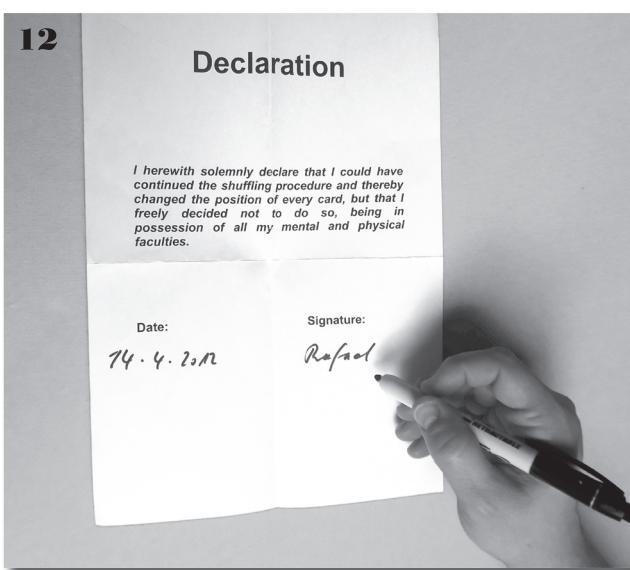
The Hook

In order to make clear that the cards are really well shuffled in the process of the Shanghai Shuffle, offer to briefly illustrate by taking the second card from the top of the face-down packet and turning it face-up in its place – so all cards are now face-down but the second card from the top is face-up (photo 10). Perform the deal as explained above, by distributing the cards one by one in two face-down packets and then reassembling them. Each time show that the face-up card has shifted to another position (photo 11). By implication it will be assumed that every other card also changes position. Turn the card again face-down in its place. The true fact of this deal, called the anti-faro, is that the fourth and the seventh card always stay in their respective positions, while the other cards shuttle around according to a specific formula I leave to you to find out.



Tell your spectator that he's the pitboss and you are the dealer. You are going to shuffle the cards the Shanghai Shuffle way until he calls stop. Deal the cards fairly quickly which adds a touch of comedy and increases the challenge.

As soon as the spectator stops you, complete the packet and place it in front of the spectator asking him if he's really sure he wants to stop shuffling the cards: *"Maybe through sheer coincidence your card is now at the seventh position, but with another shuffle it will no longer be there."*



The Contract

To further dramatize the situation, ask him to sign the following declaration so as to avoid later wondering, *"What would have happened if I had continued the shuffle?"* Have him read out the declaration aloud, „*I herewith solemnly declare that I could have continued the shuffling procedure and thereby changed the position of every card, but that I freely decided not to do so, being in possession of all my mental and physical faculties.*” Ask him to date and sign the document (photo 12).

The Sting

Slowly and deliberately deal to the seventh card, have him announce the name of the selection in a loud voice and then slowly turn the seventh card over, first towards yourself, then, after a very brief dramatic pause, towards the audience. It will be the Five of Spades! If you know how to manage a spectator, you can also have him do the counting.

The Recovery

The spectator is thanked and given the signed declaration as a souvenir so he can tell all his friends that it was not a dream, but a very unusual experience in the company of (place your name here).

Lest I forget...

- The method described will allow even the uninitiated to perform the trick successfully without having to resort to sleight-of-hand. For the card expert the almost endless variations in handling and procedure will be obvious: you can classic force the card at the beginning or use any kind of refined key card placement to later gain knowledge of the card. An excellent procedure is to ribbon spread the deck face-down on the table with a step at a known card trying to force it. See "The Master Grip" in *Card College Volume 3* for details of handling in the context of another excellent trick. In case the card is not taken, it will serve as a near or distant key card – this will fool many a sophisticated mind. Once you have placed the key card above, below or at a known position from the selection, ribbon spread the cards face up on the table for the spectator to take out the ten cards. It is during this spreading action that you look for your key card and can then immediately see and remember the selection. The card is actually glimpsed *as you do the spread*, so that you can look away even before the spreading action ends – this is very deceptive. That's all the information you need – then proceed as explained above.
- An effect always takes place at least three times. The first time, when the magician performs it live for his audience. The second time when the spectators think about it a little later, and a third time when they relate it to their friends. The psychological and dramatic construction of a magic trick that takes this into consideration will therefore be a more impressive and more memorable experience for the audience. In this sense the "declaration" considerably aids these factors and above all provides the spectator with a physical proof he may carry with him of what happened. It will also serve as a reminder of his total freedom when he reconstructs the procedures of the effect in the phase of reconstruction and when he tells other people what he experienced.
- Persi Diaconis, professor of statistics at Stanford, has found that a deck of fifty-two cards needs to be shuffled seven times in order to obtain a truly haphazard distribution of cards, and experts tell me that this is the last word. Many casinos are reluctant to use this many shuffles, because it takes away playing time which again lessens income. Therefore somebody whose name escapes me came up with the "Stop Rule", whereby the dealer shuffles until the pitboss calls "Stop". I hope all this is true, and if it isn't, it certainly makes sense, but above all an entertaining presentation.

The Deck of Missed Opportunities

The basic idea for this wonderful trick goes back to Fred Lowe, who called his trick „Christened Reverse“. In a private meeting in Buenos Aires the late Ali Bongo told me that he spun the effect further and called it in honor of Loewe „Fred“. This was the name under which the trick came to worldwide fame and triggered countless variations. The best known versions were popularized by Ken Brooke and Nick Trost, who marketed them with great success. Over the years I have been doing the effect in several versions.

Maybe 20 years ago, I had a session with the late Carlhorst Meier from Nuremberg, Germany, who was an incredibly inspired amateur, and he mentioned the title „das Spiel der verpassten Gelegenheiten“, “the deck of missed opportunities”, without having neither a specific effect nor a trick to go with it.

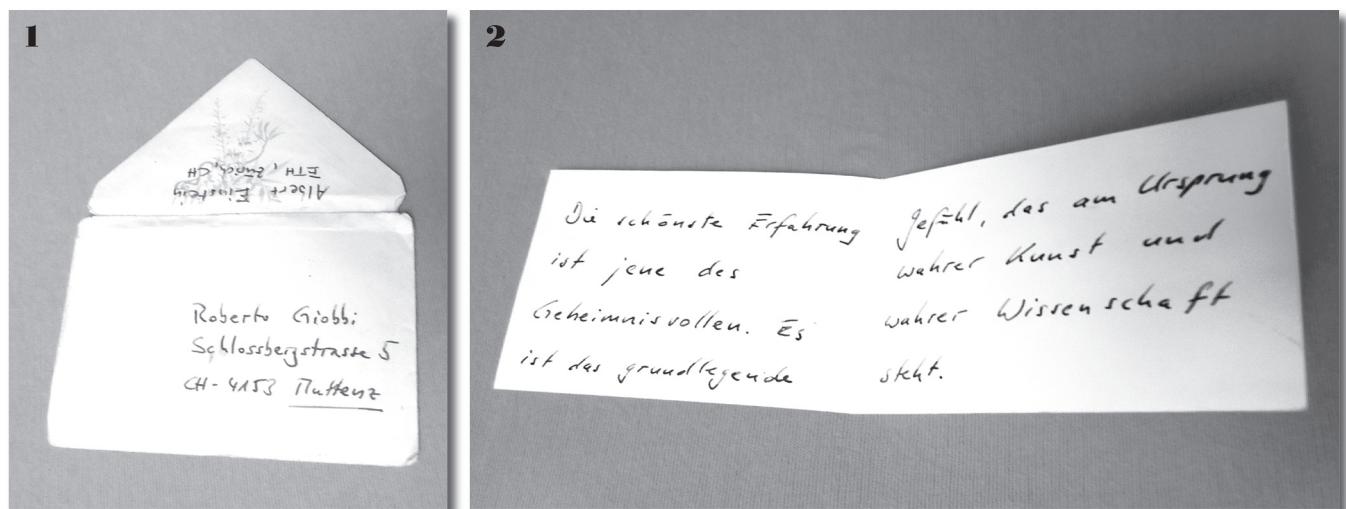
However, the title stayed with me for at least ten years, until I connected it to the ‘Fred’ trick. This is the first time I describe this effect, which has not only pleased many an audience, but also mystified practically all the magicians I showed it to. When Jeff McBride came to Switzerland in the 1990ies, I performed and later explained it for him, and he said it was one of the most beautiful card tricks he had ever seen.

Effect

The performer shows an envelope addressed to him and tells a curious story about it. From a deck of cards, “the deck of missed opportunities”, a spectator thinks of any card. On the back of each card is the name of a famous personality, who is connected to magic in some way, the performer explains. The back of the thought of card has *Einstein* on it. It is seen that the letter initially displayed comes from nobody less than...*Einstein*!

Material and Preparation

An envelope with a matching folded billet. The front of the envelope, which should look used and old, shows your name and address handwritten on it, but the envelope has no stamp. The flap of the envelope shows the sender’s address, ‘Albert Einstein, ETH Zürich’. Inside the envelope is a matching folding card that has this famous quote from Einstein written on its inside (photos 1 & 2):



"The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion that stands at the cradle of true art and true science."

The complete original quote in German is: „Das Schönste, was wir erleben können, ist das Geheimnisvolle. Es ist das Grundgefühl, das an der Wiege von wahrer Kunst und Wissenschaft steht. Wer es nicht kennt und sich nicht mehr wundert, nicht mehr staunen kann, der ist sozusagen tot und seine Augen erloschen.“ The original German quote can be found in Einstein's book *Mein Weltbild*, in the essay „Wie ich das Leben sehe“, p. 9. Here the English translation: "The most beautiful experience we can have is the mysterious. It is the fundamental emotion that stands at the cradle of true art and true science. Whoever does not know it and can no longer wonder, no longer marvel, is as good as dead, and his eyes are dimmed."

You also need a deck with 52 cards. Take out all the Sixes, Sevens, Eights, Nines, Tens, Jacks, Queens and Kings – that's a total of 32 cards - and write in clearly readable letters the name 'EINSTEIN' on their back. Take the remaining 20 cards and on their backs write the name of historical personalities, who can be connected to magic in one way or another.

Here are the names I use in my deck (photo 3):

Freud – Mozart – Caesar – Paganini – Camus – Fellini – Twain – Volta – Socrates – Goethe – Brahms – Dante – Jung – Shaw – Schiller – Cervantes – Sartre – Dürrenmatt – Horowitz – Newton.

My presentation below will give you an idea of how to link the names to a magical characteristic. Once you understand the idea, you will be able to *find names that suit you and your target audience*. If you can't come up with any names, you are not yet ready to perform this trick. It isn't an easy one anyway, and I don't recommend it for beginners, although technically speaking it is practically self-working. But it seems to me that having a certain life-experience and a good cultural background helps make the presentation believable. I've always felt that if somebody talks about something to which he or she doesn't have an affinity, it sounds hollow at worst and highfalutin at best...

Like in most tricks of this type, I recommend that you write the names in clear and bold letters, using a waterproof marker with a relatively broad tip, so the name can be read even by an elderly person or somebody who is not used to read handwriting, a relatively recent phenomenon. I advise against having the name printed on the back of the deck, as this will make the deck look like a *commercial item*, a trick that can be bought. If you take to artistic magic, this is the last thought you want to encourage in your audience.



Arrange the cards in the following order, from top down in the face-down deck: 18 cards with indifferent names, followed by the 32 cards with *Einstein* on them, and then finish with 2 cards that have an indifferent name on the back. Since it is a “special deck”, I recommend you do not put it in a normal card case, as this could suggest that there are special decks in other normal looking card cases. I prefer to use a nicely made leather case (photo 4), as I’m now over 50 and it suits my style and taste, but younger performers could choose a nicely designed plastic case or similar. As soon as you start to look around, you’ll find something that you’ll like.

Method and Staging

I am not going to give you my exact text, so as to leave more freedom for you to find your own words, but I’ll give you enough of *an idea* of the way I stage this trick, so you may understand its function in relationship to the effect.

Prologue

In my presentation I explain that I collect everything pertaining to my favorite instrument in magic, playing cards. Recently I passed a flea market and looked for stamps that have playing cards as a subject, a relatively rare theme. Perusing stamped envelopes, I hit on one that was addressed to me! The curious thing was, that the envelope didn’t have any stamp on it, so it had never been sent off, however, by finding it now, it had eventually reached me.

This is quite an intriguing prologue that should catch the attention of any intelligent audience. As I’m saying this, I drop the envelope with the address side upwards on the table, keeping the flap on the back with the *Einstein* sender out of view. Then I change the narrative level.

The Piece Begins

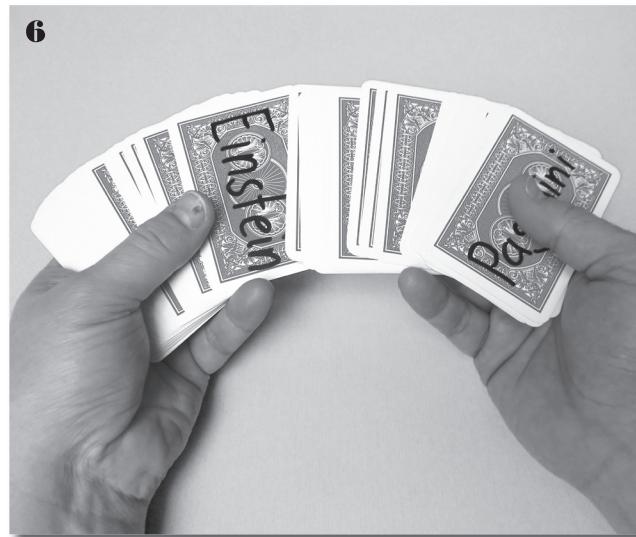
For this I take the deck out of its case and explain that I call it my „deck of missed opportunities“, because with it I’m going to do an experiment that I would have liked to perform for certain people, of whom I assume they would have liked it. But I never had the opportunity to meet them, because they lived before my time. That’s another intriguing thought and starts to delineate the plot.

I then show the names of some of these people being written on the back of each card of the deck. These are names of artists, scientists and inventors who in the broader sense of the term had something to do with magic. I start spreading the cards between my hands and will for instance say, „Paganini, the violin virtuoso, stands for great technical dexterity, which you also need in magic; Fellini, the masterful Italian director, because magic and movies go hand in hand; Mark Twain, because a laugh, as they say, is the shortest distance between two people, and magic, like any other art, is about communication; Volta, the great inventor, because everything magicians perform today has been invented by some ingenious magician, and magic has a long cultural history...“

Continue with one or two more names (photo 5). Do this like lighting of a good cigar: not too long and not too short, but just right. The aim is to catch people’s interest, to fascinate them, and to briefly mention a few facts and people that connect to magic, things that most people would never have thought of, not even fellow magicians. If you try this a few times, you will notice that although your audience will find this interesting, after 7 or 8 names they got the idea and it is time to stop. It is *not* the aim to put them asleep.

Therefore, after having named half a dozen names or so, I will push over about half the deck (photo 6), briefly display *Einstein*, without mentioning the name, but saying something like, "Anyway, lots of outstanding people in the history of civilization..." then, to close, I push off all the cards except the last two cards and make a final comment on the last two names (photo 7), e.g., "Newton, because magic apparently defies the laws of physics , and Caesar, because magic is the ultimate power on earth."

I insist that you should pick names that *mean something to you*, and then look them up, for instance in Wikipedia, so you have a rough idea what they did. Always try to have at least a rudimentary knowledge of the subjects you are talking about.



Details of Handling and Presentation

The showing of the cards and comments on the names and their affinity to magic should be done at a brisk pace, without seeming to hurry. First, this is to maintain interest, second, to give the impression that they have seen far more cards than you've actually shown or at least give the impression that they could have seen all the cards, if they had wanted. However, as already mentioned, after 7 or 8 cards, a certain "saturation" will set in, and the audience will feel it's

just right that you now stop, in other words, they've seen enough and believe you. Although the procedure itself is self-working, the experienced card handler will automatically handle the cards in a casual manner that will transmit the idea that you have nothing to hide. *Remember that body language talks as much as verbal language.*

You will now proceed to have one card apparently freely named by the audience. However, it has to be one of the 32 *Einstein* cards.

The Selection Process

Let's look in detail at how to manage the selection of the card. I will tell you exactly *how I do it*, however, once you have grasped the point, it is advisable that you *find your own words and way of doing it*.

Turn to a spectator who is sitting on your right, so he doesn't receive full attention, and ask him to name a card. Don't make a big deal out of this, yet. As soon as he names a card, there are two possibilities. One, he names one of the *Einstein* cards. Two, he names one of the other cards. If he names an *Einstein* card, skip the next two sub-chapters and move on to "The First Spectator's Choice" below. This situation will occur many times and will leave any expert nonplussed. If he names another card, read on.

The Spectator Names Another Card

As soon as the spectator names a card that has not *Einstein* on it, e.g. 'the Five of Clubs', *immediately* look to your left and letting your gaze run from left to right, say, "I must tell you something. What you are about to see is so incredible, that if just one person names a card, you will inevitably say that we arranged something together. Therefore I would like several among you to determine the identity of one card, and one card only. I cannot possibly be in cahoots with all of you, otherwise I would have to travel with my own audience every time I do this experiment." This last statement, a favorite of Marvelli Jr. (1932-2008), is amusing, at least to an intelligent audience it will be, and the (mild) laugh it causes acts as interference in their ultra-short-term memory, also called *sensory memory*, and will make them forget that you asked somebody moments ago to name a card. Even though some won't totally forget it, its priority in the memory is changed, making it more difficult later to recall it in the reconstruction phase of the trick that always follows every climax. Briefly, simply *ignore* the spectator who named the card and go directly into the following selection process.

Group Decision

You are going to ask four spectators to each take a decision. The first will be asked which color (red or black) he wants, the second which suit within that color, the third whether she wants spot or picture card, and the fourth will then decide on a specific value. The interesting thing about this procedure is that the first three are completely free, and even the fourth choice is fifty-fifty. Fact is that everything looks and sounds very fair and there is no real risk involved. Follow me along and see how this process will safely get us to one of the *Einstein* cards.

Choose the spectators from your *left to right*, the audience's right to left, which for the spectators will feel a little more awkward than the other way round, as we are used to do and read things from left to right and not vice-versa. This is a small thing, but it is one of the many factors that will facilitate influencing the spectator's choice.

Ask a first spectator to choose between red and black. Make it crystal-clear that *you are going to use whatever he decides*. If you don't emphasize this point, and repeat it at least once during the process, several will think that you are just doing the old thing were you take or leave whatever decision suits your purpose to get to a specific card you had in mind to begin with. (That's similar to what politicians do before elections, but that's another story.) Magicians all know this, but please don't fool yourself into thinking that laypeople don't, because many do. It is one of the most widely known "magic tricks" explained in magic texts for the public. I have a "running line" – the equivalent to a "running gag" – that I use, "What you say is what we take", which anchors this fact. Let's assume the first spectator said "black".

Immediately turn to a second spectator and explain that since black was chosen, he can now select between Clubs and Spades, "What you say is what we take". Let's assume he chooses "Clubs".

In both choices the spectators have had absolute freedom. You are now going to turn to the third spectator – I suggest taking a female spectator whom you judge by her previous reactions and body language to like you and your magic (Tamariz calls this a *mother*). You are going to have her choose "picture cards" rather than "spot cards", although if spots are chosen, it will ultimately still lead to an *Einstein* card as we will see in a moment.

What will make your success easier is the conditioning done during the previous two choices. When you named the two options, such as 'red' and 'black', you made a gesture to the right and then to the left in front of your body, as if physically placing the two pieces of information on an invisible shelf before you. In NLP they call this 'setting a spatial anchor', which I find an excellent intuitive term to work with, although the concept is much older. The idea in our case is that you assign a space in front of you to each possible choice. When you then say "Choose whichever you like!", step into one of the two spaces, the one you want him to choose, and push the "invisible choice" towards the spectator using both hands – to the audience this should look like an innocent gesture that accompanies your words. But to the spectator, who must of course be looking at you and be following your discourse, it will be a strong suggestion to "take" the decision you "give" him. Since it doesn't matter what the first two spectators select, you can just do it and consider it a warm-up exercise for the third choice that counts.

Another factor that will facilitate the "force" is humor. Humor – intelligent and in taste, I should add – is not only a tool of communication, but also of the psychological construction of a trick. In this case it will relax the person and make it easier to accept your suggestion. The problem with humor in magic is that it should come out of the situation and be contained within the trick, rather than be set on top of it as this happens far too often when comedy meets magic. I do it this way: immediately after having presented the two options, like 'red' and 'black', but before the choice is made, I add, "I should mention that most people prefer red to black, but of course that's not a reason for you not to choose black, if you like." For some reason this always creates a hearty laugh. I'll leave it to you to interpret it, and also encourage you not to copy my text but find your own. It is a fraction of a second after the laugh has stopped that I shove the "information in space" towards the spectator, saying, "Choose whichever you like. What you say is what we take."

You now have all the information you need to successfully approach the third spectator. Again confront her with the two options. I say, "Do you prefer the spot cards...or the picture cards?" When I say 'spot cards' I make some pointing gestures with my right hand, as if stabbing the air, which is a bit unpleasant, and I also use an unpleasant tone of voice and frown. All in all I allocate three rather unpleasant behavioral items to the information 'spot cards', which I place

as explained above to my left in the air. Then I immediately continue - with a pleasant tone of voice, a smile and a friendly gesture, three positive signals – by saying, “Or would you rather choose picture cards?” *Make sure the spectator is looking at you and is involved in what you are saying*, otherwise this won’t work. Immediately after having pronounced the last sentence, and before she says something, push the spatial information ‘picture cards’ towards her, and repeat in the *same tone of voice*, the *same smile* and the *same friendly gesture* you have anchored above, “Take whichever you like!” Try to say this in an affirmative tone. Here I also use Robert-Houdin’s verbal ruse for the classic force by saying “take” rather than “choose”, thus not even suggesting choices. Needless to say that *all which has been exposed up to here needs to be done in a very subtle way*, matching your personality, although in the description everything may have sounded exaggerated, but that was only done to make the point and explain the strategy.

If capably done, the spectator will now say “picture cards”. You can then turn to the fourth spectator and ask him to name one of the picture cards, Jack, Queen or King. Let’s assume he says ‘King’. Thank everybody and explain that they have chosen ‘black’, and not ‘red’, ‘Clubs’, and not ‘Spades’, ‘picture cards’ and not ‘spot cards’, and eventually ‘King’, and not ‘Jack’ or ‘Queen’, thus democratically deciding on the ‘King of Clubs’ (our example). As you can see, Democracy is not what you thought it was...

But what do you do if the third spectator says ‘spot cards’? This has happened to me only a few times in my life. But of course it is not really a problem, because *you do have spot cards*, namely Sixes, Sevens, Eights, Nines and Tens – that’s not so bad. The Aces are neither spot nor picture cards, so they are automatically out. When I feel that I have a good audience, I simply say to the last spectator, “Would you, Sir, then name a *good* spot card.” The adjective ‘good’ implies a card game and there it is associated to a high card. As an added incentive I make a discreet upward gesture with my right hand. On some occasions I have resorted to another strategy, which you might prefer, and which goes like this: “The last decision is the toughest. No person can bear it on his shoulders alone. So may I please ask these two gentlemen to take the decision *together*.” I then ask the first spectator to name ‘a good spot card’. If he says a high number, I simply say to the second spectator, “Do you agree, Sir, or would you like to take away or add *one* point?” Of course it doesn’t matter, as the result will always stay within the necessary range. The worst case is if the first spectator says ‘two’ or ‘three’, but in this case you immediately say to the second spectator, “And you, Sir, please say another number, maybe a little bit higher.” Then you add the two numbers. This is perfectly OK as you have initially announced that the decision would have to be taken by two spectators together.

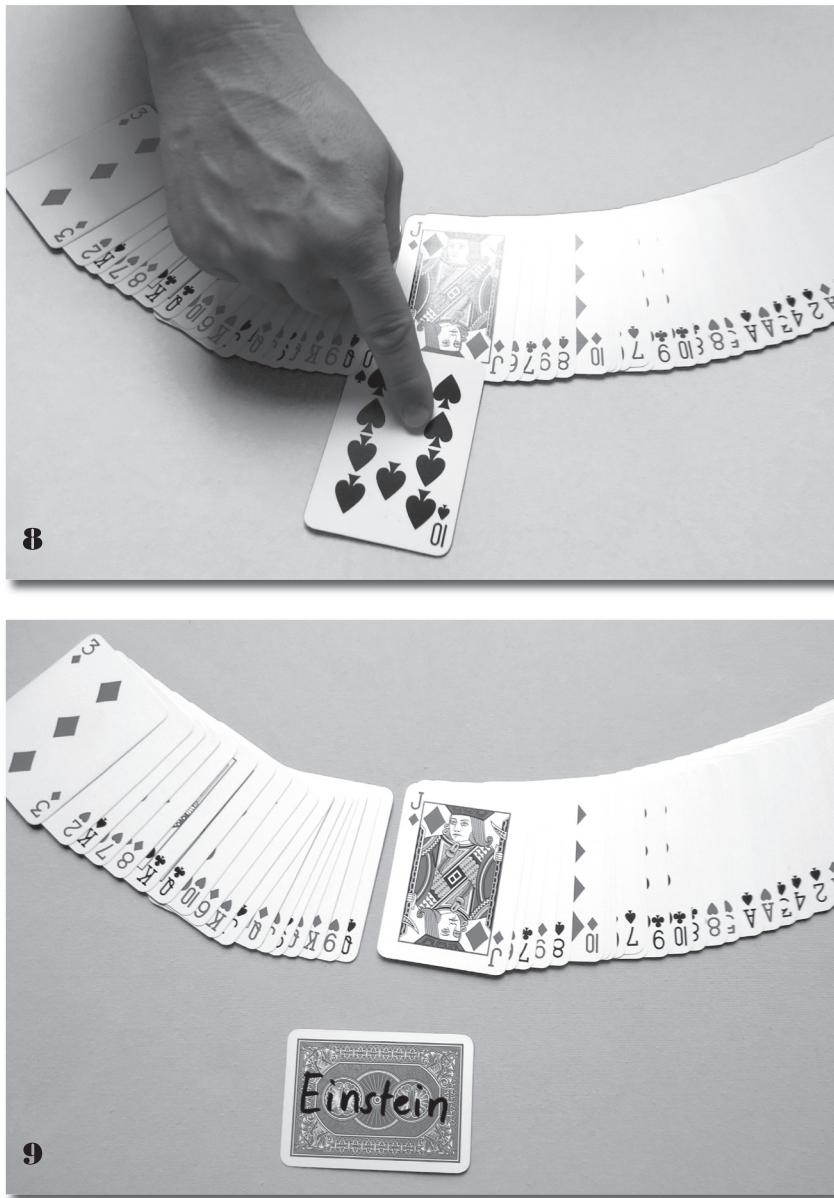
If you take a little time to think and act through the various possibilities, you will realize that every situation will yield a good result, in any case, always *use your head*. Now proceed to the sub-chapter “Preparing the Climax”.

The First Spectator’s Choice

If the spectator you first asked has named an *Einstein* card, turn to him and repeat the card, “From fifty-two cards you have named one card, the (whatever). Is that correct?” If you have the guts, you can solidify his decision by saying, “Are you sure you want the ‘whatever’...and not another card?” When asking the first part of the question *nod your head*, when you ask the second part, *shake your head*, both actions to be done without exaggerating, of course. I call this the ‘Nod-Shake-Strategy’ and it is an old salesmen thing. The spectator will stay with his choice. If you don’t believe it or are afraid of doing it, don’t do it and wait until you are ready.

Preparing the Climax

Whichever route you had to take, ribbon spread the deck face up on the table and push out the named card (photo 8). Turn the card over and the name *Einstein* will be seen (photo 9). If you like, you can now take the deck and casually spread it between your hands, remarking that the spectator could obviously have named any other card, which would then have had a completely different name on it. Here you can make a *very short* comment on two names you have not yet mentioned at the beginning. I do it this way, because I like it, but I think that it is not necessary.



Close the narrative circle you've opened at the beginning, by drawing attention to the envelope. Take the folded billet from the envelope and let somebody from the audience read out what it says on it in a loud and clear voice. If standing before a larger audience, ask an assisting spectator to take the billet out for you, so everybody can see that there is no trickery involved in this phase, and then read out the text yourself. This makes sure that it is clearly heard by everybody. In this case immediately hand the billet to the assisting spectator, to make it clear, that what you just read out is correct and is really written on the billet. Then remark with nonchalance, "And this, as everybody knows, is a quote by Einstein!"

The Denouement

A few members of the audience, who know the quote – and there will always be some – at this point will start to react by laughing, maybe even applauding, while the rest is still unsure about the situation. This is a very interesting atmosphere, which cannot be found often when you perform magic and which the textbooks don't recommend – that's why I particularly like it. Wait a few seconds, and then point out the sender, which is written on the flap at the back of the envelope. Let a spectator read it out in a loud voice, "Einstein, ETH Zürich". The audience will now react in unison, hopefully in a positive way.

I leave the balance of the deck on the table without paying attention to it. Depending on the situation I will pick up a few cards that have not *Einstein* written on them, and hand them to a few spectators to look at. This should *not* be done with the attitude, "Here, look, there are no gimmicked cards." Rather with the mindset of saying, „Incredible, isn't it?“ I don't recommend beginners do this, as it is playing with fire, and you need to know how to do this. This is a lengthy subject we cannot go into at this point. Suffice it to say that whenever you deal with the audience in this way, you have to 'lead the bull' – 'hay que torear', as the Spanish say.

Epilogue

As the Grand Master of Magic René Lavand keeps repeating in his lectures and writings, every performance piece should have a *prologue* to open and an *epilogue*, a coda, to close it. The prologue at the beginning grabs the audience's attention, the epilogue allows the audience a different access to what has been witnessed and elegantly rounds off the experience emotionally and intellectually. Therefore, as an epilogue, I say, "Although I've missed the opportunity to do this for the great Albert Einstein, I'm very happy to have been able to perform it for you tonight. I hope you found it *relatively* good."

Lest I forget...:

- Although the theme and the story play an important role, for they give the trick substance, maybe even a bit of poetry, in any case that 'certain something', I insist that it is above all a *strong magic effect*. Without a strong effect as a basis, there is no good magic, regardless of how well a story is told and how good the presentation is.
- You may write *Einstein* on more than 32 cards, if you like, and include for instance the Aces. You can also change the range of the Einstein cards and write it on the cards that are most often named – this is interesting to think about. To me the described combination is just right, because it allows me to display the prepared deck *without memory work, worry-free* and apparently *very openly*. But I agree that my method needs a bit more psychological skills and communicative sensibility.
- You may obviously take the presentation and apply it to an entirely different method. You may operate with two decks, as it was done in the original Fred trick, or use those very thin cards available nowadays, that will allow you to use 104 cards and show them as apparently 52. However, there is a risk if you hand the cards to the spectators – to me even the best decks don't look and feel like real playing cards. There is always a price to pay.
- It goes by itself that this piece requires an attentive audience and a quite environment. So don't even think of doing it while 'hopping tables' or for 'walk-around' work, unless you do it at the very end, maybe for the last group, or as an encore after your formal presence has ended, maybe sitting with your client and his friends at the table and enjoying a night cap...

The Trick That Cannot Be Explained - TTTCBE

This is my handling of Dai Vernon's famous piece "The Trick That Cannot be Explained", published in Lewis Ganson's *Dai Vernon's More Inner Secrets of Card Magic* (p. 76). It is by no means meant as an improvement on an already sensational piece – you can't improve on a genius - but simply as an additional idea that you might occasionally want to use and maybe even fool those in the know, let alone those who are not...

Effect

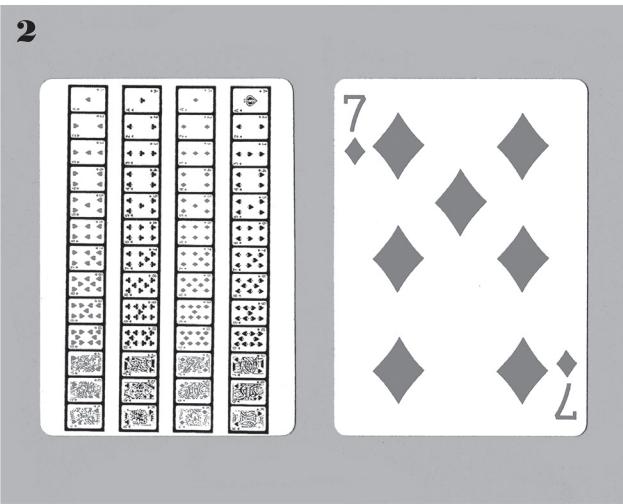
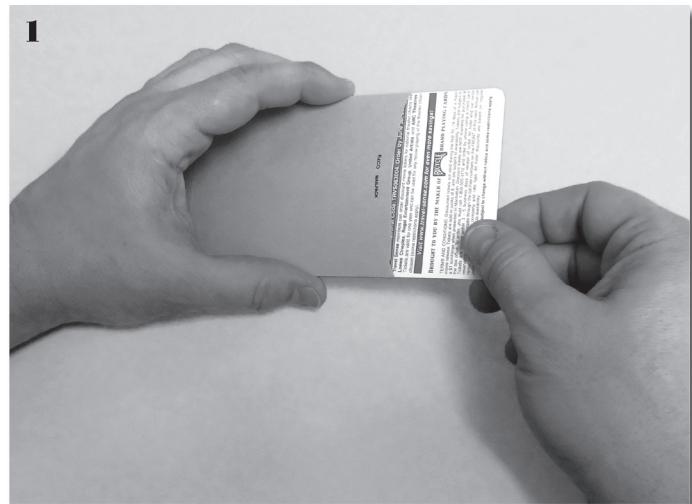
The performer shows an envelope that he says contains a prediction. The spectator shuffles and cuts his own deck and with obvious freedom selects a card. Upon looking in the envelope, it is found that it contains exactly the same card from another deck – a perfect prediction.

Multiple Outs

When I asked Persi Diaconis, professor of statistics at Stanford University and an authority on Vernon, what he thought were Dai Vernon's most important contributions to magic, he answered, "Exploring methods and effects pertaining to the thought of card, as well as multiple outs." TTTCBE is certainly one of Dai Vernon's most popular and brilliant findings in the field of multiple outs.

In my version the essence of Dai Vernon's trick is kept, of course, but I have added the use of four solutions, instead of just one, as originally described in Ganson's text. However, I wouldn't be surprised to learn that Vernon, the genius, had many solutions that were never published, among others the idea to have more than one prediction. As a matter of fact Ganson mentions that Vernon occasionally used a second deck of which he knew the top and bottom card. Add to this the idea of reversing yet another card in its center, and you already have three predictions. Using an envelope, as I do in my version, that delivers four options, is not necessarily better, but practical and clear.

Material



You will need an extra piece of prop that has to be made up once. It is a simple looking pay envelope that delivers four solutions. The first time I came across this wonderful prop was in Alan Shaxon's classic work *My Kind of Magic*, a book I would recommend to any performing magician. Forerunners of an envelope that allows several possibilities, however, are Roterberg and Annemann.

The envelope I use is just an ordinary pay envelope, a little larger than a playing card, which has a separator in it, dividing the inside into two compartments. To create this separator, take an old playing card, trim it at one of its short ends for a fraction of an inch, so that it can be inserted into the envelope as illustrated in photo 1. If you trim it the correct amount, it will simply jam inside the envelope, but you can also fix it with a piece of cello tape, so it doesn't slide around, however, I don't find this necessary.

Next find four of those "52 Cards Gag" cards that have the 52 cards of the deck printed on one side, and a card on the other side. The four cards I have show a Seven on one side, Hearts, Diamonds, Spades and Clubs respectively, and the 52 cards on the other side (photo 2).

Take the envelope and hold it at its sides with your left hand, with the flap further away from you and the address side of the envelope facing away towards the audience. Place two cards on either side, with the "gag" side towards the flap, i.e. the front of the envelope (photo 3). Of course you must remember which is where. I have the Hearts and Diamonds in the compartment closer to me, first the Heart and then the Diamond, and the Spades and the Clubs in the compartment further away, Spades first, then Clubs. When I then hold the envelope like that to take out one card, I can remember that the card closest to me is the Heart, since the envelope is held more or less in front of my heart. The next card in the first compartment is of the same color, therefore the Seven of Diamonds. This first card in the second compartment is Spades, as it is similar to Hearts, which leaves the Clubs last. This are my mnemonics, maybe something else makes more sense to you...



3

Point of Departure

Start by showing the envelope, explaining that it contains a prediction, and then drop it on the table near you, so that if anybody should go for it, you are ready to prevent him or her from doing so.

The “Selection” Process

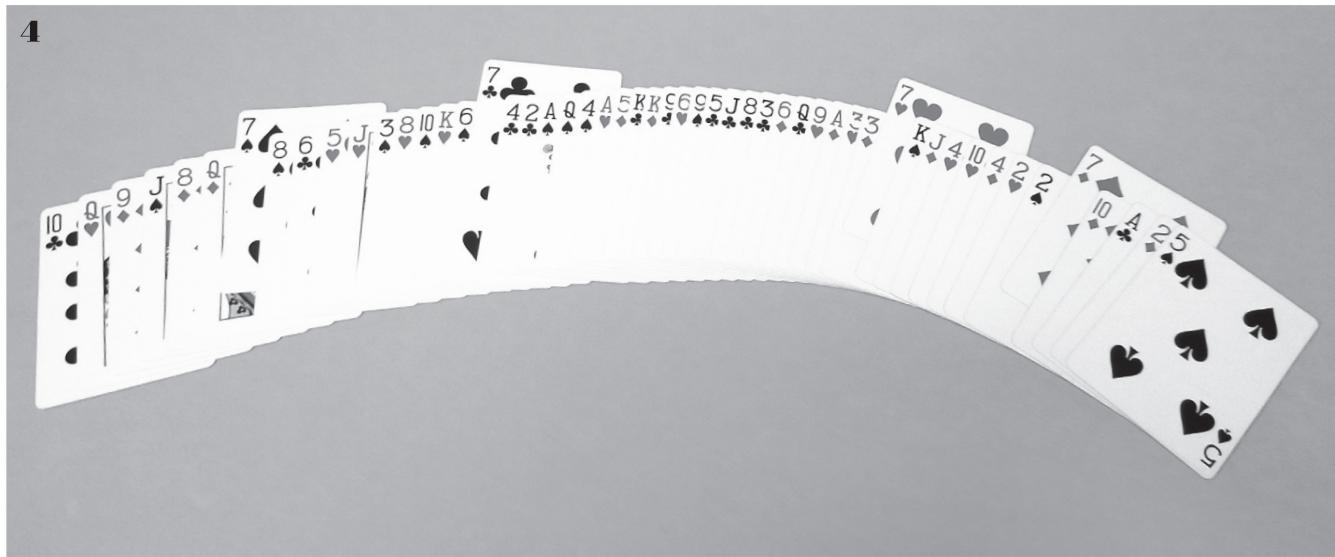
In principle you may Ganson’s explanation (source mentioned in the introduction) in order to hit one of the four Sevens. To make this self-contained, here are a few ways and means. In order to better understand these instructions, I suggest you get yourself a deck of cards and follow along.

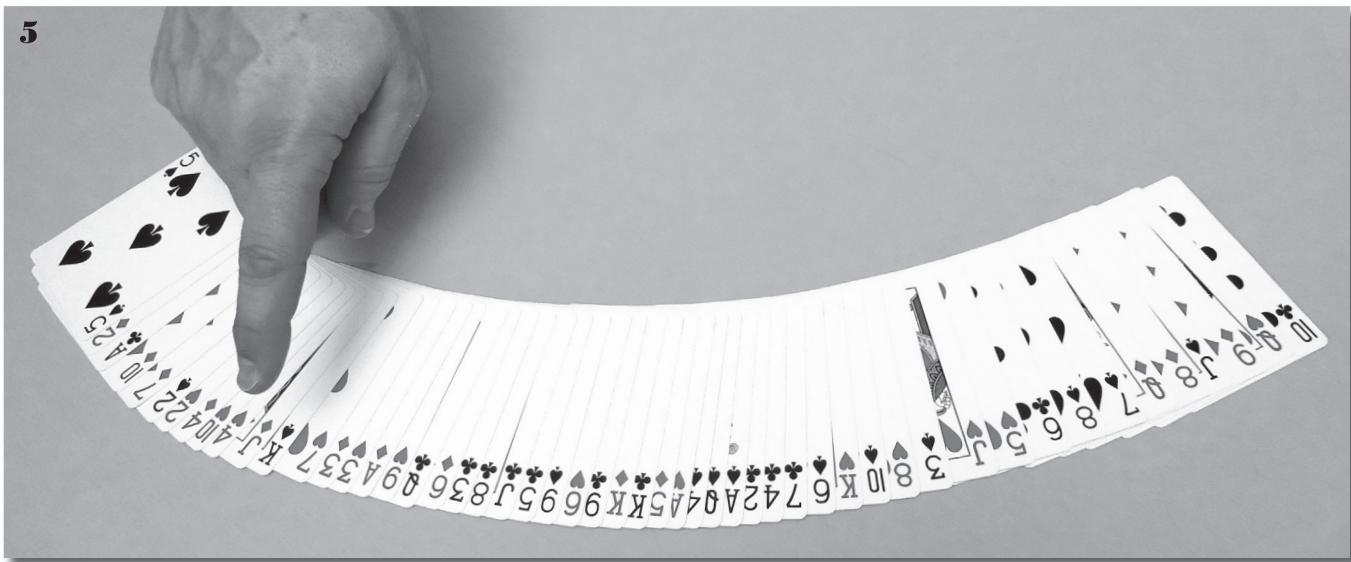
First give the deck a few good riffle shuffles to obtain a good distribution of the Sevens. Hand the deck to a spectator to be shuffled, and then take it back, glimpsing the top card. If it is a Seven (1st chance), leave the deck on the table and proceed to “Reveal the Prediction”. To better the outcome of this very first attempt, you can start out by having a Seven on top and one on bottom. It easily happens that even with several riffle shuffles the top and/or bottom cards remain in their original locations, in the case of an overhand shuffle the top and bottom cards are often interchanged.

If the top card isn’t a Seven, proceed as Dai Vernon often did: have him turn the deck face up. If the bottom card now facing you is a Seven, you’re good (2nd chance), otherwise ask him to cut the deck. If he cuts to a Seven (3rd chance), you’re good. If he doesn’t, carry the cut and turn the completed deck face down, in the process glimpsing the card that is now on top. Again, if that’s a Seven, you’re good (4th chance). If not, have him cut the deck and complete the cut one last time. Turn the deck again face up, but in the process glimpse the new top card, plus you will see the current bottom card (5th & 6th chance). Up to here you had *six chances* of hitting a Seven, but because you have *four Sevens* that are good, that will make 24 chances out of 52 possibilities. That’s almost one chance out of two, all of them being AAA outcomes.

If you still didn’t hit a Seven, ribbon spread the deck which is now face up from left to right on the table *as if this had been your intention all of the time*. As in all tricks of this type, where decisions are made according to the outcome of an action, it should look and feel as if you had had nothing else in your mind than doing it exactly this way and no other. As you execute the ribbon spread, it will be an easy matter to visually locate the position of the four Sevens.

Photo 4 shows a possible distribution of the Sevens, which have been slightly upjogged for clarity (in actual performance you wouldn’t do this, of course). Ask a female spectator to call ‘stop’ when you move your finger over the spread. Generally women are better than men for this, but as a rule you should choose what Tamariz refers to as a “mother” (or “father”), i.e. a spectator who likes you and won’t cause trouble.





Move your outstretched forefinger once over the complete spread and tell the spectator that you would like her to stop you at any position, emphasizing that this could be at the beginning, somewhere in the center or at the end. This will throw off even those who know the original Vernon version and make everyone else believe that this is the fairest possible procedure...

Slowly move your forefinger along the spread and try to be stopped above one of the four Sevens (photo 5). It is not necessary to use the standard forcing technique of hovering above the spread from great height, which might be a bit obvious for an intelligent audience, but keep the finger about two inches above the spread. This will still give you a leeway of two cards to the left and two to the right of each Seven, making a total range of about twenty cards, almost half the deck. If you add a bit of timing to this, as well as looking at the spectator with an encouraging smile, the chances are 90% that you'll hit a Seven. If you do, push the Seven out of the spread and proceed to the next step, "Reveal the Prediction".

If you don't hit it, keep your finger motionless and ask, "Right here?" Whatever the spectator says, lower your finger on the respective card. You can now use any of the strategies explained by Ganson, such as using the card stopped at to count or spell from either side of the half spreads and arrive at one of the four Seven.

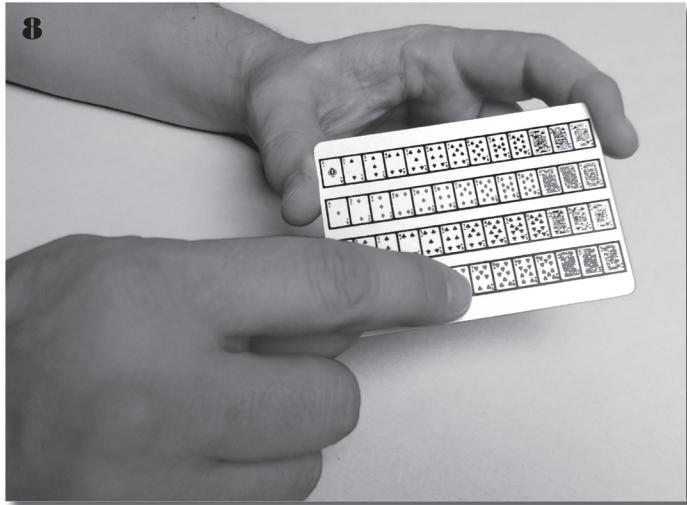
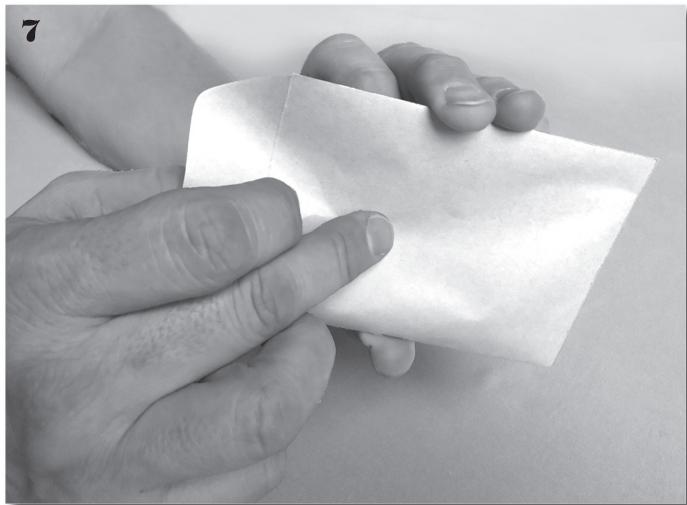
Most of the time I find that once the spread has been split at the stop-point there are two Sevens on either side. In this case I will ask the spectator to eliminate all the cards to the right or the left of the finger and keep the rest. As she can really choose any one, this is very fair. If you have three Sevens on one side of the finger and only one on the other side, use equivoque simply eliminating the bunch of cards that has the single Seven and continuing with the other portion. You can have this portion reshuffled, and then apply the same procedure as already explained at the beginning, and then go over the spread once more with your forefinger. You have now another excellent chance to hit one of the two or three Sevens. If this doesn't work, use one of the Vernon procedures described.

Reveal the Prediction

Once a Seven has been selected, proceed to reveal the matching prediction. To do this, take the envelope and hold it with your left hand at its sides with the flap towards your right and the address side facing the audience. If you need to access the compartment closest to you,

because the Seven is a Heart or a Diamond, lightly press with your left forefinger on about the center of the side facing you (photo 6). You'll notice that this pops the separator card away from you and thus opens the compartment closer to you. If you want to access the other compartment, briefly press with your right middle finger on the address side of the envelope towards you. This action, which is covered by opening the flap with your right thumb (photo 7), pops the separator card towards you and lets you easily extract either one of the black Sevens. Now reach into the compartment with thumb and forefinger, and as soon as you hit the right end of the two cards push the one you don't want to the left and pull the one you want towards the right taking it out. As soon as you extract the card from the envelope, the audience will see the "gag back" with all 52 cards. Casually put the envelope aside, close to you, and explain in all seriousness that this is his freely selected card – point to the respective Seven in the appropriate row (photo 8).

The audience will take this to be a gag and will probably laugh. After a few seconds, however, explain that this was one of Andy Warhol's latest works, a deck of cards that had all 52 cards... on the back. Make a dramatic pause, then say, "The face is on the other side – and this is exactly the Seven of..." Fill in the name of the correct Seven. This will cause a strong reaction, not only from laypeople.



Epilogue

The gag causes the audience to completely forget and ignore the envelope – experience has shown that they don't even want to look at it. If you doubt this, you can always put the prepared envelope nonchalantly into your left jacket pocket a second or two after having revealed the Seven on the back of the gag card, and then take out a similar empty envelope which you had placed there previously. Drop this envelope on the table and disregard it for the moment. Once the spectators have regained their countenance, take the gag card with the Seven on its back and start putting it back into the envelope, but hesitate, saying, “You know, once when I did this incredible experiment for a group of engineers, somebody remarked that I had a dry-frozen deck inside and that I let a drop of sweat hit the correct card that would then expand.” Hand out the envelope as a souvenir. If you choose this approach, I strongly recommend that you give the envelope away rather than handing it over for examination. In the first case it is a gift, in the second it could be interpreted as a challenge. I would suggest you have one of your business cards inside the envelope. This is not so much for marketing purposes, although that might be an added benefit, but because it will do two things. First, if anybody suspected that the envelope was a bit thicker and must have contained more than just a card, this will be a satisfactory explanation, as it might very well have been the business card to give the envelope the remembered extra thickness. Second, it will make for the always necessary epilogue, as you can now remark, “I'll leave this envelope with you as a souvenir, with my compliments. And here is my phone number. In case you can't sleep after two nights you may give me a call. I won't be able to tell you how this miracle is possible, but at least we can talk about it...” John Carney, a consummate professional and dear friend, suggested putting a pill in the envelope and say that this is in case this experiment causes a headache. Although I've never used it, that's an excellent idea – I recommend, though, that you use a sugar pill and not real medication.

Lest I forget...

- In the introduction to this item I mentioned Vernon using a second deck as the “container” for the prediction and thus having two or three prediction cards at one's disposal. If you think further along this line, you could ask, “How many ‘prediction cards’ could this second deck contain that look good when revealed?” You might then even end up using the standard Brainwave deck, giving you access to all 52 cards. Or how about using an altered “Brainwave” deck that gives access only to a specific number of cards? But is it still TTTCBE?
- If you want to explore the subject of how to get to the force card further, I recommend you first go to the Ganson book mentioned. Then Eric Mead has some excellent thoughts on the topic in his great little book *Tangled Web*, and Henry Evans is a master at this trick – you can find his methods and thoughts in his writings, DVDs and on YouTube.
- In his column “Cardopolis” (Genii, February 2011), David Britland mentions a very clever version of TTTCBE as it was used by Lewis Ganson in some of his lectures and which is described in *The Gen* for May 1954.

Details of Handling

To some, details will seem insignificant trifles. But it is where such trifles end that artistic card handling begins. In his landmark book on card magic, *Magia delle carte*, Italy's Carlo Rossetti quotes the French writer Arnould Galopin to have said, "There are no small things for a real artist." It is indeed by the attention to detail that the master proclaims himself. He who pays attention to small details is actually displaying an attitude, a way of life—he is giving a glimpse into a complex system of beliefs that shows great respect and love toward his chosen field of excellence. Attention to details thus becomes part of the all important style, *the artist's means of expression*, and has a palpable influence on how an audience perceives and lives a performance.

I sincerely hope that the study of the following techniques and refinements will give you joy as you practice. There is little that gives more satisfaction than having achieved something difficult, something that cannot be bought with money, or to gain an insight that didn't exist before. Adding these things to your repertoire will enhance your toolbox. You will thus create the best prerequisites for finding elegant solutions to new challenges. However, keep in mind that a tool is just that, as sophisticated as it might be, and that it should be used for something higher.

Control

Here is a simple but important concept that can be applied to almost any control.

The problem: Most of the time we spread the cards between our hands, have the spectator take one, square the cards, and then spread them again between our hands to have him replace his card. After that we do our control. Although I've been using this procedure myself many times, I've come to believe that there is something wrong. The question is: why can the spectator take a card from anywhere *he likes*, but must then replace it exactly in the place *the performer wants*?

The answer: It is much better to spread the cards, have the spectator take one (photo 1), *keep the broken spread intact—don't move*—as you simply turn your head away while the spectator looks at the card (photo 2). Have him then replace the card *where he took it from*, close the spread, and then do whatever you need to do.



This is a great example how asking the right question will identify the problem and will then lead to an insight with far reaching consequences.

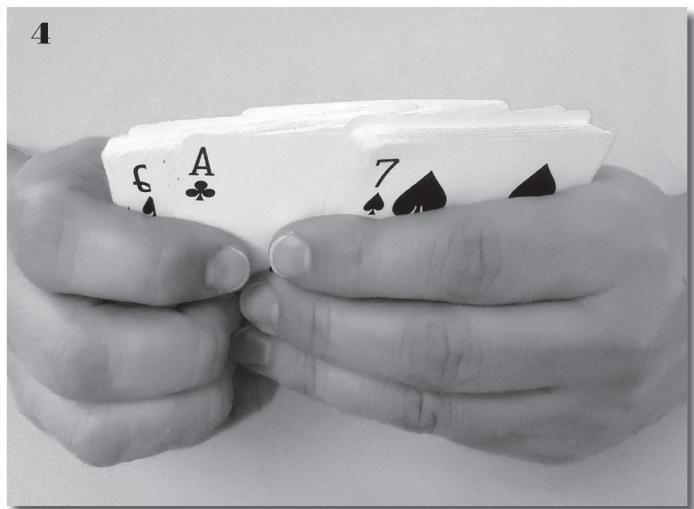
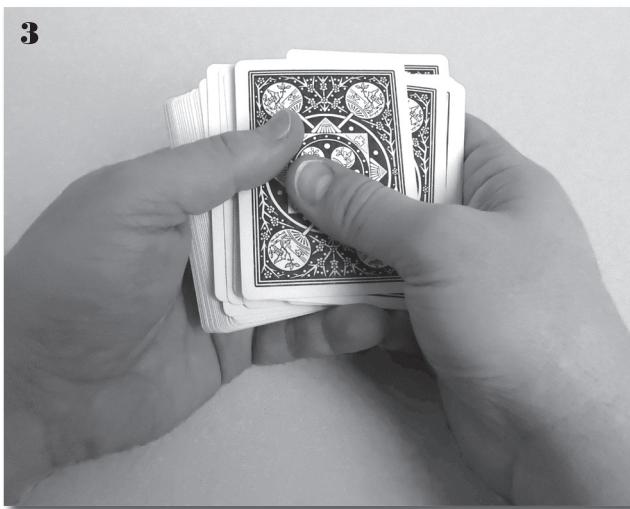
The procedure described not only looks fair, it also solves the eternal problem of why the spectator should replace his card exactly in the spot the performer wants. How many times have you heard a spectator ask, "Why do I have to put it here?", or, "Can I put it in over here?" This handling is perfectly logical, because the selected card is *replaced in the same place from where it was taken*. Since the spectator chooses the place in the spread from which he took the card, to replace it back exactly in the same spot is honoring the spectator's initial free choice. To support the logic implied and avoid any kind of resistance, you can say, "...and please put the card back *from where you took it*."

I insist that in order to obtain the necessary clarity, you should *not move around* and not talk too much after the spectator has taken the card and is showing it around, otherwise the advantage will be lost.

This not only applies when a card is taken from a hand spread, but also when other selection procedures are used, such as dribbling cards or Hindu shuffling them and having a spectator call 'stop'. In all these cases the action should be stopped, the card taken and then replaced in the same spot it was taken from.

Break Handling in Hand Spread

One of the actions most used is to spread the deck between one's hands and to then obtain a break at a specific point as the spread is closed. The problem is *how to avoid the telltale gap showing at the outer end* when the spread is pushed together and just before the right hand regrips the deck in end grip.



The secret is to cull a card when you start the spread – any card after the fourth or fifth card will pass unnoticed – and to insert it above the card over which you would like to obtain the break. When you then close the spread, you can push the spread cards controlled by the right hand as far to the left as they will naturally go – photo 3 shows an approximate configuration at this point from above. Photo 4 shows a view from below: you will notice that the tips of your left middle, ring and little fingers naturally touch the underside of the culled card, effortlessly controlling it during the next action, which is that of the right hand changing grip and retaking the deck in end grip (photo 5).

It is now an easy matter for the left fingers to pull the cards still spread to the left, even with the remaining cards and square the deck, in the process allowing the left little finger to obtain a flesh break under the culled card, which will be clearly felt.

It is of utmost importance that the left fingers *do not* push up on the culled card *until* the deck's outer end is completely protected by the righthand fingers gripping the deck in end grip. You will experience that the culled card gives security of handling and personal confidence in this phase.

One of the reasons I found this handling to be so efficient is that it reflects exactly the handling Gestalt you would use if you were doing what you pretend to do, namely spread the deck, close it again and then square it with both hands.

As far as I know this is original with me, but wouldn't be surprised if Marlo had come up with this fifty years ago...

You can insert the culled card *under* the target card, instead of above, and thereby obtain the break under the culled card. If you then use Dai Vernon's "Post-peek Overhand Shuffle Control" (see *Card College Volume 1*, p. 74) the target card will be delivered to second from the bottom, which allows you to casually display the top and bottom cards. This combination of my culled card subtlety and the shuffle is a great synergy.

G. W. Hunter False Shuffle

The overhand false shuffle created by G. W. Hunter is probably the easiest of the false shuffles that still look good. Here is a little refinement. The shuffle is done in two parts.

Part one: with the deck in position for an overhand shuffle, the right hand undercuts about half the deck and runs 7 cards on those in the left hand. The run, however, is performed in an unsteady count. That is, run 2, pause and make a brief gesture with the right hand holding its cards, and then bring the hand back and run 5 cards. After a total of 7 have been run, throw the rest on top of the portion on the left hand, injogging the lower cards of those held in the right hand. As in the original shuffle, the right hand undercuts at the injog and reruns seven cards back, again in two beats, but this time the rhythm is changed, i.e. you *run four cards*, pause end gesture, and then *run three*. Throw the rest on top, but injog its bottom cards as you did in the first part of the shuffle. As soon as the shuffle is finished, let the deck glide into dealing position and square the cards.

This procedure of breaking the count makes it less obvious that a specific number of cards is run and afterwards run back. By jogging the packet in the second shuffle, the Gestalt of the shuffle is retained (and may throw off those who know a few things about card magic).

The first detail of breaking the rhythm is straight out of Dai Vernon's *Expanded Lecture Notes* (Vernon, Dai, *Expanded Lecture Notes*, "The G. W. Hunter False Shuffle", p. 14, Magic Inc. ., Chicago 1964 [third printing 1979]), the second detail is a clever idea by Gordon Bruce that can be applied to other sleights as well.



Double Lift Get-ready 1

After having been in magic for over 35 years, I have come to believe that for *under-fire professional performances* a double lift with a get-ready is the way to go. (Of course I encourage the knowledge and mastery of instant lift techniques, as it enriches our personal magical patrimony, but for actual important performances I advise against them.)



Here is an innocent looking action that established a break under the top two cards (or more if you like). Have the deck shuffled, or shuffle it yourself, then hold it face down in left hand dealing position. Cut the deck to the table, either with two, three or more packets. Regardless of how many packets are used for the cut, as your right hand reaches for the last packet, the left thumb pushes over two cards (or three or four if you need more – photo 6). Immediately the right hand seizes this packet in end grip, the right forefinger pressing lightly on top so as to secure the spread configuration of the top two cards, and places it on top of the packets which have just been cut one on top of the other on the table (photo 7). Without releasing the pressure on the cards, the entire deck is lifted in end grip and placed in left hand dealing position (photo 8), where the left little finger can comfortably establish a break beneath the top two cards due to their lightly spread configuration (photo 9). From here the break may be transferred to any other position needed.



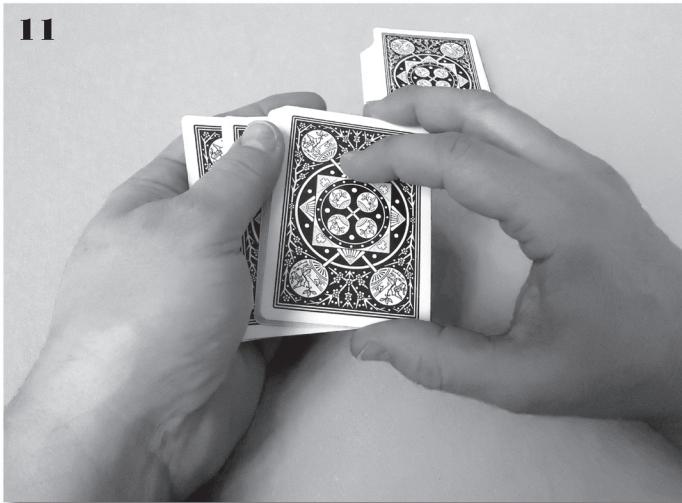
Double Lift Get-ready 2

This has the same handling Gestalt as the first method, but is different in fingering and serves the additional purpose of transferring the bottom two cards to the top and simultaneously obtaining a break beneath them.

10



11



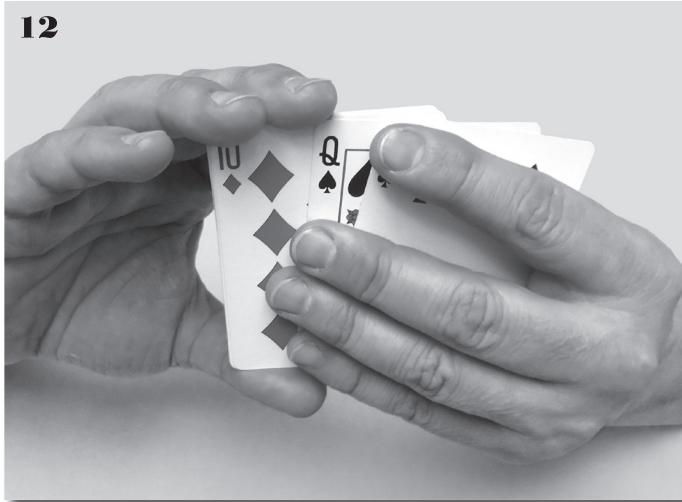
Hold the deck in left hand dealing position. Start cutting small packets on the table, one on top of the other. In the second to last action, when only a small packet is left, the left thumb pushes all but the bottom two cards over to the right. This is done in two steps. One, the left thumb pushes over all the cards except the bottom (photo 10); two, the pad of the left middle finger is placed on the exposed face of the second card from the bottom, near its index, and holds it back as the right hand slides the other cards to the right (photo 11 & photo 12, view from below). The right hand continues its movement and places its cards on those already tabled (photo 13). Finally put the last packet consisting of only two cards on top of all, but slightly offset to the right.

As in the first method the now complete deck is taken and placed in left hand dealing position, where the left little finger can comfortably create a break under the offset cards.

By means of the buckle technique, or by releasing the cards with the right thumb as the deck is gently squared, a break can be obtained *above* the bottom two, three or whatever number of cards you wish to transfer and establish a break under.

For both methods: *Raise your gaze and look at the spectators*, making a relevant comment, as soon as the broken cards hit the tabled cards.

12



13



Ambitious Detail

This is an ambitious card move that is best used as the second or third phase of a routine. Hold the deck face down in dealing position. Turn the top two cards over as one on the deck, showing that the ambitious card has come back to the top. Turn the cards again face down. Place the deck on the table, slowly and unmistakably take the top card and clearly insert it about a third of its length into the deck at its outer end (photo 14). Position your hands as photo 15, and then gently slide your middle fingers and thumbs towards their respective inner corners (photo 16). This is very similar to how Erdnase teaches to square the deck (see also *Card College Volume 1*, p.). The action will slide the single outjogged card square into the deck. This moment looks very pretty, even a bit magical, as if the card was sucked into the deck by forces unseen. After a magical gesture – never forget that all theatrical magic needs a “dramatic” cause – slowly turn the top card of the deck over, first towards yourself, and then towards the audience, à la Nate Leipzig. Do the turning over of the card *in the space right over the deck and keep it there*, do not move around, and then replace the card face up on top of it for all to see. A pretty detail, isn't it? It can be found on page 287 in Hugard's and Braue's *Expert Card Technique*. If you reread this „old“ book, within one or two hours you will find a dozen things you will want to learn, provided of course that you've already read this book several times, otherwise you'll going to find many more things...

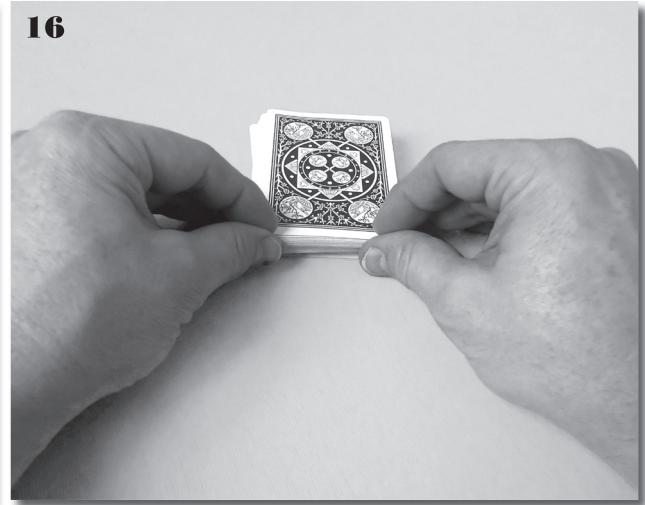
14



15



16



To Practice and Manage the Classic Force

This is a standard quick trick, which is quite good, and which we apply here to practice the classic force, guaranteeing a 100% successful outcome. What a claim!

Have the deck shuffled, take it back and casually glimpse the top card. I recommend my “Top-card Riffle Glimpse” from *Card College Volume 2* (p. 355) – (photo 17). Set this known top card as your force card in the lower third of the deck with a casual injog shuffle. Place deck on table (photo 18). Write the name of the force card on a billet that you introduce in the empty card case. Ask the spectator whether he is right or left handed. Assume he is right-handed. Give him the case to hold in his right. This action has not only served as a positive insertion that separates the setting of the force card from the actual forcing procedure about to take place, it also forces the spectator to now use his “weak” hand to take the card, a circumstance that greatly favors the success of the upcoming force. Pick up the deck and square it, thereby obtaining a left little finger break above the force card. Start spreading the cards between your hands and ask him to take a card and to turn it over (photo 19). If he takes the force card proceed by *very quickly* resuming what has happened up to here and then reveal your correct prediction.



If he does not take the force card, here is an elegant and logical out that you can use to bring the trick to an equally successful ending. The spectator has just taken a card and turned it face up. Withdraw the deck and casually cut the force card to the face of the deck which you have been holding face down all the time. Start a Hindu shuffle asking the spectator to call ‘stop’ at any point. Stop the shuffle, let him place his face up card on top of the portion just shuffled off (photo 20), and then drop the remaining cards from your right hand on top. This will place the force card immediately on top of the reversed “indicator” card. Resume, “You have just inserted any card you wanted at any point in the deck you wanted. I couldn’t possibly have influenced that.” Note that this is true in many senses.

Fan the cards, so the reversed card and those around it can clearly be seen. Say, “Since you are right-handed we will take the card to the right of your marker card.” Take the card to the right of the reversed card, from your point of view. If he’s left-handed say, “Since you are left-handed please take the card to the left of your marker card.” Take the card that from his point of view is to the left of the reversed card. Then reveal the correct prediction. This out is good enough, albeit not as good as when the classic force works, but strangely enough you will find that now that you know this out, you won’t have to use it...

Inserting Cards in a Fan

This comes straight from the first volume of Dai Vernon’s *Revelations* videos. There co-host Steve Freeman explains the original method for setting up the cards for “Cutting the Cards” from *Stars of Magic*, one of the Masterpieces of modern card conjuring, analogous to Picasso’s “Guernica” in painting. The first Ace must be inserted next to a specific card in a card fan of about 15 cards. In the video Freeman takes the Ace and inserts the Ace directly next to the card, whereupon the Professor suggests that the slight hesitation, which always occurs when you insert a card directly, can be circumvented by first sliding the Ace along the face of the fan (photos 21 & 22) – the Ace causing ‘clicking’ sounds as it does so – until the place of insertion is reached, and then it is inserted (photo 23). This is excellent advice and the class of thinking worth any expert’s attention.



Top Stock Control (Rainer Teschner)

This detail on the injog shuffle to control a top stock has deceived many an expert. Let's assume the four Aces are to be retained on top. Start a standard injog shuffle, pulling off about a quarter of the deck, injogging the next card, and then shuffling off. Form a break at the injog, shuffle off to the break, but now instead of dropping the rest on top, chop off about half of these cards remaining in your right hand onto the card you just shuffled off (photo 24). The cards left behind in your right hand are then clearly pushed into the upper side of the other cards (photo 25). This looks very fair because the last block, which those in the know expect to be the stock to be controlled, is lost in the center of the deck.

Please don't think that this is just a thing to throw off the *cognoscenti*, although it will, it also looks like a perfectly ordinary shuffle the way a layperson could do it, and that's of course its main *raison d'être*.



It's Better to Take Than to Put - The Rossini Insight

Dai Vernon used to say and write, "It's better to *take* a coin from a hand, than to *put* it into the hand." For many years I have wondered why this was so, and have discussed this with many experts, but never really got a completely satisfactory answer. Now I have come up with what I find to be the best answer to date.





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The solution was our cat, Rossini. I did the retention of vision vanish for him (photo 26), which I'm told I do very well, but when I retreated the right hand, after (apparently) visibly placing it in my left hand (photo 27), Rossini followed my right hand instead of appreciating the wonderful vanish which was about to take place in my left hand, and which he missed! Then I did a simple French drop (Tourniquet), holding the coin at the tips of my right fingers (photo 28), apparently taking it with my left hand (photo 29), and then moving away to the left (photo 30). Rossini followed my left hand, and when I opened it, revealing the coin to have vanished, *he looked at me* (not at the other hand) – I suspect he thought, "Holy Mouse!"



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From this the answer to the Professor's is easy to infer: it is better to "take" than to "put", because when you take, the hand from which the coin will ultimately disappear is the moving hand and will thus attract the eye *and* the attention. Whereas in the "put" the hand which puts moves away and thus at least partially attracts attention. Although the human mind, being more complex than the cat's, will let itself be fooled by the visual retention element as well as the natural looking technique, I'm convinced that a "put" feels less good than a "take".

What was most irritating in my quest for "the truth" was the simple fact that a retention of vision vanish, which *is* a typical "put" and not a "take", not only looks good, but also deceives quite well, at least for a moment, so why should it be bad. I found the answer to this other question, which had been bothering me for a long time, by listening to one of Dai Vernon's lectures. There he says that doing fancy "put" vanishes is no good and doesn't look as natural as when you hold the object for instance in the right hand, and then take it with the left hand, in order to free the right hand, which now picks up the tabled wand. The wand is then used to affect the vanish. The question: what's the difference? My answer: in close-up situation, the "take" is practically always the preferable approach. Inserted in the appropriate context it will look natural and convincing. However, if you are standing and perform for a larger group, such as in a parlor or even stage situation, you need to interpret the visual information in a more exaggerated form, in order to project it as far back into the audience as possible. To do this a display type of vanish is ideal, that's why a retention of vision vanish fits the bill perfectly.

I hope these thoughts will cast some light on a hitherto clouded issue and allow you to make the best decision when you next want to convincingly "vanish" a coin.

Overture for Cups & Balls

This is an opening sequence that will fit almost any Cups & Balls routine that utilizes three cups and three (visible) balls. I use it as an overture to my interpretation of the famous routine by Dai Vernon, which is published in Ganson's *The Dai Vernon Book of Magic*.

Effect

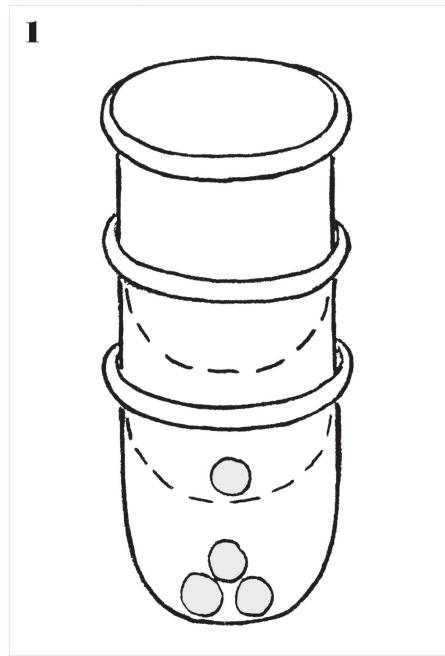
Three empty cups are shown and then penetrate each other – the third cup is even seemingly pierced by the magic wand. Nonetheless three balls appear underneath the center cup. One after the other the balls disappear and reappear one underneath each cup. From here on a most wonderful Cups & Balls routine is performed.

Properties

- 3 Cups of the size that can accommodate 3 balls in one cup and still be nested.
- 4 balls that match the style and design of the cups and fulfill the above mentioned criteria.
- A bag in which the nested cups with the hidden balls can be transported.
- A magic wand that matches the style and design of the cups used.

Preparation

Nest the cups with the lower cup containing 3 balls, the center cup containing 1 ball and the third empty cup on top of all, as shown in figure 1. Place the stack of cups prepared in this way into the bag – if you have a wand that telescopes or can be unscrewed like a billiard queue place it into the bag, too, that could contain a separate compartment on the inside to receive it. You are now ready to perform the following overture at any time.



Phase 1 – Placing the Cups on the Table

Take the stacked cups from the bag and lay them on the table so that the mouth of the cups is towards the audience - it can clearly be seen that the top cup is empty. Implicitly it will be assumed that all other cups are empty, too - this will subtly be reconfirmed in the next two steps and in two different ways. To emphasize that, without obviously saying anything in this regard, you can briefly use the bag to wipe the stack and the mouth of the top cup. Put the bag aside as it won't be used anymore.

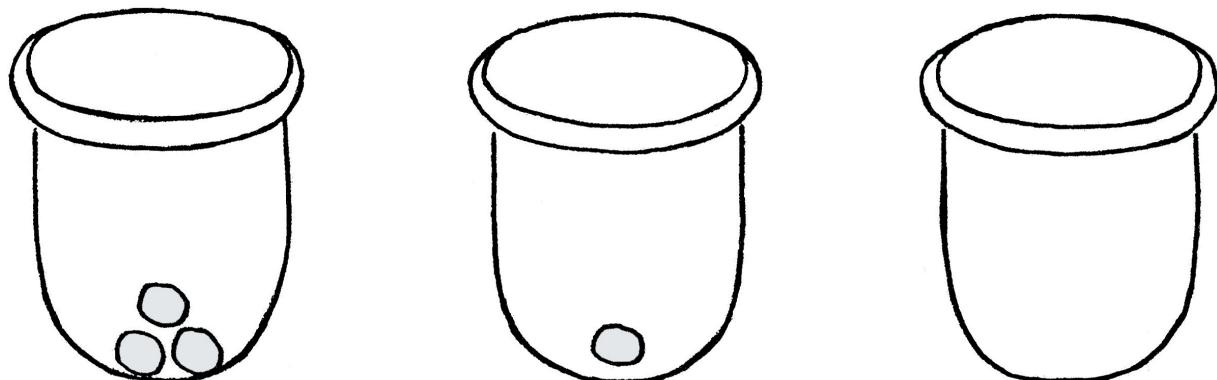
Introduce the wand, the symbol of might, and place it parallel to the edge of the table between the cups and yourself. Besides giving the hand a natural appearance when it has a ball palmed, the wand can also be very effectively used as a pointer to point to spaces where an effect takes place. At the moment, however, none of this is required, so we place it in a "neutral" position.

With your left hand pick up the stack, still keeping the opening of the top cup pointing towards the audience. As you look into the audience and make a fitting comment, the right hand seizes the bottom cup of the stack and both hands move the stack briefly into a vertical position. As this is done, the right hand takes the bottom cup and keeps it in a vertical position, with the mouth upward – the three balls contained therein can neither fall out nor be seen. The stack of now only two cups is again brought to a horizontal position by the left hand, the mouth being once more directed towards the audience thus showing its emptiness, *without mentioning it*, as the right hand lightly taps the left side of its cup against the right side of the stack (fig. 2). This "tap" that doesn't last even a second, as trivial as it may seem, is just the necessary action it takes to separate the actions of the hands in time so that the convincing illusion is created of the right hand holding an empty cup. The fact that there was visual information of an empty cup before and after the action, plus the performer's taken-for-grantedness of the actions, reinforce this belief. The single cup in the right hand is then immediately placed mouth upward to your left on the table – let's call this position A.

As the right hand moves back to seize the next bottom cup, the stack is smoothly moved back into a vertical position and the actions described above repeated, so that eventually the right hand places its cup, containing just one ball, to the right of the first cup on the table on what we'll call position B.

Finally throw the third cup lightly into the air so that it revolves once, catch it again and then place it on position "C", to the right of the other two. Figure 3 shows the position of the cups and the location of the balls.

3



The handling described creates the illusion that the three cups are empty. This is reinforced by the fact that the cups now rest mouth up on the table – if you had something to hide, you wouldn't leave them mouth up for all to see. Even spectators sitting very close won't be able to see the balls inside the two cups.

The handling of the cups in this first phase is reminiscent in function and procedure to Brother Hamman's Flushtration Count with playing cards, where a packet of cards is shown to be all alike – in reality the bottom card is shown repeatedly and the top card taken without showing its face. In the present case the bottom cup was shown repeatedly empty to make believe all three are empty. The transfer of this concept to the Cups and Balls is not my invention, as I know of several colleagues before me that have used this idea, possibly invented by Aldo Colombini. However, I might be the first to have described it in such detail, because it is truly the details in handling which makes this apparently simple move deceptive so that its implicit message won't be doubted, let alone the thought be raised, that some kind of move is performed. In order to obtain this degree of conviction, not only a precise technique and correct rhythm is necessary, the cup should also be handled without too much emphasis nor pretension, but lightly, in a "conversational" manner, insouciant, easy in one's mind about what is done, maybe saying something about the history of the trick and mentioning some of its most prominent performers, if that is your cup of tea.

An additional piece of chicanery that will strengthen the illusion, is to look inside the empty cup as you bring the stack to a vertical position, maybe blowing some "medieval dust" out of it, then look up and into the audience making a lightly misdirective remark, as the right hand seizes the bottom cup and the left hand brings the stack of now two cups back to a horizontal position. To close the sequence the last cup, after having done its aerial pirouette, can be handed to a nearby spectator to touch. If you have some particularly interesting, valuable or beautiful cups this is the moment to mention that. All of this has to be done in an artistic manner, not mechanically, always "using your head", as Dai Vernon used to say.

One more essential comment before we proceed with the action: In almost all C&B routines, the cups are placed mouth down on the table from the very beginning, because that's the way the trick works and that's the way we need the cups. However, that's how we magicians think, from the functional perspective of the method. For the audience a cup is a cup to drink from, not a magic prop, and a cup goes mouth up on the table (otherwise you couldn't pour your drink into it!). If you put a cup mouth down without reason and to begin with, maybe you have something to hide beneath it. By placing the cup mouth upward at the beginning you establish it as a drinking cup, and it doesn't matter of what material the cup is made of, the fanciest cup will be accepted as being a cup, fancy maybe, but still a drinking cup. It is only after the first three quick penetration effects in the next phase that the cups are placed mouth down in "working position". The surprise caused by the effects, albeit quick and not extremely strong, functions as a positive insertion and causes a light conversational trance, both these elements being enough to elegantly pass from one configuration of the cups to the other without unnecessarily drawing the audience's attention to it. This might be more important than it seems.

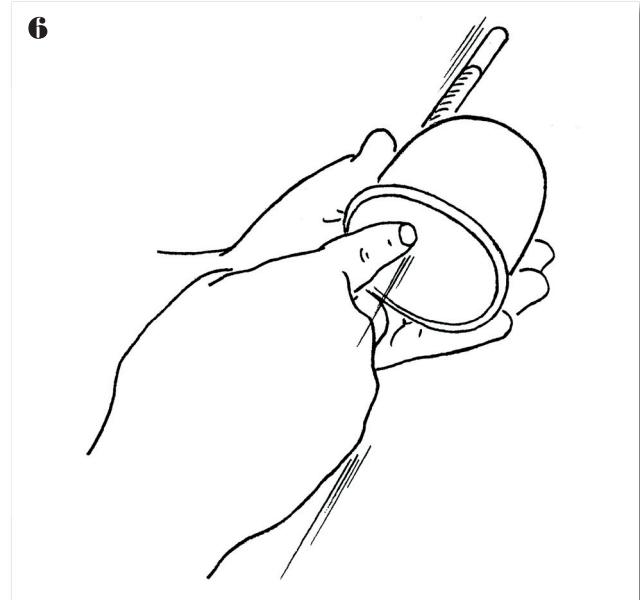
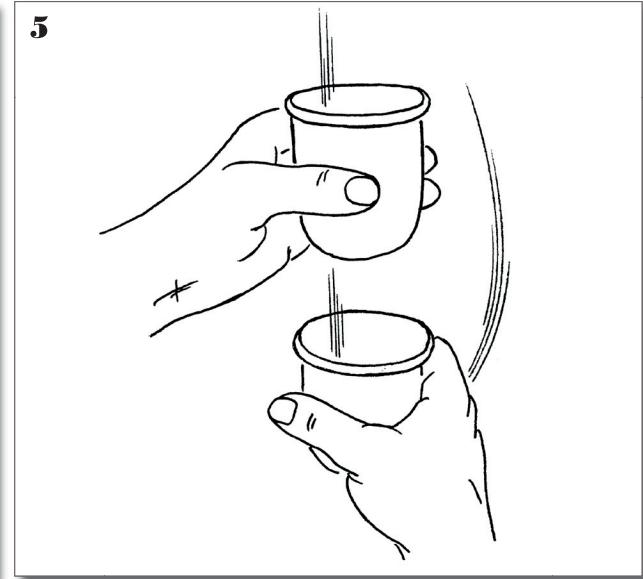
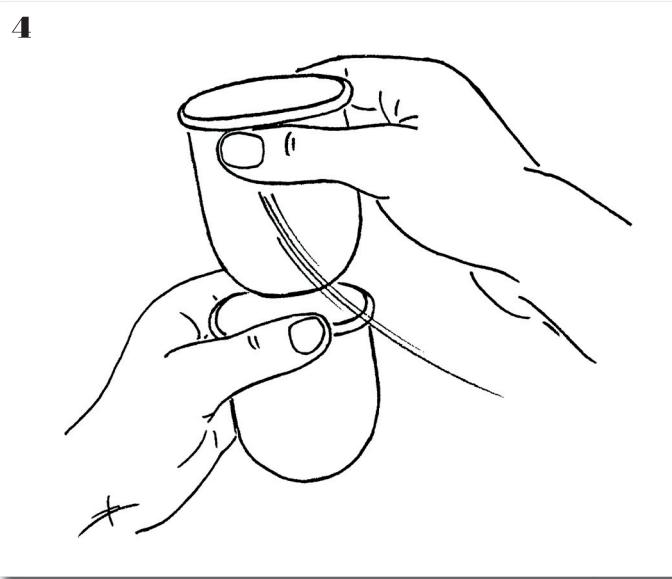
Phase 2 – Penetrating the Cups

What follows is a well known quick effect where the cups are apparently dropped through each other. Apart from being quite surprising to the uninitiated, it serves the function of showing the cups clearly empty a second time. Remember that the subsequent production of the three balls below the center cup will only be as strong as the conviction that there was nothing under the

cups to begin with. To make it for the spectators as clear as possible to perceive and easy to remember, I have found that it is not only important to execute the technique correctly, but to make the moves in specific spaces so that these spaces are associated with specific information.

Take the empty cup C with your right hand, lightly throw it into the air so that it makes one revolution and then catch it again in your right hand, saying: "The first cup..." The left hand takes cup B and brings it in the space above C. Holding cup C above cup B (fig. 4) drop cup C into cup B. The left hand holds back the falling cup C and drops cup B. Cup B is caught by the right hand, which swiftly moved down to catch it in time (fig. 5), and placed mouth down on C. *It is important that the left hand doesn't move, only the right hand.* Accompanying these actions you continue the sentence you began, "...drops through...". The cup in the left hand is moved over space B, transferred to the right hand which throws it lightly into the air letting it make one revolution. The cup is caught back in the right hand and shown mouth towards the audience, finishing the sentence: "...this second cup."

If these moves are correctly coordinated, the illusion is created that one cup has been dropped through the other and that both cups are empty, whereas one of the cups hides a ball all of the time.

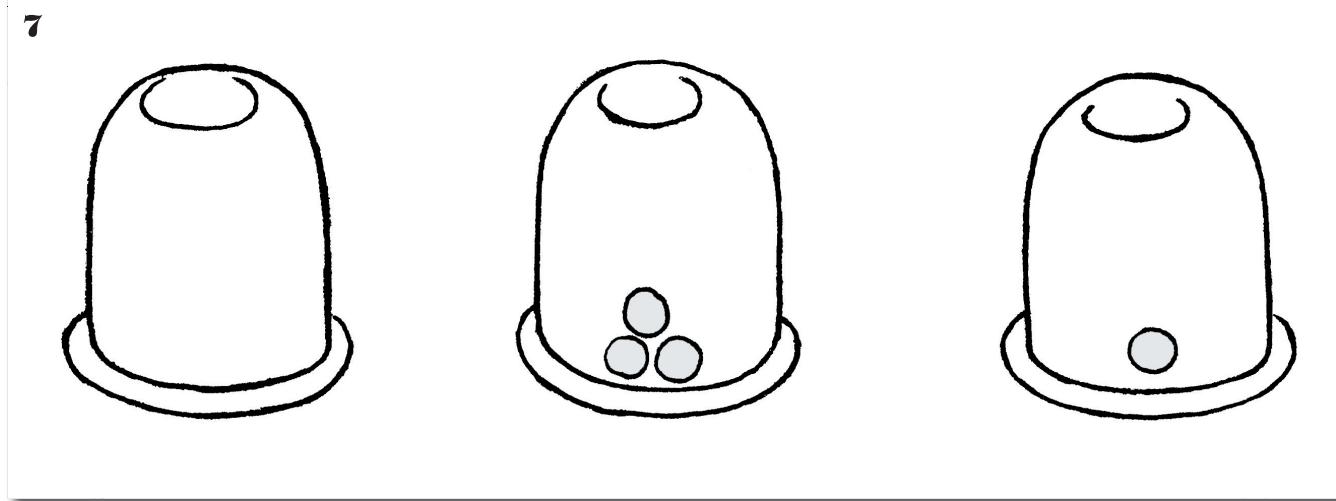


Now you repeat the same sequence of actions with the next cup that contains three balls, saying: "And this second cup penetrates the third cup." Here again the cups are brought over space B and one cups apparently dropped through the other. Then the cup containing the three balls is placed mouth down in B as the left hand moves its cup in the space over A, transfers it to the right hand which then one last time somersaults it into the air.

Eventually the third cup is apparently pierced by the wand as indicated by figure 6, which shows the performer's view that should not be shared with the audience. The empty cup is then placed mouth downward on A.

In this phase the cups have been shown empty a second time. In reality the cup in A is empty, the cup in B hides three balls and the cup in C hides one ball (figure 7).

The procedure is very easy to remember, because at the beginning the cups are placed mouth upwards on the table from left to right, like reading, and they are then picked up one after the other from right to left for the penetration phase, coming back to the left where the sequence started.



The Production of Three Balls

Spin the wand in a magical gesture, which is always the cause of the effect in the perception of the audience, the ritual so to speak, over the center cup. Lift the cup to reveal the appearance of three balls. Give your audience time to appreciate this effect. Then take the balls, replace the cup in its original center position, and place one ball on top of each cup.

The Routine Begins...

You are now ready to go into the first phase of the world-famous Vernon routine. The advantage is that the fourth unseen ball has already been loaded underneath cup C, a bonus that you get with this opening. Due to the opening handling of the cups and the penetration effects your audience should be absolutely convinced that cups A and C are empty. It follows that you can first mentally relax and second show your hands unobtrusively empty. Another asset is that the first movement of tilting the cup with the right hand becomes an action of conditioned naturalness – you can perform the action in a totally harmless way and thereby establish their innocence. Subsequently you repeat exactly the same handling Gestalt with the next two balls, but this time you secretly load the ball palmed in the right hand underneath the cup as you tilt it in order to drop the ball resting on its bottom into your left hand. (The load actually *does not* take place when the cup is tilted, but when it is set back on the table.)

Lest I forget...

- This overture has served me, and is still serving me, as an excellent introduction to the Dai Vernon Cups & Balls Routine that I perform almost to the letter as it is written in the Ganson text, since it is almost impossible to improve on this masterpiece of magic.
- The quick penetration effects, although well known among insiders, serve two vital functions:
 - Dramatic construction: They form an amusing *prologue* and introduce the props with possible links to their origins and the historical background. It's a moment that commands attention and creates expectation. Every good trick needs a prologue.
 - Psychological construction: They establish that the cups are empty to begin with and are therefore an integral part of the psychological construction. That's not only important for the production of the three balls to follow and the camouflaging of the fourth ball, but above all for the appearance of the final loads, which is only as good as the absolute conviction that they were not in the cups to begin with.
- I would like to make some additional considerations on the Tourniquet, also called the French Drop. A most intelligent description appears on pages 32 to 34 in the already mentioned *Dai Vernon Book of Magic* by Ganson in the chapter "The Vernon Touch", one of the really good essays on the theory of magic. Here Dai Vernon emphasizes the importance of making the transfer of the ball from the right to the left hand an in-transit action, although he does not call it by that name. This means that the transfer of the ball from the right to the left hand is a secondary action necessary to allow the right hand to perform the main intended action, namely seizing the wand, which is on the table. The wand is needed because it is the magician's ritual accessory which affects the vanish. All of this is, of course, the theatrical reality of the procedure and the "*raison d'être*" of the sequence of moves *in the perception of the audience*. It is always important to keep this perception, otherwise there is no deception, no astonishment and no magic experience. The text mentions that the hands 'move together' hinting at the unspoken fact that the French Drop is not a pure take-move but a combination of a take- and put-move. This historical cataloguing of a vanish in 'take' and 'put' categories, has caused more harm than good, in my opinion. In my experience almost every vanish will appear more natural, and therefore pass unnoticed and not be recognized as a 'sleight', if interpreted as a combined giving and putting action. Take a few days to watch yourself transfer objects from hand to hand – you do this all the time: the left hand takes a sheet of paper out of the printer and then transfers it to the right hand where it is held to be read; the left hand picks up a pencil and transfers it to the right hand which writes something; you pick up a bottle of water with your left hand, transfer it to your right hand and then hand it to somebody at the table who asked you for it. What did you notice? I have noticed that almost always the hand that gives goes about two-thirds of the way, while the hand that takes goes the other third. This feels and looks right. Try to apply this to the execution of the French Drop now. But when you do, make sure that once the transfer occurs, the taking hand moves first and more prominently, while the giving hand simply relaxes and drops after the attention has shifted to the taking hand.

Lest I Really Forget...

I'm not sure whether there is a technical term for this part of a written work, such as Last Word, Afterword, Farewell...but whatever it might be, I think that it's nice if a publication also has a word from the author to end it. After all, you as the reader have invested your time and even a little money, I as an author have invested much, much more time and more money. Also, I have shared some of *my* most intimate thoughts, not only pertaining to magic, and you have accepted to be stimulated by it. By using *your* intimate world of imagination you have allowed us to be siblings in thought, which is, at least to me, quite special. It reminds me of what Jean-Paul, the German Romantic writer, once said: "Books are only thick letters to friends." Well said. So how about a few amusing and maybe inspirational random thoughts to round this off? I'm glad you agree.

Information, Experience & Knowledge

After one of my lectures, Pit Hartling, the little green genius, said to me, "You speak with the knowledge and the experience of an old man, without being an old man." This was one of the nicest compliments I've ever received, and it really would make my day if you felt similarly about these lecture notes.

Importance

Francis Scott Key Fitzgerald once wrote, "You don't write to say something, you write because you have something to say." How do you know the difference? If, after reading a text, you have just more information than before, it is good; but if on top of this you also gain some insight that helps you affect a change, then what you read was important.

A little better is already much better

Whenever you practice a piece, make it a point to *consciously improve something*. Only add something if it is really necessary, but even better, find some unnecessary action or word that can be eliminated, reducing the piece to its essence. At all times strive to preserve the intrinsic beauty of an effect and don't ruin it with too much "presentation", be careful about being too "entertaining" and too "commercial".

Good is Better Than Original

One doesn't exclude the other, but there is an order of things.

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Ian Fleming once remarked, "The most important thing is that you know about what you write, and that you never underestimate your audience." It was my intention to give you some of my best pieces, presentations, techniques, handlings and thoughts concerning the practice and performance of magic, and I have done it because I know everybody, simply everybody, can be more sophisticated than he thinks he is.

Last Word

Here is one of my own quotes: "The business man wants to make as much money as possible; the artist wants to do what he does as well as possible." Which somehow connects with what Arthur Schopenhauer once said: "In this sense my philosophy has never brought me many returns; but it has saved me a lot."