

INSIDE OUT

BY ROBERTO GIOBBI

ILLUSTRATED BY BARBARA GIOBBI-EBNÖTHER



What is the simplest meal one can cook? How about fried eggs? Even those who never cook can fix fried eggs. Fried eggs are the self-working trick of the gastronomes. Paul Bocuse, who owns one of the few three-star restaurants near the French city of Lyon, is considered one of the best cooks. Here is how he prepares fried eggs, a very simple dish.

Ingredients (props): Bocuse chooses fresh eggs from hens that run around freely on a farm. There are different kinds of eggs from different breeds of chickens that will be fed in different ways. This results in differently tasting eggs and Bocuse makes a conscious decision. For seasoning he uses sea salt, white pepper, and nutmeg, everything freshly ground, so that the aroma develops only at the moment when it is necessary.

Working tools (instruments and gimmicks): Use a pan of cast iron with an enameled finish. This iron stores the heat for a long time and transfers it to the contents evenly. The enameled finish is an excellent heat conductor and prevents the eggs from clinging to the pan.

Preparation (technique, handling and management): Bocuse takes the eggs out of the refrigerator about an hour earlier and lets them reach room temperature, so that they will develop their full aroma. Taking them from the refrigerator and heating them immediately would destroy many flavors. While the pan is heated on small fire, where a little natural creamery butter is melting, the eggs are cracked one by one into a cup. This allows you to smell the eggs in order to find out if they are really fresh. Furthermore, this will allow you to easily take out pieces of shell if needed. Now he lets the eggs glide carefully into the pan and using a wooden ladle arranges them into an optically pleasing configuration. The eggs continue to cook on the lowest fire, so no crust will be created, something gourmets despise. Season with salt, pepper, and nutmeg. In the meantime he has preheated the oven to 150 degrees Centigrade upper heat. As soon as the eggs are almost ready, the pan is placed in the middle of the oven for another two or three minutes, so that they receive some heat from above, too.

Serving (the presentation & routining): Bocuse take the eggs from the oven and adds a few drops of Balsamico vinegar from Modena (the older the better) on top. He, who doesn't shy away from the costs involved, in season will add some white truffles and let them melt for a minute. Serve with white bread and a fruity, fine wine (Bocuse is partial to Crus from Beaujolais, which is made of Gamay grapes, but a young burgundy or other Pinot Noir from any part of the world will do).

Note that preparing fried eggs à la Bocuse takes just a few minutes more than doing them the standard way where they are cracked into a cheap pan and burned to a crisp. But what's the difference? Just two things: the attitude of the cook and the resulting dish. Maybe one could express it the way Aristotle did when he once reprimanded one of his students: "*There are only two faults in your work — form and content.*"

What has all of this to do with magic? Well, I thought since the next few articles of this column will be dealing with relatively easy stuff, especially the first effect, such tricks therefore, that are light on sleights, so to speak without much finger-flicking calories, but still nutritiously meaningful, the connection to cuisine is obvious. And in case you don't like any of the tricks described, you now at least know how to prepare fancy fried eggs. *Bon appétit!*

MANIPULATED HAZARD

I chose to include the following simple, yet visual, effect for the sake of all those who don't practice card sleights every day, but they still want to include an effective card routine in their program. Also the advanced card artist will appreciate an illusion which relies on what we call "self-working principles" for several reasons. The only price to pay is that it requires a minimal set-up.

Effect: The spectator freely chooses a card, the Ace of Spades. Suddenly the other black Ace turns face-up, too. The black Aces then find the red Aces. Eventually a royal flush of the spectator's favorite Ace is produced.

Set-up: You need to arrange eight cards on the top of the deck. A face-down Ace of Clubs is followed by seven face-up cards: a red Ace, Ten of Hearts, Jack of Hearts, Queen of Hearts, King of Hearts, a red Ace, Ace of Spades. The balance of the deck is face down.

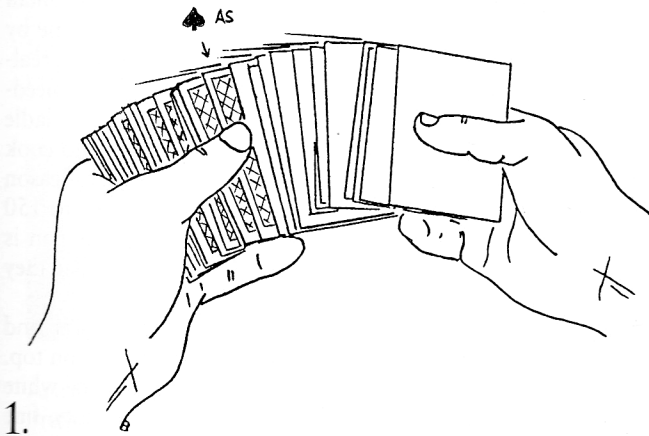
Staging and Method: "Coincidence is providence shrouded in veil," said the German poet Marie von Ebner-Eschenbach. Whatever you think about chance, I'm going to show you in the following experiment how a magician deals with it." During this prologue ribbon-spread the deck face down on the table, taking care not to expose the top few face-up cards by simply not spreading to the end. If no table is available you can fan the cards with the faces towards the audience or even spread them faces down between the hands, again taking care not to expose the reversed cards.

Pick up the deck and spread the cards between your hands until you reach the first face down card. Thanks to the previous set-up of the cards, this will be the Ace of Spades (Figure 1). Place this card face down on the table and then ask the spectator to turn it face up for all to see — the Ace of Spades. As this happens, turn the face-up cards face down and place them *under* the balance in your left hand.

Again take the deck in the right hand and dribble the cards on the table, asking a spectator to call stop. Stop when requested, place the un-dribbled cards forward on the table and ask a spectator to place the Ace of Spades face up on top of the packet. Gather the cards previously dribbled to the table and place this packet on top of all, thus completing the deck. The actions of this step should look as if the spectator had freely inserted the previously "freely" selected Ace of Spades somewhere into the deck.

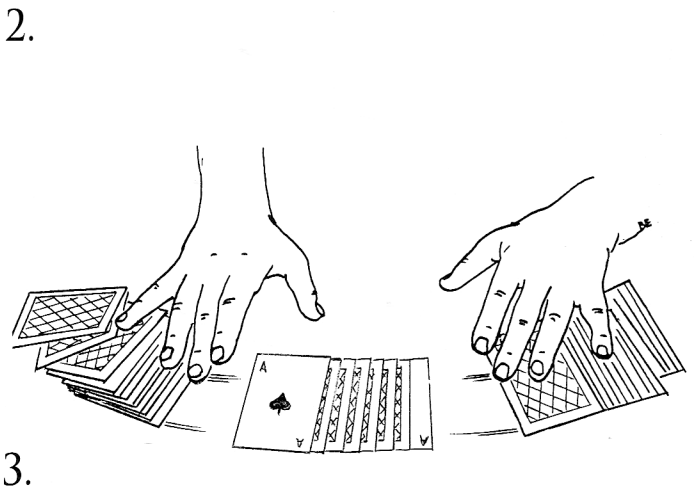
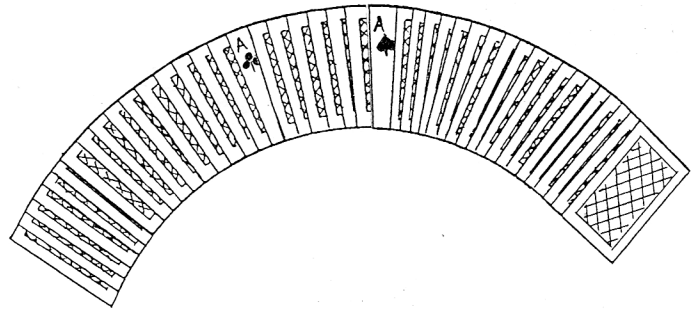
At this point the trick is done as far as the method is concerned, but for the spectators the effects are only about to start now. Explain: "The fact that you have chosen exactly the Ace of Spades was pure chance in the philosophical sense of the term. What you are about to witness now, is manipulated chance."

Riffle the cards once, then snap your fingers in the air to signify the manipulative cause of the effect. Ribbon-spread the deck face down on the table. A few cards away from the Ace of Spades, its mate, the Ace of Clubs, has turned face up, too (Figure 2). Say, "A second card has turned over... It happens to be the other black Ace."



Take the cards and hold them face down in the left hand in a dealing position. The right hand seizes the deck and lets the cards dribble into the open left hand, as a spectator is asked to call stop whenever he or she pleases. Stop the dribbling at the spectator's command, turn the cards remaining in your right hand face up, and deposit them on the face-down cards in your left hand, saying, "This is where you stopped me. Let me mark the spot by placing these cards face up on top."

Now place the deck on the table for a few seconds as you say, "You have, by an act of chance, determined one card that is the first to be face down in this spread." This is Arturo de Ascanio's Positive Insertion, a concept of misdirection that gives an apparent reason for marking the cut in this somewhat unusual way¹.



Using both hands push the face-down cards on the left and right of the Aces aside (Figure 3), saying, "Sometimes people who witness me doing this ask me if I play poker." Look at the audience expectantly which cues them to ask you this question. You might have to repeat the phrase, but sooner or later someone will play the game. As soon as he or she asks, "Do you play poker?" look at them with a surprised air and reply, "What makes you think of that?" This is the humorous

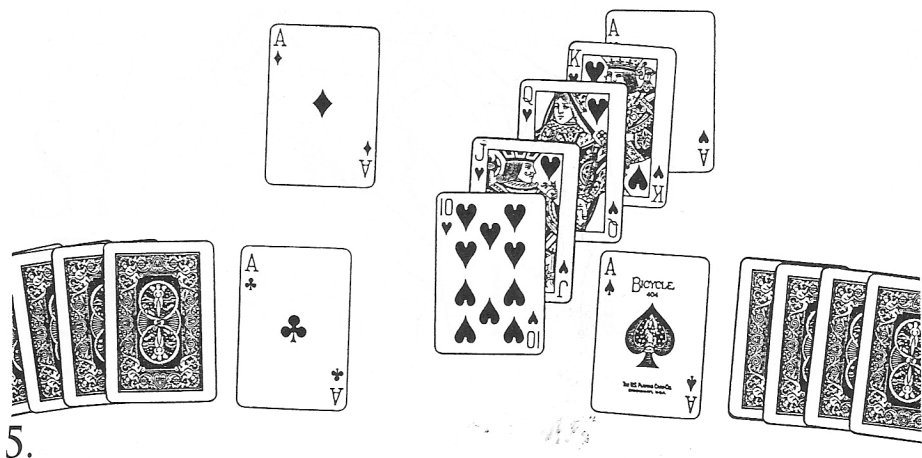
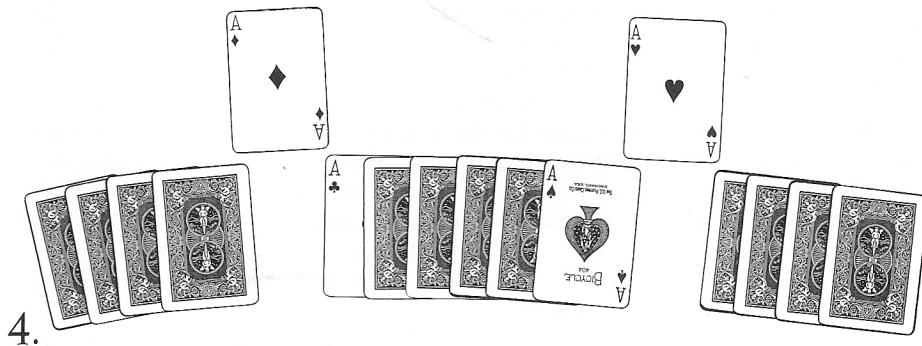
byplay that elegantly leads you to the second effect: "Of course I play poker... but only if I can get the four Aces." Turn the card next to each Ace face up revealing the two red Aces (Figure 4).

Ask another spectator, "Which one is your favorite Ace?" Not always, but more often than you might think, they will name the Ace of Hearts. If so, everything is well. If another Ace is named, I use a ploy learned from the great master Juan Tamariz. Simply ignore the answer by explaining, "My personal favorite is the Ace of Hearts."

Lean slightly forward and look at the audience as if you were about to share a secret with them, asking, "And do you know why people never play poker with me?" Without waiting for the answer, turn up the four face-down cards one after the other (Figure 5). As you reveal the attractive final display, say, "Because I'm never satisfied with the four Aces... I always want the best, a Royal Flush with that favorite Ace!"

As it stands this routine is entirely self-working and doesn't require any sleight of hand. Advanced workers will, however, certainly want to add a touch here and there. Personally I would just add an Injog Shuffle at the beginning to control the set-up top stock². But even this simple technique can be circumvented by starting the Overhand Shuffle with the faces towards the audience. Stop the shuffle before you reach the set-up and throw the balance you are still holding on the back of the cards already shuffled off. Eventually turn the deck face down and square it at the fingertips. Adding a False Cut here is optional but would complete the Gestalt that people are used to. In other words, the shuffling and cutting of the deck that closes the circle. ♦

1. For a detailed discussion of Positive Insertion see *Card College Volume 2*, pp 427.
2. My favorite explanation of the "Overhand Shuffle Controlling the Top Stock of the Deck - The Injog Shuffle" - can be found in *Card College Volume 1*, pp. 44.



GESTALT

You will occasionally find me using the term Gestalt. The concept of a Gestalt is much older than the Gestalt psychology movement, and may be traced to writings of the philosophers of antiquity, particularly Aristotle. Its premise is that the whole is more than the sum of its parts. Imagine you have 30 boards in a pile — nothing more than a heap of lumber. But if you put those boards together in a certain way, organizing them, you could make them into a bookshelf, a bed, or a chest of drawers. Suddenly the whole, say, the bed, is more than a collection of individual boards. It is a new concept, which forms a Gestalt.

This formulation or model is useful in explaining connections in the field of magic. Take, for example, the execution of an Elmsley Count. In the course of counting four cards from hand to hand, one or more cards are secretly hidden. This false-count display is made up of numerous individual actions, some of which serve to show most of the cards, others to conceal one or several. The idea

is to hide the covert actions or to make them appear as part of the overt action of counting the cards. In short, the concealment must be imbedded in the Gestalt of the Elmsley Count, so that the spectators perceive only the latter.

This leads us to another formulation, this concerning the principle of naturalness. For the Elmsley Count to be deceptive, the Gestalt of counting the cards from hand to hand must already be within the spectators' body of experience. If you are able to execute the Elmsley Count so that it appears exactly like the actions used when counting the cards normally, or rather, it appears to be the exact way the spectators would expect you to count the cards, they will perceive the procedure as natural and are unable to discern the secret concealment. The spectator's recognition of the counting-display action is due either to their past experience or to your having conditioned them to it. The latter is another way to establish a sense of naturalness.

IRELAND RED-BLACK FALSE SHUFFLE

Laurie Ireland originated this False Shuffle around 1935. Although Ireland is usually associated with this shuffle, it was already published by 1919 by Charles Jordan.¹ If a deck is separated with all the red cards followed by all the black cards, this shuffle will keep the deck in this order. What happens basically is that less than half the cards of the deck are shuffled off, then the center cards are run singly until safely past the mid-point, then the balance is shuffled off.

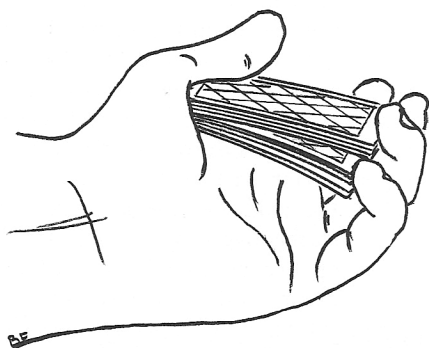
The problem I have encountered in the execution of this simple shuffle — and one I have noticed with most using this technique, regardless of their proficiency — is the long run of the single cards in the middle of the shuffle. This is caused by the fact that it is hard to estimate the center of the deck while it is in movement during the shuffle action. Even expe-

rienced cardworkers opt to start the run a little earlier and finish it a little later than necessary. The way such a shuffle appears to the audience is the Gestalt of the shuffle, and suspicion will be aroused if it appears one bit clumsy. An audience perceives an Overhand Shuffle to have about six, maybe ten shuffle actions, which will be identified as being a thorough shuffle. To match the Gestalt of the Ireland Red-Black False Shuffle with that of a normal Shuffle, I have come up with the following procedure.

We will assume that the 26 red cards are on the top and the 26 black cards are on the bottom of the face-down deck. Hold the deck face down in left hand dealing position. By means of visual estimation, a break is obtained slightly above midpoint and held by the left little finger.

To do this, different procedures may be adopted depending not only on personal gusto but also on the requirements of the context the sleight is set. An obvious one-handed method will consist in simply using the left little finger to pull down slightly more than the bottom half of the deck by applying pressure to the inner right corner of the deck. Some might prefer to press on the right side near the inner right corner. It will facilitate the visual estimation of the above mid-point if the cards are bevelled

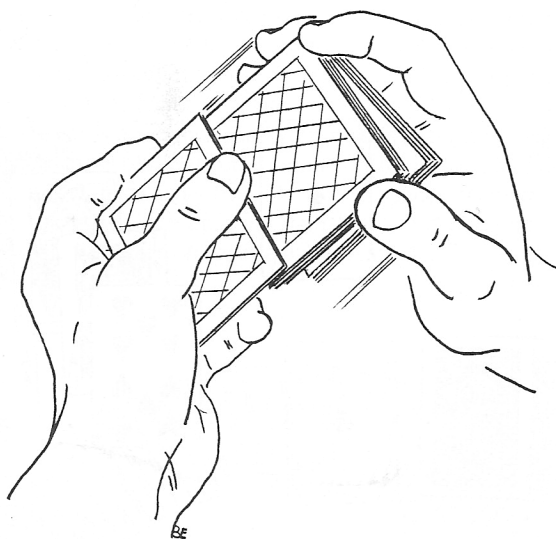
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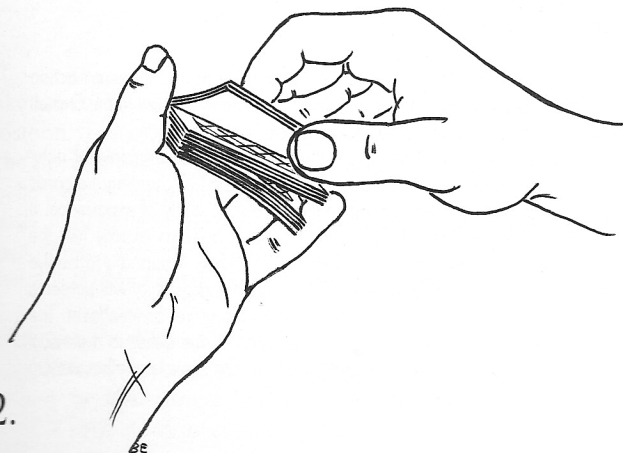
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slightly forward and the deck itself is further away from the body than usual. This is easily achieved by a gesture accompanying a remark. All those proficient in the Little-Finger Count² might prefer to start the pull-down at about 20 cards from the top and then run down a few more cards. Figure 1 shows this procedure with the little finger having arrived at end position.

An easier method to get the break is to use both hands. To do this the right hand seizes the deck in End Grip and brings it to Elevated Dealing Position³. The deck is not held horizontally, but with the right side slanted downward at about a 45-degree angle. In this position the right thumb gently riffles the inner end of the cards in the following manner: the right thumb lifts up a few cards less than 26, which is visually slightly above mid-point. The pad of the left little finger is pressed gently over the upper right edge of the lower portion and catches a break under what will be about 24 cards. Immediately the right thumb riffles off the remaining cards. Make it a soft riffle that won't be heard. Figure 2 shows the break already obtained and the remaining cards being riffled off about halfway. Lower the deck into Dealing Position. Some may want to conclude the action by gently riffling the outer end of the deck as soon as it reaches its final destination. The right hand is now moved away to gesture, to move something on the table or else. In any case, it is a good point to make a

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brief pause here which creates a Positive Insertion separating the setting of the break from its use just a moment later.

Now, and only now, the actual shuffle action starts in the perception of the audience. For this the right hand seizes the deck in End Grip, the right thumb taking over the break.

The deck is brought into Overhand Shuffle Position, the right thumb still maintaining the separation¹. The first shuffle action is started whereby the left thumb pulls off about half of the cards in the portion held above the break (Figure 3). In the next shuffle action all the cards above the break are dropped/pulled-off. Now run about six cards singly and eventually shuffle off the balance of the deck by chopping off about half of it and throwing the rest onto the left hand's stock. The red cards are now on the bottom and the black cards on top of the deck. If it doesn't matter to the effect being performed, leave the shuffle that, and simply close the circle by performing a False Cut in the hands or to the table. If you need the colors back in original order, it is a natural thing to square the deck after the shuffle and thereby obtaining a break above mid-point as described above. Now simply repeat the shuffle.

From the methods given above to obtain the break, the one using the Little-finger Count is preferred. If you use the two-handed approach, remember to use a very gentle, soft riffling action, then lower the deck into Dealing Position, and make a short break to separate cause and effect before eventually going into the shuffle.

In the above example we have used exactly ten shuffle actions. This resembles a good, ordinary Overhand Shuffle. If you want to run a few

cards more in the central portion of the shuffle, you can split it up by interrupting the shuffle action after having run five cards by making a comment and gesturing with the right hand holding its yet unshuffled cards. Then finish the shuffle by running, say another five cards and the balance in two more shuffle actions. This will still look good.

Albeit obtaining the break is a matter of visual estimation, the dynamics of the look has to be taken into consideration. It is okay to glance at the cards then look up, because only a second is needed and the Positive Insertion between obtaining the break and the actual shuffle will in reality cancel any relationship between the two actions. After some practice you will be able to use peripheral vision and not have to look directly at the deck. Those adept at Perfect Faro Shuffles realize they don't even have to look.

Some magicians get frightened when they encounter the term estimation. However, it is extremely easy to estimate the center of the deck within two or three cards, because in this case, it is about estimating two visual card blocks and not a specific number of cards. And once you know that my six-year-old son can cut a deck into two approximately equal portions, you should be able to do this, too. That's the kind of estimation required here.♦

1. *Thirty Card Mysteries*, Magic Ltd., p. 25.
2. You can find a detailed description of the Little-Finger Count in *Card College Volume 1*, pp. 201.
3. Both techniques are fully described in *Card College Volume 1*, p. 17 and p. 18.
4. Details of handling this break transfer can be found in *Card College Volume 1*, pp. 74, "The Post-Peek Overhand Shuffle Control."

SLOWR - RUNUP WITH OVERHAND LIFT SHUFFLE

This is an overhand shuffle run up system-I came up with and which I found to be eminently practical for conjuring purposes. It will also pass in card playing in "slow company," i.e. with family or friends, where an overhand shuffle may be used by some of the players in the game. Obviously I do not for a mere second suggest that the reader should do that, I'm of course publishing this method only for educational purposes and for self-protection¹.

Without a doubt there are many established systems to run up a hand, methods created by greats such as Ozanam, Robert-Houdin, Erdnase, Marlo, Lane, Fulves, or Scalbert, to name just a few. So why a new method for doing an overhand run?

I have identified a list of problems associated with the concept of running up a hand and here are a few that SLOWR solves:

A. Compared to other systems in magical literature SLOWR is very easy to remember. Every shuffle is based on exactly the same formula. Whoever has tried overhand stacking knows how important this is.

B. You don't have to memorize mathematical formulas that usually must simply be learnt by heart, but you can visualise the shuffle each time once you've understood the simple concept.

C. You never have to run more than x cards, with x being the number of hands. Most other systems require you to shuffle as much as 2x plus one card in one run which is just too much to pass unnoticed even in the slowest of company.

D. The more cards that have to be run in one single shuffle, the greater the source for making a mistake either in counting or in shuffling off the single cards.

E. Most systems use a mix of Injogs and Outjogs, with some methods going as far as asking the executor to gain a break, sometimes over and sometimes under the jogged card. SLOWR merely uses the Lift Shuffle and always the same Injog or Outjog — your choice.

F. This method is good to stack a hand in a poker demonstration as are the other systems, but each shuffle can be varied on the spot to accommodate a different number of cards. Such a necessity could arise if you wanted to place, let's say three cards at exactly the place in the deck to be later spelled out. You cannot do this with other methods without having to resort to a rather complicated change of formula, which you then better learn by heart.

Technique, Handling, and Management: Like other descriptions of this kind, this will read far more complicated than it actually is. The only way to fully appreciate its simplicity is to take a deck of cards and go through the actions as you are reading the following instruction.

Let's assume that the four Aces are on top of the face down deck and that you wish to stack them to fall into your hand in a draw poker game of five players. To make it easier for you to follow through the actions visually, may I suggest that you turn the Aces face up and place

INSIDE OUT

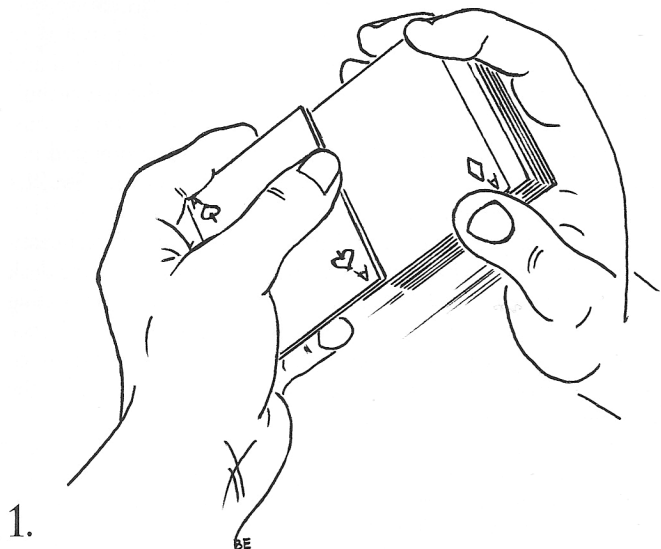
them on the face-down deck in the order from top downwards: Clubs, Hearts, Spades, and Diamonds (CHaSeD). Stacking four cards in five hands is really the most complicated case, but it will make the principle understandable. Any other example with fewer cards for less hands will be even easier. In order to make comments easy to follow, each

single step will be numbered, even if it is a single shuffle that may only last three or four seconds.

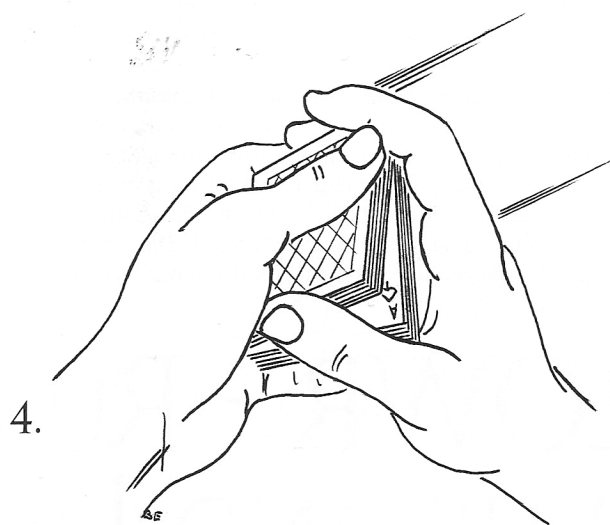
1. Bring the deck into Overhand Shuffle position and start by doing an Injog Shuffle² or a Lift Shuffle³ to bring the stock of Aces back to the top – the Lift Shuffle is the preferred approach, since it simulates only one single shuffle. This first shuffle is optional. The reason I like to start with it is that you do not have to begin by a single run of cards, which looks funny to the layperson and gives away the intended run up to the initiated.

2. Immediately continue by running the three top cards, AC, AH, AS, into the left hand (Figure 1). These are three shuffle actions, and each movement of a card or block I call a “shuffle action.”

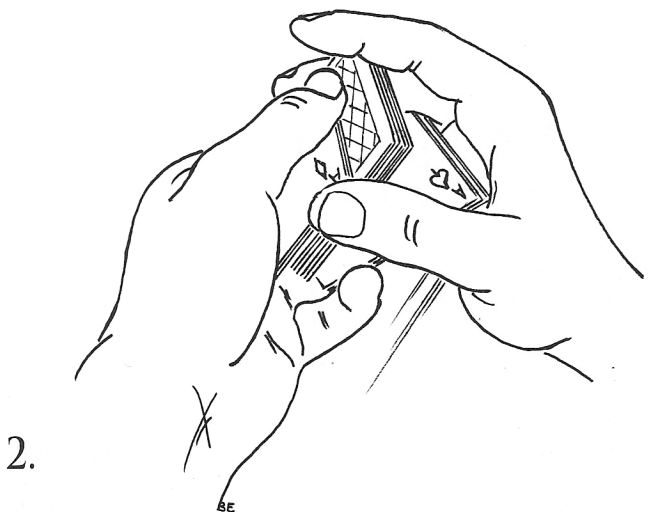
3. In the next shuffle action, the fourth, the left thumb chops off a small block as the three Aces previously run are lifted behind the unshuffled balance (Figure 2).



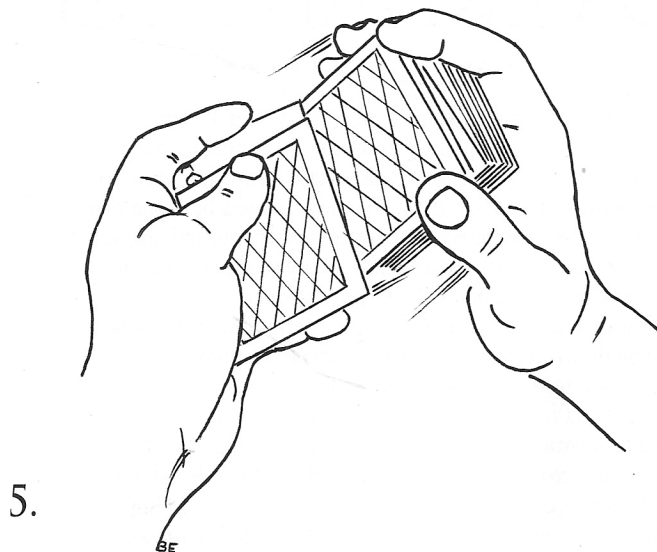
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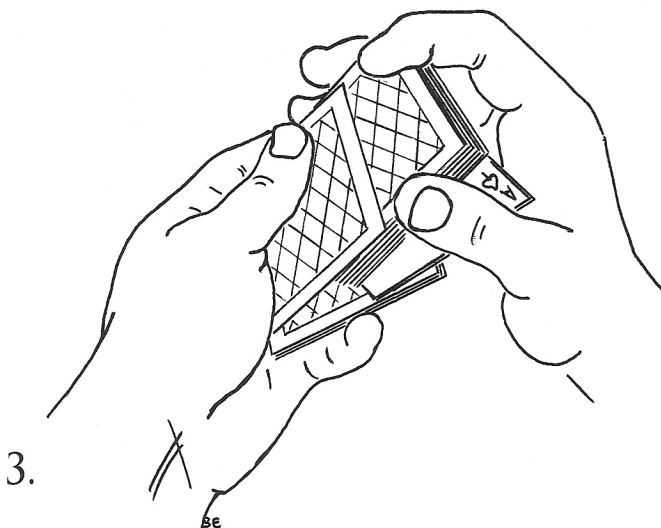
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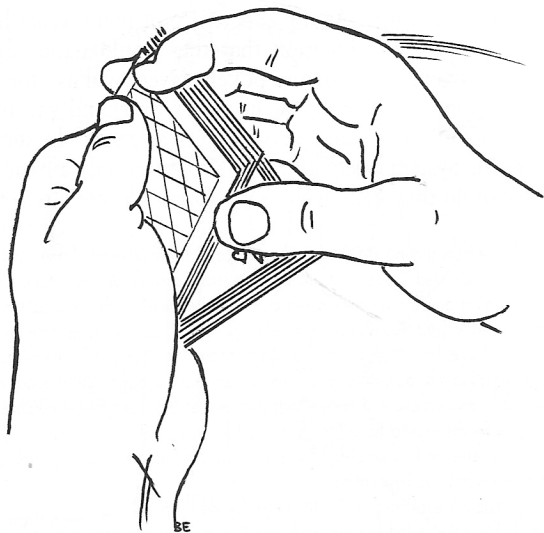
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4. Smoothly continue the shuffle by running four cards (Figure 3 shows the fourth card being run). This is one card less than the five hands required.

5. As you lower the right hand's packet to start the next shuffle action, drop the three lifted Aces from behind on top of the cards in your left hand as soon as the balance in the right hand fully covers the top of the left hand's packet (Figure 4). As the right hand retreats to



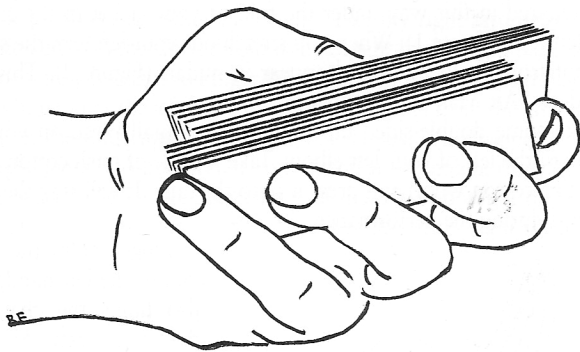
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its position above the left cards, the left thumb retains one card injogging it (Figure 5).

6. Shuffle off the rest of the cards from the right hand on top.

7. Obtain a break below the injog, shuffle off to the break, and throw the rest on top.

Basically the above description outlines the principle which will be repeated another three times, once for each card in the hand. Let me insert an explanation here to make the concept clear: In steps 2 and 3 the Aces that will not yet be stacked are simply lifted away. This clears



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the space for the four cards, in the case of five hands, to be run on top of the first Ace in step 4. Then the three Aces are dropped back on top, and the entire stock is brought back into starting position (steps 5, 6, and 7). From here on the same procedure is followed, only that you lift two Aces away to clear the way for the next run of four cards. The run of four cards (in the example of five players) is easily remembered either by the formula $x-1$ (x being equal to the number of players) or by simply visualizing the four other players — you are the fifth player and get the Ace. Which means that instead as thinking $x-1$, simply count the Ace as one and then continue two-three-four-five, as you run the next four cards, one card for each of the other players. In any case, this is practically the only memory work necessary besides understanding what the Lift Shuffle does.

Let's continue the descriptive steps. The order of the cards from top down is now: AS, AH, AC, x, x, x, x, AD, balance of the deck.

8. Start the Overhand Shuffle by running two cards (AS, AH) into the left hand.

9. Lift them behind the right hand's cards, as your left hand chops off a block of at least six cards.

10. Run four cards.

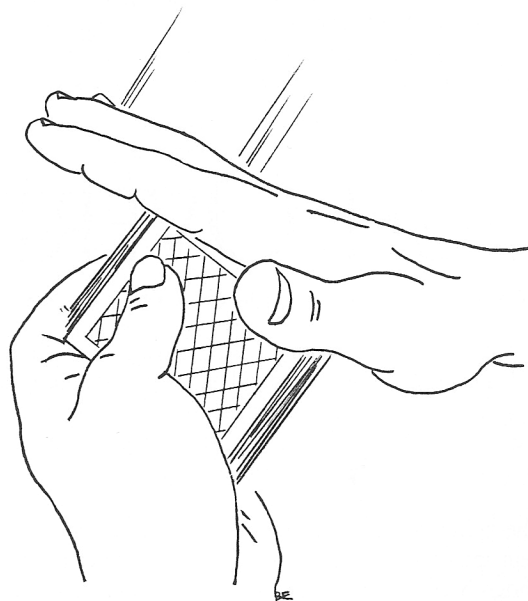
11. Drop the two Aces on top and simultaneously run one card injogged on top.

12. Shuffle the remaining cards from the right hand on top.

13. Obtain a break below the injog and shuffle off to the break. Throw the rest on top.

These steps reflect steps 2 to 7, with the exception that in step 8 two cards are run instead of three. By now you should understand the principle, especially if you turned the Aces face up. Spreading through the cards for a quick check reveals the following order from top: AH, AS, x, x, x, x, AC, x, x, x, x, AD, balance of the deck. The next phase stacks the third Ace:

14. Run the top single card (AH) into the left hand



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15. In the next shuffle action the left thumb chops off a small block of at least 11 cards as the AH previously run is lifted behind the unshuffled balance.

16. Smoothly continue the shuffle by again running four cards.

17. As you lower the right hand's packet to start the next shuffle action, drop the lifted AH from behind on top of the cards in your left hand as soon as the balance in the right hand fully covers the top of the left hand's packet. As the right hand retreats to its position above the left's cards, the left thumb retains one card, injogging it.

18. Shuffle off the rest of the cards from the right hand on top.

19. Obtain a break below the injog, shuffle off to the break and throw the rest on top.

In steps 3, 9, and 15, where your left thumb is require to chop off a block, you can simply think of always chopping off the same amount of cards, i.e. about a third of the deck. This will fit all situations, even if you want to stack five cards.

Step 5 (as well as 11 and 17) can be handled differently. As soon as the right hand's cards are over the left packet, the lifted cards are dropped. Instead of continuing with injogging a card and shuffling off, when the left edges of the right hand's cards contact the left hand, continue to grip the packet with your right hand. Then immediately lift

the lowermost cards of the right hand's packet about half an inch as your right fingers release the cards above them (Figure 6). Lower these retained cards as you move them forward for an outjog, or inward for an injog, so that they project about half an inch from either the outer or inner end. Figure 7 shows the positioning with the outjog. Use whichever you feel more comfortable with. For a brief delay you may tap the upper side (Figure 8) before proceeding as described in step 6 (as well as 12 & 18). In other words, form a break at the outjog or injog, shuffle off to the break, and throw the rest on top.

The order of the cards from top down in the face down deck in this specific example: AH, x, x, x, x, AS, x, x, x, x, AC, x, x, x, x, AD, balance of the deck. If you dealt the cards now, the Aces would fall to the first player on your left. You can actually stop here and ask whom of the players they want to win.

According to what they say, simply shuffle the required cards on top using a standard Injog Shuffle. So, if they name the first player, do nothing, if they name the second, shuffle one card on top, for the third player, shuffle two on top, for the fourth player shuffle three on top, and for yourself shuffle four cards on top. Remember it is always x-1, with x being the position the desired player occupies at the table.

This system allows any number of players, even six, seven, eight,

nine or ten. However, it will readily be recognized that six players are the limit of practicality. As my experience of many years has shown, unless you specifically mention that they could name six or more hands, nobody except hard-core poker players will ask for more than five hands. On the other hand, no other overhand shuffle system I know can handle this number of players elegantly. In such a case a Riffle Shuffle System is superior, but I know of only a handful of people who can do this really well... and that's another story. ♦

1. In a catalogue from around 1900 advertising "Dice, Card and Novelty" one can read the following amusing disclaimer: "To our customers: The Federal Court has decided that it is against the law to use the mail to advertise or sell marked cards, loaded dice, etc., to be used for gambling, and we cannot, and will not fill any orders for that purpose. But it is NOT against the law to sell marked cards, loaded dice, etc., to do magical or slight-of-hand [sic] tricks, or for the purpose of exposing crooked gambling methods, or for your own amusement. If you want these goods for a practical demonstration and exposure of the methods and devises [sic] used for the purpose of cheating at gambling or for the slight-of-hand (sic) or magical work, we will be pleased to fill your orders, but we positively refuse to fill your orders for any goods to be used for actual gambling purposes." What a nice way to be hypocritical.
2. The Injog Shuffle is explained in *Card College Volume 1*, pp. 44.
3. The Lift Shuffle is the underlying technique on which the present system is based, so a thorough understanding of it is necessary - a complete description is found in *Card College Volume 2*, pp. 257.

FLASH OVERTURE

When I developed this routine I was looking for a short opening sequence that could be performed standing up, would appeal to an audience both visually and audibly, and where the effects take place on a vertical plane. "Flash Overture" meets all these requirements and I have used it for many years to open my formal close-up act.

Effect: The performer produces two coins from his empty hands and drops them into a champagne glass. There is a brief comic interlude where a brightly colored silk appears in a flash of light. This silk is then used to produce the third and final coin.

Requirements: 1) Three half-dollars or silver dollars, 2) a champagne glass (Any other glass can be used but a champagne glass is certainly more stylish), 3) an 18-inch square red silk of the finest quality you can obtain, 4) an electronic lighter, 5) double-sided Scotch tape, 6) flash cotton.

Preparation and set-up: Place the lighter, along with one of the coins in the right pocket of your coat. Usually there is a small compartment in the upper part of the pocket, which is used to hold tickets or loose change. Put the lighter in this small pocket and

the coin in the pocket proper. This will enable you to reach into the pocket, finger palm the coin, and seize the lighter as the hand comes out.

Accordion pleat the silk so that it forms a compact bundle. Tuck the silk prepared in this way under the fold of your jacket in the crook of your left arm (Figure 1). When you stretch out your left arm the silk will pop out from its location and appear in midair (Figure 2). This is Bill Chaudet's "Air Mail Silk Production."¹

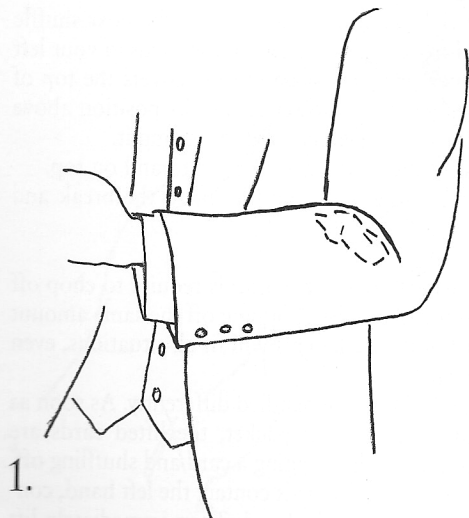
Take some double-sided tape and stick a small piece on your coat exactly to the left of your left elbow. Take a piece of flash cotton (which looks like cotton wool) and press it onto the tape. It will stay there until removed during the performance.

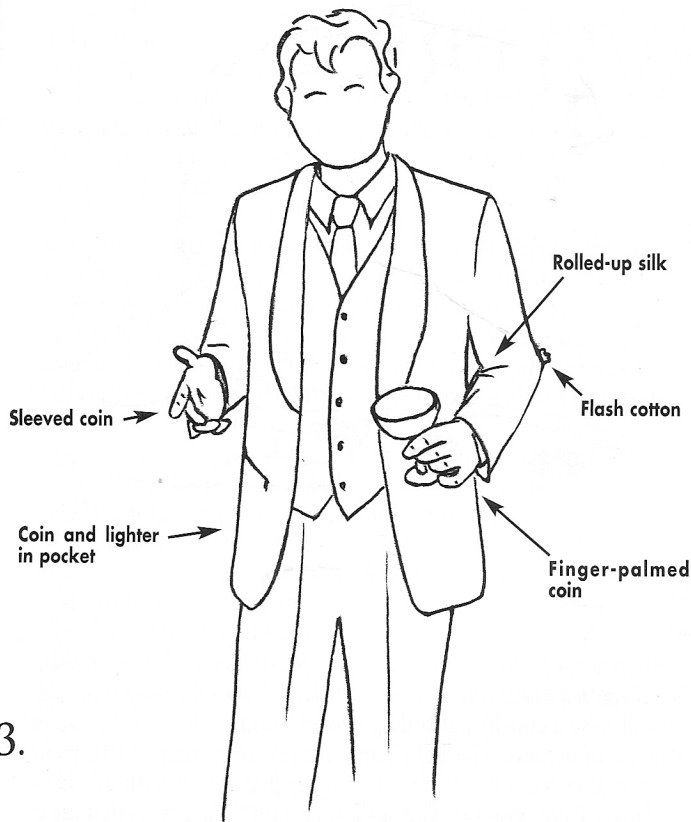
Finger palm the second coin in the left hand, which also holds the champagne glass at its stem. Sleeve the third coin in your right sleeve.

The distribution of the props is shown in Figure 3.

This routine is best performed as an opener. Later, I will briefly discuss another way to set-up that allows you to present "Flash Overture" at anytime during your act.

Management and handling: I make my entrance already set-up, holding the champagne glass in my left hand and with the coin palmed.

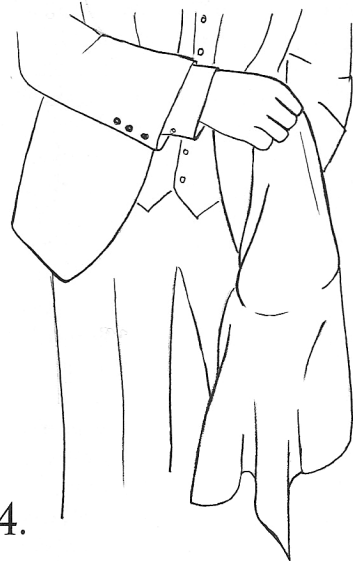




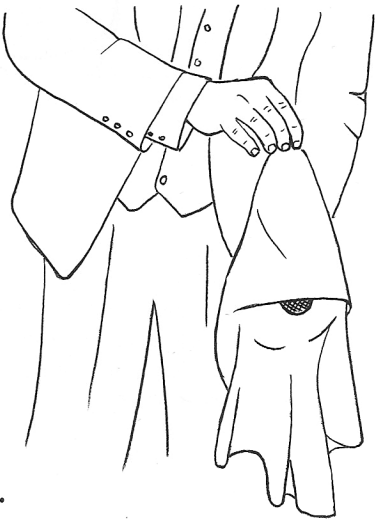
3.

While greeting the audience and making some introductory remarks I repeatedly show my right hand empty. If you like, you can use the Down's transfer move used by Dai Vernon in his well-known routine. This would allow you to show both hands empty².

As I say, "There is money in the air," I let my right arm drop to the side, which enables the sleeved coin to be caught by my right hand where it is immediately brought to Finger Palm position. The glass is transferred to the right hand as the left hand plucks the first coin from the air. Having shown it at the fingertips for a couple of seconds, it is dropped into the champagne glass. Do not stretch your left arm too much, otherwise the silk will make a premature appearance. If there is a spotlight try to wiggle the coin at the fingertips so that the reflection of the light is caught.



4.



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Again transfer the glass to the left hand as the right hand catches the second coin and drops it into the glass after displaying it.

If you are working close-up, it is a good idea to pluck the coins from a spectator's nose or from behind an ear. This involves the audience and for the layperson it is still wonderful if you pluck money from a person, rather than just reaching into the air.

The dialogue up to this point has been merely of an explanatory nature: "A coin... a second coin... and over here..." Start to pluck the third coin with the right hand as you pretend to overhear a comment made by a spectator sitting to your left. Look to the left for a moment then start again to pluck the third coin from the air, as you say, "...and the third coin... excuse me?" Again turn to one particular spectator on your left, looking her straight in the eyes as you repeat, "Excuse me?" Transfer the glass to your right hand and place it on the table as you lift your left forearm and for the first time notice the piece of cotton wool: "Oh, I'm so sorry, this must be from the dressing room... excuse me."

With the free right hand peel off the piece of cotton wool along with the tape. Press it onto the right thumb so that it sticks there. You are now going to do the old clown gag where you desperately try to throw the piece of cotton on the floor, transferring it from one hand to the other, but it always sticks to one of the fingers. Do this a couple of times and end with the cotton wool sticking to your left thumb. If you do this bit without exaggerating or overacting, quite a humorous situation is created. After a few seconds say, "Oh, I think I've got a much better idea." Reach into your right coat pocket, finger palm the coin and come out with the visible lighter. Light the cotton and simultaneously stretch out your left arm, timing the popping out of the silk so that it seems to appear in the middle of the flash. This looks very magical and should cause the audience to applaud spontaneously.

Place the lighter on the table. You are now going to produce the third coin. Grasp the silk at one corner and drape it over your left hand (Figure 4). Move your right hand forward over your left hand and then back again. Nothing happens. Address a spectator on the left and have her blow on your left hand as you repeat exactly the same movement. This time, however, the right hand unloads its finger-palmed coin on the palm of your left hand as it passes over it. Wait a second and then pull back the fold of the silk to reveal the appearance of the third coin (figure 5).

As you release the coin there should be no visible movement of the right fingers. This is even easier if you have the coin Classic Palmed, as some performers find they can move their right hand more naturally. Leave the coin on the left palm for about two seconds, and then dump it into the right hand, which eventually drops it into the glass on the table.

With the preparation described, the routine should obviously be used as an opener. However, by slightly adapting the routine you can eliminate the sleeved coin. For instance, you could hide it in a small pocket sewn into the collar of your shirt, where it could be picked up by the left hand as the right hand removes the piece of flash cotton from your elbow. There are also other methods to produce a silk from an empty hand, and you could use one of these to adapt the routine so that it can be performed in the middle of your act³.

After this effect I always go into "The Sound Travelers," which is described next. ♦

1. Rice, Harold R., *Rice's Encyclopedia of Silk Magic*, Volume 3, p. 1422, Silk King Studios, USA 1962.
 2. See Vernon's marvelous routine in: Minch, Stephen, *The Vernon Chronicles - The Lost Inner Secrets*, p. 191 "Five Coins in a Glass", L & L Publishing, USA 1987.
 3. See volume 1 of *Rice's Encyclopedia of Silk Magic*.

THE SOUND TRAVELERS

This is an ideal follow-up to "A Flash Overture". When I came up with this routine I wanted to have a Coins Across effect which can be done standing behind a table and using a glass so that each coin could clearly be heard arriving on the other side.

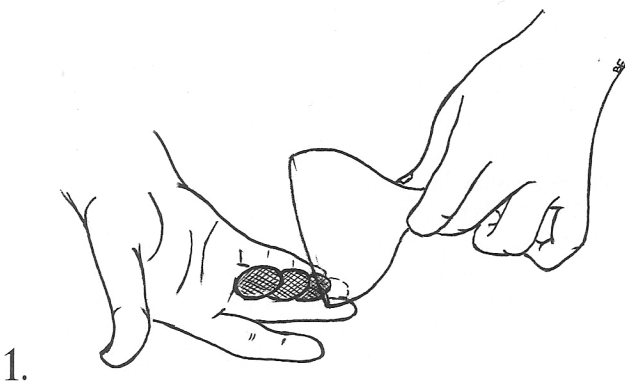
The main problem technically in this type of routine is the last coin. As far as I know the solution I have come up with is original with me although the idea seems to be so obvious that others must have used it before. By using only three coins instead of the usual four coins the construction of the effect is more compact and it is therefore easier to maintain interest right to the end of the routine.

The effect: Three coins travel singly from the left hand into a champagne glass held in the right hand.

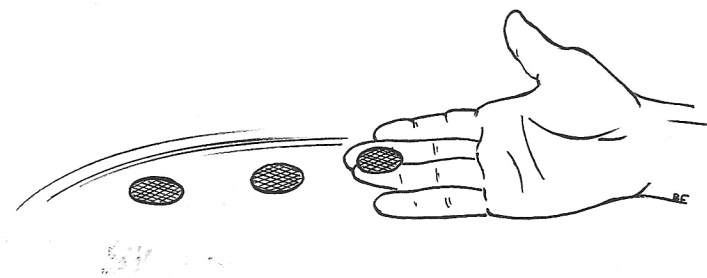
The requirements: 1) Three coins the size of half-dollars or, if you prefer, use larger ones such as silver dollars; 2) A champagne glass. Obviously the entire routine could be done using a tumbler or another borrowed glass, making effect more practical as an impromptu item. I believe, however, that a champagne glass gives the performance a touch of class.

The routine is designed to be performed standing behind a table and no particular preparation is required. As I always do this routine after "A Flash Overture," the glass with the three coins inside is already resting on the table.

Management and handling: The right hand picks up the champagne glass, transfers it to the left hand from where the coins are dumped into the right hand (Figure 1). This hand lets the coins slide on the tabletop by moving from left to right (Figure 2). The glass is tapped with the right middle finger, transferred back to the right hand, then placed on the table to your right. "An effect using three coins... a champagne glass... and two hands."

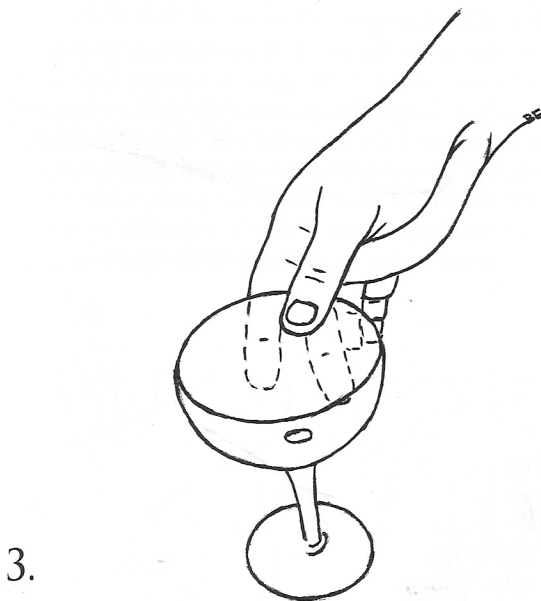


1.



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"Whenever I perform this effect people accuse me of using my sleeves. Well, I can tell you... *this is true!*" If delivered with the proper timing this line will raise a chuckle, affording enough misdirection for the following sequence of actions. The right hand, moves from right to left, picks up one coin after the other. In the process the first coin is naturally brought into Finger Palm position. The most important thing here is that the coins are picked up without hesitation and in an even rhythm. Now gently toss



3.

the two uppermost coins into the left hand secretly retaining the third coin in right-hand Finger Palm.

Say, "These three coins will travel up my sleeve, one by one..." as you immediately raise the left hand, turning it back upwards and shaking it gently so that the coins inside can be heard clinking. "...And arrive in this champagne glass." As you are saying this the right hand moves towards the champagne glass and picks it up holding it at the rim (Figure 3). In this larger movement the Finger-Palmed coin is transferred to classic palm position.

This initial action is very important for two reasons. First, the properties used are clearly introduced and in the process your hands seen to be definitely empty. Second, you are using a very natural and logical sequence of actions to display the three coins. At the end of the routine you will use exactly the same movements to secretly add the third palmed coins to the two coins which have already traveled across. By using these same actions and words you are conditioning your audience to accept your way of handling the objects in this particular manner'.

Remember that when the coin is transferred into Classic Palm, the right thumb has a tendency to visibly “snap” to the left. To overcome this press your right thumb against the side of the forefinger.

By holding the glass as shown in Figure 3 the coin will be effectively hidden from all angles while showing the inside of your apparently empty hand. If you visualise an imaginary line from your right thumb to the right ear of the spectator sitting furthest to your left you will be sure to cover any bad angles. This technique was used a lot by Fred Kaps, which is the reason it’s been called the Kaps Subtlety,² although John Ramsay and other thinking coin men must have used this for ages.

Now pretend that one coin starts its journey up your left sleeve, across the body and down the right sleeve. Coordinate the movements of your body, employing all the well-known bits of business for this sort of theme, and eventually release the Classic-Palmed coin so that it falls into the glass.

To facilitate this you might want to rest the glass on the tabletop and move the palm of your right hand slightly over more of the mouth of the glass as the coin is released. The technique, however, can be executed without having to resort to the help of the table by slightly moving the thumb towards yourself. As soon as the coin has audibly arrived inside the glass the thumb is brought into its original position.

This way of holding the glass is more natural and less apt to arouse suspicion than the standard manner of holding the glass from above.

Dai Vernon, in his coins and champagne glass routine already men-

actions.

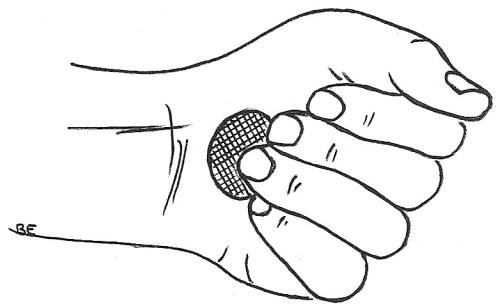
Pick up one coin after the other in the right hand and drop them singly into the left hand which closes over the coins. As the left hand turns back upwards and as your right hand picks up the champagne glass by its stem this time (Figure 4), the fingers of the left hand work out the lower coin at the wrist (Figure 5). Note that if you tilt your left fist slightly to the right even spectators to your right will not be able to see the protruding coin.

“*The next coin is a little bit more difficult,*” you say. “*It will travel straight through the air!*” Shift your weight on your left leg and make a gentle tossing movement with your left hand. Follow the imaginary path of the coin from left to right through the air (Figure 6), and as the invisible coin “arrives” over the glass shift your weight back to the right leg. At the same time lower the champagne glass as if catching the coin. Inertia will cause the coin to follow the downward movement of the glass a fraction of a second later, and result in an audible clink which suggests that the second coin has traveled across and has been caught in the glass (Figure 7). This is very deceptive if you move your body correctly.

Again shift the weight to your right leg and, as you dump the coin from the glass to the center of the table, say to spectator on your right, “*The second coin has travelled through the air and has arrived in the champagne glass.*” The coin previously worked out at the left wrist is released simultaneously, and it joins the coin from the glass in its fall.



4.



5.

tioned, uses precisely this grip, and in his hands it looks perfect. So use whatever grip you feel looks better for you.

Transfer the grip of the right hand so that it now holds the glass at its stem. This is done either with one hand or by momentarily resting the glass on the table. Whatever you do, as soon as the coin is heard to have arrived in the glass address a spectator to your right: “*The first coin has traveled through my sleeve.*” Move your body to the right tilting the glass slightly towards this spectator. This will happen automatically as soon as you shift your weight to the right leg. This movement will also bring your left fist to the right. Shift your weight back on the left leg and dump the coin inside the glass onto the center of the table (your left hand will move back to the left). This sequence of moves used here serves to condition your audience to your way of moving in this situation. This will be repeated in the next phase where these exact movements execute the Han Ping Chien Move.

With the right hand pick up the coin and drop it back into the glass. Now open the left hand, display the coins and then toss them onto the table from left to right towards the center. Again do this exactly as it is described here because the action serves as a further conditioning action for the Gallo Pitch where you will use exactly the same set of

As you are executing this variation of the Han Ping Chien, utilize exactly the same action explained above. That is, the left hand is moved to the right following the movement of your body and the coin is released as the body moves back to the left.

The right hand places the glass on the table and picks up the two thrown-out coins. As this is done the first coin is brought into Finger Palm position while the other coin is simply held by the right thumb against the tips of the other fingers. The right hand moves to the right as the left hand opens to display its coin, then tosses it from left to right to the center of the table.

You are now going to execute a further variation of the Han Ping Chien, developed by Lou Gallo, which is especially suitable for stand-up performances. The technique is called the Gallo Pitch³. The left hand picks up the coin and moves away to the left. In reality the coin is released on the table as the left hand starts its movement to the left (the coin is never really taken into the hand). The coin is met by the loose coin which is tossed towards the left by the right hand. One coin is therefore held back in the right hand Finger Palm position.

The right hand picks up the two coins and drops them into the glass. Again pick up the glass with your right hand holding it as before



6.

at its stem (Figure 4). The same actions as before are used to apparently make the audience believe that the third coin travels through the air and is caught in the glass. As soon as the clink is heard turn a final time towards the spectators on the right and say, "And the third coin has travelled across!" Look at your left hand and then slowly open it to reveal that the third coin has really vanished. For the spectators the effect is over at this moment.

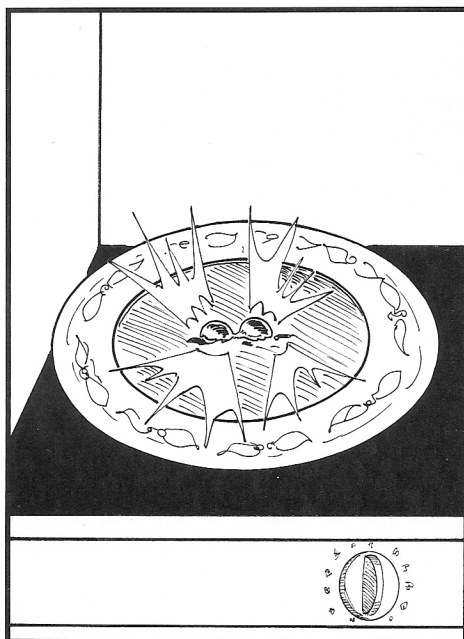
To prove what all the spectators have already accepted, transfer the glass to the left hand and gesture towards the spectators on your left, saying, "That was an effect using three coins..." Dump the two coins (apparently three) into the right hand which immediately lets them



7.

slide out of the hand onto the table. "A champagne glass..." Tap the glass with your right middle finger, transfer it to your right hand placing it on the table to your right, saying, "...and two hands." ♦

1. See a more detailed discussion of this concept of "conditioned naturalness," as it was formulated by Arturo de Ascanio in: *Card College - Volume 2*, pp. 450, "Absolute And Conditioned Naturalness."
2. Kaufman, Richard, *Expert Coin Magic*, pp. 18, "The Kaps Subtlety."
3. This is a move which has already become a classic of coin technique and which is widely used by many performers, especially those who work standing. You can find an excellent discussion of the technique and its application in: Kaufman, Richard & Philips, Mark, *Lou Gallo - The Underground Man*, p. 1, "The Gallo Pitch."



MG

MARTIN GARDNER'S
CORNER

THE ELECTRIC GRAPE

Slice a seedless grape in half, but leave the halves joined by the skin. Place the attached grape halves (cut-sides down) on a plate, then put the plate into a microwave oven. Set the oven to "high" and turn it on for 30 seconds. Watch what happens through the glass door. Bright flashes of light will shoot out from the sides of the grape, sometimes blasting the two halves apart. Grape juice conducts electricity, but I don't know what causes the fireworks. ♦

ILLUSTRATION BY TOM JORGENSEN.