

EXPERT CARD TECHNIQUE

by

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and

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CARDS
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FOREWORD TO THE THIRD EDITION

I WAS ELATED to see the Third Edition go to press particularly because of the two additional chapters by Dai Vernon and Dr. Daley to whom I feel greatly indebted. I am deeply grateful to my dear friend, George Starke, for securing very valuable material from these two great card experts.

I have a strong feeling that George may have finally persuaded Dai to do a book on cards—something the magic fraternity has been looking forward to for many years.

In the case of Mr. Dai Vernon, who is conceded to be the world's greatest exponent of sleight-of-hand with cards, I am happy for this opportunity of now giving him full credit for many of the sleights and effects I know were devised and used by him for many years, which already appeared in the previous editions. Readers can understand how difficult it is in many instances to credit the actual source. In addition, owing to the vast amount of material covered in this book and to the conditions under which it was written—namely, long-distance correspondence between Mr. Braue in California and myself in New York—it was extremely difficult in many cases to give due recognition to the originators. Therefore, I am glad to make this explanation.

I should also like to take this opportunity of paying tribute to George Starke, one of the best sleight-of-hand amateurs in the field of close-up work, who is always in the background, always refusing to take credit. To him go my heartfelt thanks for having so generously undertaken the publication of this Third Edition, purely for friendship and love of the Art.

JEAN HUGARD
New York

November 1, 1950

DAI VERNON . . .

ANY MAGICIAN who has ever seen Dai Vernon work, heard his lectures, or studied his published tricks knows that one of the hallmarks of Vernon magic is the painstaking elimination of any action that even faintly suggests trickery. His magic is performed with complete naturalness, its artistry that of the art that conceals art. The consummate skill and technique is there but it is never displayed; it is, on the contrary, so carefully hidden that the performer is applauded not for his nimble-fingered dexterity but because he has, with the effortless ease of a real magician, exhibited a feat of what must be real magic.

It is, moreover, magic that fools magicians just as thoroughly and delights them just as much as any lay audience. And it does so because so many of Vernon's methods are his own. He is a perfectionist who has devoted the major portion of his life improving old sleights and methods, inventing better and more streamlined ones, and discovering new, diabolically subtle, and ever more convincing applications of the psychological principles of deception.

With a modesty rare among magicians he will talk for hours, not about himself, but about past masters like Hofzinsler, Malini, Erdnase, Leipzig, Dr. Elliott, L'Homme Masqué, J. Warren Keane, and T. Nelson Downs—men whose magic has inspired him and for whom he has profound respect. He talks about them in much the same way that a younger generation of magicians is already talking about Dai Vernon.

A LESSON IN CARD HANDLING

By DAI VERNON

THE DE KOLTA CHANGE



IN REQUESTING EXPLANATIONS of sleights, readers of *Hugard's Magic Monthly* have written me more letters with regard to the 'Change' than any other sleight and most of the letters conclude by saying, "Why don't you get Dai Vernon to explain it?" And so that was the first thing I asked Dai to do when it came time to write this chapter.

Buatier de Kolta is said to have been the 'Father' of the 'Bottom Change'. His handling of the sleight was excellent. **He used it in a very pretty trick** in which the pips of the 10D would change color to correspond with the color of any part of a spectator's clothing to which the card was touched. After some half dozen changes of the pips to various colors, the pips would return to their original red.

The trick should be revived. It is too good to be allowed to remain in the limbo of forgotten feats.

Mr. Vernon's conception and handling differs essentially from the standard method employed by de Kolta but still retains some of the salient features.

For the sake of clarity in explanation, let us assume that you wish to change the AD to the AS.

Procedure: Place the AS face down on the top of the pack, and hold the pack in your left hand between the thumb on the back and the index finger on the face, near the outer end of the pack. The middle, ring and little fingers rest free on the side of the pack and take no part in gripping the cards.

Take the AD in your right hand face downwards and hold it by the lower index corner between the tips of the thumb on the back and index and middle fingers on the face. Turn the card upright face outwards and remove the index finger from the face, slightly bending the finger.

Face the audience, with your hands at about waist height and about a foot apart.

Holding the AD face outwards and upright in front of you, move it slowly towards the pack in the left hand. At the same time, make a slow

body turn to the left and bring the tip of the right index finger behind the card.

When the AD arrives at the position indicated in Fig. 1 and shields the pack from view, push off the top card (AS) about an inch over the side of the deck with your left thumb. (Up to this point the action has

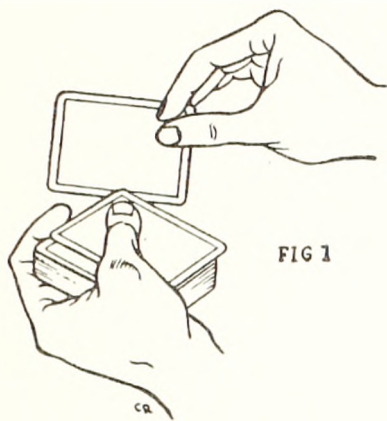


FIG 1

been at a slow and leisurely pace. The tempo is speeded up the instant the AD is turned face down and the substitution made.)

As you quickly turn the AD face down, the left middle, ring and little fingers relax *slightly* to receive the AD at the bottom of the pack. Instantly seize the AS with the tips of the right thumb and index finger (both hands moving forward until the arms are almost fully extended) and now slow down the tempo, using the same leisurely pace as when you first brought the AD towards the pack.

While the right hand moves slowly along the left arm sliding the face down card towards your elbow, the left hand moves obliquely upward and to the left, flexing the wrist to cover the movement of the left fingers in squaring the card on the bottom of the deck (Fig. 2).

When the AS arrives at the left elbow, turn it slowly face up revealing the change.

The quick action of the right hand in turning the AD face down is perfectly natural and just the normal pace at which one would turn a card face down.

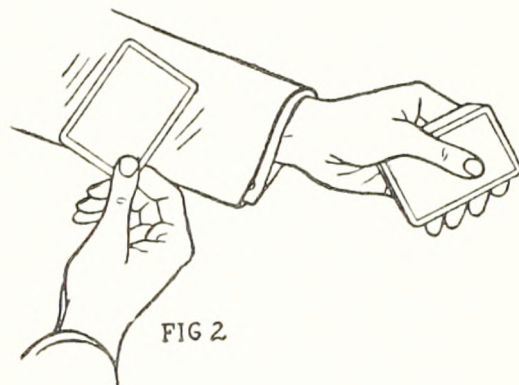


FIG 2

The entire action has the appearance of being done very slowly. When properly timed the rapidity of the actual exchange is submerged and the whole action appears to be deliberate, leisurely and unhurried.

TIPS ON CHANGES

Firstly, let me give you Dai's analysis and reasoning so that you can have a better appreciation and understanding of either the Top or Bottom Change.

Many fine performers never employ a 'Change' because they have a

firm conviction that they will be caught in the action. *"It's too dangerous. I'll never get away 'with it,"* they say. They have never acquired the 'state of mind' so essential to its successful execution. So, the first thing is to overcome this fear, and the only way to do this is to learn the basic elements, practice hard and then do it once before a keen group without getting caught. Having done this once, you will probably derive more pleasure and satisfaction than from any other sleight. With this acquired confidence and assurance, you will be well on the road to success. You will have removed all former inhibitions concerning this most valuable basic sleight passed on to us from the old masters, thus attaining the proper state of mind so essential to its use. This discovery will bring a feeling of regret for having neglected this sleight for so many years.

Timing is all essential. The finest execution of the 'Change' without this element will fail to deceive. It must be executed at the precise psychological moment. If this moment, does not naturally occur in the course of the routine, it must be created.

Here is a fine example: At the definite conclusion of any effect where a selected card is revealed, there is a natural relaxation on the part of all spectators. They are not on the alert at that particular moment because they believe that the trick has been terminated. This moment affords an excellent opportunity to perform the sleight. However, the change must be performed in a very natural, unostentatious manner. It must be done without any flourishing movements whatsoever. It must be done as quietly, stealthily and unobtrusively as is humanly possible. Thus the spectator, caught off guard, will be completely nonplussed.

Let us suppose you have just found the selected card and are holding it face down in your right hand. Turn it up and show it to the spectators on your right. Then place it, still face up, in your left hand on top of the pack. Show it to your left. The left thumb holds it in position, pushed off slightly, as in dealing.

As far as your audience is concerned, the trick is over. This is the psychological moment to execute the change. Pause a moment. The timing of the pause must be just right—not too long, not too short.

The face-up card is now turned down in this manner: The outer right corner is clipped between the right index and second fingertips, the index finger on the face of the card. It is turned down by placing the right thumb underneath and pushing upward and forward, causing the card to rotate. The second finger moves to join the index finger as the card turns face down. The left-hand pack moves directly behind the card in the right hand. As the card is turned down, the left hand moves forward and

passes under the card in one continuous movement, at which time the exchange is made. The change immediately follows the turning-down without any hesitation. The left hand moves forward smoothly without any jerkiness as the exchange is executed, and the deck is immediately handed to an onlooker as you say, "*Now I'll let you hold the pack.*" As you hand the deck to the spectator, insert the changed card face down in the center, and remark, "*If this card were lost somewhere in the deck, you would not be able to find it without turning the deck over and looking for it. I'll show you how to do it by magic. Just put your finger on top of the pack, press on it, and say 'Cootie up'. Turn the card over yourself.*"

You will find that this will cause more amazement than many an elaborate trick.

The method of turning the card facedown, in the example just given, overcomes to a great extent the glaring discrepancy which occurs in the orthodox Top Change. In this same example, should you desire to use the Bottom Change instead of the Top Change, turn the face-up card down in this fashion: Seize the card between the thumb and index finger, the thumb on top on the face of the card, the other three fingers doubled in towards the palm. To turn the card down, straighten out the three curled fingers and rotate the card between the index and second fingers as the right thumb is drawn back to allow the card to pass it. Thus, the card arrives naturally in position for the Bottom Change.

It is Mr. Vernon's opinion that one of the most neglected points in the execution of the Top Change is the action of the left thumb. It usually is lifted and makes a very decided and apparent movement during the exchange of cards. This is definitely wrong. The thumb can relax slightly but it must not move. The card in the right hand must be slid or thrust between the left thumb and the pack. However, this is accomplished by a movement of the left hand as the right holds a card stationary. During the action of the change it is permissible to move either hand or both, *but* the fingers and thumb of the *left* hand should not move and should retain their natural position holding the pack.

MULTIPLE CARD CONTROL



In the standard method of controlling several cards which are replaced in the pack separately, the cards will be in reverse order at the finish. This necessitates a further manipulation to bring them to the correct position, or the last card replaced must be produced first.

The method devised by Mr. Vernon is not only an excellent control for a single card but when used for a multiple card control it has the great

advantage of having the cards, whatever their number, arrive on the top of the pack *in correct order*. Its other features are that the cards may be replaced by the spectator *anywhere* in the deck, and the spectator may even cut the cards after the performer has shuffled them.

In addition, those who use a short or key card will appreciate the superiority of this method. In the standard methods, the weakness is that in returning the selected card the spectator is compelled to replace it next to the key or short card.

Mr. Vernon's method allows great freedom of handling and when well done is so undetectable it will bewilder the keenest onlooker. It is a remarkable advance in card technique.

In order to understand the moves clearly, let us use the four Aces as the selected cards. Place them before you in this order—C H S D.

Procedure: Hold the pack in your left hand as in dealing position. Under cover of squaring the deck, make a downward crimp with the left ring-finger, of the corners of the four or five bottom cards at the inner right corner.

Assume that the AC is the first selected card. Fan the pack for its return and have the card replaced anywhere. In closing the pack, secretly secure a break with the left little finger under the AC.

Using the Hindu Shuffle position, undercut at the break, drawing out the packet below the break and place it on top with a slapping motion, overlapping the top packet about an inch at the outer end.

Undercut the now lower packet by drawing out all the cards with the exception of the bottom card (AC) which is retained in the palm by friction. As this packet is pulled out, the other packet is moved inward by the left index finger until it is flush with the bottom card (Fig. 1).

There is a knack in making the undercut below the break. In starting the cut it is much better to commence the movement by a slight forward motion of the left hand with the upper packet until it clears the right thumb and fingertips, and then the undercut portion is pulled out with the right hand.

Shuffle off the undercut packet on top of the cards remaining in the left hand, using the Hindu Shuffle.

The position will now be this. The first card to be controlled, in this case the AC, is on the bottom of the pack, with the crimped block immediately above it.

Have the next selected card, AH, returned in any manner but secretly secure a break with the left little finger below the card, and undercut at

the break to bring it to the bottom. Proceed exactly as described above and at the finish, the position will now be this: AH on the bottom of the deck below the AC, and immediately above these two controlled cards is the crimped block.

Insert the two remaining cards, the AS and AD, separately, following exactly the same procedure, and you will have all four aces on the bottom of the deck in the order of their insertion.

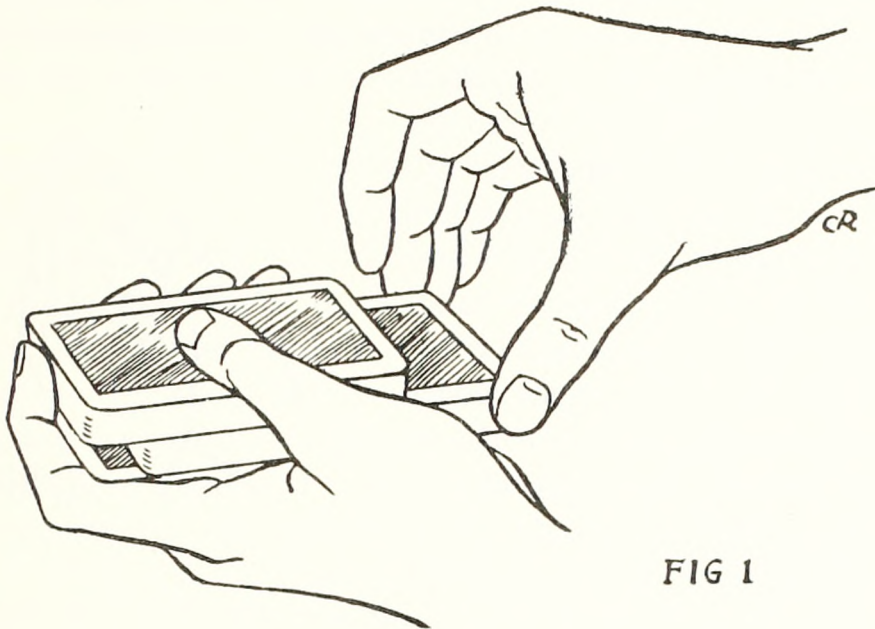


FIG 1

Invite a spectator to cut the pack and complete the cut. You have now only to cut to the crimp, complete the cut, and the four controlled cards will be at the top of the pack in proper order.

If the performer himself first cuts and brings all the selected cards to the middle, the chances are strong that the spectator may cut at the crimp and himself bring the card to the top. A glance at the rear end of the deck will tell the location of the cards.

HAND-TO-HAND CARD TRANSFER Brilliant!

This useful sleight was born of necessity on an occasion when Mr. Vernon was performing for a small group and was in the middle of a trick. Just then a friend in the group interrupted to introduce a newcomer, **Anecdote** saying, "Shake hands with Judge Haber." At that moment Mr. Vernon found himself in an awkward predicament—he had a card palmed in his right hand. On the spur of the moment, he made a rapid transfer of the card to his left hand in order to be able to shake hands with the Judge.

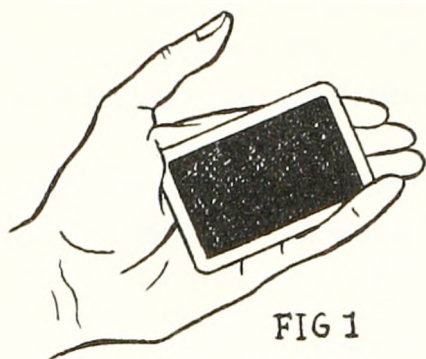


FIG 1

to have many uses. It is an ideal changeover. Furthermore, it can be used to remove a very decided crimp.

Here is an exercise for practice. Let us start with the assumption that you have a card palmed in your left hand.

(I shall later explain what to do when the card is palmed in your right hand.)

In order to transfer it secretly to your right hand, bring the hands together, the palms facing each other.

Push the outer end of the card up-

Fortunately, the move passed without being noticed and he was able to finish the trick successfully.

Reflecting on this incident afterward, Mr. Vernon worked out the following method of transferring a card imperceptibly from one hand to the other under cover of a natural movement. This sleight will be found



FIG 2

wards with the left little finger into the position shown in Fig. 1.

Your right hand rotates inward so that the outermost phalange of the index finger strikes the protruding outer corner of the card and twists it into palming position—Fig. 2.

Palm the card in your right hand and close your fingers on it as the right hand with the card moves into the



FIG 3

crotch of the left thumb (Fig. 3). The left hand then encircles the right thumb and moves off to the left—Fig. 4. The palm of the left hand is now brought into view while the back of the right hand is outward.

The whole action must be smooth and continuous, without stoppage or hesitation.

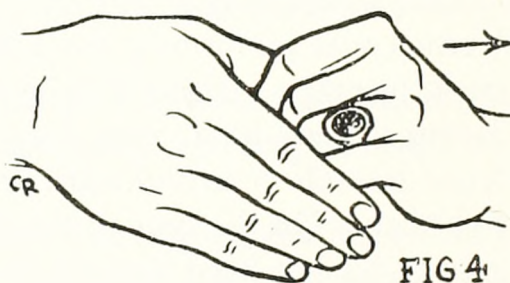


FIG 4

To transfer the card back to the left hand, the palms come together as before. At this point the procedure differs. There is no adjustment of the card by the little finger. This time when the right hand starts its turning move, it continues almost to the position in Fig. 3 *without* the card. The right hand, with an upward turning movement, encircles the left thumb and comes off, palm upward. The left hand pulls back the upper part of the right sleeve.

The entire operation should be done in a casual manner without looking at your hands, and be accompanied by an appropriate remark such as, *"This hot weather makes my hands sticky,"* or *"My hands are cold today."*

This method has many useful adaptations. It will be found to be more practical than the usual method of replacement after a cut.

Assume that a card is palmed in the left hand. With the right palm up, gesture in the direction of the pack on the table, and ask the spectator to cut the deck. Now comes the performer's turn to complete the cut. The moment the spectator cuts the cards, the performer rubs his hands together and executes the Hand-to-Hand Transfer. Then he immediately picks up the lower half with his left hand and drops it on top of the pack. Without hesitation, the right hand with the palmed card, reaches for the deck and slides it off the table, at the same time replacing the palmed card.

This method permits greater freedom of handling and is so much more disarming than the standard methods. It is vastly superior because it gives the performer more confidence and assurance, puts him more at ease, and removes that usual feeling of guilt in the replacement of a card.

THE PEREGRINATING PIP



The apparent transfer of a pip from one card to another always has a strong appeal to the lay audience. For this reason, the late **Leipzig and Merlin invariably included a spot-removing trick in their program.** The trick is most suitable for intimate parlor work or for platform work before small audiences, and can also be used as an interlude between set card tricks or as **a pretended explanation of how cards can be magically changed in value.** **A black suit (spades for preference) should be used, since black shows up better than red, especially by artificial light.**

The improvements in the handling made by Mr. Vernon will be found to be exceedingly practical and will enable one to do it in much smoother fashion. It now becomes a convincing and amusing effect.

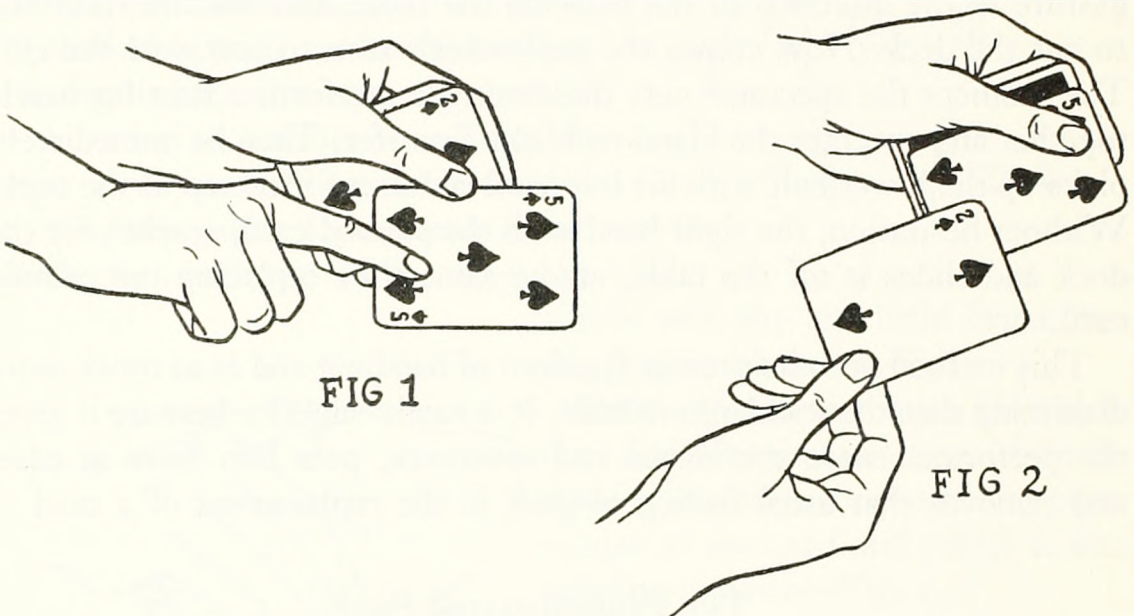
Preparation: It is necessary only to have the 3S face up under the face-down 4S on top of the pack.

Procedure: Turn the pack face upward, run through it and remove the 5S and the 2S, and hand these two cards to a spectator for examination.

Under cover of this diversion, turn the pack face down and secure a left little finger-break under the reversed 3S.

Holding the pack in your left hand, take back the 2S with the right hand and place it squarely on top of the pack, still retaining the break.

Take back the 5S. Hold it face upwards by the lower index corner between the tips of the thumb and index and middle fingers. Place it face upwards on the 2S so that it overlaps a little at the outer end of the pack—Fig. 1. Remark, "You've often seen a magician rub off a spot from a card, but he doesn't tell you what happens to the spot. I'm not only going to remove the spot but I am going to show you where it goes."



Now seize the three cards above the break with the tips of your right thumb, index and middle fingers and draw them away inwards as one card—the 2S. In pulling off the cards, the pressure of the left thumb and fingers on these three cards, plus the sliding of them along the base of the thumb, will insure their being in perfect alignment.

Call attention to the middle pip of the 5S, and tap it with the outer left corner of the cards in your right hand (shown as the 2S) as you say that you will try to transfer that pip from the 5S to the 2S—Fig. 2. Move the 5S flush with the pack.

Draw the 2S (really three cards) inwards over the face of the 5S saying, "Of course if I apply the 2S face upwards thus, the pip would attach

itself to the back of the 2S.” Move your right hand away and turn the deuce face down.

Remark, “But if I turn the 2S over ...” Keeping the deuce face downwards, draw it inwards over the 5S, thus bringing the cards face to face. Change the right hand grip to the center of the inner end of the three cards. Slide the 2S inwards slowly until the middle pip of the 5S is visible as you continue the patter, “. . . see, the middle pip is still there.”

Push the cards upwards to cover the 5S squarely, two or three times. Release the inner ends of the two cards, the 4S and 3S, from under the 2S and slowly draw the 2S away inwards, thus revealing the four spot face upwards, as you say, “You see, the center pip has gone ...”

Slowly turn the deuce in your right hand face upwards as you announce, “. . . and here it is!” Push the 4S off with your left thumb and take it with the 3S in your right hand, allowing them to be freely shown.

Caution: While holding the three cards as one, it is advisable to keep the right hand in motion and have attention directed to the 5S on top of the pack.

The All Backs



Here is a trick that is well off the beaten track of conventional card tricks. It has all the qualifications necessary for a really magical effect. The conception is novel, the plot is simple, the action direct and the climax is startling.

I know that the application of superlatives to mediocre card effects is too commonly made nowadays by writers, but in this case the word ‘startling’ is entirely justified.

Preparation: Second and fourth cards from the top are placed face up in the deck.

The Effect: The performer announces that he will show a card effect. Taking a deck from its case he spreads the cards fanwise showing the backs. Squaring the deck, he casually turns the top card over. To his surprise he finds that, instead of a face showing, the card has a second back. He inserts this card in the deck and turns up the next one. Again he is surprised to find that this card too has a second back—no face. He cuts the deck haphazardly, and turning the packets over finds that only their backs show. Assembling the deck again he spreads the top cards showing the backs, then turning the deck over he spreads the cards again. And again only backs are seen.

Even when the cards are shown singly and the pack turned over and run through again, only the backs are seen. You appear to be embar-

rassed and a little annoyed that, by some mischance, you have got hold of a pack of double-backed cards instead of the ordinary cards you expected. To rectify the situation, the only thing you can do is to exercise your magic powers and transform the cards. Squaring the pack, you slap it with your right hand uttering your magic spell. The top card is seen to have changed to a face card, and upon spreading the pack in a wide fan they are seen to have been transformed into the face cards of an ordinary deck!

Procedure: I must stress at the outset that the discovery of the double-backed cards must appear to be a complete surprise to you, and that the



FIG 1

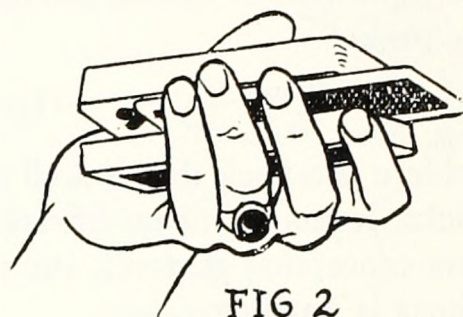


FIG 2

various moves you make in showing that all the cards are double-backed are made to satisfy yourself that a mistake has been made and *not* to convince the audience. This surprise, and a little annoyed attitude must be maintained right up to the climax.

The necessary moves follow:

1. Make a pressure fan showing the backs of the cards without revealing the two face-up.
2. Close the fan and execute a Double Lift. Show both sides and insert cards near bottom of deck in manner shown in Figs. 1 and 2, retaining break under the two cards.
3. Again Double Lift and show both sides. Replace the two cards on the top of the pack, holding them separated from the deck by the right thumb.

4. Cut at the break near the bottom and place the under portion squarely on top of the two cards, but still retain the thumb-break until the left little finger can secure and hold it.

5. Fan a few cards at the top. Square up and cut at the break, turning the right-hand packet up showing the back. At the same time, the left hand turns its half as shown in Fig. 3. (First, the deck is turned over to the right by the left fingers assisted by the left thumb. Then the deck is turned over inwards. Finally, the deck is turned over outwards. In Fig. 3, the underside of the deck is left blank for clarity.)

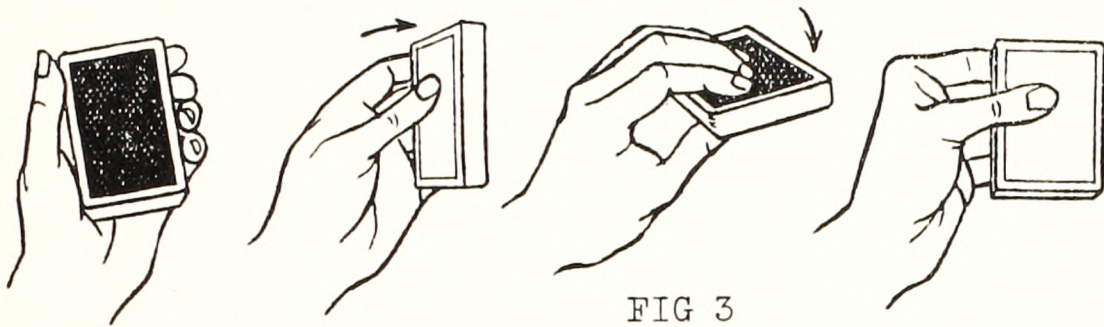


FIG 3

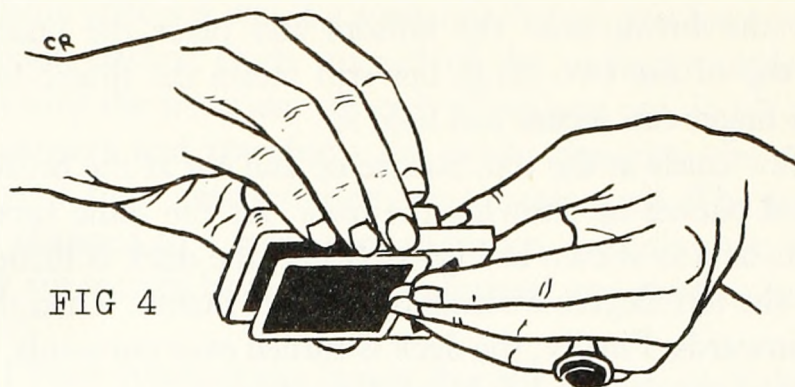
6. Turn the right portion down again. Place the halves together by placing the right portion on top of the left portion, but keep them separated by a little finger-break.

7. Fan the small packet on top, a card at a time, until you near the break. Then close pack again and slowly turn it over in this manner: As the right thumb leaves the inner end, it slightly jogs the upper portion forward as the right fingers go around and over the outer end and the thumb moves forward to turn the whole pack over and place it in the left hand. This position effectively shields the slight jog. The right thumb presses down on the inner end of the under-protruding packet and again secures the break.

8. Fan this large upper portion and show 'all backs.' Square the cards again and repeat the previous cut and turning as described under steps 5 and 6. This time, when the cards have been replaced again, they will all face the same way with the exception of the bottom card and the one above the break.

9. Now cut the under-packet to the top, but at the same time slip the face-up card to the bottom of the upper packet so that it joins the other reversed card, as shown in Fig. 4. No break is held.

10. Using the Hindu Shuffle, show all backs, stopping at different intervals. After the second or third showing, as the right-hand packet is



turned upward, the left thumb slides off one of the face-down cards on top of the left-hand packet. Continue the Hindu Shuffle a few more times and when a small packet remains in the right hand, slap it on top, holding a break. Then make a single cut to bring this packet to the bottom.

11. Secure a little finger-break above the bottom two cards, which are face to face, preferably by pulling the cards down with the ring and little fingers at the side near the inner corner. The whole pack can now be spread along to show that every card has a back. When the last two are reached, the left hand turns over, holding them nicely squared disclosing another back. Then replace them without holding a break.

12. Now use the same turn-over movement as before—Fig. 3, but stop at stage 3. You have apparently turned over the whole deck. Again methodically show each card and square up.

13. Now hold the deck on either side in either hand in the manner in which you would hold a tray. Then turn that hand completely over so that it is palm down and seize the deck with the other hand, the thumb on top and the other fingers on bottom. Turn the deck several times always keeping the thumbs opposite, one thumb on bottom while one thumb is on top. Keep track of the position of either thumb and then stop the turns when cards face upward (one face down on top). Keeping track is better than counting.

14. Finally, side-slip the bottom card and with a resounding slap transfer it to the top. Immediately pressure fan and display the faces, showing the deck to be a regular one.

After making a wide fan showing the transformation to face cards, do not immediately turn the fan to show the backs. Hold the position for a few moments to let the startling change take its full effect.

You may have the urge to add a few more moves to show that they are all backs or proceed still further to show that they are all faces. This is dangerous because you would then be overdoing it. To prolong this

part of the experiment would defeat the object of the presentation. The onlookers might get the idea only that clever moves are being made. Once the audience is satisfied that the cards are all-backs, that is the psychological moment to introduce the startling change.

Magicians know only too well that women, generally speaking, are allergic to card tricks. This trick is an exception to the rule. Mr. Vernon has used it before all kinds of audiences, even those comprised exclusively of women and with complete success. The women are intrigued by it. It is one trick that they remember and talk about and invariably when another occasion arises it is the one trick they request to see again.

That is the best recommendation I can make to you to study the effect carefully and add it to your repertoire.

Details of Handling

Holding the deck face down in the left hand, make a pressure fan and show the backs of the cards. A small block of six or seven cards on the top are left unfanned to prevent disclosure of the two face-up cards.

Close the fan and hold the deck in the left hand in dealing position, squared up perfectly. Lock the cards securely in a block by pressure with the left thumb crotch. The left fingers can thus relax their hold on the edge of the pack and it will remain perfectly squared.

Draw attention to the top card by snapping up the inner right corner with the right index finger. In reality, two cards are lifted and when they snap back, the left little finger holds a fine break under them.


The index finger should point obliquely to the right at the moment of contact with the top card and when the card has been lifted about a sixteenth of an inch by turning the finger to the right (nail downward), the second card can easily be picked up with the top one. Contact with the edge of the cards should be near the extreme top of the index finger.

Now show that the top card has no face by turning over the top two in the following manner: Pinching the cards firmly in the crotch of the left thumb so they cannot possibly slip, insert the tip of the right index finger in the break at the corner and slide the finger and the right thumb up to the center of the right side of the two cards. When you have a secure pinch or hold on these two cards, the pressure of the left thumb-crotch can be relaxed. The two cards are moved to the right, their left edges being firmly pressed downward as they slide, causing the cards to bend. When almost off the pack, the right index and second finger, with a tossing movement, cause the two cards to turn over on top of the pack. They should fall slightly jogged over the inner end of the deck. The instant

they fall, the left thumb must again press on them firmly to keep them in perfect register.

When the trick is over, there will be one card, second from the bottom, facing the wrong way. Mr. Vernon secretly reverses this card in the act of turning the deck face down, in the following manner: Side-Slip the card by pushing it slightly to the right. The left hand now grasps the left edge of the pack between the first and second fingers. With a hinging movement, the left hand fingers close, and the right hand remains motionless. The pack is thus brought to a vertical position. At this point the left side of the pack meets the left thumb which now rests on the left edge of the card. The deck continues to turn face down and the card is automatically placed on top.

INSERTION OF THE CARDS

When inserting the two cards, riffle the left corner with the left thumb and **push the cards in squarely (not diagonally)**—Fig. 1 (Page 460). 

In the illustration, to clarify this move, the protruding card and the break are greatly exaggerated. In actual practice, however, the card is pushed in leaving only about half an inch or less protruding. An exceptionally fine finger-break can then be held.

When the second finger touches the outer end of the deck, by a slight lifting motion, form a break with the tips of the left little finger. Keep the outer end of the deck perfectly squared by pressure of the left thumb.

Note particularly that the cards are inserted in the deck *squarely*. There is no twist to either side, and when the cards are pushed home the other end of the deck is perfectly regular. You can even allow a spectator to push the cards in.

This method of insertion has many other advantages as it is *excellent for the control of a single card*. In the standard method, the card is pushed diagonally and the left side is visible no matter how finely done.

In Mr. Vernon's method, the card goes in squarely and there does not appear to be any possibility of controlling the card. If neatly executed, this method will baffle even the expert.

DR. JACOB DALEY . . .

THE PROFESSIONAL who devotes most of his time to magic is expected to acquire a smooth and polished dexterity; the amateur who has acquired an equal skill while also giving his attention to another and full-time profession has achieved something more. And when he goes beyond this and his name, even among professional magicians, has, like that of Dr. Daley, become a synonym for flawless execution, the accomplishment is rare. Dr. Elliott, billed as "*The Challenge Champion of the World*," gave up his medical practice because his preoccupation with sleight-of-hand left no time for it; Dr. Daley has acquired his enviable reputation among devotees of sleight-of-hand and yet he remains a noted plastic surgeon at the same time—a skilled feat of magic in itself.

Like his close friend, Dai Vernon, he firmly believes that the performer should subordinate himself to the art, that the best magic is magic that appears real because the performer's actions are so innocently natural that they seem to have nothing to do with the astonishing result. He lays great stress on the importance of timing and misdirection. Like Vernon, also, he believes that careful attention to small details makes for fine magic, and he is a constant experimenter, always seeking new and better ways of making sleight-of-hand more closely approximate real magic. Although equally adept at other types of sleight of hand (his Cups and Balls are famous) he thinks, with Hofzinsler, that conjuring with cards is the poetry of magic.

THE SIDE STEAL AND SOME OF ITS FINER POINTS

By DR. JACOB DALEY

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS

THE METHOD of having a spectator select a card by lifting the upper right corner of the pack and peeking at the index of a card was devised by the late Nate Leipzig, that great card magician. This method was a welcome departure from the stereotyped request, "Please take a card" Not only is this procedure most efficient, but it really convinces the spectator that his card is actually lost in the deck.

For many years Nate Leipzig had a monopoly of the method, which puzzled the laymen and card conjurers. To control the peeked-at card he would secure a break under it, push it out of the pack with his left fingers and slip it onto the top of the pack with his right hand. This sleight was explained for the first time by J. N. Hilliard in *The Art of Magic* and it became common property under the title of 'The Side Slip'.

In the hands of Mr. Leipzig it was a masterpiece. Other performers, especially those with smaller hands, could not possibly get the same results and would encounter the following drawbacks:

1. The insertion of the left fingers into the break in order to push out the peeked-at card inevitably causes a visible separation of the deck.
2. There is too much noticeable movement by the left fingers.
3. The action of the right hand in carrying the card to the top of the pack and depositing it there is unnatural.
4. Too often the slipped card talks.
5. No misdirection or cover for the sleight is used.

Modifications and improvements of the sleight have since been made and the 'Side Slip' is now superseded by the 'Side Steal.' Dr. Daley's contributions to its handling and adaptability to any size hand will come as a revelation.

This improved sleight can be performed without any tell-tale break. The portion of the deck in sight is perfectly squared during the entire maneuver. There is no visible movement of the left fingers and the stolen card is carried away imperceptibly.

RIGHT HAND SIDE STEAL

Hold the deck in the left hand gently but firmly gripped in the crotch of the thumb, all four fingers resting lightly along the side of the deck. The pack is slightly bevelled to the right.

The pack is extended toward the spectator with the request that he peek at a card by slightly opening the deck with his left hand anywhere at the upper right corner.

The spectator peeks at a card. This separation permits the performer secretly to obtain a break with the fleshy part of the left little fingertip.

The deck must at all times be securely gripped in the crotch of the left thumb to prevent any separation.

The left hand, retaining the break, is dropped in a natural manner to your side and an appropriate remark is made.

Under the pretense of squaring the deck with both hands, the left little finger is now inserted into the break and is pushed upwards against the peeked-at card. At this point, the deck is firmly gripped in the crotch of the left thumb and held by the right thumb and middle finger. The other right fingers rest idly on the upper end of the deck—Fig. 1.

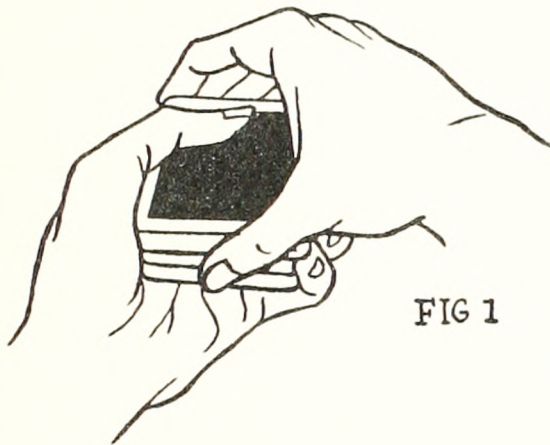


FIG 1

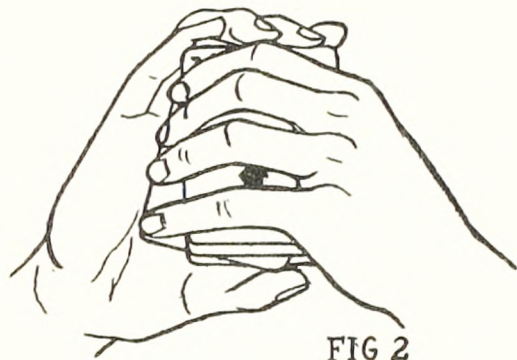


FIG 2

The upward pressure of the little finger against the peeked-at card accompanied by a slight downward pressure of the right hand will cause the card to pivot to the right on its upper right corner. This corner is in contact with the right little fingertip. The pivot causes the left inner corner to move to the right and rest on the right thumb, which is somewhat relaxed at this stage. The diagonal corners of the card are lightly clipped—Fig. 2 (view from underneath).

The deck is still being firmly gripped in the crotch of the left thumb as the right hand moves to the right carrying the clipped card with it. The left fingers remain motionless and the right hand, moving toward the right, simulates the action of squaring up the deck—Fig. 3 (view from underneath).

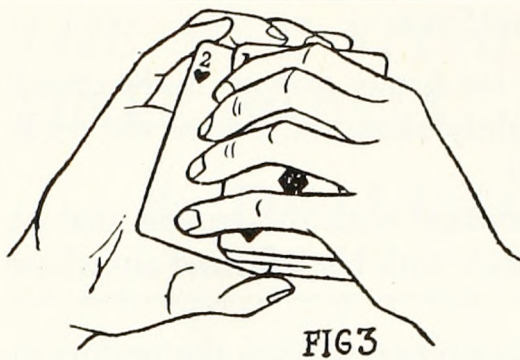


FIG 3

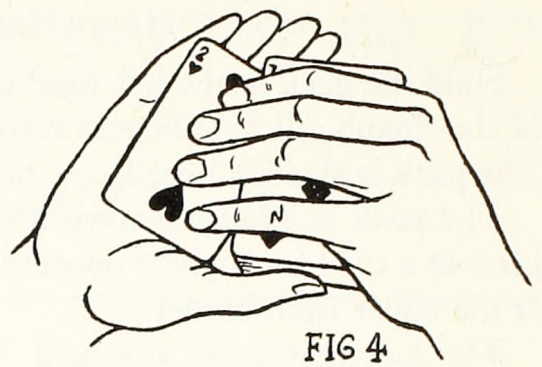


FIG 4

Now continue this movement of the right hand to the right—Fig. 4 (view from underneath).

A slight upward pressure of the left middle and ring fingers against the card will complete the pivot, cause the card to clear the deck and neatly place the card in the right palm. The right-hand fingers should remain motionless and relaxed as the card is placed in the palm.

Under cover of some natural action, the right hand with the palmed card moves away from the deck.

LEFT HAND SIDE STEAL

The first phase of this steal is identical with the R. H. Side Steal. The deck is held in the same manner, the card is peeked at and the break is obtained with the left little finger. The card is pushed out slightly so that it is clipped the same way as in the R. H. Side Steal. From now on the procedure differs.

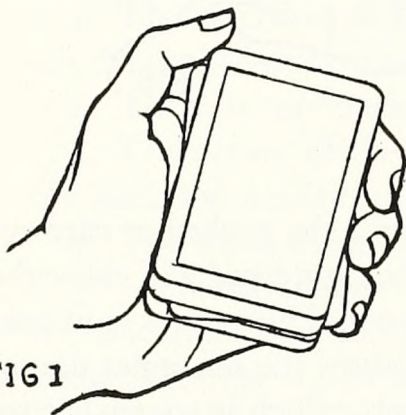


FIG 1

The right little finger, in contact with the upper right corner of the card, is pressed downward causing the upper left corner to protrude at the upper left side of the deck. The left thumb is immediately placed against this protruding corner—Fig. 1 (right hand removed for clarity).

The deck is held mainly by the right hand. The right index finger is flexed on top of the deck, the right thumb at the lower left corner and the remaining fingers at the upper end. The card is gripped by the left thumb at the upper left corner and the left little finger at the lower right corner. The left index finger is flexed on the bottom of the deck.

Holding the left hand motionless, the right hand slides the deck for-

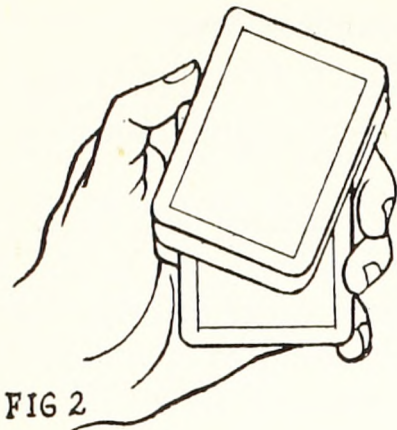


FIG 2

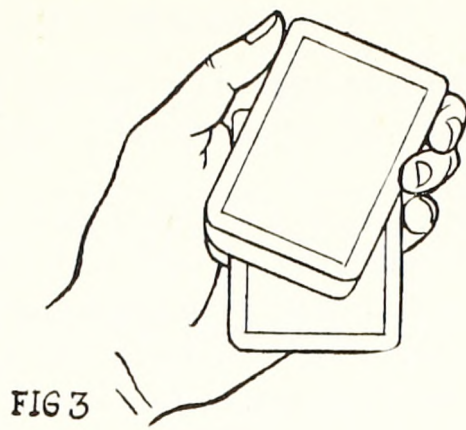


FIG 3

ward, the left hand still gripping the card at its diagonal corners—Fig. 2 (right hand removed for clarity).

The left little finger releases its grip at the lower right corner of the card and is moved upward to join the left middle and ring fingers—Fig. 3 (right hand removed for clarity).

The left hand is held motionless as the right hand, gripping the deck, is moved forward and to the right so that the protruding card pivots clockwise on the left little finger and right thumb—Fig. 4. The middle and ring fingers are somewhat relaxed so as not to obstruct the pivot of the card into the left palm. This forward movement of the right hand is continued until the card is completely pivoted into the left palm—Fig. 5.

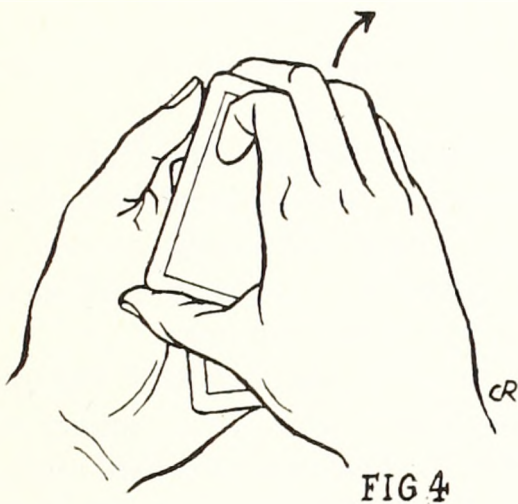


FIG 4

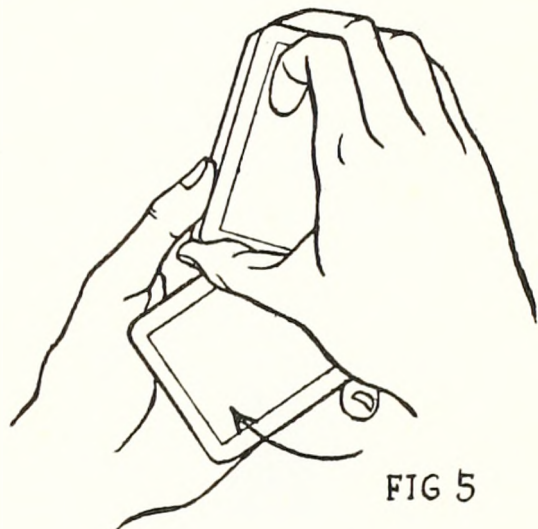


FIG 5

The right hand with the deck moves away from the left hand with some natural appropriate action, as the left hand with the palmed card drops naturally to your side.

The tendency of the left thumb to leave the side of the deck must be overcome. The whole action must simulate that of squaring the deck.

DOUBLE PEEK AND BILATERAL SIDE STEAL

This is an original combination in which the L. H. and R. H. Side Steals are executed simultaneously, under the guise of a natural squaring of the deck.

True lovers of sleight-of-hand, who have mastered both the L. H. and R. H. Side Steals, as well as this Combination Steal, will be able to bewilder their fellow conjurers and make them realize that they have just witnessed a highly technical and remarkably advanced exhibition of skill. The usual reaction by card lovers is, "No more cards for me. My deck goes out the window."



FIG 1

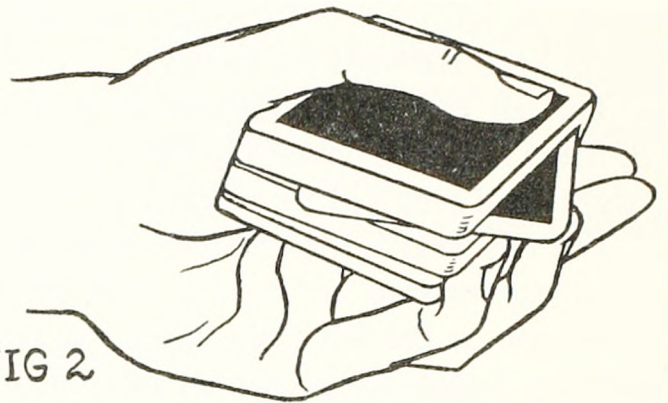


FIG 2

This also provides an excellent finger-limbering exercise. If properly executed, you will also find it of great practical value in the performance of many card effects.

In this Combination Steal, you must learn how to obtain and hold two breaks at one time undetectably.

The deck is held as previously described in the L. H. and R. H. Side Steals and two cards are successively peeked at, the first break being held by the little finger as heretofore described. The second break however, is

obtained by the fleshy portion of the tip of the ring finger.

In first learning this double-break maneuver, it is simpler to have the first peeked-at card nearer the bottom of the deck and the second peeked-at card anywhere above it—Fig. 1.

The R. H. Side Steal is executed from the upper break, with the ring finger instead of the little finger pushing the card to the right—Fig. 2

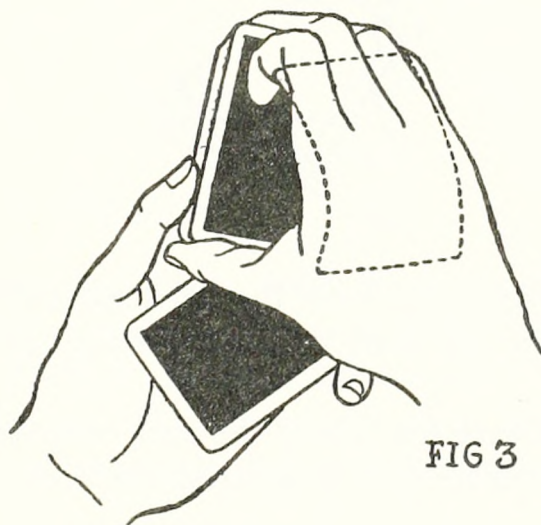


FIG 3

(right hand removed for clarity). The little finger still retains its break.

After the card clears the deck in the completion of the R. H. Side Steal, pretend to square the pack with the right hand, which is holding the palmed card. At the same time execute the L. H. Side Steal—Fig. 3. The right hand, with the palmed card, moves the deck forward and to the right and drops the deck on the table as the left hand, with its palmed card, drops naturally to your side.

Produce the right-hand card first—pause, and produce the left-hand card as an afterthought.

LONGITUDINAL SIDE STEAL AND TRANSFER

This is a novel and original Side Steal which is very practical. It is so deceptive that even the card expert will not associate the sleight with the Side Steal if it is properly performed.

A card is peeked at, the little finger obtains the break, and the right thumb and little finger clip the card at its diagonal corners, as previously described. From this point on the procedure varies.

The right hand with the clipped card rotates to the right clockwise—Fig. 1 (view from below).



FIG 1
FROM BELOW

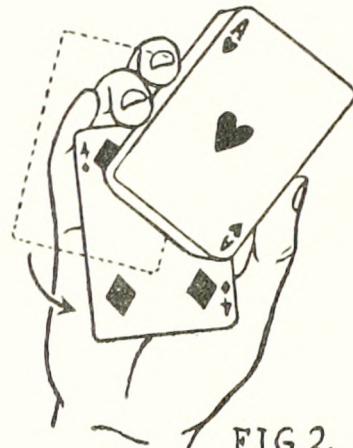
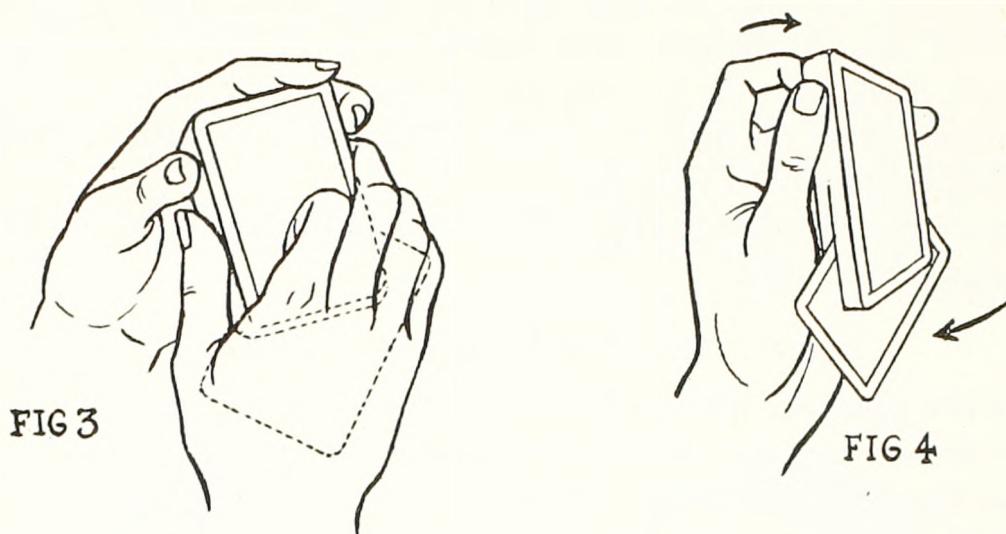


FIG 2
FROM BELOW

The right hand continues to turn in clockwise fashion until the right thumb and middle finger can grasp the deck at its sides. The right index finger is flexed on top of the deck. In order to do this, the thumb must release the corner of the card—Fig. 2 (view from below) and Fig. 3. Now release the left hand.

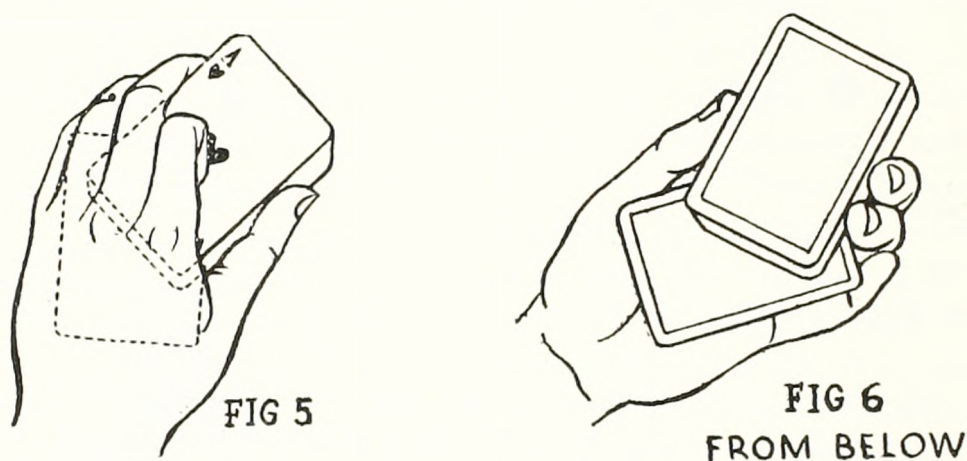
At this point, the card is in position to be palmed in the right hand. The rotated card is firmly held in the deck as in a forceps—Fig. 4. By merely removing the deck with the left hand and under misdirec-

tion of tapping the deck on the table with the left hand, the card may be allowed to remain palmed in the right hand.



The card may also be palmed into the left hand by transferring the deck with the protruding card to the left hand by gripping the sides of the deck with the left thumb and middle finger, the index finger being flexed on the bottom of the deck—Fig. 5.

Remove the right hand from the deck and simultaneously exert pressure with the left index finger on the bottom of the deck so that the deck pivots at its sides carrying and placing the protruding card in position for palming in the left hand—Figs. 5 and 6.



By merely gripping the pack at its sides and taking it from the left hand and tapping it on the table, the card will remain palmed in the left hand.

With the card retained in the deck, as in a forceps, it can be instantly palmed in either hand with facility.

APPLIED MISDIRECTION

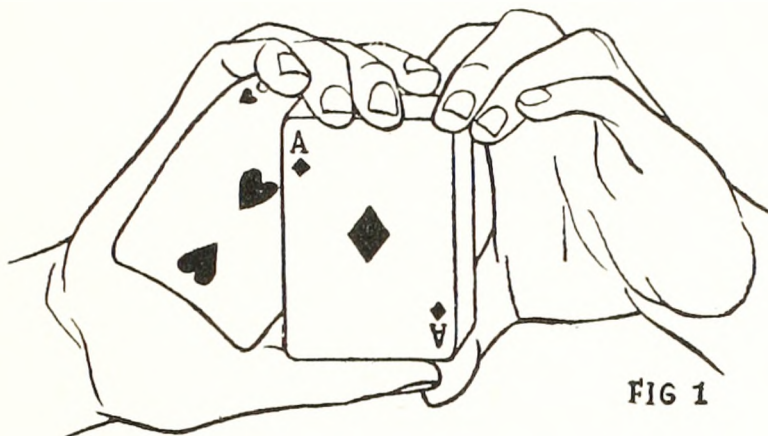
The Side Steal, perfectly done, is one of the finest and most efficient methods of card control. If correctly executed, the spectator must be convinced beyond a doubt that his card has been lost in the pack.

However, timing and misdirection must be incorporated in order to make the sleight effective. A natural mannerism of your own origination suiting your personality is the best type of misdirection.

Here is an example:

In a trick that Dr. Daley performs, the deck is divided into two halves but in the mere action of cutting the deck in two, the card is stolen from the deck. Well done, this sleight is not even suspected, let alone detected, by the most astute observer. Here is how it is performed.

After the card is peeked at and partially pushed out of the deck, the left hand turns into position in readiness to cut the deck—Fig. 1. The



left hand cuts the deck below the original break. As soon as the halves are separated, the pivoted card clears the deck and automatically springs into the right palm. The two packets are immediately placed on the table.

The action merely simulates cutting the deck lengthwise in two parts and dropping them on the table.

The reader is strongly urged to try to develop his own actions for misdirection that are most natural to himself and best fit his personality.

Here are a few other suggestions that Dr. Daley has found very effective, some of which you may find to be helpful:

1. In completing the R. H. Side Steal, the right hand with the palmed card immediately moves underneath the left hand toward the left wrist, as you say, *"I want you to hold my wrist and concentrate on your card"*.

2. Before the card clears the deck in the R.H. Side Steal, separate both hands, turning the palms inward, and gesture towards your chest as you tap your chest and say, "*Watch me carefully,*" or make some other appropriate remark.

3. Just before you complete the R. H. Side Steal, beckon to someone to come towards you, holding the back of your hand towards your audience as you motion to him. This clears the card from the deck unsuspectingly.

4. Affect a slight cough and raise the right hand to cover the mouth. This action, to be quite natural, should be used once or twice beforehand. First you cough. Then you do the Side Steal, and as you do it, move your hand towards your mouth and cough, to cover the movement of the right hand as it moves away from the deck with the palmed card.

5. In doing the L. H. Side Steal, as the hands are separated, the right hand brings the deck up to the mouth while the left hand drops naturally to your side. Blow on the deck as a magical gesture.

6. When the R. H. Longitudinal Side Steal is accomplished, the left hand immediately taps the ends of the deck on the table. In executing the L. H. Longitudinal Side Steal, the right hand taps the table with the deck.

There are many other maneuvers used as cover which can be used to advantage. Some thought on this subject will enable you to discover many other subtleties and ingenious methods.

A favorite method of cover used by Nate Leipzig, which in his hands was undetectable, consisted of raising his left hand with the deck to his ear and riffling the corners of the cards, as his right hand with the palmed card dropped to his side.

Although this is an excellent cover, it should be adopted only by those who feel certain that this mannerism fits them.

Dr. Daley is a firm believer in the principle that technique alone is useless without misdirection and timing. Nothing disarms and deceives a spectator more than an unhurried and deliberate presentation executed in a relaxed manner with neatness and precision.

Remember—delay the sleight to suit the moment—do not watch your hands—be oblivious to the mechanics of the sleight—make voluntary actions become automatic. Actually believe in your miraculous power and your feeling will be conveyed to the audience. Your efforts and effects will be magnified accordingly—but *please do not overdo it.*