

The REAL Ambitious Card

How I Learned To Stop Hating A Classic

History

I didn't realize it but I began working on this trick at the 2018 TRICCS convention. I've been a Ben Earl Fan for a long time. The Past Midnight DVDs were the first time I saw someone unapologetic-ally doing tough work and not trying to take the difficult sleights out of their routines to make it easier to do. I was aware of his Paper Switch effect in which two playing cards trans-
pose without the deck or extra cards. It's very cool, but both sleight of hand and performing wise it is a challenging effect. Ben taught the effect during his lecture and I started to work with it.

A few weeks later I was sitting in the back of a comedy room playing with a deck of cards as per usual. At some point, I realized there was a stranger card in the deck. It was a blue card and as an exercise, I explored doing Paper Switch with two cards of different back designs. The modification was fine, but not fireworks. The result of this experiment was I started walking around with a red deck that always had a blue-backed card in it. It didn't take long for me to start experimenting with controlling an indifferent backed card through the deck.

Now that I found myself moving a card through the deck it started to move in a new direction. I had resisted the idea of it being an Ambitious Card because, to be frank, that trick sucks. More often than not the Ambitious Card is just a magician showing a variety of card controls to laypeople with the kicker being a wallet that for some reason only contains a card and no money or identification. The resistance to the trick becoming an Ambitious card made it very bad for a long time. For a while, the trick was the card knowing when it was on top or not and the back of the card changing color dependent on the location. For a bit, it was part of a Chicago Opener. For a bit, I didn't want to touch it.

There were three breakthroughs. The first was a trip to Sacramento. When I did my Murphy's lecture I included The Spanish Train Change. It was a fun little sequence I came up with on a train in Spain, and I never knew what to do with it. During the lecture, I use the move to show a red card change into a blue card. What no one realized until this writing is that I am realizing that is possible in real-time. I then do a couple of ambitious card sequences that I improvise on the spot. You are literally watching me understand a lot about what is possible if you apply Fraternal Twin theory to the faces of the cards in real-time.

The second breakthrough was a trip to Costa Rica. Ultra Lucky Coin had a great release and I am once again humbled by what a positive response it has gotten from the magic community. I had the cash to burn so I decided to go on the Vanishing Inc trip. While at the trip I worked up the nerve to show the trick to Daniel Garcia who said, "The biggest problem right now is that the trick doesn't know what it is." I think on some level I was aware of this but had yet to have it articulated in that way. That was what made me stop resisting this being an ambitious card. I had been calling it, "Sort of like an ambitious card but with an indifferent back," but I still didn't want it to be an ambitious card. That was when I stopped fighting and I let the trick be.

The last breakthrough was at Magic Live in 2019. I don't fly well. I'm fine in the air, but takeoffs and landings make me very anxious. So I typically spend a reasonable amount of time in the bar before I get on the plane as well as a significant amount of time playing with cards during the flight. At some point during the flight out to Las Vegas, I did the very first version of The Southwest Control. The beginning of the effect was fine, and I knew where the end of the effect had to go. What I didn't know was what was going to live in the middle. The moment the control you are going to learn about happened it occurred to me why people have instinctively used this type of sequence in Ambitious Card since time immemorial.

The trick started to reveal itself over time and has been a lot of fun. It combines the technical sleight of hand I love with eye-popping visuals that get the reactions I like and a very simple concept that I can convey even if you

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don't speak English. Further, it allows me to perform a classic plot in a way that is very distinctly me. I never liked Monte tricks until I spent time living inside The Invisible Monte. I never liked the Ambitious Card until I lived inside this. The more time I spend with this the more I understand it, and the more it teaches me about card magic and the creation of effects.

So why is it called The REAL Ambitious Card? Well, it started with Ben Earl. He has a whole thing in his books about what would something look like if it were real? Well. To me. This is what it would look like if the Ambitious Card was real. Also REAL is an anagram of EARL because Ben is insufferable, and since this started with me playing with one of his tricks I figure it should somehow relate to its grandfather. C-137 Ben Earl. Not J 19 Zeta 7 Ben Earl. That guy eats shit.

Fraternal Twins

In every Ambitious Card routine ever created there is a thing that happens where you swap the selected card for an indifferent card without your audience knowing about it. In the performance of a "good" ambitious card routine someone signs the card to make damn sure you aren't switching it. This, of course, doesn't matter because you aren't performing with a rainbow deck so as soon as the card goes face down that signature doesn't mean a thing. It's only good for identifying the card after it has moved around.

As magicians the second a card gets turned face down we just naturally assume that someone switched the card. It's like someone genetically coded us to not trust people that don't keep a signature in full view. As I began to more closely watch magicians perform the ambitious card something occurred to me. Every once in a while you will see a magician do an ambitious card that doesn't use a signature but it does use the pop-up move. They still get the same reactions. The signature doesn't necessarily make the pop-up trick stronger, so what's occurring here? Is it the visual nature of the appearance? No, because when you watch someone do a bunch of what we consider "visual" effects the reactions aren't necessarily stronger unless that visual is insane.

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Ok, so something is going on where the layperson just kind of trusts that the card is the same card when we do something to make it unique. If you turn a card over and it's flush with the deck they are open to the idea that you switch it. If you have them point to a card up jog it, then bring the spread down... Oh, wait... That is why is it called "The Convincing Control." It took me a while to understand what the lay audience was seeing that I wasn't seeing in The Ambitious Card. What makes the Convincing Control so effective is the retention of vision. In any effect where the card is made unique in some fashion what we get is an extension in how long the retention of vision lasts because that vision is now inside their mind's eye. This is subtly distinct from what we think of as actual retention of vision. This is an abuse of memory.

That brings me to my idea of Fraternal Twins in card magic, and it was understanding this that opened a lot of doors with this particular effect. Something we take for granted is that all cards look the same on the back. They must be this way because they are primarily used by most people for games, and if the back designs were different then it's not so much a game as it is a chance for everyone to cheat at once. As magicians, we abuse this feature of playing cards every time we turn over a card, and we can let one card stand-in for another. That is because effectively every card has a fraternal twin. It just so happens that every card is a fraternal twin to every other card because all the backs are the same. So when a double is turned over and a layperson can watch the back of the card they just saw the face of and track it then they are more trusting than you didn't switch the card.

Let's turn all that on its head right now. If you showed someone the back of a card that was different from all the others, and then turned it over to show the face, the lay audience will then take for granted that the "face-up" card is, in fact, the same card that you just showed them. However, if you switch that card out with a card that has an identical face but a different back you can start doing actual miracles. Furthermore, if the only thing that makes the card different from all the others is that it has a different back design than the others then your brain starts to fill that in whenever you see the face of the card that back design is associated with.

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If we think back to every version of the Ambitious Card we have learned it is this idea that cards have fraternal twins that can stand in for them when they need to be switched out that has made them work for laypeople. The REAL Ambitious Card takes that notion, amps it up, and abuses that notion. It's a thought that is touched on when people do The Chicago Opener, but here we are going to take advantage of this principle. It uses the face of a card the same way all other ambitious cards use the backs of indifferent cards.

With all these thoughts floating around in our head, let's get into the REAL Ambitious Card.

Effect

The magician has someone select a card from her pack. She informs them she plans to show them a trick called the ambitious card, where the selected card rises to the top of the pack over and over again, and she would like them to sign the card. When they turn the card over she notices that they have a face card. There is a moment of dismay as she laments that their signature won't show up well on the card. Not to worry, she has another way of making the card unique. She flexes the card, turns it over and is suddenly blue. Not only is it blue, but it is the only Blue card in the pack.

The magician places the card in the middle of the pack so the audience can see it placed clearly into a fan. Once the fan is closed and the deck held face down the blue card is shown to have jumped to the top of the pack. The card is out jogged and openly placed again in the middle of the deck. The magician lets her audience member square the pack. When the pack is turned face down the blue card has jumped to the top yet again. For a third and final time, the blue card is placed openly and cleanly into the middle of the deck. With a gentle shake, the blue card visually jumps to the top of the pack. The blue card is then given away.

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Setup

One blue-backed card on the bottom of the deck. It's fraternal twin in roughly the center of the deck. Before we move on I'd like to address two things about the blue card. The first is the specific blue card that is used. I would avoid using a blue card in a red deck with the same back design of the red deck. If the design is the same sometimes the card arriving on top of the deck doesn't register with an audience immediately. It should be a stranger card. Because I am a little neurotic about these things I make sure that whatever my performing deck is, the blue card is from another deck that has not only a different color and back design but the same stock. My primary everyday deck of cards is the Penguin Maiden Back Marked cards. These are printed on the double crush stock, so the stranger cards that I use for this usually also come from decks that are also printed on double crush stock. For other people, this may not be a huge sticking point, but making sure all the card stock is the same thickness helps me to execute the sleights more effectively. I should also point out that the face of the blue card should match the faces of the deck you are working with.

The second thing about the blue card is that it helps with a few of the sleights if the card is slightly dirty and the deck itself is very new. Typically a blue card from a well broken in deck is exactly what you need. There are some odd deals and handling of two cards as one that a dirty card will give you an impromptu rough and smooth effect. There will be a temptation to use rough and smooth cards, but this should be resisted, as it will make it very difficult to accomplish other portions of the effect if you do this.

Lastly, the specific card that is your blue card matters. It's better if it's a face card if you want to use the idea that they can't sign the card to justify why you need to change it. As I have done this trick I have experimented with all manner of cards and found that I prefer to use either the Jack of Diamonds or the Queen of Clubs. These two cards feel very random, and also are visually distinct enough that they are easy to remember. For the porpoises of explanation, I'll assume that you are using a Jack of Diamonds, the same as I am.

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Method

Begin by turning the cards and spreading through them face up as you ask to show someone an effect. As you begin the spread push off two cards from your left hand into your right hand and separate them from the deck (fig 1). Next, push a small group of cards again from your left hand to your right hand. Push another small group and then spread the deck from hand to hand. It should look as though you were taking a couple of chunks of cards and then spreading through the whole deck to casually make sure they are all there (fig 2). You are in effect doing a spread cull to move the blue card second to the top of the deck. As you move through the deck visually sight the fraternal twin of your blue card and down jog it about a quarter of an inch (fig 3).



Close the deck back up with the red-backed Jack of Diamonds down jogged and turn the deck face down in your hands. As you square the cards and prepare to offer them for a selection use the down jog to get a break over the Jack of Diamonds. The previous casual looking through the deck essentially allows you to get into a position to do a classic force without cutting the deck right before offering the cards for selection. Be sure to push a good portion of the top of the deck as a block to hide the blue card that is second from the top. Classic force your red-backed Jack of Diamonds. Once they select it ask what they got. When they reveal what it is and you notice the problem of them signing a face card take the card back and turn it over on top of the deck using a Stu-



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start Gordon Double Lift action. That is to say, use your left thumb to push the card to the right. Your left thumb grabs the short edge closest to your body as your ring finger contacts the outer end of the card. The thumb and ring finger make a pinching action that causes the card to turn end for end and has the thumb slide down the face of the card as it is turned face up (fig 4 & 5). The right

fingers then lift up and allow the card to turn face down on top of the deck as though you were closing a book.

Making a Stuart Gordon type action with a single card will help to camouflage the switch you are about to do. With the red-backed Jack of Diamonds face down on top of the deck you will now execute the Spanish Train Change. This is a sequence I invented on a train in Spain and further proof that I should not be allowed to name my effects. The short description is that you are second dealing a double into a Stuart Gordon turnover. Let's break that down.



With the deck in the dealer's grip, the left thumb pushes over the top three cards as one (fig 6). I find that using a very new deck and a dirty blue card greatly facilitates this action. The action here is the same as though you were dealing thirds. The one key here to this particular version of the Spanish Train Change is that because the third card is blue you will want to use bordered cards to give yourself leeway with any spread of the cards, but you still don't have much room for error. Once the block of three cards has been pushed over the left hand comes in and takes control of the block using the thumb and ring finger to grip the narrow short ends of the deck, but



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this time your pinky angles inward and contacts the long edge of the cards. The thumb and ring finger should contact the cards about a third to halfway across their width. As they pull the blue card and the indifferent card above it out of the deck they gently move toward the pinky as the pinky continues to press towards the deck. What's happening here is a squaring action as the double is dealt from under the top card.

As soon as the double clears the deck to begin the pinching action with the thumb and ring finger to execute an actual Stuart Gordon double turnover. This double can then be toyed with a little longer being turned over on top of the deck to emphasize singularity. When closing it like a book be sure to do so with about a third of the card extended beyond the edge of the deck and catch the double with a heel brake. Maintain the heel break as the index finger comes forward contacting the front edge of the deck and pushing it back

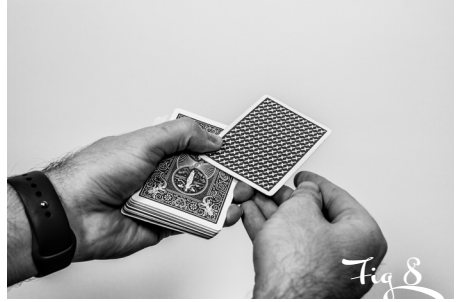


so while maintaining a heel break the card is brought flush with the deck. The heel brake is maintained so that you can easily use your right hand to lift the established double off the top of the deck and execute another Stuart Gordon Double lift casually to show the singularity of the card you are playing with.

Don't make a huge deal out of it being just one card, but the nature of toying with the card while talking puts this in the realm of the casual. That helps to disguise the Spanish Train Change which is by nature a fairly open move. Also, it doesn't make it feel like the trick has even really begun yet. After being successfully casual, and with the double face up, execute the KM move while keeping the blue-backed Jack of Diamonds face up (fig 7). In this instance, your right thumb slides to the right side of the face-up blue card while the fingers push the opposite direction peeling the red-backed jack off the back of the blue-backed Jack and continue pushing the red-backed Jack so that it flips over and ends up face down on top of the pack. This is done with a wiping motion of the Jack against the back of the deck.

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You are now finally in a position to reveal that the Jack of Diamonds has transformed into having a blue back. To effect this transformation I like to move the Jack up so that the bottom left corner of the Jack is against the upper right corner of the deck (fig 8). I give the Jack a little flex to make a magic moment and then turn it over to reveal it is now blue. Our situation now is a blue backed Jack in the right hand with an indifferent card on top of the deck with a red-backed Jack of Diamonds below it. We need to displace the indifferent card before we move into the first ambitious phase.



After much trial and error, I have found the best way to do this is openly while showing the blue card is the only blue Jack of Diamonds in the deck. While holding the blue Jack in the right hand with the thumb on the back of the card and



the fingers on the face the right-hand turns palm down so the Jack is face-up, The right thumb pushes the indifferent card over slightly so the thumb can flip it to the back of the blue jack and lift it off the deck (fig 9,10,11). Once you have a grip on the indifferent card the right hand rotates forward turning the cards end for end as the hand comes palm up while the left thumb simultaneously pushes up and over turning the deck over and face up in the left hand. The turns should happen at the same time so that when the deck ends up face up the indifferent card is placed on the face of the deck.



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Now that I found myself moving a card through the deck it started to move in a new direction. I had resisted the idea of it being an Ambitious Card because, to be frank, that trick sucks. More often than not the Ambitious Card is just a magician showing a variety of card controls to laypeople with the kicker being a wallet that for some reason only contains a card and no money or identification. The resistance to the trick becoming an Ambitious card made it very bad for a long time. For a while, the trick was the card knowing when it was on top or not and the back of the card changing color dependent on the location. For a bit, it was part of a Chicago Opener. For a bit, I didn't want to touch it.

There were three breakthroughs. The first was a trip to Sacramento. When I did my Murphy's lecture I included The Spanish Train Change. It was a fun little sequence I came up with on a train in Spain, and I never knew what to do with it. During the lecture, I use the move to show a red card change into a blue card. What no one realized until this writing is that I am realizing that is possible in real-time. I then do a couple of ambitious card sequences that I improvise on the spot. You are literally watching me understand a lot about what is possible if you apply Fraternal Twin theory to the faces of the cards in real-time.

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Fraternal Twins

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Ok, so something is going on where the layperson just kind of trusts that the card is the same card when we do something to make it unique. If you turn a card over and it's flush with the deck they are open to the idea that you switch it. If you have them point to a card up jog it, then bring the spread down... Oh, wait... That is why is it called "The Convincing Control." It took me a while to understand what the lay audience was seeing that I wasn't seeing in The Ambitious Card. What makes the Convincing Control so effective is the retention of vision. In any effect where the card is made unique in some fashion what we get is an extension in how long the retention of vision lasts because that vision is now inside their mind's eye. This is subtly distinct from what we think of as actual retention of vision. This is an abuse of memory.

That brings me to my idea of Fraternal Twins in card magic, and it was understanding this that opened a lot of doors with this particular effect. Something we take for granted is that all cards look the same on the back. They must be this way because they are primarily used by most people for games, and if the back designs were different then it's not so much a game as it is a chance for everyone to cheat at once. As magicians, we abuse this feature of playing cards every time we turn over a card, and we can let one card stand-in for another. That is because effectively every card has a fraternal twin. It just so happens that every card is a fraternal twin to every other card because all the backs are the same. So when a double is turned over and a layperson can watch the back of the card they just saw the face of and track it then they are more trusting than you didn't switch the card.

Let's turn all that on its head right now. If you showed someone the back of a card that was different from all the others, and then turned it over to show the face, the lay audience will then take for granted that the "face-up" card is, in fact, the same card that you just showed them. However, if you switch that card out with a card that has an identical face but a different back you can start doing actual miracles. Furthermore, if the only thing that makes the card different from all the others is that it has a different back design than the others then your brain starts to fill that in whenever you see the face of the card that back design is associated with.

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Begin by turning the cards and spreading through them face up as you ask to show someone an effect. As you begin the spread push off two cards from your left hand into your right hand and separate them from the deck (fig 1). Next, push a small group of cards again from your left hand to your right hand. Push another small group and then spread the deck from hand to hand. It should look as though you were taking a couple of chunks of cards and then spreading through the whole deck to casually make sure they are all there (fig 2). You are in effect doing a spread cull to move the blue card second to the top of the deck. As you move through the deck visually sight the fraternal twin of your blue card and down jog it about a quarter of an inch (fig 3).



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With the deck in the dealer's grip, the left thumb pushes over the top three cards as one (fig 6). I find that using a very new deck and a dirty blue card greatly facilitates this action. The action here is the same as though you were dealing thirds. The one key here to this particular version of the Spanish Train Change is that because the third card is blue you will want to use bordered cards to give yourself leeway with any spread of the cards, but you still don't have much room for error. Once the block of three cards has been pushed over the left hand comes in and takes control of the block using the thumb and ring finger to grip the narrow short ends of the deck, but



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this time your pinky angles inward and contacts the long edge of the cards. The thumb and ring finger should contact the cards about a third to halfway across their width. As they pull the blue card and the indifferent card above it out of the deck they gently move toward the pinky as the pinky continues to press towards the deck. What's happening here is a squaring action as the double is dealt from under the top card.

As soon as the double clears the deck to begin the pinching action with the thumb and ring finger to execute an actual Stuart Gordon double turnover. This double can then be toyed with a little longer being turned over on top of the deck to emphasize singularity. When closing it like a book be sure to do so with about a third of the card extended beyond the edge of the deck and catch the double with a heel brake. Maintain the heel break as the index finger comes forward contacting the front edge of the deck and pushing it back

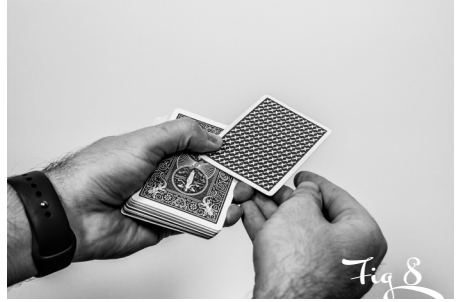


so while maintaining a heel break the card is brought flush with the deck. The heel brake is maintained so that you can easily use your right hand to lift the established double off the top of the deck and execute another Stuart Gordon Double lift casually to show the singularity of the card you are playing with.

Don't make a huge deal out of it being just one card, but the nature of toying with the card while talking puts this in the realm of the casual. That helps to disguise the Spanish Train Change which is by nature a fairly open move. Also, it doesn't make it feel like the trick has even really begun yet. After being successfully casual, and with the double face up, execute the KM move while keeping the blue-backed Jack of Diamonds face up (fig 7). In this instance, your right thumb slides to the right side of the face-up blue card while the fingers push the opposite direction peeling the red-backed jack off the back of the blue-backed Jack and continue pushing the red-backed Jack so that it flips over and ends up face down on top of the pack. This is done with a wiping motion of the Jack against the back of the deck.

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You are now finally in a position to reveal that the Jack of Diamonds has transformed into having a blue back. To effect this transformation I like to move the Jack up so that the bottom left corner of the Jack is against the upper right corner of the deck (fig 8). I give the Jack a little flex to make a magic moment and then turn it over to reveal it is now blue. Our situation now is a blue backed Jack in the right hand with an indifferent card on top of the deck with a red-backed Jack of Diamonds below it. We need to displace the indifferent card before we move into the first ambitious phase.



After much trial and error, I have found the best way to do this is openly while showing the blue card is the only blue Jack of Diamonds in the deck. While holding the blue Jack in the right hand with the thumb on the back of the card and



the fingers on the face the right-hand turns palm down so the Jack is face-up, The right thumb pushes the indifferent card over slightly so the thumb can flip it to the back of the blue jack and lift it off the deck (fig 9,10,11). Once you have a grip on the indifferent card the right hand rotates forward turning the cards end for end as the hand comes palm up while the left thumb simultaneously pushes up and over turning the deck over and face up in the left hand. The turns should happen at the same time so that when the deck ends up face up the indifferent card is placed on the face of the deck.

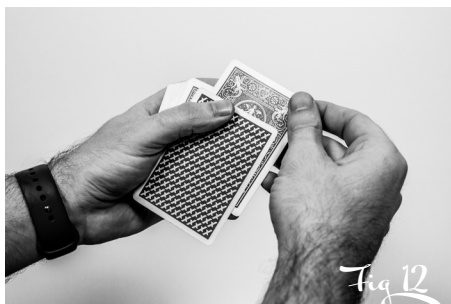


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After it is placed on the face of the deck the right-hand lets go of it and the deck is rotated back the opposite way so that it is face down as the blue Jack is rotated back the way it came and is now face up and then flipped over to be face down on top of the face-down deck. This sequence feels like you are just flashing the backs and faces of the deck and the blue card, and the displacement is disguised inside the sequence even though a card is moved openly.

Ambitious phase 1

With the blue card face down on top of the deck and the red jack face down second from the top we can now take advantage of our first fraternal twin moment. With the deck in your left-hand dealers grip bring it up so that the back is looking you in the face and the face of the cards are looking



your audience in the eye and execute the world's easiest second deal (fig 12). Use your left thumb to move the blue card over just a bit and use your right thumb to contact the back of the second card and draw it out. It is important that the red Jack be drawn out the moment the blue back is removed from the view of the spectator. With the cards still up at eye level openly put the red-backed Jack in the middle of the deck up jogged (fig 13). Use both hands to spread the deck and show the card is legitimately in the middle of the deck (fig 14). Close the deck and then begin to push the red-backed Jack down and into the deck. As the card is pushed down the middle finger should push down on the left corner of the red jack causing it to angle job in the deck.

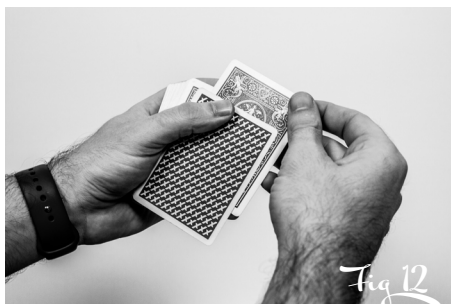


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Use the right pinky to continue the squaring action so the red-backed Jack of Diamonds is now side jogged out of the right side of the deck hidden by the right hand as it holds the deck in a Biddle grip. This all happens as the deck is brought back down to be parallel with the floor. When the deck is brought back down this brings the blue card back into view and makes it appear as though the card as magically transported back to the top.

While the shock of the card appearing is registering the red-backed Jack is controlled to the bottom. To do this we execute the Ramlo Bottom Placement. I began developing this move while learning Marlo's Future Reverse where you turn a card face up in the middle of the deck. I discovered that while doing this I could use a similar technique to put the card on the bottom instead of turning it over. I've never been able to find a written descrip-



tion of a move like this, so it might be original but if it's not I apologize and please write in the margins the actual creator of the effect. With the red-backed Jack side jogged clip the outer right corner of that card with your pinky and use the heel of your palm as a pivot point (fig 15). By clipping the card it should want to lever down. While that happens grip all the cards below the red-backed Jack and tilt them down so that the red-backed Jack can clear the bottom half of the deck. Once the Jack has cleared the bottom half of the deck allow it to slide back underneath the deck (fig 16). Your situation now is the blue backed Jack is on top of the deck and the red-backed Jack is on the bottom of the deck.

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Ambitious phase 2

Phase 2 of this ambitious routine is the one where the audience member confirms the card is placed in the deck by squaring it themselves. We will do this using the Southwest control... I sleight I created on a Southwest flight. If you are still reading please feel free to send me suggestions for a better name for the following sleight. The Southwest Control is essentially a variant on the Wesley James load that everyone uses at some point during a traditional Ambitious Card routine.



To prep for the second phase while holding the deck in your left-hand dealer's grip use your left index finger to apply backward pressure on the bottom card of the deck, the red-backed Jack, causing it to buckle away from the bottom of the deck so you can get a pinky break over the card (17). Bring your right hand back in taking the deck in Biddle Grip while



maintaining the break with your thumb. Swing cut the top half of the deck into your left hand and proceed as though you were going to do the Wesley James addition. Place the bottom half of the deck at the halfway point of the blue card. Normally here you would contact that blue card and push it forward while letting go of the card you have a break over so it would align flush. To do the Southwest Control release the card you have a break



over once you have touched the packets together at their halfway points. Your middle finger contacts the blue card and pushes it forward while the red-backed Jack you have a break over is released and taken control of with your left pinky and the heel of your left hand. The blue card is pushed out as

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the packets are brought together to be square while the red-backed Jack is left jogged out the back of the deck (fig 18). Due to the nature of the way your hands are holding the packets while these moves are executed the red-backed Jack is shaded by the wrist and the fact that it is still halfway down the deck. Your angles are pretty good for this.



Once the blue Jack is out jogged in a continuing action the left-hand takes control of the entire deck and the left hand rotates at the rest towards yourself turning the deck end for end in a longitudinal fashion. This brings the face of the out jogged red back Jack into view. While the deck is being turned the index finger of the left-hand reaches up and pulls the out jogged blue backed Jack flush with the deck (fig 19). Once the deck is turned face up the right hand comes in and holds the deck so the left hand can release the deck and return to hold the deck in a loose dealer's grip. Note that this is a discrepant turnover (fig 20). If you had just out jogged the card face down and then rotated the deck in this fashion it should be now sticking out the back instead of the front of the deck. However, if done with confidence this flies right by your audience. The situation is now that the red-backed jack is out jogged face up in a face-up deck. The blue backed Jack is secretly above it. Under the guise of proving that the card is actually in the middle are going to transpose the two halves of the deck around the face-up red Jack so the blue Jack ends up on the actual top of the deck.



The right hand comes in and gently presses on the face of the out jogged red Jack so it can pick up all the cards above it and place that packet on the table (fig 21). The right hand then places the red-backed Jack still out jogged on the now tabled packet. The remainder of the deck is placed onto the tabled packet and red Jack. The spectator is invited to square the deck. At this

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point, you are effectively done, because the spectator can turn over the deck. The red Jack is safely in the middle of the deck so this can feel like it has happened nearly entirely in their hands.

The Final Phase

In my head, as I was building this routine I wanted the final phase to be the most visual. The most visual color change that I do is a one-handed top palm, and so I knew that's what I needed to do to make this as fast and visually arresting as possible. For someone else, Robbie Moreland's cloud change might be the way to do that. For me, it's the one-handed top palm. But let's get the card into position before we talk top palms.

Show your audience the blue card is just a single card and then place it second from the top via Tilt, or The Depth Illusion depending on which school of magic you slavishly devote yourself to. There are many variants on tilt, and I'd like to give an honorable mention to Xavier Spade's combining tilt with the get ready for Raise Rise so you have a bit of the card sticking out of the back. I really wanted to do that with this routine because it looks so bloody convincing. He teaches this on the Xavier's Rise download, and it should be required watching for anyone. The trouble is because the card is blue-backed I couldn't use that convincer. I also don't like it when people do the thing where they push cards out of the middle of the deck before they do tilt. The rest of this routine is precise and full of interesting sleights, so I wanted to use a Tilt that would feel the same. In this case, I elected to do the version where you use your thumb to lift up half the deck. I believe this is a Daryll thing, but I am prepared to be wrong.

To get into the position I use my left thumb to push over the blue Jack on top of the deck so my right hand can take it. As the card is pushed over I smear over the second card and get a pinky break underneath it. Once I have a pinky break under an indifferent card my left thumb lifts about half the deck up opening it like a V. As this happens the thumb is lifting the top packet at the front edge of the deck and bracing the deck against the ring finger. Because that top card is also held by the thumb and ring finger it will begin to open

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the gap where the pinky break is even further. Place the card in the gap between the top card and the top packet (fig 22). I give it a little flick with the back of my index finger as though I was shoving it home. As that happens I move my thumb away letting the whole thing drop. When executed in one smooth motion the blue Jack is placed second from the top even though it appears as though it was casually flicked into the middle of the deck. From the back, this looks awful, but from the front, with all the moving parts working together it looks very nice.



Once you have executed your Tilt preference there is one final fraternal twin convincer I like to use here. I turn the deck face up and start spreading the cards between my hands looking for their Jack of Diamonds. This is the red-backed Jack of Diamonds still in the middle from the Southwest control. When I come to it I up jog it for half its length and break the deck at that point taking it on the bottom of the spread in my right hand. I like for the jack to be able to wiggle a bit as I gesture with it. I also use the phrase, “Look there is your blue jack right there in the middle of the deck.” This does a curious thing. I’m taking advantage of the fraternal twin nature of the two Jacks. But the slight bounce of the Jack as I gesture with it as I say the supposed color of the back of the card then allows them to put together in their head that, “yes that is the blue Jack.” I’ve overheard people later swear they saw me place the blue Jack in the middle before I brought it back to the top. This is a very important convincer to sell the final and most visual phase.



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Take the deck with the left hand in preparation for the One-Handed Top Palm. Everyone's hand is a little different, but here is the position I use. The thumb is at the outer edge of the deck with the cards against the first joint. Along the front edge of the deck, the cards are against the first joint of the middle and ring fingers (Fig 23, 24). The index finger rests along the front edge prepared to apply pressure to the front edge of the deck so the deck doesn't fall during the palm. The pad of the pinky is on the top outer corner of the deck.

The biggest problem many people have with the One-Handed Top Palm is the card shoots out the side of their hand after the pinky puts pressure on the card. This generally occurs because the person having trouble is using the corner of the deck as a pivot point. Because the corner of the deck is so... well... pointy... the card is allowed to spin and slide any which way it wants. The result is usually the card shooting out of the side of the hand. Pressure by the pinky is not placed towards the corner of the deck. The pinky presses forward and against the front edge of the deck. Using the front edge of the deck as your pivot point makes a much more stable levering action for the card. As this happens the thumb, ring, middle, and index finger bevel the deck backward and then forwards. This allows the thumb to bend just enough so that the card can clear the flesh of the thumb and continue as it is levered up into the hand. By doing this all at once the top card, in this case an indifferent card, can lever up and into a classic card palm.

Finally, once the blue card has been seen to appear the right hand, with indifferent card palmed, takes the blue jack off of the deck by clipping the outer corner between the thumb and index finger. As the blue card is turned face up the palm of the right-hand brushes the deck depositing the indifferent card it had palmed on top of the deck so you can end clean.