



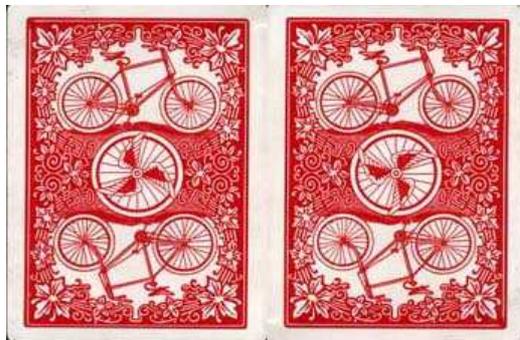
Inside Ed's Head

What Should You Bring When Invited To a Knife Fight? A Gun!

Do you give your deck away after each performance? Neither do I. So why do you perform with a regular deck? If you spend the extra bucks to buy the best props and spend hours rehearsing and polishing your routines, why wouldn't you take the time to transform your "ordinary" decks into ones that will do extra duty for you, and allow you to perform miracles that wouldn't be possible with a deck straight out of the box. Please note that I'm not talking about a gaffed deck that only is good for one trick; I'm talking about a regular deck that you can use for all of your card tricks that use a regular deck, just "souped up" a whole lot! (Think of a pasteboard version of Barry Bonds.)

In the last two months, we've talked about stacked and memorized decks, and several types of locator cards that you can force on unsuspecting spectators to assure the location of these cards later on. This month, we'll talk about several other nefarious ways that we can gaff an "ordinary" deck so that your audiences will worry that you really DO have supernatural powers.

The first thing you might want to think about is making, or buying, a "one-way" deck. Bicycle League Back decks are what Ted Annemann recommended to fool magicians and laymen alike. These decks are still available; I've found them on Amazon.com and Ebay. (Bicycle Wheel Backed decks are one-way too; also available from Amazon) These decks have a propeller like shape in the middle of the card. This is rather subtle, but is so obvious if you know what you're looking for, that you can discern it from the other side of the room.



There is one notable problem with this, since the one-way mark is in the center of the card, you must tailor your trick to allow you to see the whole back. You can easily get around this difficulty. Go out and buy red and blue

Sharpie Ultra-Fine Point pens. In the upper left hand corner, make a little dot in the white border that runs around the colored part of the card on ONE side of the card. (Lefties would mark the right corner, or just watch the BOTTOM of the card as they spread.)



If you do this on a League Back card, you'll have a one way deck that's useable in both close-up and platform work. If you don't like the idea of League backs, you can doctor any deck you choose to make it a one-way deck.

You might not realize it, but often "regular" decks are one-way. Sometimes, when a deck with borders is printed, the design isn't centered perfectly. Very often, this misalignment is very noticeable, if you're looking for it.

Even more diabolical than one-way backs, are one-way FACES! This goes back to at least Annemann. Take an Exacto knife, or a pin, and scratch some of the ink off the pip of the card. (Lefties will have to look at the bottom of the card.) No one who picks a card, or handles the deck casually, will notice these scratches. **[Addendum of Jan 2, 2016.** I found a better way to make one-way faces. Take liquid Wite-Out™ and put a small blob of it a bit underneath and to the right of the card's index. This is virtually unnoticeable unless you're looking for it.

You can also buy a deck that is *manufactured* with one-way faces. It's the Ask Alexander deck from Conjuring Arts. (Also available on Amazon.) The index on one end of the cards is printed in a thicker font than on the other end. Unfortunately the back of the deck has an elaborate, obviously one-way design that makes it look like a deck of "magic cards." This could make some audience members suspicious.

If you do decide to go with a home-made deck with one-way faces, it's a good idea to give the deck to the spectator so he'll spread the deck with the unmarked pips facing up.]



In a forthcoming issue, I promise to divulge a killer trick that uses one-way faces. The trick will slay laymen, but I designed it to give magicians the belief they know where I'm going. Then I open up a trap door beneath them. It's actually more fun to do this for magicians, as it's always nice to

look at their face the moment they realize they've been "had." I'll also be letting you know a great one-way back trick, too.

Another gaff you can have as part of an ordinary deck is Gary Ouellet's ProControl card (from his book of the same name). This is a locator card made by taking a two-inch length of Scotch™ tape, and placing it over each END of a joker. Place that tape so half the width will be on the back of the card, and the other on the face, wrapped around the end of the card. This will make a "long" card that is very easy to manipulate. Once you've finished the routines that use this card, you can remove it by openly taking the joker from the deck.

Last month, I mentioned that you might want to have a breather crimped card in the deck as one of the cards you might force if you want a sure fire location. If you want to forego this ability, you can do a mindblowing trick with a Jontay or Will DeSieve gimmick. Before I continue, read "The Trick That CAN Be Explained" at David Britland's website:

<http://cardopolis.blogspot.com/2009/04/trick-that-can-be-explained.html>

Pretty good, huh? One thing Mr. Britland mentioned, but did not explain, is that you need to have the ridged cards marked, so you could tell which one has been cut to the top. Here again a Sharpie pen comes to the rescue (via of the late Ted Lesley). On the back of a Bicycle Rider Back card, you'll see an angel. Use your trusted Sharpie on one of the cards and block out the left wing of the angel (on both ends of the cards). On the other card, block out the RIGHT wing. (If you need to be able to identify three cards, you can block out both of the wings of the third.) On the League Back cards, you can block out part of the flowers on the left and right of the top borders. After you've given the ink some time to dry, rub the marked area with the ball of your thumb. This will make the mark observable only to someone looking for it.



Mr. Britland uses the Will DeSieve crimp (quarter crimp), in his trick. There is another ridged card that you might want to consider: the Jontay crimp. You make this card by taking a picture card and placing it face-up on a newspaper. Take a stylus from your old Palm Pilot or DS, or a dry ballpoint pen, and run it around the border of the picture. This will raise a rectangular ridge on the back of the card. This card will always cut to the top, unlike a quarter crimp, which can be made to cut to either the top or the bottom. The nice thing about the Jontay crimp, is that it can be used with a non-picture card if you use one of the decks that has a border around ALL of the cards. (I think these are on large pip decks, I'm not sure.)

Well, we've discussed stacked, memorized, one-way decks (faces and backs), with several trimmed, marked, and ridged locator cards that can be forced and found quite easily. We've also added a long card so we have a sure-fire way of controlling cards in the deck. Is there anything else we can do to give us an extra edge? You bet! Use a marked deck.

I'm sure you all realize that there have been tremendous advances in making marked decks. Ted Lesley came out with "The Working Performer's Marked Deck" a long time ago. It enables the magician to read the back of the card virtually instantly. Today you can make a deck like this yourself, or buy other similar decks; the Boris Wild Marked Deck comes to mind.

Imagine what you can do with a marked stacked deck. You can offer the deck for a spectator peek, sight the back of the card you've stopped at, and know the value of the card the spectator is looking at is the card ahead of the sighted card in the stack. I like to use a stacked deck in the following manner: have the spectator lift some cards off the top of the pack and look at the face of the card he's cut to. As he does this, sight the marks on the card on top of the tabled portion, and you know the name of his card.

You can also do a great key card routine using a marked deck. Give the deck to a spectator, and turn your back. Have her shuffle it thoroughly, table it, and remove a card from anywhere in the deck. Now tell her to lift about half the cards. As she does this, turn towards her and tell her to place the selection "right there." As you point to the tabled portion of the deck, note the top card, and turn back again. (This method of getting a subtle glimpse is also Annemann's.) In most cases, the spectator will remember you had your back to her during the entire selection process. After the spectator returns the card, you can allow her to cut the cards once or twice, safe in the knowledge that it will forever remain above the key card you just glimpsed.

Please, please, please! Avoid any temptation to over-use marked cards, or to use them improperly. You must ALWAYS structure a trick that depends on marked cards in a way that will give your spectator the presumption that marked cards would be of no value.

Of course, a reason for always using a marked deck is for security. If you don't want to bother forcing a locator card, or miss the force, you can always read the back of a selected card. Now you have another sure-fire out in case of a rare foul-up.

OK Ed, by now you must have given us every possible way we can get an advantage with a regular deck. Ha! There's still more. John Mendoza suggests that all of our performance decks should contain a duplicate pair of cards. What John does is to take two decks, and put the Jack of Hearts from one in place of the Jack of Diamond in the other, and vice versa. There are countless tricks that use duplicate cards; you'll always be prepared to do one with this simple addition to your deck. (If you use a memorized deck, don't forget which card is the dup!)

Here are a couple of ideas you might want to consider using duplicate cards. Make “Card to Wallet” a centerpiece of your performance. Use your regular methods to get an indifferent card to the wallet once or twice. Make sure the spectator looks through the deck to see his card is gone before you reveal it’s in your wallet. (This cancels the idea of duplicates.) During an offbeat moment between tricks, load one of the dups into the wallet. Later on, give your wallet to the spectator to hold and force the other dup on him. The spectator can now open your wallet and remove the card. This is obviously an “impossible” teleportation, but it also makes your previous CTW more impossible, because you’ve just cancelled the idea of palming.

What if you make the dups ridged marked cards. Do your “Ambitious Card” routine as you usually do. Having a duplicate on top of the deck will give you the cleanest possible insertion and rise in the history of Ambitious cards. For the climax, give the deck to the spectator to shuffle and cut, a la “The Trick That Can Be Explained.” The Ambitious Card will rise to the top while completely under the control of the spectator!

Could there possibly be anything else? Why yes, you can use punched cards, but since this piece is longer than I intended, I’ll get to them at another time.

Righting a One-Way Deck

If you are working with a one-way deck, you might think that you’ll have to limit its use to the beginning of your act, as you might not be able to control the orientation of the cards for more than a few tricks. I believe there is a way to get around this, but since my eyesight is limited, I’m unable to tell if this idea works in practice as well as it works in theory.

The idea is the “Slop Shuffle.” Martin Nash uses it to separate reds and blacks, so I’ll assume that people with normal eyesight can use it to get a one-way deck in order. After you do the slop shuffle, all the cards will be aligned, but one half will be face-up and the other face-down. Be sure to turn the top half over BOOKWISE, to keep all the marks in the same direction. If anyone goes to the trouble of making up a one way deck by blocking the border, please let me know if you can right it with a slop shuffle. One important note: If you’re thinking about using the slop shuffle to right a one-way deck, be sure it’s completely messed up. If only a few cards are reversed in the deck, the slop shuffle can’t be used. If you find yourself in this situation, you can always do a riffle shuffle where one half of the deck is rotated 180 degrees before you begin the slop shuffle.

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