



Inside Ed's Head

September 2013

Contemplating the Dream Card (Another Kick Myself Moment?)

Featuring: the Hofzinsler Bottom Palm

Last month, we were talking about Darwin Ortiz's "The Dream Card," and one of its predecessors, Bro. John Hamman's "The Signed Card." (Darwin credits Alex Elmsley's "Between Your Palms," from *The Collected Works of Alex Elmsley, Vol. II*, by Stephen Minch, p. 246.) The main point of this plot is that a card is set aside, another card is selected and signed, and somehow the original card is seen to be the signed selection. In the Elmsley and Hamman versions, the special card is under a spectator's control, in the Ortiz version, the special card is in his wallet, but has an odd colored back that seems to preclude any possibility of a switch. In the Elmsley and Hamman versions, the switch of the mystery card for the selection is done by co-mingling the mystery card with other cards. Ortiz avoids that possible weakness by switching the card in his wallet.

As I mentioned last month, I'd like to construct a routine that has the odd-backed element of Darwin's routine, and the cleanness of his switch, while avoiding the use of the wallet, and eliminating a multi-card palm. In order to do all of that we need to analyze the elements of the trick necessary to create the illusion, and figure out exactly how we might use sleights, subtleties, gimmicks, or gaffs to achieve them.

Our first task is to have a spectator think he's picking a card from a blue-backed deck, but in reality, we'll force a red-backed card on him. At the same time, we'll have to convince him that the card is blue-backed. There are many forces in the literature that enable you to do that. Three that come to mind immediately are the Riffle force, the Hindu Shuffle force, and the Cross-cut force. I'll use the Cross-cut force because I think that having the spectator cut to a "random" card makes the most sense in this context. You can feel free to disagree. You might also note that the ability of these forces to hide the back of the force card is also somewhat of a weakness. If the spectator actually touches, or removes, a blue-backed card, he will have no reason to suspect the back is anything but blue. I'm not sure this is a problem in this effect, but in next month's column, I'll introduce a force where the spectator picks a blue-backed card, and we switch it for the red force-card as we turn it face up.

First, you should do this after doing several other tricks with your blue deck. You should have a red-backed card in your left-rear pocket; it should be a low spot card, so the signature will be easy to see when you force it later. I'll assume it's the two of hearts. Have the spectator shuffle the blue deck, and place it in front of you. This is convincer number one that the card he is about to choose will have a blue back. Now remove the red card from your pocket, showing only the back, as you patter about its mystical properties. Feign replacing the card in your back pocket, but in reality, get it into gambler's cop or bottom palm. Now pick up the blue deck, load the odd

card onto its bottom, and place the deck in front of another spectator. Ask that person to cut the cards; instructing him to handle them in the standard cross-cut force manner.

Reach into your pocket to get a marker, and continue your patter to introduce a suitable time delay. Pick up the top portion by its sides in your left hand; the cards will be in glide position. Turn your hand palm up, and ask the spectator to sign his name on the card. You'll now do another sleight to help convince the spectator that he just signed a blue-backed card: Marlo's Glide Variation.

Raise your hand to your mouth so you can blow on the card, as if you're helping the ink dry. As you do this, let your left thumb riffle off two cards, to facilitate a double. As soon as you do this, your right hand takes the double on its left side, thumb at the rear, fingers at the front, and out-jogs the double a little less than an inch.

Ask the spectator to lift about half of the packet still on the table. As he does this turn your left hand palm down. This will show the blue back of the double. Now approach the protruding card(s) with your right hand; the right fingers will push the bottom card of the double flush with the bottom of the deck, and almost simultaneously, the thumb and fingers will move the top card off to the right and place it onto the small packet remaining on the table. Ask the spectator to bury it with the cards he is holding.

Now your right hand lifts the top half of the cards you are holding, while you ask the spectator to place his entire portion on top of those in your left hand. Finally, bury that portion with those in your right hand. The spectator should be totally convinced that the signed, blue-backed card is now in the center of the deck. In reality, the signed card is now on the bottom.

For the denouement, all you have to cop or bottom palm the bottom card, and reach back to your left-rear pocket, and feign removing the card. I like retrieving cards from my rear pocket because it's off the sight line of the spectators. They can't really see what's going on back there, so "retrieving" the odd card is much easier. (If by some chance, someone IS burning the area of your rear pocket, you've probably met someone who's interested in more than your prestidigitation skills.)

The Hofzinsler Bottom Palm

I had another "kick-myself" moment recently. After I finished reading *Darwin Ortiz at the Card Table*, I took Tannen's *Stars of Magic* off the shelf for a reread. I bought this book while still a teenager, and learned just about nothing from it. The book is almost useless for a beginner; the photographs are not done nearly as well as they could be, and the text is very sparse. In some cases, steps are omitted, or glossed over too lightly. Even today, I can't figure out how some of the sleights are supposed to be executed.

I took it up again many years later, and found that I had learned enough to pick up some of the effects – most notably Vernon's "Triumph."

This time I found the easiest and most deceptive bottom palm I've ever encountered. It's the "Hofzinsler Bottom Palm," page 98, within the explanation of Vernon's "Travelers." I kicked myself extra hard because the mechanics are quite similar to those of the Diagonal Palm Shift, a move I've done for years.

Here's how to do it. Hold a left pinky break over the card(s) you want to palm. Now grasp the deck in your right hand for a brief squaring action. Your right index finger will go to the **LEFT**

side of the deck, about one-half inch from the top. Your right middle and ring fingers will be on the outer side, and your pinky can go where it's most comfortable, probably on the right side of the deck. Your right thumb tip should hold the rear side of the deck; you don't want the thumb to interfere with the movement of the card. Your left thumb should make way for your index finger; it should ride on top of it for most of the move. Your left pinky will contact the cards that are separated by the break. It will act as a pivot point to help you get the cards into palm position, just as in the Diagonal Palm Shift.

Briefly move the deck forward and back in a squaring action, then start moving your right hand rightward. The pressure of the right index finger will start the bottom cards pivoting clockwise around the left pinky. If you bend the pinky inward a bit as this begins to happen, the card will rotate easily into left-hand palm position. You should experiment to see where in the squaring action you should begin the rightward movement. The ease of pivoting the card into position depends on exactly where the bottom card contacts the pinky.

Be careful that your left thumb doesn't flag the move. It should stay in contact with the right index finger, or the left side of the deck. You don't want it wagging around, or standing off at a right angle. Pay attention to what it's doing, and you'll have an incredibly easy and deceptive move.

Next month, I'll talk about some other ways to approach this effect.

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