



# Inside Ed's Head

May 2014  
(Revised February 2015)

**It Doesn't Count If the Audience Can't See It.  
(Re-think your handling when you're doing close-up tricks when the audience isn't close!)**

**Featuring: the Veesper Count, the Upside-down Elmsley Count, and Jerry Hartman's Up Count.**

A short while ago I witnessed a performance in a "close-up show" situation. The performer was standing behind a table, and the audience was seated in several rows of seats starting about fifteen feet from the performer. This type of situation is often called a "parlor show."

He performed several tricks—none of whose effects could be seen by the spectators. The only person who could see the faces of the cards was the magician himself. He never for a moment considered that when he held cards waist high, the seated audience members could see only the edges of the cards.

I've seen this happen most frequently when the performer is doing an Elmsley count, or a similar display. The move was obviously created for the close-up table, where people sit right next to the performer.

Some of you are probably thinking that you can use your normal Elmsley count, but with your hands lowered so that the faces of the cards are visible to the audience, rather than the edges. You are **wrong!** From an aesthetic point of view, this is bad because you are drawing the spectator's eyes to your nether region, rather than to your face. (If you are the house magician at Chippendale's, disregard this injunction.) From a practical point of view, by lowering the cards, you make it impossible for anyone beyond the first row to see what you're doing.

Ideally, a display/count should let the spectators see all the cards, and your face as you talk. Here are a few counts that will allow you to do just that.

## **The Veesper Count**

This count is essentially an Elmsley count, done from a Biddle grip. I'll describe the standard handling. (Gary Ouellet published a similar set of counts called Paradise Counts in his book *Close-up Illusions*, p. 87.)

Let's assume we have a face-up packet of three red cards and a black card third from the face. Hold the packet in right-hand Biddle grip. The cards should be held at chest height, tilted so the faces are visible to the audience.



Spectator's view. (Sorry, the card should be a 4D.)

Take the top card in your left hand by dragging it off the top with your left thumb. However, as you start this action, your left fingers will jog the **bottom** card of the packet about one-half inch to the right.



5H jogged to right.  
Right hand moved for visibility.

To take the "second" card, your left hand places its card squarely under the side-jogged card as the right hand comes over it. At the same time, pinch the left-most cards between the side of your left index finger and thumb, and draw them into your left hand.



LH about to take two cards—6H and the (hidden) black card.  
Original 1<sup>st</sup> card (4D) placed flush under 5H.  
Right hand moved for visibility

For the next two counts, draw off the cards in normal fashion.

### **Jordan Count from Biddle Position**

Other than Gary Ouellet, I've not seen this discussed. My handling is quite different from his. Unfortunately, I can't think of any way to photograph

this move that will make my words more comprehensible. I hope words are enough. If not, you know how to contact me. The cards start off in Biddle grip in the right hand. The card to be hidden is at the bottom of the packet.

Take the first card into your left hand, but somewhat more to the **right** than normal. (On your outstretched fingers.) As you take the card, your left hand should move to the left, and your right hand to the right. This back-and-forth action will make the switch on the third “take” invisible.

Slide the right-hand packet under your left thumb, and pull the second card flush on top of the first card. (Don’t forget the back-and-forth action of the hands.)

As the right-hand cards begin to move to, and cover those in the left hand, you’ll jog the bottom left-hand card to the right by pulling the top card to the left with your left thumb, as your left fingers push the bottom card to the right. Slide the right-hand cards under your left thumb square with the leftmost card, and withdraw the right-jogged card with the right fingers.

Finally, take the last card on top of those in your left hand.

The above counts are somewhat better than the Elmsley and Jordan, but still require some care to be sure the faces of the cards are visible when you do the counts.

The following moves are relatively unexplored, but quite suitable for our purposes.

### **J. K. Hartman’s Up Count**

While reading John Bannon’s book, *Mirage*, I came across a trick called “Be-bop Deluxe” that used a count he called the DRED count. (Discrepant Reverse Elmsley Display.) I asked John for permission to explain them. He said yes, but pointed out that after publication, he found out that J. K. Hartman had published the identical count earlier. A quick search of my database found the Up count, and I asked Mr. Hartman if he would allow me to publish it here. He readily agreed.

This move, as described by John and Jerry, is not the exact analog of an Elmsley count, as it shows the faces of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 3<sup>rd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup> cards in the packet, and the backs of the 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 4<sup>th</sup>. As such, it’s not useful for those times where you are trying to hide a reversed card. In all other cases it has a more casual, and more fair appearance, as you seem to be showing both sides of all the cards. Like an Elmsley, it can be used with more than four cards. The order of the cards after the Up count is different than the order after an Elmsley. There is no “resetting” count similar to the Elmsley-Jordan pair that will get the cards back to their original order. (At least I haven’t been able to find one.)

Here it is:

Hold the packet **face down** in left-hand dealing position. From the top, the cards are red, black, red, red. (If you turn the packet face up, it's the normal order for an Elmsley count.)

Take the first card in your right hand and tilt the face of the card towards the audience.



Spectator's View

As in a normal Elmsley count, place this card under the packet as you push the two top cards into your right hand. Tilt these two cards towards the audience. They will see a different face. (This is a discrepancy. Placing the second card on top of the first should show the same face both times. This goes unnoticed.)

Take the third card **under** the right-hand cards, and once again display the face card of the right hand packet.

Finally, take the last card **under** all, and display its face.

### Upside-Down Elmsley Count

I wasn't totally satisfied with any method for doing an Elmsley count for a seated audience, so I came up with the idea of doing an upside-down Elmsley that would allow me to clearly show the cards in this situation. I've never seen this in print before (and I read a **lot**), but I'm told others have published similar items.

The first step is get the cards from face-up left hand dealing position into the position needed for the count.

Grasp the cards at the right side, fingers on top, thumb underneath. Lift them up and rotate them to a vertical position—faces towards the audience.



Retake the cards in left-hand mechanic's grip; the face of the cards should be towards the audience.



Take the face card of the packet in your right fingers; raise it to the right to display it. As you do this, use your left thumb to rotate the top card of its packet a bit to the left



**Spectator's View**



**Magician's View**

Slide the right-hand card flush with the top card of the packet allowing you to grasp the next two cards. Lift them to the right, for the second count.



Take the face card of the left hand packet under those in the right and display it.

Finally take the last card under all, and display it. You may now rotate the cards back into a face-up mechanic's grip in the left hand. The cards are in the same order as you'd see with a normal Elmsley count.

### **Upside-Down Jordan Count**

This is the easiest of all the counts.

Rotate the cards to a vertical position, as in the Elmsley count above. Grasp the cards at the right side, fingers on top, thumb underneath. Lift them up and rotate them to a vertical position—faces towards the audience, then

retake the cards in left-hand mechanic's grip; the face of the cards should be towards the audience.

Take the face card of the packet into the right hand.

Take the new face card under the one in the right hand, and display it. The first card will have to temporarily go **behind** your left thumb as your right fingers slide the face card off the packet.



As you move to take the "third" card, use your right thumb to jog the top card of the packet one-half inch or so to the left. Clip this card in the crotch of your left thumb as the rightmost card coalesces with the other two left-hand cards. Remove these cards for the count of three.



Take the last card into your right hand, and then lower them back down into left-hand dealing position.

Next month I'll give you a chance to use one of these counts in an oldie-but-goodie from the mind of John Bannon—Be-Bop Deluxe.

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