



Inside Ed's Head

August 2014

Oh! Cullcutta!

(Sorry, I couldn't think of a better title.)

Featuring: Justin Higham's Combination Cull

Sometime in the late 80s or early 90s, I created an Ambitious Card routine that had what most routines of this type don't—an ending. I also was able to avoid a deck destroying signed card by having the spectator *name* any card, and use this card for the ambitious card—avoiding the thought of duplicates, while setting up the ending.

I kept this routine to myself, showing it to only one magician, who liked it enough to spend several sessions learning the “crucial” move. I eventually decided to write it up, sell it, and use the proceeds to retire to the French Riviera. Unfortunately, my real life got in the way, and I dropped the project. Several years later, while reading Roger Crosthwaite and Justin Higham's *Roger's Thesaurus*, I came across a move of Justin's that was an improvement on one I was using in my routine. It was his “Combination Cull (Second method).” The cull I had been using was Larry Jennings' “Wedge Cull.” Although Mr. Jennings' cull is a perfectly fine move, I couldn't do it for people right next to me, because they might see the faces of the cards. I had to pretend not to see their selection as I ran through the deck, and sometimes the spectator would point out the card as I passed it. Justin's cull avoided this problem, and was easier to do—icing on the cake!

Once I decided I'd use this forum to publish my trick, I contacted Justin and he kindly consented to let me use his move. After our correspondence started, I began reading another of his books: *Technomagic*. It was originally produced as a monthly limited distribution, non-subscription magazine, with the express idea of turning it into a commercial book after a year. The material was mostly that of Justin's and some guy named Marlo. (His first name escapes me at the moment.) It had some ideas in it that were intriguing to the point of causing sleeplessness. He modified a standard move that I always considered iffy into a workable idea. In other words, I like the way he thinks. You'll be seeing more of him here.

His website is www.card-magic.com. He has many interesting books for sale, as well as an archive of free (yes free!) tricks. Anyone who reads this and doesn't check out the site will turn into a toad at midnight.

This month, I'll teach the Combination Cull. It's from *Roger's Thesaurus*, page 133. I'm also including an addendum of my own. Next month, I'll get to my Ambitious Card routine. I call it "The Borgia Cards."

The Combination Cull, First Method

This culls the four aces to the bottom of the deck. Justin credits this variation to David Carré.

1. Start with the deck in the left hand, and begin spreading cards into the right. When you come to the first ace, separate your hands so the ace becomes the **top** card of the left-hand section. Loosely square the cards in your right hand.
2. Continue spreading the cards from the left hand **on top** of those in the right. When you come to the second ace separate your hands again, with the second ace **on top** of the left-hand section. Thumb this ace on top of the ace on the right-hand section. Now continue to spread the cards **on top** of the two aces on the right hand.
3. When you come to the third ace, injog it, and separate the cards so the injogged ace is on the bottom of the right hand spread, above the other two aces. Loosely square the cards in the right hand, being careful to maintain the injog.
4. Continue to spread the cards on top of the right-hand cards until you come to the last ace. Separate your hands so the ace is **on top** of the left hand packet. Spread all these cards on top of those in the right hand. (Or just drop them on top.)
5. You now have an ace on the face of the deck, an injogged ace in the middle, and two aces directly below that. Press down on the injogged card, getting a break over it. Slip cut the face ace onto the other three, and place the cut off cards at the rear of the deck.

You now have the four aces at the bottom.

The Combination Cull, Second Method

This will cull the four aces to the top. This is Justin's method.

1. Start with the deck in the left hand, and begin spreading cards into the right. When you come to the first ace, separate your hands so the ace becomes the **bottom** card of the right-hand half. Loosely square the cards in your right hand.
2. Continue spreading the cards on **top** of the right hand cards. When you come to the second ace, separate the hands again, this time keep the ace on **top** of the left-hand section. Loosely square the cards in your right hand.

3. Begin spreading the cards on **top** of the right-hand cards again. **Injog** the ace as you continue spreading cards from the left hand. (The injogged ace will be the face card of the right-hand portion as this is happening.)
4. When you come to the third ace, take it directly on top of the injogged ace on the right-hand half, and then separate your hands. The right hand half will now have an ace at the back, an ace at the face, with an injogged ace directly underneath it. Loosely square the cards in your right hand.
5. Once again, begin spreading the cards **on top** of the cards in your right hand. When you come to the last ace, separate the hands so that ace is at the rear of the right hand section. Loosely square the cards in your right hand. The last ace will end up directly over the other two aces, the rearmost of which is injogged.
6. Spread the remainder of the cards onto those in the right hand. When you are done, flip the deck over sideways, face down into your left hand. Press down on the injogged card with your right thumb. Get a left pinky break over the three aces as you push the injogged card flush with the deck.
7. Finally, do a slip cut of the top card onto the cards below the break. You can do this as a slip cut to the table, or in the hands.

The four aces are now on top of the deck.

The Royal Flush Cull

1. I've seen many instances of tricks where you need to cull a royal flush. I wondered if there was any way to extend Justin's cull to make that happen. It turns out to be rather simple, albeit a bit ballsy.
2. Proceed with the first five steps written for "The Combination Cull, 2nd Method." (This is for the first four cards of the royal flush.)
3. As in step 6, begin spreading the left-hand cards **on top** of those in the right. When you come to the fifth card of the royal flush, separate the hands so the fifth card of the flush remains **on top** of the **left-hand** packet.
4. Spread all the remaining cards in the left hand **on top** of those in the right hand.
5. Turn the deck face-down in the left hand, being careful to maintain the injogged card. Take the deck in Biddle grip as you press down on the injogged card, holding a break over it with the right thumb. As soon as you do this, buckle the bottom card, and get a break above it with the left pinky. (All this happens almost simultaneously.)

6. Slip cut the top half of the deck to the table, slapping it loudly on the table as you do so. This will place four royal flush cards on top of the left-hand portion.
7. Lift all the cards above the pinky break, and slap them loudly on top of those already on the table.
8. Lift the remaining card (the fifth flush card), holding it so as to mask its singularity, and loudly slap it on top of the remainder of the tabled deck. Square the deck, or lift it off the table immediately. The timing and sound should give the appearance of a simple triple cut to the table.

You now have the five royal flush cards on top.

You should note that sometimes two or three of the cards you are trying to cull might be next to each other in the spread. This should not cause any problems with the cull, as long as you're not taken by surprise. It's a good idea to practice these culls by placing the cards in the deck purposely to duplicate all the possibilities you might face.

OK, that's it for this month. Be sure to check out "The Borgia Cards" next month!

Inside Ed's Head, August 2014
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