



Inside Ed's Head

August 2016

More on False Riffle Shuffles (I Hope You Don't Think I'm Being Too Pushy)

**Featuring:
The Push-Through Shuffle
Up-The-Ladder Cut
The Divided Shuffle by Luis Otero
A Zarrow Tip**

Last month we featured Simon Aronson's handling of a Stripout Shuffle. This month we'll talk about the other way to do a false shuffle where the cards are separated by "cutting" them apart as the last move of the shuffle. We also have a tip on the Zarrow.

First of all, I'd like to discuss some details I ignored last time—partly because a stripout is a little easier than a push-through shuffle, and partly because I was in a hurry to publish the article. This column is late specifically because I've been giving a lot more thought to the entire method than I was last month. (There were extenuating personal issues as well.)

The first detail is the condition of the cards. Old cards tend to get sticky and cause problems during the push-through phase and the subsequent stripout phase. If the cards bind up during these procedures, you will find them very difficult to do deceptively—if at all. You'll do better with a new or almost new deck.

The second detail is the surface you're shuffling on. You'll need a surface that has sufficient "give" to allow you to comfortably control the ends of the deck as you're shuffling and squaring them. It should also be relatively smooth so your fingers can move the cards back and forth comfortably without your fingers, or the cards themselves, hanging up on the surface as the cards are manipulated.

The Push-Through Shuffle

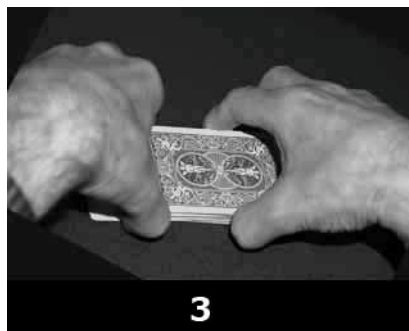
As I mentioned last month, I do the "Aronson Stripout Shuffle" starting with a dovetail shuffle, rather than the tabled riffle shuffle; the only people I've ever seen doing tabled riffle shuffles are casino dealers and magicians. I think the dovetail shuffle is just more "normal." I also said last month that I can do the "Aronson Stripout" either right handed or left handed. That's

because it ends with a three-packet tabled cut, which I can easily manage in either direction. That's not the case with a push-through shuffle. It ends in a single cut from bottom to top, or an up-the-ladder cut. I'm more comfortable doing either of these cuts with my right hand. Because of this, I start by cutting the cards so that about the top third of the deck ends up to my *left*. (Cutting only a third of the cards makes the push-through and stripout easier.)

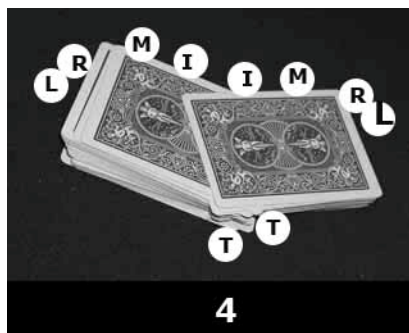
As with the Aronson shuffle, you'll begin by lifting the top half of the right-hand cards and shuffling them into the left-hand cards. (Photo 1.) Make sure that at least one card from the *right* section falls last.



You'll now push the two sections together as follows: Grip each side in a symmetrical manner, your index finger at the middle of the packet, the middle finger next to it *and the ring finger at the side of the packet, near the upper corner*. The thumbs will be opposite the index fingers. (Photo 2.)



Push the two halves straight into each other until the left side of the right-hand packet comes even with the left index finger. (Photo 3.) Now the ring fingers will begin moving upward as they continue to push the cards together. As this is happening, the thumbs move toward each other so that the cards begin moving toward each other in a "V," then an "X" shape. (Photo 4, with the circles approximating the location of my fingers, and Photo 5. Photo 5. Key: I=Index, M=Middle, R=Ring, L=Little. The "V" and the "X" are exaggerated. As you practice this move, your push-through will be *almost* a straight line.)



Continue pushing with your ring fingers until your index fingers are together, and (we hope) you have pushed the two halves together into an almost inverted "V." (Photo 6, thumbs moved away for clarity.)



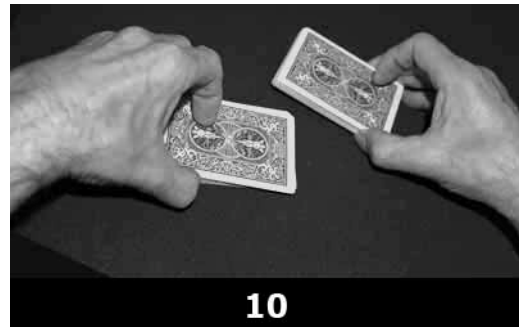
Now you'll straighten the deck by moving your thumbs apart and pressing forward toward the fingers. Your little fingers will move to the front of the deck hiding the outjogged condition. (Photo 7.)



Next, prepare for the stripout by lifting the rear of the deck about one-half inch and beveling the cards backwards somewhat. (Photo 8.) This will mask the stripout somewhat as well as "give air" to the cards to make the stripout easier.



Finally, rotate the right packet a few degrees clockwise using your right thumb as a pivot point, as you strip the cards out about an inch in front of the left packet. (Photos 9 -- 10.)



Now return the cards to the top of the left packet to "complete the cut." (You should practice legitimate cuts in this manner so that you can duplicate the motion when you do the stripout.)

Up-The-Ladder Cut

Instead of this simple cut, you might consider an "up-the-ladder" cut, as follows: Strip out the right section of the cards as above, but replace them on top of the deck stepped about one-half inch to the right; grasp the ends of this packet with your left fingers. This will control the packet, as well as mask the action from the front. (Photo 11.) Pull out about half the cards



from the *bottom* of the top packet and place them back on top, the left side even with the packet on the bottom. (Photo 12, just prior to the cards being placed on the deck. Photo 13, hands removed for clarity.)

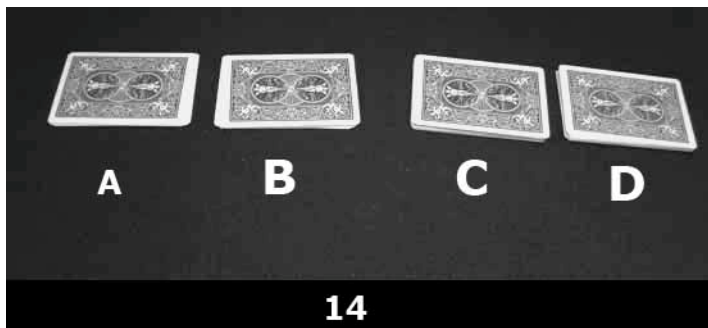


Finally, remove the cards protruding from the center, and slap them on top of the deck, completing the sequence.

The Divided Shuffle, by Luis Otero

Once you understand the push-through mechanics, you can use them in a very nice false riffle sequence first published in *MAGIC Magazine* in September 2006, and shown on Joshua Jay's *Talk About Tricks Vol. 1* DVD.

Start with the deck slightly to your left with the long edge parallel to the table. Cut the top half to the right, as if for a riffle shuffle. Lift the top half of the left packet with your left hand and the top half of the right packet with your right hand. Place these two packets to the right of the initial two, making a row of four packets. (A,B,C, D. (Photo 14.)



Do a push-through shuffle with Packets C and D, but on finishing the push-through, immediately drop the left hand's cards on Packet B. (This will put Packet D on top of Packet B, where it was originally.) Now shuffle this combined packet into the one remaining in your right hand (Packet C).

Upon doing the push-through with these two packets, immediately place the left hand's cards (Packet C) on top of Packet A, restoring it to its original condition.

Finally, do a push-through shuffle with the remaining halves of the deck, but since the original cut had the top half going to the *right*, you must do this shuffle somewhat differently—you must shuffle the cards so the last card(s) to fall are from the *left* packet. Now, after the push-through, you can either use your left hand to cut the bottom half of the pack to the top (mirroring the description given above) or you can use your right hand to strip out its cards and leave them in front of those in the left hand. You then finish the shuffle by reaching back with your right hand and taking the rear cards and place them on top of the other half, simulating a tabled cut.

When you do this move, you should strive for a smooth and even tempo. Don't worry about which card falls where on the first two shuffles, since the left hand places its cards on another packet. It's not like you're trying to simulate a cut. Just remember that some left-hand cards must fall last on the final shuffle, and all will be fine.

A Tip on the Zarrow Shuffle

I've always felt that the initial slip cut used in a Zarrow shuffle just looks odd at best, and looks ridiculous at worst. Most magicians I've talked to about this shuffle seem not to know that it is unnecessary. By doing two Zarrow shuffles in a row, you can cancel out the lack of a slip cut in both of them.

Start by cutting the top of the deck to the left and Zarrowing the right half under the top card of the left-hand cards. As you apparently square the deck, maintain a break between the two halves with your thumbs. Now cut all the cards above the break to your left again, and Zarrow the right cards (the original top half, minus the top card) under the top card and legitimately square up the deck. Voila, the deck is now back in its original order.

As a younger man, the Zarrow was my false shuffle of choice. Now, as my skin has dried out, I have difficulty consistently holding back a single card. Sometimes I realize I'm holding back two, other times I inadvertently drop all the cards. Neither hand creams nor Golden Touch lotion seems to work for me. Any suggestions?

Inside Ed's Head, August 2016, Copyright 2016 by Edward Hass.

Feel free to link to this article at:
www.magicianssoftware.com/eds-head.