



Inside Ed's Head

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December 2016 The World's Greatest Mentalism Trick (Made Even Greater)

Featuring: Worldly Things, by Steve Draun

Paul Curry's "Out of This World" (OOTW) is, in my somewhat humble opinion, the greatest demonstration of psychic powers ever devised. What makes it great is that the magician apparently does nothing. The spectator is given a deck, deals the cards into two piles and ends up psychically separating all the red cards from the black cards.

I've had some extraordinary experiences performing this effect. On one occasion the spectator became terribly upset that I was able to control his actions. I told him not to worry—it was only a magic trick. He insisted it *couldn't* have been a trick. I could not dissuade him from his fear.

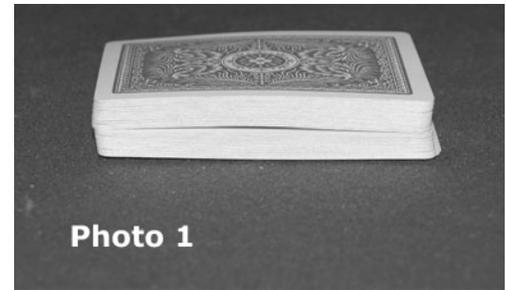
One of the "knocks" on OOTW is that you must pause midway through the trick to put out two more guide cards. This hasn't been a problem for me since I found Harry Lorayne's impromptu version from his book *My Favorite Card Tricks* in the late '60s. In my presentation of this effect, the spectator is asked to read my mind as I remove cards from the deck and stare at them. When it comes time to switch the guide cards, I just say, "Instead of reading my mind, why don't you take the cards and deal them onto the pile you think is the right one."

Of course, this approach is not suitable for all occasions. It is slow and demands an intimate connection between the performer and the spectator. It's fine for a small dinner party where you've established yourself as a magician, but would be deadly as an opener or for a large audience.

Steve Draun has come up with a solution that goes in the other direction. You give a deck of cards to the spectator and ask him to deal the cards into two piles. When you turn them over, one half is all red the other is all black. It can be done in about a minute or two but the effect might stay with the spectator for a life time.

I use a different presentation than does Steve, so first, I'll describe the method. I'll get to the presentation later.

As in the original, you'll need to start with the deck divided by color. Let's say the reds are on top and the blacks on the bottom. Unlike the original, you'll need to put a little "work" into the cards. You need to bridge the two halves of the deck in opposite directions. Bend the ends of the red cards downward, to make a concave bridge and the black cards upward, to make a convex bridge. When placed on the table, you should be able to see a small space in the middle of the long sides where the two colors meet. (Photo 1.)

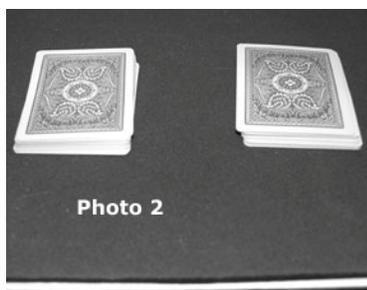


When you start off, I suggest you make the bridges rather large, so you can easily understand the workings of this effect. Obviously, your goal will be to make the bridges unobservable. (Don't forget that what is observable to you is likely unobservable to others. I recently did this trick for some rather sharp individuals. I was afraid that they'd see the bridge in the cards, or feel them while dealing. They didn't. They were gobsmacked.)

With the deck in this condition, you'll find it very easy to do red/black false shuffles all day long. Just separate the colors at the break and shuffle the lower half onto the upper. Be sure to finish the shuffles with the deck in the original red on black situation.

Tell the spectator that you'd like him to deal the cards into two *face-down* piles, emphasizing that he's to deal the cards one at a time onto either pile in a random manner. Emphasize that it's OK to deal several cards in a row onto the same pile, but he should try to keep the piles about the same size.

Give him the deck and let him deal out the two piles. When he's finished, move them over to you, and place them about six inches in front of you. (Photo 2.)



Pick up the pile in your left hand and continue your patter as you glance at the packet to see where the colors have separated. (The ends of the deck should be noticeably separated. You can help this along by holding the packet so that your left thumb is resting on its outer left corner.)

You'll now look directly at the spectator as you continue. Simultaneously, two things will happen: Your right hand will lift off the top half (the black cards) of the packet you've been holding and glide smoothly to the other tabled packet while your left hand drops straight down to slightly below the table edge.

You'll now deposit the right-hand cards on top of the tabled packet and drag

that packet off the table, to land on the awaiting left-hand cards, which rise up, ready for your denouement.

Steve and I seem to have two different ideas about how to present this. His approach is quite straightforward—he talks about how unlikely it would be for a person to separate the red cards from the black by dealing randomly into two piles, and how ESP might allow for a different outcome. He even has the odds of doing this randomly written on the inside flap of his card case to underscore the virtual impossibility of this occurring.

After all the dealing is finished and Steve has done “the move” he takes the deck, now in his left hand, and does a wide ribbon spread to show the spectator has accomplished the impossible task!

I’m not too fond of that approach. When I do the standard OOTW, spectators often take five to ten seconds just to decide onto which pile to deal a *single* card. Now, to try to speed them up, you either come off as a bully or as someone who is trying to sabotage their efforts. If you’re working one on one, this is not a problem; if there are several people watching, you might end up losing their attention.

I’d also rather not let the people know what the effect is going to be this early—I see no reason to make them want to be paying attention to the two piles yet. My approach is just to discuss how unknown forces in the universe can influence people in ways they are completely unaware of. I then give them the deck and ask them to simply deal the cards into two piles as outlined above. Since they are dealing randomly, the deal will typically take only about a minute. When they are done, I adjust the cards, pick up the left hand packet and mention that some people might unknowingly be influenced by the color of the card they’re about to deal. This is when I look up at them, begin “the move” and ask them if perhaps they had the impression of black cards as they were dealing this packet.

After “the move,” I table the deck face up with a red card at the face and ask, “And were you thinking of red cards when you dealt this packet?” I spread a few red cards off the face of the deck, Then a few more, and then I speed up, spreading more cards, and faster still, more and more, until they see they’ve accomplished a miracle.

Now I must point out the only similarity between Steve Draun and me is the color of our hair. He has been performing professionally for years and for large crowds. Except for a few years of paid close-up gigs, I only perform for laymen after we’ve eaten dinner together. I can’t recall the last time I performed for more than six laymen at a time. If Steve thinks highlighting the ESP is a good idea you should definitely consider it. The man knows what he is doing.

Speaking of which, I’ve just started watching his live lecture distributed by

Penguin Magic. (<http://www.penguinmagic.com/magician/steve-draun>)

It is unbelievable! After watching it, I sent a rather brief email to Steve. All it said was, "Holy S**t." I've been doing magic for over sixty years, and am not easily impressed. He is impressive. If you want to learn a little more about Steve, you can check out his website: www.stevedraun.com.

I also want to thank him again for his immediate offers to go above and beyond what is asked for. He *really* wants to help his fellow magi to improve. I'm very lucky to have made his acquaintance.

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