

A Miss is as Good as a Mile (It's OK, if Your Next Shot Hits)

Featuring: Too Many Cards By Derek Dingle

Last month, in an effect I called, "A Miss is as Good as a Mile," I spoke about having a spectator "divine" a card that he had just selected from the deck—a task in which he will fail about 98% of the time. I use this for two reasons: when it fails, it gets a chuckle from the audience and gives them a sense of my performance style. When it hits—and it has—it's a miracle-class effect.

I also realized that if you *emphasize* the name of the card that the spectator thinks of, you could use that card later in a "boomerang" effect to erase the "failure" and leave the spectators feeling good about your success.

I came across such a trick while I was browsing the wide variety of tricks on the *Conjurer Community* website. (www.conjurer.comunity) It's Derek Dingle's "Too Many Cards." This trick was an underground hit in the late '70s. I learned it from someone at the Belmore Cafeteria, a Saturday hangout for NY magicians. I did it for everybody I knew and then forgot it. In 1982, it was finally published in Richard Kaufman's *The Complete Works of Derek Dingle*. I made note of the trick but didn't start doing it again.

Steinar Thelan did a one hour+ tutorial on this trick for the Conjurer Community. It was pretty much as Dingle did it, with one major exception. He used a previously selected card for the denouement. That's what inspired me to do this article. I'll not reproduce Derek's exact handling. You can always find Richard's book if you want all the details.

Too Many Cards By Derek Dingle

Assuming you just performed "A Miss is as Good as a Mile," and the hoped-for card (e.g. the Nine of Spades) did not materialize, say, "There's a good reason that trick didn't work: there are too many cards in the deck! If I use fewer cards, I'll have an easier trick."

As you're saying this, spread the cards face up, to illustrate that there are, indeed, many cards in the deck. While doing this, use your right index finger (behind the spread) to clamp down on the named card (Nine of Spades) while you pass through the cards. As you close the face-up spread, get a break under the selection with your left little finger. As you square the pack, pick up the break with your right thumb as you position the deck for an overhand shuffle. Shuffle off to the break,

which leaves the selection on top. Of course, you can get the card to the top any way you like; an under-the-spread cull is the most obvious way.

As this is completed, you might say, "If I only use five cards, it will make things easier to follow." Run through the deck again and outjog the ace to five of a suit opposite in color to the named card; let's use the Ace through Five of Hearts.

Strip out the five outjogged cards with your right hand and flip the deck face down in your left. Place the five cards in your right hand, *face up* on top of the face-down deck.

Get a break under the top face-down card as you arrange the face-up cards into numerical order—ace at the face followed by the two through five. Square the deck, maintaining the break under the top six cards. Use your right hand to lift these six cards in overhand grip, thumb at the rear fingers in front. Table the deck *face up* in front of you, somewhat to your right.

Use your left thumb to slide the Ace of Hearts face up into your left hand. Continue by taking the two, three and four onto the ace, one at a time. Finally, drop the double card on top of all. Flip the packet face down, into dealing position. (Position check: The ace through four are face down, followed by the face-up Nine of Spades, with the face-down Five of Hearts lowermost.)

Take the Ace of Hearts into your right hand and display its face. Say, "With only five cards, it's easier to follow what's going on. Look what happens when I place the ace second from the top." Openly do this, getting a break under the ace as you push it flush and square the packet. "All I have to do is snap my fingers, and the ace comes back to the top." Do a double lift to show the ace on top, then flip the double-card face down again.

"Watch what happens when I put the ace near the bottom." Take the top card in your right hand—do not flash it—and, using a buckle or a pull-down, insert it above the bottom card. Snap your fingers, and turn the top card face up on top of the packet, showing the ace has risen again.

Explain that perhaps the trick is too hard to follow because you still have too many cards. With an overhand grip that obscures the front of the packet, lift the face-up ace, and place it on top of the face-up deck, to your right. (You'll want to use an overhand grip to remove the cards so you'll be able to hide a double when you remove the four, later.)

Using a buckle or push-off, do a multiple lift of *all* the cards above the bottom one. (Position check: Two of Hearts face up. Nine of Spades face down. The four and three follow, face up. Five of Hearts face down.)

Take the face-up two in your right hand, making it obvious it's a single card. Turn it face down and say you'll put it into the packet again. Place it above the bottom card. Once again do a multiple lift of all but one card—the two will be face up on top.

Apologize for any possible confusion and remove the two with the same overhand grip you used before, placing it on top of the ace.

Turn the three face up and take it into your right hand. Use the three to flip the left hand's cards face-up. Put the three, still face up, on top of these. Square the packet as you take it into right-hand overhand grip.

Hold the packet with moderate pressure between the right thumb and middle finger. Say, "We'll try something different with the three." You'll now perform a mini Ascanio Spread. Using the side of your left forefinger lightly pressed against the bottom of the packet, slide the four about a third its width to the left. (Photo 1.) Your left hand continues its leftward motion—using your left thumb to drag the three off the double card, onto the face of the four. (Photos 2 and 3.)



Now, without letting go of your right hand's grip on the double, position it in a fan to the right of the other two cards. (Photo 4.) Pause for just a beat and square the packet in the left hand. Say, "This time we'll put the three in the middle of the packet, with all the cards face up."



Snap your fingers again and do another Ascanio Spread as before. The three appears to have turned face down. (Photos 5 and 6.) Apologize for this odd turn of events, flip



the four and the five in your left hand, face down, and place the double between them. Say that perhaps things will work better if the cards remain face down.

Square the packet in your left hand and snap your fingers over it. Take the packet in right-hand overhand grip and backspread the two bottom cards into a fan with the Three of Hearts face up, as follows. Lower the packet into your left hand, so that the left index finger applies upward pressure on the bottom card while the left thumb pushes off all the cards except the bottom one. (Photo 7.) The right hand's grip helps keep this packet square. The right hand now moves forward about an inch and the left middle finger now moves to contact the lowermost of the right hand's cards. Once again, your left thumb pushes off all but the lowermost card in the packet, exposing the face-up three. (Photo 8.)



As soon as the three becomes visible, the left thumb pulls it to the left and the right hand returns its card(s) to a squared position, so the three appears to be outjogged between the four and the five. (Photo 9.) Strip out the three with your right hand and place it briefly face up on the packet.



Then lift it as before and place it on top of the two. (Position check: Four of Hearts, Nine of Spades, Five of Hearts, all face down.)

You are now most vulnerable to exposure. You are apparently holding two cards but if you give the spectators a look at the edges of the packet they will have their best chance to spot a discrepancy. You must pay attention to make sure this doesn't happen. (I got caught here once.)

Holding the cards in Mechanic's Grip, make sure your index finger obscures the edge of the packet from the front. (Photo 10, audience view.) Your left middle finger at the upper right side of the packet will ensure that only one card moves when your left thumb pushes the top card to the right. As you do this, use your right hand to flip the four face up, squared with the card(s) below. Point out you're now working with only two cards, the four and the five. Take the entire packet in right-hand overhand grip and rotate your palm upwards, displaying the five at the face. (Photo 11.)



Point out that you have the five at the bottom, return the packet to your left hand and again show the four on top. Flip it face down.

Slide out the bottom card (the five) from under the packet, show its face, and place it on top of the "four." Snap your fingers over the cards and do a double turnover, showing the

four has risen to the top. Pause for only a beat or two and using the overhand grip you've established throughout this routine, lift the face-up double and place it on top of the three. You've just unloaded the five and are ready for the coup-de-gras.

Explain that you're somewhat stuck as to what you can do with the remaining card. Certainly, with only one card you don't have much opportunity for chicanery. Then show them the Nine of Spades they had named earlier and wait for the reaction!

You are now in a perfect period of audience inattention. The trick is over, they can't imagine you have anything left. Now is the time to load the card into your wallet or do a "Mercury Card Fold" to prepare for another trick with that card. You might use this time to do a deck switch to prepare for other miracles. You've got lots of choices. Make a good one.

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