



Inside Ed's Head

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A Swindle of Sorts, by Paul Curry

(Will this fool all of the people all of the time?)

Paul Curry pointed out, in the preface to this trick from his book, *Paul Curry Presents*, that “the more brazen the fraud, the greater the attraction to the perpetrator.” If that sentiment is part of your credo, you will *love* this trick!

Effect

The spectator removes all of the cards of one suit and gives them to the magician, who puts them in order, A – K. The magician demonstrates how switching cards while dealing them to the table will (naturally) change their order.

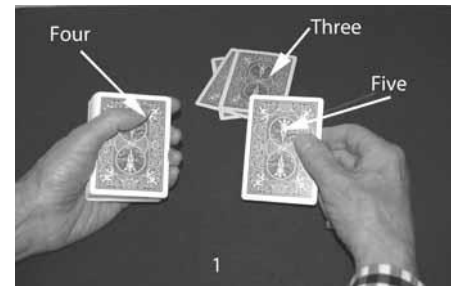
To not be seen, the magician turns his back to the audience. He states he will switch the cards three times. He then tells the spectator he will deal the cards face down slowly. The spectator is to call out the word, “Switch,” three times. Each time, the magician will stop, switch the next pair of cards, and continue the deal.

When all the cards have been dealt, the pile is turned face-up—the cards are in perfect order, A – K. Apparently, the magician has controlled the spectator's choices.

Method

After the thirteen cards have been removed from the deck, pick them up, and fan them in your right hand. Hold the fan just above the audience's eye line. Remove the ace with your left hand, briefly flashing it in the process, and take it into the left hand, face up. Remove the two, flashing it briefly and take it on top of the ace but as you do so, move the fan a little further away from the eye line. Remove the three, similarly. By this time, the faces of the cards should be out of the audience's view. Remove the *five* next, then the *four*. Make sure these and the following cards are not flashed. Continue with the rest of the cards. You should have the thirteen cards face up in the left hand. Turn these cards face down into dealing position. You next ask for the audience's attention. Deal the ace face down on the table, followed by the two and three. Take the next card, which is really the *five* and say.

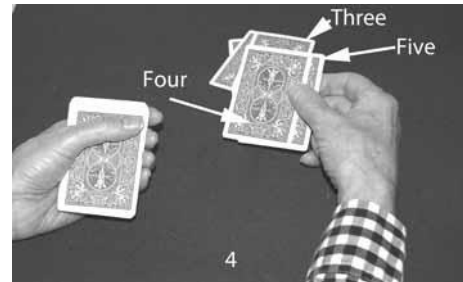
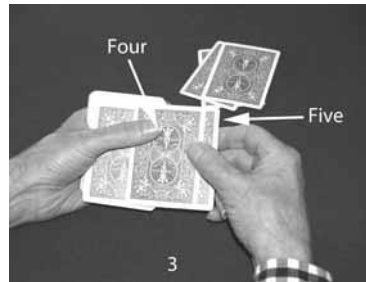
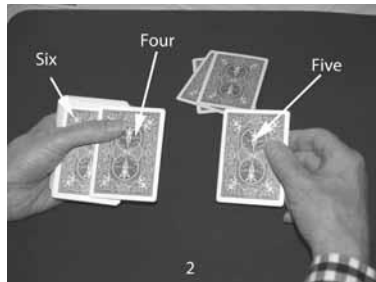
“I’m now going to switch the four and the five.” (Photo 1.) As you say this, perform the following action:



Push the top card (the *four*) halfway off the deck. (Photo 2.)

Push the card in your right hand *under* the card on top of the deck and grasp both of these cards into your right hand. (The four on top of the five. Photo 3.)

Drop both of these cards onto the three cards previously dealt. (Photo 4.)



Now quickly deal the remaining cards on top of the rest of the cards.

Pick up the packet and start dealing it face up, one card at a time. When you come to the five and the four, point out that they are not in their original order because of the switch.

Now say, “Of course, the same action that puts the cards out of order can also put them back in order. I’ll deal the cards face up so you can see what’s happening.”

With this, begin dealing the first three cards face up on the table, one at a time. When you come to the fourth card (the *five*) take it face down into your right hand. Push the next card partially off the deck and perform the switch as before. Take the pair of cards and turn them face up as a *unit*, showing the four and five are back in order. Continue dealing the rest of the packet face up.

Now that you’ve demonstrated how the switch works, tell the assembled multitude that you are going to turn your back and secretly switch three pairs of cards. Turn your back and begin making noises as if you are switching cards *but do nothing*. Turn back to your spectator and ask him to call out, “Switch,” three times as you deal the packet *face down*. Deal the cards at a moderate tempo and perform the switch action each time you are commanded to do so. When done, show that they amazingly put the cards back into order.

OK, I used to do that trick after buying his book. Unfortunately, I never felt comfortable with it—I couldn’t decide on what the *magic* was. Was I controlling the person’s actions? Was he reading my mind? Perhaps I could have used this as a trick proving my compatibility with the spectator. Anyway, I always enjoyed *doing*

the trick, as it is a fooler, but I never got a strong enough reaction to it to justify keeping it in my active repertoire.

This has changed. A few weeks after I began sketching out this article, Michael Close posted a discussion of this trick on his Facebook page. He mentioned it was his belief that Herb Zarrow had used this trick as a prediction. This is on the nose. Zarrow's variant was published in *Epilog* #21, p. 196. Zarrow doesn't actually mention the word "prediction;" he just shows what he does and specifically says each performer should decide on his own presentation.

Effect

Here's what Herb does. He removes two suits from a deck of cards. He takes one of these, places them into an order unknown to the audience, and sets them aside.

He takes the other suit into A – K order and demonstrates the switch as written above but he deals the cards *face-up* both times. (So, no hanky-panky is needed with the initial ordering of the cards at the start.)

He now turns away, telling everyone that he will place the cards in a different order. He turns back and tells the spectator that he can call out, "Switch," as many times as he likes, as the cards are dealt. After all the dealing and switching, the magician takes the packet he initially set aside and turns the top card of the two packets face up. They match. He continues dealing cards from each pile face up until the cards are exhausted—all match. He has successfully predicted the outcome of the spectator's choices.

Method

Take the first packet and arrange it in an order you know, from *back to face*. Herb uses the Si Stebbins sequence, A; 4; 7; 10; K; 3; 6; 9; Q; 2; 5; 8; J. Although the order you use should be completely irrelevant, I'm a little queasy about using this order. Since there is only one suit in each packet and the cards are dealt up somewhat dramatically, I would worry that someone might notice the mathematical nature of the stack and thereby think he has somehow busted the trick. Therefore, I would use the Eight Kings or Jackass order. (Don't know what I'm talking about? Read the Afterword.)

After setting this packet aside, demonstrate the switch. I believe that Curry's original idea of how to do this is better than Zarrow's because Curry "proves" the switch works with the cards dealt face up or face down.

After you've done this, turn around and put the cards in the same order as the first packet but this time they should go from *face to back*. The two packets must start off reversed in regard to each other to make the denouement come off as described.

Deal the cards face down as described, “switching” them when commanded. Finish as described.

This is so blatant a swindle, I fooled myself the first few times I practiced it. I hope you have fun with it, too.

Afterword

If you liked last month’s “Order Out of Chaos,” you should be aware there are some problems that can occur in the opening of the trick that make it impossible to proceed. If you have the deck shuffled, the cards may be mishandled and get out of order. If you have the spectator remove the hearts; they can get out of order. Even if *you* remove the hearts, they can get out of order. Once the hearts get out of order, you *must not* try to get them back into order. Any fiddling the supposedly “random” cards ruins the premise. What can you do with the hearts if you can’t do “Order Out of Chaos”? “Swindle of Sorts,” of course.

What are Eight Kings and Jackass? They are two bits of doggerel that were used as memory aids to create cyclically stacked decks. I know nothing about their origin. I assume they were created to remove any mathematical relationship among the cards that a spectator might notice. Here they are.

Eight kings threatened to save

Ninety-five queens for

One sick knave.

(8; K; 3; 10; 2; 7; 9; 5; Q; 4; A; 6; J.)

Jackass ate live tree

King intends to fix

Several for benign queen.

(J; A; 8; 5; 3; K; 10; 2; 6; 7; 4; 9; Q.)

Read the poem out loud while looking at the cards they represent. It’s easy to learn and impossible to forget. I learned them about sixty years ago and they’re still easy to recall.

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