

## The Trick of the Month: Marlo's "Succession Aces (Method One)"

Note: This trick involves palming a card briefly and then ditching it with what I believe is adequate misdirection. If you do not like to palm cards, don't bother reading on.

### The Effect

This is an Ace Assembly, with a difference. The familiar type consists of Vanish, Vanish, Vanish, Reappearance. The Succession plot consists of three Vanish-Reappearance phases in a row. The ace in the first packet vanishes to reappear in the second. Those two aces vanish to appear with the third. Three aces vanish to reappear with the leader ace.

I don't know if this plot is more or less compelling than the standard one. I've never seen it performed. I hope to perform it soon, to see what reaction I get.

### The Gaffs

You will need a double-faced card with the Ace of Clubs on one side and the Ace of Diamonds on the other. Marlo suggests you make this card by gluing together two used cards. The color or design of the backs makes no difference. He recommends rubber cement. I use a Zig Glue Pen. It's easier and less messy to apply, and since you can use it as either permanent or repositionable, it's handy to have around. Be careful to avoid letting any glue near the edges of the card. You do not want the card sticking to the ones above or below it.

You will also need three additional cards: an Ace of Hearts and two Aces of Diamonds with the same back as your performance deck.

### What I'm doing differently

For reasons I cannot comprehend, Marlo designed many of the tricks in this book (including this one) to be done with a borrowed deck. He also has you wear a sport jacket or suit, so you can ring in gaffs or extra cards by putting the borrowed deck into one of your jacket pockets. I know that if I were to loan someone a deck of cards, and he put it in his pocket, I'd be paying *extra special attention* to his actions.

Accommodating this “borrowed deck” restriction ends up severely weakening the method, as well. In this case, Marlo uses a Three of Hearts and Three of Diamonds to “impersonate” the respective aces. One of these methods is quite natural, if performed well. The other is so ludicrous that I can’t imagine that anyone would consider it. I use *duplicates* of the Ace of Hearts and Ace of Diamonds to simplify and strengthen the trick.

I’ve also eliminated a center strip out move that Marlo uses in the Ace laydown phase.

Instead of doing an unusual palming technique of Marlo’s (“The Scoop-up Palm”) to transfer an ace from one packet to another, I just use a top palm—it’s very easy in the context of the trick. Any other palm off the top of a packet will work.

## The Setup

Arrange the following seventeen cards from the face to the rear: Double-faced AD/AC AD side showing, AH, AS, AH (Duplicate), three X-cards, AC, AD, four X-cards, AD (Duplicate), three X-cards. All the cards in each of the three groups of X-cards should have different values. (In other words, a six of clubs and a six of spades in the same group would be wrong.)

Have this packet at the face of the deck or just take out the cards from your wallet/card envelope/pocket explaining you want to show a “famous” trick magicians love to perform.

## The Method

**Laying Out the Aces:** Start with the packet of seventeen cards face up in your left hand so that the spectators can see the face of the Ace of Diamonds. Deal the next card directly under it. As you do so, start lifting the cards to your face, so the spectators will only see the backs of the cards. Deal the remaining two aces under the two aces in your right hand. Place the cards in your left hand, face down off to your left.

You will now use Marlo’s “**Duck and Pull**” technique to display the four aces, taking advantage of the double-faced card to show it as two different aces.

Take the squared, face-down packet of “four aces” into left-hand mechanic’s grip.

Push over the top two cards to display the two red aces and the Ace of Spades, being careful not to expose the bottom Ace of Hearts.

Square the two red aces, still side-jogged from the Ace of Spades. Grasp the cards at the upper-right corner and turn the packet so the Ace of Diamonds faces the spectators. Comment that the red aces are the Ace of Diamonds...

Continue the rotation face down and slide the cards squarely beneath the left-hand packet, retaining contact with the right thumb.

As the cards go under the packet, pull the Ace of Hearts to the right, leaving the double-facer behind. Display it openly as you say, "...and the Ace of Hearts," then place it face down beneath the packet.

**Position Check:** Face up: Ace of Spades

, Ace of Hearts, Double Facer, Ace of Clubs showing. Face-down: Ace of Hearts.

Push off all cards above the face-down card with the left thumb. Take them at the right edge with the right hand and shift them slightly to the right and forward.

With the right thumb, push over two cards and hold them square on top of the face-down card under the left thumb. Move the right hand back, pushing the Ace of Clubs (double facer) beneath the left thumb to display two face-up black aces.

Your patter should be: *"The more important cards are the black aces: the Ace of Spades and the Ace of Clubs."*

**Position Check:** Face-up Aces of Clubs (DB), Spades and Hearts, followed by the face-down Ace of Hearts.

Push off the face-up cards about a quarter of an inch and then take them in right-hand end grip, thumb at the rear, fingers in front. Lift these cards so they can be held between the ball of the left thumb at the left edge and the right middle and ring fingers at the right edge. The cards should be held as far above the face down card as possible. Now do a D'Amico Spread as you turn the cards face down. Continue holding the packet above the face-down card.

**Position Check:** The right hand holds a face-down Ace of Hearts spread to the right of a double: the face-down Ace of Spades on top of the double-faced card with the Ace of Diamonds side facing up.

Use your left thumb to pull the Ace of Hearts onto the other ace of Hearts, then drop the double on top of all, taking a pinky break below it. Turning the cards face down takes a second or two. No additional patter is needed. Flip the cards above the break face up and spread them. Place the Ace of Clubs face up in front of you a little bit to the right of center. (You'll be ditching a palmed card onto this a bit later, so experiment with the best placement for this Ace, and adjust the placement of the other aces accordingly.) Place the Ace of Spades to the right of the Ace of Clubs. Patter: *"As the black cards are the more important cards, I'll put them face up. Here. And here."*

Turn the packet face up in the left hand. Be careful not to expose the second Ace of Hearts. Turn the packet towards yourself and take one of the cards into your right hand and place both face down to the left of the black aces. *"We can leave the less important ones face down."*

**Covering the Ace of Spades:** OK, we now have four aces in front of us; we will now apparently put three black cards on top of each. The only *move* has to be done with the first ace, which is good, as your spectators will not know what's coming.

Pick up the tabled packet, holding them face up in your left hand, so the spectators can't see the faces. Spread over five cards so you can take a little finger break under the Ace of Diamonds. You will now use "**Marlo's Technical Variation of the Veeser Count**" to switch in the two aces while apparently taking three black cards into your right hand.

Lift the five-card packet above the break slightly to the right and angle it so the upper-left corner protrudes. The right thumb contacts the lower-left corner and the right fingers take the packet from behind.

Holding the packet in the right hand, use the left thumb to fan off the top two cards, keeping the remaining three square.

The left hand now shifts from mechanic's grip to a side-support position: the left thumb along the left edge of the packet and the fingers along the right edge, leaving the bottom of the packet accessible.

The right hand takes the first fanned card, then thumbs the second card onto it, forming a two-card block.

Now the switch occurs.

As the right hand returns to take the apparent three-card block, it pushes the two cards it holds beneath the packet and simultaneously clips the squared three-card block between the right thumb and index finger. The

two black cards are left hidden under the packet as the three-card block is removed.

Pause briefly so the spectators register the black card in your right hand. Lever the packet face down and fan the three cards to display them.

Square the packet, turn it face up, and use it to scoop up the Ace of Spades as you return everything to its original position.

**Position Check:** The face-down packet contains AD, AC, X-card, AS

**Covering The Ace of Clubs:** This is easy. Handle the cards as you did before. You only need to move a block or three cards of the packet and then with the packet face up, take the three cards into the right hand, turn them over and square them, and turn them face up. This time fan them again and use the fan to scoop up the Ace of Clubs. The fan hides the Ace of Clubs side of the double-facer.

**Position Check:** three X-cards, double-facer, AD face is up.

**Covering The Second Red Card:** There is an Ace of Diamonds second from the top of the remaining cards. Mimic the fanning of the cards as before—this time, the first card of the fan must be a double. Then fan off two singles. Take the double into your right hand then the two singles. Flip the cards face down as usual and drop these three cards on top of the red card second from the left.

**Position Check:** AD, three X-cards, AH.

**Covering the First Red Card:** Show the remaining X-cards, turn them face down and put them on top of the leftmost ace.

**Vanishing the First Ace:** Take the first packet in your left hand, flash the face briefly and deal the two top X-cards into your right hand. Flick the edges of the right hand's cards down against the edges of those in the left, then back up, and finally down again. Place the two cards under the cards in the left hand, square them, turn them over (with a D'Amico Spread if you wish) and Elmsley Count to show four black cards. Toss the packet face up into your left hand, then drop it, face down, out of play to your left.

**Reappearance of the First Ace In the Second Packet:** Pick up the second packet and turn it face up in your left hand. Spread off the Ace, then the X-card under it. Now do a two-card push-off to (apparently) spread a

third X-card under the other two. Display the Ace of Diamonds and then put it *on top* of those in your left hand.

**Vanish Of the Two Red Aces:** As before, turn the packet face down, take the two top cards into the right hand, flick, place on bottom, turn face up, and Elmsley to show four black cards. Now, in the act of turning the cards face down and tossing them on top of the first pile, you must palm off the top card of the packet (Ace of Hearts) and transfer it to the top of the third packet.

Flip the face-up cards in your right hand face down into the left. Begin squaring these cards with your right hand. Shift your attention to the first pile that you previously tossed out of play. Now, your left thumb pushes the top card of the packet to the left and forward. This should allow you to top- or lateral-palm the Ace of Hearts while attention is focused on the discard pile. Turn your body to toss the left hand's cards on top of the first pile. As you do so, drop the Ace on top of the third pile.

**Reappearance Of the Two Red Aces in the Third Packet:** This packet is the most difficult, as you'll need to pick up two consecutive doubles.

Pick up the next packet and turn it face up in your left hand. You will again perform "**Marlo's Duck and Pull**" move, somewhat differently than the first time.

1. With the packet face up, the double-facer shows the Ace of Clubs at the face of the deck. You must now push off or otherwise move the double-facer and the card below it; as one, about an inch to the right,
2. Now grip this card(s) at the upper right corner and stud deal the card so the back of the card(s) is showing. Place it under the packet as you say, "We have the *Ace of Clubs, ...*" Then pull out the top card of the double, flick it once or twice with your left thumb and replace it under the packet *without showing it*.
- 3.
4. Pick up another double, move it to the right and stud deal it under the packet. "*..one black card, ...*"
- 5.
6. The Ace of Hearts is now on top of the packet. Take it into your right hand. The other side of the double-facer, the Ace of Diamonds, shows on top of the packet in the left hand. Take this card squarely on top of the Ace of Hearts and stud deal the cards under the packet.

**Vanish of the Three Aces from the Third Packet:** Turn the packet face down in the left hand. Take the two top cards into your left hand, flick them against the side of the left-hand cards three times and put them *under* the left-hand cards. Turn the packet over, Elmsley Count. Voila! They're gone. Drop the packet face down on the previous discard pile.

**Showing the Four Aces in the Last Packet:** Use the top card of the remaining packet to scoop up the rest of the packet, turn it face up and Elmsley Count it as four aces. (If, when turning the cards face up, you can place your thumb on or near the center pip of the ace, it will make it impossible to catch the Elmsley Count.) Drop the packet face down onto the discard. Pick up the discards face down into your left hand. Relax in your chair—the trick is over. Use this moment to lap the top card of the packet.

Deal the four aces from the top of the packet back onto the table. Be sure to do a wrist kill as you deal the fourth card to avoid showing the Double-facer.

### **The Hook**

My presentation of this trick is semi-comedic. I just tell the spectators that most magicians move three aces at one time to the end of the row. I explain that my magical ability isn't powerful enough to move a card from one end of the row to the other—I have to move them one card at a time.

This may seem like a difficult trick to learn—it's not. Go over it slowly, do it a few times. If you're good enough to do the sleights, you'll find the trick will be easy to remember.