

SECTION TWO

CARD SLEIGHTS AND MOVES

CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

VERNON ON THE PASS

Perhaps more has been written on the standard Pass than any other sleight in card magic, yet very few magicians can perform it without telegraphing that something is happening. Some performers seem oblivious that a tell-tale movement as the packets transpose will make it obvious that some form of trickery is being executed, whilst others avoid the Pass entirely and employ a substitute manoeuvre to bring about the desired result. Nevertheless the Pass can be one of the most useful of all methods of controlling a card or cards, and the following observations by Dai Vernon will help the reader to master the handling and avoid the pitfalls which deter so many.

In correspondence and on tape recordings Dai Vernon has sent us detailed descriptions of his method of making the Pass; in addition Steve Young has taken three photographs to show the exact movements of the hands and cards. By following the text and studying the photographs the mechanics will be easily understood, but only practice will give that smoothness of execution and understanding of timing which will eliminate all cause for suspicion.

To clarify the description we will assume that we are to bring a selected card to the top of the pack. The pack is held in the left hand for the right hand to cut off the top half of the pack, so that the selected card can be replaced on top of the left hand portion. The bare essentials are that the pack is then reassembled and the packets transposed, so that the bottom portion is brought to the top. It is the transposition of the two packets of cards which causes difficulty in eliminating visual movement.

Dr. Daley used to say, "You have to pay a price for anything in magic and if you remove a slight defect it will crop up in some other way." How true this is will be proved when trying to improve the Pass, for when one fault is rectified another develops, yet by being aware of Dr. Daley's warning one knows the danger and can take precautions.

Angles of vision are the main difficulties we encounter. Anyone can soon perform the Pass so that it cannot be detected from one angle only - e.g. from directly in front, or it can be helped by lifting the hands up or down according to the direction of view and elevation of the spectators. It can be done almost in slow motion without being seen, but to be really effective it must look well from the left, the right and in front. Usually, any person

observing the hands from the right will see the packet go **down**, and the only way this can be covered is by the actions pictured in the photographs and which we will describe later.

First let us quote Dai Vernon's own words on the timing. He **writes**, "Of utmost importance in performing any '**steal**', '**pass**' or such move is how you '**go into it**.' The pass should be executed the very instant the upper hand touches the pack. There should be absolutely no '**getting set**.' The little finger must be in position between the packets and the pack in the exact position for instantaneous operation the second the hand grasps the pack. The identical basic **principle** applies equally for the '**side steal**', '**top and bottom palm**', '**changes**' and so forth."

Now let us study the handling from here on - from the point where the selected card has been returned to the top of the left hand portion.

As the right **hand**, holding its packet from above, comes over the left hand packet, the left little finger is inserted between the packets.

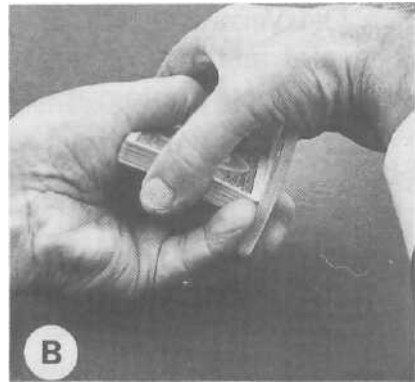
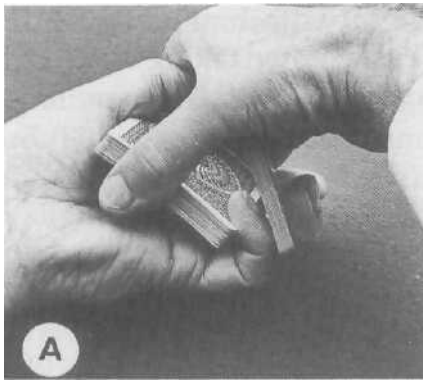
Photograph A.

This shows the start of the transposition and from the photograph we can visualize why the pass is often detected. The right side of the upper pack is gripped between the left little finger below, and the third finger above. If the transposition is made in the usual way the little finger causes '**space**' between the packets, and additionally the upper packet travels in quite a wide arc on its downward passage. Usually the packet goes out and right down before coming under the other packet, and this permits it to be seen by spectators on the right, as well as causing a jumping movement of the hands.

Now let us study Dai Vernon's method.

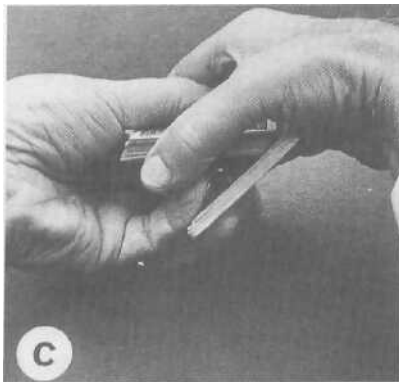
Photograph B.

When the top packet is gripped by the left little and third fingers the lower packet is immediately shifted forward by pushing with the right thumbtip, until the little finger is at the inner end of the lower packet. This permits the face of the top packet to come flat against the top card of the lower packet, and so eliminates the telltale triangle where the little finger would usually be, in other words there is no wasted space.



Should the top packet be brought straight down, or in an arc, it will still be visible from the right, but Dai Vernon makes it hug the right side of the lower packet.

Photograph C.



With the packets 'kissing', he eliminates both a large arc and an excessive downward path by revolving the moving packet under the other, as if to bring the packets face to face. This can be seen in the photograph - if the packet was released at this point and the pack squared, one half would be face down and the other face up. However, as soon as the right side of the moving packet clears the right side of the now upper packet, the left fingers curl inwards and the packet revolves in the opposite direction, the side wiping across the face of upper packet, until it is sufficiently turned to be brought up against the

underside of the other packet. A downward pressure with the right hand prevents a jumping movement as the packets transpose.

The reader is urged to study the photographs carefully as Steve Young cleverly captured the important features whilst Dai Vernon's hands made the moves.

The thought behind this method of making the pass is an excellent example of how Dai Vernon analyses each move to attain near perfection - this is the "Vernon Touch."

When Dai Vernon was in England we sat with him while he demonstrated several methods of making the Pass. After taking notes of little-known versions we photographed his hands making the moves.

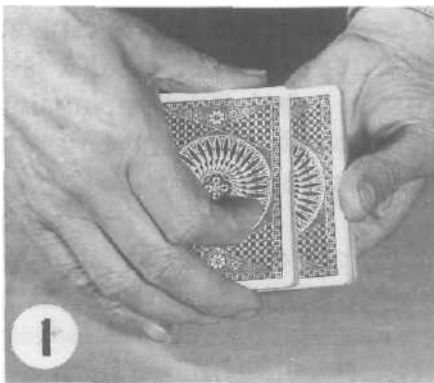
THE BLACK PASS.

This is so named by Dai Vernon because he based it on a method devised by Fred Black, a cattle rancher from Thedford, Nebraska. Incidentally, Fred Black was given world prominence by Ripley in his "Believe It or Not" newspaper feature as, "the only man who could take a shuffled pack of cards, deal out four Bridge hands, then gather the cards together, riffle shuffle, have the cards cut, shift the cut and deal out the identical hands to the same players in less than a minute!" Fred Black also supplied the Faro Tables to T. Nelson Downs which appeared in "Expert Card Technique."

We have seen that with the standard Pass there is usually a wide movement as the two halves of the pack are transposed, and have learnt how to eliminate this. When Dai Vernon learnt the Black Pass he found that Black had also fallen into a trap - that of positioning one half of the pack at an unnatural angle in the hand.

Here is how Dai Vernon adapted the Black Pass for his own use:

Hold the pack from underneath at the tips of the left fingers and thumb. Cut off the top half with the right hand to have a selected card replaced in the centre. In returning the top half it is stepped at about one inch to the right as in Figure 1.



Let both halves settle in the left hand, which has the palm flat, fingers extended and thumb wide as in Figure 2. Close the left thumb and fingers to square the pack, when a flesh break is automatically held at the base of the

left little finger. (Figure 3)

By pulling with the left **fingers**, the top half is pulled to the right and tilts upward (Figure 4 - right hand removed for clarity) and can be taken to the bottom. Cover is given by the right hand which also masks the left thumb which slightly tilts up the bottom half. In **addition**, the right hand only allows the bottom half to tilt sufficiently for the halves to **pass**, then holds it motionless (that is the bottom half is not allowed to settle again) as the top half moves downwards. The right hand only covers the pack for a fraction of a second; just long enough to cover the movement of the top half which the left fingers draw to the right and downwards until the packets trans-
pose.



LOCATION PASS.

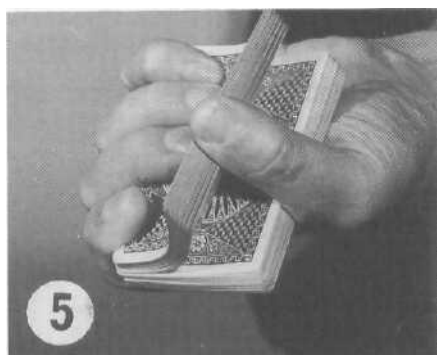
This pass will be **found** particularly useful when it is desired to bring a certain card to the top or bottom of the **pack**, even though its actual position in the pack is not known and has to be found.

Hold the pack face down in the left hand with all four fingers curled well over the right side of the **pack**, which is perfectly squared. Squeeze with the left **fingers** to prevent the cards slipping out of alignment when the thumb is released.

By bending the left **thumb**, the pad can be brought to the left side of the pack. When the thumb is moved forward with pressure the sides of the cards can be released in a riffling action. By glancing **down**, the performer can see as the cards pass and can locate any card by spotting the inner index. When the required card is seen, the riffling stops at that card. Dependant on the requirement for bringing the card to the top or bottom of the pack, the card is either retained in the seen position or allowed to escape from the pad

of the thumb.

There will now be a V shaped opening in the side away from the fingers, the top packet; being heavily bent - Figure 5. By bringing the right hand over the V opening, the bottom half of the pack can be seized in the regular Pass position and hinged upward (Figure 6), as the left fingers pull the top packet down and under.



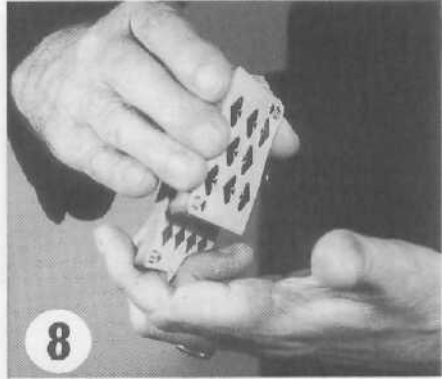
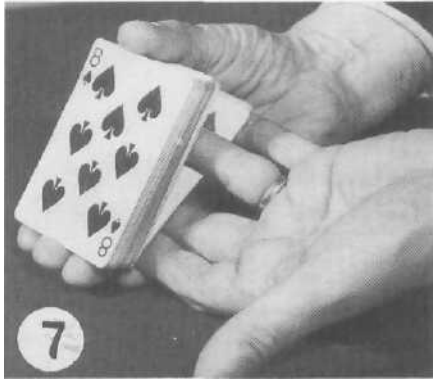
SPRONG'S PASS.

Johnny C. Sprong, a well-known devotee to pure sleight of hand, originated this pass and called it a "Hinge Pass". He demonstrated it to Dai Vernon, then also sent him detailed written instructions. Expertly performed it is invisible.

The pack is held as in the regular Pass - all four fingers curled at the right side - but the third finger is between the two packets.

The whole pack is hinged face up (back of pack now facing the floor) to show the whole face of the bottom card. This is accomplished by turning the right hand (holding the pack) so that the back is to the floor. The left fingers are extended (third finger between the packets) so that the pack is now on the left fingers - see Figure 7. Simultaneously as the reverse movements are made to turn the pack face down, the left fingers are lowered (they hold the back packet). There is no tilting of either packet, the back packet sliding down the back of the other packet (Figure 8), then coming up on the face of the packet as the right hand continues an uninterrupted and natural turning down action - all the right hand does is to turn the packet face down.

Sprong's favourite method of exhibiting this Pass was to have a card selected and returned, then inserted his left third finger one card above the selected card. He showed the bottom card by the pass move, made the pass



then immediately took off the top card and showed it. He buried both the top and bottom cards in the centre of the pack and was all set with the selected card on top of the pack.

FANPASS TRANSFORMATION.

This pass is performed in rather an unusual position in that the pack is held at above knee height, with the performer bending forwards. It was devised by Walter Baker, one of the original founders of the Tarbell Course.

Hold the pack face up in the dealing position in the left hand. Hold a break with the left little finger so that a small packet is held close to the left palm. Insert the right fingers into the break and fan the upper portion of the pack (not a wide fan). Notice in Figure 9 how the left thumb is along the left sides of the cards. As the right hand turns fan face **down**, make a quarter turn inwards with the left hand until the thumb is directly facing the spectators.

Retain the left hand position until the backs of the cards held in the right hand completely cover the packet in the left hand. As the movement is continued the under packet is lowered by the left fingers - Figure 10 (exposed view from lower right side). This brings the back of this packet upwards to conform with the fanned packet which is squared on **top**, the left thumb coming over on top to complete the squaring of the pack.

The effect is that the cards are fanned face up in a short **fan**, turned over and squared. Walter Baker only used this as a transformation of the bottom card - he performed it extremely well.



CHAPTER NINETEEN

VERNON ON TABLE PASSES

In the last chapter we dealt with the Pass with the cards held in the hands. Now we will explain methods of making the Pass after the pack has been cut on the table, and in the action of completing the cut.

First Method:

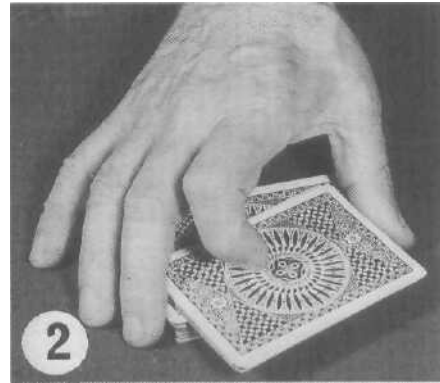
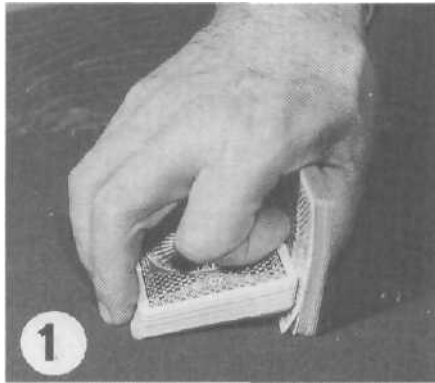
This method is good because it allows the cut to be shifted when the pack is actually on the **table**, and the general rules of making a cut are observed; that **is**, the cut-off portion of the pack should be placed towards the **dealer**, for there to be two portions of the pack on the table.

To make the shift after the **cut**, pick up the packet furthest from you in the following manner: -

Place the right second, third and little fingers over the far side of the **packet**, with the thumb at the centre of the near-side to tilt up that side for the thumb to be slid underneath. Curl the forefinger inwards onto the back card. Lift the packet and bring it above the other packet. At this point, with the right thumb and first finger, carry the lifted packet to the table behind the inner side of the other packet. Holding the lifted packet with the thumb and first finger only, extend the second, third and little fingers to the outer side of the other **packet**, the second finger going near the left outer corner. With the **forefinger**, push down on the top of the lifted **packet**, so that the outer side is firmly on the table behind the table packet, and begins to slide forward. The lifted packet will now be standing on its side on the table, the cards held by the thumb on the face card and the tip of the forefinger on the back card. With the second, third and little fingers, pull on the outer side of the table packet for it to be scooped up onto the lifted packet. The top card of the lifted packet acts as a guide for the table packet to be aligned as it is scooped up and pulled onto the lifted packet - Figure 1. Without any loss of time, the pack is placed into the left hand.

Timing is a most important factor in the execution of this Table Pass. There are two separate actions and a series of **actions**, making three phases, each of which must take the same time - say, on a lazy silent count of "One - Two - Three" as follows: -

"One" - Cut the pack.



"Two" - Pick up furthest packet.

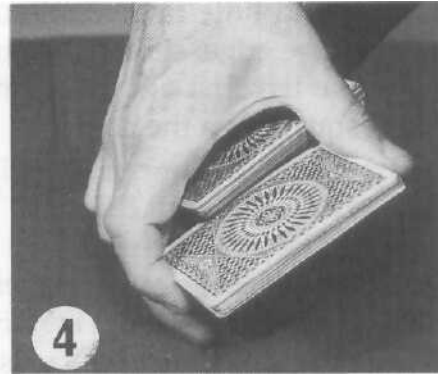
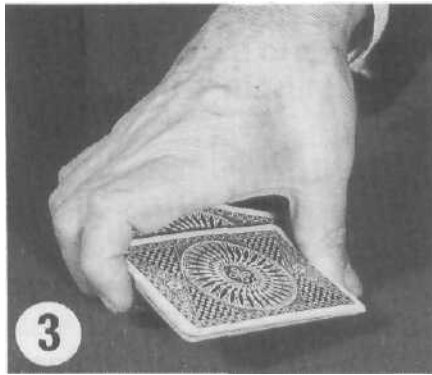
"Three" - Make the shift and place the pack in the left hand.

Second Method:

Cut the pack into two packets on the table as in the previous method, but this time have the end of the pack facing you and cut to the left.

With the right hand, pick up the right packet by the ends, the second, third and little fingers at the outer end, the thumb at the opposite end, and the forefinger curled on top. This would be the most natural method of picking up the packet by the ends for most people, and the essential thing is that it must look natural. So if the reader would pick up the packet by the ends in some other manner, then it should be adopted.

Slap the lifted packet on top of the other packet at an angle, diagonally to the left as in Figure 2. Without removing the right hand, change the grip for the first finger to go right to the left corner of the upper packet, and curl the little and third fingers under the outer end of the lower packet. The second finger is relaxed. - Figure 3. Extend the first finger and thumb to the left, taking the top packet with them, the lower packet being held by the curled third and little fingers which hold it against the palm. As the right hand moves to the left, to place the pack in the left hand, curl the right third and little fingers a little more to make the sides of the packets clear each other, the original lower packet now being a little above the other packet - Figure 4. The side of the extended packet hits the left thumb as the hands come together and the right hand continues to travel for the packets to be squared on the left palm.

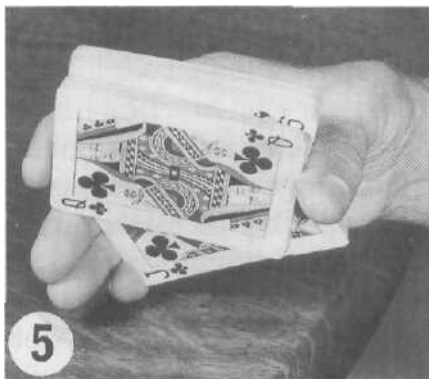


MEXICAN JOE'S TABLE PASS.

This Pass can be used for retaining a dozen or so cards on the bottom of the pack after the cut.

Make the cut as in the previous method. Pick up the original lower portion with the right forefinger at the outer **end**, and the thumb at the centre of the opposite end. With the little finger reach forward to the centre right corner and swing a small block of cards **from** the bottom to the right; that is the block pivots on the right thumb.

Place the visible portion of the packet (the bottom block is covered by the back of the right hand) flush onto the other packet on the **table**, and slide the whole pack back to the edge of the **table**, the **second**, third and little fingers extending in front of the pack and hiding the block. Figure 5 shows an exposed view of the holding position, the hand having been turned to show the packets and block of cards.



Draw the whole pack over the edge of the table, until the first finger is clear of the table, but extend the other three fingers for their tips to rest on the edge of the table. The moment the pack clears the **table**, bring the left hand up from below to the underside of the **pack**, the left thumb crotch contacting the left side of the pack.

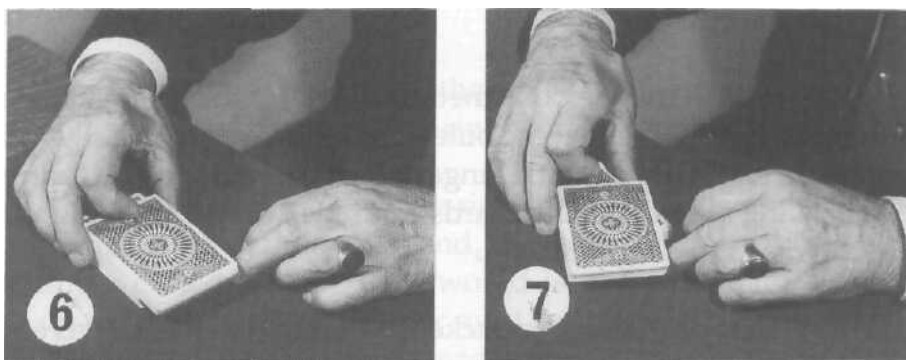
Extend the left fingers and spread them apart under the pack. The protruding block of cards must now be clipped by the left forefinger at the outer **end**, and the left little finger at the inner end. With the tips of the right

second, third and little fingers still on the table edge, and the pack itself dipped below the edge, shift the protruding cards to the bottom by pulling down with the left first and little fingers, then lift the left hand with the whole pack squared on the palm.

CHARLIE MILLER'S TABLE PASS,

This pass restores the cards to their original position after the cut.

Allow a spectator to cut the cards towards you as you are sitting at the table, with the left hand resting on the table top. Shift the left hand to bring the second finger about half-an-inch diagonally from the left inner corner of the cut-off top packet.



With the right hand, pick up the packet furthest away from you by the sides and near the right end, and slap it on top of the other packet, but projecting to the left for about half-an-inch - Figure 6. Slide the whole pack back rapidly until the projecting corner strikes the back of the nail of the left second finger - Figure 7.



Continue the backward movement, raising the left forefinger to allow the pack to pass. The top packet of cards pivots around the left second finger, and as it is leaving the bottom packet, tilt it up with the left fingers so that the face of the bottom card is towards the audience. Under this cover, hinge up the other packet with the right fingers and take it to the back of the pivoted packet - Figure 8. Square up the whole pack as it is resting on its side, then hinge it down to the table.


CHAPTER TWENTY

AFTER PEEKING

We have dealt in detail with the handling for allowing a spectator to peek at any card in the **pack**, in Dai Vernon's "Tribute to Nate Leipzig." What we are mainly concerned with here is the methods Dai Vernon employs for controlling the card after the peek has been taken. **However**, to be complete we will again give a description of the peeking procedure. Here is Dai Vernon's own handling.

With the face of the pack towards a **spectator**, hold the **pack**, well forward in the left hand, the fingers curled round the face so that the little finger is in contact with the inner right corner of the pack, the left side of the pack well in the thumb crotch and the thumb across the back of the pack, gripping it firmly. The fingers themselves do not grip the pack but are relaxed.

Extend the left hand towards the spectator, the face of the pack at his eye level, and ask him to lever back a section of the cards by placing his left thumb at the top outer corner and merely peeking at the index corner of the card where the pack breaks. As the peek is taken, a section of cards hinges back a little, allowing the tip of the left little finger to close in and hold a break (the gap being only about a tenth of an inch). The thumb grip is never relaxed, which except for beveling, keeps the cards in perfect alignment.



Bring the right hand over the **pack**, gripping it by the ends, and not until the pack is gripped by the right hand is the pressure of the left thumb released. Now tilt up the pack, still retaining the break with the left little finger, till the ball of the left thumb rests on the left side of the pack. Shift the right hand and take the pack with the thumb at the inner side and the second and third fingers at the opposite side. Squeeze the pack to show that the outer edges of the cards are perfectly squared. Now allow the pack to settle on the left palm again (still hold the break), the left thumb along the side of the pack.

A variation in handling for the Peek is for the performer to do the work himself. It is almost as effective if the spectator does not touch the **cards**, but is asked to call "Stop" at any time as the performer himself runs the cards by riffling the corner of the pack with his right forefinger. This makes the whole operation dead sure, because everything is under the **performer's** control. It also saves the spectator doing any work and prevents delay through **mis-**

understanding.

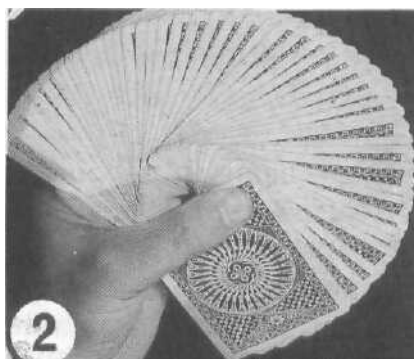
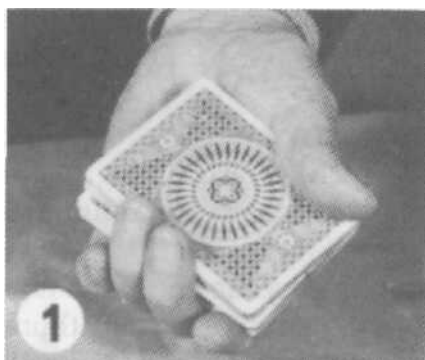
Whichever type of Peek is **used**, from here on we can go into various handlings.

It is not proposed to describe the Side **Slip, Pass**, and other well-known manoeuvres which **can** be used to control a card after a spectator has peeked at it, but rather to confine our studies to unpublished procedures.

The following are some of Dai Vernon's variations: -

1. PRESSURE FAN.

Proceed as before to obtain the break, but continue folding the tips of the left **second, third and little** fingers in so that a step is formed in the pack at the **break** - Figure 1. Now immediately make a pressure fan. On inspection of the rear of the **fan**, a sharp corner will be seen projecting in the hub of the fan at the point where the break was dropped - Figure 2.



Close the fan by placing the side of the right little finger at the bottom of the last card of the fan and moving the right hand round. When the fan is closed the entire pack is taken by the right hand (second finger at the centre of the outer end and thumb at the centre of inner end). Shift the position of the left hand, the thumb going to the outer left corner and the second finger to the outer right corner. Squeeze the outer end of the pack to square it. The left little finger can now feel a step (Figure 3), which if pulled down will allow a break to be held and the pack squared. Now proceed as desired.

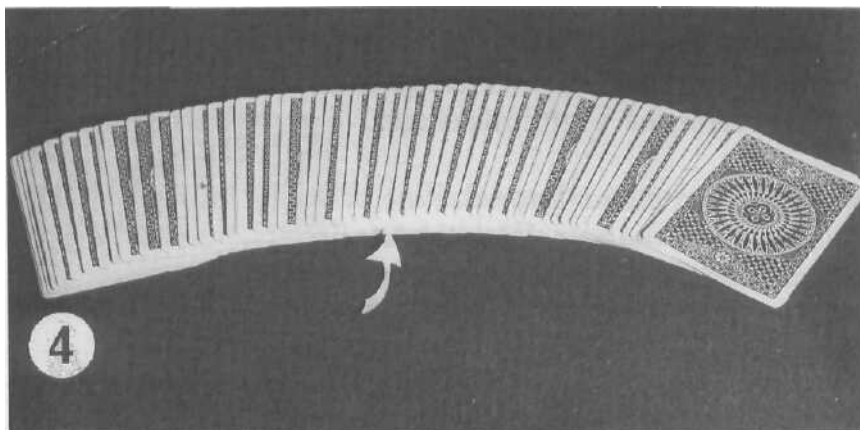


Seemingly, the purpose for making the fan is to show that the peeked at card is still somewhere in the pack. Any suspicion of control is dispelled after this manoeuvre.

2. SPREAD LOCATION.

A card is peeked at in the usual way and a break held by the left little finger.

While the pack is covered by the right *hand*, the bottom section of the pack can be pulled down at the break and the tip of the left little finger brought into contact with the bottom card of the top section. This card is pulled down about a quarter of an inch. Now by pushing the card with the tip of the left little *finger*, it is made to protrude for about a sixteenth of an inch (less than the width of the margin) at the other side of the pack at the inner corner. Holding the cards from above with the right hand, turn the pack a little to the left and bring it to the left side of the table top. Move the right first finger just around the outer corner to the side of the pack as you spread the cards in an *arc*, from left to right, across the table. The card originally peeked at will be jogged in the spread.



The arrow in the photograph at Figure 4 shows the jogged card. The jog has been exaggerated for clarity, but in performance (after experience) it needs only the tiniest of jogs to be recognized.

The only difficulty is in picking off a single card with the tip of the little finger. If the sides of the pack are squeezed downwards it will make it easy to accomplish.

Dai Vernon also uses the following variation. Instead of jogging the card

out, he jogs the whole upper packet by pressing on it with the left little finger. The front end of the pack is squared with the right **fingers**, then the pack spread across the table as before.

An example of the subtle use of this basic principle is to secretly bring the selected card to the top, then show that the bottom card is not the one peeked at. Bury the shown card in the middle of the pack **then**, by means of a double **lift**, show that the card is not on the top. After the two cards have been returned to their original **position**, take the real top card (the one peeked at) and also seemingly bury it in the centre of the pack. When it has been pushed in until it protrudes about a quarter of an inch, the right forefinger, which is doing the pushing at the outer end, causes the card to go in just off square. This happens because the pressure of the left **thumb**, holding the near outer corner, is increased to cause a pivoting action. The pack is spread across the table as before when the jogged card is apparent only to the experienced eye.

It is remarkable what a fine jog will show in the spread once the performer has experience in detecting the slight slope. To the inexperienced, the spread will stand the closest scrutiny.

3. TO SHUFFLE THE CARD TO THE TOP WITH THE RIFFLE SHUFFLE.

A spectator takes a peek at a card in the usual way, and a break is held secretly by the **performer's** left little finger.

Bring the right hand over and seize the pack, the four fingers at the front end and the thumb at the rear. With the left fingers, buckle the bottom portion of the pack until the left fingertips can contact the peeked card above the break. Keeping the fingers in contact, release the buckling pressure and the card will jog out about a quarter of an inch to the right. Shift the right

thumb to the left inner corner of the pack and curl the right first finger on top. Tilt the pack up until the tip of the left second finger rests on the centre of the bottom card. Riffle with the right thumb and a click will be heard and the pack will break at the jogged card. Keeping the left hand palm up, insert the left forefinger into the opening so that the pack can be broken into two packets, ready for a riffle shuffle. The photograph at Figure 5 shows the pack being



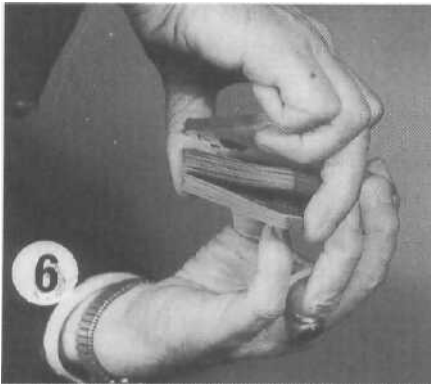
broken, and it will be noticed that the left thumb has moved to the back of the jogged card. This allows the jogged card to be brought forward and square with the bottom packet. Now the left thumb is positioned at the outer **corner**, so that both thumbs riffle their respective **packets**, shuffling the cards together for the selected card to be left on top at the completion of the shuffle.

It will be appreciated that by jogging a card and riffling for the pack to break is, in effect, using an ordinary card as a "**short**" card. This principle is one which Dai Vernon has developed to great advantage.

4. DOUBLE PEEK CONTROL.

Assume that it is required to have two cards peeked at, either by the same spectator or two different individuals. Hold the first break with the left little finger as usual, then allow the second peek to be **taken**, and as the spectator releases the **gap**, position the tip of the third finger to hold the second break.

Drop the left hand to bring the back of the pack upwards and bring the right hand over from above to undercut the pack at the lower break and complete the cut, which brings one of the peeked at cards to the bottom. Take over the remaining break with the right thumb and retain it as the cards are turned to the overhand shuffling position.



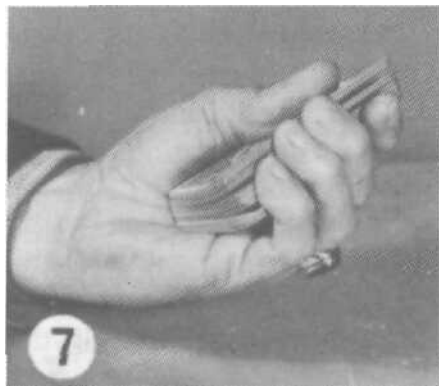
Pick up the lower packet at the break and shuffle right down to the last card, which is thrown on top. This leaves one selected card on top of the pack and the other on the bottom.

Another handling which brings the two cards to the same position in but a single cut is as follows:

Hold the two breaks as before then seize the pack at the sides with the right hand. Insert the right third finger into the upper break and reach down with the second finger to grip the packet below the lower break - Figure 6. Cut this packet to the top but in doing so, press upwards with the right third finger and draw out the card above the upper break, which joins (and comes above) the top card of the lower packet.

5. THREE BREAK CONTROL.

Assume that it is required to have three cards peeked at in succession. Arrange so that the peeks are taken near the **bottom**, centre and top of the pack. The order in which the peeks are taken does not matter so long as



there is the approximate spacing as shown in Figure 7. The left fingers go in to hold the breaks in the order of **little**, third and second - that is to **say**, if the first peek is taken at the **centre**, the little finger tip must go in to hold the break. The example in the photograph is that the first peek has been taken at the bottom so the little **finger** has gone in to hold the break; the second peek was in the centre which the third finger holds and the third peek at the top for the second finger to hold.

Bring the right hand over the ends of the pack, the thumb at the inner end. Open the break held by the left second finger very slightly and by squeezing slightly with the left hand, the second finger enters the break. By releasing the squeezing **pressure**, the peeked at card will pivot to the right. The right thumb must relax slightly until its tip contacts the inner left corner of the card. In the same manner, the third finger enters its break and the second card is pivoted to the right. Next the little finger enters its break and the third card is **pivoted**.

Without changing the position of the hands, pivot the whole bottom



packet of cards to line up with the three pivoted cards. In Figure 8, the right hand has been moved to show the position of the cards at this stage but actually it retains its position throughout. **Tilt** the right hand forward as the left forefinger is placed at the inner **left** corner and pivots out the top packet. Shift the right thumb slightly to the right to grasp the bottom section and the two projecting cards. With the left fore-

finger, pivot the unimportant top packet to the left to clear the cards held by the right hand which are then thrown on top.

This brings the three peeked at cards to the top of the pack.

6. MULTIPLE PEEK CONTROL.

This is the handling Dai Vernon uses to bring several peeked at cards, in order, to the bottom of the pack.

The first card is peeked at in the usual way and a break is held, but not close to the inner corner as usual, but about an inch from it. Now hinge up the pack so that the side can be held by the left thumb tip. Bring the right second finger and thumb to the rear of the pack, cut out the lower packet at the break and slap it on top. Have a second card peeked at and carry out the same procedure as before, except that when the packet is slapped on top, it is done with a forward step of about an inch.

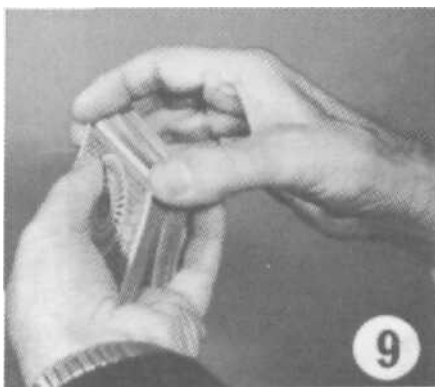
Hinge the whole pack down to the palm, then cut the bottom jogged packet to the top, but by pressing the pack down on the left palm, the bottom card is retained on the palm for the top packet to fall on to it. Two peeked at cards are now together on the bottom of the pack.

By repetition of this jogged cut and retaining the bottom card on the left palm, any number of peeked at cards can be brought to the bottom in the correct order.

7. TRANSFERRING THE BREAK.

Starting after the peek has been taken and a break held by the left little finger, bring the right hand over the pack and grasp it from above, the second and third fingers at the right outer corner and thumb at inner corner. Pick up the break with the right thumb, and lift the whole pack. Re-position the cards in the left fingers, so that the inner left corner of the entire pack fits

into and between the bottom joints of the third and little fingers. The other fingers and thumb hold the pack, the top joint of the left forefinger on the near corner of the pack.



With the right thumb, riffle the packet of cards above the break, which will release the grip on the inner left corner of the upper packet. The flesh at the fork of the little and third fingers will hold a break of about

an eighth of an inch. The pack can now be tipped up and the right edge shown (Figure 9). From this position one can revert to the original position or, because the pack is already in the overhand shuffling position, the bottom half can be picked up and shuffled on top, which will leave the selected card on the bottom.

This method of holding a break with a pinch of flesh at the base of the fingers has become known as the "Greek Break." Here is another use for this type of break:

8. A SPECTATOR FINDS HIS OWN CARD.

The usual procedure is adopted, the spectator taking a peek then the performer holding a break with the left little finger.

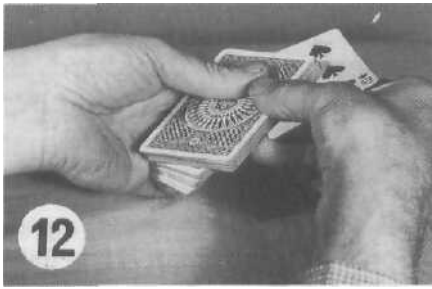
If the break is held close to a third of the way from the top of the pack, all well and good, but if it should be very close to the top or in the lower half, cut the pack to bring the break to about a third from the top.

Hold the pack from above with the right second and third fingers at the outer end and the thumb at the inner end. Slide the pack across the left hand until the inner left corner fits into the crotch of the left third and little fingers. Riffle the upper third with the right thumb only, the left thumb pressing on the centre of the back of the pack. A break will now be held by the web of flesh between the left third and little fingers.

Tap the side of the pack on the table, then slide out the face card with the right hand and using this card as a board, pat the end of the pack, squaring it perfectly - Figure 10. Still pinching the pack firmly between the left fingers and thumb, hand the right hand card, face up, to the spectator instructing him to insert the card, face up, somewhere near the centre of the pack. Twist the card to the position shown in Figure 11. This photograph is an exposed view and shows the break held by the web of flesh at the base of the third and little fingers.



Extend the first three fingers of the right hand under the inserted card and push their tips into the pack at the insertion point. The inserted card will now be slightly bent upwards. Move the left hand to the **right**, the thumb exerting pressure on the cards. It will be found that the packet above the break will slip about half an inch to the right. Grip this packet with the right little finger and thumb (Figure 12) and slide it and the inserted card clear of the pack. After its initial **push**, the left thumb is lifted and takes no further part in the **above**, but a pinch is maintained at the inner left corner of the pack by the third and little fingers.

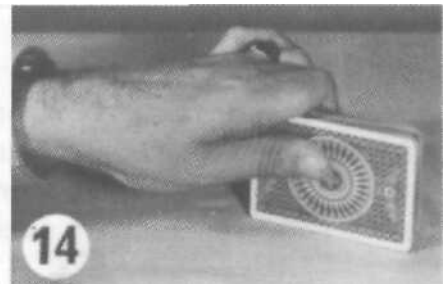


When the right hand is turned, exhibiting the face of the **previously** peeked at card to the **spectator**, it appears as if he inserted a card next to the peeked at card.

9. ADAPTION OF THE GREEK BREAK FOR CARD STABBING.

This is Dai Vernon's own variation of this form of break.

The break itself is obtained in the same way as described **above**, but when sliding the pack forward across the left palm, the corner fits into the crotch of the first and second **fingers**, the break being held by the web of flesh between those fingers. Figure 13 shows an exposed view of the break. Note that the pack is held at the corner by the second finger and thumb only. The other fingers are relaxed and held away from the pack. Tap the pack on the table as in Figure 14. In the photograph, the pack has been allowed to open to show the break, but in performance the pack is perfectly squared.



This hold is excellent for the well-known trick of wrapping paper or a bank note over the side of the pack and pushing the point of a pocket knife through the paper to locate the card. If the point of the knife is run across the paper over the upper edge of the pack (held at a slight slope) and the

pressure is released, the point will find the opening into which the thrust can be made. Alternatively, if a finger is run along the smooth paper and the break allowed to open, pressure of the finger will cause a dent in the paper to show where to make the thrust.

Yet another use for this method of holding a break is in forcing a card. By referring to Figure 14 again, it will be seen that the hand position is natural, and you know exactly where the force card is as soon as the pack is fanned for a card to be selected.

For the purpose of convenience in description, we have treated the various methods of control as if they automatically followed on from the spectator's peek. The reader will readily appreciate that most of them can be used equally well when a break has been obtained in other circumstances.

CHAPTER TWENTY ONE

ONE HANDED SHUFFLES

Most card enthusiasts enjoy mastering methods of handling cards which look unusual and neat. There is something particularly fascinating in performing some slick and difficult-looking *manoeuvre*, even though the performing time is *short*, and the same result could be accomplished with much less practice. *Obviously*, we do not recommend the use of several of such items in a performance of card *magic*, but one thrown in occasionally demonstrates that the performer is above average in handling cards.

BENZON'S SHUFFLE.

This shuffle was devised by Alfred *Benzon* as a neat and spectacular method of shuffling.

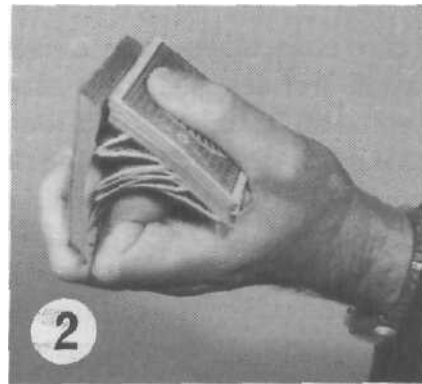
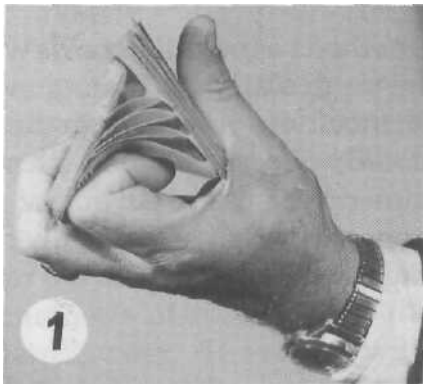
An important factor in the execution of this shuffle is that the cards must be bent *convexley* along their length. After this is done the pack is held in the same position as if the *Charlier* Pass is to be made, and half of the pack dropped from the thumb as at the beginning of that Pass.

To begin the shuffle the curled forefinger assists in lifting the bottom of the packet nearest the thumb up into the thumb crotch. Continue the *Charlier* moves but when the packets are in the inverted V *position*, they are held there momentarily. Now the thumb packet is moved up, but a few cards from the underside of the packet are left bent against the fingers-packet. As the outer side of the thumb packet reaches over the top edge of the upper side of the fingers packet, a few cards are caught from the fingers packet by the underside of the thumb packet, so that these cards are bent inwards. These movements are repeated continuously, bending the packets alternately until all the cards are interwoven.

Photograph 1 shows the thumb packet leaving cards bent against the face of the fingers packet and Photograph 2 shows the action as the thumb packet is brought down by the pressure of the thumb, to bend down cards from the underside of the fingers packet.

This is a difficult shuffle to describe and indeed it is not easy to perform, but if the photographs are studied the mechanics will soon be understood. We have found that at the start it feels that the hand is "full to overflowing", but after a while a knack is acquired. Two important factors are (a) that the

cards are bent along their length and (b) the bottom of the thumb packet is lifted up until it comes to the bottom of the thumb. After this, the knack comes with a "See-Saw" movement of the thumb and finger.



VERNON'S ONE-HANDED SHUFFLE.

Dai Vernon often shuffles the cards with one hand in the following manner.



With the pack on the table, he cuts the cards into two equal packets, placing the cut-off packet alongside the other, the sides being together and in perfect alignment.

Now he brings his right hand over the packets, the little and third fingers being at the outer side of the packet on the right and the thumb at between the centre and outer corner of the packet on the left. The second finger rests idly at the centre of the end of the right packet, and the first finger at the corner of the left packet (where the two corners of the packets touch), see Figure 3.



He presses the packets together with the thumb and third finger, at the same time lifting the touching corners slightly with the first finger, which causes the packets to

rise in the middle like a tent. Now, by an upward riffling motion with the tip of the first finger, the cards are coaxed to interweave (Figure 4). They are finally pushed together and squared with one hand only.

CHAPTER TWENTY TWO

CARD PLACEMENT

Since the publication of Frank Kelly's "Bottom Placement" in "The Tarbell Course in Magic" (Volume 3, page 184) it has been put to many good uses in cardmagic.

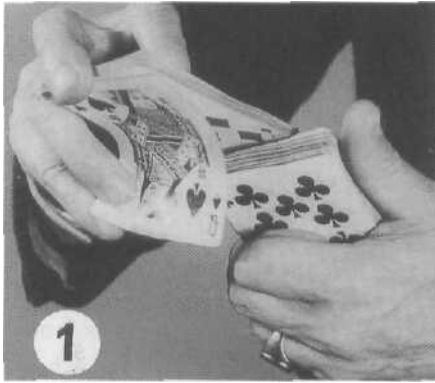
The original of this manoeuvre is that the performer holds the pack back up in his left hand and riffles the cards with his left **thumb**, stopping whenever a spectator says the word. The upper half of the pack is then lifted to show what card was stopped at. Now the upper half is replaced and the pack **squared**, but the card just shown has been secretly brought to the bottom of the pack.

The bare outline of the mechanics of this secret placement of the card on the bottom of the **pack**, is that the inner end of the card is released whilst it is on the bottom of the cut off packet. Thus a "V" shaped gap is formed between it and the rest of the packet. When the right hand packet is brought diagonally over the left hand packet in the action of squaring the pack, the left hand packet goes into the gap for the bottom card of the right hand packet to go the bottom of the left hand packet. Illustrations of this move will be found in Francis Haxton's "Last Word Four **Aces**."

Dai Vernon has evolved several effects in which the principle can be utilized, and has also developed a completely different handling to the one used by the originator.

To perform Dai Vernon's version, proceed as follows: -

1. Hold the pack in the dealing position in the left hand, but well forward in the hand.
2. Bring the right hand over the pack for the purpose of cutting off a packet of cards, placing the right second finger-tip towards the right side of the outer end and the thumb at the inner end. Curl the right forefinger onto the back of the top card. The right third and little fingers are curled inwards, the side of the third finger resting against the side of the cut-off packet.
3. To release the inner end of the bottom card of the right hand packet, bring the tip of the right third finger under the card at the inner right corner (almost touching the thumb), then pull on the inner corner to make the card



move a little to the right. This corner can now be nipped against the third finger by the back of the nail on the little finger.

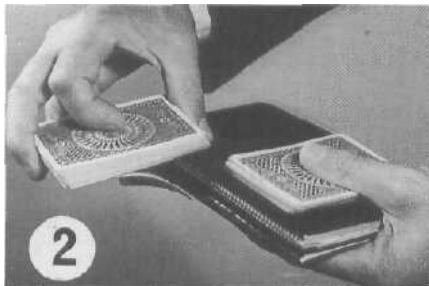
4. By moving the third and little fingers, bend the bottom card downwards, just sufficiently for the placement to be made. (See Figure 1).

5. This is done by holding the left hand packet still as the right hand packet is brought diagonally over the top of the left hand packet, for the bottom card to be guided to the bottom of the pack, as the right hand cards are pushed flush on top.

PENETRATION - JOHN McCORMICK.

The following effect by John McCormick makes use of Dai Vernon's "Card Placement" in a novel manner.

In addition to a pack of cards, you will also need two thin boards about seven inches long by five inches wide. Alternatively two sheets of cardboard, or even two slim books can be used.



The effect will be apparent as we proceed. To perform, show both sides of the boards, then place them together and hold them at one end in the left hand, the fingers being extended well under the bottom board.

Have the pack shuffled then placed on the top board at the end, close to the left thumb. Ask the spectator to cut the pack at any point, and place the cut-off portion to the right, beside the rest of the pack.

With the right hand, lift the cut-off packet and show the spectator the bottom card. In replacing the packet on the board, secretly perform the card placement already explained (Figure 2). Note how the left thumb holds the other packet to prevent the cards falling. As the bottom card slides under the bottom board, it is received and pulled in place by the tips of the left fingers.

Ask the spectator to complete the cut and when this has been **done**, tilt the left hand for the pack to slide off the boards to the **right**, where they are caught by the right hand. Hand the pack to the spectator to be shuffled.

Take the top board in the right **hand**, separate the hands, then bring them together **again**, the right hand board now going below the other and trapping the card between them. Gesture with the boards, turning them over in the process, then ask the spectator to replace the pack on the centre.

Place your right hand on top of the pack and press, then lift the pack to reveal that the previously chosen card is not on the bottom.

Lift the top board, when the card will be found face up, having apparently penetrated the solid wood.

CHAPTER TWENTY THREE

HANDLING A SHORT CARD

Much has been written on the types and uses of short cards, and we do not propose to duplicate it here. However, there are several little known subtleties employed by Dai Vernon which should be recorded as the information will be interesting and valuable to magicians.

The Short Card:

Instead of making a cut completely across one end of a card to shorten it, an improvement is to make the cuts in the shape of a slight concave curve in both ends of the card. The amount of card cut off should be no thicker than a coarse thread, the corners of the card not being touched. The illustration (Figure 1) shows how the cuts should be made, but the amount cut off has been exaggerated for clarity. If it is normal procedure for the reader to cut a pack by the sides, then he will prefer to make the curves in the two sides instead of in the ends of the card.



With normal handling a card shortened as described cannot be distinguished in appearance from a normal card, and when slightly bent cannot be detected under close scrutiny.

This type of short card is ideal when it is required to lift off two cards as one from the top of the pack. With the short card on top of the pack, the right thumb goes to the centre of one end (or side) and the second finger to the opposite end (or side). The two cards are automatically picked off together in the normal action of taking one card only.

Locating a Short Card:

With either the usual short card or the one described, hold the pack in the left hand, the tips of the second, third and little fingers at one side and the thumb at the opposite side. Pull down with the tip of the forefinger at the centre of the outer end of the pack. The pack will cut at the short card, and when the cut is completed the short card will be on the bottom of the pack.

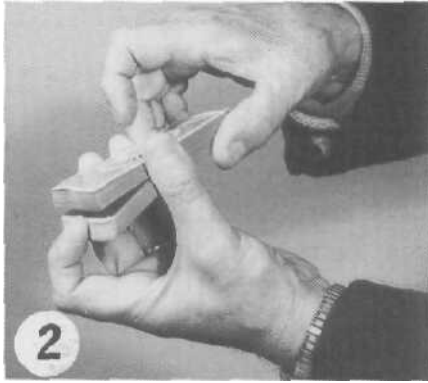


Figure 2 shows the holding position of the pack, for the tip of the left forefinger to pull down to locate the short card.

The Corner Short:

When a card has been made into a short card by taking off a little at two diagonally opposite corners, the short card will protrude slightly from the pack if the corner is tapped on the table. This is useful to know,

as the location can be made without riffling.

Dai Vernon's Methods of Handling:

1. To bring a selected card to any number from the top of the pack, have the short card on the bottom at the start.

Have a card selected and as it is being noted, shuffle two cards less than the desired number from the top of the pack to below the short card. Have the selected card returned anytime during a Hindu Shuffle and immediately it is returned, drop the rest of the cards on top. Cut at the short card, and complete the cut, which brings the selected card to the desired number from the top.

2. With the short card on the bottom of the pack, have a spectator take a peek at any card (Spectator's Peek) and hold a break with the left little finger. Transfer the break to the right thumb and turn the pack on its side for an overhand shuffle. Remove all the cards below the break and shuffle off on top down to the last card, which brings the short card to the top. By cutting the pack, the selected card and the short card are brought together in the centre of the pack, where they can be located when required.

3. Have the short card on top of the pack at the start. When a spectator has selected a card and returned it to the pack, hold a break above it. Turn the cards to the overhand shuffle position, cut at the break, run the selected card on top of the short card and shuffle off. All is in readiness for the selected card to be located when required.

4. Start with the short card on the bottom of the pack. When a selected card has been returned to the pack, hold a break below it. Before turning the pack for an overhand shuffle, lift up at the break and turn the pack, drawing

off the top card as the shuffle starts. Continue shuffling the top packet on top of the bottom **packet**, finally throwing the last (selected) card on top. By cutting the **pack**, the selected card is brought immediately below the short card in the centre of the pack.

If it is required to have the selected card above the short **card**, then "Milk" shuffle the cards before the cut. This type of shuffle brings the top and bottom cards together on the bottom of the pack; the cut takes them to the centre.

5. With the short card on top of the pack and a break held below the selected **card**, cut off about half of the packet of cards above the break and drop it on the table. Cut to the break and drop on top of the packet on the table. Cut the remaining portion once or twice, then drop it on top of the cards on the table. In this manner the selected card is brought immediately above the short card.

6. Have the short card on the bottom of the pack. After the selection and return of a **card**, hold a break above the selected card. Cut off about half the packet of cards above the break and drop on the table, then cut to the break and drop on top. Cut half the packet remaining and drop on **top**, and finally drop the remainder on top. This puts the selected card under the short card.

After studying the foregoing methods to bring a selected card and the short card together, the reader will be able to vary the manner of cutting the **packets**, half packets etc., to give the same result.

We have mentioned holding breaks, and these can refer to breaks held after a selected card is actually returned to the pack, or when the "Spectator's Peek" has been carried out.

CHAPTER TWENTYFOUR

MAGIC CASTLE MOVES

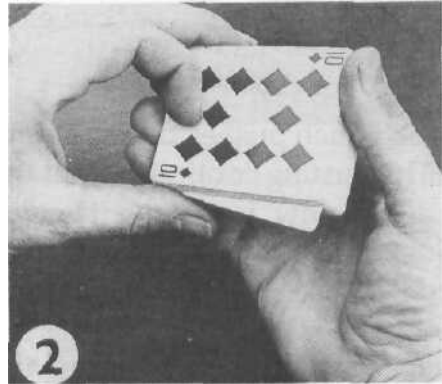
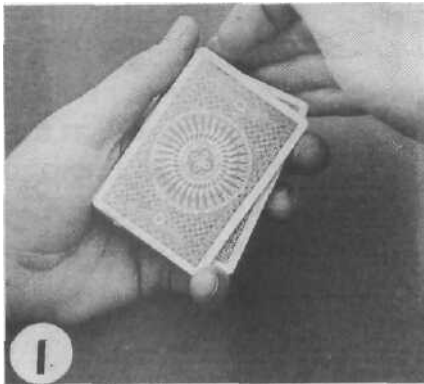
ALL AROUND SQUARE UP.

Larry Jennings devised this stratagem for controlling a selected card when it is returned to the pack. The handling looks perfectly **fair**, yet a tiny jog is produced at the rear end of the **pack**, which can then be placed on the table and the jog cut at prior to a riffle shuffle. Should the pack be retained in the **hand**, the jog enables a break to be picked up. It is based on an idea of Ed Marlo's.

The photographs are almost self-explanatory, and with a pack of cards in hand the following method of handling will soon be understood.

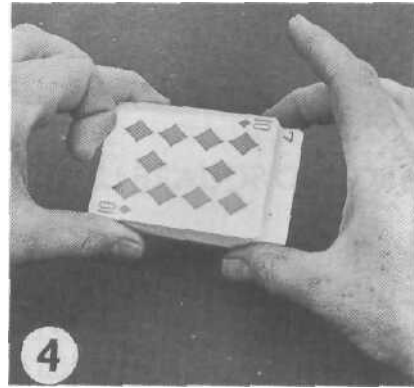
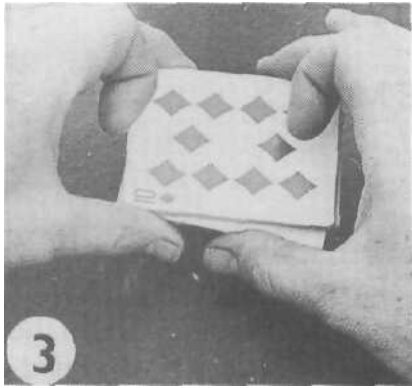
Photograph 1.

A selected card is returned to the pack by being inserted into the front end. As it is pushed home it is **angled**, the bottom right corner of the card protrudes from the bottom of the right side of the pack. In this photograph the right hand has been lifted to show the angle of the card, but in performance the right hand would be holding the pack from above, thumb at the inner end, forefinger curled on top and the other three fingers at the outer end.



Photograph 2.

The right hand now rotates the pack; in other words the hand turns palm up. The left hand is removed for this to happen then retakes the pack at the left end, the left thumb at the inner corner, the second finger at the outer corner and the forefinger curled on top.



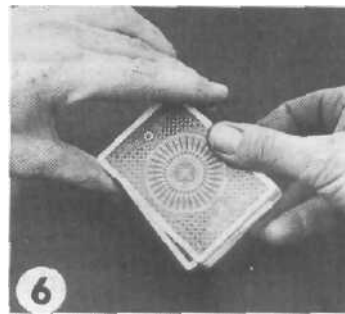
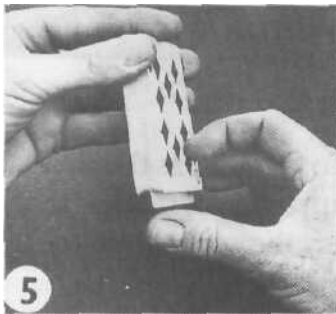
Photographs 3 and 4.

Holding the pack with the left hand, the right hand is moved palm down, comes over the pack and "milks" the card down. This is done by running the right thumb down the inner side of the pack and the right second finger along the outer side. This looks like a squaring action but due to the angle of the card it causes it to jog out at the right end as in Photograph 4. The jog has been exaggerated in the photograph for clarity - normally it is just a minute jog. The position of the hands in Photograph 3 (start) and Photograph 4 (finish) shows the direction and degree of movement of the right hand.

Photograph 5.

Beginning with the holding position shown in Photograph 4, the right hand begins to turn the pack over lengthways (face down), by pushing its end of the pack down as the left hand lifts its end up until the position shown in the photograph is reached. The right thumb then presses on the end of the pack which pushes the card through so that it now jogs out at the outer end. The turning continues until the pack is face down as in Photograph 6.

Notice how the card is jogged for the break to be picked up when required.

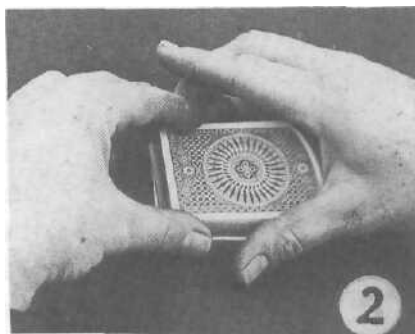
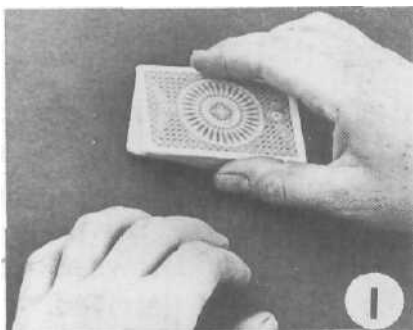


JENNINGS' TOP PALM.

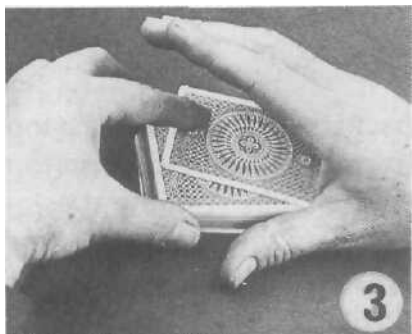
This top palm can be made either with the pack resting on the table, or held in the hands. We will describe the handling for both. The technique is *excellent*, borne out by the fact that Dai Vernon now uses it in many of his tricks.

On The Table:

The pack is on the table as in Photograph 1, the selected card, or card you want to *control*, on top of the pack. Both hands are brought to the pack, but in the photograph the left hand has been moved for clarity. Notice how the right hand is on the right end of the pack, the whole length of the right thumb laying on the table at the inner side of the pack. The right hand moves towards the left until the corner of the top card is in the big crease of the thumb, where the thumb joins the hand. The true position of the left hand is seen in Photograph 2. Notice how the left forefinger is about to pivot the top card forward. In the photograph the right fingers have been lifted to show the action. The pivot point is at the right inner corner, where the corner of the card is in the crease of the thumb.



As soon as the position seen in Photograph 3 is reached, the right little finger pushes down on the left outer corner of the top card, which causes the card to tip up into the right palm.



The right thumb and second *finger* close on the sides of the pack and undercut the bottom portion to the top, then hands out the pack to be cut. The whole action is done in a second, and the only awkward point in the handling is the fact that the hands are over the pack for a split second. However, because of the normal handling prior to the palming and handing it out to be cut after-

wards, it is most unlikely that anything suspicious will be noticed.

Until one is experienced with this method of palming the undercutting can be **omitted**, as during the action there is some danger of flashing the palmed card. You can simply palm the card as described and push the pack over to be **cut**, then replace the palmed card on top after the cut is completed.

In The Hands:

For palming the top card when **the** pack is held, hold the pack from above with the left hand, the pack being face down, the thumb at the inner left **corner**, second finger at outer left corner and forefinger curled on top. Bring the right hand over the pack in the same action as in the table method. Pivot the top card as explained, for the inner right corner to go into the crease at the base of the right thumb. Press down with the right little finger on the outer left corner of the card which causes it to spring up into the right hand which takes the pack and hands it to the spectator. Actually you can take the pack from one **person**, palm the top card in a flash before handing the pack on to someone else.

KEY CARD PLACEMENT.

Dai Vernon gives us this subtle method of placing a key card next to a selected card. Photograph 1 will make the description easy to understand, and when the method is understood it will be seen that even a person who knows about key cards will be completely deceived.



Have the key card on the bottom of the pack and have a card selected. Cut the pack so that the key is about twelve cards from the bottom, and hold a break below the key with the left little finger.

Cut small packets of cards from the top of the pack, dropping each packet on top of the others on the table. Tell the spectator to drop his card on the pile at any time he wishes as you drop the packets. When he does so, lift all the cards above the break and drop them on the selected **card**, which brings the key card and

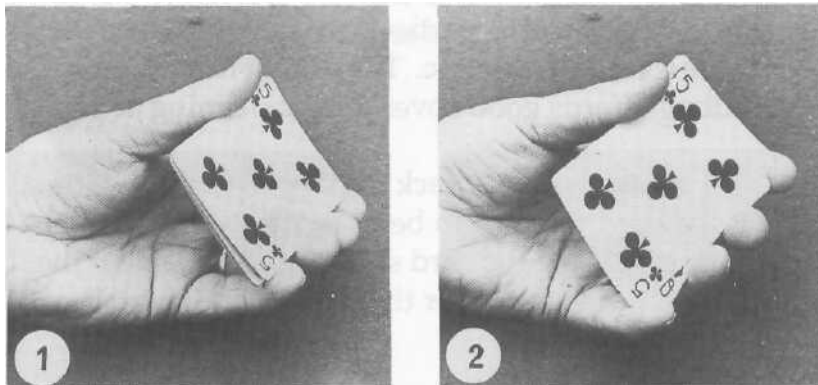
the selected card together. Finally drop the last packet on top. You can now find the selected card anytime you wish.

SMALL PACKET GLIDE.

Dai Vernon developed this glide for when a packet of **cards**, and not a complete **pack**, is in use. It will be found to be particularly useful for up to about a ten card packet, or on those occasions when a Stanley Collins type 'Four Ace' effect is being performed. It is possible to employ it with a complete pack, but it is not so convincing.

Photograph 1.

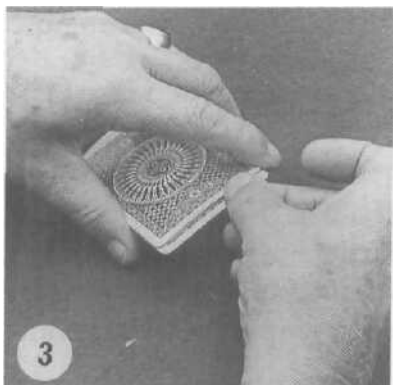
This is an exposed view of the left hand holding position - at the commencement of the move the hand would be turned back up so that the cards are face down as in Photograph 3. Notice in the first photograph how the left little finger holds a break above the bottom card - this is the only get ready. The forefinger and thumb should be as close as possible to the upper corners, without permitting the hand position to look unnatural from the back.



To perform this glide, turn the hand palm up as in Photograph 1 and show the bottom card.

Photograph 2.

Now turn the hand back up, in other words reverse to the starting position, but as the turn is made apply pressure with the little finger on the corner of the card so that it is angled as in the photograph (exposed view). From above no movement is seen as the protruding corners are masked by the forefinger, little finger, and back of the hand.



Photograph 3.

The right second finger is now brought to the right outer corner of the packet and removes the card which is second from bottom. The little finger evens the remaining packet by moving from the corner of the bottom card to the corners of the other cards.

THE ROOKLYN TOP PALM,

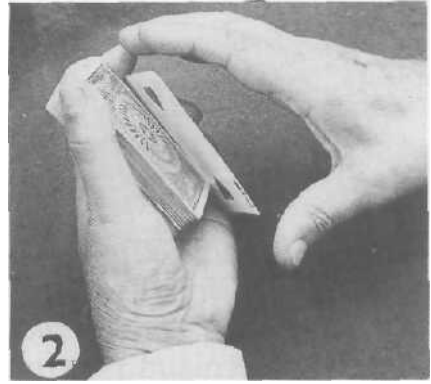
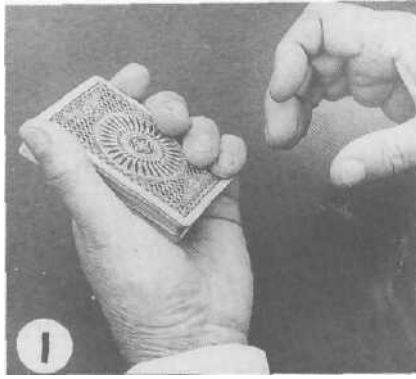
The clever Australian manipulator Maurice Rooklyn, toured the world with his act in which he featured Billiard Balls. For many years he played the best Theatres and Night Clubs, and deservably earned a reputation for being one of the finest acts in this field.

It was inevitable that he should meet Dai Vernon, and at the Magic Castle in Hollywood they had many discussions. Although Maurice Rooklyn has specialised in ball manipulation he has a love of all types of magic and finds time to experiment with the pasteboards. Being primarily a stage performer any of his ideas are developed with stage or platform performance in view. Accordingly his Top Palm will be particularly useful for such tricks as "Cards to Pocket"; "Three Cards Across" etc. The sleight itself is easy to do and the method of handling affords good cover for the palming action.

Photograph 1 shows how the pack is gripped in the left hand, the hold being as if the standard Glide is to be made, except that the hand is held palm up with the back of the top card showing. Notice how the thumb and forefinger hold the pack squared for the gliding of the top card to be made with the third and little fingers.

Photograph 2. The right hand comes over the pack as if to take it in that hand and as the top card is covered, the left third and little fingers not only glide the card a little, but also pull it over the right side of the pack. The left side of the card automatically tilts upwards towards the right hand where it is almost in the palm position but is not gripped as yet. For clarity in the photograph the card has not been covered with the right hand in order that the position of the card can be seen, but in performance the right hand would now be over the card.

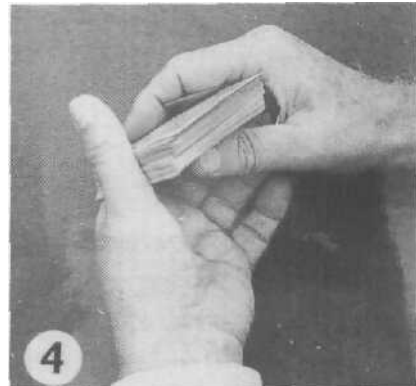
Photograph 3. The left thumb shifts slightly to the left outer corner of pack and presses down which causes the right side of the pack to tilt upwards to push the top card into the palm position.



Photograph 4. By swiveling the right hand, the pack is grasped around the right edge, the right thumb being on the face card and the fingers over the new top card. In this holding position the right thumb tilts up the pack and the hand carries it away the back of the hand and the top of the pack now being toward the spectator.

Do not be afraid of bending the top card; the holding position requires this to be done and ensures that there is effective cover.

A trial will show that it is possible to palm more than one card from the top of the pack in this fashion, by first holding a break under the number of cards to be palmed.

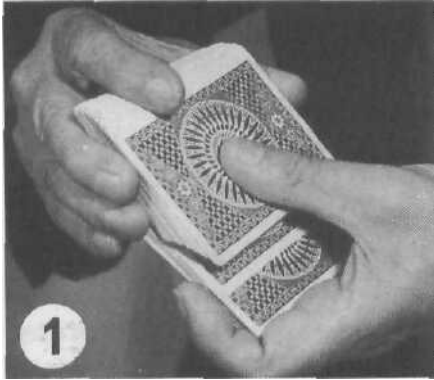


CHAPTER TWENTY FIVE

MORE USEFUL SLEIGHTS AND MOVES

SINGLE SHUFFLE CONTROL.

Dai Vernon credits Faucett Ross with this shuffle which is useful for retaining a selected card on top of the pack. **Actually** the handling is somewhat similar to the Jules Shuffle, which allows a whole packet of cards to be retained in **order**, but in Faucett Ross's version it is a single card which is controlled.



Assuming that the selected card has been brought to the top of the **pack**, commence an overhand shuffle pulling off the top packet of cards into the left hand in the usual manner. Bring the cards in the right hand in **front** of the left hand packet to drag off another packet of cards from the **top**, but in lifting the right hand packet **again**, the bottom side of the back card is in contact with the selected card - a pressure to

the right ensures that the selected card is drawn upwards - Photograph 1. As the selected card comes upwards behind the right hand **packet**, the right third finger and thumb grip it at the edges and carry it away. The card remains in position while the right hand packet is shuffled off and so becomes the last card to be thrown on top.

SPREADING SIX CARDS AS FIVE.

We will describe this move as being used for spreading a packet of six cards into a fan (like a hand of cards) to show as five cards **only**, because this is a convenient example. Actually other numbers of cards can be spread to show one less - or even a small number less than the total.

When it is necessary to show six cards as five, hold the squared packet in the left hand; the left hand being over the packet in the usual position for making the regular glide. As the left hand is turned to bring it to the natural position for spreading the **cards**, make the glide move with the left fingers so that the bottom card is pulled down. Immediately this is done spread the cards in the normal way between the left and right hands, when one card less than the total will show.

If more than one card is to be hidden, nip the inner corner of the cards to be hidden between the side of the little finger and tip of the third finger and pull the cards down. The rest of the action is as already described.

KEY CARD LOCATION.

About 1930 Dai Vernon devised this ingenious method for using a key card. He showed it to the noted New York **magician**, Al Flosso, who uses it regularly to excellent effect.

In instructions for performing card moves the reader is usually urged to strive for neat **handling**, but in this instance the more haphazard the actions the better the final result. Al Flosso seems not to worry how he picks up the cards and appears not to look at them. It is this casualness and apparent lack of care which ensures that the spectators get no inkling of the use of a key card.

Procedure:

After a card has been selected and noted by a **spectator**, the performer spreads the rest of the pack, face down, across the table, and has the selected card dropped on the spread somewhere near the centre.

The bottom card of the pack is known to you (that is the card on the extreme left of the photograph). This can be done by shuffling the pack before having the card selected and noting the bottom card, or asking a spectator to shuffle and glimpsing the bottom card as the pack is returned to you.

Study the photograph to make the next moves clear.



Without appearing to look at the **cards**, grab a few from the right of the **spread**, that is from the top of the pack. As you do this note the number of cards you take. This must be done in a careless manner as if the number does not matter. It is simple to grab a small packet of say, four cards in this **way**, being sure of the number without having to pause to visibly count. Any semblance of counting or observing how many you pick up is deadly. You must just reach over and pick them up, taking not more than six. When you have picked them up you know how many you have taken.

Drop these cards on top of the selected card and as you do this grab some cards from the left of the spread (you know the bottom card of this packet) and drop them on the cards just dropped. You now know the number of cards between the selected card and the key card. Continue to grab small packets from the right and left **alternately**, dropping them on the centre until the selected card is well down in the pack. Square the **pack**, cut and complete the cut. It would seem that the selected card is hopelessly lost in the pack.

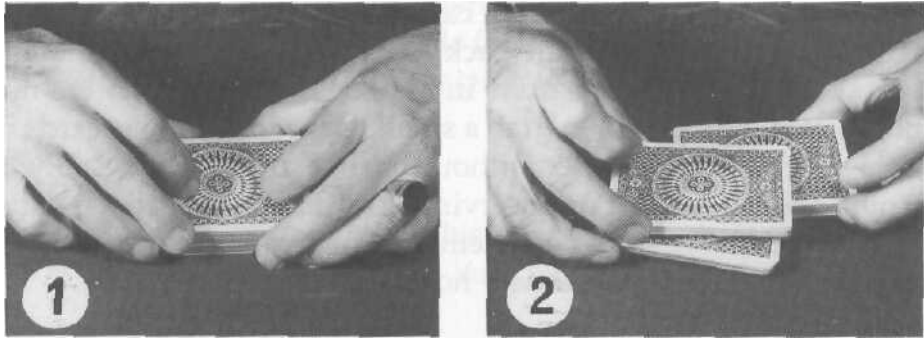
To locate the card, all that is necessary is to spread the pack face up from left to right, note the key card and count the number of cards in the first packet dropped (four in our example) to the right, when the next card (fifth) will be the selected card.

An alternative handling is to have the key card on top of the pack at the start and hand the pack to a spectator for shuffling, ask him to give it an overhand shuffle. He will probably bring the card to the bottom. If he does not, glimpse the bottom card as he handles the pack and let him spread the cards before making a selection by drawing out a card from the centre of the spread. Should you fail to get a glimpse in this way, then you take the pack (glimpse) and continue as described.

COLD DECK CUT.

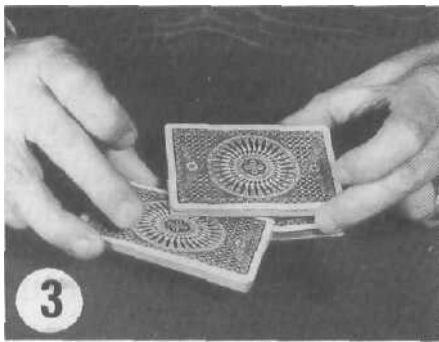
This method of Dai Vernon's for cutting the pack looks scrupulously **fair**, but actually it is a false cut and preserves the original order of the cards.

The pack is on the table, side-on to the performer who grips the **ends**, one in each hand. Note the holding position in Photograph 1, remembering that the camera was positioned opposite the performer's hands so that the performer's right hand is on your left, etc. Now let us master the mechanics.



Have both forefingers curled on the top card and feel with the right second and third fingers for the second finger to hold the upper section of the pack at the edge and the third finger the bottom section as in Photograph 1. The left thumb (at rear) and second finger (in front) hold the centre section of cards.

Raising the pack slightly from the table, then keeping the left hand still, move the right hand diagonally outwards carrying the top and bottom sections forward as in Photograph 2. Place the centre section on the table. Move the right hand back over the cards on the table, take the top section from the right hand with the left hand as in Photograph 3, and move the right hand forward again to clear the rest of the cards so that the portion now in the left hand can be dropped on top of those on the table. Keeping hold of the right hand section, bring the cards over those on the table and place them on top, but stepped a little at the rear left corner, so that a break can be picked up later.



We dealt with this matter at length in Chapter Seven of Dai Vernon's "More Inner Secrets of Card Magic", but to be complete in this present description, we will quote the relevant text. "...place the packet so that the inner side forms a step at the left inner corner. Immediately square the pack (apparently) by bringing both hands to the pack and seizing it at the ends. Actually, the left thumb tip goes over the step, and the pack is squared by pinching (in a "milking" action) the right inner corner with the right thumb and second finger. This causes the pack to ride up at the left inner corner, for the left thumb to hold an open break. To cut the upper packet at the break without hazard, contact the left thumb tip with the right thumb tip, when the cut can be made with certainty."

To bring the cards back to their original **order**, the cut is made with a seemingly careless **action**, packet above the break being cut off with the right hand and dropped on the table, then the right hand picks up the remaining cards and drops them on top of all.

The handling of the whole operation should be carried out with an apparent "I don't care" attitude - as if the actual mechanics are of no importance.

CHAPTER TWENTY SIX

TWO SLEIGHTS BY Dr. ELLIOTT

Reading through a copy of "Mahatma" 1898, we came across an advertisement which Dai Vernon referred to on many occasions. It was the challenge which Dr. Elliott's Manager (Mr. J. A. Richardson) issued on behalf of "The Champion Card Manipulator of the World" as Elliott was billed. It reads: -

TO THE CARD MANIPULATORS OF THE WORLD

on behalf of

ELLIOTT

The Champion Card Manipulator of the World, I hereby challenge any breathing card manipulator in the world to dispute his claim to the above title. ODDS TWO TO ONE AND FOR ANY AMOUNT OF STAKE WAGER NAMED. Will give or take (Four Hundred Dollars) for all traveling expenses. I have this day August 22nd (Monday) 1898 at 3 p.m. deposited (\$250.00) in the hands of Mr. Frank. B. Summers as a guarantee of good faith to show that I mean business, which will give any of the very many Kings of Cards, Card Kings, Card Conjurers and Card Manipulators in all corners of the civilized world ample time in which to think and accept the above well intended challenge...

I remain, respectfully yours,
R, A. RICHARDSON.

Sole Backer and Manager of Elliott

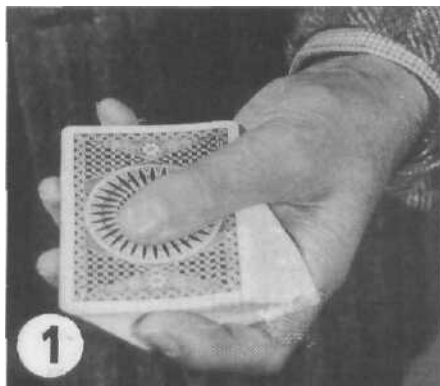
Witnesses: C. W. Chase. W. E. LeRoy
F. Zanzie. E. Wilson G. L. Stockton.

During the many hundreds of hours we have sat with Dai Vernon recording his magic, the work of Dr. Elliott was often mentioned. Dai told us how Dr. Elliott would always book two rooms at any hotel at which he happened to be staying - one to live in and the other in which to practice his card

magic. This second room always had a bare table at which Elliott would sit for **hours**, but he confessed to Dai that he had learned by experience to practice his magic both sitting and **standing**, as after practising a trick **sitting**, he had found difficulty when compelled to perform standing - the method of handling and angles to be covered were often different.

BOTTOM DEAL.

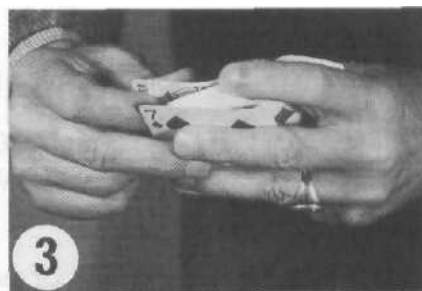
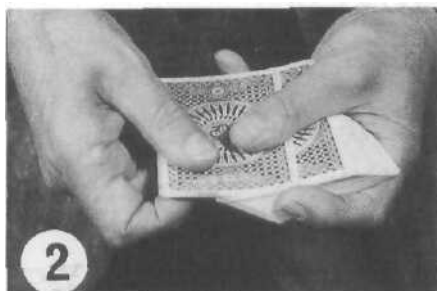
A sleight which defied detection in Dr. Elliott's hands was his Bottom Deal. Although he contributed many articles to magical **magazines**, he always retained the secret of this deal. At one of the many sessions the young Dai Vernon had with Elliott, the Bottom Deal was carefully explained. Over the years Dai has used the deal and it is revealed here for the first time.



Much has been written on Bottom Deals but Dai Vernon considers that Dr. Elliott's version is the best. The pack is held in what seems to be the normal dealing position, but a close study of Figure 1 will show the

important differences. Note how the little finger is at the inner end and that there is a space between the second and third fingers. According to Dr. Elliott this spacing of the second and third fingers is the most difficult part to remember.

The top card is pushed over to the right with the left thumb and taken near the outer **corner**, between the first finger and thumb of the right hand (Figure 2), but always the right second finger goes under the pack and onto the face of the bottom card - between the left second and third fingers.



For fair dealing the top card is dealt onto the table, the right second finger just sliding away from the bottom card, but for dealing the bottom card

the procedure is as under:

The top card is still pushed over and actually gripped by the right thumb and first finger as **before**, but when the right second finger goes under the pack it pulls out the bottom card with an inward **twist**, tilting the outer edge up to come against the right first finger (Figure 3). The right first and second fingers then deal the bottom card downwards onto the table. Simultaneously the left thumb pulls back the top card onto the pack where it is "boxed" as in a second deal.

The right hand movement is a twisting action from the **wrist**, with a snap of the first finger off the card under the thumb. The front end of the pack slopes just slightly downward to the table to mask the under-pack activity.

In all types of Bottom **Dealing**, where the bottom card is pulled from the **pack**, the pulling motion is not a straight **one**, but is done with a twisting motion from the wrist.

The pack should be gripped lightly in the left hand - almost floating in the hand.

The deal can be made with the pack square or bevelled as in Figure 1. A bevelled pack is often used by gamblers who have the edges of the cards marked. By bevelling they can see the marks and know when to deal fair or from the bottom.

Dr. ELLIOTT'S FAVOURITE BREAK CONTROL.

Dr. Elliott fooled laymen and magicians alike with this manouvre, which he used to delay the Pass.

After a card had been selected and noted he had it returned to the pack and held a break above it with the tip of his left little finger. He immediately transferred the break to his right thumb and slid the pack across his left hand until the side of his left little finger was opposite the break. Now he twisted the pack until the outer left corner came to the base of his left **fore-finger**, then riffled the front end with his right fingers and the rear upper portion (above the break only) with his right thumb. He then held up the pack in his left hand **only**, when it could be seen from all sides. He pattered for a while before reversing the moves to get into position for making the Pass.

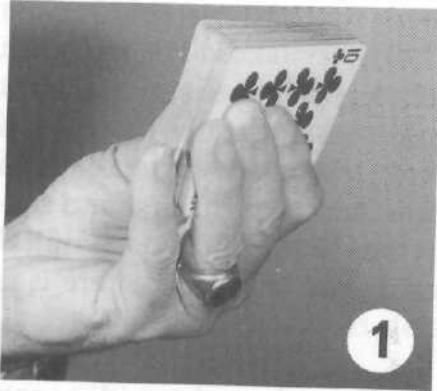


Figure 1 shows an exposed view of the left hand holding position. Notice that the side of the left little finger holds the break at the opposite inner corner to which a break is normally held.