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Cyclic Aces

This idea was first published in *Sorcerer* magazine, issue 2 (1988). It's a simple idea but you might find it useful. It's also a good excuse for me to try out the OCR software on my new scanner. Let's hope it works and following is transcribed without too many errors!

Effect: A deck of cards is shuffled, squared and placed in the centre of the table. "It is said that three is a lucky number," says the performer, "Let's see if that's true." The performer cuts the deck into three packets, stacking one on top of the other and bringing a new card to the top of the deck.

He turns the top card over and it is an Ace. Placing the Ace aside he says, "Well that's pretty lucky, an Ace." The performer cuts the cards again, saying, "Of course that's all it was, pure luck. The odds against doing the same thing again must be pretty phenomenal." After the cutting the new top card of the deck is turned over and is seen to be another Ace and this is placed with the previously tabled Ace.

The deck is cut again as the performer says, "Three cuts each time, and this is the third time... third time lucky perhaps." The new top card is turned over and seen to be the third Ace. It's placed aside, with the first two Aces, and the cutting procedure is repeated.

I should add at this point that the cutting procedure looks incredibly fair, to layman or magician, but despite this, when the new top card is turned over, it is the fourth Ace.

Method: This is more than just an Ace Cutting Routine, it's a utility principle that you can expand upon and use in many different ways. The whole procedure is made possible by using one crimped card but it's the novel way in which the crimped card resets itself for each Ace that is of interest. You'll be glad to know that the trick is entirely self-working.

Place two Aces on top of the deck and the other two, together, about one-third from the face of the deck. crimp the card that lies above the lower pair of Aces. The crimp should be bent downwards and be positioned at the inner right corner of the deck when the deck is tabled face down.

False Shuffle the deck, retaining the positions of the Aces and crimp. An easy way to do this is to cut off the top third of the deck and Riffle Shuffle it into the upper third of the remaining portion. You are Riffle Shuffling above the Crimp and you allow the top two Aces to fall last. This can be repeated several times. You'll find it even easier if you position the crimp and the Aces below it lower down in the deck before you begin. It will make no difference to the subsequent working.

Spread the deck face down just to show that there are no breaks or

whatever and then square it and place it in the centre of the table. You place the deck almost at arm's length from you. This is for two reasons. Firstly it is a very open gesture; somehow if the deck is away from your body it seems as if there is little you can do in the way of trickery. Secondly it enables you to see your crimp perfectly, a visual check just in case you foul up somewhere along the line.

Reach over and cut approximately one-third of the cards from the top of the deck and place them on the table, beside the original talon. Make a second cut, this time at your crimp, the crimped card becoming the face card of the packet you have just cut. Drop this packet onto the first tabled packet. Pick up the remainder of the deck and drop it on top of the first two portions. Turn over the top card, it will be an Ace.

The cutting can be made to look quite sloppy and effortless, which it almost is, thus adding to the deception. The remarkable thing is that the crimp is again nearly two-thirds down the deck but is now above what were the top two Aces.

Square the deck and repeat the cutting procedure, bringing another Ace to the top and setting the crimp above the third Ace. As each Ace is cut it is laid aside. Cut the deck again, bringing the third Ace to the top and at the same time setting the crimp above the last Ace. Finally cut for the fourth time, bringing the final Ace to the top and revealing it in your most dramatic manner.

Notes: That's all there is to it but I hope you'll agree that it is very deceptive and it seems almost impossible to control the Aces during the cuts. The fact that it is self-working should make it easy to use.

Those with a penchant for card handling can of course cull the required Aces to position. You might also like to just locate any pair of cards that happen to be together, position them about one-third in from the face and crimp the card above them as you spread the cards face up in front of you. This leaves only two cards, the other pair, which need to be cut or culled to the top, making your job that little bit easier.

To crimp the card I spread the cards face up between my hands, from left to right, raising them to a vertical position so that only I can see the faces. Having spotted a suitable pair of cards I spread them to the right and use my left thumb to crimp the lower left corner of the card immediately behind them. The left thumb just bends the corner upwards, towards the card's face.

Vernon's Aces Ride Again: By reversing the procedure you can use the crimp card to control the aces. In this version you openly places the aces into the deck, apparently at random, and then find them again. Pointless I know but that's the magic business for you!

Start with the four Aces face up on the table and a crimp card two-thirds of the way down the deck. Cut off about one-third of the deck and table it. Take one of the Aces and drop it onto this packet. Make another cut, this time at the crimp, and drop this packet on top of the just-placed Ace. Pick up the remainder of the deck and drop it on top of the first two cut portions. You've secretly placed the crimp above the first Ace while apparently losing the Ace in the deck.

Repeat the procedure, cutting off about a third of the deck and tabling it. Place a second Ace on this portion and then cut another packet from the deck, again making the cut at your crimp, and drop it on top of the Ace. Pick up the remainder of the deck and drop it on top of the first two cut portions.

Repeat this for the third and fourth Aces and you will end up with two Aces on top of the deck and two below the crimped card. By reversing the original procedure you have arrived at the start position for the original Ace Cutting. Reveal the aces in any way you choose.

Not Quite Final Notes: There is more to say on this system but it will

only detract from what is offered here. However, when setting up the Aces for cutting (the first routine) you may like to introduce the same sort of ruse that Vernon used in his **Cutting the Aces** routine (*Stars of Magic*). You can do this by setting the deck with an Ace on top, followed by a Six-spot, then five indifferent cards, the second Ace, then the rest of the deck with the crimp card set two-thirds of the way down just above the remaining pair of Aces.

Proceed with the first routine, cutting the first, second and third Aces as already explained. When you try to cut the fourth Ace you turn over a Six-spot instead. It looks as if you've missed but you recover the situation by explaining that the six in fact tells you that the last Ace is six cards down. Place the Six-spot aside and then deal down six cards from the top of the deck, turning the Ace up on the last card dealt. The extra twist on the fourth Ace brings the routine to a more satisfying conclusion.

If your table space is limited you can always hold the deck in the left hand dealing grip and place the cut off packets on another spectator's outstretched palm. Ask him to pretend he's a table and then tap him on the head, knocking on wood for good luck.

A Four Star Discovery: With the deck in the left hand dealing grip and a crimp card a third in from the face, riffle down the outer left corner with the thumb and ask a spectator to call stop. Contrive it so that he halts you when you are about one-third down from the top. Cut this top packet to the table. Push off the new top card of the deck and raise it towards the spectator so that he can remember it. This will be his selection. Drop the selection face down on the tabled packet. Cut at your crimp and drop this packet on top of the selection. Place the remainder of the left hand cards on top of all, burying the selection completely.

Repeat this with three more selections and you will finish up with two selections on top of the deck and two under the crimp. It seems impossible since you do virtually nothing. The cards are in position to be revealed just as in the original Ace Cutting Routine. However, to add spice to the proceedings try the following:

Hold the deck in the right hand, in position for an Overhand Shuffle with the cards facing left so that you can see them. Note the face card. Let's imagine it's a Six-spot. Pull the top and bottom cards off together, into the left hand, mentally counting 'one' and then draw off five more cards from the face of the deck, counting each one and bringing your count to 'six' which is equal to the noted card. The drawn off cards are shuffled on top of the original milked pair.

Drop the remainder of the deck on top and continue with any False Shuffle or Cut which retains the deck order. You can now cut to three of the selections, just as in the original routine. On cutting the fourth selection you will turn up the Six-spot. It looks like a mistake but you rectify it by dealing six cards off the deck and turning up the final card to reveal the fourth selection. Incidentally the selections will turn up in the reverse order to which they were chosen. That's all for now. Have fun.

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