

DEALING WITH IT

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Diaspora 2020

PRECIS

"Jazz Aces"—with a kicker. Again.

Fairly laid-down Aces vanish one at a time from a small packet and appear with the Ace of Spades.

However, instead of the last Ace appearing with the Ace of Spades, in an unexpected transposition, all of the Aces appear with the last Ace, leaving only spot cards where they used to be!

Streamlined, straightforward, and reasonably easy to do.

NOS ENCANTA

I thought I was done with "Jazz Aces." In an Ace Assembly like "Jazz Aces," the three Aces vanish (kinda) and appear in the leader packet with the fourth Ace. Accordingly, the "rule of three" applies. When the same effect is repeated three times, the rule of three provides sound guidance: do it, repeat it, then change it up and do something unexpected. Typically, the third Ace would travel with great clarity and under stringent conditions. Notwithstanding the "rule," there is usually a lot of room to maneuver.

For example, *Mirage* (1986) included a "Jazz Aces" routine that's still pretty good. In "Be Bop Deluxe" the Aces are not shown as they arrive in the leader packet. Then at the end, the leader packet—presumably the Aces, what else?—is shown to have changed into the Kings. Surprise often forgives a number of conditions.

Over the course of many years, I ended up with "Well-Tempered Aces" which was described in *Season One*. That handling was somewhat demanding, requiring a Bottom-Deal variant and Marlo's infamous "fifth peel." While I still believe it was a good practical trick, it suffered from the

"turn-the-page" phenomenon. You know, when you read something in a trick that really does not interest you or puts you off, you stop reading and move on.

So let's see if we can make the trick more accessible. The result has a lot to like. It does not begin "one-ahead"—no initial switch, all four Aces are on the table. Structurally interesting, the trick starts out even, gets one-behind, catches up to be even again, then gets way ahead. A discrepant switch eliminates all the heavy lifting. No one sees the ending transposition coming.

Works for me. This time, I think we're done.

MISE EN SCENE

Fair Play

Remove the four Aces and four black spot cards. For the spot cards, I use the "rounded" numerals (Sixes, Eights, and Nines), two Clubs and two Spades, with a maximum of one pair, and arrange them so the duplicate numbers are on the top and bottom of the packet. I always use the following:

Eight of Spades, Eight of Clubs, Six of Spades, Nine of Clubs (photo 1).

First, show the Aces and lay them face up on the table in classic "T" formation (photo 2).

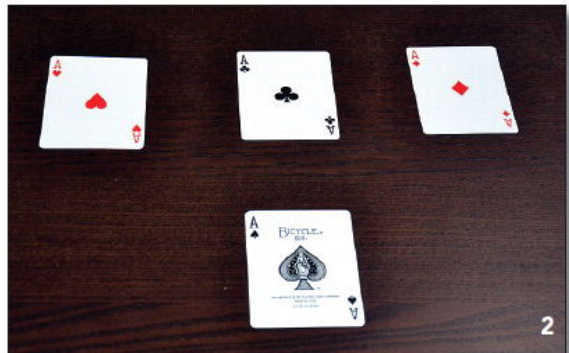
AH AC AD
 AS

Before proceeding, turn each Ace face down.

And then show the spot cards face up in a loose count, reversing the order from your right hand into your left hand dealing position (photo 3). This loose reverse count is part conditioning for the upcoming Elmsley-type counts.



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Implication

Flip the spot-card packet face down. With your right hand, flash the face of the Ace of Spades and replace it. Place the top card of the spot-card packet onto the Ace of Spades without showing its face.

Now, with your right hand, pick up the left Ace, here the Ace of Hearts, and show it (photo 4). You will insert the



Ace into the packet from the back as follows: With your left thumb push the top card of the packet to the right enough so your right hand can slide the Ace under it into second position (photo 5).



Do this deliberately, but do not call too much attention as to exactly where the Ace is being inserted. In other words, do not clearly show the Ace being placed second from the top. This handling is particularly designed so that the spectators cannot be certain exactly where the Ace is.

Give the packet a twist or spin, gently tap the leader packet with it—whatever.

Turn the packet face up and give it an Elmsley Count.

As packet vanishes go, the original face-up Elmsley count is probably still the best. Of course, there is a discrepancy of seeing the same card twice. In the first place, don't worry about it. In the second, don't speed up the count, but slow it down. Take the first two cards, executing the Elmsley exchange. Then pause and open your left hand widely (photo 6). Regrip the cards and continue taking the third card (photo 7). Pause again, then take the last card—I like



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to keep it moving and show both sides (photos 8 and 9). No sweat.



(If you used a packet of four identical Jokers, there is no good reason not to do a straightforward Elmsley Count to show that the Ace is no longer in the packet. None.)

The Ace has apparently vanished, but you do not show that it "arrived" in the leader packet. Not yet. For now, the appearance is left implied.

Instead, move on to the second Ace.

Reconciliation

In the repeat, we'll highlight the "transposition" aspects of the trick. Rather than show that the Ace has arrived, I immediately divert attention by adopting a conspiratorial tone as if I was bringing the participants into my confidence.

"You know how this works, right? The Ace did not simply disappear. It changed places with the black card. I'll show you ... You'll need to remember two cards ..."

Do a Block Pushoff of all but the bottom card and turn the block (three cards) face up onto the packet (photo 10).



Call attention to the identity of this card and highlight that this card will be placed with the Ace of Spades. Let's say it's the Eight of Clubs.

Turn the block face down and put the top card (an Ace) face down onto the leader packet.

Now, with your right hand, pick up the middle Ace, here the Ace of Clubs, and show it (photo 11). As before,



with your left thumb push the top card of the packet to the right. Now from the back of the packet, slide the Ace under it into second position (photo 12).



"You'll need to remember two cards. I'll put the Eight of Clubs with the Aces and the Ace of Clubs with the black cards. Eight [tap the Ace pile]. Ace [gesture with the black pile]. Eight. Ace. With me?"

Again, give the packet a twist or a spin and tap the leader packet. Turn the packet face up into your left hand. With your right hand, grasp the right side of the packet for the following "broken" Elmsley Count procedure. With your left thumb, pull the upper face-up card into your left hand (photo 13). Apparently pull off the next card, but actually



do the Elmsley Count "exchange" (photo 14). Now stop.

The top/face card in your left hand is the same card you purportedly placed in the leader packet, for example the



Eight of Clubs. Call attention to the apparent re-appearance of this card.

Spread the remaining two cards in your right hand by sliding the lowermost card downward and back into your right hand (photo 15). While the card is clearly a spot card,



one index is covered by the base of your right thumb and the other is covered by the upper card. The Ace has apparently vanished and was replaced with the Eight. Place these two cards onto the left packet, squaring them.

Crossing Jordan

You will now show all three Aces, safe and sound, in the leader packet. A Jordan like count provides the actual mechanics. If you are not familiar with the Jordan Count, the concept of this count is not straightforward. Like an Elmsley Count, the main application is a four-as-four count that apparently shows four cards, but actually hides one of them. It works like this:

Let's say you have a packet of four cards and the bottom card is face up (photo A1). Take the packet with your right



hand, by pinching it on the right edge, with your thumb on top, fingers underneath. Now, with your left thumb, pull off the top card into your left hand in usual dealing position. Then, pull off the next card onto the first (photo A2).



The "work" is done as you take the third card. Bring your left hand over to the packet apparently to take the third card. As this is done, your left hand and the initial two cards naturally move beneath the right-hand packet (photo A3). As you do this, hold the left-hand cards by pinching their left sides against the base of your left fingers. Holding the packet in this way allows you to drop your left fingers enough so your right fingers can slide under the left-hand cards.



So on the count of three, as the left cards move under your right hand, you slide those cards into your right hand under the right-hand cards. As soon as the left cards are added to the bottom of the right packet, use your right thumb to push off the top three cards of the packet (using a Block Pushoff).

Finally, with your left hand, take away the pushed-off block of three cards in a counting action (photo A4). The



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last card is taken on top. The reversed card does not show and is now third from the top (photo A5).



That's the basic idea. Now back to the trick:
With your right hand from above, pick up the leader packet and place it face down along the right edge of the left-hand packet (photo 16). With your left thumb, clip the leader packet momentarily so your right hand can change position. Changing your grip provides the motivation for what follows.



Turn your right hand palm down and grasp the right side of the leader packet with your thumb underneath, fingers above.

Now several things happen at once.
Turn your right hand palm upward, turning the packet face up. As you do this, with your right thumb, push over the top two cards, essentially as one (photo 17). Take the



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double card squarely on top of the left-hand black cards.
You are left with presumptively two cards in your right hand, but actually you are holding a single Ace. Keep your hands moving, and don't worry about it.

Maintaining a rhythmic counting action, bring your left hand to your right to take the single Ace on the count of two. As you approach the single card to take it onto the left packet, add the entire left packet *under* the card. Without pausing, with your right thumb, immediately do a Block Pushoff of all but the bottom card. With your left hand, carry away the entire block as you apparently take the second Ace (photo 18). (Seem familiar? The action is the same as in the Jordan Count.)



In your right hand you hold a single face-up Ace which has been secretly transferred from the bottom of the left-hand packet. Finally, take this last Ace onto the left packet (photo 19).



So, it looks like there were *three* Aces in the leader pile which were counted into your left hand. The illusion is very good, especially if you maintain a steady, rhythmic, counting rhythm. Just a little practice ...

Third Time Is The Charm

Okay, now what? As we have seen, done smoothly, the illusion of simply reversing the order of the three right-hand Aces is extremely good. I really like the first phases of this trick—starting clean, going one behind, then catching up. Problem is, now you are caught up—you are neither ahead, nor behind, and everything is exactly as it seems.

A perfect time to change gears. The last Ace is on the table. Now, to set up for the final kickback transposition, we'll switch the first three Aces for three black cards. And we'll employ an effective, but discrepant switch—the Discrepant Block Switch.

Right now, you are holding a face-up seven-card packet: three Aces followed by the four black spot cards. The bottom card of the packet is the same black card you just asked your participant to remember—a happy coincidence.

Let's bring this home.

Slide out the bottom card, turn it perpendicular, and show its face to your participant (photo 20). Ask them to



continue to remember the card, say the Eight of Clubs. Lower your left hand, turning the black card face down. Without additional comment, slide the black card face down back on the bottom of the packet (photo 21). Take the packet in left-hand dealing position.



Now we need a brief moment of time misdirection for your participants to forget (if they noticed at all). This is simply and easily accomplished by calling attention to the lone Ace that has yet to join the other Aces: Pick it up, flash its face, and return it in position. That's all it takes.

Return attention to the packet. Time to switch out the Aces. Spread over the first two Aces (photo 22). On the third Ace, do a Block Pushoff and flip the Aces face down onto the packet (photo 23). The spread of Aces will coalesce as it turns over.

Spread off the top three cards—presumably the Aces—and put them onto the table in a neat pile (photo 24).

There were three face-up black cards under the Aces followed by a face-down card, and the face-down card makes the actions look copacetic. So, you have imperceptibly just



switched out the Aces. As long as your participants don't remember the actual state of the packet. Trust me, they will not remember. In fact, there's a good chance you fooled yourself.

Okay, position check: On the table there is a packet of three face-down cards, presumably three Aces, on the left. One face-down card (the last Ace) is also on the table in its original position. In your left hand, in dealing position, are four face-down cards: three Aces followed by a spot card. Presumably you are holding all four spot cards.

With your right hand take the left-hand packet in Biddle Grip, turning your right hand palm upward to show the spot card on the face.

As you turn your right hand palm downward, bring your left fingers under the packet and slide out the face card into your left hand. Continuing, flash the face of the spot card as you place it onto the supposed Aces (photos 25 and 26).



Then, drop the right-hand packet on the remaining Ace. You'll need to emphasize what exactly you are doing. "Remember how this works? I'll put a spot card with the Aces and put the last Ace with the rest of the spot cards" Pick up the tabled spot-card packet and turn it face up to show the remaining Ace (photo 27). The trick is essen-



tially over; you are actually holding the Aces while the Ace pile on the table actually consists of all four spot cards. "... Now, to bring the Aces together, this Ace will change places with the spot card that's with the Aces, right?" Time to turn the tables, pause a beat and say, "Well, that's one way to do it." Pause another beat to let the audience consider where you are going, then, "Or, we could do this ... and it looks like the band is back together again!" Simply spread the packet in your hands to show all four



Aces (photo 28). The sudden appearance surprises everyone! Continuing, turn over and spread the tabled packet to show all four spot cards (photo 29). Perfect.

POST MORTEM

Credits And Background: I continue to be fascinated by John Neely's routine in which he began a Jazz Ace-type Assembly with all four Aces on the table (no duplicates either). In other words, he was *not* one-ahead as is typically done. See "Jazz It Up" in the "Card Corner," *Linking Ring* (May 2012). I was very intrigued by the notion of a no-initial-switch handling. Kudos to Mr. Neely for this concept.

In early 2013, under completely different circumstances, I saw the estimable Jack Carpenter do a peculiar Jordan Count-like clean-up move at the end of a trick. It was a cool way of secretly transferring a card from one packet to another in a reverse counting maneuver.

Almost immediately, these two concepts combined to form the first two-thirds of this trick. Being two-thirds of the way into a trick and suddenly having no advantage—not ahead, not behind, all cards where they are supposed to be—was a tough challenge. This ending reminds me of various approaches to the "Seven Card Assembly" plot which employs the Aces and only three spot cards, and which no doubt had an influence.

I used a favorite switch to make the last third easier and exceedingly practical. I introduced the Discrepant Fat Block Switch in "Iconoclastic Aces," from *Dear Mr. Fantasy* (2004). The discrepancy derives from the audience not remembering the orientation of certain cards.

The switch was streamlined (and turned upside down) in "Among The Discards," *MAGIC* magazine, July 2004, and in "Watching the Detectives," from around the same time and included in *Six. Impossible. Things.* (2009) and compiled in *High Caliber* (2013), where it was called the Packet Discrepant Block Switch. The switch caught on with several practitioners, including John Carey, who used it in several routines. Recently, I've decided finally to call it the Discrepant Block Switch.

To mix it up a bit, for the second vanish I highlighted the transposition aspect by calling attention to the identity of the spot card that was placed with the Aces. The packet vanish was a face-up Elmsley Count, but "broken" when the spot card reappeared. Wisely, Mr. Neely also played up the transposition aspect, but the idea is not new. I first used this gambit—again at least in part to deal with the discrepancy—back in *Smoke and Mirrors* ("Boogie Woogie Aces," 1991). I'm particularly happy with the last display which I believe was new and deals with the discrepancy most effectively.

"Diaspora" is from the Greek: a scattering, from *diaspeirein* to disperse. When used in lower case, diaspora refers to "the movement, migration, or scattering of a people away from an established or ancestral homeland." Unlike the basic concept of migration, diaspora embraces the idea of "return." Okay, maybe it's a stretch, but it sounds cool.

BADINAGE

What are we going to say about the trick? You *have* to say something. What you say depends on the framework you give the trick—even if that framework is just "adventures of the props." Magic doesn't always need to be meaningful, we're talking card tricks here, but it should always be interesting.

That said, Ace Assemblies are a challenge to present in any way other than "adventures of the props." Even so, let's not default to, "The Ace of Spades will be the leader Ace." Nobody knows what a "leader Ace" is or does. Worse yet, it suggests the "birds of a feather flock together," "exclusive coterie," or "four bank robbers" type of presentation. We can do better than that.

My current approach is to introduce the Aces as the "rock stars" of the deck. That way, when they finally assemble, I can iconically say, "Looks like the band is back together!" I also employ one of my favorite frameworks, "the Master of Time and Space." Altogether, it goes like this:

In the magic hierarchy, just beneath Grand Wizard is Master of Time and Space.

I'll admit that's as far as I ever got.

I only bring this up because I want to try a demonstration of objects moving in space, instantaneously, without any time passing at all.

Let's start with the Aces.

Now the Aces are, of course, the rock stars of the deck. The Ace of Spades would be the lead singer, so we'll put it out front.

Perfect. I've said something, set up a context, and laid the groundwork for the final callback. Now what's essentially "adventures of the props" can take advantage of

that context.

I also have some black spot cards.

I'll place one of the spot cards with the Ace of Spades.

And I'll put the Ace of Diamonds in with the spot cards.

The idea is to make the Ace go from here—over to the Ace of Spades. In no time. And through no space.

Like that.

Look, the Ace has ... vanished! Disappeared into thin air.

Remember we're not going to show the arrival of the Ace yet. So here, I drop out of character and adopt a conspiratorial tone, as if I was really going to divulge some secret.

You know how this works, right?

The Ace didn't disappear, it changed places with the spot card.

Let me show you. You need to remember this card—the Eight of Clubs. I'll put the Eight with the Aces. And I'll place the Ace of Clubs among the spot cards.

Got it? Eight. Ace. Right?

Too late. The Eight is back with the spot cards.

Which means that over here we have ...

The Ace of Spades ...

Diamonds ...

And the Ace of Clubs!

Crossing no space in no time.

Now, we just need to set up the final transposition so the backfire ending is both surprising and logical (as these things go).

One more Ace to go.

You're remembering the Eight of Clubs, right?

We'll put the Aces on the table. And we'll put the Eight of Clubs with them.

We'll place the rest of the spot cards with the last Ace, the Ace of Hearts.

Now, to bring all of the Aces together, the Ace of Hearts has to change places with the Eight of Clubs, right?

Well, that's one way to do it ...

Or we could do it backward ... and it looks like the band is back together.

The spot cards are where they have to be.

And, everything is ... copacetic!

Master of Time and Space.

Of course, your mileage may vary. But, you knew that. •