



# DEALING WITH IT

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## On The Border

### PRÉCIS

Calling them a "prediction, sort of," the performer removes two cards from the deck. One card, he explains, predicts the value of a playing card; the other predicts a suit.

The participant then shuffles the deck and deals cards into a face-down pile on the table, stopping wherever they like. The last card dealt is set aside as the selection.

The performer shows the "value" card, let's say it's a Six, and the suit card, say it's a Club, and explains that in this instance, the cards have predicted the Six of Clubs.

The card the participant freely selected—from cards that they shuffled—is the Six of Clubs!

### NOS ENCANTA

Okay, maybe I left a little detail out of the description.

Alex Elmsley's "The Mexican Prediction," from which this trick hails, predicts a completely fair selection from a spectator-shuffled deck. Brilliant, genius even, but ...

- It uses a Mexican Turnover to switch the actual selection for one of the prediction cards. Not many can do this move well enough to get away with it. I know I can't.
- In order to know which prediction card to switch, the suit of the actual selection had to be secretly glimpsed pretty much under fire.
- Importantly, it only worked directly *half the time*. The other half of the time, the performer must add more procedure, complicating the trick and bogging it down.

Use of the Mexican Turnover helps it appear that the selected card remains isolated from the prediction cards. Even aside from the relative difficulty, however, choreographing and justifying the move can be a real challenge. Let's look for a different, more accessible switch.

Not a lot to do about the necessity of a Glimpse, but it should be carefully choreographed. Otherwise, it can be somewhat obvious. Let's work on that, too.

Finally, let's try to find a practical, defensible way to preserve the key element of the trick—the free shuffle and free selection—and have it work 100 percent of the time. The original trick works by removing a pair of mated cards, say,

the Seven of Spades and the Seven of Diamonds. Because only two of the suits are represented (here, Spades and Diamonds), the trick won't work if the selected card is one of the other two suits.

A couple of other peoples' "fixes" involve getting two ahead, placing two mates in their pocket ahead of time. At showtime, the performer removes the other two mates and places them in the same pocket, giving him access to all four mates, and guaranteeing that the trick will work no matter which suit is selected. Use of the pocket, however, now needed to be justified. I don't know about you, but as soon as the performer places a live object in his pocket, I instinctively feel like the pocket has got to be part of the method. I've been right every single time.

So can we do this without pockets or other devices? Can we start as squeaky clean as the Elmsley trick with just two cards on the table? It turns out, yes, we can.

### MISE EN SCÈNE

#### DIVIDE AND CONQUER

Allowing the participant to shuffle and select a card in an undeniably fair way is what makes this trick worth doing. That said, we don't need to allow the participant to shuffle the *entire* deck, as long as there is the illusion that all the cards are in play.

The selected card may be one of two suits. So, let's limit the selection to only two suits. That way the trick works 100 percent of the time. We can do this convincingly. Accordingly, before beginning the trick, divide the deck into Hearts and Spades in one half, Clubs and Diamonds in the other. It's not difficult and can be done quickly. One way is to spread through the deck and upjog all the Clubs and Diamonds (photo 1), strip them out and place them on





You'll need to explain what you are doing and why you are doing it.

"Okay, I am going to look beyond the veil and use my psychic superpower to try to see what will happen in the very near future. In a minute, you will nominate a card from this shuffled deck. Obviously, I can't remove that card, so I'll do the next best thing: I'll remove one card to foretell the value and a second card to tell the suit."

top of, or behind, the remaining Spades and Hearts. That's pretty much it. You now have a "divided" deck (photo 2).

We are trading off total impromptuism for a practical trick that works and does not require special clothing (that is, a pocket) or devices (such as a Himber wallet). The divided deck, moreover, can be made expediently. Although, it may take a few run-throughs to get used to the Clubs-Diamonds/Spades-Hearts split.

Once the deck is divided, it can be given as many Jog Shuffles or Ireland Shuffles as you like. You can also casually show the face of the cards to illustrate that the deck has been shuffled and is not in any particular order. (You could divide the deck into reds and blacks. The trick will still work as described, but then, you could not show the faces at this point.

#### SHOWTIME

I'll describe this with Jog Shuffles, but Ireland Shuffles, or a mixture of both, work just as well.

Give the deck a Jog Shuffle preserving the divided halves.

Raise your hands and spread the cards between them, showing the faces to your participant. Give them a brief, in-motion look and no one will notice the divided nature of the deck—the cards will look well and truly shuffled.

Now, spread the cards toward yourself and, from the top divided half (at the back of the face-up deck), remove two cards of the same value. There will only be two, and one will be red and the other black. You'll need to know which card is which when the cards are face down. I always place the black card at the face of the pair. Let's say we're using the Seven of Diamonds and the Seven of Clubs (photo 3).

Place the pair face down on the table with the Seven of Clubs lowermost (photo 4).



Give the deck another Jog Shuffle, preserving the divided halves. Then, place the deck face down in front of your participant.

### FREEDOM

Tell your participant that you want to make sure that she has an absolutely free choice. Then ask her to cut off some cards, but "less than half the deck." She can cut any amount of cards as long as she cuts within the upper, divided half (photo 5).



After she makes her cut, ask her to shuffle her cards. Make a big deal of this. This shuffle of half the deck stands in for the full-deck shuffle in the Elmsley trick. The crux is that your participant will remember that she *shuffled*—exactly what she shuffled is not as important as the fact that she did shuffle. That's the theory, at least. Sure, we are trading off, but in practice, it's not that much of a trade-off, and now the trick works.

Continuing, after she shuffles, ask your participant to deal her cards into a face-down pile on the table and to stop whenever she feels psychically compelled to (yeah, right) (photo 6). When she does, do the usual, "Do you want to deal some more? Take some back?"



Finally, ask if she meant to stop on the last card she dealt, or on the card that's on top of the remaining cards in her hand.

Run through this with cards in hand. It all seems so very fair. For the most part, it is.

### GLIMPSE OF WHAT IS TO COME

Whether she nominated the top card of the tabled pile, or of the packet in her hand, you pretty much do the same thing.

With your palm-down right hand, slide the nominated card toward you onto your right thumb. You are not exactly "picking" the card off the packet, but sliding it so your right thumb is about halfway under the card (photo 7).



Once you've got the card, raise your right hand a bit and angle the rear of the card upward slightly. Move the card to the center of the table, near but forward of the two prediction cards. During this movement, you can glimpse the card (photo 8).



This is an effective glimpse which is derived from Dai Vernon's, "Out of Sight, Out of Mind." (Ganson, *More Inner Secrets of Card Magic*, 1960). While getting the value and the suit is unavoidable, all you really need to know is the color.

### SWITCH

Now you will apparently sandwich the selected card between the two prediction cards and you will turn the prediction cards face up. Actually, in the process, you'll switch the card that was selected for the relevant prediction card. We'll use a version of Marlo's handling for the switch of the "Mystery Card" in Bro. Hamman's synonymous trick (which appeared in my trick, "Heart of the City" in *Smoke and Mirrors*, 1992).

Hold the squared pair or prediction cards face down in left-hand dealing position. You will want to take, with

your right hand, the card that is the opposite color as the glimpsed selected card. It's simple; if the selected card is black, take the top prediction card (that's why we always put the black card of the pair on the face). If the selected card is red, take the bottom card of the prediction pair in your right hand.

In this example, the actual selection is black—the Three of Clubs—so you would take the top card (the Seven of Diamonds) in your right hand (photo 9).



Once each hand has a prediction card, remind your participant that one card will predict the suit—here, with a short shake, indicate the card in your left hand—and the other will predict the value of the card—here, gesture with your right. So far, so good; time for the switch.

Move both hands forward and scoop up the tabled selected card. The right-hand card goes below the tabled card and the left-hand card is placed above to “steady” the scoop (photo 10). Do not square the three-card sandwich.



With your right hand, move the lowermost card to the right (photo 11). Calling it the “value” prediction, and flip it face up (photo 12). As all attention is drawn to the card being turned face up, with your left thumb, slide the uppermost card of its pair to the right (photo 13).

In a continuing action, with your right hand, take the uppermost card of the left hand pair *under* the face-up card (photo 14). And now, with your left hand, flip its





card face up calling it the "suit" prediction (photo 15). Place the face-up left-hand card under the right-hand pair (photo 16).



The "suit" prediction is, of course, the actual selected card which has now been switched for the appropriate card. The new "selected" card, now sandwiched between the prediction cards, will always be the same value and the same suit as the predictions. Always. Because we started with a pair of mates, one of the mates becomes the selected card and will have the same value as the other selected card. Because the suits have been limited, it will also have the same suit as the actual selected card which has now become the "suit" card.

To finish, remind your participant which card you are looking for by pointing out the now face-up prediction cards—one for the suit, one for the value (photo 17). Then, show that the face-down "selected" card has been perfectly predicted (photo 18).

#### POST MORTEM

Background and Source: Alex Elmsley's "The Mexican Prediction" can be found in Stephen Minch's *The Collected Works of Alex Elmsley, Volume 2* (1994).

#### SWITCHED SWITCH

Once you understand the Marlo switch, you'll see how flexible it is and how it can be varied depending upon how



you want to use your right and left hands. In the text, I've described a right-handed version. The more astute among you may have noticed that in the demonstration video, I used a left-hand version of the switch. Over the last year or so, I have landed on the right-hand version in the text as perhaps being slightly more deceptive. Or not—it likely is just a personal preference.

#### IRELAND SHUFFLE

For those who are not familiar with it, the Ireland shuffle is an Overhand Shuffle especially designed to maintain a divided deck.

In brief, in an Overhand Shuffle, chop about a third of the cards into your left hand. Then, run the cards singly until you are sure you have passed the center of the deck. Finally shuffle off the remainder as you usually would.

Presto! The divided deck is still divided, but the respective halves have been reversed—the top half is now the bottom half. A second Ireland Shuffle will bring this half back to the top. •

[The shuffle was invented by Charles Jordan and explained in his 1919 booklet *Thirty Card Mysteries*.]