



Inside Ed's Head

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Impromptu Blankwave Revisited (A Deck Undergoes a Radical Change.)

In 1981, Richard Kaufman released *Cardworks*, his second hardcover book on card magic. Its focus (IMHO) was on visually appealing card magic. He also constructed most of the effects in a straight line, using techniques in his arsenal that got the job done to his satisfaction.

When I first bought the book, looking at the first few tricks made me think that the tricks in the book were beyond my abilities. Most were, although I might have gotten one or two had I persevered.

Anyway, the book sat in the “K” section of my bookshelf for over thirty-five years before I took another shot at it. Right at the beginning, I found an excellent color change that seemed quite effective. Then, I found a great trick that used that move. Unfortunately, I still couldn't do it. There was no way I could set up the four cards necessary using the difficult sleights Richard used for the trick. Fortunately, in the years that the book was sitting on the shelf, I had developed a lot more expertise and a penchant for adjusting tricks from books to fit my skills and demeanor. I set out to find a method to do that trick, and I eventually prevailed.

I didn't make this a self-working trick but at least I put this within the wheelhouse of any intermediate-to-advanced magician who was able to perform a “reverse.” There are many moves published that are used to accomplish this; I've already discussed Ken Krenzel's “Mechanical Reverse” in a previous column. This is very well suited to this effect but any reverse/half pass you can do is suitable.

Effect

The magician shows an “unusual” deck he's just found. All the faces are blank. He asks two spectators to name any card. Then, he takes the deck and, with a flourish, cuts to two cards he claims are the cards called by the spectators. The spectators seem unimpressed; the cards are blank, after all. The magician acknowledges that there might be some chance the cards he produces aren't the right ones. He gives the cards a snap and they instantly turn into the named selections. As a bonus, the rest of the deck changes; all the cards now have printed faces.

Setup

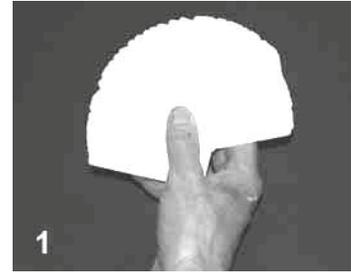
You'll need a regular deck and two blank-face cards with a back that matches the deck you'll be using. These cards should be prepared so you can cut them to the bottom. (Only one card needs this treatment, but I do

both, so I can't get confused.) I normally use corner shorts at the top left and lower right, so I'll describe the trick that way. One blank-face card should be on the bottom of the deck, the other should be about a quarter of the deck from the bottom.

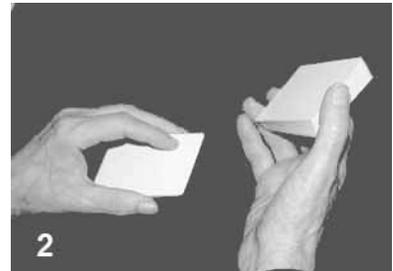
The deck should be in new or good condition, so you can fan it without "clumping." It is in its case.

Method

Tell your audience you have a special deck that might be of interest to them. Remove the deck from the case with the backs uppermost. Turn the deck to yourself and do a reverse fan so you will see an apparently blank deck. There are several different ways you can make a blank fan. I like to hold the deck in my right hand at the lower right corner, thumb at the face, right fingers curled under the back of the deck, so my middle and ring finger nails are supporting the cards from the rear. (Photo 1.)



Turn the "blank" cards to your audience. Say, "This is an unusual deck of cards. Only an extraordinarily perceptive people can see their faces clearly." Close the fan and hold the deck face down, in dealing position. Cut the deck to the blank card near the bottom with your right hand and then turn the hand palm up to display it. Simultaneously, turn your left hand palm down, to show the other blank card on the bottom. (Photo 2.)



Say, "Can you see that I have the Four of Clubs and the Two of Hearts showing?" Return your hands to a normal position and swing-cut a small block of cards on top of those in your left hand. (Photo 3.) Turn your hands to display the two blanks as in Photo 2 and say, "And here are the Ten of Spades and the Ace of Hearts." Continue cutting small blocks of cards like this, displaying the blanks and naming the cards "showing" on their faces.



As you get to a point where you can't swing-cut any more cards, buckle the bottom card of the deck and put the cards remaining in your right hand over the buckled card—between it and the bottom of the deck. This will put the two blank cards on the bottom.

You now ask the spectators to name any two cards. Let's assume they say

the Eight of Hearts and Seven of Spades. Claim you will now use your magical abilities to find those two cards. Now, use any technique(s) you prefer to “produce” the two blank-face cards on the bottom of the deck. Some of those that might be used are the Johnny Benzais ‘s “Spinout,” Piet Forton’s “Pop-Out Move,” J. K. Hartman’s “Popover,” etc. You could just double- or triple-cut the bottom card to the top and turn it over triumphantly. I’ll discuss another production technique in the Afterword.

After you produce each card, display its (blank) face triumphantly and say, “Here’s the Seven of Spades; here’s the Eight of Hearts.” Your audience is unlikely to go into paroxysms of astonishment. Note their look of incredulity, pick up the two cards you just produced and say, “Yes, I can see how you might not be certain that I got your cards; it *is* a little bit hard to tell for sure. Let me check to see if your cards might be in the deck.”

Place the blanks, one on top of the other, *face down* on the table, near the edge. (Photo 4, spectator's view.) Pick up the deck and begin spreading the deck towards yourself. When you come to each of the “named” cards, slip it to the face of the deck, saying something like, “Hmm, this looks like it’s a possibility.”



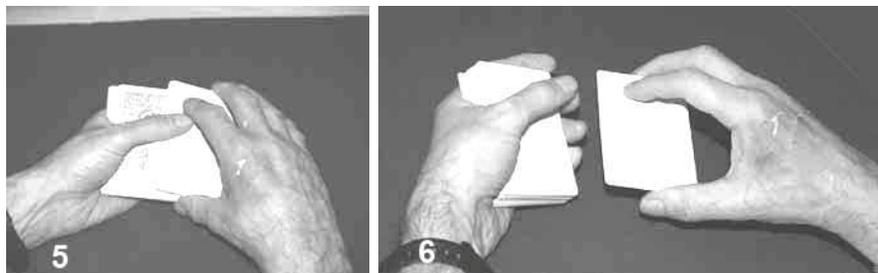
After you’ve brought both cards to the face, you must now reverse the bottom card. As you close the spread, insert your little finger between the two face cards. This puts you in the perfect position to perform Ken Krenzels’ “Mechanical Reverse” as you turn the deck face down and put it into dealing position. (A full description is in the July 2015 issue of *Inside Ed’s Head*.

<http://www.edhassmagic.com/edshead/EH-2015-07.pdf>.) Of course, you can use any reverse/half-pass that you’re comfortable with that ends up in left-hand dealing position.

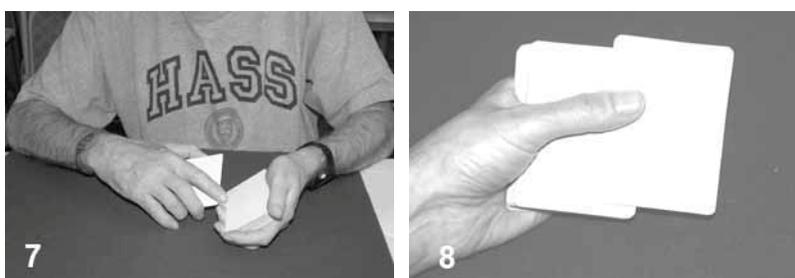
As you finish the reverse, buckle the bottom card so that you can push the card above it out to the side a bit. Then pull down on the sidejogged card with your left fingers so you can get a break under the named cards.

Now say, “No. I’m positive I got it right the first time.” You’ll now apparently sweep the face-down blank cards off the table and place them face up on top of the deck, by doing the following: take the deck into right hand Biddle grip, maintaining the break with your right thumb. Place the deck on top of the two facedown blank cards and sweep them into your left hand, waiting behind the tabletop. As the cards hit the left hand, drop the two cards below the break on top of them. Immediately take these four cards and flip them over on top of the deck—blank faces showing. Get a little-finger break below them as you do. The position at this point should be: two face-up blanks; one of the named cards face down; the other named card, face up.

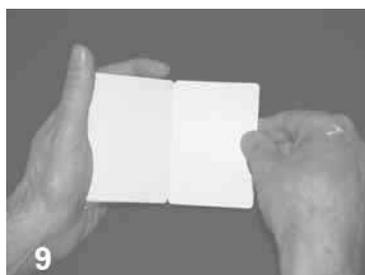
You will now perform Richard Kaufman's "Radical Change." (*Cardmagic*, 1979, p. 80.) Lift the four-card packet above the break with your right hand—fingers in front, thumb at the rear. Move the packet to the right, retaining the top card on top of the deck with your left thumb. (Photos 5 and 6.)



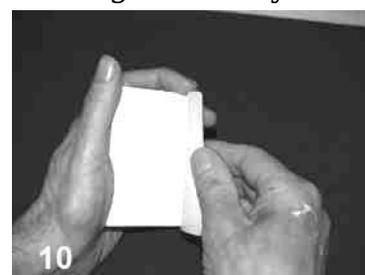
Point to the blank card on top of the pack with your right index finger (Photo 7, spectator's view) and say, "I'm *sure* this is the . . ." (Name the card that you reversed.) Place the right-hand cards under your left thumb (Photo 8) and say, ". . . and this is the . . ." (Name the other card.)



"Sometimes, all it takes is a little rub to make the cards easier to see." Take the sidejogged cards between your left thumb, on top, and your fingers below. (Richard Kaufman uses only his index finger; I like to hold the cards with my index and middle fingers.) Move these cards to the right so they are aligned at their long sides. (Photo 9.)



Using this side as an axis, fold the cards toward each other. (Photo 10.)



As you approach a face-to-face situation, your right thumb pinches the two face cards of its packet forward and the right thumb pulls back, letting two cards spring off the right thumb and landing on top of the deck in the left hand. (Photo 11.)



Immediately return your hands to a palm-up position, showing the two "visible" cards. (Photo 12,



spectator's view.) Scale the right hand card to the spectator that named it and say, "Yup, here's the Eight of Hearts and here's the Seven of Spades," as you push the top card into your right hand and scale it toward the other spectator.

It's now easy to take a break below the two top cards, due to the face-up card. Say, "The funny thing is, once some cards become visible, *all* the cards become visible." Now grasp the deck at its upper and lower left corners with your right thumb and middle finger and turn the cards face up by rotating them book-wise, using the right side of the deck as an axis. This will cause a step to form at the lower right corner as the deck turns face up. Use this step to take a break over the two blank cards. Immediately cop the cards and then spread the deck face up on the table.

Have smelling salts available for any fainting spells among your audience.

Afterword

At an IBM Ring 244 meeting, Zach Mandel showed a flashy cutting procedure that makes it appear that you've found a card in the middle of the deck. He says it's based on a Dai Vernon idea. The cards you wish to produce must start on the top of the deck, so in the context of this routine, double-cut the two blank cards to the top of the deck.

Take the deck in right-hand Biddle grip. Swing cut about two-thirds of the deck into the left hand, then place the remainder of the right-hand cards on top of these, keeping a break between the two sections with your left little finger. Retake the deck in your right hand, maintaining the break with your right thumb—it should be about one-third of the way down in the deck. Now, move your right hand to the table and drop about one-half of the cards below the break to the table. As soon as the first packet hits the table, release the cards below the break immediately to its right. Then move your hand to the right and place the remaining cards at the end of the row started by the first two piles. Finally, snap up the card on top of the middle pile. Place this card aside. It's amazingly simple and surprisingly effective! I was there when Zach fooled a room full of magicians with it.

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