



Inside Ed's Head

Written by Ed Hass

Edited by Sal Mannuzza

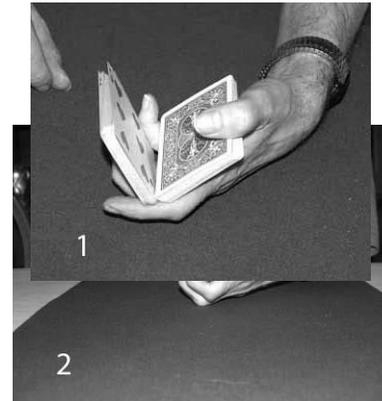
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Hass on the Half-Pass

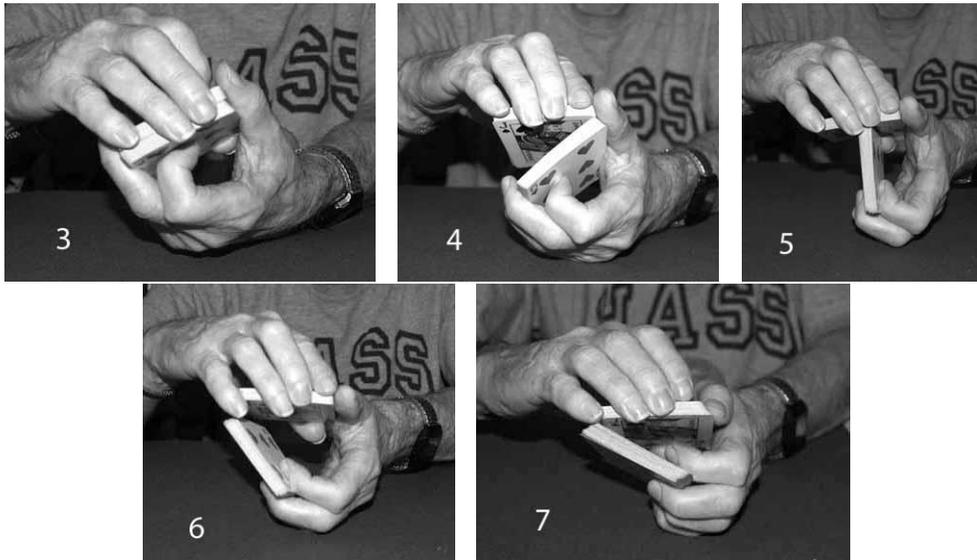
(With a Little Twist)

Last month I taught a trick by Jerry Hartman that used a half-pass. I mentioned that I wasn't comfortable with the half-pass and tended to use Ken Krenzels's Mechanical Reverse when I felt I needed to reverse cards.

So, what is a half-pass, anyway? *Expert Card Technique*, by Hugard and Braue, mention it at the beginning of their chapter on "Reverses." They say that a half-pass is just what it sounds like—a classic pass that leaves something out. The first part of a classic pass has the left fingers levering the top half of the deck into a vertical position to the right of the bottom half. (Photo 1, Front View. Right Hand Removed.) The next piece has the left thumb pulling down on the left side of the bottom half, causing the right side to rise so that the top cards can clear the bottom half. (Photo 2, Front View.) In the Pass, the left fingers curl in to deposit the cards they control face down into the left hand. In the half-pass, this step is omitted. The two packets just coalesce, face to face. Notice that this move is quite different than the way we think of half-passes today. It reverses the *top* cards and brings them to the bottom.



Today, we think of a half-pass as a move that reverses the *bottom* half and *leaves it* on the bottom. How do we do that? The standard approach is simple. You hold a break over the cards to be reversed. Your left index finger curls under the packet (Photo 3, Front View.) and your right hand lifts the right long edge of the cards above the break (Photo 4, Front View) to make room for the left index finger to push up and to the right. (Photos 5 and 6, Front View.)



At this point, you merge the two halves either by lowering the right hand's cards onto the lower packet or by raising the bottom cards to meet those on the top—depending on how you will proceed. (Photo 7, Front View.)

Well, I believe a digression is in order. While taping myself trying to learn these moves, I noticed that there was a noticeable disadvantage in performing seated at a table.

Seated, with one's hands on the table, the elbows will be lower than the hands. This causes the forward end of the cards to be higher than the rear end, which gives the spectator a very good view of the left hand's index finger and knuckles. (Photo 8. Card Fanned to Help Me Make My Point.)



If you are standing, the normal position of your hands at your waist has the cards in an almost vertical position. The cards and the right hand easily hide most chicanery performed by the left hand. Additionally, the cards are further away from your face while standing than sitting. This provides an additional degree of misdirection while you are talking.

People looking at your face as you talk will have the cards deeper in their peripheral vision and if you are sitting. Unless the sitting magician's right hand can hold the deck in a way that totally obscures the front end of the deck and the left knuckles, the move *will* flash. Some performers turn to their left and display cards vertically, at shoulder height. (Photo 9.)



This gives you excellent cover, similar to a standing magician. I find it's somewhat unnatural to make such a large body turn while seated and completely unsuitable if I'm at the head of the table and have spectators

seated to my left and right. However, if you have two or three people across a table from you, this type of display might work.

Viewing the videos of me doing the half-pass, I found that even if my right hand was placed on the packet to hide the cards being flipped over, I couldn't hide the movement of my left first finger, especially at the second knuckle. Fortunately, I found that with a bit of practice, you could just as easily use the little and ring fingers to lever the cards over, just like they do in a classic pass. Here's the way to do this half-pass. (We are using a packet of five cards: four face-up kings with a face-down selection below them.)

The Little-Finger Half-Pass

Start with the packet in mechanic's grip. Lean forward; stretch your left arm toward the spectator and fan the packet to show the four kings. As you do this, curl your little finger under the packet and place your ring finger in position to get a break under the top three cards. The packet should be held entirely in your left hand, as you patter. (Photo 10, Spectator View.)



Note that moving forward and stretching out your arm, will place your elbows *above* your hands and the forward ends of the cards are now *lower* than the rear, so the cards completely obscure your left fingers—except for the left forefinger which remains in mechanic's grip position. Close the fan with your right hand in a deep overhand grip, obscuring as much of the front of the packet as possible. Dig your ring finger into the packet to get control of the two lower cards. As you are doing this, lean back to start moving your hands to their original position. Moving backward will give you extra misdirection.

Your right fingers will now rotate the right side of the cards above the break upwards somewhat as your left hand lowers its cards enough to give them



enough room to clear the top cards. (Photo 11.) As soon as this is done, the little and ring fingers will uncurl, so that the face of the selection will be facing the king above it. (Photo 12.) The left hand moves its cards upward so the packets may coalesce; the little finger curls out of the way



as this happens. The packet ends up in the right hand, in an overhand grip. It can immediately return the packet to mechanic's grip. I think this is a remarkably clean half-pass for the seated magician.

The Christ Twist

Thanks to Henry Christ, there is another half-pass that is useful in situations where you want to reverse the bottom cards of a packet or the entire deck. Its only drawback is that it uses an all-around-square-up where one might not be called for.

Since you will be simulating an all-around-square-up, let's see what a normal one looks like. The cards start in mechanic's grip in the left hand. The right hand takes the packet in an overhand grip and lifts the rear end moving the packet to a vertical position with the palm facing to the right. As soon as the right hand begins to take the cards, the left hand lets go, rotates clockwise, and takes the cards between the thumb and fingers on the long ends in a squaring motion. (Photos 13 - 14. Spectator View.)

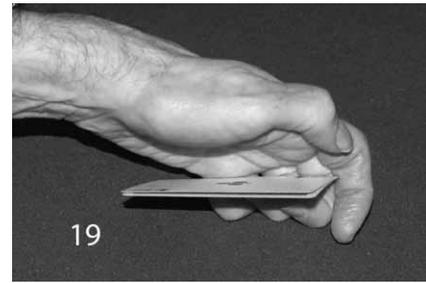


The right hand now releases its grip and the left hand rotates clockwise for a quarter turn and turns palm-up, so the right hand can come back and take the cards at the short ends and square them. (Photo 15.) The right hand now places the packet back in mechanic's grip. This move is done in two beats. Beat 1: The right hand takes the cards from the left and rotates the cards 180 degrees to be squared along the long sides by the left hand. Beat 2: The left hand rotates the cards 180 degrees to be squared along the short sides by the right hand.



Now, let's learn the Christ Twist. The packet starts in mechanic's grip in the left hand, with a break over the cards to be reversed. The right hand takes the cards above the break in an overhand grip. As soon as it does so, the left hand rotates its cards clockwise, in the horizontal plane. Notice that the ball of the left thumb is in contact with the upper-right corner of the top packet. (Photo 16.) The right hand rotates its cards up, over the outer left-hand corner of the bottom packet with a clockwise motion of the forearm as the left-hand turns palm down, claspings its cards between its fingertips and palm. The (now) right-hand corner of the bottom packet will end up flush with the reversed bottom cards. (Photo 17, Spectator View. Photo 18, Bottom View. Photo 19, Right Hand Removed.)





As the left hand continues its rotating motion, it pushes its cards more or less square with those in the right hand as the right hand finishes its rise to the position shown earlier in Photo 15, where the left hand is squaring the cards. This completes the reversal, and the first beat of the square up. The second beat is identical to the second beat of the real thing.

The Upsy-Daisy Reverse

Now, after all that heavy sleight of hand, you should know that I came up with a reverse that doesn't use a half-pass. This can be used in any small packet trick in which you must show both sides of the packet.

Going back to the Hartman trick from last month, you've just dropped the four face-up kings on top of the unseen selection. Lift the entire packet in right-hand overhand grip; your right index finger is on the upper left corner of the packet and your thumb is about at the center of the lower end. Extend the middle, ring and little fingers so as not to obscure the face card. (Photo 20, Spectator View.) Say, "This is your card." Place the cards into your left hand, spread the cards, and say, "These are my cards." Close the spread. As you do, get a right thumb break or ring-finger Verdase break under the third card and lift the packet again as in Photo



20. Say, "What is this?" As he replies, you'll do the following: Move your right hand back to the left hand, relaxing the right fingers so they completely obscure the front of the deck.



(Photo 21. Spectator's View.) The left hand receives the cards between the ball of the left thumb slightly above center of the left side and all four fingers on the right. (Photo 22. Right Hand Removed.) There is no pause as you apparently turn the packet over, as follows. The right hand never leaves the packet. As soon as the left hand is in position, the right hand takes all the cards over the break and begins to revolve them in front of the remaining cards. (Photo 23, Front View, Photo 24, Side View as Cards Continue to Revolve.)



Notice that from the front, the right fingers obscure the cards in the left hand, preserving the illusion that the packet is being turned over. You should note that you should not attempt to revolve the cards and place them square with the cards behind them. See Photo 25 for a view from your perspective.

You can now retake the cards by relaxing your grip somewhat so the three cards you've just turned over fall into your palm, merging with the cards below. Now, turn your left hand palm down and take the cards into your right hand to continue.

If you want to see me demonstrating these sleights, go to <http://edhassmagic.com/half-pass.mp4>.

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