



Inside Ed's Head

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The Stainless Steal (It's Easier than You Might Think)

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Last month, I reviewed Jerry Andrus's *Card Control*. I mentioned that some of his sleights were physically beyond me. However, they are in the minority. His "Stainless Steal" interested me. I had always felt that my toolkit of sleights was one item short. I didn't have a side steal. Yes, I had one in my head. I knew and understood LePaul's version from *The Card Magic of LePaul*, by Jerry McDermott, p. 45. I even used it to fool my wife. However, I never felt comfortable with it. In addition to the mechanics being somewhat difficult, I wasn't thrilled that the move followed a peek.

Let me clear up some possible confusion here. When a magician uses the word "peek," he is talking about a way that the spectator can select a card. In my opinion, the most magical way of doing this is: hold the deck in your left hand, you ask the spectator to lift the outer left corner (in the spectator's orientation), and look at the index of the card he sees. Another way of doing this is to have the *magician* riffle the cards, stop when the spectator wishes, and then offer the deck for the spectator to look at the card stopped at.

I believe that any trick that begins with the latter of these is entirely too suspicious—that the spectator will almost surely suspect that the odd selection process has something to do with the outcome. I'm also wary of the first method; that's why I've only used it once. As a matter of fact, virtually *all* side steals are followed by a peek; that's why they've never made it into my repertoire. (For the record, when a magician secretly looks at the face of a card, we call that a "glimpse.")

I suggest you watch the following video before you continue reading. You'll see the Stainless Steal in action. (Don't judge me too harshly; I've been doing this less than a month.)

<http://www.edhassmagic.com/videos/stainless-steal.mp4>

The Stainless Steal isn't preceded by a peek. Most of Andrus's sleights follow an insertion of an outjogged card into the deck. The way I get the

card outjogged is: I first spread the cards for a card to be selected. When



the spectator grasps the card I break the spread at that point. I loosely square the left-hand cards, while leaving the right-hand cards spread. (Photo 1.) I have the spectator return the card to the top of the left-hand cards, then I push it to the right with my left thumb. My right hand approaches the rear of those in my left and takes the selection under the spread with my right fingers. The right hand moves forward, leaving the selection in an outjogged position. Note how far I leave



the card outjogged. If I leave the card more outjogged, I will have difficulty doing the move. Your hand size will determine the height of the selection in the spread. (Photos 2 - 4.)

Raise the cards to show the selection to the spectator(s) one more time. (Photo 5, audience view.)

There are other ways of getting a selection outjogged; I'm sure they can be used with this sleight.

Lower your hands to a horizontal position as you begin to loosely square up the cards. As they are almost horizontal, your right hand moves to the outjogged card to push it "flush." (I believe that having the selection outjogged in a spread gives you a bit of extra misdirection as you square the cards while pushing the selection into the deck.) Extend your right fingers over the card, the crotch of your ring finger and little fingers moving to its outer right corner. (Photo 6, viewed from underneath.) Notice that the right fingers are *not* perpendicular to the card. They are almost parallel to it.



You will now use Jerry Andrus's "Clivot Principle," (short for Clamp Pivot) which will angle the card as you push it straight into the deck. I, as do most of the magicians I know, use Mechanics Grip to hold the cards, so I'll describe the move with the deck held that way. If you, as does Jerry, hold the deck with all four of your left fingers on the right side of the deck, substitute "left index finger" in the places where I use "left middle finger."

OK, you have an outjogged card and you're putting your right hand in position to push it flush. As you are doing this, start squeezing the deck by pressing your left middle finger down onto the deck, as if you want to touch your left palm. (How hard will come with practice.) The cards should be horizontal by this time.

With your right hand, push the card *straight* into the deck with your middle and ring fingers. The pressure of your left middle finger will cause the card to go in at an angle. (Photo 7, right hand removed.) I suggest you practice nothing but this until your tendency to use your right hand to angle the cards goes away. This can be a dead giveaway that you're doing something sneaky.



Looking at Photo 7, note the position of the left little finger. It is imperative that it is *under* the lower right corner of the selection.

You might have to adjust the position of the card with your left thumb and/or little finger to be in position to do the move properly. This shouldn't be a problem, as your right hand is covering the deck at that time and if you need to do it, it takes a but a fraction of a second. (I often move my little finger away from the deck as the card is being inserted and get it in position *after* the card is pushed flush.) As soon as your right hand reaches the position in Photo 7, your right ring and little fingers will pivot the selection around your left little finger to the right, so it is above the rest of the deck, with its outer edge parallel to the rest of the deck. (Photo 8 top view, right hand opened for clarity, Photo 9. bottom view.)



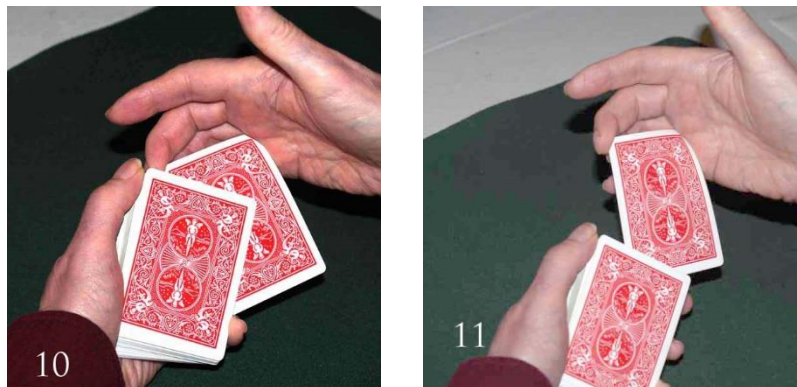
Your right hand now places your right middle finger on the outer left corner of the card. I suggest you use the outer right part of the ball of your finger or even the outer right side of the finger. Experimentation will tell you how to get a proper grip. This finger should hold the card firmly in the crotch of the ring and little fingers but not so firmly that the card bends.

At this point, Jerry moves the right hand directly to the right, until the card is free of the deck; then he points to one of the audience members to cover

the motion of the right hand. I don't do that. I would never want to draw attention to the hand that has a card clipped in that manner.

Of course, Jerry worked in a different setting than I do. He would normally perform standing in front of people standing or sitting ten - twelve feet in front of him; he also had very large hands and used bridge-sized cards. I work mostly sitting at a table with spectators sitting at my left and right. I have small to average-sized hands and mostly use poker cards (although I've recently begun experimenting with bridge-sized cards). He certainly knows what conditions are suitable for each of his moves, so he I'm sure he wouldn't have used this technique if it were dangerous.

Here's how I do it: I begin to lean forward; I'm about to offer the deck to the spectator for shuffling. From the position in the previous photos, rotate your right hand a bit counter-clockwise. This will add extra cover to the card and make it easier to remove the card from the deck silently.



Almost simultaneously, you will rotate the left hand a bit clockwise (Photo 10, right hand opened). As you lean forward, your right hand should move forward faster than the left and draw the card out of the deck. (Photo 11, right hand opened, an instant before the card is removed from the deck.) If you hear a click as the card is removed, you are either holding the deck too tightly in the left hand, or you are not moving the left hand in the plane of the right-hand cards.

(Jerry does not give this clip/palm a name, so until I learn better, I'll call it the "Andrus Middle Finger Clip." Since that's rather a mouthful, I'll abbreviate it to the AMF Clip.)

As the selection is freed, drop your right hand straight down to the edge of the table so the rear of the card is protected. (Photo 12.) Offer the deck to someone to shuffle. You can now hold out the card quite comfortably. It's probably a good idea to exert a little bit of extra pressure with the right middle finger on the corner of the card so the card bows upwards in your hand somewhat. This will give you extra control and cover.



If later, you wish to replace the card on top of the deck, it's easy. Just move your right hand to the top of the deck and once it's directly over it, just open it and grasp the deck in overhand grip—thumb at the rear fingers in front. I think this is the easiest top-card replacement out there.

Afterword

Looking at the video, I'm not crazy about the way Jerry suggests pushing the card into the deck. It shouldn't take your entire hand to push in a card. I'll try to find an alternative that will make me happier.

I started working on this move a little less than a month ago. I practiced while I watched TV, slowly going through the motions—paying particular attention to the left hand position. As I did this, I eventually was able to increase my speed until I believe I'm doing the move reasonably well. (Of course, I'm legally blind and might not be seeing my mistakes on the video.)

I also realized that it was important to ascertain the most "trustworthy" position for the outer right corner of the card in the right hand. I liked the position I described above. You may find you like some other nearby position. Don't be afraid to experiment.

As I've mentioned many times, dry skin might make it impossible to do these moves without stumbling. If you find the card slipping out of your right hand grip, it might be time for moisturizer.

Next Month, I'll give a trick that takes advantage of the Stainless Steal and the AMF Clip specifically. I'll also have some other goodies for you.

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