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### Head To Head Poker

Let's open *Gold Dust* with a trick that is easy to do but packs a punch. Over the years I've published many versions of the Head To Head Poker theme. *This* one is the version that fooled Alex Elmsley. Why's that important? Well, it was Mr. Elmsley who started the ball rolling so far as this concept is concerned. I showed it to him back in 1995 when he returned to The Magic Circle. He liked it a lot! In fact, I gather he used it a few times to fool those who knew his original.

The effect is that you deal ten cards from a shuffled deck and the spectator decides how the ten cards are dealt; five apiece. The five he *freely* decides you should have are, incredibly, the royal flush in spades.

Prior to performance, cull the royal flush in spades to the top of the deck. I casually do it as I'm nattering and toying with the deck. False shuffle the deck, retaining the top five cards (at least), as you say, "Have you heard of head to head poker? Let's play a round." Here you deal the top ten cards to the table thereby placing the flush cards on the bottom of the ten-card pile. Place the deck aside as it's not used again during this trick.

Pick up the ten-card pile and hold it face down in dealing grip. Say, "Head to head poker is where we work with just ten cards. But, to give you an edge I'm going to let you make *all* the decisions." Deal the top two cards to the table so they lay side by side. Say, "Okay. Which one do you want for your hand. Free choice!" Turn over the card he points to and place it face up in front of him. Casually drop the inhand eight-card packet onto the one he didn't choose and slide the (now) nine-card packet back into dealing grip.

Continuing say, "I'll do it again. In fact, let's deal...yes...let's deal *three* cards to speed it up and you can choose...yes, any *two* cards!" Here you deal the top three cards in a row and ask him to choose two of them. The patter line is designed to make it look you were going to deal two cards but then decided to deal three as an afterthought. (Some acting is required here.) So he chooses two which you turn face up and place on his first card. Openly peruse his three cards and make a comment or two appertaining a hand of poker. Act as if you are trying to help him build a good hand.

Casually drop the inhand packet onto the one he didn't choose and slide the packet back into dealing grip. Say, "Okay. Now it's my turn. I'd like *you* to choose for *me*!" Deal the top two cards to the table so they lay side by side. Say,

“Okay. Which one do you want for *my* hand. Again, it’s a free choice!” Slide the card he points to in front of yourself but don’t turn it over. Say, “We’ll look at my hand later!” Casually drop the inhand packet onto the one he didn’t choose and slide the packet back into dealing grip.

Continuing say, “I’ll do it again and again you can choose any two for me!” Here you deal the top three cards in a row and ask him to choose two of them. (Really ham it up here by saying things like, “You sure? Want to change your mind?” etc., etc.) He chooses two which you slide onto your first card and you drop the remainder onto the remaining card. Slide the packet back into dealing grip.

At this stage, he has three face-up cards, you have three face-down cards and you hold a four-card face down packet in dealing grip.

You now deal the top two (as before) to the table and have him choose one for himself. (It’s placed face up onto his hand. Don’t forget to comment as to what cards he has and what possible hand he’s aiming for.) As usual, the inhand packet is dropped on the discard and the packet picked up into dealing grip.

Again, you deal the top two (as before) to the table and have him choose one for you. It’s placed face down onto your face-down three-card pile. As usual, the inhand packet is dropped on the discard and the packet picked up into dealing grip. Okay, into the ending...

You are left holding two cards; the bottom one of which you need to get into your hand. Here’s how I handle it:

Stare at his four-card face-up hand of poker and patter about what he has, or hasn’t, got. He will look intensely, too. (You are pausing for time-misdirection so that he will later forget as to whose deal it is next; and the pausing/pattering will set him off guard.) Okay; quite sharply, look at him (in the eyes) and say, “Okay. As quick as you can, top or bottom?” Due to the actions and patter he will have to answer quickly. If he says ‘top’, you deal the top card (of the inhand two-card spread) face up onto his hand. If he says ‘bottom’, you place it (the bottom card) onto your hand and turn the remaining card face up and place it on his hand. Whatever occurs, immediately talk about his hand and congratulate or commiserate. To end:

Say, “Remember we shuffled the deck and dealt ten cards. You freely chose as to who got what. Well, your hand is on view but mine isn’t. Let’s see what you gave me.”

Slowly deal your cards face up to reveal the royal flush in spades; a hand that can’t be topped!

Note: Please do not set the deck so that the spectator ends up with a good hand. It’s too obvious – too pat. Please just try it just as I describe it.

*“Corner of Piccadilly (from Gold Dust) is a very strong monte routine that uses un-gaffed cards. Its kicker is truly astounding, and all can be examined. If ever there was a “worker,” this is it.” – DAVID REGAL (Genii review)*

## Hellman’s Aces

You like visual tricks? Here’s one that fits the bill. It’s a variation of Bill Goodwin’s Hold The Mayo from *Card College*. So, if you do a lot of standing/strolling magic, this is for you!

After any other four-Ace only effect (Twisting The Aces, Daley Aces etc) casually hold the packet face up. Whilst toying with the cards, use a block push-off to do a triple turnover (onto the single Ace) followed by placing the top card to the bottom of the packet. The Aces are now face down with the third-from-top Ace being face up. (Or, simply set the Aces as such whilst toying with them.) Drop the Ace packet onto the deck and jogshuffle as you say, “Let’s do something different...” You’re set to do Hellman’s Aces. The basic effect is that the black Kings magically sandwich and locate the Aces one by one without any visual ‘moves’. Here it is:

Flip the deck face up and remove any pair of mates. I use the black Kings. Flip the deck face down into dealing grip and catch a pinky break under the top Ace. Flip the Kings face up onto the deck and pick up the block of three. Do the ‘standard’ sandwiching ploy by using the left thumb to peel off the face King and place it to the bottom of the packet. Drop the three-card packet (supposed two face-up Kings only) onto the deck. Slowly spread the top three cards off the deck outjogging the central face-down card as you do. Grip the packet in the right hand; thumb on top and fingers underneath. Turn the right hand over and let the (magically revealed) Ace slide onto the spectator’s palm. During the applause, catch a left pinky break under the top *two* cards of the deck.

Place the two face-up Kings onto the deck and flip the four-card block (as two) over onto the deck. Slowly spread the top three cards (outjogging the central one) and grip the packet in the right hand as before but keep the top and bottom card fairly aligned! Photo. 1. The reason being is that, contrary to belief, the top one isn’t a King; it’s an Ace! Turn the right hand over as before and let the Ace slide onto the first Ace on the spectator’s palm.

Turn the right hand palm up and reverse deal the two Kings (actually an Ace and a King) onto the deck.



Photo. 1

Slowly push off three cards outjogging the central one as you do. Flip the three card spread face up onto the deck to show the 'third' Ace is sandwiched between the Kings. Hold the packet in the right hand as usual and let the third Ace slide onto the spectator's palm.

Flip the two Kings face down onto the deck. Perform a magical gesture and spread off the top three cards, outjogging the central one as you do. You are now going to turn the packet face up (to show the last Ace sandwiched) using the Trevor Lewis Monte move. (See the sleights section.) The final Ace is seen to be caught. Add it to the spectator's palm as you did the other three. All four Aces have been magically revealed. End.

### The Session Stunner

This trick is mostly Jon Racherbaumer's. It's a technical variation (plus a few *nuances* here and there) of Humma-Humma-Hummer from his website and Jon wrote to me to say that he liked it very much.

From a shuffled deck, casually spread it face up between the hands and cut *any* two cards of the *same* suit to the face of the deck. Or, cut them to the top and run-shuffle them to the bottom. Anyway, assume they are the Six and King of Clubs. (My idea of using same-suit cards eliminates possible memory problems.) Shuffle the deck keeping them there.

Flip the deck face down into dealing grip and catch a pinky break above the bottom two cards. Transfer the deck into right-hand Biddle Grip (i.e., hold deck from above – thumb at rear end, fingers at outer end) re-catching the break with the right thumbtip.

Say, "As I peel through the cards, stop me wherever you want." As you say these words, your left thumb peels the cards, from the top of the deck, into the left-hand dealing grip. When he says 'stop', your right hand hovers over the left-hand cards and secretly deposits the two 'broken' cards onto them. *This is done as the left thumb peels the 'stopped-at' card onto them.* It's easy to do; just practice the timing. So, on top of the left-hand packet you have an X-card followed by the two Club cards.

Say, "So, you stopped me here. We'll use these, then!" Your left thumb deals the top three cards to the table in a *right to left* fashion; X-card at your right and the two Club cards are at middle and left positions. All three *choices* look like a random selection.

Return the right-hand cards onto the left-hand cards and hold the whole in dealing grip. Say, "As I turn my back, I'd like you to peek at *any* one of the tabled cards. Then I want you to leave it where it is but to confuse me, I'd like you to *switch the positions of the other two.* Okay?" (Reiterate these instructions so he fully understands you.) Once this is done, turn back to face your spectator. Say, "There is no way I can know which card is yours, and there is no way I could know what *any* of them are. True?"

Pick up the card at the *left* of the row and insert it face down into the outer end of the deck somewhere near the *top*. Pick up the card next to it (original middle card) and insert it face down into the outer end of the deck somewhere near the *centre*. Finally, pick up the last card (original far-right card) and insert it face down into the outer end of the deck somewhere near the *bottom*. Make sure it's obvious that you can't see their faces.

Push the three cards flush, but as you do, *angle them through the deck* (Photo. 1) so that you can catch a pinky break *under* the lowermost 'inserted' card. Casually doublecut the deck at the break thereby bringing the *lowermost* card to the bottom. Reiterate the fairness of procedure and casually hand-to-hand spread the deck. Say, "Your card is lost here somewhere. I have no idea as to what it is. True? True!"



Photo. 1

As you close the spread and square it, glimpse the bottom card. Now, if the bottom card is neither one of your Club cards, it's his selection. If it's the Six of Clubs, then his card is the King of Clubs. If you glimpse the King of Clubs, his selection is the Six of Clubs. *Immediately* cut the deck and hand it to the spectator to shuffle. Do your best mind-reader impression and tell him what his card is! This is a real puzzler!

"It is rare to see a magician who can entertain an audience that much with just a deck of cards. But Paul Gordon is one of them! His shows are as funny as the magic he performs is strong. Paul perfectly knows what the spectators enjoy and deliver it to them with great humour and killer effects." – **BORIS WILD**

## Twister

The effect of this highly-popular trick of mine is that the four Kings magically reverse themselves one-by-one and then transform into the four Aces. As an extra (optional) ending, the Aces are cut into the deck and the missing four Kings are seen to be face up in the deck. One of the things I'm mostly proud of is that you do the whole thing with a (thin) *five-card only* packet!

Twister first appeared in *The Card Magic of Paul Gordon* (1994), then in *Nocturnal Creations* and then in Harry Lorayne's *Apocalypse*. Set up: The Aces are on top of the deck in, from the top, B, B, R, R order; the Kings are face-down on the table in alternating colour order. To perform this routine with a shuffled deck, simply cull the Aces to the top whilst removing the four Kings. Or, go into this routine after any four-Kings routine that leaves the Aces on top of the deck. (I often do this trick after *Diminishing? Not Likely!*)

### Phase One

Obtain a left pinky break under the four Aces as you reach to pick up the four Kings. Flip the four Kings face-up onto the deck immediately picking up the block of eight cards at your left fingertips (whilst the left hand still holds the deck in dealing grip). The packet is held from above in Biddle Grip. Whilst squaring the packet of cards with both hands, get a right thumb break above the lowermost red Ace in preparation for Marlo's ATFUS (Any Time Face-Up Switch; see the sleights section). I always prefer to use my *left* third fingertip to *pull-down* on the lowermost Ace to prepare for ATFUS. I think it's better than *lifting-up* with the right thumb.

To perform ATFUS, peel off (with the left thumb) the first King and place it to the bottom of the right-hand packet. The left thumb now peels off the second King from face to rear. Now, *just before* the left thumb goes to peel the third King (from the face of the right-hand packet), the three cards below the right thumb break are dropped onto the top of the deck. So, the third King is peeled to the bottom of the right-hand packet and the fourth King is simply left on display at the face/top of the packet.

Position check: on top of the deck is a face-down red Ace followed by two face-up Kings. The small inhand packet consists of three face-down Aces sandwiched between a face-up red and black King. Place the deck *face-up* onto the table in front of you as you will need it later.

### First Count

Perform any 'magical' action with patter to match and Elmsley Count the packet to show that one King has turned face-down. In actual fact, the spectators have seen the same red King twice.

## Second Count

Holding the packet in Elmsley Count grip, peel off (with your left thumb) the first King into your waiting left hand. Repeat with the second King. Then, with your right thumb, block push-off two cards (as one) followed by the last card onto the cards in your left hand. The count looks the same as the Elmsley Count, but you've shown two face-up Kings and two face-down Kings.

## Third Count

Hold the packet in right-hand Biddle Grip and use your left thumb to peel off three face-down cards into the waiting left hand. The three cards are held in left-hand pinch grip; thumb on top and fingers underneath. The right hand holds a double showing a face-up King. Slide this double to third from top of the left-hand three-card spread. Close the packet.

## Fourth Count

Perform one more regular Elmsley Count to show four face-down cards. As you complete the count, however, catch a break under the (last) top two cards and cut them to the bottom of the packet. Take your applause. Note: At the start of the 'first count', particularly for other magicians, I openly display the thinness of the packet. It looks good!

## Phase Two

For the second climax, patter on these lines: "Did you like it, or would you rather see a four-Ace trick?" Flip the packet face up and do an Elmsley Count to show four Aces. The face (red) Ace shows twice, but no one notices. They are too astounded to notice!

## Phase Three

This may well be an anti-climax; but it does clean-up the packet and the deck. You will have to decide for yourself whether or not to use it. Whilst holding the face-up Ace(?) packet in your left hand, pick up the face-up deck and place it *onto* the Aces. Without pausing, cut the deck at centre, flip it over and spread it face-down onto the table.

Say, "If you were wondering where the Kings were...well, they are still in the deck!" Show them to be face up in the centre of the deck.

Note: The Aces are the sandwiched cards. Do not be tempted to reveal them. Just use them for your next trick!

## The Bed-Sit Mystery

This risqué trick (originally) from *Nocturnal Creations* (1996) isn't easy to do but it's worth the practice. It's based on the "Hotel Mystery" premise. You need two court cards and four spot cards. Due to the nature of the counts in this routine, I suggest you use the two black Queens and the Six to Nine of Diamonds. The cards read from the top of the face-down packet: Q, Q, four red-spots.

To perform: Hold the spread packet face up and patter about the night two girls met four men in a hotel. Flip the packet face down. Flip the two top cards (Queens) face-up. Spread the packet to display them and in re-squaring it, obtain a break under the fourth-from-top card. Pick up the cards above the break in right-hand Biddle Grip and, using your left thumb, peel off the face Queen. Flip it face face-down onto the left-hand packet (using the long edge of the right-hand packet) and drop the other face-up Queen (plus two hidden spot cards) on top of the packet. Follow this by casually flipping the face Queen face-down. This is a Braue Add-on variant.

Say, "The two girls were in different hotel rooms..." Deal the top card (Queen) to the right of the table and the second card (supposed second Queen) to your left. Flip the packet face-up and Elmsley Count to show four spot cards. Flip the packet face-down and deal the top two cards (reversing their order) onto the Queen at the right. Deal the final two cards onto the (supposed) Queen at the left. So far, so good. "...and two fellas joined each one! Kinky, eh?"

Pick up the right-hand packet and flip it face up into left-hand dealing grip by turning it end-for-end. Snap your fingers and then thumb over the face Queen to show two Queens only. Say, "But, the girls actually fancied each other..." Applause! Square the cards, turn them over end-for-end and hold from above in right-hand Biddle Grip. Slide out the face Queen with the left fingertips and revolve both hands to display the two Queens. As you replace them to position (palms down), your left fingertips contact the Queen at the face of the right-hand double card and push it into a classic right-hand palm. (Photo. 1 is a stop-action shot of the palm.) With the Queen still palmed in the right hand, place the two cards back to the right and reach over (with the right hand) and pick up the packet at the left. Turn this packet face-up adding the palmed card (to the top) as you do.

Jordan Count this packet to display four spot cards. "...But it didn't matter, because so did the fellas!" Applause! Flip it face-down (always turning the cards end-for-end to hide the various palms) and palm the top card. Return the packet to position. Rest your right hand, with the palmed card, on the table's edge as you reiterate what's happened. The audience believe that the two Queens are to the right and the four spot cards are on the left. Say, "But even this situation got boring after a while and all worked out nicely..."



Photo. 1

To continue, pick up the right packet, turn it face-up adding the palmed card and deal the cards to the table displaying one Queen and two spots. Pick up the packet at the left, using the top card as a scoop (in other words it goes to bottom), turn it face-up and deal the cards to the table revealing one Queen and two spot cards.

The above patter is merely a guideline. My actual patter is, well, pretty darned risqué and not to be set in print! See, also, Fairly Sexy in this book. By the way, it's a trick I use mostly at hen/stag nights.

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