Inside Ed's Head

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Going Home
(With Help From Tom Craven)

Featuring: Elmer's Homing Card

If you've ever read a book or magazine on magic, you know the name Tom Craven. Certainly if you've been an IBM member for a while, you've read his "Card Corner" column in *The Linking Ring*.

Some time ago, Tom came to Long Island for a lecture. I just picked up these notes again, and found a cool trick I had overlooked.
Effect: The magician shuffles a deck, and asks the spectator to cut off some cards, and look at the card on top of those left on the table. The magician now counts the cards that the spectator cut off. Say it's fifteen.

The spectator cuts the tabled half of the deck, sending his selection to the middle of that packet. The top fifteen cards are now placed on top. The magician asks if it would be amazing if he could make the selection move up in the deck so it returns to its original position, fifteenth.

After a magical gesture of impressive nature, the magician counts the cards. Amazingly, when he reaches the fifteenth card, it is the selection—*face up!*

Unfortunately, this effect required a heavily gaffed deck. It needs twenty-six roughed cards on top of the deck. Also, the magician must perform a false shuffle to keep the gaffed cards on top prior to the cut.

Serendipitously, as I was reading this I noticed a stick of Elmer's Repositionable Picture and Glue stick on my desk, and a light bulb went on over my head. (Those damn florescent bulbs have been acting up a lot lately.) With the aid of Elmer, you can borrow a deck from a spectator, have him shuffle and cut it, and still arrive at the miraculous conclusion.

Anyhow, I immediately contacted Tom and asked him if I could print my variation in my column. He kindly consented.

Preparation: Have an opened stick of the above mentioned Elmer's in your pocket. Make sure the glue is high enough in the tube so that you can easily smear it copiously on your fingertips.

Method: Have a spectator shuffle a deck, and table it. (Now is a good time to get some glue on your right fingers.) Ask him to cut off a small amount (ten – fifteen) of cards, and hand them to you. Have him lift off the top card of the tabled portion, show it around, and replace it. As he's doing this, turn the cards you're holding face up, and smear the glue on the back of the top (rear) card of the packet.

When the spectator replaces his card, place your cards face-up on top of the tabled portion, and ask the spectator if he has any idea how many cards he cut off initially. Whatever the answer, pick up the deck and place it in mechanics grip in your left hand, squeezing the deck to facilitate the Elmer's card adhering to the selection beneath it. Count the cards one by one, face up to the table. As you count the last face-up card, the selection will be taken, unseen, beneath it.

Now place the face-down cards back on the table, and ask the spectator to give them a complete cut, then take the face-up cards, turn them over, and place them face down on top of the rest of the deck. You've just set the selection face up in its original position, and the spectator doesn't have a clue as to what's about to happen.

I suggest you leave the deck on the table, and scale the top cards off the deck as you count them. This handling will preclude any thoughts of sleight of hand. When the selection appears face up in its original position, it should be quite a shock. Bow modestly as you receive a round of tumultuous applause.

Note: There is a discrepancy in this trick. I didn't notice it for quite a while, maybe you'll find it if you look for it, but your audience won't.

I have seen repositionable glue used in a card trick at least once before, but the deck was prepared in advance. I don't know of anyone who uses it like daub— putting it on a card on the fly.

You could use this concept to make a selection vanish by daubing it on its face as you handle it, or on the back of a card that will go on top of it. You could also use this with a key card to allow you to give or the spectator the cards a legitimate overhand shuffle, without any risk of losing the selection.

I've come up with one application of this principle, but quite frankly, I think it's too much work for the effect obtained. Nonetheless, I'm going to write it up with the hope that someone might come up with a useable improvement.

The Armchair Magician's Card to Pocket

Effect: The spectator cuts some cards off a face-up deck, and everyone notes the card on the face of the tabled portion. The cut-off section is put back on top of the selection and the spectator cuts or shuffles a few times.

The magician removes a card from his pocket and places it face down near the spectator. The magician starts dealing the cards from the top of the face-up deck,

counting them as he does so. He tells the spectators to watch for the selection. When the magician counts the last card, only fifty-one cards have been seen. The selection is not among them. The face-down card is turned over, it is the selection.

Preparation: You need a deck of fifty-two cards. Place a card index in your jacket pockets. It should contain a deck that matches your performance deck. (For those who don't know what a card index is, it's two plastic or cardboard devices that each hold a half deck of cards in a manner that allows the magician to reach into his pocket and rapidly retrieve any card he wants.) Finally, you should have a stick of Elmer's Repositionable Glue in your pants pocket.

Method: Before the trick starts, get some glue on your right fingertips. Have the spectator shuffle the deck, put it face up on the table, cut off some cards, and hand them to you.

Have everyone note the top card of the tabled portion; as they do so, rub the glue on the back of the top (rear) card. Give these cards to the spectator and have him replace them on the selection, and cut the deck a few times.

While this is going on, reach into the appropriate pocket, and remove the card that matches the selection. Put this face down in front of the spectator.

Take the deck in dealing position, and squeeze it to make sure the selection will adhere to the card above it. Then deal the cards into a face-up pile rapidly, counting them as you do so. Because the selection adheres to the card above it, you'll get to fifty-one, and the selection will not be seen.

Turn the face-down card over, and miribile dictu, there's the selection!

I can see how this method might have a certain attraction to the armchair magician. The card is obviously in the deck when the spectator cuts the cards, and the magician puts a card face down on the table. It is a rather interesting situation. Is it more effective than any other card to pocket method? I doubt it. (For instance, you might want to check out "H. S. Card to Spectator's Wallet," in the April 2013 issue of *Inside Ed's Head*.)

I would like to point out that although I think this is not the best method for a card to pocket trick, I do not think card indexes are of no value. A good friend of mine, Hal Sprechman, used to use a card index to blow the minds of laymen and magicians alike. I particularly remember a time when Hal used it to badly fool a magician who now has an international reputation. That magician was very interested on how the miracle was performed, and Hal obligingly explained. Upon learning the secret, the magician discounted the trick. Suddenly, it went from a miracle to a curiosity because of its method. I can understand why someone might eschew the use of a tool like a card index; it does use pocket space that might be very valuable to a table-hopping performer. However, f you want to perform a certain effect, and a pocket index is the cleanest way to perform it, you'd be unwise to dismiss it.

I had something in mind for next month's column, but I sent it into Mike Powers for his "Card Corner" column instead. It will be published in *The Linking Ring* towards the end of the year. Watch for it. With a little bit of luck, I'll figure out something else for next month.