

March 26~Double Undercut Control

The double undercut²⁵ is a brilliant, relatively easy and versatile technique. There are, though, good and bad applications. If you show a card on top, and then apparently lose it with a double undercut, any intelligent spectator will interpret your actions as your having cut the deck and then recut it, undoing the first cut.

To make this or any similar situation convincing, you need either to cut only once (see “Marlo’s Bluff Cut” back on February 27, p. 66) or to do a triple or multiple undercut. If, on the other hand, you are holding a break in the center and double undercut to it, that is acceptable; for even though the spectator might think you nullified the cut, this wouldn’t explain how you got a card from the center to the top. Nonetheless, the procedure is not free of conceptual inelegance.

After years of trial and error, here is what I believe is the most deceptive way of using the double undercut for a card control. Overhand shuffle the deck, doing it *in the space* between you and the spectators where you will perform the next action.

Have a card selected in whatever manner you wish, but the handling must match the style in which you have the card returned. You could dribble the cards into your left hand and have a card taken when *stop* is called; then have it replaced, using the dribble break²⁶ as your means of control. You now hold a break above the selection (or below it, if you wish to control the card to the bottom).

Wait, relax and say a few things pertinent to the effect as you withdraw from the space in which you earlier shuffled the cards. “*Let’s mix the cards a bit to make sure we can’t know where your card is.*” With a double undercut, bring the card to the top.

Now move back into the space you have previously established as the place where shuffling the cards occurs, and immediately do an overhand shuffle, during which you may retain the card on top, deliver it to the bottom, or to any position near the top or bottom.

Ending your series of actions with a shuffle causes your spectators to remember that you simply shuffled the deck, and makes them forget the preceding cuts. Also, by saying “*mix the cards*” as you do the double undercut, the action flows conceptually into the shuffle, and the whole will be perceived and remembered as *mixing and shuffling the cards*.

After any control, it is always advisable to glimpse the card, just in case you later lose it, or if someone demands to shuffle the cards. (Thankfully, most people are polite and rarely do.) Managed in this fashion, I believe the double undercut is as good a control as any, and a lot easier and safer than many.