

UNANCHORED

Created by Ryan Schlutz

Written by Ryan Schlutz & Salomon Vainstein

Edited by Scott Kahn, Salomon Vainstein & Mike Vance

Photographs: Ryan Schlutz

Consultant & Hand Model: Christian Magill

Layout: Phil Shaw

Shuffles Therapy

“Shuffles Therapy” first started out as an idea for a control and a peek. The peek was so obvious to me that I was not sure it would work, but I was pleasantly surprised to find out it was completely invisible. I first road tested it for various magicians at Magic Live, and each time I got to the peek, I was convinced everyone saw me. Serious magician’s guilt. Of course, no one noticed! The only other time that I felt this way was when I first started to play with billet peeks. The effect is sort of a lost card-found card, but what separates “Shuffles Therapy” (besides an awesome name) is the fact that your spectators control a lot of the shuffles, which makes it so fair. After fooling magicians with it, I would tell them it is a key card effect and they would laugh because they thought I was just pulling their leg. The other part that makes it stand apart from other effects is, from your spectators’ point of view, you never see the faces of the cards, so it would be impossible for you to be able to name the card.

How

Like many of my effects, I prefer to do this routine with a pencil-dotted/edge-marked card (page 286), but you can substitute a corner crimp instead. Begin by handing the deck to your spectator for shuffling. When they return the deck, get a quick glance to see where the edge-marked card is. Cut it near the top, ideally twenty cards or so from the top. (Photo 28) Spread the cards over and



29



30



break the spread right under the marked card. Drop that pile to the table. Continue to spread over and then drop cards on top of the pile until you have gone through the entire deck. Essentially, you just shuffled up the deck a bit more, but more importantly, the marked card is now on the bottom of the pile. Square the deck. Ask the spectator to cut off about two-thirds of the deck and place it to the right of the bottom pile. Then ask them to cut off half of that top pile and place it on the right, leaving that middle pile in the center.

Note: Throughout the trick, I like to give the spectator their instructions as I am finishing the current sequence and have about five seconds left. For example, as I am squaring the deck, I start to tell them to cut off about two-thirds of the deck. This reduces the amount of dead air time and your spectator starts to think about what they need to do next, which often makes them pay less attention to what you are currently doing. This plays an important role in making them unaware of the peek later on. Proper pacing of directions helps everything blend.

Have your spectator look at the top card of the middle pile as you glance away, stressing how there is no way you could know what that card is since it truly came from the center. (Photo 29) Tell them to place the card back on top of the pile. Turn back around and quickly take the bottom pile with the marked card, place it on top of the middle pile, and then pick that pile up and place it on top of the last remaining pile. The marked card is now directly above their selection. I do this stacking process in a rushed manner with my body turned a bit, as if I am trying to be fair but need to close it up for them. I also leave the deck a bit messy. (Photo 30) As you finish stacking the piles together, ask the spectator to cut the deck in half and complete the cut. Pick up the deck and glance at the edge to find the marked card (it will usually be near the bottom,

but I always double check just in case). Ask your spectator to cut about half of the deck for themselves. Tell them to mix up their cards.

Note: If the marked card is near the top you have two options. (1) Give the cards a quick cut to bring it near the bottom and then ask your spectator to cut off a pile for themselves, or my preferred way, (2) Have them cut a pile for you and the remaining cards are for them.

While they mix their cards, you can mix yours as well, as long as you only mix the cards above the marked card. I do this with the mixing procedure explained on page 280. If you want, you can even trade cards with your spectator as long as you only trade cards above the marked card. Finally, both you and your spectator each cut your own piles, which will bring the marked card and selection near the top of your pile.

After mixing, say something like, *“We are friends, right? Mixing these cards independently seems weird. We should mix them together.”* Spread through the cards until you see the marked card. Spread over one extra card (their selection), break the spread under their selection, (Photo 31) and drop that pile onto the table. Ask them also to take some cards from their pile and drop them on top of yours. Continue to alternate, randomly spreading cards and dropping piles. You want to be a little messy with the handling because you need a reason to square the deck afterward. You now have a messy pile of cards with their selection at the bottom!

With your fingers on top of the pile, slide the cards to the edge of the table. (Photo 32) As you slide the cards off the table, your thumb is brought below to grasp the cards. More importantly, it



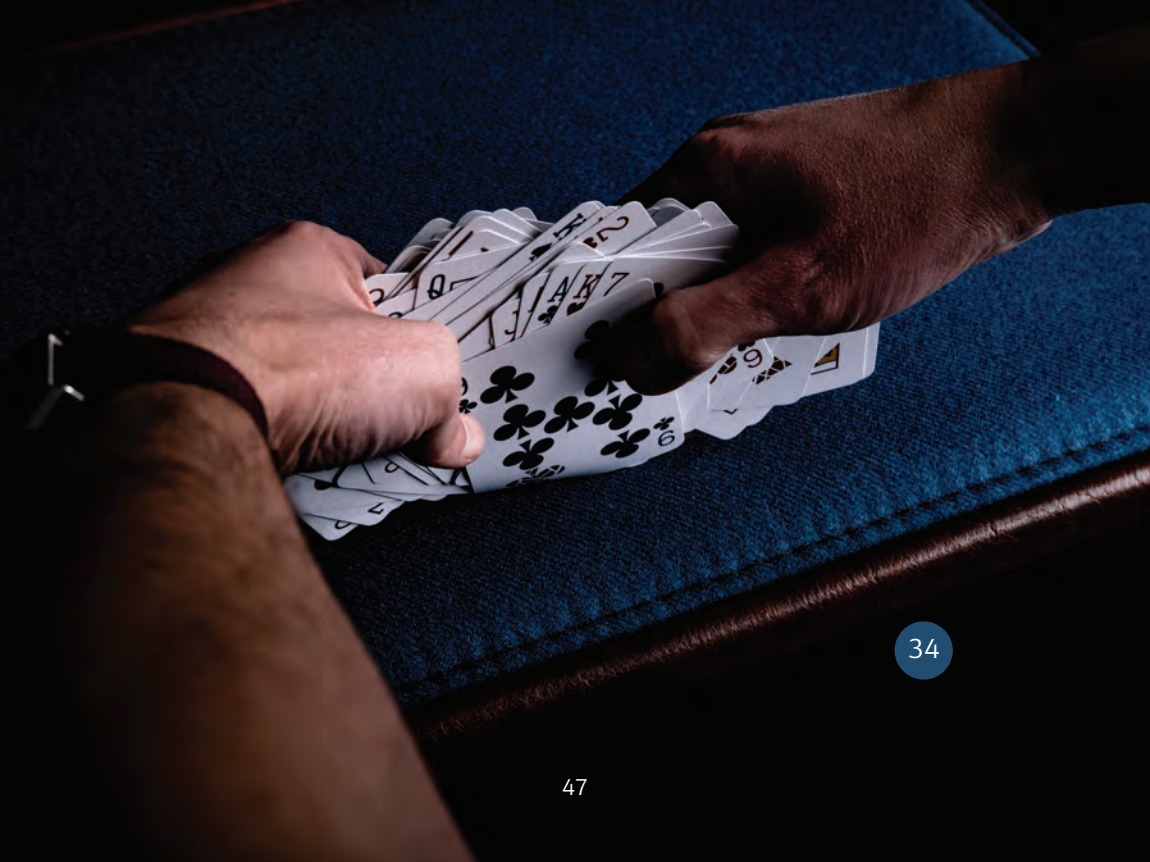
“ Giving them this instruction ahead of time as previously explained will distract them from noticing or thinking about a potential peek. ”

will naturally tilt the card faces toward you. (Photo 33) Regrip the cards in your right hand. It is in this motion that you will do a partial square up and catch a peek of the bottom card. Let's say it was the Nine of Clubs. (Photo 34) Once you know their selected card, look back up and maintain eye contact with your spectator, which further convinces them that you never peeked at their card. As you square the deck, ask the spectator to cut about one-third of the deck. Giving them this instruction ahead of time as previously explained will distract them from noticing or thinking about a potential peek.

You have now squared the deck, it is back on the table with the selection on the bottom, and your spectator should be cutting a third of the deck. Have them place the pile in your hand and look them in the eye. It is important to maintain eye contact every time they hand you a pile and also during the spreading procedure, as it helps hide the one very small move you do at the end. Ask them to think about the color of their card and spread through the pile face-down as if you are trying to sense their card (again, make sure you are maintaining eye contact), and say something like, *“Definitely not here.”* Drop the pile on the table and ask them to hand you about half of their remaining cards. Tell them to think about the suit of their card as you spread through these cards face-down. This time, stop near the middle and bring attention to the spread as you remove a card and place it off to the side, saying, *“I think I got a feeling for this card, but I am only 95.2% sure.”* Place the rest of the cards on top of the first pile that they handed to you.



33



34

Note: This might seem like a non-moment to you, but from their point of view, the card you removed is most likely their card even if they do not know how. Bringing attention to this moment anchors it in their mind and will be helpful later when you refer back to it.

Ask, *“Do you mind if I check that last pile? You deserve me being 100% sure of your card.”* Pick up the final cards from the deck, which of course has their selection on the bottom. Ask them to think about the value of their selection as you spread through the cards. At some point, stop spreading through the cards, break the spread in the middle, and as your two hands separate to open up the spread, use your fingers to slide their selection out from the bottom of the deck and onto the bottom of the top half of the cards. You could think of this as using the under-the-spread cull force to bring the bottom card to a random position in the middle. Outjog the card, and say, *“Okay, I am 100% confident this is it. Do you care if I switch it for my original choice? Of course not! We are friends after all.”*

Place the selected card on the table and return the random card you placed aside earlier back to the deck. Begin divining their card by asking, *“Your card was black, right? And a Club?”* They will say yes. Then, I like to add, *“Okay, so originally I put down the Eight of Clubs, which I was 95.2% sure about, so I think that was close to your card. I actually think your card is one more than that. Was it the Nine of Clubs?”* While normally it is customary to flip the card over to bring the trick to a conclusion, I do not for this routine. I will devine the selection and they just let it sit there building tension. After a few moments go by, or if the spectators start to hint they want to see it, I will say, *“Well we could look at the card and I promise you it will be the selection, but you did say we are best friends so I doubt you need to verify anything.”*

I say this with a devious smile. *“Or we can put it back inside the deck and let it forever be a mystery.”* I have only had one person ever decide option two.

Borrowed Deck Version

Instead of the marked card, you will need to corner crimp a card. After your spectator shuffles the deck at the beginning and hands it back to you, discreetly corner crimp the bottom card. I use Martin Nash’s method of buckling the bottom card then pulling down on the front corner where my index finger rests. Turn the deck around so the crimp is on the back side and place the deck onto the table. Now you can continue on with the routine as before, by having them cut off two-thirds of the deck, placing it to the right, and so on.