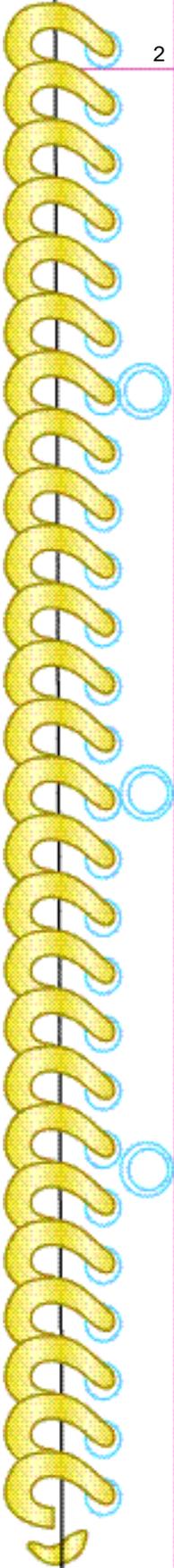


GARY OUELLET'S

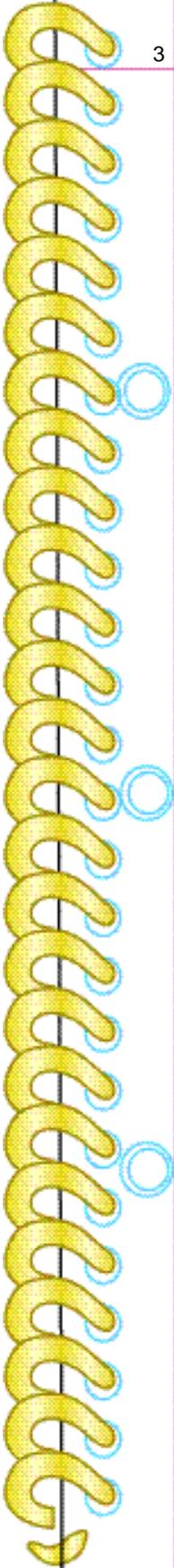
THE REAL WORK
TEACH-IN SERIES

NUMBER ONE
THE HOLLYWOOD DOUBLE LIFT



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THE HOLLYWOOD DOUBLE LIFT GARY OUELLET

A phrase is born into the world both good and bad at the same time. The secret lies in a slight, an almost invisible twist. The lever should rest in your hand, getting warm, and you can only turn it once, not twice.

-Guy de Maupassant

The double lift, a sleight of recent origins if you consider that magic is the oldest of the performing arts, has been hailed as the most useful move in all of card conjuring. It can stand the scrutiny of repeated use, if properly executed. There have been, of course, hundreds of variations published over the years, from the ground breaking natural approach by Dai Vernon in the original **Stars of Magic Series**, to more daring and baffling applications by the late Arturo Ascanio, a true master in the handling of double cards.

If only to perform Ambitious Card, one of the most amazing tricks in all of magic no matter the routine employed, it is worth mastering a double lift. I have published a number of lifts in **Close Up Illusions**, and in **Finger on the Card**, but I think that the version described here surpasses them in deception.



What follows is a handling that has developed, literally, over a decade of research. I have been enamored by the double lift since childhood, especially handlings which seemed "loose": where the double was not gripped in a death-lock hold by white-knuckled fingers, all of which emphasized the single-ness (or singularity) of the card(s).

The move itself takes but a few seconds, but getting there will take some time. Indeed, it will take 30 photographs! It may take you a while to build up the muscle memory needed to make any sleight smooth cruising, so I suggest you take it a step at a time. I have never taught the move to anyone, so this is its premiere release!

CAVEAT

This explanation offers no uses for the sleight, no routine, no trick. There are many thousands of published card tricks which rely on the double-lift and it is assumed the reader has a use for the sleight. If you are truly new to card magic, here is its most basic application. The magician turns over the top card of the deck (say, the Ace of Spades), and turns it back face down. He takes it, inserts it cleanly into the middle of the deck, snaps his fingers, and amazingly, the card has jumped back to the top. The secret: when the magician apparently turned over the top card, he really turned over two cards. So when he turned them back face down and took the top card and buried it in the deck, it was not the Ace of Spades which, conveniently, is now the true top card of



the deck, and can be shown to have magically risen. This is, of course, the basic premise of a classic trick called "The Ambitious Card" where this scenario is repeated over and over again, with variations and mounting challenge conditions.

My personal favorite routine for this legendary trick can be found at my website, www.ouelletshows.com. Go to the *Magicians Only* page and you will find it in the tip sheets. You can bypass the magic test by using the password, "jamyary".

THE ELEMENTS OF A GOOD DOUBLE LIFT

A good double lift looks natural, and contains elements which suggest that there can only be one card, the mind of the onlookers unconsciously computing that more than one card would be visible, or they would separate, and so forth. What is wrong with many double lifts being performed by magicians is the obvious fear that the cards will separate, or move out of alignment, and consequently they pinch the card(s) tightly, in a death grip. A card is a delicate object, a piece of thick paper, and there is no logical explanation for gripping a single card tightly, or unnaturally.

GETTING READY

Although there is a school of thought that believes the correct way to get into the move is simply to reach over to the cradled deck and lift up two cards with the right forefinger - a method described by Dr. Jacob Daley in the **Stars of Magic** series - I have found that this approach is

risky. Depending on the condition of the deck, and your familiarity with the deck in question (someone may have handed you their deck with instructions to do a trick) the majority of double lifts require that you first get a small break (small being the operative word here) under the top two cards. The act of counting up two cards with the right thumb is usually a dead give-away to onlooking magicians, and, I suspect, a suspicious moment in what should be an otherwise clean handling performance.



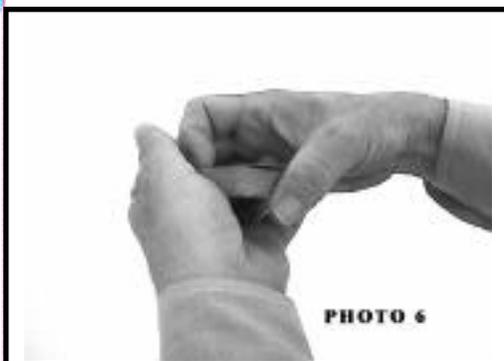
As much as possible, the deck should be held in an "ungripped" position, as exemplified by the master Juan Tamariz: Photo 1.



The excuse for the right hand to come over and get the break should be to square up a slightly unkempt deck, and therefore I always precede the break-getting action by dribbling the cards: Photo 2.



Now you have a reason (cleaning up the small mess) to bring the right hand over the deck: Photo 3.



What follows is the traditional handling of using the pad of the right thumb to lift up two cards at the back - BUT, and this is a big but, instead of lifting up, you in fact should lower the back of the deck: Photos 4 and 5. This keeps the "curvature" of these cards as they are being counted out of view. Immediately (and this can take only a fraction of a second) release the two cards onto the left pinky finger which presses ever so lightly against the right side of the deck, and then bring the deck back to a level position: Photo 6.

Do not take the right hand away because apparently you are going to continue straightening the deck, and add a finesse that is a throw-off to those watching like hawks.

THE WAVE FINESSE

Apparently, in your squaring up action, you will bevel the deck back and forth, which visually conveys an impression of "loose" handling, but which will retain the secretly obtained break under the top two cards.

Other than the left pinky applying a light pressure and maintaining the break, the left hand cradles the deck very loosely. The right hand is over the deck, first finger curled over it, and other fingers extended toward the front, with the thumb loosely on the back: Photo 7. The right hand grip is also very loose. Note that the extended fingers do not grip the deck but extend forward.



The second finger of the right hand now bevels the front of the deck backward: Photo 8, and then the thumb pushes forward, straightening the deck once again: Photo 9. But despite the loose grips, the break under the top two cards, just rides along: Photos 10 and 11 are an exposed view from the right with the right hand partially raised.

It is just a little squaring action, beveling the deck back and forth, but this finesse will throw off magicians, who do not think you have a break, and if expecting a double lift, will later wonder when you got it at all.

Okay: you've got a break under two cards and are ready to execute the lift itself. But before I explain the lift, I need to outline a move called the Crook, first explained in **Close Up Illusions**, and repeated here so that this description will be complete. Again, this is a little utility move that many owners of **Close Up Illusions** passed by. It was developed by Gilles Couture for another use, but over the years I have found countless ways to use this gem, some of which I have explained in videos produced by Videonics and now distributed by Louis Falanga.

THE CROOK MOVE

Step away from the double lift explanation for a moment. We are going to pause just to explain the mechanics of this move, then resume the double lift from where we just left off. The right hand has been removed for clarity, and it is not used in the Crook mechanics.



Here is the Crook Move. The left hand holds the deck, and the left pinky is holding a break below two cards.

The left forefinger comes up to the far right corner, as the left thumb relaxes its pressure on the top, allowing the break to exist all along the right side of the deck: Photo 12.



The pad of the left forefinger comes directly onto the far right corner of the double: Photo 13.

The left forefinger pulls this corner down and to the left, which pivots the double counterclockwise against the crook of the left thumb: Photo 14.



Note that the cards move in perfect alignment.

Practice this (easy) move a bit before continuing. We are now ready to resume the description of the double lift.

THE PICK-UP AND DISPLAY

Recall that the deck was now squared in the left hand, the left pinky was holding a break, and the right hand was over the deck. Two actions will occur simultaneously. The left finger carries out the Crook move as the extended right thumb and second finger grasp the left corners of the double card: Photo 15.



As you can now see, the Crook move is used to secretly enable the right hand grip of the extreme left corners of the double



PHOTO 16



PHOTO 17



PHOTO 18



PHOTO 19

without fumbling. Both actions take place at once, and the idea is to convey the impression that the right hand simply picked up the top card at the left front and back corners.

Once the right hand has gripped the double, lift it up off the deck, flexing it downward slightly and curling in the right third finger, bringing the nail of that finger against the back of the card: Photo 16.

Now, extend the third finger, which pivots the card(s) into a face up position, rotating on the axis provided by the right hand hold at the left corners: Photo 17. The pick-up and rotation is carried out more or less simultaneously.

Place the double onto the top of the deck, stepped forward and to the right as shown in Photo 18. The right hand releases the card, and the card is held there by the left thumb.

I want to take a moment to discuss this display position. The hands can gesture - Photo 19 - as you talk about this card. Again, this is a very subtle finesse. The card(s) looks single, the handling appears nonchalant and unstudied, and it is normal to call attention to the identity of the card.

When you are ready, resume the action.

THE PINCH PICK-UP

You are now going to pick up the double again with the right hand.



The thumb and second finger come up against the far and left edges of the double: Photo 20.

By squeezing together, they push the inner left corner up against the base of the left thumb: Photo 21. Note that this action keeps the double in alignment.



Now, by exerting upward pressure with the right thumb, and downward pressure with the left second finger - Photo 22 - the double is pivoted face down: Photo 23. If you wish, this action can be made into a snapping move.





Now, you lower the left edge of the double onto the left fingers, aligning this edge with the right edge of the deck - Photo 24 - and softly allow the left edge of the double to fall against the pad of the left thumb: Photo 25.



Now comes another interesting display move. For this to work smoothly, keep the tip of the left third finger tucked down onto the deck.



With the left thumb pushing slightly, keeping the opposite (right) end of the double firmly against the second pad of the left second finger, pivot the back end of the double counterclockwise - Photo 26 - and back to the previous position: Photo 27).





PHOTO 28

The right hand, fingers below and thumb on top, grabs the inner right corner of the double - Photo 28 . . .

and flips it face down onto the deck: Photo 29. Note that it has been flipped down so that it lands extended about 3/4" rear-jogged.

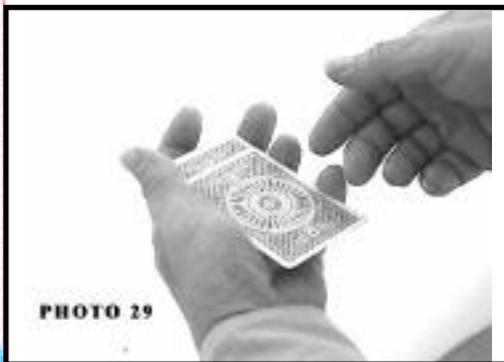


PHOTO 29

Immediately tilt the front of the deck down, and to your amazement, I hope, the double will glide forward, perfectly aligned, until it moves squarely onto the deck: Photo 30.

This flipping over to a rear-jogged position then tilting it forward is a continuous action, and is a final subtle but convincing argument for singularity. The finesse was first published in my book, **Finger on the Card**.

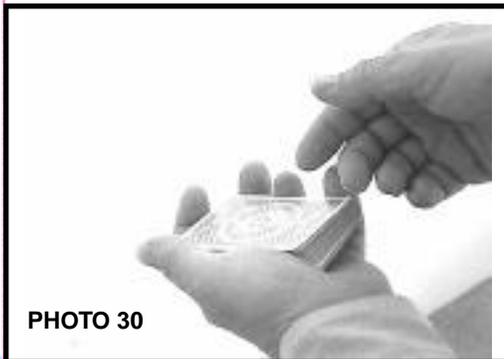


PHOTO 30

And that's it. It may take a while to get all this down pat, but let me assure you that the handling is natural. It does not suffer from being too over-flourishy. From the Pinch-pickup to the final alignment face down onto the deck, the action is continuous. The overall impression created is that of fairly showing and handling a single card, without saying so overtly.

*Don't look back...
something might be gaining*

*-Satchel
Paige*