

ACODEON – Jack E. McCoy

One day a binary sorting muse reared its cutesy little head into my big’ol ugly head and do you know what it said? I’ll tell you what it said, it said “*Acodeon!*” then it slapped me.

History: I first learned of the self-working binary sorting principle which is at work in this trick from a Phil Goldstein mind reading effect called ‘Out of Sorts’ which is in a manuscript he’d released in the late 80’s (*Thequal* – pg. 5). The principle has obsessed me for many years and I’ve come up with many uses for it, some not involving cards. I consider it a personal muse. I first learned of the quite easy and brilliant method for stealing and glimpsing the selection that’s explained in step 6 of this trick comes from a Gordon Bruce trick called ‘The Tell-Tale Kings’ from Peter Duffie’s terrific book, *5 Times 5, Scotland* (Kaufman and Company publishing).

Method:

Some aren’t in favor of numbered explanations but I chose to with this trick as the numbered sections will assist in understanding and learning the method.

1. Remove 16 random cards from a deck and hand them to the spectator. Set the remainder of the deck off to the left area of the table. You want all focus to be on the sixteen cards. Turn your view away from the spectator, where it’s obvious you can’t see the cards, and ask him to shuffle the 16 cards and mentally choose one for his selection. He doesn’t remove it or anything but simply remembers it. Tell him to say it to himself a few times to implant it into his brain.

During the next two steps, you’re to remain turned away.

2. Once he has a card in mind, tell him to hold the packet face up and deal cards one at a time, back and forth, into two piles. During that time, he is to watch and notice which pile his selection goes into. Once he’s dealt the whole packet, tell him to pick up the packet that **does not** have his selection in it, flip it over (faces downward) and drop it on top of the other. Tell him to pick everything up.

3. **Repeat step '2.'** *three* more times. In other words, the process of dealing and flipping the non-selection packet and dropping it on top of the other must be done a total of 4 times. When you try this trick out, you'll see that the flipping of packets during the process really gives a nice stirring appearance of the cards.

4. Once step 2. has been done a total of 4 times, tell the spectator to flip the entire packet over so his selection becomes one of the face down cards. This extra turnover disorients the spectator to his card's general location he may have obtained during the 4th dealing and assembling. Tell him it's so there's no way you can peek once you turn back around.

Regardless of where it began and thanks to the binary sorting process, the selection is now 6 cards down. The dealing and flipping of the packets has also now perfectly interlaced face up / face down cards. Turn back around to face the spectator and hope he's not pointing a gun at you, all wore out and angry.

5. If he's a tolerant spectator and you're still alive, reach down and ribbon spread the packet to show a perfect interlacing of face up / face down cards as you say, "*Ah yes, you mixed them perfectly.*" You'll be surprised how many spectators find this alone fascinating. As I mentioned, the selection is now the 6th card from the top (the third face down card). It will always be, no matter where it began. Remove the top card of the spread (it will be face up) and use it to tap on each of the face down cards, moving downward along the ribbon spread. This is a quickly moving action accompanying your patter as you say, "*Any of these face down cards could be your selection.*" Keep the card you're holding face up throughout its downward travel. After tapping the lowest face down card (the very bottom card of the spread) place the face up card you're holding on the bottom of the spread (still face up), saying to block the face of the bottom card just in case it's might be the selection. You want to encourage the thought of his card being anywhere. Close the spread and pick the packet up. Square it and place it into the left hand.

6. The right hand now grasps the packet in biddle grip. The left thumb starts single-peeling cards off the top and into the palm. When you peel the 5th card (the selection), catch a pinky break below it. When the left-hand returns to peel the 6th card, steal that broken card (selection) back onto the bottom of the right hand's packet. Continue peeling cards singly until you come to the face up card that you

had placed on the bottom. This card will be a double, the selection now secretly beneath it. Extend you index, rotating your right palm slightly towards yourself and point downward at the packet's top card with the index and say, "*Your card is face down.*" When you point, you'll find that the hand rotates perfectly during the action where you can see the selection, staring at you in the face. All the spectators see is you pointing at the top card. Once you know the selection's identity, lower the double back down to the deck but don't let go.

7. Pause briefly as you talk about how everyone knows the selection isn't the face up card showing, remove the double and place it onto the deck. The selection has just been secretly eliminated from the packet. Thumb the top card that's on the packet (face down card) onto the table with the left hand. Return the right hand to the packet's top and as you're looking at the face down card just dealt and talking about how it could be the selection, biddle riffle the packet and obtain a pinky break above the bottom 3 cards. In the same motion as earlier, remove the top face up card by the right hand (single card) and place it onto the deck as you talk about how you know it's not the selection. The left hand thumbs its face down card onto the top of the earlier dealt card on the table as you mention how it could be the selection. Repeat this 3 more times. You will now be holding 5 cards and with a pinky break below the top two. With the right hand remove the double and place it onto the top of the deck. You've now secretly unloaded the extra face up card from the spot the selection was stolen. The left hand thumbs its face down card onto the now tabled pile. Finish with the right hand cleanly removing the remaining face up card and dropping it onto the deck. The left-hand places its remaining face down card onto the tabled group.

Even though you showed one less pair of face up / face down cards, the spectators will never notice. Everything is fluid and the natural pauses and motions will blur the actual number of pairs they did see plus I've never come across anyone who counted or cared.

Pick up the packet of face down cards. Hold your other hand above them and turn the top card face up. Say you sense it's not the selection. After the spectator confirms this, remove the top card by the right hand and drop it onto the deck. Continue this until you have one card remaining. The spectators will expect this to be the selection and that you somehow put it there or by a self-working method. The beauty of this trick is that some people know of or are at least aware of a math

based card trick or at least have seen, the 21-card trick, the marriage trick, etc. This thought process they impose upon themselves works in your favor. They're waiting for the inevitable, they think you are going to turn over the final card and show it's theirs. They may even have that *"I did all that work just for this?"* kind of expression. Their expectations are straight forward, they got it figured out, or so they think. Turn the final card over, click it to show its singularity and drop it onto the deck. The selection has disappeared! The revelation throws them for a loop. They have self-imposed a stronger surprise into their own minds by natural assumption. A double whammy for magic lovers.

Finish by picking up the deck, spread the face up cards briefly, remove them and flip them face down onto the deck and put it away. Say *"Isn't it amazing how I vanished your _____ of _____"* naming the selection you'd earlier peeked at, finishing with a double shocker that even looks cool when performing.

Alternate Ending: Knowledge of the half-pass is required. For this routine use only spot cards. In step 5. Do not ribbon spread the packet on the table. Keep it in your hands instead. Spread it from hand to hand to show the perfect interweaving, all the way down the packet. The top face up card isn't shifted to the bottom either. Mention there being 8 cards face up and 8 cards face down. Now half pass the selection and all the cards below it. This puts the selection face up on the bottom and puts two face up cards together in the middle of the packet. Buckle glimpse the selection. Snap your fingers or some sort of magical gesture. Hold the packet in right hand biddle grip. Single peel the top face up card, stealing the bottom card under it. If you don't know this move, basically the left fingers drag the bottom card out and flush with the top card as its being peeled. The left hand somewhat cradles them together immediately. The move is pretty easy to do. Immediately hand the remainder of the packet to the spectator and tell him to deal the top face down card onto the table, give you the top face up card, which you take into your right hand. Look down at both face up cards you're holding and say, *"So you didn't choose the _____ or the _____"*, naming the cards showing. Place the right-hand card onto the left and hold your left hand forward. Tell him to remove the top cards one at a time, handing you the face up cards and dealing the face down cards to the table. Name the face up card as they are handed to you and number them as well, *"The third card is the _____ which you didn't pick, card number four is the _____ and not the selection, the fifth face up card is the _____ which I now know you didn't pick, etc.."*. When he reaches the spot where two face up cards are together,

say *“Two face up cards together, how strange.”* When the spectator has finished sorting the packet, he will have heard you mention eight face up cards and their identities. This patter will also remind him of there being eight face up and eight face down. Revolve the left-hand palm down and deposit its cards onto the deck. The selection has now been ditched and all is clean. Tell the spectator to pick up the stack of face down cards and deal them into a pile, counting how many he has. He’ll count 7. Mention how there was 8 earlier and remind him of two face up cards that were together and that a face down card had vanished from between them. Tell them to pick them up and deal them into a pile again, turning each face up. Ask if he saw his selection. He’ll be surprised that he didn’t. As an afterthought name the selection which will further baffle the spectator.

Humming to the Acodeon:

Combine the face up/face down mixture of cards from ‘Acodeon’ with a Bob Hummer principle and you have an almost self-working baffler that will even amaze you that it always works. It’s a cool principle.

After step 4. take the packet, spread it to show the alternating face up/face down condition. Eye the 3rd face down card (the selection which is 6th from the top) and start closing the packet. When that face down card merges with those below it, catch a small pinky break below it. With the right hand continue holding the 5 cards above the selection and still slightly spread as you look at the 5th card from the top (the bottom card of those it’s holding) and say *“Hmmm, the _____ of _____ (naming that face up card) seems to have an extra glow to it.”* Flip all 5 cards over and square with the packet, still maintaining the break below the selection. Remove the top card off the packet and insert it face down into the break. Square everything up, the break no longer needed, as you mention the face up card showing on top. Say *“This could be your card but I’m not sure. Tell you what, instead of me trying to determine your card let’s try a little experiment. Now your card can be any of them but let’s see if you can find it in a strange but fascinating way.”* Hand him the packet. Tell him to complete cut the packet then flip the top two cards over, together as a single unit. Tell him to cut it again and once again flip the top two cards over together. He can do this as many times as he chooses. While he’s doing this mention his determining which cards are face up and face down. When he’s satisfied and ready to stop, tell him to deal the packet

one last time into the two piles. Once done have him pick up either pile, flip it over and drop it on top of the other. When spread it will be seen that all the cards are now the same direction except for one card, his selection!

More Humming (knowledge of the half-pass required): Here's another method for setting up the hummer principle. After spreading and closing the spread (showing the face up / face down alternating spread) single peel off the top 6 cards (reversing their order) and place them on the bottom then half pass the bottom 5 cards. The packet is now ready for the principle. Tell him to give the packet a complete cut anywhere. Flip the top 2 cards over as a unit, cut again, flip a double over again, cut and flip again. Remind the spectator that he completely shifted different cards face up and down by free choice. Deal the packet into two piles, pick up either, turn it over and drop onto the other then spread to show all the cards the same way except for one, the selection!

If you're not a half-pass expert, simply put the packet behind your back or below the table and do the moves as you say you're going to do some secret arranging of the packet. Bring it out, let the spectator cut and flip, deal into two piles, flip one over and drop onto the other then spread to conclude.