

Place Mats – Jack E. McCoy

This card trick will seem giant and complicated at first appearance, but if you take the time to read it, you'll find it not to be quite the behemoth you'd first feared. The actual trick is very simple to perform but it does involve a stacked deck. I decided that, instead of having to memorize the stack or carry a crib note, I would spend a couple of days breaking it down and amazingly I did devise a shuffling sequence to put the deck into the required arrangement, and it's fairly simple to memorize. But I'll tell you right now you're gon'na haf'ta wanna. I imagine there's a strong chance you will pass this one up because of its apparent complexity, but if you do take the time to learn it, you'll find it to be a nice addition to your card magic arsenal. It has a very unique presentation that may delight you and never fails to put a smile on the audience.

History:

In the March, 1953 issue of 'Magic Wand', there is a cool, offbeat card revelation by Toni Koynini called 'Karpel'. In that routine, a card is selected and returned to the pack, which is then dealt out into seven rows of seven cards. After concentrating, the magician claims the selection to be red, and removes the red cards from the dealt stock. To the spectators' amazement, the remaining black cards form the figure '8' and the letter 'H', symbolic of the 8 of Hearts, the spectator's selection! What a cool premise. Sometimes the spectators wouldn't realize this at first and when it was brought to their attention, it often created great surprise and laughter. The only issue was the setting up process.

In 1986, Phil Goldstein described a clever variation of Toni's trick called 'Throw Rug' which can be found in his amazing manuscript 'Amperthand'. His version creates a 4 and H and uses a cool setting up procedure that can be done in front of the spectators, hidden within overhand shuffles. Try to find this manuscript if you can. It is full of truly amazing creations.

I never could get the shuffling sequence of Phil's to a comfort level, due to my hand size, so I would just set the deck up beforehand with the color pattern if I had shuffled it according to Phil's instructions. To perform, I would just do a couple of false shuffles then proceed with a stripped-down version.

With my magical brain continuing on its miserable plight of over thinking, I first thought of the possibility of instead of just one card, what if the deck had the capability of creating two selections. That would allow for a repeat performance or

could be performed to two spectators at the same time. I also wanted to be able to preset the deck, anytime, anywhere, with some sort of shuffle sequence, simplified as much as possible to where I may actually want to remember it. The following is the result. Once again don't fear at first sight what you're about to see on the next pages. It's basically two methods of arranging the cards so they spell two cards when dealt. Trick is very easy to do. Simply get the deck arranged, place it into the case and put it in your jacket for whenever the conditions are right to perform it. This trick looks great on top of a pool table at a bar which make excellent impromptu close-up pads.

The Work:

Ready? Get your deck, take a deep breath, and here we go!

If you're not too enthusiastic about the stacking process I'll be teaching, simply arrange the deck, from the top down: king of hearts – jack of clubs – R-B-R-B-R-B-R-R-R-B-B-R-R-R-R-B-R-B-R-B-R-R-R-B-R-B-B-B-R-R-B-R-B-R-R-B-B-B-R-B-B-B (the R's being red cards, the B's black cards). Write this on a crib note or something for future reference. Now skip to step 6.

If you want to learn the stacking procedure, begin here, with step 1.

1. Remove the king of hearts and the jack of clubs. Separate the deck into reds and blacks. Place the black cards under (on the face) of the red cards. Now stick the king and the jack into the exact center to where the king becomes the bottom red card, the jack the top black card.
2. You're going to build the stacked deck into the left hand, by either peeling black cards off the top of the deck, or a red card from its bottom by the left fingers. It's like a milk-build shuffle except the thumb and fingers take turns, either peeling a black or a red card from the deck. Holding the deck **face up** in the standard overhand shuffle position, start peeling black cards into the left hand, one at a time. When six cards have been peeled, the left fingers slide (milk), from the back side of the deck, a red card, maneuvering it onto the top of the peeled stack and into the 7th position. Peel two more black cards, then a red card. Using this procedure, arrange the left hands stack to where there is a red card in the 7th, 10th, 15th, 16th, 20th, 21st, 22nd, 25th, 26th, and 30th positions, the rest being black, counting from the bottom. Stop peeling once the red card has been placed at the 30th position, that red card ending up as the top card of the face up stacked portion in your left hand. Once this step is done, I always quickly run through it from the back and counting,

verifying I got the red cards into those locations, before I continue. It's kind of a dance between the thumb and fingers, either a black card off the top by the thumb, or a red card off the bottom, with the fingers. Each peeled card goes on top of all in the left hand. Go slow at first until you get it down. On the count where a red card is required, by shifting your right hand upward slightly the left finger(s) basically slide their red cards onto the face (top) of the left-hand's portion. I can shuffle this sequence pretty quickly.

3. Place this stacked portion face up onto the table. Spread the remaining portion, remove the king of hearts and jack of clubs, and place them onto the face (top) of the packet you're still holding. Now cut all the black cards, the king and jack as well, to the back. Place all those cards, face up, onto the tabled cards. Pick up the reassembled deck and turn it **face down**.

The deck should now be arranged as follows: from the top down – the black cards with a red card in positions 7,10,15,16,20,21,22,25,26,30 – 5 black cards - the king of hearts – the jack of clubs – the remaining red cards. I don't have a mnemonic to aid in memorizing these positions since it's not that difficult to do in the first place. Just remember 7 10 15 16 20 21 22 25 26 30.

Now for the 2nd part of the stacking. This time you will be either single peeling cards or milk / build shuffling which means peeling cards off the top and bottom in unison, the bottom-peeled red card ending below the top peeled card (which becomes the top card). Here we go: I'll be referring to the milk / build action when needed, as simply 'milk'.

4. Holding the deck **face down**, in overhand shuffle position. Peel 3 cards. Now, perform a milking action (pull the bottom card of the right-hand stock plus the top card of that stock onto the left hand cards). Now peel 3 cards, then 2 milks, then 1 card, then 1 milk, then 2 cards, then 1 milk, then 2 cards, then 3 milks, then 3 cards, then 1 milk, then 3 cards, then 3 milks, then 1 card. You'll be left with some cards in your right hand, just hang on to them for a moment until step 5.

Step 4 may seem complex but an easy way to remember the pattern is: First, notice that the peeling and milking alternates, back and forth (peel, milk, peel, milk, etc...). The numbers during this sequence are 3,1,3,2,1,1,2,1,2,3,3,1,3,3,1. A mnemonic to remember this is, $3 \times 1 = 3$, $2 - 1 = 1$, $2 \times 1 = 2$, $3 / 3 = 1$, $3 / 3 = 1$ (notice the last two calculations are identical). Just think about those 5 calculations in the above order and alternate the peeling and milking (3 peel, 1 milk, then 3 peels, 2 milks, 1 peel, 1 milk, etc...).

5. Place the remaining few cards on the bottom of the arranged pack. Turn the reassembled deck face up. Spread the front few cards, remove the king of hearts and jack of clubs, turn the deck face down, and place the king and jack face down onto the top. The king needs to be the top card. The deck is now set up and ready to go.

Performance:

6. False shuffle. Flip the deck face up and spread them to display a random looking mix. Close the spread. Try not to spread the front or back few cards. Just do it as a quick chunky casual display. Turn the deck face down and give it a straight cut, catching a pinky break between the halves (the king of hearts should be the below the break). Rifle force to the break. With the right hand, lift all the cards above the break as the left hand thumbs the top card of its half (king of hearts) face down onto the table. Reassemble the deck by putting the right half **below** the left's.

7. Double undercut the top card (jack of clubs) to the bottom of the deck as the spectator is looking at the thumbed off card. Don't make the double undercut a secret action or anything. You're simply toying with the deck while the spectator is busy remembering his selection.

8. You will now make 3 rows of 7 cards each, starting with the lower right corner and ending at the upper left corner. Make the rows as straight as possible. Deal one card at a time, each time flipping the card face up as you place it onto the table. The dealing order is:

							Spectator
21	20	19	18	17	16	15	
14	13	12	11	10	9	8	
7	6	5	4	3	2	1	
							You

9. Double cut the jack back to the top of the deck. Act like you're concentrating and tell the spectator that the cards are telling you his card is a red card. After the spectator acknowledges this to be true, remove the **black** cards from the table, being careful not to disturb those that remain, and place the removed cards under the deck. The red cards on the table will now be making a large K and H (upside down to you). Look at those cards on the table and act like you're studying them.

See how long it takes the spectator to notice the letters. The 'K' for king may require a little imagination to see it. If he doesn't, call his attention to it.

Once it sinks in, pick up the remaining cards and put them on the bottom of the deck. The deck is now ready for a repeat performance, this time with the jack of clubs (which will make a large 'J' and 'C' when the cards are dealt out). Just repeat the process that you did with the king. For the jack, remove the **red** cards from off the table and the black cards will be making the letters.

If you want to do this effect for two people at once, after the rifle force, thumb the king and jack onto the table, one for each spectator, as if you're not in the mood to go through the selection-process twice. Place the lifted cards on the bottom. Now deal the 21 cards in front the spectator with the king, the next 21 cards in front of the other spectator in the order previously described.

So, what do you think? All you have to do is remember the first placements of red cards into positions 7,10,15,16,20,21,22,25,26,30 and the 5 calculations using milk build shuffles (in fact the last two are identical so there's really only 4 calculations, just remember to do the last one twice). Everything else will fall in place as you come to them. See, easier than you thought.