

# THE CARD CORNER

[INTERACTIVE]

By Mike Powers



Performance video available  
at [www.mallofmagic.com](http://www.mallofmagic.com).

We've had two columns dealing with the Twenty-one Card Trick, including an item called "Forty-two," published in November 2007. During a session, I showed Dave Solomon the version that used my PM Principle as the modus operandi. Dave later challenged me to come up with a solution in which three piles of seven are dealt at the outset. Here is the solution I worked out.

## 21 Again

**EFFECT:** A spectator is handed the deck and asked to deal three face-down piles of seven cards each. While the magician's back is turned, the spectator is told to pick up and shuffle any pile and then to remove a card and commit it to memory. Let's say it's the Seven of Diamonds. This card is replaced face down on the remaining six face-down cards. Now the spectator is instructed to cut some cards from one of the other piles and to add them on top of the selection, burying it under an unknown number of cards. To make the selection's location completely unknown, the spectator is now instructed to cut the packet into the center of the unused packet on the table; i.e., the spectator lifts some cards from the unused packet and places the packet containing the selection onto the tabled portion. The upper cut packet is now placed on top, burying the packet at a completely random position. Finally, the small packet on the table is shuffled and placed on top of all.

The magician points out that the selection is now buried inside the twenty-one card packet at a random location – and this is true. He proceeds to deal out the familiar three-column, seven-row pattern face

up. However, one card is dealt face down. When asked if the spectator knows which column the selection is in, she indicates that it's not visible. Of course, it is the face-down card.

**PROCEDURE:** As with the version previously published as "Forty-two," this version also uses two key cards. There is an advantage to this version, which is, it cannot fail. In "Forty-two," there is a chance that the spectator cuts more than half the cards. In this case the location principle fails. With this version that is not a factor. It works one hundred percent of the time.

You need to remove twenty-one cards from the deck at the outset. You'll need to be able to identify three of them. Since my memory isn't what it used to be, I always ensure that there are three, and only three, picture cards (jacks, queens, or kings) among the twenty-one cards. The picture cards need to be seventh, fourteenth, and twenty-first from the top of the face-down packet.

One way to achieve this is to simply spread the deck toward yourself as you upjog a group of seven cards. As you do this say, "We're going to need twenty-one

cards for this trick. These look good....” The first card of the seven must be a picture card. Just skip other picture cards as you upjog six X cards. Remove this group of seven and table it face down. Repeat this process two more times, tabling each packet of seven on top of the previous one. You now have twenty-one cards face down with the only picture cards at positions seven, fourteen, and twenty-one. You may spread the twenty-one cards, showing a “random” distribution if you wish.

Give the packet to the spectator and have her deal seven cards face down in a pile on the left side, seven in the center, and seven on the right side. This verifies that there are exactly twenty-one cards and also positions a picture card on *top* of each pile. For descriptive purposes let’s call the packets A, B, and C from left to right. See **Figure 1**. You can turn your back for the selection and random positioning process. I think this strengthens the feeling that you have no idea where the selection is (and you don’t!).

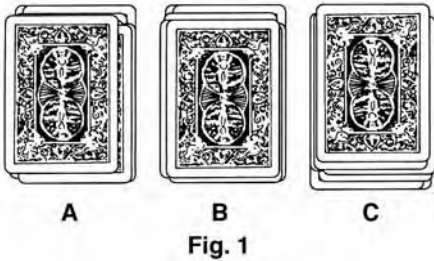


Fig. 1

Tell the spectator to pick up and shuffle any packet. Let’s say she picks up packet B. She is to pull out any card, remember it, and then place it face down on top of the other six face-down cards. Tell her to take some cards from either packet (let’s say it’s A) and to place them face down on top of her selection. Point out that one packet has not been used (C). She is to pick up some cards from packet C and hold them above the others in C. Instruct her to place the packet with the selection on the lower part of packet C and then place the upper part of C on top. Be sure to point out that the selection’s location is now totally unknown. Finally, she is to pick up the

small packet (lower part of A), shuffle it, and place it on top of all.

This really does position the selection at an unknown place with no possible key card next to it. It doesn’t hurt to point out at the appropriate times that the prescribed actions are placing random cards next to the selection and that its location is now unknown to everyone.

You now take the packet face down and begin dealing cards face up into the traditional pattern one by one; i.e., deal a row of three from left to right and then another row of three overlapping these. As you begin to deal you must count *backwards* from seven until you see a picture card. Let’s say you see a picture card as your count reaches four. Remember this number (four) as you continue to deal. When you see the *next* picture card, the selection will be your key number (four) of cards *after* the picture card, i.e., not counting it.

I like to deal this card face down and then continue dealing face up until the twenty-one cards are in the configuration of **Figure 2**. You can then say, “Do you know which column your selection is in?” You’ll get varying answers to this question but they all lead to a mysterious ending. The selection is the face-down card.

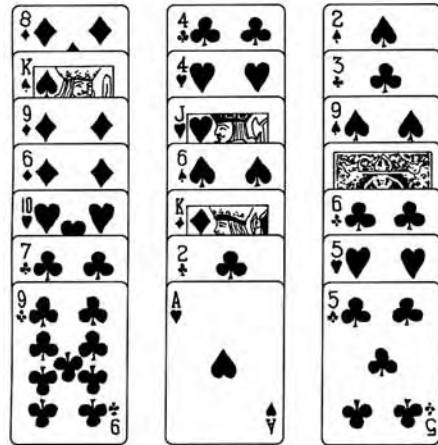


Fig. 2

Many alternate endings are possible. For example, if you bottom deal after reaching the selection, you could hold the

last two cards as one and then flip them face up, dropping the double as a single in position twenty. You end apparently with only twenty cards. The selection has “vanished.” I’ll leave it up to you how to proceed from a vanished selection scenario. Clearly there are many ways to go.

**FINAL THOUGHTS:** If you are worrying about the third picture card creating a problem, you can stop worrying. It will always be below the other two. Thus, even if the spectator selects the picture card in her packet, it won’t create any problem. The other two keys are always above it.

I have a way to use the same location

principle from a borrowed shuffled full deck. The spectator cuts the deck into three random piles and proceeds to bury a free selection as in the item above. Using a similar procedure, you can locate it. It’s another way to get into the “Invisible Card” scenario from the October 2007 “Card Corner.”

I’ll be writing up the more general use of this location principle next month. Until then, may all your faros be perfect, and may your doubles never split!

**Mike Powers**

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### *Answer to Pictures from the Past* – from page 22



John Giordmaine (1898–1974) was born Giovanni Nicola Giordmaina but later changed his name to Giordmaine to rhyme with legerdemain. He immigrated to Canada in 1919 and settled in The Junction area of Toronto, going to work as an electrician’s assistant for the Swift Meat Packing Company.

In early 1927, Sid Lorraine – the staff artist for *The Linking Ring* and an early I.B.M. member – heard about an amateur musician who also did a few magic tricks. Sid Lorraine arranged to meet him and found that he was a shy fellow in his late twenties. “I pointed out the advantages of joining the I.B.M.,” Lorraine later wrote, “telling him that he would learn many new effects

from the monthly magazine and would eventually meet many others who had magic as a hobby. He signed, that night, on the dotted line....”

Three years later, now actively involved in magic and the I.B.M., Giordmaine was injured working on an electrical circuit at Swift. That accident led him to reconsider his choice of careers, and against the advice of friends who thought he was crazy to leave a good job during the Depression, Giordmaine went to work at a magic shop and began booking paid engagements.

An optimistic man, Giordmaine spread cheer wherever he went. His love of music continued throughout his life, and as a devout Catholic, he attended mass every day. When asked why he went to church so often, he replied, “God gave us twenty-four hours in a day. The least we can do is to give him back one.”

After his death in 1974 following a severe heart attack, his longtime friend Sid Lorraine wrote of his jolly nature. “One minute he’d be checking the time with a giant watch that contained a sandwich, as a colorful flower leaped from one lapel to the other, while his bow tie flashed in many colors.

“Upon a volunteer assistant being asked if he had a coat-hanger in his pocket, John would withdraw a large wooden one from a tiny purse, before the fellow had a chance to answer.

“No matter what he did, when or where he did it, there was always joy and laughter. Nobody enjoyed it more than John Giordmaine.”