

history of the *Slow Motion Ace Assembly*, the first major change in the basic plot. The plot of *Progressive Aces* is generally credited to Ken Krenzle and is to be found stated as a card problem under the title of *A 4-Ace Problem* in *Epilogue* Number Sixteen, for November of 1972 on page 4. The basic plot is this: Four Aces are dealt face down in a row on the table. Three indifferent cards are placed on each Ace. The Ace vanishes from the first packet. The second packet is picked up and shown to contain both the Ace from the first packet and the Ace previously laid down. Both Aces vanish from this packet to travel to the third packet joining the Ace already there. These three Aces subsequently vanish to conclude with all four Aces gathering in the fourth packet. Krenzle's method eventually appeared in print in *Epilogue Special* Number Two, for 1975, on pages 9 through 12, under the title of *Progressive Aces*. However, the first published statement of, and solution to, this problem had already appeared in print in *Necromancer* Number One for August 1970, under the same title of *Progressive Aces*, by Roger Smith, on pages 6 through 8. In *Necromancer* Number Six for January 1971, on pages 1 through 4 appeared Roy Walton's version of the same plot under the title of *Assembly in Reverse*. In the initial write-up in *Epilogue* of the Krenzle problem, there is a rather curious statement that "Krenzle discussed the progressive ace routine with Dai Vernon as early as 1960." Apparently the effect was developed at least five years prior to the 1960 date. In *MARLO'S MAGAZINE* Volume One (1976), on page 71, Ed Marlo noted the following: "... he[Krenzle] did have several discussions on this effect with Dai Vernon. The Vernon version, which was worked out around 1955, was sent to me at that time by Bill Simon." I can corroborate this as I have in my files a letter from Bill Simon to Faucett Ross dated November 16th, 1955 giving the method for this routine.

The Marlo reference noted above contains a lengthy section on the effect, retitled as *Succession Aces* – a more appropriate title, I feel. Some 72 pages are devoted to this subject, including the first appear-

ance of the intermingling of Lynn Searles' *Ultimate Aces* plot with the Krenzle effect. Briefly, the Searles idea, first proposed in his 1958 book *ULTIMATE ACES*, was to perform the standard *Ace Assembly* but with the twist that the Aces have contrasting backs to the 12 indifferent cards used. Marlo titled his combination *Technicolor Succession Aces* and versions are to be found on pages 121 through 137 of *MARLO'S MAGAZINE* Volume One. Versions by Eugene Castillion and David Walker have also recently seen print.

The effect of the *Reverse* or *Inverted Assembly* wherein the four Aces scatter from one packet to four, was first published by Phil Goldstein in his lecture notes entitled *CARD TRICKS FOR PEOPLE WHO DON'T DO CARD TRICKS... AND SOME FOR THOSE WHO DO!* (1974) on page 6 under the title of *Seca Rouf*. In a recent article in *New Tops*, Goldstein points out that Dai Vernon had solutions to the problem several decades ago. Other versions have appeared in print by Ed Marlo, David Solomon, Allan Ackerman, John Mendoza (on tape), Jon Racherbaumer, Eugene Castillion, Danny Korem, and again, Phil Goldstein.

Various combinations of the different plots noted have seen print recently. However, no one has, to my knowledge, combined the distinctive elements of *Progressive Aces*, *Ultimate Aces*, and the *Inverted Assembly* within one routine prior to Francis Pelkey.

Purists will find the Pelkey approach unpalatable as duplicates are used. However, after Francis sent me this routine on May 8th, 1981, I subsequently developed and then performed my handling of this for several well-informed cardmen. None was able to give any solution to the routine.

In this lengthy article, I propose to first give the original Francis Pelkey routine exactly as developed by him. I will then describe the variation of this routine that I have developed. Finally, I propose to give my "final solution" to the routine – one which is worked with two borrowed ungimmicked decks with minimal effort expended.

A feature of Francis Pelkey's routine is that it automatically resets. To perform this, you will need five red backed Aces stacked in the following order from top to bottom: Ace of Diamonds, Ace of Hearts, Ace of Clubs, Ace of Diamonds (a duplicate), Ace of Spades.

You will also need a blue deck set up as follows from top to bottom: Three indifferent cards, Ace of Diamonds, four indifferent cards, Ace of Hearts, Ace of Clubs, Ace of Hearts (a duplicate), Ace of Diamonds (a duplicate). The last three cards of the stack are interchangeable.

Casually *False Shuffle* the blue deck and then

place it aside. Pick up the face down red packet in *Biddle Grip*. Peel off three cards with the left thumb. The last two cards are dropped onto the top of the packet as one card. Turn the packet face up and obtain a left little finger break above the bottom card.

Take the packet back into *Biddle Grip* in the right hand. As you do so, the break is transferred to the right thumb. Peel off the face two cards with the left thumb. As you peel off the third card into the left hand, the card below the thumb break is secretly allowed to drop onto the left hand cards, beneath the third card. Drop the last card on top. The packet will be in the following order from top to bottom: Ace of