

From: Bruce Cervon <hopey@fishnet.net>

To: [REDACTED]

Date: Saturday, March 14, 1998 3:46 PM

Subject: Con-Control

The Convincing Control
Bruce Cervon

Once more I take Mr. Kauffman to task for rewriting magical history and

once more that rewrite is from the pages of "Jennings '67". It seems that again, Larry Jennings claimed that a move was his, years after the move came out. In this case it happens to be Ed Marlo's "Convincing Control" Larry called his version the "Immediate Bottom Placement".

It would seem to me that the following evidence would show nearly any thinking person that Larry's and Richard's claim about this concept is not likely.

If you want to start at the beginning of this, yet another, Jennings controversy go to "The Collected Almanac", on page xxix. Kaufman mentions that "Ackerman Varies Kelly" (From "The Esoterist", 1971) is a simplified version of Larry Jennings "Immediate Bottom Placement". This theme is expanded on in "Jennings '67".

Go back and read Ackerman's "Magic Mafia Effects" (1970) you will find "A Card Pass" which has all the elements of the "Immediate Bottom Placement/Convincing Control". Allan credits Marlo. Marlo then publishes

his own handling "Convincing Control" in the Hierophant #3 (3/1970).

Kaufman tells you that Marlo published his method in the Hierophant #3 (3/70) but fails to tell you that this item was from Marlo's notes dated June 15, 1966! In his Hierophant write up Marlo mentions this fact and that he worked this out at the same time he was working on (and publishing) similar spread cull ideas in the New Tops. (see The New Tops, The Prayer

Cull, 6/1966) If you check these sources you can see that these two ideas have common ancestors. It is not necessary to theorize how Marlo came up with the concept as Kaufman does with Jennings in "Jennings '67", in Marlo's case it's obvious.

I am not championing Ed Marlo. I, however, learned "at his feet" (as did Larry Jennings... don't forget, I was there) and I am not ashamed to say

so. I have also (in contrast) been the number one Vernon fan since I was a young boy.

Personally Marlo and I did not get on well and I, too, can sight many items that he “used” which belonged to others but can also sight thousands of original ideas which were his and his alone. Praise him for

what he did; he made information available that most of us would never have had. We (and most card workers) wouldn't be where we are in magic if Marlo had not been what and who he was.

To continue on with this long story, Allan Ackerman then published “Ackerman Varies Kelly” in “The Esoterist” (1971) and once more credits Marlo.

Frank Simon (with much input from Earl Nelson) gives the complete history of Spread Controls on page 7 of “Versatile Card Magic” (1983). Earl Nelson is the person who served as an expert roll model for doing the “Convincing Control” or “Versatile Spread Control”. And as many of you know he posed for all the photos in this book. Earl loved this move and from 1977 on demonstrated and used it until it became nearly a national craze. Frank and Earl credit Marlo even though they both knew Larry Jennings very well. In fact, they both saw him several times a week at the Magic Castle.

Aside from all of the above I personally never saw Larry do this move prior to 1976. I know he did the Marlo spread culls because he and I learned them from the same source at the same time. Larry and I discussed them at great length. We learned them in June of 1966 in “The New Tops” from Ed's article.

I am interested in the truth, not a lot of bull. The story as quoted on page 19 of “The Classic Magic of Larry Jennings” and is followed up on in “Jennings '67” is as follows: “Years ago, when Alton Sharpe was putting together his “Expert Card Mysteries”, Larry gave him the handling for the Bottom Placement. Mr. Sharpe showed several people and the move got around, Subsequently, Ed Marlo published a version of his own.”

I spoke to Al Sharpe, in the company of Jim Patton, about this “Convincing Control/Immediate Bottom Placement” story. He told us that what was stated in “The Classic Magic of Larry Jennings” was not true. Larry had never given him a handling for the “Bottom Placement”, ever. At the time “Classic Magic” was published Al said he was very upset about this and was considering asking, legally, for a retraction.

Kaufman says that Marlo admitted in print that Al Sharpe described how the Jennings' sleight looked from the spectator's point of view. Kaufman

says that "Sharpe has since confirmed this, personally, to me". This is TRUE, however, Kaufman allows you to think that Al described the "Immediate Bottom Placement" to Marlo. He did not!

Al Sharpe told Jim and I that much later, sometime between 1975 and 1978, Larry showed him a move at the Magic Castle which fooled him badly. Larry did it for him several times and he did not know what Larry

was doing. As Al described it to us and it was the same description Marlo gives to anyone who wants to read it in Marlo's Magazine #6.

"Larry spreads deck FACE UP and has a spectator touch any card in the center. He then closes the spread, turns the deck over, then shows the card is on the top of the deck."

Does that sound like the "Bottom Placement". No, it sounds like a face up spread cull, exactly as Marlo points out in Marlo Magazine #6. How this and the "Convincing Control" relate I don't quite see. The time difference is at least 9 years! Go to the source, as I did, ask Al Sharpe.

Larry has added to the "Convincing Control / Versatile Spread Control", his squaring of the cards a la the Larryverse and a few other touches but should credit those who came before. The progression of the move is there for all to see, Kaufman shouldn't have embarrassed himself with such a losing cause. Larry had a "handling" of Marlo's "Convincing Control" a slight variation.

Bruce Cervon

--

"Work is for people who don't know how to do magic..."