

BRIDGE BITES

from The American Contract Bridge League

THREE DEGREES OF BACON

By: Brian Gunnell

This week's hand features an astonishing defense by West - we'll get to the winning play by degrees.

	♠ AT2 ♥ Q6 ♦ KQJT73 ♣ 84	
♠ 765 ♥ 542 ♦ 54 ♣ AQJ96	<i>North</i> West East Declarer	♠ KQJ93 ♥ A3 ♦ 982 ♣ K73
	♠ 84 ♥ KJT987 ♦ A6 ♣ T52	

E-W Vulnerable

South	West	North	East
			1♠
Pass	2♠	3♦	Pass
3♥	All Pass		

E-W did well not to compete to 3♠ (that contract is down one if N-S get their Diamond ruff). Instead, E-W are required to defeat South's 3♥ contract. Will they? West's lead is a Spade, won in Dummy.

In the first degree, you are **Declarer**. With that running Diamond suit you have loads of winners, but the danger is that E-W will get five tricks first. You can try for a Club ruff in Dummy, but alert defenders will switch to trumps (being sure to hold up the ♥A until the second round). Nonetheless, at Trick 2, you lead a Club hoping that something good will happen.

In the second degree, you are **East**, trying to thwart Declarer. Dummy's ♠A wins the first trick, and a Club is led, won by West's Jack. West shifts to a trump, and you have a dilemma:

- If Declarer has the ♣A, and West the ♦A, then the winning defense is to take the ♥A immediately and play another Heart, stopping the Club ruff.
- If Declarer has the ♦A, and West the ♣A, then the winning defense is to duck the first trump, win the next Club, cash ♥A and then a third Club.

To bring home the bacon the defense must go to the third degree. This time, you are **West**, trying to help East to thwart Declarer. Same start, but instead of routinely winning the ♣J at Trick 2, you do some thinking. Declarer did not play Clubs like someone holding the ♣K, so East surely has that card. In that case you can afford to squander the Ace! This brilliant stroke solves East's dilemma, telling him what he needs to know. How many Wests would find that truly remarkable play? None that we know of!

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