

Ethical Dilemmas (Part 3)

The “Nasty” Director

To wrap up “Ethical Dilemmas”, I will look at a hand from a recent Congress, where the various aspects I previously mentioned in the first two articles all came into play.

But first a bidding problem.... You are West, the dealer, and open 1♥ with

♠ 952	NS are silent, and the auction goes:-
♥ KQJ985	West North East South
♦ Q8	1♥ P 2♠ P
♣ K2	3♠ P 4♥ P
	???

You have agreed with your partner that 2♠ is natural and strong (slam-going) and that 4♥ is a cue bid, showing first round heart control, but denying first round control in clubs and diamonds. What do you bid now?

Unlike in magazine bidding forums where panels of experts give their views on the best call, there is a definite right decision on this hand. It is to bid 4♠. Even though your hand will probably produce lots of side suit tricks in hearts and slam looks a real possibility, your partner’s 4♥ bid is very telling. You are missing the aces in both clubs and diamonds, so there is no point in going past the safe contract of 4♠.

When this hand came up at the table the auction was as above. After East bid 2♠, South asked West what it meant and was given the answer, “natural, strong – looking for slam”. South passed, West raised to 3♠, North passed. Now, before bidding 4♥, without anyone asking East said, “My partner told you the wrong thing. 2♠ was a Bergen raise, showing a limit raise with 3 hearts.” West said, “Oh, that’s right.” NS called the director. **Those of you who remember Part 1 will realise that East has done the wrong thing.** When partner has given a wrong explanation, the correct time to inform the opponents is at the end of the auction if you are going to be declarer or dummy, or at the end of the play if you are a defender. So, my first job as Director was to remind East of when he should have mentioned partner’s wrong explanation.



Those of you who remember Part 2 will realise that there is another problem with East’s comment. It passed information to West which West was not entitled to use in coming to a decision on what to bid next. A little confused, West asked me what she had to do. I told her that she had to continue as if her partner had a good hand with spades – at the very least bid 4♠ if she had any support, which must be the case since she had raised to 3♠. This did not go down well.

West: “But he’s got hearts and he might not have any spades. Anyway I had worked out that it was a Bergen raise.”

Me: “Under the Laws it is assumed that you were woken up by your partner’s comment and so you must continue to bid as if he has got a good hand with spades.”

West: “That’s just not fair”, followed by a very reluctant and disgruntled 4♠ on the bidding pad and a disgusted look in my direction.

So, 4♠ became the final contract. It wasn’t such a disaster – East just happened to have four spades in his hand. So, instead of playing in a 6-3 heart fit, they played in a more challenging 4-3 fit.

Here is the full hand:

You can play out the hand in both 4♥ and 4♠, and Deep Finesse will confirm it. In hearts, EW make 10 tricks. In spades, EW also make 10 tricks! Apart from possibly imposing a penalty on East for his unwarranted and untimely comment, there was no further appropriate director’s adjustment to be made. Normally, the cards will be enough to penalise infractions such as this, but on this particular day, justice was “out to lunch”.

	♠ Q743	
	♥ 76	
	♦ 10432	
	♣ Q107	
♠ 952		♠ KJ108
♥ KQJ985		♥ 1043
♦ Q8		♦ KJ6
♣ K2		♣ AJ3
	♠ A6	
	♥ A2	
	♦ A975	
	♣ 98654	

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