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by
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West		North	East
S: 763		S: K9	S: J54
H: A94		H: J1053	H: 82
D: Q4		D: K965	D: J10732
C: KJ1073		C: Q84	C: A62
		South	
		S: AQ1082	
		H: KQ76	
		D: A8	
		C: 95	

Match-points, both vulnerable

N	E	S	W
P	P	1S	P
1NT*	P	2H	P
3H	P	4H	P
P	P		

*Forcing

Trick 1: D—Q, K, 2, 8
 Trick 2: H—J, 2, 6, A
 Trick 3: C—J, Q, A, 5
 Trick 4: D—J, A, 4, 5

Declarer easily took the rest. Who gets the charge?

Steve Evans: "This error is almost entirely West's. When East plays the diamond 2 on the opening lead, he must want partner to play a club. If East has nothing in clubs he should encourage in diamonds, just so there won't be a disastrous shift. Since West knows his partner has the club ace, and he knows that he doesn't have a singleton diamond, he should play club K followed by club J.

East could reason that West might lead a club other than the J if he wanted a ruff, since the J seems to indicate that West didn't want to put East in. However, this is a deal where West can make the defense easy for his partner, and he should do so. After the club K is played, there is nothing that East can do wrong."

Marty Shallon: "The charge goes to West. He should not give his partner a problem unnecessarily. The lead of the club J has no deceptive value, for if South has the club A he will play the queen from dummy. Upon winning the trump, West should play the K and then another club. This loses only when East has the doubleton A of clubs, but that holding is impossible. South cannot have three clubs, since he is marked with at least nine cards in the majors, and he also must have the diamond ace still tucked away. West should take charge, since he knows what to do and East may not. West knows the diamond position."

The panelists have been hard on West, and I, too, think he merits the charge. But the recommended play of the club K seems somewhat flashy to me and it is not without risk. Suppose declarer has Axx of diamonds, the singleton club A, and a corresponding hole in one of the majors. Steve suggests that this combination is not possible given partner's diamond deuce, but why rely on partner when it is not necessary. I think West should return the club 3 at trick 3. East will be deceived as to the club count on the actual hand, but he will win the ace and return a club. Why will East not return a diamond? Because a basic signaling principle is that a low card lead means the leader wants the suit returned. In order to get a diamond ruff, West should lead a moderately high club, such as the ten, from his actual holding.

