

Do you trust people? If you said yes to that question, suppose I told you that I had witnessed an event in which a policeman had outrageously misrepresented the facts, while a couple of teenagers who had suffered at the policeman's hands were no more than innocent victims of a conspiracy, would you believe me? And if you said yes to that question as well, what would you do with the East cards on today's hand?

The setting is the Lederer Trophy, an all-star event in which the teams who have won England's major trophies over the season match their wits against international opposition. You are second to speak at game all, and you do not expect the man in front of you will have anything to say that might be used against him in a court of law, for your hand is:

♠A5 ♥AQJ973 ♦A98 ♣AJ

You have 20 points, a decent suit, and a problem. If you open one heart, everyone might pass and you might have missed a game — after all, your side can make three no trumps if partner has the king of hearts. You cannot open two hearts, for that is a pre-emptive bid. Colin Simpson, the policeman to whom I was referring

earlier, chose an opening bid of 2NT; not the usual course with a six-card major suit, but he hoped for the best.

His partner, Robert Sheehan, bid three clubs to ask for four-card majors. Simpson didn't exactly have one of those, but he showed his six-card major by the unusual response to Stayman of four hearts. Sheehan has been playing bridge at the highest levels for more than 30 years, and this sequence was one he had never encountered in all of them. He bid six no trumps, he put down the dummy, and he waited to see what on earth his extraordinary partner would make of the play.

This was the full deal:

	North		East
	♠ 7 2		♠ A 5
	♥ K 10 6 4		♥ A Q J 9 7 3
	♦ 10 6 5 4 3 2		♦ A 9 8
	♣ 8		♣ A J
West		South	
♠ K J 10 4		♠ Q 9 8 6 3	
♥ 8		♥ 5 2	
♦ K Q J		♦ 7	
♣ K 9 5 4 2		♣ Q 10 7 6 3	

North-South were two of England's brightest junior prospects, but they were to be well and truly fixed by the old guard. South attacked with a club lead, but that merely ran to East's jack. Knowing that his best chance was to bring in the heart suit for five tricks, Simpson led a diamond to dummy's jack and a heart to his queen. This held the trick, and Simpson cashed the ace of hearts. But South followed with the two and North with the four — each had played his higher card on the previous round to indicate an even number.

Colin's years in the police force have taught him to tell at once if a man's behaviour is honest or suspicious. On this occasion, there seemed no reason not to play the opponents to be honest men, so knowing that North had the king and the ten left, Simpson abandoned hearts. Instead, he played the ace of spades and a spade to dummy's ten.

When this held, he could have claimed the contract, but he is not given to flamboyance. He cashed the ace and king of clubs and the diamond winners before putting South in with the last club to lead away from the queen of spades. All very neat, and Simpson became the only player to make a slam on this deal.

Bridge

Zia Mahmood

The field for the Lederer Memorial Trophy this year will be one of the strongest the event has seen. Spectators are welcome — the Lederer is a chance to see at close quarters top-class bridge played in the friendliest of spirits. The event begins at the usual venue, the Young Chelsea Bridge Club, at 1pm today and continues tomorrow at the same time. The club is at 32 Barkston Gardens in Earl's Court (020 7373 1665).

Colin Simpson of last year's victorious All Stars team made the play of the tournament on this deal. The position was a difficult one for the defenders — particularly against a slam contract, it is hard to know whether you can afford to conceal information from the declarer at the risk of also misleading your partner.

the event is held, the answer would be simple — an opening bid of two hearts showed almost exactly this kind of hand. But that was then, and this is now — Simpson would open two hearts with three fewer aces than he actually held, since the bid is used by almost all modern experts as a pre-empt. Unwilling to risk a one bid with such strength, Simpson decided to fall back on 2NT. His partner, Robert Sheehan, inquired for majors with three clubs, and Simpson tried to show the nature of his hand with a jump to four hearts. Sheehan, who hadn't heard this sequence before, shrugged his shoulders, bid 6NT and let his partner get on with it.

The opening lead was, fortunately for Simpson, the six of clubs to the two, eight and jack. He crossed to the jack of diamonds in dummy and

elsewhere. This was the full deal:

North

♠ K J 10 4

♥ 8

♦ K Q J

♣ K 9 5 4 2

West

♠ Q 9 8 6 3

♥ 5 2

♦ 7

♣ Q 10 7 6 3

East

♠ 7 2

♥ K 10 6 4

♦ 10 6 5 4 3 2

♣ 8

South

♠ A 5

♥ A Q J 9 7 3

♦ A 9 8

♣ A J

After the jack of clubs, king of diamonds and two rounds of hearts, Simpson played the ace of spades and a spade to the 10, then a club to the ace and two rounds of diamonds