

# Three Degrees of Bacon

by [Brian Gunnell](#)

Today's deal features an astonishing defense by West – we'll get to the winning play by degrees.

<b>Board 6</b>		♠ A 10 2											
East Deals		♥ Q 6											
E-W Vul		♦ K Q J 10 7 3											
		♣ 8 4											
♠ 7 6 5		<table border="1" style="border-collapse: collapse; width: 40px; height: 40px; margin: auto;"> <tr><td></td><td>N</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>W</td><td></td><td>E</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td>S</td><td></td></tr> </table>		N		W		E		S		♠ K Q J 9 3	
	N												
W		E											
	S												
♥ 5 4 2			♥ A 3										
♦ 5 4			♦ 9 8 2										
♣ A Q J 9 6			♣ K 7 3										
		♠ 8 4											
		♥ K J 10 9 8 7											
		♦ A 6											
		♣ 10 5 2											
<i>West</i>	<i>North</i>	<i>East</i>	<i>South</i>										
2 ♠	3 ♦	1 ♠	Pass										
All pass		Pass	3 ♥										

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 two, 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 ♣J. 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 two, 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 ♣A! 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!