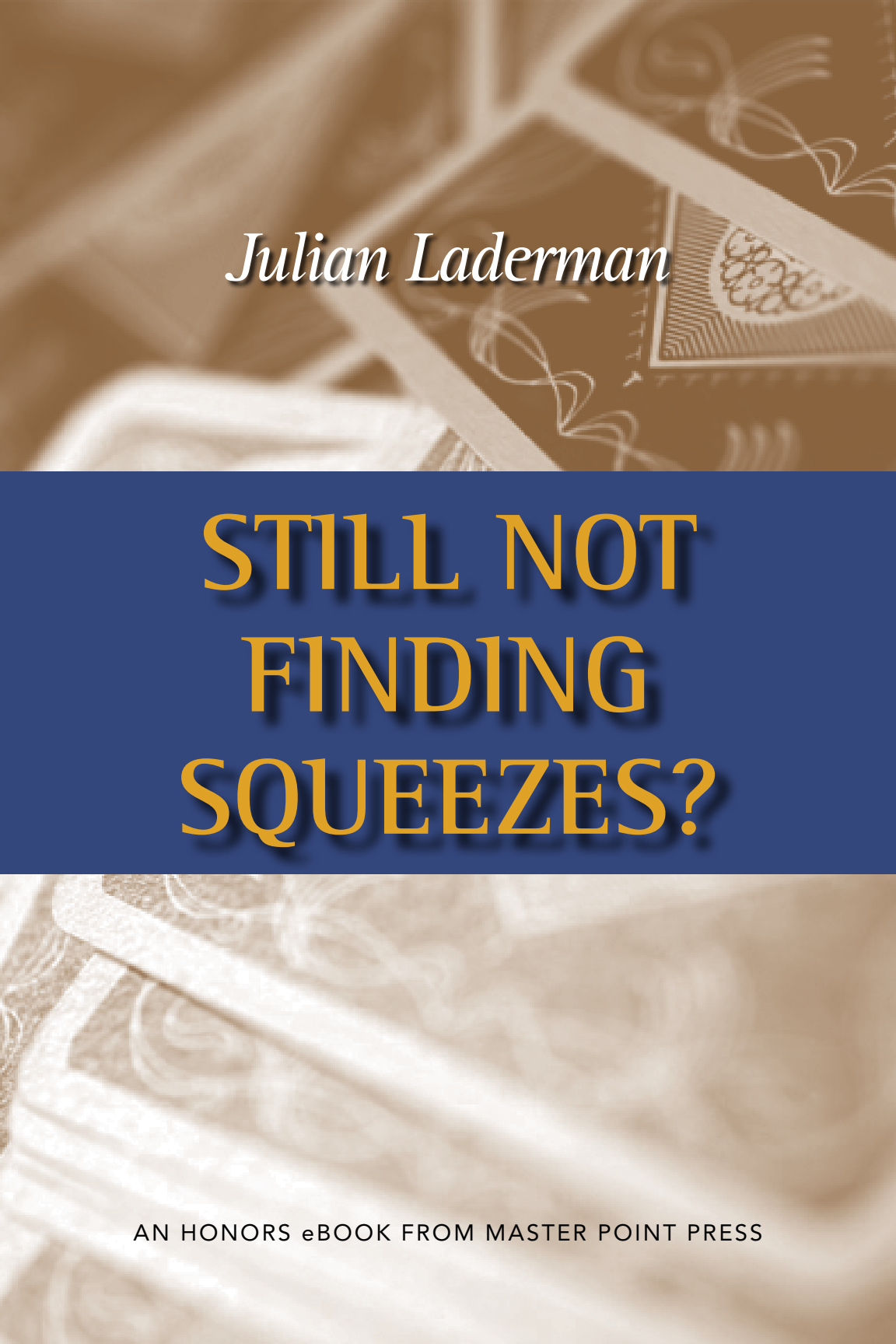
Julian Laderman
STILL NOT FINDING SQUEEZES?
AN HONORS eBOOK FROM MASTER POINT PRESS

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Dr. Julian Laderman is a retired mathematics and computer science professor (Lehman College, City University of New York). He has written two books that have won the American Bridge Teachers' Association Book of the Year Award. His first book *A Bridge to Simple Squeezes* won in 2006 and *A Bridge to Inspired Declarer Play* won in 2009. For many years he wrote the bridge column for *The Bronx Journal*.

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INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this book

Terence Reese wrote in several of his books: "The squeeze play has to be learned – it cannot be 'picked up'." While with most other plays, one can become proficient solely through experience at the bridge table, squeeze execution must be studied. Bridge players have often lamented to me that even though they have read squeeze books and feel they understand the technique, they still do not find squeezes at the table. I try not to take it too personally when it is my squeeze book that they are referring to. Therefore, I chose the title *Still Not Finding Squeezes?* for this book.

With an advanced technique, such as squeeze execution, a player has to encounter many deals in order to become proficient. Unfortunately, since squeezes only occur on a small percentage of the hands, it is very hard to get all the experience one needs at the bridge table. Also, there is the following "catch-22": when players are not proficient at squeeze execution, they not only fail to carry them out at the table but even worse, from a learning standpoint, they don't realize when they miss a squeeze. Therefore, even on hands where squeezes are possible, players don't acquire any squeeze experience. I strongly feel bridge players must first realize, while studying hand records at tournaments, that they are missing many squeezes before getting to the point where they can regularly execute the play.

In order for software developers to produce a large computer program it is necessary to use what is called a *structured approach*. The goal of a structured approach is to break down a complex activity into numerous ordered simple activities. I created a structured approach for squeeze execution in *A Bridge to Simple Squeezes* (Toronto: Master Point Press, 2nd edition, 2007). This structured approach involves recognizing strong and weak threat cards, making assumptions, planning the squeeze, and avoiding the four common mistakes. This book, *Still Not Finding Squeezes?*, does not try to present the structured approach in a clear complete fashion

but only provides some comments about these steps, a quick review of strong threat cards, and some key definitions. It is assumed that the reader has read at least the first five chapters of *A Bridge to Simple Squeezes.*

An excellent source of squeeze exercises can be found in *The Simple Squeeze* (Toronto: Master Point Press, 2004) by David Bird and Tim Bourke. That book contains 39 squeeze examples (three deals in the introduction and 36 problems). In *A Bridge to Simple Squeezes*, I recommend that readers apply the structured approach to those 39 examples. This book, *Still Not Finding Squeezes?,* does just that. The technique developed in *A Bridge to Simple Squeezes* is applied to the 39 examples that appear in *The Simple Squeeze*. Those 39 deals are repeated in this book exactly as they appear in the Bird/Bourke book, *The Simple Squeeze.* The bidding provided in their book is carried over to this book without any changes. No bidding explanations are included in *Still Not Finding Squeezes?*

Throughout, *Still Not Finding Squeezes?* any reference to a specific problem number refers to the corresponding example in *The Simple Squeeze*. The following abbreviations are often used: ABTSS for *A Bridge to Simple Squeezes* and TSS for *The Simple Squeeze*. Both of these books are available from Master Point Press either in print form or as an ebook.

Quick review of strong threat cards

Strong threat cards are the driving force behind the structured approach. ABTSS Chapter 1 is titled, *Strong Threat Cards*. Here is a short review. If declarer holds 4 3, and dummy holds A K Q 2 in a suit, the lowly 2 is a *strong threat card* since only the defender with four or more cards in the suit is preventing the 2 from winning a trick. With the defenders holding seven cards in the suit, it is impossible for both defenders to be guarding the 2. If instead declarer holds just the singleton 3, with the dummy still holding A K Q 2, the 2 would only be a *weak threat card* since a 4-4 split would enable both defenders to guard the 2. From declarer's perspective, the 2 may be guarded by only one defender but the actual situation is not known. If there had been bidding evidence or any other clues that would

have allowed declarer to virtually rule out any possibility of a 4-4 split, the 2 would have been a strong threat card.

If declarer holds A K and dummy J 3 2 in a suit, the jack is a strong threat card since only the defender with the queen (assume not doubleton or singleton) is preventing the jack from winning a trick. Suppose declarer holds just the singleton ace, and dummy holds jack doubleton. In this case, the jack is a weak threat card since if the king and queen are split between the defenders, both will be able to guard the jack (unless one of the honors is a singleton). If, however, either defender holds both the king and queen, that defender is the only one guarding the jack. Since declarer usually has no way of knowing that only one defender is actually preventing the jack from winning a trick without peeking at a defender's cards, the jack is only a weak threat card.

Occasionally in squeeze literature the terms **single menace (single threat)** and **double menace (double threat)** appear. They indicate whether a threat card is guarded by just one or both defenders. These terms are based on double dummy knowledge and are therefore quite different from strong and weak threat cards which are based solely on declarer's knowledge. In the last example, ace opposite jack doubleton, we saw that the jack, a weak threat card, may be either a single threat or a double threat, depending on whether or not the king and queen are both held by the same defender.

If declarer were to learn from the defenders' bidding or play which of them is guarding a strong threat card, it is labelled strong-plus. The word **plus** does not mean that declarer is more likely to be able to execute a squeeze but only that declarer has more information. Declarer knows which defender is guarding the strong threat card. It may actually be bad news: declarer may be certain that unfortunately different defenders are guarding the two strong threat cards, and therefore no simple squeeze is possible. This additional information may be useful in suggesting an alternative line of play. Declarer has several of the ingredients required for a double squeeze.

During the play of a hand the status of a threat card is often upgraded. In our last example of a weak threat card, ace opposite jack doubleton, suppose during the play the king forced out the ace, the jack would be promoted from a weak threat card to a strong threat card. A more impressive promotion occurs when one defender shows out in the suit of a threat card. In that case, a weak threat card can be upgraded all the way to strong-plus. Even if one is unable to upgrade a weak threat card to a strong threat card, it may actually be guarded by only one defender. Therefore it may be just as useful in a squeeze as a strong threat card. Since declarer needs to assume that only one defender is actually guarding the weak threat card, the level of assumption will be higher.

Several of the examples in *Still Not Finding Squeezes?* involve the techniques of **isolating the menace** or **transferring the menace**. The procedure of isolating the menace can be viewed as a method to promote a weak threat card into a strong threat card. The procedures of transferring a menace or executing a show-up squeeze are inspired by the presence of strong-plus threat cards.

I often describe a strong threat card like a pin in chess. A pin restricts an opponent's movement options. A strong threat card restricts an opponent's discarding options.

The ability to recognize strong threat cards is essential for squeeze execution. Their presence alerts a declarer to consider a squeeze when playing a particular hand. After the threat cards inspire a declarer to look for a squeeze, their location and the communication between declarer's hand and dummy will provide declarer with the necessary information as to what type of squeeze may be possible.

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IF YOUR ANSWER IS 'YES' TO THE FOLLOWING THREE QUESTIONS, THIS IS THE PERFECT BOOK FOR YOU:

1. Have you read *A Bridge to Simple Squeezes*?
2. Did you see merit in the structured approach introduced in that book for executing simple squeezes?
3. Do you feel that in spite of your great effort you are still not finding squeezes?

In this book, *Still Not Finding Squeezes?*, the structured approach is applied to the 39 squeeze examples that David Bird and Tim Bourke created for their book, *Test Your Bridge Technique: The Simple Squeeze*.

These examples will give you the experience you need to include squeezes in your arsenal.

DR. JULIAN LADERMAN is a retired mathematics and computer science professor (Lehman College, City University of New York). He has written two books that have won the American Bridge Teachers' Association Book of the Year Award. His first book *A Bridge to Simple Squeezes* won in 2006 and *A Bridge to Inspired Declarer Play* won in 2009. For many years he wrote the bridge column for *The Bronx Journal*.

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