MIT/DL BC May 3, 2016 -- When You're Hot -- Problem

**Board 18**

East Deals
N-S Vul

- ♠ 10 9 4 2
- ♥ 9 5
- ♦ Q 9 8 6
- ♣ 8 5 3

North-East-South-West

- ♠ A Q 7 5
- ♥ K 7 6
- ♦ A K J 3
- ♣ K J

West North East South

Pass 2 NT

All pass
1. 20-21 HCP, balanced
2 NT by South
Lead: ♣ 10

This is a normal contract with a normal lead. East plays the ♣ 4. Plan the play.
Before even calling a card from dummy, I made a plan. More mistakes are made at trick one than at any other.

First, count top tricks: with the club lead, I had six. The contract appears likely to fail, and it would be easy to go down two (or more, as it happens). I decided to play for down 1, and hope to come up with one more trick at the end. There was one more factor: I held the ♠K, and West knew I had it. He might not cash out the clubs, if my first finesse lost. I decided to play for one more spade trick, hoping not to lose the lead.

When I cashed the ♥A and K, both followed. This allowed me to overtake the ♥J with the Q, preserving a second entry to dummy in the ♥9. If my first spade finesse lost, I wanted the possibility of trying again.

Leading small to the ♣Q produced a huge bonus: West played the ♣J. A diamond to dummy let me finesse again in spades. I cashed out all eight tricks, as many declarers would not do that well. I remained with a losing spade, my three original hearts, and the ♣K, with which I exited. West eventually conceded a trick to my ♥K.

Making 9 tricks on this deal took some skill, but also incredible luck. That's how it goes with a 70% game. See you next time, back in the 40s or 50s!