

Ex Libris by **Joaquin Ayala, PhD.**

Hello folks and welcome to the Ex Libris article for December, 2016! Wow – where did the year go?! It flew by and there were plenty of magical happenings this year. In April we were gifted by the appearance of Levent at Michigan Magic Day, for my family our daughter was born four days later, we saw two inductions of long-time local magicians into the Michigan Magic Hall of Fame (**Ron Aldrich and Paul Nielsen**), we saw one of our own honored with the Order of Merlin (Marvin Mathena) and so much more! There were lots of things in our circle of the world to be thankful for.

I want to thank all of you that have sent me letters and comments on my articles this year – I am very pleased to know that so many of you read them and get so much out of them, and I am also glad that I can share my knowledge of these wonderful tomes with all of you! With that said the book that I am focusing on for this month was, in the eyes of many, a gift of sorts to the magic community. It is one of the often-referenced books and it is not really all that old compared to many of the books that I normally focus on. The book is called ***John Carney's Carneycopia*** by **Stephen Minch**. It was published by L&L Publishing in 1991 and has since been out of print. If you find a used copy anywhere (which is not often) they are usually north of \$100/USD (sometimes for less) but worth, in my humble opinion, every last penny. In case you do not want to shell out that much cash, L&L Publishing does sell a PDF version of the book for a mere \$20/USD.

The book covers a very wide range of material from cards to bank notes, matches to coins and even some mentalism. There is absolutely something in here for everyone, even beyond the effects in the book. John Carney is known for being a student of Dai Vernon and the philosophies that he has developed and put into this book are evidence of that time spent with the Professor. In reading this book you are getting a masterful lesson in how to construct effects and routines in the most streamlined/economical manner possible. There are a number of effects in here that can easily be put into a set as they flow nicely together, often with the preceding effect setting up the next one, almost (if not completely) eliminating any get-ready from one effect to the next. If that is not economical, what is?

Some of the effects/moves that John really became known for are in this book. One of the standout items is a sleight called the Versa Switch, a very practical method for switching two packets of cards as you pick one up off the table. The Streamlined Cylinder and Coins is exactly that, a direct and logical approach to the classic effect of **John Ramsay** (which happens to be the all-time favorite coin effect of mine). The Logical Bill Trick (a favorite of John Carney) is a self-contained method of producing coins from a banknote, all of which are examinable at the end. Bullet Train is the John Carney method for the Cards up the Sleeve for platform, popularized by **Jean Eugene Robert-Houdin** and is rather stunning.

Quarter Spin is a very baffling Coin in Bottle and it even fools people that know about folding coins – it does not even seem like a possible method for this version! Polite Penetration is the

Carney treatment of the **Scotty York Nickel Saver**, which is the York treatment of the old Cap and Pence. The Thirteenth Victim is a now-classic Carney bit and it is based on The Chinese Marbles from the **Edwin Sachs** book, ***Sleight of Hand***; however this is done with bullets! This is a very entertaining version where three bullets start in one hand and end up in your other hand, which has two paper eyes, a mouth and even a squeaky falsetto voice that sounds suspiciously like your own. The bullets are “spat out” by the mouth one by one onto a plate. Suddenly, there is a loud BANG! An empty bullet jacket is found on the saucer and you reveal that you caught the bullet in your own mouth!

Well, that is all for the month of December and indeed, for the year 2016. Please do yourself a favor and gift yourself with a copy of ***Carneycopia*** – you will be glad you did and you will get many hours of enjoyable reading out of this modern classic. Until next year, I hope everyone has a wonderful holiday season filled with much love, magic and celebration (Happy Christmahannukwanzika!), and I bid everyone a prosperous new year in 2017! See you all on the other side!

Very Magically Yours,

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Club Librarian
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