

Ex Libris by Joaquin M. Ayala, Ph.D.

Hello folks and welcome to the Ex Libris article for December 2017! December?! Where did the year go? It seems we say that every year but this year for some reason was fleeting. Having been on tour with Michael Vincent earlier this month really re-ignited a long-time passion with an effect that I have been studying my whole life, which led me to dedicate the article last month to **John Ramsay** and his sole student, **Andrew Galloway**. As promised, this article is part 2, and the conclusion of that article.

For all the knowledge that we have of the body of work that John Ramsay created and performed, we owe it all to Andrew Galloway who recorded it for posterity and put it into three books, several manuscripts and two DVDs for us to learn, enjoy and perform. There was still a lot more of the Ramsay work that has been lost to the mists of time because John remembered and taught what he performed regularly; it is the body of effects which he created for certain occasions which, while no less powerful, were not performed regularly and thus, forgotten.

The first book of the trilogy was *The Ramsay Legend*, published in 1969. This includes legendary routines such as a devilishly clever *Cut & Restored Rope, Black and White Handkerchiefs* (a nice Copper/Silver transposition with both coins being marked), the Ramsay *Ten Thimble Production* (John Ramsay considered himself a master of thimble work) and the wonderful *Three Coins In the Hat* in which three coins travel between invisible “sky hooks”, your hands and a hat multiple times and just when the audience thinks you are using many coins, you are show only three and the hat is empty. There is also the excellent *One Cup and Ball Routine* for which Ramsay used an Indian-style cup (but you can use any type you like) which is an elegant Chop Cup routine that does not require a Chop Cup! It also has all the elements of a classic Chop Cup routine, including a final load.

The second book was *The Ramsay Classics* which included exactly that: effects that are (especially now) considered classic John Ramsay magic. It was first published in 1977 and a revised edition was released in 1985. The *Ramsay Cups and Balls* which uses only two cups with a certain feature to their dimple design. The cups are not gimmicked – in fact, Ramsay himself used two cardboard ice cream containers which he painted silver, but the routine relies on this dimple feature for a very strong version of this effect. There is much more thimble material in this book which really shows off his prowess with thimbles.

The Four Little Beans is a fun and simple diversion which relies more on routining and presentation than anything. Four little beans are pushed into various parts of your face and reproduced from your mouth – it is not gruesome and is rather entertaining! *Triple Restoration* was reportedly the personal favorite of Ramsay himself. It uses a big sheet of tissue paper torn into quarters and two upside-down wine glasses. Under one glass a ball of torn tissue is placed and on top of its base is a ball of untorn tissue. The opposite is true for the second glass. The balls all then transpose and at the end, the torn pieces are eventually restored. This book also includes the legendary *Cylinder and Coins*.

The third and final book was, appropriately, *The Ramsay Finale*, first published in 1982. This book included more work on thimbles, *Comedy Billiard Ball Routine, Five Fly Cards, Six Card*

Repeat, Ring Off Rope and some great work on the *Miser's Dream*. Each of these (and the other items in the book) were put through a Ramsay filter and came out such that even if you knew how the standard versions were done, you would be thrown off the scent. This was very typical of John Ramsay.

There is a lot of great magic in this trilogy and it should be studied carefully, but even more important are the things in between those effects. These 'things' are the ideas, principles and pragmatic performance theories. This includes the *Ramsay-isms*, which are sayings that Ramsay was known for, i.e. "*If you want the audience to look at you, look at them. If you want them to look at an object, look at it yourself.*" and "*I have a hidden assistant that helps me with all of my miracles; her name is Miss Direction.*"

When you can find these books, since they are long out of print, they are very expensive. Luckily the Ramsay Legend is available as a comb-bound edition from Magic Inc. in Chicago and on www.lybrary.com. The Ramsay Classics is due to be reprinted soon, hopefully followed by the Ramsay Finale. The booklets that Andrew Galloway has authored, such as *The Ramsay Cups and Balls*, *Triple Restoration*, *The Four Little Beans* and *The Tasseled Rope Trick* are all relatively easy to find and not all that expensive to procure. The *Ramsay Cylinder and Coins* manuscript by Victor Farelli is the one that is most difficult to find and pricey when you do, but the original was reprinted in the November 2008 Genii magazine in full, which is available for about \$6/USD.

Even if you only get a look at the magic of John Ramsay through the videos from Andrew Galloway, you will be all the better for it. John Ramsay really knew what he was doing, and he did it well, and we all owe Mr. Galloway a debt of gratitude for preserving those works and sharing them with us. Check the books and the DVDs out if you can; study them, practice them and I guarantee you will learn a lot more about magic and performance than you would have thought.

That is all for this month folks – I hope everyone has a fun, safe, magical and happy holiday season. It has been a great year and I certainly hope next year follows suit! Happy ChristmaHannuKwanzika everybody – see you on the other side in 2018! – J. M. A.