

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

Hello folks and welcome to the Ex Libris article for October, 2015! I hope this month has been a prosperous one for those of you that are working performers. Rightly so, October is recognized by magical fraternities as being the “official” magic month. This is the time of year when magic is especially engrained in the minds of the public because of Halloween, its origins and celebrations.

This month I am going to focus on a book that is considered by many as one of the standards in our humble art, specifically in the branch of mentalism. That book is **‘Thirteen Steps to Mentalism’** by Tony Corinda. This book was originally released as a series of booklets starting in 1958 and continuing until 1960. Each booklet was to focus on one specific area of mentalism and/or one of the allied arts. Noted English magician and actor Jon Tremain alongside Eric Mason were both illustrators for these booklets. Later, noted magic studio book and booklet printer Harry Clarke printed the first bound hardcover edition in 1964. In 1968 Tannen Magic and D. Robbins published their own editions, and in 1996, D. Robbins published an eighth printing, all a testament to its timeless and very influential material.

There were, of course, thirteen booklets in all, numbers 1-5 published in 1958, 6-11 in 1959 and 12-13 in 1960. The subjects covered included telepathy, precognition, ESP, telekinesis and mediumship. Also covered are the subjects of hot and cold reading, as well as secret devices used by mentalists, such as nail writers, billets, switching devices, etc. Magicians and mentalists today consider this text to be standard reading, along with other texts such as *Practical Mental Effects* by Theo Annemann and *Mind, Myth and Magick* by T.A. Waters.

The thirteen steps covered in the books are The Swami Gimmick, Pencil/Lip/Sound/Muscle Reading, Mnemonics & Mental Systems, Predictions, Blindfolds & X-Rays, Billets, Book Tests & Supplement, Two-Person Telepathy, Mediumistic Stunts, Card Tricks, Q&A Effects, Publicity Stunts and Patter & Presentation.

Born in 1930 as Thomas William Simpson, the author Tony Corinda (which was a scrambling of the name ‘Conradi’) died on July 1<sup>st</sup>, 2010 in Norfolk, England. In the 1950s and 60s, he owned shops in London, England where he sold many magic kits, which not surprisingly had a mentalism slant to them. Most of what he sold was geared toward the lay public rather than serious magicians. He marketed almost a dozen well-known effects starting in 1958 up to about 1961, and he wrote a lesser-known book entitled *Tele-Trickery* in 1961.

I very highly recommend this book for anyone looking to get into mentalism or a related branch. Personally I would recommend book tests and psychometry, which is a form of token-object reading (technically it is a type of ESP) – very strong for lay audiences! Join me next month for a look into the magic of gifting. Until then, keep the magic alive and Happy Haunting everyone!