

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

Hello folks and welcome to the first Ex Libris article for the year in February 2019. As there was no newsletter in January, keep an eye out on the website for a special article dedicated to January 2019, just to keep all manner of O.C.D. in check...As I always do for the beginning of the year, I go back to the basics. Searching my memory bank for a good book to focus on, I decided to focus on a complete set of books – 5 in total, with an addendum of 3 additional books sort of related to the first five.

I am talking about *Card College: Volumes 1-5* and *Card College Light*, *Card College Lighter* & *Card College Lightest* all written by **Roberto Giobbi**. The first volume was published in 1995, followed by each successive volume in 1996, 1998, 2000 and 2003, respectively. They were all published by Hermetic Press in hardcover format with a running total of 1,395 pages across all five volumes!

Despite the word 'college' being in the title, these books are excellent for the beginning card magician. While they do not teach every single sleight and move out there, nor do they teach the latest and greatest finger-flicking moves of the time, they are both progressive and comprehensive. Roberto Giobbi is respected as one of the best teachers in magic and for good reason. He selected some of the best (read: the most useful, versatile and economical) moves and sleights and he teaches them in great detail, starting with some of the simplest and most basic moves, then progressing into those with greater degrees of difficulty.

Earlier when I used the word 'progressive', I meant that in every sense of the word. He teaches each move, gives you the credits and the history of them and then describes effects and routines in which each move is used to great effect. What this allows the reader to do is to focus on practicing a move or two at a time and then when they have become proficient and ready, they can move on. This series of books focuses on developing skill in a proper manner and at a personal pace.

This format guides the reader through things in a logical manner, logical in that it starts with a history of playing cards, a background about the pasteboards themselves, then moves on to how they should be handled. How to hold them, how to square them, how to deal them, how to cut the deck, etc. Then, on to holding breaks, in-the-hands shuffles (false and genuine), controlling cards and so on. These five volumes cover everything a magician will ever need to be a great card magician, including things like the Zarrow Shuffle, false riffle shuffles, palming, switching cards, double/triple

lifts, peeks, controls, forcing a card, flourishes, performance theory and much, much more. Each move/sleight has its own dedicated chapter.

There are many different effects throughout these books, lots of references and credits, all in addition to the great wealth of moves and sleights. That makes these books an excellent reference source!

Earlier I mentioned the *Card College Light, Lighter & Lightest* books. What are those all about? Well first I might point out that they are all subtitled as: "*Professional Card Magic Without Sleight-of-Hand*". You might see these referred to as the Giobbi 'Light trio' and yes, these three books all contain effects which are "self-working", but not in the way most magicians are familiar. They are all aimed at both the beginning magician *and* the working professional.

The Light trio is not actually part of the five-volume Card College set; it is its own set, but most people consider it an extension set. Again, make no mistake about it: the content and format of the trio is very different. The format here is a routine per chapter, meaning each chapter teaches you three different effects as part of a whole routine. They flow one right into the other, but they are also modular - you do not necessarily have to perform all of them. You can do just one, two or all of them. Some magicians might see the 'without sleight-of-hand' and brush these tomes off, and that would be a great mistake. The contents of these three books are hard-hitting, commercial and professional routines direct from the working repertoire (used for paying lay audiences, not necessarily magicians) of the author.

If you want a video study guide version Volumes 1-5, check out the new *Masterclass* DVDs with Roberto as your teacher, a set of DVDs recently released by Vanishing Inc. Magic. This does not contain every single item from the five Card College books - it is basically the best-of-the-best. The DVDs still run 9 hours long!

Well that wraps up this edition of Ex Libris and if you read this far, thanks for sticking it out! Join me again next month as we dive into another great magic book! - *J. M. A.*