

A MAN NAMED JORDAN

My subject is "A MAN NAMED JORDAN". Charles Thornton Jordan was born in Santa Barbara, California, on October 1st, 1888 to Mr. and Mrs. Charles Ronlett Jordan. He died in Petaluma, California, at the home of his sister Mrs. George Woodson on April 24th, 1944 - 35 years ago last Tuesday.

In the Charles T. Jordan COLLECTED TRICKS published by Karl Fulves, the second name is given as Thorton. This must be a mis-print but I mention it to avoid any possibility of confusion. Jordan's mother's maiden name was Mary Thornton. Where we knew him as Charles, he was always Thornton to his family.

SAPT.

In COLLECTED TRICKS it is claimed his first ad was for THE SPIRIT ACES, THE CLIMAX, and three other tricks in the ~~August~~, 1916, Sphinx. But he had already advertised LONG DISTANCE MINDREADING and THE WONDER FORCE in the May SPHINX of that year. To the best of my knowledge, his first ad appeared in the February, 1915, SPHINX on page 245. It was for PSYCHOLIA.

Jordan dis-continued the sale of magic in 1923. A contributing factor was the loss of his books, notes and mailing list in a fire.

In 1935 Theo Annemann completed arrangements with T. Nelson Downs (who owned the copyrights to the Jordan books) and Jordan to publish the material in serial form. There were to be 50 issues but only 6 were completed. In appearance they resembled the Annemann Jinx. Jay Marshall informs me the material sent by Jordan to Annemann was also destroyed by fire. In a letter from Jordan, included in the first serial issued, he describes the material as "magical secrets I sponsored". You will notice he did not use the word originated or invented but sponsored.

Whenever I think of this next magician, I invariably remember a write-up by Patterson James in the BILLBOARD. He said, "Dorny has hands large enough to palm a baby grand piano. Dorny's book TRIX & CHATTER first appeared in 1921. It included a trick by and a picture of Jordan. There was a brief biographical note stating Jordan was a performer of note and was always glad to meet any and all visiting magicians.

During a session I had with Rufus Steele, he described a meeting he had with Jordan. I related his story in a letter to my good friend Francis Haxton and Haxton told it at a closed meeting of the London Society Of Magicians. It was published as THE MYSTERY OF CHARLES T. JORDAN in the May 1948 PENTAGRAM.

- I wish to read a portion of it and then make a correction.

- The name of the Kellar assistant was George Wright. He had lived in Reading, Pa. but the last address of his I had was Salem, Ohio. George had had a great tragedy in his life and was constantly on the move. Some of you may remember him at I.B.M. conventions where he made a few dollars as a show card and window painter.

Lloyd Jones pretended to take exception to the article in an apparent attempt to boost the circulation of The BAT by spawning a controversy. His ridiculous remarks included such things as talking chickens. Jones assumed the attitude I was trying to smear the name of Jordan and rob him of his just due.

On the contrary, I have a tremendous admiration for Jordan and he should have a prominent place in the Magic Hall of Fame for releasing so many clever tricks - whether all of them were independently created or not. More on this later.

Steele also told me he knew Findley who was in the clothing business and lived over the store. How Findley was taking a bath during one of Steele's visits and did a card trick for Steele without getting out of the tub or handling the deck. It appeared in FIFTY TRICKS as I SHOULD JUDGE and an improvement by Vernon named JUDGMENT in 52 AMAZING CARD TRICKS.

Credit for certain tricks or ideas were given by Jordan **IN HIS WRITING** to T. Nelson Downs, James Moren, Louis Haley, Henry Gavin, Dr. Ervin, Sam Bennett, Earl De Forrest, William McGraw, Ford Rogers and C. O. Williams.

Jordan states in the preface to THIRTY CARD MYSTERIES, "Perhaps the research of others has been along the same line as mine. In one case, that of Mr. Charles O. Williams. I know it has been in some respects similar regarding certain aspects of the dovetail shuffle."...and previous to my own."

This book of Jordan's was copyright in 1919. Williams' "READING THE FIFTY-TWO CARDS AFTER A GENUINE SHUFFLE" appeared in Stanyon's MAGIC for September 1913. In his description it was called the "waterfall" shuffle. Through my friend Haxton, I was privileged to meet Ellis Stanyon. Williams performed this effect for him in the summer of 1912.

In seeking information on Williams, I corresponded with Dr. Henry Bowen a magician who was also Williams family doctor. Bowen told me they met for the first time at the first annual seance of the Magic Circle. ~~He was a~~

THEY WERE BOTH

Welsh-speaking Welshman. Williams was probably best known for the trick described by Professor Hoffman in "LATER MAGIC under the top-heavy title of "TO DISCOVER AND POCKET (BEFORE ASKING ANY QUESTION) THE CARD THOUGHT OF BY A SPECTATOR. Williams himself had sold this for a time as THE TWENTIETH CENTURY CARD TRICK.

His business was travelling around the mining districts selling jewellery. At one time he launched out as a dealer in magic and had the agency for Thayer.

Bowen informed me most emphatically he didn't remember Williams having any trick based on the dovetail shuffle and would certainly have known if he had.

One year when Blackstone played the Grand Theatre, London, Ontario, I went backstage after the show. Blackstone shook hands and we exchanged a few pleasantries before I annoyed him by saying I had come around to speak to Walter B. Gibson. Later when we asked him if he had met Jordan, we got a rude answer.

Gibson remembered visiting Dr. Nixon's House Of Mystery where he met Jordan who was trying to get an idea for a story. Gibson said that he, Gibson, could have walked through the house and come out with a dozen stories. Which I am sure is an under-statement. Gibson did not seem impressed with Jordan's creative ability.

This Dr. Nixon was not the magician of "WHERE DO THE DUCKS GO" fame. This write-up is from The BILLBOARD.

Someone told me Arthur Buckley knew Jordan well. They said they had seen a picture of the two of them together. Buckley and I had met a few times and got along rather well. I told him I was intensely interested in Jordan and would he tell me something about him. He said, 'I never met him.' After that he avoided me.

One man I talked to who said he knew Jordan claimed he was nothing but a pool hustler.

Downs wrote, "Jordan is the only man I ever met up with that had ideas for cards worth mentioning. This was in a letter dated Jan. 8th, 1925.

Annemann called Jordan's secrets a bonanza of information second to none in the annals of magical literature.

Larsen and Wright, in the July, 1928, SPHINX, wrote, "The magician interested in cards should certainly possess Jordan's THIRTY CARD MYSTERIES. Good as the feats are,

of more value among the contents is the analysis of the riffle-shuffle as illustrated by the feats. These principles are of vital importance in modern card handling."

All opinions were not complimentary. In the GENII for January, 1966, Marlo wrote. "Jordan started a trend of bad magicians."

It has always been a source of wonder to me why widely advertised Jordan material was so difficult to acquire so quickly after he no longer sold them. As a teenager, I laboriously typed out as many as 20 single-spaced pages of secrets to trade for one Jordan item.

In England, Stanyon advertised Jordan's tricks with full page ads in Stanyon's MAGIC. But in later years, when George Armstrong advertised in the MAGIC WAND for ANY of the C. T. Jordan series of magical effects he wrote me he had not received a single response.

In Trevor Hall's "READING IS BELIEVING" Hall states, "In England at least Jordan's work appears largely to have been overlooked." In this same book, Hall praises Jordan's "THIRTY CARD MYSTERIES" and yet the first item in the book is a presentation routine for THE CARD AND NUMBER MYSTERY from Jordan's book with no credit given Jordan.

- o Warlock delivered a lecture to the MAGIC CIRCLE on "SOME ASPECTS OF THE FLYING CARDS." It was included as a supplement to the MAGIC CIRCULAR of June, 1953. Warlock listed 5 main variants of the trick although No. 5 is a combination of those already described. ~~Jordan sold several tricks in which all four variants were covered but Warlock only gave brief mention to Jordan's ESCAPE and then to state, "The trick has proved inconstant and because of that fact I do not perform it in public."~~ PTO

~~In reply to my letter in which I expressed the opinion he had been less than fair with Jordan, Warlock replied, "About the twenties, I can't remember any fine aspects of card work."~~

- o As one example, I mentioned Jordan's TRANSFERO being advertised in Stanyon's MAGIC in February 1920. Warlock had stated in the lecture the first mention of packets of cards with contrasting backs being used, was by Farelli in 1933. Warlock replied Stanyon MIGHT have advertised it. FOR THIS EFFECT

I have been mildly curious for many years as to why the list of Jordan tricks advertised in the December, 1919, SPHINX

to more value among the audience in the analysis of the
tricks-shuffles as illustrated by the Jordan
principles and of vital importance in modern card work.

All variants were covered at one time or another in
tricks released by Jordan but Warlock only gave brief
mention to Jordan's ESCAPE which he said had "proved
inconstant".

In reply to my letter listing where Jordan's relevant
tricks had been advertised, Warlock replied, "About the
twenties, I can't remember any fine aspects of card work".

George Airstrong advertised in the MAGIC WAY for 1914
the D. T. Jordan series of magical effects as well as
he had not repeated a single technique.

in Trevor Hall's "MAGIC IN THE TWENTIES" which states
Jordan's work appears largely to have
been overlooked. In this same book, Hall states
Jordan's "THIRTY CARD SYSTEM" and yet the book
in the book is a presentation routine for the card
which history from Jordan's book with no credit given
Jordan.

Warlock delivered a lecture to the MAGIC CLUB on
"SOME ASPECTS OF THE MAGIC WAY" in Washington
as a supplement to the MAGIC CLUB at June, 1933.
Warlock listed 5 main variants of the trick although
No. 3 is a combination of those already described.

~~Jordan's work appears to have been overlooked in
the book "MAGIC IN THE TWENTIES" and yet the book
in the book is a presentation routine for the card
which history from Jordan's book with no credit given
Jordan.~~

~~In reply to my letter in which I requested the names
of the card work.~~

As one example, I mentioned Jordan's THIRTY CARD
advertised in Stanton's MAGIC in February 1930. Warlock
had stated in the lecture the first mention of Jordan's
cards with contrasting cards being used by Jordan in
1933. Warlock replied Stanton might have advertised it.

I have been highly anxious for many years as to the
of Jordan's tricks advertised in the MAGIC WAY, 1914.

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and duplicated in Stanyon's MAGIC are numbered .. but there is no No. 24.

John Braun contributed some of the correspondence between Downs and Edward "Tex" McGuire to the April and May, 1971, issues of the LINKING RING. I marvel at the time and energy he has devoted to the world of magic with far too little recognition. As we well know, all of Brauns articles are carefully researched but I understand this was a rush job. When I wrote him several of the tricks described were actually released by Jordan and gave him references as to where advertised or published, Braun gave credits in an article entitled "TO KEEP THE RECORD STRAIGHT" in the August, 1972, LINKING RING... ~~just~~ 15 months later.

In the LINKING RING of February, 1960, Braun reported his first column appeared in the January, 1939, issue of that magazine. ~~Then he proceeded to name all the other columnists writing for the LINKING RING at that time. All~~

I contributed tricks off and on from 1926, ~~the~~ Jan 1939 marked my first regular column also.

except me. Braun and I have something in common. Although
A puzzle to me has been the line from one of the letters in Brauns article of May, 1971. Downs wrote, "Photos of my hands and matches will appear in Houdini's RED MAGIC." In the RED MAGIC I have there are plenty of pictures... 245 of them...but no photographs except a one and a half inch circular one of Houdini which appears at the top of each section.

The last picture taken of Jordan is in Jones' BAT No. 9. In a letter written by Gilson Willets, he claims he is the one who took that picture.

Willets is the man Jones wrote about in BAT No. 56^A when he said, "A book was in manuscript form before Jordan's death based on Jordans fame in the field he entered in later life and this book discloses nothing of Jordans acquaintanceship with magic nor was it known to the author, Jordans closest associate in the puzzle field and he was truly surprised to find Jordan knew magic."

Yet in a letter written by Willets, he states: "My files on Charles Jordan start in 1932 and run through to April 14th, 1941. 80% of it is not related to magic." *It is so heavy it would be prohibitive to ship. I am loaning you my file with Floyd Jones.*

By this letter is established the fact that Willets knew Jordan was connected with magic and may have known for as long as 12 years prior to Jordan's death. If 20% of the material in Willets file is devoted to magic and the file was started in 1932, it is reasonable to believe at least some of the material ~~at least~~ was developed in that period. Such being the case, Jordan produced this material some 9

BUT DID NOT NAME

years after he has been described as turning his back on magic and possibly covering a span of 9 years.

Here are some remarks from one of the letters written by Willets.

In his introduction to COLLECTED TRICKS, Fulves raises the question as to why the second edition of Jordan's "Thirty Card Mysteries", released in 1920, just one year after the first edition, was called a REVISED EDITION.

The 10th trick in the book was called THE TRIO. The principle upon which the trick depended was found unreliable after the first edition was published. An alternate method, entitled THE THIRTY-FIRST MYSTERY was sent to each purchaser of the book in return for a 2-cent stamp. THE TRIO title was retained in the second edition but the method described was THE THIRTY-FIRST MYSTERY.

Trick is the unreliable one. No mention is made of the 31st Mystery
 Fulves states he did not have the instruction sheet for "JUST A SQUARE OF PAPER" but it could well be "PAPER TEARING SUPREME" from Jordan's TEN NEW POCKET TRICKS under another name. PAPER TEARING SUPREME was sold as an individual trick as early as 1919. When JUST A SQUARE OF PAPER was advertised in 1921 it read: "Guaranteed a brand new method." On the other hand, Jordan seems to have been quite proud of it and held back on its release. I have a copy of a letter Jordan sent to Hardin on July 10th, 1916. Jordan describes this trick in detail calling it a "a very fine effect" and including a model. Jordan stated it even worked very nicely with wrapping paper. PTO

Confusion may have arisen due to the fact that in both ads it was stressed only one piece of paper was used.

LEE DEFOREST

Fulves assumes the De Forrest mentioned in Jordan's DIABOLICAL REVERSED CARD is not one of the fathers of radio. It was actually Earl DeForrest, a magician and close friend of Jordan.

In a letter written to Jones by Willets, he says: "Last night I had a long talk with ALBERT RHINE. Rhine told me, in the presence of several witnesses, that he, personally, saw Charlie create many of the tricks of which he wrote...and even assisted in their perfection. He acknowledged Charlie Jordan as a clean, decent, honest and a great credit to the business, a man worthy of your respect, a man whose memory should be honored, not slandered as it apparently has been. Incidentally, Rhine calls attention to the SPHINX and points out that many of Jordan's tricks appeared first therein. Since you know Rhine, magician, one time "Ghost Chaser" of the San Francisco Police Department, intimate of Harry Houdini, Mrs. Houdini and many

years after he had been described as having his back
on walls and possibly covering a span of 9 years.
Imagine how far ahead of his time he would have been again
if he had suggested newspaper. Particularly as one of the
principles in this method was a pocket permitting the paper
to be shown freely before and after the tearing.

After the first edition, was called a "REVISED EDITION".
"Thirty Years Review", released in 1950, just one year
in his lifetime.

The book in the book was called THE THIRTY
principles upon which the book depended was found unchangeable
after the first edition was published. An alteration was made
applied THE THIRTY-YEAR REVIEW was sent to each purchaser
of the book in return for a 2-cent stamp. THE THIRTY-YEAR
was retained in the second edition but the method described
was THE THIRTY-YEAR REVIEW.

Handwritten in red ink: The book is a...
copy of the book is...
copy of the book is...

under another name. THE THIRTY-YEAR REVIEW was sold as
an individual book as early as 1919. When THE THIRTY-YEAR
book was advertised in 1921 it reads: "CONTAINS
a book on the new method. Jordan seems to
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1920, 1920. Jordan described this book in detail calling
it a "very fine effort" and including a model. Jordan
stated it even worked very nicely with wrapping paper.

Conclusion may have arisen due to the fact that in both
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Review assumes the 30 years mentioned in Jordan's
REVIEW CARD is not one of the factors of value. It was
actually Earl DeForest, a Mexican and close friend of
Jordan.

In a letter written to Jones by Willet, he says: "Last
night I had a long talk with ALBERT WILLET. He said
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to the BANK and delete out that many of Jordan's trials
appeared first therein. Since you know these, regarding
one time "Great Chase" of the San Francisco Police Depart-
ment, instance of Harry Lindell, the Lindell and many

others, world traveller and internationally renowned magician...Rhine is a higher authority than I am on the actual origin of Jordan's tricks."

In this letter, Willets spells SPHINX with a y instead of an i. Houdini was written HUDINI.

After the description of Rhine by Willets, one might consider him an unforgettable character but in a letter to De Forrest, Willets writes, "The fellow Rhine who is mentioned prominently in my letter to Jones I have completely forgotten. I don't even remember the man or my conversations with him as recorded in the (~~Jones~~) letter." **To JONES**

There are 26 illustrations in Jordan's THIRTY CARD MYSTERIES by Eli Benneche. Downs wrote, "I have not been privileged to look over the originals of the illustrations but from previous examples of the artist's work which I have seen, I do not hesitate to predict that they will be illustrations which really "illustrate" and not merely "fillers"."

Dr. Wilson's comment was, "The cover design and cuts illustrating the various mysteries are works of real art."

The cover design on TEN NEW PREPARED CARD TRICKS was by this same artist and was originally used to advertise THE IDOL'S VISION...a trick which Stanyon withdrew from sale in England.

Who Eli Benneche was is revealed in one of the letters I received from De Forrest but first about De Forrest himself. He was in constant touch with Jordan for more than 20 years. Actually lived in his home and shared his bed for 2 or 3 years. He described Jordan as one of the finest guys to ever pick up a pack of cards.

One letter in particular contains considerable information.