

## *Ex Libris* by Joaquin Ayala, Ph.D.

Hello folks and welcome to the Ex Libris article for July 2017! As of this writing we have had quite the interesting summer so far as the weather is concerned. In this area, it tends to be hot and muggy this time of year but we have had some unseasonably cool weather with plenty of variations in the “typical” weather pattern. As with variations in your magic effects, that can often be a good thing. The book we are focusing on this month is ‘*Ultra Cervon*’ by **Bruce Cervon**. It was written by Bruce Cervon and **Stephen Minch**, published in 1990 by **L&L Publishing** as a 177-page, photo illustrated hardcover book.

Bruce Cervon was a long-time student and friend of **Dai Vernon** and spent many hours at the Hollywood Magic Castle performing, sessioning with Vernon, **Larry Jennings**, **Charlie Miller** and many others. Over the years he took many detailed notes on things he learned from Vernon and these later became known as the now-highly-sought-after *Castle Notebooks*.

One of his best-received books was *Ultra Cervon*. Its focus is card magic but there are a couple of other items such as a very good handling for *Ring Flight* (which Michigan Magic Hall-of-Famer **Ron Aldrich** employs in his professional work), a burnt and restored handkerchief with a coins and glass appearing within and a couple of rope effects/ideas. These are all novel ideas that use classic pieces of magic with the Cervon Touch. Bruce also teaching his ideas behind common card sleights such as the *Elmsley Count*, *Olam Subtlety*, the *Jordan Count*, etc.

You will find quite a few classic plots with some rather unique changes in this book; for example: Cervon was not the first to use a banknote for *Card Warp* instead of two cards, but it is different. He also teaches a variation on that as well as a version with a jumbo card. Another classic piece for which he does not stray too far from the original but does change up a few key areas to clean them up is the *Conus Aces*, the classic four-Ace transformation from under the spectator’s hand. One of my favorite packet effects is the Larry Jennings *Ambitious Classic*, which is very much like the *Ambitious Card* but done with just five cards. The Cervon handling of that effect, called *A Matter of Psychology*, is quite original and is done with just four cards and the presentation is a stunner!

Other items such as *The Joker Trick* see a four-of-a-kind change into Jokers, then into Aces; *Repeat Aces to Pocket* uses not only your pockets, but that of an audience member as well for one phase, and a wallet or envelope for the last phase. *The Fabulous Cards to Pocket* is a very strong, clean version using only three cards and no duplicates. There is a good chunk of the book on *Table Pass/Half Pass* work, dedicated to *The Cervon Free-Turn Pass* which is based on earlier work by **Jim Patton** and **Ed Marlo**. There are some excellent applications for that pass detailed after its description.

Well that is all for this month folks and if you want some great classic magic in your repertoire with a different look to it, you owe it to yourself to pick up a copy of this book - there are plenty of things to make you think! Until next time, be safe, have fun and have a great summer! – **JMA**