

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

Hello folks and welcome to the Ex Libris article for April 2019! As I type this article, I am on the wrong train home from Chicago (long story) after spending five days there with my good friend Michael Vincent (and, incidentally, with A.A.M.C. Vice President Don Oesterwind). There were many, many different things which were discussed but between Michael and I, we both talked quite a bit about a magician whose name which will be familiar to some of you – **Darwin Ortiz**.

If you recall, back in 2017 I wrote two articles on his magic theory books, *Designing Miracles* and *Strong Magic*. There was one Ortiz book that came up repeatedly in the discussions between Mr. Vincent and me and for very good reason. That book is the focus of this article and it is called **Cardshark**. It was written by Darwin Ortiz and published in 1995 as a 189-page hardcover book by **Kaufman and Greenberg** and was illustrated by **Ton Onosaka**.

This book was wildly popular and sold out very quickly. Magicians knew there was gold in this book, and they held onto their copies, quickly making this a rare book in high demand, and when they hit the open market, they fetched a good chunk of money.

The effects in this book range from relatively easy to knuckle-busting hardcore sleight of hand. The one thing they all have in common is that every single effect in this book is absolutely stunning, very powerful and very much worth your time and attention in practice and in performance.

Some of the highlights include **The Unholy Three** where cards from one deck are found in another deck, and then change into the original selections. **Blind Aces**, in which a spectator shuffles a deck (which can be borrowed) thoroughly, then covers your eyes with their hands as you proceed to blindly cut to and find the four Aces! **Museum Piece** is a very pretty effect where you have a few double-blank cards selected, and one by one the cards are printed with very old faces and backs, then turned blank again on both sides.

**Time Piece** is an elaborate version of the old *Clock Trick* which uses an actual pocket watch, which winds up (HA!) with a revelation etched into the watch case! **The Showdown** is the familiar *Gambler vs. Magician* plot given the Ortiz treatment. **Time and Again** is a signed card effect with a time travel theme and a very (VERY!) unusual climax! The last effect in the book is probably one of the strongest gambling themed effects in all of magic,

***The Sting*** – a double-cross cheating demonstration, it is also a very, very hardcore sleight of hand effect but well worth the effort!

These are but a few of the effects in the book and the teaching of the material is done extremely well. Do not let the hardcore stuff scare you away from this book – there are some relatively easy things in this book that an intermediate card handler could work with.

If this book piques your interest, you are in some luck because although the original print run is still hard to come by (and still expensive), due to popular demand, Darwin Ortiz himself had the book reprinted in 2015 in the exact same format as the original, and as of this writing it can still be had from most of your favorite Murphy's Magic dealers, at the original cost of \$55/USD.

Well that is all for this month everyone – please join me again next month as we explore another wonderful, magical tome!

*Dr. J.*