

overview

the
BackStory
magic: 30 years in the making **project**



overview

**welcome
to
BackStory**

A handwritten signature in gold ink, appearing to read "Brynn", is centered below the main text.

introduction

by Chris Wasshuber

Ben Harris has for more than three decades created and invented unique magic effects. His output is stunning and his miracles are amazing. The only one I would dare to compare Ben with is Lubor Fiedler, who has exhibited a similar knack to take new materials and concepts and bring them into magic to create entirely new methodologies and achieve new effects.

All too often we see in magic little incremental improvements, a touch here, a twist there and a subtlety over there. So much I love these little touches and improvements, it is quite another achievement to develop an entirely new method or effect. And it is even more amazing to do this consistently over the course of three decades. And Ben Harris has done that. The record of his creations speaks volumes.

If for example one looks at effects such as "Epic Flight", "Cosmosis" or the "Enlightenment" gimmick then it becomes clear that Ben Harris has a special gift to create unique and amazing magic effects. Besides his groundbreaking inventions where a new material, gimmick or concept is introduced Ben also exhibits the skills of what I would call the skills of a 'magic engineer'. A magic engineer is someone who takes known bits and pieces, moves, principles, subtleties, performing concepts, etc. and puts them together in a skillful way to create something entirely new - something practical - something beautiful. If for example we take his most recent creation "Crossroads" then his accomplishments as magic engineer become apparent. No individual part of the method of Crossroads is entirely new or unique to Ben Harris. However, Ben has engineered from known elements something completely new and wonderfully amazing. For me it is clear: Ben is a magic genius.

With his BackStory project Ben shows great care about the history of magic and his understanding of things to come. How much better off would magic be if every magician would have carefully documented his creative legacy? How many creations have been lost because of incomplete documentation? Like other creative magicians in the past, Ben is using new technology, in Ben's case digital technology, to achieve his goal to document his creations. I can only hope that other prolific magicians follow Ben's lead and digitize their creative magic output. It will help all of us to stand on the shoulders of giants.

Thank you Ben for being one of those giants who care to share.

Chris Wasshuber
(Lybrary.com)



An odd moment from Quarks & Quirks

the **BackStory** magic: 30 years in the making project

The BackStory Project is a definitive effort to digitize the entire back catalog of Ben Harris' magic creations.

Harris released his first effect, "Needled" in 1979. Since then, there have been dozens of books, dozens more manuscripts, magazine articles, 40 plus individual trick items, magic related articles for the mainstream media, lecture notes, etc. Truly, a lifetime's worth of work in this wonderful field we love—close-up magic!

Following recent and tragic family events, Ben has decided to "put his house in order" and to answer the occasional past call of book publishers, "When will the Big Book of Ben be ready?"

"I used to laugh at such thoughts, but now I see a method to the madness. I can't just leave all those ideas and effects 'lost at sea' they must be brought home."

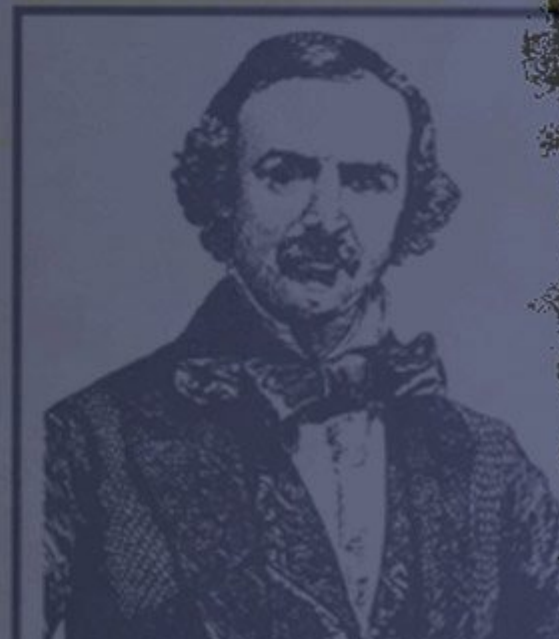
So, in a massive undertaking, every available item released since 1979 is being fully digitized. A partial bibliography follows, and if you treat this as the skeleton upon which we'll grow this project, you can then appreciate it's enormity. The material is NOT simply being scanned. All items (books, tricks, manuscripts, etc) are being re-typeset and redesigned so as to be fresh, consistent, and digitally friendly. By making small chunks available as the project continues, it will we hope, make the exercise self-funding.

It is estimated the project will take two or three years to complete. The end result is that the entire catalog will be "digitally-organized"—in a form that can be composed as a set of hardbound books—**"BackStory: Magic: 30 Years In The Making"**

UNDER
THE SOUTHERN CROSS
Australian Published Magic Books
1858-2000

Partial Bibliography

reproduced, with permission, from the book
"Under The Southern Cross:
Australian Published Magic Books 1858-2000"
by Brian McCullagh



**When compiling his book, Brian enforced very specific rules.
Thus, many items that failed to meet his criteria are not included in this partial listing.
There are dozens of other manuscripts, notes, and effects
with which we'll be using to plug the gaps.**

- Harris, Ben** *Bands Of Gold* 29h x 10¹/₂ cm., card wraps, [i-iv], 1-24pp., BHM Industries, Brisbane, 1987. This unusually shaped book deals with "the offbeat world of rubber band magic".
- Harris, Ben** *Ben Harris Exclusive 1985 Lecture Appearances Singapore* 29 x 21 cm., card wraps, 1-9, [10-12]pp., Ben Harris Magic, Brisbane, 1985.
- Harris, Ben** *Ben Harris Exclusive 1987 Lecture Appearances* 30 x 21 cm., card wraps, [1-24]pp., Ben Harris Magic, Brisbane, 1987.
- Harris, Ben** *Beyond The Black Hole* 21 x 15 cm., card covers, one sheet printed both sides, folded and loose in card cover, Ben Harris Magic, Brisbane, n.d. Contents deal with card magic.
- Harris, Ben** *Cosmosis* 21 x 15 cm., card wraps, [1-16]pp., BHM Industries, Brisbane, 1986. A gimmicked card accompanies the book. The author admits that while several magicians embraced the trick with enthusiasm, others believed it overrated and overpriced. "Cosmosis did not 'smoothly' settle into magicdom", he quipped. Nevertheless, some thought the trick good enough to produce "versions" without the permission of the effect's creator.
- Harris, Ben** *Cosmosis The Original & Only Authorized Floating Match* 29 x 21 cm., card wraps, [1-12]pp., BHM Industries, Brisbane, 1988. This is the second edition of the book, the author's answer to the "rip-off merchants" who were "unconcerned with providing a quality product." The text was re-written with added details; there is a full description of a move added by Sydney magician, Geoff Pearce, which "turns 'Cosmosis' into one of the most powerful micro-levitations ever made available."
- Harris, Ben & Kleefeld, Jim** *Cosmosis Tips* 15 x 21 cm., card covers; the contents are five A4 size sheets, printed on one side only, stapled to the card at the top left corner and folded in half; BHM Industries, Brisbane, 1990. Three pages are devoted to Cosmosis tips by Jim Kleefeld and Ben Harris describes his "Ultimate Cosmosis". This might be the place to draw attention to a modern situation. Late in 2000 I accessed the Ben Hams website and came across some routines (with excellent patter) for Cosmosis. If I was a regular performer I would have adapted and used one of those routines with its story. I wonder just how much first class material is put "on the Internet" and will eventually be lost because it is not in print form. It seems to me that putting something in a book gives it more chance of surviving. Perhaps I am just too slow adapting to changes, or do I raise a valid point? Interestingly, just after I typed the above, I read Jon Racherbaumer's "Letting Loose the Light" in *Genii*, January 2001. It is the best examination of the whole subject of books and electronic devices that I have read, and certainly made me think beyond my own comfort zone.
- Harris, Ben** *The Creeps* 21 x 14h cm., card wraps, [1-11]pp., BHM Industries, Brisbane, 1990. This describes the working for a matchbox that opens in the spectator's hands. A prepared matchbox accompanies the book.
- Harris, Ben** *Digital Card Scanner* 30 x 21 cm., card wraps, [1-4]pp., BHM Industries, Brisbane, 1991. The front cover has a slit down one side that enables the prop to be clipped to it.
- Harris, Ben** *Dimensional Relativity* 30 x 20%z cm., card wraps, 1-12pp., Ben Harris Magic, Brisbane, 1981. This is the author's "ultimate solution" for his "Turn Inside Out" concept.
- Harris, Ben** *Expressions '79-'89* 21 x 15 cm., cardboard wraps (though stapled at the spine, the cover opens half way along the front), [1-2], 3-2(?pp., BHM Industries, Brisbane, [1989]. These are lecture notes with the Introduction hand written - a novel approach. There is a warning that the rest of the book is not in the same style! There are some new tricks as well as old ones, with an explanation from Harris on the development of the lecture notes.

- Harris, Ben** *Fandango* 21 x 15 cm., card wraps, [1-8]pp., BHM Industries, Brisbane, 1986. Two cards (one gimmicked) are in an envelope attached to the inside front cover. This consists of a version of the Sandwich Plot.
- Harris, Ben** *For Close-Up Magicians' Eyes Only* 21 x 14½ cm., card wraps, [i], 1-44pp. (page 44 is on the inside of the back cover), Ben Harris Magic, Brisbane, 1980. The title says it all.
- Harris, Ben** *Geller Card* 21 x 15 cm., card wraps, [1-8]pp., BHM Industries, 1988. This is a "visible bending" card effect. A sample gimmicked card is attached to page [2].
- Harris, Ben** *Gellerism Revealed* 21 x 14 cm., card wraps, 1-95pp., Australian Skeptics, 1986. This is a special limited reprint by arrangement with Micky Hades International. It is a detailed study of how to achieve Geller effects with trickery.
- Harris, Ben** *Hoodwink* 27½ x 21½ cm., card wraps, [1-8]pp., Media T Marketing Pty. Ltd., [Brisbane], 1999. The subject of this magnificently designed book is based on the author's own *Prime Hole Card* (1983). Harris commented, "I was over proving way back in 1983."
- Harris, Ben** *The Hypercard Experiments* 29½ x 21 cm., card wraps, [1-4]pp., Ben Harris Magic, Brisbane, 1985. This is Chapter Three in the Topological Card Series.
- Harris, Ben** *Killer Klose-Up* 21 x 15 cm., card covers, plastic spiral binding, parchment dedication page, [i-iv], 1-77, [78]pp., Ben Harris Magic, Brisbane, 1983. With a Foreword by Michael Ammar, this contains several items that originally appeared in overseas magazines.
- Harris, Ben** *Link-Link* 21 x 14½ cm., card wraps, [1-8]pp., BHM Industries, Brisbane, 1986. There are two variations of a card linking to a chain. A length of "ball chain" accompanies the book.
- Harris, Ben** *Mad Fax And Other Mysteries* 22'h x 16 cm., card wraps, [i-xx], 1-73, [74-78]pp., BHM Industries, Brisbane, 1990. The contents consist of magic with cards, keys, rings, credit cards and, of course, magic tricks and general ideas using a fax machine.
- Harris, Ben** *Magic From Which Memories Are Made* 17 x 20½ cm., card covers, plastic spiral bound, [i], 1-130pp., Ben Harris Magic, Queensland, 1981. A feature of this book is the way the book's editor, Woody Meltcher, comments about the origins of each effect and gives other pertinent general background information.
- Harris, Ben** *Midnight Special* 30 x 21 cm., card wraps, [i-viii], 1-28, [29-32]pp., Ben Harris Magic, 1985. Card magic follows a forthright Introduction by the author.
- Harris, Ben** *Off The Wall* 30 x 21 cm., card wraps, [1-13], 14-90pp., BHM Industries, Brisbane, 1988. This has a variety of close-up magic with cards and coins. The Introduction is by Jay Sankey.
- Harris, Ben** *I A. M. The Sequel* 30 x 20½ cm., card wraps, [i-iv], 1-16pp., BHM Industries, Brisbane, 1986. This is a sequel to *Midnight Special* and deals with card magic.
- Harris, Ben** *Out Of His Mind* 21 x 15 cm., card covers, plastic spiral bound, [i-v], 1-130pp., Ben Harris Magic, Brisbane, 1985. Card work dominates this book of close-up magic.
- Harris, Ben** *Poltergeist Ball* 21 x 14½ cm., card wraps, [1-9]pp., BHM Industries, Brisbane, 1986. This contains "a bizarre collection of Sponge Ball Stuff" The book introduced a new vanish of a sponge which, subsequently, proved to be very popular.
- Harris, Ben** *Premier Elastic Thread Routines* 21 x 15 cm., card wraps, [1-16]pp., BHM Industries, 1989. The book's title says it all.
- Harris, Ben** *Presenting Ben Harris* 29½ x 21 cm., paper covers, stapled, [1], 2-6pp. (printed one side), Ben

Harris Magic, Queensland, 1984. These lecture notes are an addition to *Table Side Manners* and were used at the 1984 "Magic In The Mountains" convention. They briefly discuss the psychological points detailed in the original work and three original effects are described.

Harris, Ben *Prime Hole Card* 20¹/₂ x 14¹/₂ cm., card wraps, 1-11, [12]pp., Ben Harris Magic, Brisbane, 1983. This is Chapter One of four "chapters" in the Topological Card Series.

Harris, Ben *Pyramid Power* 21 x 15 cm., card covers, [1-12]pp., BHM Industries, Brisbane, 1990. This describes the levitation of a metallic looking pyramid. The book is accompanied by a gimmick and a pyramid cut-out.

Harris, Ben *Pyrobox* 21 x 15 cm., card wraps, [1-12]pp., BHM Industries, Brisbane, 1988. This describes a "Signed Card to Matchbox" method. A pre-folded card and a matchbox accompany the book.

Harris, Ben *Royal Divide* 29¹/₂ x 21 cm., card wraps, 1-4pp., Ben Harris Magic, Brisbane, 1985. This is the final part, Chapter Four, in the Topological Card Series. The cover for this book is reproduced on the next page.

Harris, Ben *Solid Gold EasyAction* 21 x 15 cm., card wraps, [1-10]pp., BHM Industries, Brisbane, 1987. This describes a "palm free" "Card to Pocket" method. An envelope gimmick accompanies the book.

Harris, Ben *Solid Gold EasyAction -Pro* 10 x 14¹/₂ cm., paper wraps, [1-13]pp. (including inside back cover), Media T Marketing Pty. Ltd., [Brisbane], 1999. The cover of this small booklet has "SGEAPRO Instructions" as the title, while the title listed above, with the author's name, is on the inside front cover. In his Introduction the author, commenting on the rerelease of the effect, includes, "... is prompted by the discovery of the special plastic paper now used and also the desire to publish the half-moon addition described below."

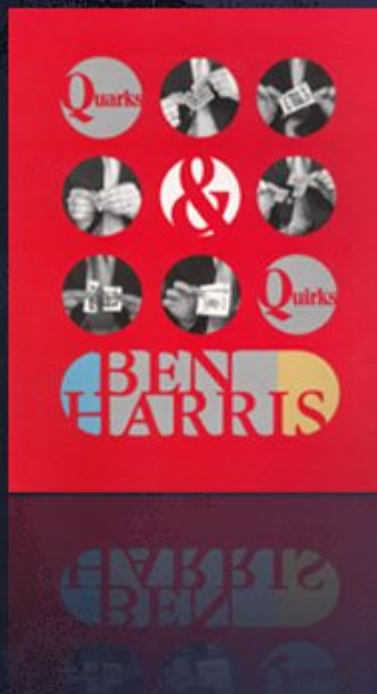
Harris, Ben *Table Side Manners* 21 x 15 cm., card covers, plastic spiral bound, 1-27 [28]pp., Ben Harris Magic, Brisbane, 1983. These are lecture notes on the art of close-up magic with some flourishes and effects studied as examples.

Harris, Ben *The Ultimate Floating Deck* 29¹/₂ x 20¹/₂ cm., card wraps, [i-iv], 1-9pp., plus ten unnumbered pages of photographs scattered among the nine numbered pages, Brisbane, 1984. This is a version of a Paul Harris effect and is Chapter Two of the Topological Card Series.

Harris, Ben *The Word* 21 x 15 cm., card covers, [1-20]pp., BHM Industries, Brisbane, 1989. This is the author's method for a book test, inspired by an idea by Daryl.

Harris, Ben *World Lecture Tour 1986* 21 x 14¹/₂ cm., card wraps, 1-8pp., BHM Industries, Brisbane, 1986.

Harris, Ben See also "Appendix A".



APPENDIX A

Harris, Ben *Quarks & Quirks* 27½ x 21½ cm., card covers, perfect bound, [1-9], 10-39, [40]pp., Media T Marketing Pty. Ltd., Brisbane, 2001. Strictly speaking, this title does not qualify for listing in this "bibliography" because of its stated date of publication (2001). In fact, the book was ready for distribution in mid-December, 2000. It arrived at the author/publisher's place, not on the day arranged, December 15th, but one day earlier, December 14th, 2000. Uncanny, as on December 14th, 1900, Max Planck presented his radiation formula to the German Physical Society. Planck was the centre of a revolution in the world of physics. On the back cover of this Harris book is "A journey beyond the tear, inspired by the weird world of Quantum Physics."

The contents reveal a mature, sophisticated approach to the presentation of magic in general as well as to the specific focus of the book, tearing and restoring a playing card. The careful reader is forced to think about his/her magic; for example: "Attention seems focused in a surreal manner - the card stripped bare of its usual companions. With no safe ground to hide, methods become devious and revolve around planes, folds, configurations. These are particularly 'distant' areas in which to play. A regular human being (layman) has rarely considered a playing card, even as a single entity, let alone bending or configuring it in any manner."

The author's approach is open-ended; the sub-title is "An **Exploration Beyond The Tear**" (emphasis is mine) and the Introduction uses phrases such as "Perfect creative fodder" and "inspire you to make a quantum leap of your own".

The design of the book is all class; a practical approach does not detract from a visual presentation that is stunning and, most importantly, consistent and "whole" in its approach.

Not only did I decide to list this book because the publication date was so close to the cut-off date but, in my opinion, it is one of the finest pieces of writing on the practical and presentation side of magic to emerge from this country. This is the first Australian book of magic published in the new millennium.

the BackStory project

magic: 30 years in the making

The original work on elastic thread magic first published in 1980.

All the you do you need, along with a full section on what performing it you can!

Elastic Thread routines

BEN HARRIS

24 PAGES & 28 ILLUSTRATIONS

the best-seller from 1986 is back!

an affordable way to "do" the highly desired card 100% of the time... inspired by the "Waves" and "Flu" routines... and the same-idea-routine!

This & That

BEN HARRIS

#1 BEST SELLER NOW DIGITAL

hoodwink!

created by ben harris

I highly recommend this to all of you who are interested in learning a distinctly clever approach to DOON & RESTORED CARDS!

#1 BEST SELLER NOW DIGITAL

"Something that's never been done before using a method that's never been used before...winky cool!"

Richard Kaufman

HOLE IN THE HEAD

lite

"...a totally original breakthrough plot!"—Paul Harris

"Mind-blowing magic in every sense..."—Michael Ammer

epic flight

Ben Harris' BREAKTHROUGH EFFECT from 1980!

"Evermore desired looking without since Epic Flight was released!"

12 pages, full photo illustrations

no gimmick supplied

AUTHORIZED DIGITAL VERSION

Enlightenment

Ben Harris' THE ULTIMATE FLOATING CARD

ben harris'

ZOOM

16 CLEAR PHOTOS MAKE IT EASY!

"The construction of the card is ingenious..."

Michael Cose (MAGIC Magazine)

The lesson and easy assembled card that approximately makes 100% time over longer-lasting versus the wire, Easymagic, before, during and after.

One of the most desirable uses of Elastic Thread ever created...can be on your own!

BEN HARRIS' COSMOSIS

The ORIGINAL Floating Match

"...in fact, the originator explains his classic masterpiece in COMPLETE DETAIL... a digital text..."

24 PAGES BRISTLING WITH DETAIL

the first eight products to be digitized and made available as "instant downloads" (July, 2009)

Notebooks

Private Manuscripts

(many released for the first time!)

Apart from re-presenting the well established effects and books from Ben's back catalog, we shall be releasing his old notebooks (see "Pop" from the 1986 Notebook, herewith) and many of his privately distributed manuscripts. Some of these were so "sub rosa" that the distribution list was only a dozen or so. But these were Ben's private "think tank"—people like Ed Marlo, Harvey Rosenthal, Jerry Andrus, Jeff Busby, David Harkey and others.

Ben sincerely thanks **John MacDonald** and **Mark Trudinger** for access to their wonderful private collections.



with Ed Marlo, "the round table" Chicago, 1986

Jerry Andrus

Jill Busby

David Faulkner

David Harkoy

Don McCarthy

material from notebooks and exclusive manuscripts
previously shared by only a dozen or so

Harvey Rosenthal

Jay Sankoy

Ed Manno

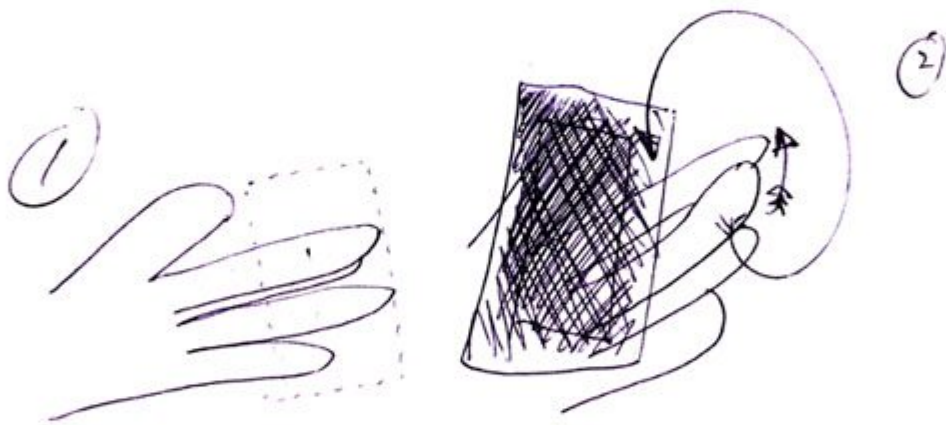
Orlando Eastman

David K. ...

Pop 23/6/86

A method for causing a card to instantly flip over on your outstretched left hand.

Place the card on the left fingers as in ① the 2nd finger is pinned under the 1st finger & upward pressure is applied.



By snapping the 2nd finger upwards, the card will flip over 180° & land back on your hand!



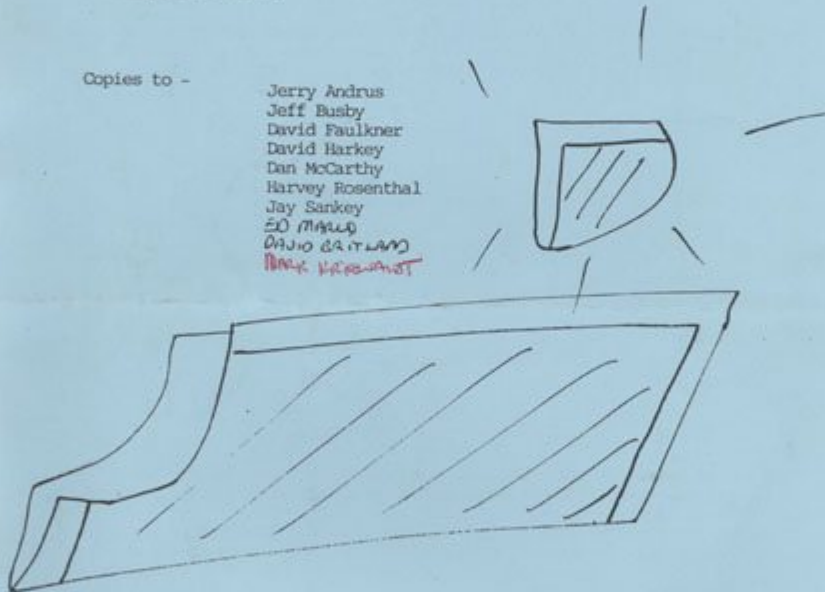
THE FIFTH CORNER

By Ben Harris
August 24th, 1987

All Rights reserved.

Copies to -

Jerry Andrus
Jeff Busby
David Faulkner
David Harkey
Dan McCarthy
Harvey Rosenthal
Jay Sankey
ED MALLS
DAVID BARTLAND
MARK WILSON



The FIFTH CORNER CONCEPT allows you to apparently tear
TWO CORNERS FROM A PLAYING CARD while actually only
REMOVING ONE PHYSICAL CORNER and actually leaving
THREE RIPPED-OUT, CORNER SPACES!

In other words, the card is missing 3 corners, though it
looks like it's just missing 2.

There are apparently 2 ripped-off corners in your hand
but in fact there is only ONE!

You are both 'ONE-BEHIND' and 'ONE-AHEAD'!

a long lost manuscript from 1987

old

**Ben has contributed articles and tricks to the following periodicals
over the decades.**

**All the material will be brought together, with permission of the
respective magazines:**

magazine

Apocalypse

Genii

Penthouse

Playboy

The Magic Circular

The Magic Manuscript

The Linking Ring

covers



1981



1990

How **YOU** can follow the BackStory Project!

It is estimated the project will take two or three years to complete.

The end result is that the entire catalog will be “digitally-organized”—in a form that can be composed as a set of hardbound books—
“BackStory: Magic: 30 Years In The Making”

You may access the material, as it is prepared, (in the form of self-contained ebooks) via the **DOWNLOAD CENTER** at **WOWBOUND.COM**

The downloads are available at any time. It is estimated that three to four new additions will be made monthly.

These downloads are also available from **lybrary.com**

Or

YOU CAN JOIN THE BACKSTORY PROJECT CLUB

As a member of the “Project Club” you will receive 1 **DOWNLOAD** each month. This will be something in relation to the project, or, more often than not, a full trick or manuscript that we’ve just completed. You will also receive regular updates as to the progress of the “Project” and other offers and specials on **NEW BEN HARRIS (digital) releases.**

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