



# The Amazing Life of Ormond McGill

Dean of American Hypnotists

*The Amazing Life of*  
***Ormond McGill***

A new type of magic and hypnotism book in  
which a thoughtful professional  
reveals secrets of a lifetime

**Ormond McGill**  
Dean of American Hypnotists



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# *Biographical Foreword*

## **Lifetime of a Magician/Hypnotist**

Ormond McGill is a name to conjure with for those who know hypnotism. I use the word “conjure” as he is a magician in addition to being a hypnotist, and has combined those arts into stage shows of outstanding merit. His exciting magic/hypnotic shows have been witnessed by thousands throughout the United States and internationally in Canada, India, Hong Kong, Taiwan, Japan, Korea, Philippine Islands, French Polynesia, Australia and New Zealand.



Ormond was born in Palo Alto, California, June 15, 1913, and started his performing career in grammar school showing his classmates the ever popular “Wine and Water Trick”, which was made possible by a chemistry set received as a Christmas gift.

While attending high school in Palo Alto, the budding entertainer took the Tarbell Magic Course by correspondence, which, at that time, was being nationally advertised. Work in the high school manual training shop made possible the construction of various pieces of apparatus which resulted in his first full evening magic show, presented for the high school in 1928. It was the start of a career in show business which has continued for 70 years plus. During those high school days, Ormond became interested in hypnotism. An interest which eclipsed even the young performer’s interest in magic. Hypnotism became the feature of his shows, which, through the years, have been billed as “The Concert of Hypnotism”.

During the 1930s, in addition to attending college, the developing magician/hypnotist performed at California summer resorts. It was also during that period that his work as an author began, (he will tell more about that in subsequent chapters of his autobiography).

While attending the Pacific Coast Association of Magicians Convention in San Diego in 1940, Ormond met Arnold Furst who subsequently became his personal manager and booked his shows on many tours throughout the western United States and overseas.

The year 1942 marked a milestone in Ormond's career as it was then that he launched his original Spook Show, under the title "The Great London Hypnotic Seance". The show played the Fox and United Artists Theatres throughout the Pacific Coast and midwestern states, as well as in Famous Players Theatres across Canada, as far east as Quebec. He adopted the stage name of Dr. Zomb, for that phase of his career, and he continued playing theatres as Dr. Zomb. The name of the show was changed to "Seance of Wonders", but the name Dr. Zomb stayed with him, being used as a subtitle even in his overseas tours, as "The Man Called Dr. Zomb".

In 1943, Ormond married a girl named Delight. She was exactly her name, he says, and she became his "Girl Friday" in numerous performances.

An outstanding showman, Ormond McGill is also the author of numerous books on hypnotism, magic, and other things. In 1947, he began the writing of his now famous *Encyclopedia of Genuine Stage Hypnotism*. It has gone through half a dozen printings, and become recognized as the "bible" of stage hypnotists. An enlarged edition called *The New Encyclopedia of Stage Hypnotism* was recently published in the UK by Crown House Publishing. Already it has gone through six printings, and hit "best seller" acclaim.

The year 1955 found the McGills touring in Australia, Japan and Korea, on a tour arranged by Arnold Furst. And, in 1958, in association with motion picture producer, Ron Ormond, they made a tour of the Orient, both filming and performing in the Philippines, Hong Kong, Taiwan and India. On returning from this trip, Ormond, in collaboration with Ron, wrote the book *Into the Strange Unknown*, which was later rewritten and expanded into the book *Religious Mysteries of the Orient*, published by A.S. Barnes & Company, Inc. in 1976. Ormond McGill and the late Ron Ormond were the first men to bring Western attention to the "psychic surgery" of the Philippines.

In 1969, Ormond and Delight made a pioneer tour to Tahiti and other islands of French Polynesia with the first magic/hypnotism



show to play these remote islands of the South Pacific. On returning to the States, the couple designed their new show of "South Sea Island Magic" which combined with "The Concert Of Hypnotism". During this period, Ormond, also, had featured roles in two movies produced by Ron Ormond Films, Inc.: *Please Don't Touch Me* and *Sacred Symbol* with John Calvert (The Falcon).

The 1970s proved a time of writing five books: *The Secret World of Witchcraft*, *Religious Mysteries of the Orient*, *The Mysticism and Magic of India*, *How to Produce Miracles*, and *Entertaining With Magic*. These books were published by A.S. Barnes & Company, Inc. for public sale. *How to Produce Miracles* was also produced in a popular paperback edition by Signet. It was a busy time in which the couple managed to squeeze in their last overseas tour for Kerrig-Odeon Theatres in New Zealand.

Then, in 1976, tragedy entered Ormond's life. His beloved Delight died. Ormond's thought was to end his career then and there, but friends stepped in and encouraged him to continue on. Friendship with renowned illusionist, Lee Grabel resulted in his being booked to play sponsorship shows for the National Federation of the Blind, to raise funds for that worthy organization. The association lasted for 20 years. The last show for NFB was in 1999.

In 1981, in addition to performing hypnotism on the stage, Ormond McGill turned attention to teaching classes as a state-approved Hypnotherapy instructor at the Hypnotherapy Training Institute of Northern California (HTI). He developed some revolutionary techniques. He has written of some of these in the Hypnotism section of his autobiography, and also in *The New Encyclopedia of Stage Hypnotism*. Besides teaching at HTI, the conventions of the American Council of Hypnotist Examiners (ACHE) and the National Guild of Hypnotists (NGH) annually engage his services. In recognition of his contribution to the field of hypnosis, he has become internationally recognized as "The Dean of American Hypnotists". He wears the mantle well.

Ormond McGill is recipient of numerous awards and citations including recognition by the New Hampshire House of Representatives, and the prestigious Dr. Rexford L. North Award. Likewise he is on the Faculty of the Hypnotherapy Training Institute, Northern California, and the advisory board of the American

Council of Hypnotist Examiners (ACHE) and the National Guild of Hypnotists.

However, I believe the finest tribute to this man is the aura of friendship he radiates to everyone. Outside the field of hypnotism, his book *Grieve No More, Beloved: The Book of Delight*, written after Delight's passing in 1976, has brought comfort to hundreds of people who grieve the passing onwards of someone they loved. It is known as a handbook of life after death, as channelled through Ormond by his wife, Delight, in spirit.

In writing his autobiography, Ormond McGill takes you on a journey through this lifetime from his birth in 1913 onwards into current space and time (2003), and along the journey you will learn some clever magic you can perform, innovative hetero-hypnosis and self-hypnosis methods you can use, and much more.

I close now this brief biological outline of Ormond McGill, and let Ormond tell his own story, in his own way, with magic and the magical-like sprinkled along the way.

*Charles Mignosa*  
*San Jose, CA*  
*2003*

## *Chapter Fourteen*

# *East Indian Miracles*

On Halloween of 1952, following a performance at the Orpheum Theater in Seattle, I said farewell to “The Seance Of Wonders”. It was a fitting climax to nearly 12 years of touring as Dr. Zomb. I wanted to move on now and present my show under my own name.

Various magicians were working a full evening show under sponsorships such as Lions Clubs, Kiwanis, Rotary, etc. These Service Club groups all have charity projects for which they need funds. A magic show provides an evening of family entertainment which is an easy way for them to raise money, as all they have to do is furnish the auditorium and sell the tickets.

I entered the field.

The first full evening show I produced was called “East Indian Miracles”. India – “The Land of Magic” – intrigued me. It seemed an ideal theme to develop a show around. There was an exclusive India Store in Palo Alto. Delight and I went shopping there.

A couple of 9 x 9 curtains, showing the Indian “Tree of Life”, provided an effective background to the show, when set up against a black backdrop. Two 6-foot gold-gilded idol figures completed the set. Appropriate costumes, East Indian designed props in brass, and the tricks presented with Hindu-type patter and music developed into a stage show that was showy and different.

My close friend, Donn Wood, who later toured the nation as Merlin, with his own full evening show, helped me create and present the show, both on and off stage. The first act was magic given an oriental look. It was programmed as “The Physical Magic of the Fakir”. The second act was hypnotism which I presented as “The Mental Magic of the Yogi”. It was an appropriate show for “East Indian Miracles”.

"... One of the most unusual productions I have ever seen."  
... JIMMIE FIDLER



**Ormond  
McGILL**  
and his  
**SENSATIONAL  
STAGE PRESENTATION**



**EAST INDIAN  
MIRACLES!**

The advertising for the show was fittingly East Indian. The well-known columnist, Jimmie Fidler, caught the show and gave it a plug in his column, so I used his quote on my ads.

The show played well and I used it for awhile, but frankly it was just too much work for "one nighters" on the road, so in due time Delight and I retired it. It has remained at rest these many years, although some features I retained. One routine I always liked was the opening we designed of producing "fire balls" from a cloth bag. The effect went like this:

Center stage was a brass urn. The magician entered carrying a Hindu Carpet Bag. It was shown inside and out. A pass was made at the urn, and a flash of fire and smoke belched forth.

Reaching into the smoke a handful was caught and placed within the bag, immediately being withdrawn as a flaming ball of fire held on the performer's hand. It burned on the hand, was tossed in the air, and then deposited in a brass bowl held by assistant. Two further "balls of fire" were produced in the same manner. The flaming bowl was carried backstage by an assistant who put out the fire by clamping on a cover. The trick worked fine and got "East Indian Miracles" on its way. The modus operandi was simple.

The Hindu Carpet Bag was designed as an oversized "Egg Bag" having an inverted inner pocket in which the three "fire balls" could be held gripped in hand outside through the cloth, and the bag turned inside out and shown empty.

To produce the balls, all you had to do was release them, one by one, to drop into the bottom of the bag and set them aflame as they were removed from the bag. To produce the fire, a match-striking surface (sandpaper) was sewn inside the bag. The "fire balls" were turned from hardwood peppered with holes bored over their surface. In each of these little holes bits of asbestos wick was stuffed and clipped down flush to the surface of ball. Through the center of each ball, a matchstick size hole was drilled. In this, a wood kitchen match was placed leaving the head end of match extending.

Just before coming on stage, lighter fluid was sprinkled on the wicks. To produce a ball of fire, all you have to do is strike the match head on the sandpaper within the bag, and out comes the

## *The Vanishing Torch*

I invented this trick to open my South Sea Island Magic Show. The magician comes on stage holding a flaming torch. Suddenly, it is tossed in the air and disappears. It is a good flash opening for a show.

My friend, Fred Faltersack, in his workshop, made the first one of these for me. U.F. Grant (Mak's Magic Company) put it on the market with my permission. Here is how "The Vanishing Torch" is made and operated.

### *Modus Operandi*

The torch is made of two metal tubes, one of which telescopes within the other. The inner tube has holes drilled in it and is stuffed with wicking. Soaked with lighter fluid, the torch when lighted will flame brightly (be careful of the flame – keep it away from stage curtains, etc.).

A cord of black elastic is attached to the inside of torch. It is arranged "pull" fashion up the right coat sleeve. In operation, the torch is brought down from the sleeve and held in the hand. When released it instantly disappears up the sleeve, and the sliding-out tube of torch immediately puts out the flame.

Operating of "the Vanishing Torch" is easy. Just bring it down from the sleeve and hold snugly in your hand. Light the torch and walk on stage. A flaming torch makes an interesting entrance. Show it to the audience, then suddenly toss it into the air (apparently – actually elastic "pull" pulls it up the sleeve). It vanishes in an instant. You've captured your audience, the "South Sea Island Magic" show goes on.

## *Tarbell's Enchanted Cane*

The first instruction I ever had in professional magic was in taking the Tarbell Course by correspondence. Tarbell was remarkable in the way he kept in touch with his students via personal letters.

Harlan Tarbell invented this trick. I always like it and present it often in my show when conditions are right for its presentation.

### *Effect*

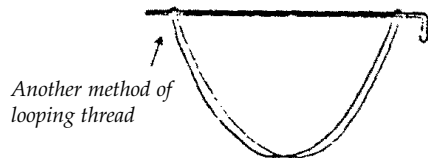
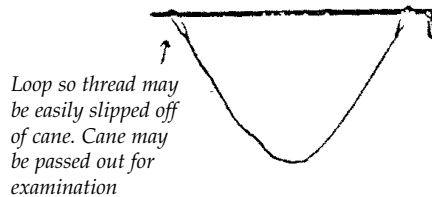
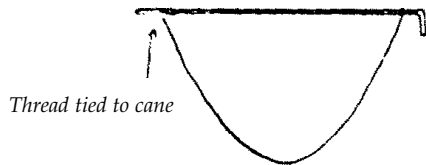
After passing a hoop over a cane to show nothing is attached to it, the magician causes the cane to adhere to his fingers, balance itself at gravity defying angles, float about and remain suspended in mid-air. This puzzling magical routine is a wonderful example of apparent magnetism and levitation. The principle employed is the essence of simplicity, requiring but little preparation. It is entirely self-contained, the cane is unprepared, and the trick can be introduced at any time during the performance.

### *Secret Preparation*

Use a fine, black silk thread and attach it to the cane, as shown in the first figure of this illustration. The length of the thread will be determined by the length of the cane and the routine the magician wishes to perform. The second and third figures show other methods of arranging the thread, should it be desired to pass cane for examination. In either case, the thread is easily attached and detached.

In describing the various moves in this routine, I will take it for granted that the first method of attaching is used. This is the one I personally use under most conditions.

#### *Methods of attaching thread to cane*



*If you are a magician, hypnotist or hypnotherapist, this book is for you.  
If not, this book will help you become one.*

This autobiography tells you about the life of the most famous stage hypnotist of the 20th century – a life devoted to the professional performance of magic, mysticism and hypnosis. Ormond McGill has amazed audiences all over the world with his exciting stage shows. Now he takes us backstage and reveals personal secrets of his success. Using original sketches, photographs, and press material, Ormond covers topics such as:

- Performing Hypnosis On Stage
- Remarkable Hypnotic Inductions
- Mental-Magic
- Past-Life Insights
- Conjuring Presentation
- Mind Control
- Hypnotherapy
- Yogi Pranayama Practices

Join Ormond on his odyssey and share in a lifetime of rich and varied experiences. This is a performance not to be missed!



“An extraordinary book on the lifetime of an extraordinary man, devoted to magic, hypnotism and beyond”

Gil Boyne, Executive Director, American Council of Hypnotist Examiners

“A fascinating account of an inspired world traveller and master showman”

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“... genuine hypnotism that leaves you tingling with awe at the unspeakable wonders of your own minds...”

Fox & United Artists Theaters

“... hearty and sincere congratulations to Ormond McGill in recognition of his more than 60 years as an author and showman.”

New Hampshire House of Representatives



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