

ALMOST UNPUBLISHED



by **DAVID GINN**



ON THE INSIDE

- Intro 2
- Warm-up Still 3
- Confusn Wands 4
- Fright Disappear 6
- Vanishing Coke 7
- Blooming Bouquet 8
- Steaming Flowers 10
- Sport Coat Warm-up 11
- Easy Mechanics 12
- Copperhead Revisited 14
- The Magic Chalk 15
- Sucker Turn-Arounds 16
- Tricky Bottles 17
- Routine vs. Trick 18
- Handkerchief Gamble 18
- Money from Hands 20
- My Little Indian 22
- Making Adults Laugh 23
- The Mummy Finger 24
- Appearing Vanishing Wand 25
- The Wand That Isn't 25
- Flower to Cane 26
- Fred Kaps' Toss-up Cane 26
- Wand to Cane 27
- Gur-reen Handkerchief 27
- Magic Hank Production 29
- Slicing a Banana 30
- Farmyard Frolics 31
- Look---Don't See! 33
- Co-Cola Bottle 34
- Gene Gordon's Shoelace 34
- The Not Scary Snakes 36
- Bananas, Hot Dogs 38
- The Real Magic 40

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an unusual conglomeration
of comedy and magical stuff

by **DAVID GINN**



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How This Whole Thing Started

ALMOST UNPUBLISHED is my 41st book in print. I wrote this clip and paste combination fast, right from my head to camera-ready, something I have never done. But midway through this week long project, I realized that what I was putting down on paper was not really being "written" now. I was writing it on stage during shows and in lectures during the past two years. Ideas brewing inside me actually developed more as I presented them, and this was the right time to put them at last into print.

PRESENTATION is the main theme of this book. Anyone can buy a trick, but it's the way you use it that counts. In these pages I will share with you many ways to "use it." Read them all, I urge you, even if you don't have or do that trick. Study the methods and techniques because they will work for you in other situations. Above all, I hope they will make you think and help shape your future performances.

CONGLOMERATION is a good word to use for this book, for it is surely a mixture of magic and comedy and ways of working as well. Yes, the slant is toward children's shows, but you'll find a few other things in here too. There are things in these pages that I never planned to publish, things saved for future books, things lost in the pages of out-of-print books and magazine columns, and even brand new things. And one of the best things I have ever developed is in this book, buried in the text for you to discover . . . and use. It really WAS almost unpublished.

SUPREME MAGIC is abundant in these pages. The reason for this is simple: I have used it, am using it, and will be using it in my shows. At one of my spring lectures this year, one magician suggested that I write down my routines with these props. This book contains a partial answer to his request. Let me state here, however, MOST CLEARLY, that any props I advocate in this book are recommended by MY OWN CHOICE ALONE, be they Supreme or otherwise. I have made no deals with anyone. I'm just writing about what I believe.

WITH THESE WORDS, let me thank my favorite wife, LYNNE GINN, for the proofreading and good advice; AUTUMN GINN for being in the photos and some shows; SUSAN BLANKENSHIP and DEBRA HORTON, for being on the cover and in many shows; WENDELL TUDOR, for shooting most of the photos; GENE GORDON for the shoelace routine; BILL BLACKARD, BARNEY LaSAUCE, ED HARRIS and FURLO KURD for the drawings; MIKE WILLIFORD for the front cover graphics; the MAGICIANS and CLOWNS along my lecture tours for the positive feedback; and last, but first, to the GOOD LORD who created me for giving me these performing and writing talents. Thanks and love to you all!

JUNE 15-21, 1987

David Ginn

Dedication

I wish that each of you could have in your lifetime a friend like PHIL THOMAS. Companion on long trips, stage manager, builder, problem solver, clear thinker, Christian. PHIL and I were friends long before "the big show," and we're still friends though his job responsibilities have taken him off the magic road for now. PHIL, I can NEVER thank you enough . . . so let's just say, "This one's for YOU!"

I Still Warm Them Up!

SPENDING those first moments of a show warming up each audience has become a standard way of working for me over the past 15 years. In the first 30 seconds my goal is to get some reaction, either applause or laughter . . . to get the audience used to my voice and mannerisms, my sense of humor and a feeling for all the fun we will be having during the show.

In those first minutes of my program, I want to start a snowball of applause and laughter that will continue rolling all through the show, getting bigger and bigger until the climax of my program. I start this snowball with words, then compound it with gags and tricks, even a short warm-up routine.

During the past two years I have opened with a rapid-fire speech, saying the following words as quickly as possible so that NOT EVERYONE understands my entire oration:

"Now the first thing I want you to know is this---if you see anything during the show that you like or enjoy, feel free to clap your hands and applaud whenever you like. In fact, let me see how GOOD you can clap your hands right now." I use the word GOOD with an alive, active type group. If the group is quiet and "too courteous," I substitute the word LOUD in place of GOOD. I want them to start reacting early in the show . . . like now!

Then I move on to my rapid-first speech:

"And the second thing I want you to know is this---if you see anything during the show that makes you want to laugh or that looks funny,

I want you to go ahead and laugh whenever you feel like it. Don't wait till the show's over 'cause it will be too late. I will be gone and you will be gone and then everybody will be gone. You understand what I mean?"

Sometimes even I get tongue-tied at the end of the speech, goofing up the last few words, but that doesn't matter. Kids tend to laugh at what I'm trying to say or at how I've goofed up and that's what I'm after. Whatever I say, I end up by saying the last sentence clearly:

"You understand what I mean?"

Then I wait for their reaction. It's both YES and NO. Then I say:

"GOOD! I hope you understand because I have NO IDEA what I said!"

That gets a laugh too, and we're off to a good start.

Before we move into specifics let me make one thing completely clear:

I WARM-UP ALL AUDIENCES in one way or the other. Not just kidshow groups, but teens and adults as well.

The warm-up is PERSONALITY BUILDING time, time to connect with the audience, time to first relate to them and they to you. Get them to like you during that first moment together and it will affect FAVORABLY the rest of your time onstage.

I cannot think of anything more important in your presentation. You MUST establish yourself early in the show . . . otherwise, your audience will not even be there at the end of the show!

Oh, are we in for some fun on the next bunch of pages. And to think: Some of this stuff was ALMOST UNPUBLISHED!

Confusn Wands with a Surprise Ending

WHEN I THINK of the newer tricks I've been using in the warm-up of my shows, as opposed to some I've been using ten years or more, CONFUSN WANDS from Supreme Magic comes first to mind. I used the routine which follows in over 50 kindergarten and day care center shows during the 1985-86 school year, plus I've used it in dozens of lectures and other shows. Right now I'm debating on WHEN to put it through a year of school assembly shows. It's that good!

In addition to Supreme's CONFUSN WANDS, I employ their WAND TO SNAKE along with this to make a complete routine. I slide the spring snake back down the wooden wand and fix it in place with the removable pin that comes with it. This I place out of sight in a receptacle. I place the three Confusn Wands (solid red, solid yellow and hollow black) into a brown paper bag about four inches wide and an inch or two longer than the wands themselves. You can make such a bag with a grocery bag (just cut it up) and some wide package sealing tape. Or buy an umbrella that comes in a narrow bag. Someone also told me you can get such a bag in a bottle shop or package store. Or, you can even sew such a bag out of heavy cloth. By the way, this bag serves not only in the performance, but also for carrying the trick from show to show.

"I bought a new magic wand not long ago," I begin. "And not only will it make magic work, but it will also do magic by itself." I pull the wand out of the bag, showing it black. Then I replace it as I continue to talk.

"See---I'll put it inside this bag, wiggle my fingers over it, snap my fingers . . . and when I take it out, it has magically changed to a RED magic wand!"

I show the red wand, then replace it.

"Then I put it back inside the bag, wiggle my fingers, snap my fingers . . . and when I remove the wand, it has changed back to BLACK! Oh, you like that?" The kids are beginning to bite, as you may suspect. "Then I'll do it again!"

Repeating the above actions, I change the wand to red again. I put the red wand back into the bag, but THIS TIME the red wand goes into the hollow black wand. I wiggle and snap my fingers. Then I dump the black wand out into my hand (the red one inside it), retaining a hold on the yellow wand so it stays INSIDE the bag.

"And there it is---changed back to black again." Here I place the black wand (with red inside) into my receptacle BESIDE the Wand to Snake. "And the funny thing about it is that NO ONE has every figured out HOW I DO IT!" And if they're not biting by now, that remark surely provokes them. Yes, they'll be telling you "there's another wand in the bag."

"What? In the bag?" I turn the bag upside-down, holding the yellow wand tight through the paper. I shake the bag several times, acting as though nothing is there.

"You're HOLDING it!"



Here is your chance to play with the kids and milk the situation for laughs through your stalling. Act dumb. Act as though you don't understand what they are saying. HAVE FUN! I end this part by either "accidentally" hitting or tapping the mike stand or my table if I am not using a mike. That REALLY puts them onto you!

"Well, what do you know," I finally admit. "There IS another wand in the bag. I guess I didn't NOTICE it. Hmmm, it happens to be a YELLOW WAND, now that I look at it." Out it comes. "And as far as this bag goes, I really don't need it, so I think I'll just fold it up and put it away." I toss the bag aside.

"By the way, I'd like to give all of you a magical observation test with these wands, the yellow one and the black one. Let me get the black wand." I reach into my receptacle (having laid the yellow wand on a table), pull the pin out of the Wand to Snake and bring the wand into view with the collapsed snake hidden in my hand. For your backstage info, the picture on the opposite page shows both a collapsed and an expanded Wand to Snake. Now you will understand what I am talking about. I usually hold the collapsed snake in my right hand and pick up the yellow wand in my left hand. I hold the wands upright in both hands.

"I'll place both wands behind my back." I do this. "Now, which hand is the BLACK magic wand in?" They answer, then I bring the wands into sight again. "That's correct. Let's try again." Behind the back they go once more. "Now, which hand is the YELLOW wand in?" Again they yell out. I bring out the wands in front and say, "You got that right. Now I will make it even harder. I'll hold the wands right out here in front of me!" Here I stop a moment, wrinkle up my face as if to say, "What did I say?" Then I move on. It's a bit of humor that some get and some don't . . . but as Dean Drewry used to say, that's perfectly all right.

"Now---which hand is the BLACK magic wand in?" I ask with both wands in front of me. The kids yell. "Right? Hey, that's right!"

The moment I say that I release the collapsed spring snake and then I YELL! "SNAKE! SNAKE!" Immediately I start hitting the yellow snake with the yellow magic wand, finally knocking it into my receptacle. Then I come "out" of my crazy act, my I'm-afraid-of-snakes act, and I stand perfectly still at center stage.

Believe me, the kids LOVE this sort of stuff, the grown-up acting silly because of a cloth-covered spring snake. After the laughter dies down, I usually conclude the routine by saying, "I'm not REALLY afraid of . . . s-s-s-snakes!"

WRAP-UP NOTE: After the show I place the three Confusn Wands back into the paper bag, ready for a repeat performance. Also, I purposely drop the steel pin down into the "mouth" of the Wand to Snake, shaking it down deep inside so I will know where to find it at the next show. I always leave the snake open and expanded between shows. Never travel with a spring snake collapsed IF you can avoid it; they last longer that way . . . I know from experience.