



Dennis Deliberations ... Ring # 170,

Assembly #99

“The Bev and Alouise Bergeron Ring”



Photo courtesy Ray Eden (Zweidinger)

Franz did show 4 videos, but unlike what he did 15 years ago in Daytona, he did not frame this as a magic lecture. It was mostly about the business of magic and inside talk about stars and the business. It was fun. He ended with giving everyone a Tee Shirt.

Franz Harary Lecture

As the mastermind behind some of the world's most groundbreaking illusions, he's redefined what live entertainment can be.

- Behind-the-scenes insight into how his illusions are built and performed.
- Career stories, including working with major entertainers and touring internationally.
- Discussions about creativity, confidence, and originality in performance.....and much more!

FREE to paid members...all others \$15

Location: I-Hop 5203 S. Kirkman Road,
Orlando, FL 32819

Watch a video about Franz Harary:

<https://youtu.be/JWQt79Fw59I>

Lecturing

**FRANZ
HARARY**
MASTER ILLUSIONIST

Appearing at... IBM Ring170 / SAM99
July 15, 2026 7:30pm



Steven Spill writes with the advice that Carl Ballantine gave him:

“1973. I’m 18 yrs old in a North Hollywood hotel banquet room, there to entertain some fast-food restaurant managers. A guy says, “Ladies and gentlemen here is our magician.” That’s all he said. A light smattering of applause. I begin.

NOTHING. The sweat begins to pour, it takes me a year to get a volunteer to help with my Egg Bag trick. I do 20 minutes of stuff, zero crowd reaction, and get off. They never noticed I left the stage.

In the lobby I’m thinking, I wonder if there’s a gun shop in the hotel so I can shoot myself, when a man I kinda recognize comes up to me. “Hey, kid, nice show..” I just smile.

The guy was magician, comedian and actor, Carl Ballantine. He says, “You can’t fight the fork. They were eating dinner when you started. You can’t fight the fork.”

And Carl Ballantine, who I know from TV and I’m meeting for the first and only time, sits me down and tells me the following..

“First of all, there were sitting at round tables. Half the audience had their back to you. Bad for magic. Second, they were serving dinner. You can’t work when people have food in their mouths, they can’t laugh. Third, magic needs focus and their focus was on their food not your tricks. And, your

intro sucked, it did nothing to help you. Your act is good, keep working on it, don't give up. I know comedy magic, but they tied your hands..”
Finally, Carl says, “Never let this happen to you again.”
Carl shakes my hand and disappears. Not sure what he was doing there, but I needed to hear what he had to say..

The first half of my career was largely spent performing in nightclubs, bars, dinner theater, casinos.. places where tables take up a lotta space, noise, cocktail waitresses walking around taking orders and serving, and so on.. Unable to stick to Carl's advice for long, from time to time am still doing round table banquet room gigs for the nation's top Ford car salesmen, the meat cutters convention, financial service managers, or whatever.
As a talk act you'd think a booker would let me know when the audience only speaks Japanese. Yep, that happened to me once.

Fortunately, since the mid-1990s I've mostly done theater-style venues, the crowd knows they're coming to see a show, and everyone in the audience is actually facing the stage.

Like me, take Carl's advice, “.. keep working on it, don't give up.” When you're obsessed you make your luck, I've done 20,000 shows over the last 60 years. I'm neither the best nor the worst magician, but perhaps the luckiest. If they told me I would die tomorrow, I could live with that.”



Harry Blackstone Jr. was standing backstage at the 1985 Emmy Awards rehearsal in Pasadena when a stagehand told him the prop list for his upcoming live illusion was too risky for broadcast television, because the network feared that one wrong cue would turn a carefully designed disappearing act into a national embarrassment on live air. Blackstone didn't cancel the trick.

He rebuilt it.

That moment captured what his career had become: not just performance, but engineering illusions that had to survive cameras, timing pressure, and audiences trained by television to expect everything to be explained.

The televised appearance was part of a broader wave in which

Blackstone brought large scale stage magic into mainstream American entertainment during the 1970s and 1980s. Unlike close up magicians working in clubs, he specialized in theatrical illusions that relied on precision timing, lighting control, and carefully choreographed misdirection.

He performed on shows like *The Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson*, where live broadcast conditions meant there were no second takes, only execution under pressure. A single mistake could expose the mechanics of an illusion to millions of viewers in real time.

But Blackstone was already built for that kind of risk.

He grew up inside magic itself.

His father, Harry Blackstone Sr., was one of the most famous stage magicians of the early 20th century, known for grand illusions like the floating light bulb and the vanishing bird cage. Blackstone Jr. inherited not only the craft but also the expectation that he would preserve and expand it for a new era of entertainment.

By the time he began touring independently in the 1960s and 1970s, he had developed

signature stage illusions that combined classic stagecraft with modern theatrical pacing. One of his most recognizable effects was the “floating light bulb” tribute to his father, updated for contemporary audiences but still rooted in early stage magic tradition. His touring shows often played in large theaters, state fairs, and Las Vegas venues, requiring complex setup crews and precise coordination. Illusions involved large props, assistants, stage traps, and carefully timed lighting cues that left no room for improvisation.

He also became a frequent television guest, adapting stage illusions for broadcast formats where camera angles replaced audience sightlines. This required rethinking how misdirection worked, since viewers could be closer, slower, and more analytical than live theater audiences.

In 1985, he published *Blackstone’s Secrets of Magic*, sharing aspects of stage illusion design while still protecting core mechanics. The book reflected a long standing tension in his career between popularizing magic and preserving its mystery in an era increasingly interested in exposure and explanation.

One of his most famous television moments involved performing large scale illusions on live specials where assistants vanished inside cabinets, objects transformed mid air, and entire stage setups shifted in seconds. These performances relied on exact timing between stage crew, lighting technicians, and Blackstone’s own verbal misdirection. Behind the curtain, rehearsals were often more demanding than the shows themselves. Every movement had to be repeatable under pressure, because unlike film, live television did not forgive error.

He also spent significant time touring educational demonstrations, introducing younger audiences to stage magic as a craft rather than just entertainment. He often emphasized discipline, practice, and theatrical thinking over gimmicks or shortcuts. By the late 1990s, he had become one of the most recognized figures in American stage magic, continuing the Blackstone family legacy into a new media era shaped by television and emerging digital exposure.

The contradiction in Harry Blackstone Jr.’s career is not illusion versus reality.

It is how he built wonder inside a medium designed to reveal everything.

He didn’t just perform magic.

He engineered belief under conditions where disbelief was always waiting in the next camera angle.

Dennis