

## Chapter Synopsis of

# **THE MAGICAL LIFE OF MARSHALL BRODIEN**

**Creator of TV Magic Cards and Wizzo the Wizard**

**By John Moehring**

### **Chapter 1: Whatever Happened to Wizzo?**

In September of 2003, almost a decade after Marshall Brodien retired his popular television character of Wizzo the Wizard, he receives a request to make an appearance on Chicago's *WGN Morning News*. He reluctantly agrees, yet Wizzo's magical high jinks create an on-air sensation, resulting in a switchboard jam-up that the Superstation had not experienced since the morning of 9/11.

### **Chapter 2: Sellers of the Secrets**

It's a Saturday afternoon in 1944 when Marshall's mother takes him for his first visit to a magic shop. Destined to become a magician, it's not long before he quits school for a full-time job demonstrating tricks behind the magic counter of the Treasure Chest in the heart of Chicago's Loop.

### **Chapter 3: Riverview Park**

Young Brodien is offered the job as the sideshow magician at the world's largest amusement park. The following season he becomes the talker for the freak show, ballyhooing the likes of Pricilla the Monkey Girl, Emmett the Alligator-Skinned Man, and Betty Lou Williams, the world's only living double-bodied, four-legged girl.

### **Chapter 4: First Pitch on the Tube**

The powerful advertising medium in the 1950s is television, and Marshall creates a commercial to sell the world's oldest trick, the venerable Cups & Balls.

### **Chapter 5: Odd Fellows and a Tall Tale**

After learning fire eating and sword swallowing from his sideshow friends, Marshall hits the road, working as the talker for the sideshow and, along the way, becomes friends with an entertainer who's ten-feet, four-inches tall.

### **Chapter 6: Cicero, the Mob & Beyond**

In a Chicago suburb where vice thrives with official indulgence, 19-year-old Brodien becomes the mob's favorite magician while working at the Magic Lounge, baffling the likes of Joey "The Doves" Aiuppa, Jackie "The Lackey" Cerone, and Frank "The Immune" Diamond.

### **Chapter 7: Trouping with an Alligator**

Marshall gets to perform his Blade Box and Electric Chair illusions while touring with an animal show that features a wrestling alligator and a boxing kangaroo.

### **Chapter 8: Carnival Knowledge**

While playing carnivals, Marshall befriends the owner of the *French Follies*, Hedy Jo Star, a lady of questionable sexuality who will pop up in the not-to-far-off future. Coming off the road, Marshall works as the house magician at the Beacon Inn, where he meets a hypnotist who will change the direction of his career as an entertainer.

### **Chapter 9: Abracadabra, You're Drafted**

When Uncle Sam calls, no war drums are beating at the time, so Brodien works his way into Special Services, saying, "I made up my mind that amazing, amusing, and confusing the troops was going to be two years of great fun."

### **Chapter 10: A Spell of Hypnosis**

The Army provides Marshall with the ideal opportunity to hone his skills as an accomplished stage hypnotist, developing a full-hour show of hilarious hypnotic feats that's highly acclaimed by the top brass.

### **Chapter 11: Straitjackets & Shenanigans**

Fort Carson becomes the epicenter of entertainment excitement when Private Brodien garners headlines with his upside-down straitjacket escape, and it isn't long before Brodien becomes Lieutenant General W.H. Arnold's favorite show-biz soldier, dispatched to entertain at military bases around the nation.

### **Chapter 12: Nightclub Necromancer**

No sooner had Marshall been discharged from the service and he was headlining as "America's Most Entertaining Hypnotist and Magician Extraordinary" at the Boston Nocturne Club on Chicago's West Side. Within a year, Brodien takes over the operations and renames his place the Mystic Club.

### **Chapter 13: The Cairo**

When Brodien takes his hypnotic show to the posh Cairo Supper Club he becomes the talk of the town. The show is high on humor with stunts like "Bubbles La Rue," where women, as well as men, are hypnotized and transformed into sexy, exotic dancers. There are moments of wonder when Brodien's nightly signature stunt becomes the "Rigid Lady," an unbelievable feat where a lady is mesmerized and becomes stiff as a board, withstanding the weight of a grown man on her midriff.

### **Chapter 14 Bozo's Circus**

Unlike the Bozo the Clown TV programs that were franchised across the nation in the 1950s and '60s, WGN-TV's show featured a 13-piece band, guest variety acts, usually circus performers, jugglers, and magic acts. And not surprisingly, Marshall Brodien quickly became the most in-demand magician to work the show.

### **Chapter 15: New Girlfriend and a Prize Fight**

When an ice revue shared the bill with Brodien at the Cairo Club in the summer of 1962, he met a perky blonde ice skater named Judy who would be instrumental in getting Marshall the job of demonstrating the dangers of hypnosis in the upcoming Patterson/Liston World Heavyweight Championship fight.

### **Chapter 16 Pass on the Playboy**

Hugh Hefner comes to see Brodien at the Cairo Club and invites him to the Playboy mansion. Hef's string of clubs, where "members only" ogle beautiful cocktail waitresses clad in skimpy bunny costumes, were in New York, Los Angeles, Miami, Detroit, St. Louis, and New Orleans and were the ideal venue for Marshall Brodien's acts of magic, mirth, and mesmerism.

### **Chapter 17: Presto! Less Hypno**

Brodien takes some time off from the Cairo Supper Club to play a string of state and county fairs, performing an act of grand illusions. After a brief tour as the ice-skating magician of *Ice Royals*, Brodien returns to the Cairo, but it isn't long before hypnotic-show home of four years is victim of a mysterious bombing. The shutting down of the nightclub gives Marshall the opportunity to pursue more magic.

### **Chapter 18: Taking on Trade Shows**

An agent books Brodien to work the Owens-Corning Fiberglas booth at the huge Homebuilders Show. Trade-show producer Fred Kitzing likes Marshall's approach to integrating the client's marketing message with his illusions performed with an attractive assistant. It's not long before Kitzing signs an exclusivity agreement with Brodien and he's crisscrossing the country as the magical spokesman for major corporations such Bethlehem Steel, Lennox, Westinghouse Electric, Reynolds Metals, Sylvania, and numerous others.

### **Chapter 19: Mike Douglas Show**

Laughs and amazement prevail every time Brodien goes on the nationally syndicated *Mike Douglas Show*. The producers love Marshall's ability to involve Mike's guests — stars such as Bill Cosby, Louis Nye, Totie Fields, and Tony Bennett — and have fun with the magic and illusions.

### **Chapter 20: A Movie and a Trip to the Moon**

The Pillsbury Company likes Brodien's ability to pitch product with trade-show magic and he earns a starring role in a marketing film all about Sweet Cream Pancake & Waffle Mix. Marshall also gets the nod to play the lead role in an episode of *Moon Magic*, a pilot produced for a new children's series at WGN-TV.

### **Chapter 21: Doody, Doody, Do**

When Brodien creates an extravagant Arabian Nights-theme trade show for the American Gas Association he's told to keep the sultan's costume he performed in. Within months, he develops a performing persona of a wizard named Wizzo who, with his magic incantation of "Doody, doody, do," becomes a regular on WGN-TV's *Bozo Show* for 27 years.

### **Chapter 22: TV Magic Cards**

Risking \$2,500 apiece on airtime and taking a gamble on pitching the age-old Svengali Deck on television, Brodien and partner, Rick Carey, slowly but surely discover a gold mine. Hundreds of thousands of the trick cards are ordered, as Marshall convinces the nation, "Most magic tricks are easy, once you know the secret."

### **Chapter 23: Enter Mr. Eicoff**

Alvin Eicoff, pioneer in the field of broadcast direct-response marketing hears of Brodien's sales achievements on the tube and makes a deal to place the product in key-outlet retail markets — "Available in these stores only" — guaranteeing sales in the millions. Sales of TV Magic Cards, as well as a line of TV Magic products, soar into the millions.

### **Chapter 24: Friends in the Biz**

By 1972, Brodien has moved from Fox Lake, is divorced, and resides in the Chicago suburb of Rolling Meadows. Frequenting The Lancer, an upscale steak house in Schaumburg, Marshall becomes friends with the restaurant's owners, an attractive lady who becomes his real-estate investment partner, and some colorful characters that are prominent members of the mob.

### **Chapter 25: The Best Partner is No Partner**

After disagreements over the directions TV Magic, Ltd. should take, Brodien is bought out by his partner. However, it's not long before Marshall gets back the profitable mail-order catalog division of the company and the job of consulting on a Columbia House of Magic subscription series.

### **Chapter 26: Old Chicago**

The Marshall Brodien Magic Shop gets a prime location at the world's largest completely enclosed amusement park.

### **Chapter 27: The Restaurateur**

As if doing major trade shows every month and appearing on the Bozo Show three times a week isn't enough work, Brodien becomes a major partner in the operations of the popular Lancer Restaurant.

### **Chapter 28: Visit from the FBI**

The trench-coated agent is as cagey as TV's Colombo and he's not buying the fact that there wasn't a trucking company or a shady banker involved in Marshall's deal to buy the Lancer.

### **Chapter 29: DBA Marshall Brodien Magic Co.**

He's back! After buying back the company, the familiar pitch of "Most magic tricks are easy once, you know the secret" is on the tube again, and in addition to putting the Marshall Brodien product line in retail outlets everywhere, he's producing magic sets for Las Vegas Superstars of Magic Siegfried & Roy.

### **Chapter 30: Circus Daze Over**

*Bozo's Circus* is renamed the *Bozo Show*, and Brodien is now taping his thrice-a-week spots as *Wizzo* to air at 7 a.m. on WGN-TV. Despite the programming change, the popularity of the show remains high, with the *Wall Street Journal* reporting: "Its local at-home audience of 300,000 just about equals that of the three major networks' morning news shows combined."

### **Chapter 31: Home Shopping**

Brodien tunes in early to the profits of cable television's networks devoted entirely to mass merchandising, pitching his products via round-the-clock satellite broadcasts.

### **Chapter 32: Ships Ahoy**

Since his carefree days of lakeside living on Fox Lake, Brodien has had a fascination with boats, owning several, even his "hotel afloat," the 32-foot *Sleight of Hand*, which he docks in Pompano Beach, Florida.

### **Chapter 33: Mansion For Sale**

Brodien and his Bozo-show producing buddy Don Sandburg knock out a concept for a sitcom series called *Magic Mansion*, however, the powers that be at WGN-TV are not too interested in showing the property to potential sponsors.

### **Chapter 34: A New Bozo**

Bob Bell, who's played Bozo on WGN-TV for 23 years, retires. While the Superstation conducts a nationwide search for a new clown host, Bethlehem Steel recruits Brodien for a series of trade shows that pay quadruple his normal fees.

### **Chapter 35 Check, Please!**

Brodien takes the opportunity to cash out of the restaurant business, giving him more time for develop new product line for the Marshall Brodien Magic Company and produce a syndicated television special, *Wonders of Magic*.

### **Chapter 36 ToTo's**

Marshall gets the call to consult on the creation of a circus-theme nightclub that features jugglers, circus and carnival acts and, of course, magicians.

### **Chapter 37: Ventures in Toyland**

Convinced that magic will sell with mass marketers such as K-Mart, Toys "R" Us, and Target, Brodien takes tons of orders at the New York Toy Show. His success attracts the attention of Harmony Toy, who makes a lucrative offer to buy out his company.

### **Chapter 38: Viva Vegas**

Lance Burton, a young magician who started with a deck of TV Magic Cards, makes a splash in Vegas and debuts his own show at the Hacienda, and when Brodien sees it he's convinced that Burton is destined for a television special.

### **Chapter 39: A Shot at Producing**

Marshall assembles a team of investors, a production crew, and puts together a one-hour Lance Burton television special that's pretty spectacular but, unfortunately, not up to the expectations of NBC.

### **Chapter 40: Marshall Meets his Match**

When WGN-TV announces that, after 28 years, Wizzo will be leaving the *Bozo Show*, the *Chicago Tribune* commissions a bright young freelancer named Mary to write about Marshall and, as their meeting ensues, it's difficult to distinguish between the interviewer and interviewee.

### **Chapter 41: Magic Boom of the '90s**

Sales of Brodien-designed magic products soar for Harmony Toy: There are magic sets for the Disney movies, *101 Dalmatians*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and *Aladdin*, a new custom line of sets and tricks for Siegfried & Roy, as well as Marshall Brodien sets that now include video instructions. When Cadaco buys out Harmony, Brodien remains their magic consultant, producing top-selling sets for Lance Burton.

### **Chapter 42: Farewell to 40 Years of Fun**

After four decades on the air, WGN-TV pulls the plug on the *Bozo Show*, but not without a farewell special that includes the return of Wizzo. At the 100th anniversary of the Society of American Magicians in 2002, Brodien is saluted for his “multi-faceted career in magic.”

### **Chapter 43: Sh-h-h-h... It's a Secret**

It's revealed that a large part of Marshall Brodien's success is attributed to some words of wisdom that are on a plaque given to him by a man who made his millions selling billions of burgers.

### **Chapter 44: Pressing On**

Persistence and determination are still critical to Marshall's life-long successes. Sure, “It's easy once you know the secrets.” But occasionally, to make it all happen, he has to resort to Wizzo's magic words of “Doody, doody, do.”