



The Great Brindamour

Born: George W. Brindamour on April 5, 1870 in Cannon Mills, Minnesota, U.S.

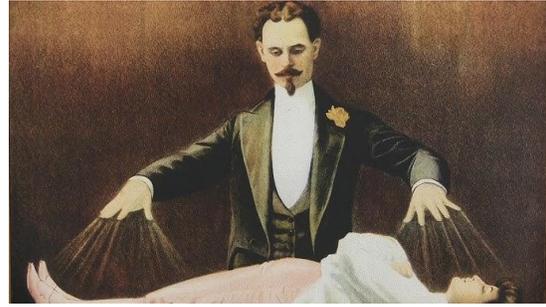
Died: July 31, 1941 at age 71.

◆ How He Became a Magician

Brindamour started his working life as a **photographer** (at one time using the name Sam Brown) but became fascinated with performance and stunt escapes. He moved into **vaudeville** and began performing magic and escape acts around the turn of the 20th century, developing a reputation for daring feats that predated or paralleled those of contemporaries like Houdini.

◆ Influences

It isn't clear how much Houdini directly influenced Brindamour, but Brindamour was performing **handcuff escapes several years before Houdini became famous** for similar stunts. Houdini did, however, perform in some of the same venues and contexts — and their rivalry culminated in public engagements where they competed for audiences.



◆ What Type of Magic He Did

Brindamour blended **stage magic with escape artistry** in his performances:

- He was known as the “**Handcuff King**”, performing daring escape acts involving handcuffs, bridges, and even partial jumps into rivers while bound.
- His escape tricks sometimes included rescuing himself from **locked barrels, spiked cells, and glass display cases** — stunts that showcased his physical skill and showmanship.
- Early in his career he also included **illusion elements** such as levitation in his stage show before ultimately focusing on his escape feats as his main draw.

◆ Performance Career Span

Brindamour was active in **vaudeville and touring shows from around the early 1900s into the 1920s.**

He headlined his own acts for **about 28 years**, performing across America and abroad and sometimes even performing full evening shows when bookings required more than just escape stunts

◆ How He Died

George Brindamour **died on July 31, 1941** at age 71.

Reports from historical accounts suggest he had retired to Los Angeles by 1930 and may have taken occasional small acting roles, but there’s no indication his death was due to anything other than natural causes or age-related decline.



Signature Tricks, Illusions & Show Elements

1. Handcuffed Bridge Jumps

Brindamour was best known for **jumping off bridges while handcuffed**, sometimes into **partially-frozen rivers** — one of his signature escape stunts that drew large crowds and press.

2. Jailbreak and Handcuff Escape Acts

He billed himself as the “*Handcuff King*” and specialized in **escaping from handcuffs** and various restraints — acts he was performing even before Houdini became famous for similar escapes.

3. Locked Barrels & Unusual Restraints

Brindamour devised creative escape stunts from **locked barrels (even filled with beer)** and other strange devices: a **spiked Spanish Cell** and **glass display cases** gave his escapes a theatrical twist.



Signature Tricks, Illusions & Show Elements

4. Levitation Illusion in Early Show Posters

Although he became best-known for his escapes, early promotional posters depict Brindamour performing a **levitation illusion** with an assistant suspended in the air — part of his full stage show before he focused on escape feats.

5. Magic & Vaudeville Show Acts

When escape bookings were slow, Brindamour would sometimes **present a full evening show that included standard stage magic** in addition to escapes, blending traditional conjuring with daring escapes for variety.

6. Publicity Stunts

One of his favorite crowd-pleasing bits was to have **any church bell chosen by the audience ring at a designated time** — a playful public stunt that added flair to his performances.

These highlights show how Brindamour's act combined **danger, showmanship, and theatrical flair** long before escape acts became broadly popular, making him a notable figure in early 20th-century vaudeville and escapology.