Hypnotism still a mystery

Trade Editor

I'd always wondered about hypnosis, considering it a mysterious and strange thing, so when I heard a hypnotist was coming to campus I decided to try a little experiment. I had seen a hypnotist back in high school, and he had tried to convince the audience that he could pull our arms apart. When he said to try to pull our arms apart, I immediately did, and I looked at my friend, who had done the same thing, and we wondered how a body could be hypnotized.

This time I was going to do it differently. When he asked for volunteers, I ran up on stage. I decided I was going to try "fake it." When he told us we couldn't pull our arms apart, I pretended I couldn't. After all, he had said only imbeciles or morons couldn't be hypnotized. Then he started to put us "under." My heart was really pounding. I let my parts of my body go limp, although I decided it would be overreacting to fall out of the chair. Then he had us stand up and touch each one of us individually. Here's where he nailed me. I was gasping, my heart pounding, and realize I'm in a trance.

But he didn't nail me, and he went on to tell us we were watching a movie. I wondered whether I should open my eyes. After all, if I'm supposed to think I'm watching a movie, I'd better have my eyes open. So I opened my eyes, and he saw it, and he told me not to think. Oh, well.

But he didn't decide I wasn't hypnotized, and the show went on. We pretended it was hot, then there was a cool breeze, then it was cold. We saw a race, yelled "two" as loud as we could, and he won ten thousand dollars, which was promptly stolen by the guy next to me. The audience was all nude, then we were nude. Throughout this, the guy kept asking me questions like "what's the matter?" "how are you feeling." He's trying to nail me, I thought. He's suspicious. But I kept up my charade. Then we up-danced, and did a strip- testcase, and pretended we were Mick Jagger when "Start Me Up" came on. At least I did.

Then it was over. He asked us how long we thought it was. "20 minutes" everybody said. An hour. I thought. We'll all go back to our seats, except for a few people who were stuck to the chair or the stage. I was going to be the Lone Ranger soon as the Lone Ranger music came on. I saw him throw ten dollars to one of the people stuck on stage. He had told me, "If he had made me one of the people stuck on stage, I would never have done the things they did if they weren't hypnotized. But hypnotism worked for them, I have no idea. Hypnosis is still a mystery to me."

Bob Himann '83

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