

Hypnotized

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Students attending “Hypnosis by Randy” perform a command issued by the hypnotist, Randy Emily.

IUS graduate and hypnotist Randy Emily performed to a sell-out crowd on Friday, March 13, at the Corydon Jamboree in Corydon, Ind., with proceeds going to benefit charity runners for the American Cancer Society.

Sheila Lenz, of New Salisbury, Ind., volunteered to be hypnotized by Emily.

While under the trance, Emily convinced Lenz and another participant that whenever Johnny Cash’s “Ring of Fire” was played their buttocks were actually on fire and they needed to scoot across the floor to extinguish the flames.

After coming out of the trance Lenz said she couldn’t remember anything, a common side effect for people that undergo hypnosis.

“The last thing I remember is being told to ‘sleep, sleep, sleep,’ ” she said, “and now, my butt is hot.”

Goofy antics and silly charades are what draw people to Emily’s shows, which guarantee clean, family-oriented material.

“I’ve chosen to do fun, clean shows that everybody will like,” he said. “To try to make it funny and keep it clean is a challenge, but I enjoy that challenge.”

Zack Dixon, a sophomore at Corydon Central High School, danced on stage believing he was a backup singer for Beyoncé Knowles, something he said he would never consciously do.

“All I remember is thinking about a cave,” he said. “Then, Randy blew his whistle and I was awake and back in my seat.”

Public uncertainty of hypnotism is strong, especially among religious groups who argue it is the work of the devil.

“They don’t really understand hypnosis,” Emily said. “It’s used in a lot of helpful areas for migraines, smoking and weight loss; it always works when you want it to work.”

He said he compares hypnosis to the trance-like state one goes into when watching TV or taking a long drive.

“I get those people so involved that they forget about everything else in the room,” he said. “It’s very real, but it’s nothing more than taking a suggestion.”

Once in a hypnotic state, he said he has the ability to make people do hilarious and crazy acts, but he can’t hypnotize somebody against their will or convince them to do anything against their morals.

After assuring people it’s real, the question he most often answers is whether or not he can hypnotize women to find him irresistible.

“They want to know if I can make a girl do all of these wild and crazy things,” he said. “I’ll say, ‘yes, but it has nothing to do with hypnosis.’”

IUS student Corey Berry, secondary education junior, has known Emily for years and agreed to help him advertise the March 13 show around campus.

This was his second time watching one of Emily’s shows and he said a lot has changed for the better since he last saw a performance.

“He’s come up with a lot of new material,” Berry said. “The people up there or the things that he does are always going to have their own unique touch.”

Emily, who served a year in Vietnam after being drafted, became interested in hypnotism after participating in a show at IU Southeast in 1976.

After volunteering to be hypnotized to alleviate his skeptical outlook, he was captivated by the process when he couldn’t remember anything that happened during the performance.

“I didn’t remember any of it at all,” he said. “If you know anybody that’s ever been hypnotized, they come off the stage feeling like they’ve been in a deep sleep.”

While earning his bachelor’s degree in sociology, he took every class related to hypnotism that he could find. After graduating, he found employment as a social worker in Floyd County where he remained for eight years.

During that time, he went to every show and took every class available on hypnotism. He said he initially learned to administer self-hypnotism to help deal with the lasting effects of his time spent in Vietnam.

“Obviously, coming back from Vietnam, like a lot of veterans, we had a lot of garbage we carried,” Emily said. “I learned to deal with that a lot better.”

While working as the director of admissions at Ivy Tech Community College, he earned a master’s degree in human resources at Webster University and continued to attend hypnotism performances at IU Southeast and elsewhere.

Emily soon met Jim Wand, a professional hypnotist who had been performing at IU Southeast for almost 12 years.

Wand put Emily through a two year training program where he learned to develop his stage presence by shadowing Wand at his performances.

Five years ago he made a sudden career change and began performing his own show, Hypnosis by Randy.

His sister’s childhood death from cerebral palsy inspired him to regularly donate proceeds from his shows to the Crusade for Children and other charities.

“You reap what you sow, that’s the old theory,” he said. “I wanted to put [my talent] to work to help other people.”

Emily describes himself as quiet-natured in high school and attributes his strong stage presence and ability to read and understand people to his time spent as a social worker and counselor.

Now, he performs at corporate and holiday events, awards banquets, anniversary parties, fundraisers and churches.

The March 13 show was his fifth year performing at the Corydon Jamboree and the third consecutive year with a sold-out crowd.

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