

The State News

Students placed under hypnotist's trance Friday

By Casey Holland | Published 01/12/14 8:42pm



As [Incredible Boris](#) slowly counted to 10, students gathered in the [International Center](#) Friday night began to feel their muscles slacken and their eyelids droop.

Incredible Boris, or Boris Cherniak, randomly selected 11 volunteers. Those who fell under the power of the trance were told to imagine they were holding a balloon.

The two-hour show was filled with moments of hypnotic hilarity as Cherniak performed. He took his volunteers on a mental trip down the Colorado River and erased the number six from one student's mind. Cherniak even convinced two strangers they were long-lost lovers, causing them to run to each other in slow-motion.

Audience members threw their heads back with laughter throughout the show as they watched Cherniak's performance.

The comedy hypnotist made his volunteers believe the impossible. In their minds, the napkins he handed them really were \$100 bills and a pesky invisible bird really did fly inches from their heads.

"It was like you knew what was happening to you, but you didn't care," said human biology and nutritional sciences junior Kory Stamper.

Stamper was one of the long-lost lovers, and also was convinced that he couldn't pronounce the number six. He instead hissed the number like a snake.

The students who joined Cherniak on stage were not behaving as mindless zombies. His techniques are more suggestive than they are forceful, with psychology taking a greater role over "mind control," Cherniak said.

"People didn't understand before (present day) that hypnotism is a science and took it as occult," he said. "This is something I've studied at length. It's the science of how the brain works."

The Toronto resident's philosophy revolves around mixing psychology and technology and he treats the mind like a computer.

As Boris counted down to one when his performance concluded, his volunteers left their trance-like state, at first only remembering pieces of the performance. He told them to "let it sink in" that they remembered their antics during the show, and as they remembered, they laughed.

"The most important part of what I do is make people laugh and forget whatever is troubling them," Cherniak said. "Students forget the big exam, forget problems with their boyfriend or girlfriend and are instead living for the moment. They escape into my world."

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