



Terry Stokes

and

Michael
Johns

—by Laura Ruby

Hypnotists Gone Wild!

HYPNOSIS GONE WILD!

is a perfect description for comedian/hypnotists Terry Stokes' and Michael Johns' Vegas show. Your jaw will drop (just like it may have years ago when you very first, naively had a glimpse of one of the Girls Gone Wild-video advertisements.) You will find yourself saying: "No way—he's gonna actually do it!" The hilarious, adult fun can be seen by both comedian hypnotists as they share their venue and perform individually on separate nights. Their comedic style is very different, which makes it fun to go a second time, not only to get a chance to see both performers, but you'll also see a whole new gang of participants. Maybe you, yourself, will decide to join the hypnosis hilarity and jump up on stage and become a star in the show.

SLV found out some interesting background history, while interviewing these two hilarious showmen.

SLV: How did you begin performing as a live, on-stage hypnotist?

Terry: Well, I've always been doing stand-up (comedy). And one night I saw a hypnotist perform, and I thought to myself, "Now—that's what I want to do." So I completely changed my major at college. I was (previously) in Business Management.

SLV: Were you able to finish at that same college?

Terry: Yes—I just completely changed courses, and afterwards practiced some Psychotherapy.

SLV: Can you tell me about your very first hypnosis performance?

Terry: Yes—it was in an Apartment Complex, and there were only about 25 people. I was so nervous that the entire crowd could hear my knees knocking. So when I took a break, my wife said, "You're so foolish. You can hypnotize all of these people, and yet you don't know how to use it on yourself. So I gave myself a simple post-hypnotic suggestion, and told myself that whenever I would touch the microphone I would be put in the mind frame to relax. I went back out and finished the performance and received a Standing-O. I've continued to use that over the past 30 years. When I was on a television program, they pinned the microphone to my lapel and I began the show stammering, and I realized, "Oh, I forgot to touch the (hand-held) microphone." So I did, and started taping the show again, completely relaxed. I use it before I do all interviews, also. And it always puts me at ease.

SLV: Have you ever been hypnotized by someone else?

Terry: Yes—many times. I was taught many years ago by the man that first taught me hypnosis, that you if you're going to perform a hypnosis show—you've got to get off the

stage and go into the audience. That is where you're going to learn. He taught me that first you must have empathy for all of the people in your audience. When there's a hypnotist in town or when I travel, and I'll be in Florida next week, I'll go see a show, and I'll participate in the audience.

SLV: You'll allow yourself to be hypnotized over and over again?

Terry: Oh, yes—all the time. That way you learn what it's like to be a part of the audience, and I learn from it each time.

SLV: I have never been hypnotized, and for all the readers who haven't, can you explain what you experience when you're "under?"

Terry: Well, you say you've never been hypnotized before, but you have—many times. When you've been on the freeway driving in your car on your way home—and you somehow made it back home, but you don't remember taking those turns. Your body has been in a relaxed state—it knew which turns to make (without you consciously doing it). When you are deeply involved in watching a movie, sitting on your couch—you are in such a relaxed state—that someone may come in, ask you a question, and you answer them clearly.

After the movie is over—you may say, “Did you ask me something?” Some people may call that marriage.

SLV: (laughter)

Terry: But that’s hypnotized.

SLV: Do you have any extra sensitive abilities or intuition, or do your abilities lie more in show business, comedy, entertainment...?

Terry: Show business—comedy.

SLV: What do you like to do on your day off—I heard you like boating on Lake Mead.

Terry: Oh yes—I love it. I enjoy waking up and seeing the sun rise. **SLV**

*** After 15-minutes, Michael phones me next. ***

SLV: After high school you joined the Army. Was it difficult to suppress your comedic personality during your military years?

Michael: You know, I was always in a lot of trouble. I was never the kind of guy who knew when to keep his mouth shut. I did a lot of push-ups. When I got out, my upper body, I was pretty ripped.

SLV: (laughter) When did you decide that you wanted to be a hypnotist?

Michael: I was actually doing stand-up. When I was in the army, in Georgia, they had a little comedy club in Columbus, and I would go do Open-Mic there. And when I had a little time off I would go do Open-Mic in Atlanta, too. And then one night, I got hypnotized on stage—and I was just going up to help the guy out. I didn’t think it would really work. But he was a nice guy, and I figured I’d just help him out, and at least just fill a chair for him—because nobody was getting up there. And the next thing I know—it’s an hour and a half later—I’m opening my eyes—and I was the star of the show. So after that, I said, “I have to learn how to do this.”

SLV: Did you wonder afterwards, if you did anything embarrassing?

Michael: I don’t get embarrassed easily, but I did a lot of things that I would not ordinarily do. In my show, we step over the line of good taste a lot—but I don’t think anybody has anything they need to be humiliated about. If you have a good sense of humor, you’re gonna really enjoy being a part of the show.

SLV: What method did you use to educate yourself about hypnosis?

Michael: I went to Miami, Florida and I learned from a guy there who’s name is Gerald Kine, and he is probably one of the top Hypnotherapists on the planet—doing this for 40 to 50 years. He’s made some incredible discoveries and breakthroughs. So I took what he taught me and I applied it to the stage. With the comedy background, it was a natural progression.

SLV: Do you have any extra sensitive abilities, or just great showmanship?

Michael: It’s the comedy and show—I love the “performance,”—and I love the challenge. You never know the kind of people you’re gonna get on stage—and you don’t know what’s going to happen. It’s always new—it’s always fresh.

SLV: That must make some difficult nights for you.

Michael: Some nights you get an audience that doesn’t realize that it’s an audience participation show, and that they need to get involved. We take what we get on stage. We make a show out of it. We never use plants or skills. We’ve never done that—and we never will—and quite frankly, that’s cheating.

SLV: The Adult-Rated comedy in your show—in particular—makes it uniquely hilarious. What are some of your comedic influences?

Michael: I love all different kinds of comedians. I don’t care if it’s dirty, if it’s clean... I love Seinfeld, a guy named Brian Regan—he’s absolutely brilliant. I also love guys like Carlin. And another guy, he’s dead now, he’s probably the greatest comedian who ever lived. His name was Bill Hicks. He would come on stage and tell you why you were stupid, how stupid you were, and you’d sit there and laugh at, ‘cause you’d say, “Yeah, this guy is right.” He was so funny. He was probably one of my biggest influences.

SLV: Do you have a favorite personality-style for a volunteer?

Michael: I would like to say the really, high-energy, fun people, but sometimes you get people on stage that are really timid and really quiet until you get them hypnotized—and they’re just insane.

SLV: I noticed the female volunteers seemed to really lose their inhibitions. They had like a “come-hither” look on their face. And then the male volunteers went to this innocent, trusting, child-like look.

Michael: Exactly—you never know. And other nights it’s exactly the opposite. (laughter)

SLV: Have you ever used your hypnosis techniques on a girlfriend, for your personal pleasure?

Michael: You know what? I think I can’t incriminate myself and answer that.

SLV: I had to ask...

Michael: No—I’ve never actually done that. Maybe I need to give that a try.

SLV: What do you like to do on your day or night off work?

Michael: I’m a single guy—kind of private. I’m waiting for Paris Hilton to come around. (laughter) I love the Vegas lifestyle. I like the

restaurants, movies. I’m a sports car fanatic. I like to hit the interstate and drive as fast as I can... **SLV**

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