

# Writers hypnotized

## Nonbelievers fly across the universe

by CATHY SAATHOFF

**Battalion Staff**  
I flew the Millennium Falcon. Star Wars heroes Han Solo, Chewbacca and I took off from the Texas A&M Research and Extension Center on Hwy. 21. When we were out in the stars, Solo touched my arm and told me to take the controls.

For a few brief seconds I sailed across the universe in complete command of the ship. I took the ship higher, then looped off to the side. Solo told me I was doing fine. Then he said he must take over, that it was time to go down.

Regretfully, I released my tight grip on the controls and let him take over. But my trip wasn't over.

After coming back down to Earth, I went backwards in time to my first grade classroom. I saw the old gang, wrote my name for the teacher, then came back to the present.

The entire trip took about 30 minutes, and my tour guide was a graduate of the Investigative and Forensic Hypnosis Institute sponsored by the Law Enforcement and Security Training division of the Texas Engineering Extension Service.

George Perkins, detective captain of Terrebonne Parish Sheriff's Office in Houma, La., hypnotized me, and while I was hypnotized I did all of these bizarre things.

Perkins also helped in the hypnosis of Uschi Michel-Howell, another Battalion reporter. Jimmy Jones, police chief of Hedwig Village in Houston, launched Michel-Howell on a trip that took her across the ocean on "a big fluffy white cloud" to her hometown of Frankfurt, Germany.

While in Frankfurt, Michel-Howell ran into old schoolmates Ralph and Bettina, and was almost carried away by a bunch of balloons tied to her wrist.

That's what Perkins told her, anyway, and although Michel-Howell's arm levitated from the arm of her chair, she said she is still skeptical about hypnosis.

We were both aware of what was going on while we

were hypnotized. It became easier to follow the hypnotist's suggestions and answer questions as we relaxed.

Jones said, "Hypnosis is not like on TV, where people will do apparently anything they are told." They will not do anything that is against their beliefs, but as I found out, some people do strange things like driving spaceships.

We were hypnotized in a tiny room normally used for polygraph tests. Eight such rooms face each other on either side of a hall lined with two-way mirrors. Michel-Howell made sure I stayed in the room while she went under.

Before hypnotizing me, Perkins told me hypnosis is not witchcraft, as many people think.

"It's like being halfway awake in the morning or at night, just before you fall deeply asleep," Jones said. "We can only show you the way, you have to be willing to go."

Perkins compared the mind to a long hallway, lined on both sides with filing cabinets. Everything that has ever happened to a person is stored somewhere in these files, he said, and hypnosis is a means of finding out what is in these files.

When Perkins took me down my mind's hall, part of my mind kept saying "This isn't gonna work." It piped down when my head started to drop forward. And when the entire scene looked just like it did in the movie, my mind said I could see it clearly only because I had seen *The Empire Strikes Back*.

But when my hands lifted to take the controls from Han Solo, my brain once again was amazed. And my voice, telling Perkins that I saw "lights," seemed to come from someone else.

But I must have done a good job, because when I came out of hypnosis, officers who had been watching through the glass said I was the best space-ship driver they had ever seen.

Perkins said Michel-Howell and I were good hypnotic subjects and will go under easily the next time we are hypnotized. He also said the next hypnosis course is in September, and I plan to go back to find out.

## Won't go back to drugs and alcohol

# Pryor says rum, not ether, caused fire

United Press International  
LOS ANGELES — Comedian Richard Pryor said he wasn't using drugs but was drinking Jamaican rum when flames engulfed him in a near-fatal "stupid" accident June 9.

Pryor is not going back to drugs or alcohol, he told Barbara Walters in an interview televised Tuesday but taped July 24 after his release from the hospital.

"Everybody gets wise, don't you think? A fool stays the same. No, I don't think I'll even drink. "I'm 40 years old and I've burned up," he said. "So I'm through being hip."

The comedian denied he had been "freebasing," a process involving the use of ether to purify cocaine.

"You can't blow up yourself freebasing," he said. Critically burned from waist to face, Pryor was given a "one in three" survival chance when he arrived at Sherman Oaks Community Hospital.

He called the accident "stupid."

"Me and my partner had been drinking this Jamaican rum — it's called 'overproof' — and we were drinking and it spilled, and he went to get a towel out of the bedroom to wipe it up, and I lit a cigarette and the next thing I know I was on fire," Pryor said.

Pryor said he and his friend were cleaning "every (cigarette) lighter in the house" and refilling them at the time of the accident. "So we got all the lighters, we're filling up — shish, shish — and I don't know what happened."

Pryor said the "friend of mine from Jamaica" — never identified — and his Aunt Dee ran into the room and his aunt threw a blanket over his head to put out the fire.

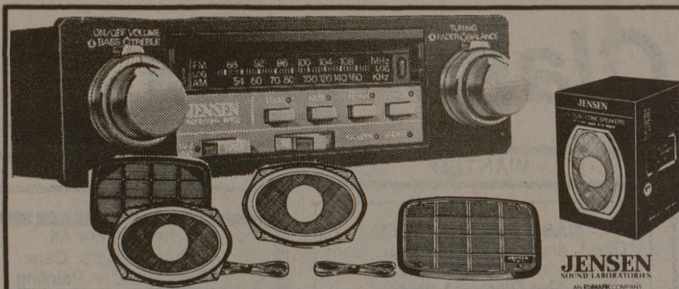
Lt. Dan Cooke of the Los Angeles Police Department said police were told Pryor's aunt was the only other person in the house. He also said Pryor told several people at the time of the accident he was freebasing cocaine and it exploded.

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# New investigative procedure

## A&M police learn hypnosis

by CATHY SAATHOFF

**Battalion Staff**  
The use of hypnosis as a law enforcement tool has been around for about a decade.

At the end of July, 17 law enforcement officers from Texas and Louisiana learned hypnosis techniques at an investigative and forensic hypnosis course offered by the Law Enforcement and Security Training Division of the Texas Engineering Extension Service.

Michael Bouch, director of the hypnosis institute, said, "They're trained in theory and in practice."

The four-day course was conducted by Bouch and his staff. Bouch, who is director of the Therapeutic and Forensic Hypnosis Institute in Houston, said he has been teaching hypnosis in Texas for about three years.

"We've put on two seminars at A&M," Bouch said.

Texas A&M Police Chief Russ McDonald is a graduate of the first course, which was completed about two weeks ago.

"I think it's the best school I've been to," McDonald said. "I'm looking forward to using it."

Detective Ken Nicolas of the University Police also attended the course.

"We haven't had a case yet," Nicolas said. "The Chief and I are sitting on the edge of our seats waiting for one."

Bobby Austin, associate training specialist for the division, said, "The course is designed to provide a comprehensive program of both theory and practice. Graduates should be able to apply their new skills upon return to their agencies."

"It helps victims to recall certain important things relating to an experience they have had," Austin said.

It is especially helpful in trauma cases like rape, McDonald said.

Witnesses who agree to be hypnotized are asked to recall details of the crime, McDonald said, and may describe the suspect to a composite drawer, who will make a sketch from the description.

McDonald said hypnosis was used in the LeShan Muhlinghaus homicide case last year. The College Station Police Department brought in a Texas Ranger for this, he said.

A composite of a suspect was drawn from descriptions given by people who thought they had seen someone suspicious. McDonald said after the composite was published hundreds of people called in saying they knew the man. The leads proved fruitless, McDonald said.

Texas A&M doesn't have a composite drawer yet, but McDonald said he will probably send one of the officers to school to learn this soon.

College Station has an artist, he said, and Texas A&M sometimes uses his services.

The University does have a Smith & Wesson Identikit, which is another identification tool.

"The people that are being hypnotized want to help you," McDonald said. Witnesses cannot be hypnotized against their will. People who are younger than 5 years of age, have an IQ lower than 70 or are senile usually can't be hypnotized because they can't concentrate well enough.

However, people who have been in prison make good subjects because they have vivid imaginations, McDonald said.

McDonald said anytime a witness is hypnotized, the interview must be tape recorded, and video recorded if possible, to make sure the witness is not being led.

"You don't lead them," McDonald said. "You don't try to put any thoughts in their mind." For example, McDonald said the interviewer would not ask if a suspect wore glasses, but would ask if there are any distinguishing things about the suspect.

Bouch said there are three means of inducing hypnosis: eye fixation, pressure and confusion. Bouch said he tries to stay away from eye fixation because of its association with pocket watches in old movies.

Subjects can be hypnotized through eye fixation with something as simple as a thumbtack on the ceiling, he said.

"To get you in a hypnotic trance we have to occupy the analytical side of your mind with a difficult task," said George Perkins, detective captain, Terrebonne Parish Sheriff's

Office, Houma, La. "Then we can work on the other side of the brain."

Dr. Cliff Sherry of the Biology Department at Texas A&M said the explanation given to the officers is "not a totally satisfying explanation."

Dr. Robert Reilley of the Educational Psychology Department at Texas A&M, said this explanation is one of many.

"There are a lot of different theories about what happens when a person is hypnotized," Reilley said. "I think that's one theory." Students of the course practiced their theory by taking volunteers back in time or having them experience adventures.

The students were taught to occupy the left side of the brain by having the subject count down from 397 by three's. Meanwhile, the hypnotist counts down from 100, telling the subject to relax as he counts.

The hypnotist's voice gets softer and softer, and as the practice subject is led through the adventure of his choice, he is told repeatedly how beautiful everything is, and what a good hypnotic subject he is.

The subject cannot be made to do anything he does not want to do, Perkins said.



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