

Whether he is empowered or fake, all types of people seek his prophecies for he is the...



Photo by Steve Dyles

By CHRIS DOLGENOW  
Of the Emerald

With the boom of psychic appeal comes the restraining hand of reason that carries a yardstick by which to measure the world.

The issue is not whether psychics "work," but why more and more people turn to them. Believers include not only easily beguiled little-old-ladies and rabbit's foot clutchers, but bank presidents, university deans, sheiks, adolescents and yacht brokers.

A successful psychic and an open-minded skeptic reviewed each others experience over fetucinni and talked of those factors that draw people to mysticism.

Jamil makes his headquarters in Eugene, but attracts most of his 1,000 clients from around the world. No crystal-ball gazing swami, Jamil conducts business over anisettes and good cigars. On first glance he seems prone to wallow in luxury rather than to probe the depths of the psychic world.

Merging business with mysticism proved successful. His 150-200 daily calls and walls papered in praise from clients testify to his ability, he says. In step with the merchant who bares his goods, Jamil advertises his services:

#### PSYCHIC

Can bewitch (mesmerize) loved ones, others to your bidding.  
Write requests. Donations appreciated.

Jamil mystifies many, but the University's Professor of Psychology Ray Hyman finds his appeal less of a mystery.

Hyman, who offers classes in pseudo-psychology as well as experimental psychology, worked his way through college performing magic and palmistry. Those shows are behind him, but he still uses his experience and research to debunk the image of palmists, magicians and the like. Hyman maintains a careful balance between a calculated measure of the world and what might be "a possibility."

No scholar of psychic study, Jamil clinches deals and triggers romances (or retriggers them) to "make money and help people." The hard-luck stories, fantasies and ambitions brought to him by clients let Jamil know why he's needed.

Increased science and technology fail to solve problems, and people seek an alternative, Jamil says. Needs borne of fear, frustration and desperation breed a need for affirmation. And Jamil, a psychic, feels he eases the burden of a too-logical world.

If you apply the disciplines of logic to almost anything, Jamil says, it becomes "absurd." "Look at sex," he says. "People do it over and over again; it just isn't logical." Neither is love. "Matters of the heart

don't make a lot of sense." Logic, like science he believes, "doesn't fill man's needs."

He tells of a middle-aged woman who had been married since adolescence. One night when she was ill, her husband got drunk. "She had never seen him drunk before, in all those years," says Jamil. Tempers rose on both sides and the woman kicked her husband out. And she came to Jamil to get him back.

"What are you going to tell her? That her happiness shouldn't depend on another person? This woman had never even been out with another man in her entire life...she loved him."

Through his support and meditation, Jamil says he brought them back together.

Hyman: That is something that comes up over and over again... Its true that overpopulation, the ghettos and what have you, are a function of increased technology. But if we could go back or get rid of science, I'd suspect we'd want to think twice before we got rid of it. Also, to get rid of the problems created by science, we need to use science.

Jamil: I'm not anti-science.

Hyman: Right. I think you're right that people believe that science and technology... and rationality created all the problems. There is a big trend toward anti-science, even among college students. But many of them haven't had science at all, and don't know what they're rejecting.

But college students are not the greatest seekers of psychics. Hyman says those who would shun traditional establishments, such as psychiatrists, for help, do business with psychics.

Granted, psychics serve a useful purpose, he says. Yet there is "something sick with a society" that cannot cope with its members openly.

Jamil disagrees. An absence of the "middle class" in his customers stems from stodginess, not stability, he says.

"They (the middle class) don't have the creativity, faith or drive to get out of the middle class. Bank managers are the worst. Those poor slob wonder why they're never going to be anything but bank managers, while the guy who started the bank, who wheeled and dealed, now runs a chain of banks." The top executive comes to him, Jamil says: the "movers and the shakers."

A wheeler-dealer himself, Jamil also serves the "welfare guy with nothing to lose and everything to gain" to step up in the world. He "accepts donations" in lieu of charging a fee, and refunds unsatisfied customers, which encourages the money-conscious to patronize him.

This guarantee enhances his credibility as a frustrated or enterprising person hesi-

tates to ask the aid of a professional whose talents he doubts. In turn for their faith, Jamil says he responds on two levels. He returns that confidence; from there he "makes things happen."

Jamil: I meditate on it and try to do what's right. (He loves to meditate in the bathtub).

Hyman: You mean you visualize it actually happening?

Jamil: Yeah. It's hard to explain... my work is very specific. And I'm very successful at it. I only fail about 10 to 15 percent of the time.

Hyman: You keep records on that?

Jamil: I guess the best record I have is my refund record.

Hyman: You were saying that if you were a fraud or really didn't have powers, you'd be out of business. That doesn't necessarily follow. A lot of people are going to think they're being helped anyway... and aren't going to demand their money back.

Jamil: I just wonder when you've been put through the mill as many times as I have and they can't nail you...

Hyman: How would they nail you? You have to have evidence pro and con.

Jamil: I work with a lot of rich, powerful people and they aren't going to mess around with a fraud.

Hyman: How can you be sure you're the one who makes it happen?

Hyman: Now what would be one of the more miraculous things?

Jamil: Let's put it this way. Nobody's more hard-nosed than a businessman.

Hyman: In some ways they're pretty sharp, and other ways they can really be suckers.

Jamil: Are you trying to say I sucker people?

Hyman: What? No. No, I'm not. But since you raised the question concerning businessmen...

Hyman doesn't view Jamil's success as necessarily proof of his power. He thinks Jamil is proof of positive thinking.

Insecurity can manifest itself in many ways, he says, and if Jamil can inspire confidence in his clients, he succeeds.

"If people believe Jamil is behind them," Hyman says, that gives them the confidence to behave a certain way and actually carry the deal through.

And Jamil says he always admits that. "When I help people, I use everything I've got. I'm a pragmatist. And people don't care. They just want their boyfriend back."

Yet people who seek supernatural means to mend their love lives might have more faith in Jamil if he gazed through a crystal ball and murmured incantations. Image aids any success, and Hyman says those props are employed to lend an aura of mystique.

Jamil sheds aura for action. "When you've got the power, you don't need the

props," he says. "I'm just myself and people believe in me."

Telling people what they want to hear is the secret of psychic success, Hyman says. In an article he published about fortune tellers and palmists, Hyman points to numerous tests where people believe more readily what they want to be true about themselves than the actual truth.

But while that might be true of other psychics, Jamil maintains it is not true of him. "I tell people like it is; I scream and yell at them if they need it... I've blown a lot of money that way," he says a bit ruefully "but people respect you for that."

A sheik from the Far East asked Jamil to literally enlarge his head. "I told him he was too fat; if he lost weight, his head would be in proportion to his body."

Jamil refuses to comply with the requests from "about 100 girls" who want to marry Elton John. "It wouldn't be moral... or ethical" for him to do that, he says.

"My image hasn't changed since I received my gift," says Jamil. He's always exuded the "so-called wrong" image, whether as a psychic or social worker. "But I'm successful at everything I do," he says. Prior to his psychic debut, Jamil worked as a social-worker and was in the Navy.

"I suppose you have to draw a balance between establishing credibility and telling people what they want to hear," says Hyman. But in one sense, he adds, "You're telling them what they want to hear by bringing about what they want to happen."

"That's exactly what I do," agrees Jamil. Jamil: I'm not an expert on psychic phenomena. All I know is what I do and I'm very successful. You'll never find me being defensive at all.

Hyman: My position would be that I suspect that someone like you really does help your clients, but I really have to be skeptical about people having powers. I believe that people can believe in their power without there being power. There is no way of checking whether you have power or not. Jamil: I really don't care if people believe in me or not. And why should I? I have much more work than I can handle. I make a lot of money and I don't make it by telling people what they want to hear. Just the opposite.

In fact, Jamil says he's probably an even bigger skeptic than Hyman. His education imposed logic. "What I think intellectually is different than what I do psychically." He uses his gift to make money and help people, but doesn't try to rationalize how it works.

Whether or not Jamil or any other psychic possesses power fades in importance when compared to the enormity of the faith his believers place in him. If some lost soul leaves Jamil's office with the confidence he once lacked, maybe there's magic in that.