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## Mentalists use supernatural to entertain

**Scott Robertson**  
Senior Reporter

Supernatural powers such as mind reading, telepathy, telekinesis, and extraordinary abilities of intuition don't usually impress me. The people demonstrating these skills are usually fraudulent con-artists whose real powers are knowing how to contrive a scam that can fool their unsuspecting audience. The mentalist duo of Tess and Jeff Evason who performed at West Hall on Saturday seemed like the real deal, however.

The most amazing feat that I observed that night involved mathematical calculations. In the opening mental warm-up, Tess put on a blindfold to shut out any visual cues from the surrounding crowd. Jeff then asked members of the audience for six unique numbers between 0 and 9, and put them together to create two three-digit numbers. Despite her blocked out visual sense, Tess quickly computed the sum of all the numbers and identified each digit without error. Later Jeff asked an audience member for a number between 50 and 100. After she chose 94, another audience member started counting the time. In less than 25 seconds, Tess was accurately able to construct a four-by-four grid of numbers whose columns, rows, and diagonals all summed to 94.

For audience members who are largely unimpressed with phenomenal mathematical abilities, the Evasons' act also showcased unusual powers of physical strength, telekinesis, and object psychometry. One audience member who can bench 200 pounds was easily able to lift light-weight Tess when asked. He later struggled mightily, however, when Tess appeared to mentally make herself heavier. In another demonstration of telekinesis, four audience members tried to lift someone off a chair with only their fingertips. It seemed silly at first to think that people could ever do that, but they successfully lifted her after Tess helped them focus their mental intuition.

If Tess and Jeff could use all of these powers, you might be wondering why they can't just predict the Powerball Lottery and retire. Apparently they can only use their abilities in human-focused connections. In a twist on the lottery, they told random audience members that they had won a

lottery and asked for an amount and what they would buy with their earnings. After they chose \$499,321 and a boat 40 feet long with 300 horsepower, Tess opened a sealed letter she had written nine hours earlier. It detailed how they would play a lottery game, and audience members would want \$499,321 and a 40-foot boat with 300 horsepower. She was right on the money.

The most bizarre act simulated a ouija board where the Evasons used a wooden block lying on a bottle and two school slates taken from an old schoolhouse. An audience member was asked for the name of someone who she loved that had passed away, and then sat in a chair holding the slates with chalk in between, and tied together by a rubber band. Suddenly, to the audience's surprise, a draft knocked the bottle over. Upon close inspection of the slates, the previously empty surfaces now eerily displayed the words Douglas Spoonmaker, the audience member's grandfather who had passed away five years ago.

I'll admit that there could be some real-world explanation for what I saw that night. The Evasons could have used wireless devices to communicate, a hidden calculator to compute the numbers, and invisible wires to manipulate objects. That seems unlikely though, because the mentalist duo wouldn't offer \$25,000 to anyone who can discover any deception in their act if they weren't confident that no one would find anything.

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