



---SITE INDEX--- + Go

Resources: Fun Book | Help Book | W

ADVERTISEM



3:57 PM  
Islip: 79°

Clear

Forecast | Radar

Inside  
FEATURES

- Books
- Comics
- Crossword
- Faith
- Food
- Home & Gardens
- Horoscopes
- Long Island Life
- Queens Life
- Travel
- Columnists
- Print Edition

TRAFFIC

NEWS

- Long Island
- New York City

SPORTS

BUSINESS

OPINION

ENTERTAINMENT

CLASSIFIEDS

ARCHIVES

SEARCH

Go



Today's Newsday

A REGULAR GENIUS

# The Smart Guy

## Chris Langan is not your average genius

By Dennis Brabham

August 21, 2001

IF YOU'VE GOTTEN out of line at any number of eastern Long Island bars or nightclubs in the past two decades, there's a good chance that Chris Langan was the guy tossing you through the doors. Unlike most bouncers, however, Langan probably could calculate your exact trajectory and total air displacement before you even hit the ground.

That's because Langan is a certified genius, tested as having an IQ of at least 195 and quite possibly much higher. The adult average IQ is 100. The "genius" level of 175 occurs in 1 in a million people; an IQ that tests in the range of 195 or higher occurs 1 in several billion. That impressive score could very well make him the smartest man in America and quite possibly the world.

This distinction has earned him appearances on ABC's "20/20" and in the pages of the London Times and Esquire. You'd find someone of Langan's intellect holed up in a lab somewhere or in front of a group of students, possibly teaching physics. Instead, you're far more likely to encounter him stationed at a door, checking IDs, or clad in a leather jacket as he tools around on his Harley-Davidson.

Upon meeting the 40-something Langan at the Westhampton Grill, a bar where he works, it's clear that his burly, 6-foot, 250-pound frame is up to the physical task of bouncing. Within moments of speaking to him about particle physics, and about the Cognitive Theoretic Model of the Universe, his "theory of everything," it's just as clear that his amazing mental skills are being underutilized. Of course, there are few jobs that could actually push his intellect to the limit.

Unlikely as it is that Langan ended up in this line of work, it's no more unusual than any number of other jobs he's held. In addition to working the door at numerous nightclubs, Langan's also been a farmhand, a construction worker, a firefighter and a lifeguard; he's even been a horse whisperer and a cowboy. He has spent most of his life in a very blue-collar, working-man mode of existence. While other geniuses such as Albert Einstein and turn-of-the-century wunderkind

- Email this story
- Printer friendly format

On the Web

[Take an IQ Test: The Mensa Workout Think You're a Genius?](#)

Find out if you're a genius. Take the [Mensa Workout IQ test](#)--Come back and post your results.

Real world problems are harder because you are not always given the solution as multiple choice. Sometimes we don't know the solution until we know question. Puzzles are cute  
Submitted by: sps  
4:38 PM EDT, Aug 21, 2001

I scored 22 while smoking pot and drinking a beer - just like at St. John's.  
Submitted by: bmo  
4:30 PM EDT, Aug 21, 2001

[Read more comments or post your own Photos](#)

click here for



Home del

apartments.

See Your Apartment  
CLICK HERE



graphic design  
information technol  
web design



COMPLETE CLAS

SHOPS OF LI

FIND A BUSINESS OR ADDRESS

GOING BUSINESS WITH NEWSDAY

•How to Sub:

•How to Adv:

•About Us

•Contact Us

William Sidis spent time in office jobs and other fairly pedestrian careers, it's still nearly impossible to imagine either of them making a living by tossing unruly drunks.

Despite some interest from the "Guinness Book of Records" and a British show called "Record Breakers" in the '80s, Langan was able to live a pretty much anonymous, blue-collar existence until Esquire magazine decided to do a "Genius Issue" in 1999. When the magazine asked prominent members of the high-IQ community who should be interviewed, Langan's name consistently popped up.

After he was featured there, "20/20" came looking for him and wanted to verify his IQ. The results: He had broken the ceiling on the conventional IQ tests he was given; his intellect was immeasurable by ordinary standards.

Yet, rather than parlay his new fame into riches or status, Langan has taken it all in stride, barely letting it affect his everyday existence. He still works as a bouncer and still is the same old Chris that people have known for years.

Kevin McDonagh, who has worked with Langan for 20 years, including a current stint together at the Westhampton Grill, knew he was unique from day one. "The first thing I noticed besides his size was that he was the only bouncer I knew who ever showed up for his shift with books," McDonagh says. "And they were always on quantum physics or something else that most of us hadn't even heard of yet. Just from the way he talks, you can tell how intelligent he is, but he never plays it up. Around us, he's just one of the guys."

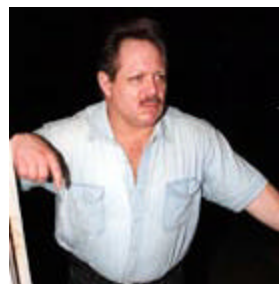
Early in life, Langan indeed seemed to be on the way to a lifetime spent in academic pursuits. He began speaking at 6 months, taught himself to read at 3, and was repeatedly skipped ahead in grade school.

From all indicators, it seemed he would end up doing something far more scholarly. But along with the advantages of his genius came the disadvantages of a rough childhood. Langan and his three siblings lived well below the poverty level. Their mother was cut off from her family, and Langan's father disappeared before he was born.

His brother Jeff recalls their struggle growing up. "It was rough. Impoverished would be the way to describe it." Yet he also notes the poverty didn't slow Chris' development. "As long as I can remember, he always got A's in school. I remember when we were little kids and he'd be reading adult books at 4 years old."

His mother remarried; Langan has few fond memories of his stepfather. "When I was a kid, I was conditioned against showing any signs of brilliance," Langan recalls. "My stepfather constantly asked me difficult questions, and when I'd give him correct answers to those questions, he'd bat me in the mouth or something of that nature to let me know he didn't appreciate a guy trying to be smarter than he was."

SCHOOL WAS NO HAVEN for the budding genius, either. Langan, whom teachers would praise for his college-level work, says he was picked on by peers -- not only because of his intellect, but because he was usually dressed in



Chris Langan's IQ is off-the-chart, but he's just a regular guy (Photo

by Doug Kuntz)

Aug 21, 2001

**Top Stories**

 [Clinton's Choice](#)

tattered clothing and showed signs of abuse.

"I'd go to gym class covered with welts and bruises, and you know, kids can be cruel. That was in addition to dressing like a ragamuffin -- I didn't have a pair of mated socks to my name, and the front of my hand-me-down tennis shoes were torn open. They'd see all that, and sometimes they'd come at me like a school of piranha. That's when I turned to the weights."

Langan began strength training when he was 12, immediately fell in love with the benefits of bodybuilding, and has worked out ever since. For a while in the late '90s, he was novelist Tom Wolfe's training partner at a gym in Southampton.

In addition to being one of the world's smartest men, he's also incredibly strong, and recently got the chance to show off his training methods and impressive physique in a Muscle and Fitness magazine profile. Most geniuses don't boast a 500-pound bench press, but that hardly surprises him.

"A lot of cerebral people don't have a grasp on the physical side of life," he says. "They're likely to be sheltered in one way or another. They also consider any time away from their intellectual labors to be time wasted. I find that ridiculous. Changing gears every now and then can do the mind a lot of good."

While Langan's newfound muscle helped end the abuse from schoolmates, his academic pursuits were thwarted. Even though the family moved more than a dozen times before Langan finished high school, he still managed to earn a full scholarship to Reed College in Portland, Ore. But several snafus concerning his financial aid status and a staggering bureaucracy made it impossible for Langan to finish his first year at Reed, and later interfered with his studies at Montana State University. He left, and never finished college.

"I had some bad experiences in high school and college which caused me to become totally disgusted with the intellectual mainstream," Langan says. "I became a regular guy, more or less, throughout my 20s."

That led him to a string of jobs, mostly hard labor, where he didn't have to exploit his genius at all. A call from an old girlfriend on Long Island led him to a job bouncing at a local bar more than 20 years ago, and he's been here ever since. But about a decade ago, he was overcome by feelings of emptiness and urgency that he couldn't dismiss. Langan started to feel as if he'd been squandering a precious gift.

"I began to experience feelings of 'time is running out,' and guilt over the fact that there was something I had to do that wasn't getting done. So I gradually worked myself back into an intellectual frame of mind, and started doing what was inside of me to do."

What was inside him was his grand theory of the cosmos, the Cognitive Theoretic Model of the Universe (or CTMU for short). Conveying it in layman's terms is no easy task. Although his theory about the relationship between theories and observations is revolutionary stuff, Langan is already finding some approval among the scientific community. Theoretical physicist and former NASA executive Robert N. Seitz recently corresponded with Langan and is impressed with his theory.

"If I've ever met anyone brighter than Chris, I don't know who it would be," Seitz says. "Every physicist is inundated with amateurs' 'Theories of Everything,' but Chris' CTMU is very, very different."

Langan feels that the CTMU is important because it adds to science an ethical component that may prove useful in dealing with such Orwellian issues as cloning and other forms of genetic engineering. "I think science is rapidly outstripping the sophistication of our ethical systems. I don't think we have any understanding of what constraints we should impose on science, if any. We need an overarching philosophy that provides us with a scientific theory of ethics that we can apply to some of these questions." He hopes to publish his theoretical applications of logic to science, theology and the nature of time in a book titled "Design for a Universe."

His usual workday (or night) consists of a late shift bouncing at the bar, followed by a brainstorming session at home sitting at his cramped desk until mid-morning, when he takes a nap to let his mind wander creatively. After awakening in the afternoon, he works a little more, maybe goes to the gym and then gets ready for another night shift at the bar. While it's hardly a normal workday, after 20 years of closing bars, he can't work any other way.

But once people have a chance to access his work, all the odd hours will have been worth it. To Langan, getting the book published will be a far more important distinction than his rep as the "world's smartest man."

"What's in a name, or a title? I may or may not be the world's smartest man, but certainly I do know this: My intellectual self-opinion has very little to do with my IQ scores. It has much more to do with my theories. DaVinci, Newton and Einstein did great things with their minds, but never took IQ tests. Can someone who merely scores well on an IQ test call himself the same kind of genius as they were? I don't think so. You've got to have great ideas."

Langan is seeking a publisher, but if necessary will publish the book himself through the Mega Foundation, a high-IQ organization that he and his girlfriend, Gina LoSasso, run from their small cottage in Westhampton. LoSasso is also a genius with an IQ that has tested as high as 182. She holds a PhD in clinical psychology with a specialty in neuro.psychology (the biological basis of behavior), and definitely found her match in the rough-hewn Langan.

"We met through the UltraHIQ world when Chris applied to join one of the high-IQ societies. He applied to me as the membership officer. He was very well known in the UltraHIQ circles, but I didn't realize that and spent a few weeks checking his credentials," she says with a smile. "He was very patient. We became friends very quickly because of our outspoken personality styles. We also enjoyed each other's sense of humor."

LoSasso says their relationship is "extremely enjoyable because we share many of the same interests and have different areas of expertise, so there's a lot to learn from each other. It's also very comfortable from a romantic perspective. Chris is very strong, but also sensitive and caring."

EVEN THOUGH Langan is hardly wealthy (he usually lives on less than \$10,000 a year), he has taken steps to help those who might be in the same boat he was all those years ago. One of those steps is the Mega Foundation (not to be confused with Mensa, which has a lower-IQ threshold than the near-genius requirement for Langan's organization).

In addition to being a meeting place for geniuses and interested onlookers, the Mega Foundation also is a nonprofit charitable corporation dedicated to the gifted population, especially the "forgotten gifted" who have been ignored or frustrated in their attempts to find an outlet for their ideas and opinions.

"As an alternative to academia, we ultimately intend to receive sizable grants and donate money and equipment to gifted people," Langan says. The foundation already has awarded small grants and launched several projects, he says, including "a research study on severely gifted adults, a music CD and an Internet radio station for the gifted, and a global UltraHIQ community that interacts through discussions, e-zines and forums on more than 500 linked Web pages."

Is being a super genius the only way to impress the Mega Foundation? Langan says the group is very particular, but "you can also get in if you're artistically or musically talented, or gifted in any other field of art or science. And if you have a theory that you believe is somehow new or dynamic, we may look at that as well."

Langan also is working with a new company called Virtual Logistix (based in a Southampton garage), where he is using his self-taught knowledge of artificial intelligence to help create, among other things, a smarter search engine for the Web.

One of his associates on the project, Joseph De Bellis, considers Langan's input invaluable. "The amazing thing with Chris is that he can absorb things so easily, and then just offer a tremendous amount of insight on a number of different levels. We call him the intellectual gauntlet here. If a concept can get by him, we know it's flawless."

If it seems Langan is spreading himself thin these days, he's at least taking better care of his brain and the body that houses it by putting safety first. "When I came out here in the '80s, I worked at a lot of the more prominent bars and beach clubs. Because I was sometimes the only bouncer on staff and had to face more than one guy at a time, I was taking a lot of hits -- walking out at the end of the night with bloody noses, black eyes, that kind of thing.

"But this place [the Westhampton Grill] is a genteel sports bar. It's rare that I have to actually throw someone out of here. As far as the bloodbath clubs that I used to work in are concerned, I won't have anything to do with those anymore. Since I became famous a year and a half ago," he says with a sarcastic smile, "I've had too much to lose to put myself through any more of that nonsense."

He may eventually give up the bouncing if the book and the foundation catch on, but don't expect to find him seeking riches on game shows such as "Jeopardy!" or "Who Wants to Be a Millionaire."

"A high IQ is more about problem solving than knowledge of trivia," he says. "A lot of people think, 'Wow, that person has a 200 IQ, so he'll do great on 'Jeopardy!' But it doesn't necessarily work out that way."

To contact Langan or the Mega Foundation try: [www.ctmu.org](http://www.ctmu.org) or [www.megafoundation.org](http://www.megafoundation.org).

*Dennis Brabham is a freelance writer.*

*Newsday, Inc.*

By visiting this site you agree to the terms of the Newsday.com [User Agreement](#). Read our [Privacy Policy](#).

Copyright © Newsday, Inc. Produced by Newsday Electronic Publishing.

[About Us](#) | [E-mail directory](#) | [How to Advertise](#)

Powered by Genuity