

Rip

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Salzman speaks about time studying kung fu

Nate Perez
Reporter

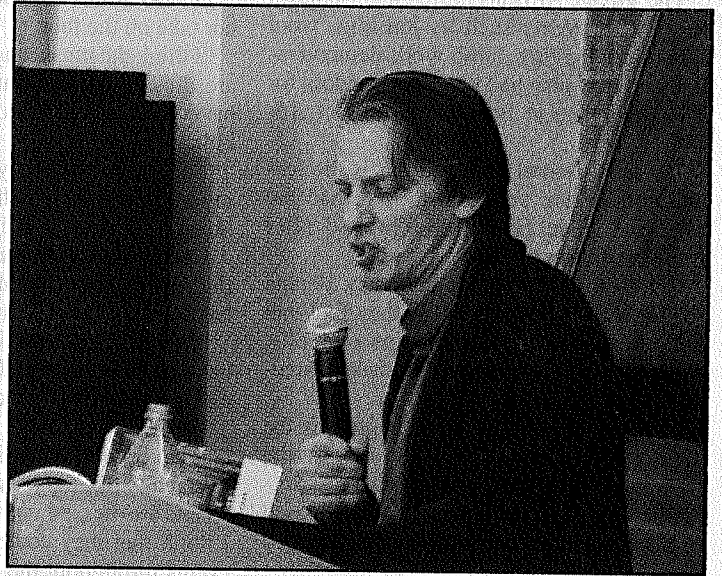
After graduating from Yale University, Mark Salzman was offered a job in China where he taught English at a medical school and studied kung fu for two years. He wrote his most notable title, "Iron and Silk," based on his experiences in China. Later, the memoir was turned into a film where Salzman played himself.

Growing up, Salzman never

intended on being a writer. He was obsessed with martial arts and Chinese culture. He wasn't fond of reading and he was an extremely awkward child, petite with a high voice. "I only read books that were assigned to me," said Salzman.

Salzman grew up in Greenwich, Conn. and attended Yale University where he originally intended on studying music, but changed his major to Chinese Language and Literature.

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MEGAN LUECKE / THE RIP

Mark Salzman gives a reading from his book "True Notebooks," telling of the young boys he helped in Central Juvenile Hall in the Fireside Room on Oct. 12.

SALZMAN: He was kung-fu writing

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Salzman gave three presentations on Oct. 11 at the Fireside Room. His presentation titled "Fall Down Seven Times, Get up Eight: Chapters from the Writing Life" discussed the challenges of writing and focused on three books: "Iron and Silk" described his time spent in China, "True Notebooks: A Writer's Year at Juvenile Hall" described his experiences on teaching young inmates writing skills and "Lying Awake," his novel about a nun experiencing spiritual visions due to a health issue where the nun must make a decision between a life-saving operation or her spiritual quest.

Salzman seemed particularly fond of his time spent at the juvenile detention center. Salzman said, "the grammar wasn't great, but the stories and the potential were phenomenal. That's what writing is to me." To this day, Salzman still keeps in contact with some of the boys that he encountered in the juvenile system.

Despite Salzman being an accomplished author,

he still faced many challenges writing his books. He resorted to unusual methods such as wearing foil while writing and going to an authors resort in order to finish his work.

All the seats in the Fireside room seemed taken and there were even people sitting on the floor in order to catch the event.

David Guerrero, 19, said, "I didn't know who he was. I saw the poster in the library and the description sounded interesting, so I decided to go."

Salzman was the Cerro Author chosen for 2011. Reference Librarian Marci Lingo organized the event. Each year, Bakersfield College receives spending money for events like these where speakers well suited for BC students give presentations.

The library purchased copies of Salzman's books to specifically be distributed to students for free on Sept. 14.

Salzman currently lives in Los Angeles with his wife and their two children. For now, Salzman has no plans to write another book.