

Larry King Live

Are Psychics for Real?

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(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP)

JOHN EDWARD, HOST, "CROSSING OVER": Somebody back here either passed in a war camp or somebody was killed during wartime.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Yes, I had an aunt that died in a concentration camp.

EDWARD: Do you know the story about her? Do you know that she sacrificed herself for other people?

(END VIDEO CLIP)

LARRY KING, HOST: Tonight, on his hit show he claims that he can talk to the other side. But are psychics for real? From New York, one of the hottest psychics in America, John Edward.

In Miami, Florida, Leon Jaroff, whose critical article on Edward just appeared in "TIME" magazine.

In Los Angeles, she says it runs in the family. Renowned psychic Sylvia Browne.

Also in L.A., bestselling author and self-described spiritual medium, James Van Praagh.

In Washington, he said they used psychics during investigations; former FBI hostage negotiator, Clint Van Zandt.

Also in D.C., Dale Graff, a scientist who says evidence shows psychics work.

And in Buffalo, New York, he investigates psychic claims, author, philosophy professor Paul Kurtz.

And in London, Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, coauthor of "The Psychic and the Rabbi. They're all ahead.

We begin with John Edward, subject of this article in "TIME" magazine, "Talking to the Dead," by Leon Jaroff. Mr. Jaroff will be with us in a little while. Here is a sample of John Edward at work.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP) EDWARD: Many, many times when a child passes, I have seen that it puts a rift in relationships in families and he is telling me to thank you, because I feel like you did everything you possibly could, to help you, deal with this and talk about it. And it is usually other way around. It is normally the woman, and the mother, who is the person who is having to drag the father into seeing a therapist or to come do something like this. And I feel I want to thank you for him, for being so open to the energy that he expelled from there to help you guys get through this.

(END VIDEO CLIP)

KING: That's from John Edward, a very successful show on the Sci-fi Network, which by the way, is going into syndication. Here is just a portion of the article by Jaroff in "TIME" magazine in which he says, writing about our guest: "It is a sophisticated form of the game 20 Questions, during which the subject, anxious to hear from dead, seldom realizes that he, not the medium or the departed, is supplying the answers."

That is from "TIME" magazine. John, were you upset over that article.

EDWARD: Was I upset? I don't think I was as upset as the people who work on the show and the people that actually have come to the show. I think it is insulting to the intelligence of the people in the audience, and I think it's insulting to the credibility and the integrity of everybody that works on show trying to do, and that's to help people understand that this is real.

KING: Well, the claim says there are a lot of setups in the audience. Questionnaires are filled out, bugging is used. They listen to people --they learn things in advance. When you have the thing wrong, they edit out things when you are wrong. All of that is wrong?

EDWARD: All of that is complete wrong -- completely wrong, and if the person had actually come to the show and maybe interviewed the people who work on the show, spend time with us at the show, maybe, interviewed me, asked me about what my process is or how this works, bring people on his own, for us to work with, you know, I mean I think that the show and myself would have been more than happy to do that for this guy or for "TIME" or for anybody. We just want to show that this is something that's real and credible.

Is the show edited? Absolutely. It's edited for time, not for content. Some of the readings that we do go on for anywhere from 45 minutes to an hour. It's only a half hour show. So, if you do the math, it's only logical that there are certain things that are not going to make it.

KING: He quotes a Michael O'Neil (ph), who attended one of your shows, and writes that O'Neil claims that his encounter on the show was edited and gave a false impression. Clips of him nodding "yes" spliced into the videotape about statements which he remembers disagreeing. Is O'Neil wrong? EDWARD: You know, I have to say that I would believe so, because I don't believe that they'd edit the show in that capacity. And again, I think that this is subjective to somebody's experience. And if somebody came to a show, and they were hoping to understand -- if they were hoping to hear from one person, and maybe they didn't, maybe they're disappointed, or maybe they just don't believe in it. I can't speak for, you know, Michael, I can only speak for myself.

KING: And there is no microphones in the audience where you picked up private conversations to learn things that you could use later?

EDWARD: Absolutely not. I mean, the information that comes through during any type of session -- or, actually, I should say this in a bigger, general way: the information that any medium brings through should be something that validates the person, and that is not something -- I mean, these are things that are, like, private personal things that people look at you sometimes and like, why would they say that? You know, something that's completely remote and obscure, but it's a validation of the person who is actually coming through.

It is not always about, you know, love and light, peace and new age fluffy stuff. It is to validate that the energy outside the physical body is still connected to the family that's here.

KING: How do you react to those magicians -- I guess Amazing Randy is the most famous of them -- who says that he can do what you do, and what he does is a trick?

EDWARD: I can't -- I can't. I mean, we're talking about somebody who has an adjective in front of their name. You know, it's like -- I can't even go there.

To me, this something that I do. It is my work. I do the best job I can. I say it all the time, I said here on your show -- I say it every time I step in front of an audience, I say it in my book, I say it on the show: sometimes I get it right, sometimes I get it wrong, but I get it.

And there is an interpretation to the process of what's coming through. Are there similarities in situations? Do people say, oh, it is a lot of this, and you get a lot of that? Well, yeah. How many letters are there in the alphabet? Twenty-six. How many words there are in the English language? A lot more than 26.

So, it is how those things come together that make the message for that person.

KING: Do you think, John, we'll be able to prove it?

EDWARD: Do I think -- you know, I think that to prove it, is a personal thing. It is like saying, prove God. If you have a belief system and you have faith, then there is nothing really more than that.

That's not to say that I don't think that skeptics and a skeptical mind-set is not positive, I think that you need to approach anything of this nature with a skeptical mind-set. This way, somebody is not taken advantage of.

And as long as validation is provided, that provides evidential information that there is a survival of consciousness.

KING: All right. We will take a break, come back, we'll meet our critics, the gentleman who wrote the article as well, other renowned psychics -- all -- by the way, all of these people have generally books out, except the "TIME" writer, and you can spot them at any bookstore. If we went through all the books, we would go out of our mind here.

But we will meet everybody right after this.

(BEGIN VIDEO CLIP, "CROSSING OVER")

EDWARD: Is there anybody in your family that has a nickname "pig"?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Pig?

EDWARD: Pig.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Pig?

EDWARD: Or someone known as, like, "Aunt Pig" or "Miss Piggy" or...

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Yes. Yes.

EDWARD: I said to myself there is no way this woman is going to acknowledge that. I said, there's like no way possible.

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: It's so funny!

EDWARD: Funny that you are acknowledging it, or funny that I actually got that?

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: Oh my God! My -- I can't even say it...

(LAUGHTER)

UNIDENTIFIED FEMALE: My nephew -- he used to call my mom "Miss Piggy."

(END VIDEO CLIP)

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: Now let's meet our entire panel. In New York, again, with us is John Edward. He'll be with us throughout the program, the subject of the article in "TIME."

Here in Los Angeles, Sylvia Browne, the world-renowned psychic who has appeared on many shows, including this one. Also in L.A. is James Van Praagh, the known spiritual medium who has also appeared on many shows, including this one.

In Buffalo, New York, is Paul Kurtz, professor of philosophy at the State University of New York in Buffalo. He publishes "The Skeptical Inquirer." In, I said Miami, I believe it's Boca Raton, Florida is Leon Jaroff, contributor to "TIME" magazine who wrote the critical article that we're discussing here tonight and in London is Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, co-author of "The Psychic and the Rabbi." The co-author, by the way, is the famed Uri Geller.

Let's start with Leon Jaroff, who wrote the article. First, one of the things, you never attended a show yourself nor did you call Mr. Edward.

LEON JAROFF, "TIME" MAGAZINE CONTRIBUTOR: Well, I tried to get in touch with people on the show, but I was told that John Edward does not respond to criticism. So, I did talk to the director of public relations of the show. By the way, Larry, I have written a book, too, but it's on a real subject, the human genome project. I thought I would throw that in.

KING: OK, and are you in Miami?

JAROFF: Yes, I'm in Miami now.

KING: OK, now, Leon, you're main complaint -- are you saying, in effect, that John Edward and people like him are frauds?

JAROFF: Yes. I'm will say two things. One, I think they're very good at what they do but I think that what they do is baloney.

KING: And it's baloney because?

JAROFF: It's baloney because they use a technique that had been known to magicians for years. It is called cold reading and then there are variations of it which are called warm reading and hot reading.

KING: This is like a preamble to getting the right answers to various things they...

JAROFF: That's correct, and if there is time, I can give you a couple of quick examples.

KING: Oh, there's is time. I'm going to have you do it in a while, but I want to get the reaction of the other panelists to your article. Sylvia, what did you make of it?

SYLVIA BROWNE, PSYCHIC: Well, I don't think he's done his homework very well because if, for instance, and I mean I never brag on myself, I found -- saved babies lives, found people that were dead, solved crimes, worked with FBI. How do you do that with cold reading when you don't even know the people? Work with police department, how is that possible?

KING: James, what did you think of the article? JAMES VAN PRAAGH, SPIRITUAL MEDIUM: I didn't think very much of the article. It just was exactly what most articles about this sort of thing have been, from a skeptical point of view.

KING: It's easier to be skeptical.

VAN PRAAGH: It's based on someone who never had a reading with John, who never experienced the mediumship of John, so how can you talk about something you know nothing about.

KING: So, you tend to discount the article as well. You don't believe in cold readings, warm reading...

BROWNE: Well, what does somebody do one day, just decide to be a skeptic. I mean, I don't understand that. What do they do one day?

VAN PRAAGH: Larry, you know, if I...

KING: You should encourage skeptics, shouldn't you?

VAN PRAAGH: But the thing is also if you understood the mechanics of mediumship, you'd understand that when a medium is working, they are very intent on listening to spirit. There is no way that they can recall what someone is saying or someone's face when they're not even listening or looking there. They're really listening intently to what they're getting from spirit.

KING: Rabbi, what did you make of the article?

RABBI SHMULEY BOTEACH, AUTHOR, "THE PSYCHIC AND THE RABBI": Well, Larry, I'm very skeptical of anyone who claims to speak to the dead for one main reason: It's like aliens and the belief extraterrestrial life. Why do they always land somewhere in the Mojave Desert with some hazy photograph? Why don't they land in Times Square where they can just -- we can verify their existence?

All of these readings seem to only revolve around the emotional. Don't feel bad, your relative loves you. Don't feel guilty. What about the intellectual? I want to hear just one of the psychics today tell me when is there going to be the next bus bombing in Tel Aviv so we can avoid going on that bus. Or how about the next earthquake in some Third World country so tens of thousands of people don't die? And if any of them, if John, if Sylvia, if James can just tell us even one of those things, they can refute all of the skeptics.

But I think that any kind of religion that focuses on the future and takes us away from the natural can be -- it's unhealthy.

KING: You wrote a book with Uri Geller. Do you believe Uri Geller is a magician or a psychic?

BOTEACH: Well, Uri is a very good friend. I think Uri has this power to sort of do things with material object like bending spoons, but I always say to him it's utterly immaterial to me, and our book really focuses around this conflict between traditional spirituality versus new age spirituality. I do believe he can do the things that he does because he's done them in my house 10,000 times and all of my guests now sort of sip soup through a straw because I have no spoons left. But that doesn't affect any -- he doesn't make prediction and he doesn't really exploit this power to make money off it or anything like that

KING: And you don't buy communication with the dead?

BOTEACH: I believe that religion is supposed to get us to be focused on this world, mastering relationships, being better parents, better husbands, more ethical in business, not telling us what happens in the afterlife. In fact, I even think that's quite dangerous.

I don't want to be pulled to the heavens. You know, we're supposed to be focused here on Earth. But I just issue this simple challenge to the psychics, just tell us anything that can help preserve life on this planet sometime in this program.

KING: John, do you ever foresee tomorrow?

EDWARD: Sometimes, some of the information comes through during a session that will actually help somebody avoid something, that could be health care related. It might actually help somebody -- it actually will bring a family together.

KING: That means it's preordained or you can change it?

EDWARD: No, I actually believe that God gave us free will. So, for me I think...

(CROSSTALK)

KING: Well, than what -- if you see something you can prevent, what did you see if you prevent it?

EDWARD: It's like the weather. You know, if somebody gives you the option of whether or not you want to take the umbrella, it's your choice. Do you want to get wet or not? To me, I feel like we are individuals. We have our individual belief systems. We either choose to have a belief system or we choose not to. It's a personal choice.

KING: Leon, does any of this at all amaze you when you hear some of the things that these people can do?

JAROFF: Well, yes, I'm constantly amazed. As a matter of fact, I was the first one in this country to demonstrate that Uri Geller was a fraud. Excuse me, rabbi, for saying that, but this was, what 20, 25 years ago, when he first came to this country. We did a story...

KING: But are you ever -- you're saying a fraud in that he was a magician, as Randy said...

JAROFF: Oh, yes, I think Uri Geller is a very skilled magician. I don't think he has any paranormal powers.

KING: Let me take a break, come back and pick up right where we are. I'll try to get everybody in on the discussion. I realize we have a lot of guests. We'll also, hopefully, check in with Paul Kurtz as well. Don't go away.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: Let's check with Paul Kurtz, now, in snowy Buffalo, New York. He is chairman of the Committee for the Scientific Investigation of Claims of the Paranormal and publisher of "The Skeptical Inquirer." What do you make of what you've heard so far, Paul?

PAUL KURTZ, "THE SKEPTICAL INQUIRER": Well, I think the claims are preposterous. The American public, I think, deserves to hear the other point of view. Now, I'm a skeptic. Namely, I have an open mind. If someone makes a claim, an extraordinary claim, then we ask for evidence of the facts.

And there are no facts to support this. What we're faced with are psychic sharks, like card sharks, sleight of hand, sleight of mind. They're using methods of deception to confuse poor people who have suffered death and are bereaved and I think this is not only false, but also immoral.

KING: Paul, what if John Edward or James could tell you something about someone in your family that's passed on?

KURTZ: Well, I think they either would do it by means of a cold reading. Namely, in an open area they would go fishing for information and then hit on something or by a hot reading, as Leon Jaroff mentioned. Namely, they do try to find information about people who come to them and then give...

KING: I mean, what if they could do it right now?

KURTZ: Do it right now? Well, they may have looked me up in "Who's Who," but go right ahead. Let's try it.

KING: So, whatever they said wouldn't impress you. If they said your grandfather's name was Phil and he died of a hemorrhage, that wouldn't impress you because they could have read that somewhere?

KURTZ: Well, if it's very specific. Usually, it's general. If it's specific, it's because they did some study before.

VAN PRAAGH: Larry, I want to say that it's wonderful, these people, because number one, his mind is already made up, OK. And also, this goes along with the other absurdities from his group. Michael Shermer (ph) once said in (UNINTELLIGIBLE) that I actually had a computer system wired to every single home in the United States. So, I thought that's pretty good. CIA, move over because...

KING: James, do you see something in Paul's...

VAN PRAAGH: I wouldn't even attempt...

KING: See, that looks like a copout. Why not attempt? VAN PRAAGH: Why not? First of all, I don't need to prove anything to that man, And why would I even attempt to go there when I've proven myself over years and years through thousands and thousands of readings?

You know, the American people are not that gullible. There are millions and millions of people out there. Now, listen, if we're not real, then why does the people buying these books? Watch the TV shows?

KING: Because they...

(CROSSTALK)

KING: Well, the answer, sometimes, is, Sylvia, is they want to believe.

BROWNE: That's exactly right. But I want to want to tell him...

KING: They want to believe that the dead are here.

BROWNE: But I want to tell him, and of course, it's kind of a -- a delicate subject, but I want to tell him that he has to watch out for his prostate area because he does have a problem, and he's going deaf in his right ear.

(LAUGHTER)

KING: You're laughing, Paul.

KURTZ: That's very funny. Any man -- I don't have a prostate problem, but any man of my age generally would have a prostate problem.

BROWNE: No, I know lots of men that don't have prostate problems.

KURTZ: OK. Well -- so that is -- that is a general guess.

BROWNE: Well, get a PSA count, anyway.

KURTZ: Larry, also, you have to understand what Paul will do. He'll rationalize every single thing, even if it makes sense --

BROWNE: And that's not an open-minded...

(CROSSTALK)

KING: Shouldn't a religious person believe that the dead are there?

BOTEACH: Yes, but the question is: What's the use of communicating with them, and how do we know that we're actually communicating with someone that's passed on?

KING: But if you do believe that the dead go on, Rabbi, why do you believe that John can't talk to them?

BOTEACH: Aren't you a bit surprised that the only message that the dead seem to be able to give to us is someone had a nickname Miss Piggy? And they can only tell us that, you know, I had a heart condition? For goodness sake, if that's the case, then, no pun intended, to hell with them. Why would I even want to communicate with them to know about things that existed here on Earth?

I mean, I would think that if someone is up there in the cosmos, unrestrained by the constraints of the body, they could tell us about the great secrets of existence, where is God, and how can we better human life.

Instead, they're telling us things like, "I choked on a chicken bone and I'm here to tell you that I don't hold you accountable for serving me that soup."

KING: That's a fair point.

PRAAGH: That's not true because, obviously, he has not been to many readings.

BROWNE: That's right.

PRAAGH: Because the majority of readings, people come through with messages of forgiveness, and: I'm sorry I did this, I wish I could do better. I love you more. I wish I could have

demonstrated love more. We learn so much from people that have passed on about love and forgiveness how to live a better life on this earth.

KING: What about God, though?

PRAAGH: But how to live a better life on this earth.

KING: Do they know about God? Do they know God? Do they tell you what God...

BROWNE: Absolutely. That's what my books are about. That they do know God.

PRAAGH: God is pure love.

BROWNE: Apparently they haven't done their research.

KING: Let me get a break and we'll get Leon and John back into things. This is LARRY KING LIVE. Don't go away.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: Leon Jaroff, years ago I had the honor of interviewing J.D. Rein, professor at Duke University, who invented the term "ESP" and told me it was just in its beginning stages; he worked a lot with cards. He did believe that some people had much more of an intuitive nature than others. Do you believe that?

JAROFF: I certainly do, I certainly do. But I don't go as far as to say that intuition allows you to foretell events, to be clairvoyant, to be clair-anything.

KING: Do you believe it's possible, Leon, that the dead are around, are in spirit form and can communicate; or do you believe that is impossible?

JAROFF: Well, I think it isn't true. I think that a death has a certain finality to it. And for that reason, we all ought to live it up while we can.

KING: Now, John, how do you react when you hear something like that, since a lot of people -- no one's ever met a dead person?

EDWARD: I met a lot of dead people. Actually, I like the dead people sometimes more than the living people. I don't know. I just -- I just -- I think that Mr. Jaroff is entitled to his belief, but I think in all fairness to not just me the show but anybody who watches the show -- anybody who does this type of work, I would like to know how he defines journalism to be quite honest.

JAROFF: Larry, I have a question for John, if I may.

KING: Go.

JAROFF: Your nemesis, John, and the nemesis of Sylvia and Jane's is James Randy. James Randy has a standing \$1 million challenge and that challenge is to anyone -- and I think he has given that challenge to all three of you, that anyone -- anyone who can -- can agree to a test with

Randy, and show him in this test -- and the terms of this test would be agreeable to both parties. Show him -- prove to him that you have these abilities, you will get \$1 million. And I know for a fact that the \$1 million is available, and...

KING: All right, the question then, John, is, why wouldn't you automatically do this test?

EDWARD: Well, that is actually a logical thing: Would I allow myself and put the integrity of everybody that I've worked with and their experience in the hands of somebody who is a magician who gets paid to be a skeptic? Or would I do what I have done, along with a number of other mediums, go out to the University of Arizona, work with Dr. Gary Schwartz of the Human Energy Systems Laboratory, and allow myself to go through a series of three tests that are documented. And if Randy would like to make the check out, I'm sure Gary would love to cash it.

JAROFF: Dr. Gary Schartz believes in the Tooth Fairy, he believes in UFOs, he believes in levitation, he believes in, as I say, the Tooth Fairy. So he is not a credible scientist.

KING: Why wouldn't you take this challenge, James?

BROWNE: I have never been offered this challenge.

KING: You would take it?

BROWNE: I would take the challenge. I have tried to run around the table -- ran way from me.

KING: She will meet with Randy and take the challenge.

BROWNE: He ran way from me.

VAN ZANDT: Larry, Randy has a history of setting people up -- with, I know a few years ago, there was an aura reader. He had her on the show; everything was set; and five minutes before, he changed the lighting in the studio, he will manipulate things around.

KING: If you're communicating with the dead, how could he manipulate that?

VAN ZANDT: There are certain standards of what he'll accept as a reading. If you don't go by his -- what he accepts in that contract, then...

KING: So then argue with him.

(CROSSTALK)

BROWNE: I don't care about the million dollars; I just think -- you see, we are talking about him being a magician, and we are psychics.

KING: OK, let me get -- but that doesn't mean you can't answer questions.

BROWNE: No, absolutely.

KING: We will take a break. When we come back, we will talk to a physicist and a former FBI investigator, get their views on psychics, then come back with our panel, bring the rabbi back in from London, take some calls as well. Don't go away.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: We are now going to break away from the panel and spend time with two distinguished gentlemen. In Washington, Clint Van Zandt, FBI's former chief hostage negotiator. He negotiated with David Koresh in Waco standoff. Twenty-five years of the FBI, was the profiler with the FBI before retiring, now runs Van Zandt & Associates.

And Dale Graff, also in Washington, physicist -- worked with the Department of Defense as a physicist for 30 years. Worked on the Stargate program.

All right, Clint, you have heard the first half, now what are your thoughts on psychics and crime?

CLINT VAN ZANDT, FORMER FBI CHIEF HOSTAGE NEGOTIATOR AND PROFILER: Well, OK, Larry, one of the first things a psychic asks a law enforcement officer to do is take your reason and logic and set it aside. That is awfully hard for someone in law enforcement to do, because that's what you spend your whole life doing. As a rookie FBI agent, I went to interview a fellow in jail. I asked -- I asked the guard, I said, "Would you search him?" He said: "I don't have to search him. He has been in jail two days." I said, "Search him anyway." He searched him and he found a knife. I said, "What were you going to do with that knife?" and he kind of smiled at me.

Well, that wasn't psychic, there was just something about this guy that bothered me. But as an FBI agent, you know, you have to keep your mind open, and I'm not going say I'm a skeptic. I would listen if somebody could help solve a crime, Larry.

When I was in Waco, dealing with David Koresh, and a psychic sent a letter in and said: If you say the word -- I think it was Beelzebub -- to David Koresh, he will come out. I read the letter, I got a three-by-five card and I wrote that word on 3-by-5 card, and I shoved it in front of the face of the negotiator talking to David Koresh on the phone.

The negotiator says: "What am I supposed to do with this?" I said, "Use the word in the sentence." He said, "I don't know how to." I said: "Make up a sentence." So we did, and we used it.

I would have loved David Koresh to come marching out with those little kids behind him, Larry, but it didn't happen. And there were situations where we have tried, and it didn't happen.

But if you exhaust law enforcement investigation, if you exhaust psychological profiling, if the victim's family or the police say, "I would like to try a psychic," I would say, anything that can help, and anything that would help a victim's family, I would not stand in the way.

KING: Dale Graff, where do you stand? You worked on Stargate, that was the -- looking at the Russian program, right?

DALE GRAFF, RETIRED MILITARY PHYSICIST: No, the Stargate program was a U.S. program. It also looked at Soviet work too, but Stargate was a research and applications program that looked at the phenomenon that we call remote viewing, which is an aspect of extrasensory perception, the ability that some people have to describe a remote scene, even thousands of miles away.

So, my take on the whole issue that we're talking about tonight is -- I can very easily accept that the phenomenon is real. I spent 30 years working on it, exploring it, researching it, applying it. It exists. But the problem is -- how do you interpret it? How do you actually put into it practice?

Sometimes it works, and sometimes it doesn't. But it's there, and it is real, and it cannot be shoveled away by skeptics that say it is not real.

KING: So, what, Dale, is real to you? The psychic can do what? You are a physicist, what can the psychic do that there is no law of physics dealing with it, is there? GRAFF: This is one of the issues, and I can understand why this skeptical community is coming at the phenomenon very hard. Because there is no clear known physical law that -- electromagnetics or whatever -- that can clearly explain how this phenomenon works.

But as a scientist, you have to look at the data and not get too locked up as to whether or not it fits the known paradigm. The data actually speaks for itself. There is something to it, and the challenge to the physicist and to anybody else is, well, how can you explain it? What new models of reality are out there?

How can this work? Instead of shoveling it away and saying, there is nothing to it -- which is a cop-out -- we should say: "How does it work? What is the key to understanding this?"

KING: Clint, to your knowledge, have they been used in the solution of crimes?

VAN ZANDT: I have seen law enforcement try a lot of times, Larry. When I have seen them participate in the solution of a crime, my experience and experience of my colleagues is that it is usually been some type of vague information, like a kidnapped victim was kidnapped somewhere up along Great Lakes, and we have been told you'll find the victim buried near a body of water. Well, you know, we understand the Great Lakes are a body of water.

My experience has been more that information has been developed, and the profilers that I have talked to -- and my 25 years is that we have been open to it, we have listened to them, and I know there are people who will say, well, we have been a consultant to the FBI. But as far as seeing a case solved, a kidnapped victim recovered, either dead or alive, based solely on the information of a psychic, no.

But again, a psychic -- if they are real, and if they contributed, it should be like a profiler providing investigative assistance, and law enforcement solves it.

KING: It can be asset. And, Dale, do you believe we are going to learn more about it?

GRAFF: Oh, absolutely. The key is we have to go ahead with research programs involving neuroscience, physics, and actually do the stuff. If we ignore it, we will never learn anything about it. And there are too many people out there in the listening community, in the viewing community, that know exactly what I'm talking about.

KING: Thank you both very much. Clint Van Zandt of the FBI, Dale Graff of Department of Defense, both formerly with their respective agencies.

We will come back. We'll include your phone calls for our panel, we will re-introduce the panel quickly as well. Don't go away.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: Let's re-introduce the panel. In New York is the famed medium John Edward.

In Los Angeles, equally famed Sylvia Browne, and in Los Angeles, equally famed -- we spare no differences here -- James Van Praagh.

In Buffalo, New York, Paul Kurtz of the State University of New York at Buffalo. In Miami, Florida is Leon Jaroff of "TIME" magazine who wrote the article critical of all of this.

And in London, a critic as well: Rabbi Shmuley Boteach of -- who wrote the book with Uri Geller.

We are going to include phone calls, and what we are going to do with the calls is -- we'll have a reading, and then after the reading, have our critics analyze what the reading was. And by the way, you did say, did you not, Sylvia, that you found a kidnapped child?

BROWNE: Oh, absolutely, a lot of them. On Montel's show. I mean, I've...

KING: You've named the child, the incident...

BROWNE: Named the child, the incident, and found that lost child, and cracked the ski mask murder, and the World Trade Center, with Gunderson (ph).

KING: Rabbi, are you as open to it as our physicist friend?

BOTEACH: To be sure, I believe in the spiritual realm, but I'm skeptical of any religion that pulls us away from this Earth and into the higher realms. I think that a real religion tries to find a miraculous in the natural, and the extraordinary in the ordinary, and the unique in the everyday.

It is like being married -- this is like an affair, it is too passionate. And it's so elitist -- it's like we have these psychics -- they are the ones we have to rely on.

KING: Well, he asked what -- what is a prayer?

VAN ZANDT: What are prayers about? What do we pray to God for? What are prayers about, then? I don't understand what that comes to.

BOTEACH: Prayer is about people communicating directly through God. It's not elitist, it's not specifically through a psychic, and prayer is trying to bring God to this Earth.

VAN ZANDT: Where is God located?

BOTEACH: God is everywhere. I don't need to communicate with the dead in order to find him.

VAN ZANDT: Perhaps God is within every single person.

KING: Let me get a call. Santa Fe, New Mexico. Hello.

CALLER: Hello. My question is for Sylvia Browne, both of my parents have been adopted. I was wondering if we can get some information for my mother's mother maybe. If she is still alive, if we can find her, or not.

KING: You were adopted?

CALLER: No, my mother.

BROWNE: Her mother.

KING: Was adopted.

CALLER: Both my mother and my father were both adopted; we don't have any family history from my mother and father.

BROWNE: The name Burgess, B-U-R-G-E-S-S. And I don't know if there's an "es" on it. But it looks like they could be in and around -- at least the father is there -- in and around Memphis.

CALLER: Memphis.

BROWNE: Yes.

KING: Can you explain quickly before we have someone comment, what you saw or heard there?

BROWNE: I don't know; it comes from God; I have been this way all my life. It just comes...

KING: You heard a name -- someone say Burgess.

BROWNE: It came into -- it just -- I just opened my mouth.

KING: Did someone say Memphis?

BROWNE: No, God. I believe it comes from God.

KING: Paul, what did you make of what she just said?

KURTZ: I don't know if this funny or sad. I mean, she is engaged in guesswork. She is claiming that she has a direct pipeline to some spirit guide. I mean, this is really unusual, extraordinary, bizarre. Now...

BROWNE: Who do you have a pipeline to?

KURTZ: I should point out that the scientific community has been investigating these claims for a century and a half, it can find no hard evidence that people can communicate with the dead. No hard evidence that psychics can help detectives. And I must say I'm also skeptical about remote viewing. I think there is a physical universe. You can explain it in terms of the laws of science without bringing in the hocus-pocus...

KING: You discount the physicist?

KURTZ: Yeah, well, there are physicists and physicists. The CIA -- the CIA abandoned the remote viewing tests in 1995. And the report was issued that they are inconclusive, insufficient evidence.

KING: Let's try another question, then. We'll have Williston, Vermont. Hello.

CALLER: Hi, Larry. My question is for James Van Praagh.

KING: Go ahead.

CALLER: I would like him to tell me about my brother-in-law who has passed.

VAN PRAAGH: I don't know. What's his first name please?

CALLER: Peter.

VAN PRAAGH: Peter, I feel -- what is his last name?

CALLER: Reinhart.

VAN PRAAGH: OK. For some reason, I feel like his throat condition -- something with his throat -- a breathing problem -- there was something there I am feeling with him. I feel, before he passed over -- right around the time he passed over, also, there was a separation from family, or he did not -- there wasn't a coming together. There was either an argument that happened or there was something that separated him from the other part of the family.

OK. I also feel there were people around him he couldn't trust. So whatever that means. I also want to ask -- tattoo with this guy, a tattoo but seeing that very clearly. I also see him around you, but there is also a baby born after he died, and there was talk -- there was something about a baby being born after he passed over.

KING: Ma'am, is any of that clear to you?

CALLER: No, I have to say it really isn't. I have no...

KING: Does that mean, James, you missed on this one?

VAN PRAAGH: I -- as I said what Sylvia said, I'm hearing what I'm hearing with the name. So at the time I'm given the information, she might not recall this or it might not make sense now, might not be interpreting it correctly. But this is what I'm hearing so I'm just conveying to you, what I'm hearing.

KING: And Leon, what do you make of that?

JANOFF: Well, I think Mr. Van Praagh could just as easily have said, as many mediums do say -- by the way, is the plural of mediums, media?

Anyway, he could just as easily have said, I sensed that he died of some problem in the chest. Now that would include heart attack, emphysema, lung cancer, or practically anything else, even an auto accident, because the heart would stop. And this is what these people do. And... VAN PRAAGH: I would only relay that if that is information I was given. Otherwise, I would not give that information out, so...

KING: It seems, I mean, it does seem weird. This person calls from Vermont, asks you in Los Angeles to pick up someone who is gone. We don't know where that person died.

VAN PRAAGH: Also you have to understand the interpretation of the information coming through, how we receive these things; it is not language like we hear to each other: hello, how are you today, it is very quick pieces of information. It's feeling, it is sensing things. It is not very verbal, hello.

KING: Is the spirit around her or around you?

VAN PRAAGH: No, the spirit would be around her. So, and sometimes, perhaps I speak to someone but that person isn't there, but someone else might be there.

BROWNE: That is right. You might not be able to get ahold of -- Aunt Harriet but you'll be able to get ahold of Uncle Henry.

KING: Rabbi, supposing it isn't right, is there any danger in this?

BOTEACH: Of course.

KING: What?

BOTEACH: First of all, it makes us focus on a realm which is really unimportant. We have husbands and wives who never speak over a dinner table at a restaurant; now we're speaking about relatives in the afterlife. For goodness sakes.

Let's say, for example, everything that James said was correct, there was a tattoo, there was a baby. Don't you see how banal this information is? Who really cares? It's like saying I had dinner last night. Of what practical value is any of this. This is nothing but escapism, it's fantasy, it's like watching a movie.

I have yet to see the practical value of any of this, of how it makes me into better person, more connected to God, more spiritual or indeed more ethical.

VAN PRAAGH: Let me answer that by saying this: As I said earlier, if information comes through, supports life after death, that we live on after we pass out of the physical body, and in that way, it teaches us how to act on the Earth, to be better people by living our lives, how we

treat one another, if it helps support love with one another, isn't that a good thing? Isn't that what you propose to do with your religion?

BROWNE: I can't understand...

BOTEACH: The way we learn...

KING: Hold on! Let her say something.

BROWNE: It's just really amazing to me that the Bible -- Samuel and Saul is all based on biblical text, what you going to do, just wipe out the Bible now? Because that is prophecy.

KING: I'll have you respond in a second, Rabbi, then will take a call for John Edward as well. This is LARRY KING LIVE; don't go away.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: Rabbi, do you want you to respond on a biblical level and I will take another call?

BOTEACH: The Bible beautifully deals with cold hard truth like, don't commit adultery and don't steal. It tries to get to us to create heaven here on Earth so that we don't reject the Earth in favor of the heavens.

And the reason why all of this is dangerous is, in the same way that no one can read my mind because that is my zone of privacy, that is what makes me into an individual, the same thing is true. We are supposed to focus here on curing cancer, not finding out why someone died of cancer, what they now think of us.

I don't think we should be comforted through death. On the contrary, we're supposed to combat it, we're supposed to defeat it, because we are supposed to embrace life. I don't like people who are chasing the dead.

I also find this very elitist, that there is this group of psychics, that we need them in order to communicate with God. I mean, for goodness sake. I'm a rabbi, but anyone can be a rabbi. You need to take a couple of tests and you need to be Jewish -- OK, but aside from that, I have no special powers that anyone else has. This is going back to class systems...

BROWNE: Nor do we. Nor do we.

VAN PRAAGH: We don't have that.

BROWNE: And I'm a Jewish woman and I can take a few classes and maybe be a female rabbi, so what? That is still -- rabbi still exemplifies that the book of Job where they have Samuel and Saul because I'm a biblical scholar.

KING: One more call. Kennesaw, Georgia -- hello.

CALLER: Hi, Larry. My question is for John Edward.

KING: Yes.

CALLER: I would like to know what she can tell me about my grandma Marion. I believe, however, I'm a little bit skeptical -- I would also like to inquire about my mom's younger brother, Phil, and also...

KING: Hold on. We've got a lot -- let's just deal with the two.

BROWNE: Yes, just one.

EDWARD: Actually, you know, if, if I was to make a connection with you, like James and Sylvia were saying, whenever we open up to do this you're opening yourself up to the energy of everybody that's around you. And you never know who is actually going to come through during that process.

And there is a, there's a certain type of symbolic nature of things that come through. And I'm just, not answering your question just because I to want to comment on what happened with James earlier.

Just because she called, that other woman called up, to ask about Pete or Peter, her brother-in-law, James opened up and he got information, and automatically that woman was trying to say, "Well, no that doesn't make sense for my brother-in-law. But what we don't know is if that made sense for her father, or if it made sense for something that was more directly related. Just so, I just needed to say that because I didn't get a chance to before. Umm...

KING: On this person?

EDWARD: No, I'm not get anything on her.

KING: Not getting anything at all. Does that happen a lot, John?

EDWARD: Oh, sure. Absolutely. You know, it's like a medium's not an operator. We can't dial direct. You know, it's not like you go, "hold on, let me get somebody on the line."

(CROSSTALK)

BROWNE: You know, all, the only thing I got, because I thought it was directed towards John, I just kept feeling absinthe, there was something about an absinthe. But I wasn't included in it so I just didn't...

PRAAGH: I just want to comment also, along with John, it isn't a switch that you can turn on and off. And some of the information that comes through, many times, you have go home, later the person will say, "Oh, yes, that makes sense. Oh, yes." They call a relative, "Yes, that is true." So those things happen all the time.

BROWNE: Or after the show they'll come up and tell you.

KING: Let me get a break and we'll get some thoughts from everyone.

By the way, Bernie Shaw will be with us on Thursday night. Walter Cronkite on Friday. That's two pretty good news men back-to- back, both now retired.

We'll be right back.

(COMMERCIAL BREAK)

KING: One more quick call. Port Saint Lucie, Florida, hello.

CALLER: Hi, how are you.

KING: Hi.

CALLER: I just wanted to say, I've read everyone's books except for John's and they're wonderful. They helped me out a lot.

I had a question to ask John Edward. I was wondering why in the gallery do you not flooded with spirits from everyone that's in there, or is it a higher spirit?

KING: Yes, where do they all come from, John?

EDWARD: That's a Great question. What happens when I'm standing in front of any, any group of people whether it's one person or 300, is that you are flooded by their energies and it's the loudest one that gets through.

And what will happen is as a medium I'll get a pull to a certain area, and then usually, and again if anybody watches the show, or if anybody watches any medium that's legitimate do this, there's no game of 20 questions. It's a game that's not nonexistent. It's a matter of providing information, and facts, and then asking that person if they understand it, period.

KING: Paul Kurtz, do you believe that most people don't agree with you? That most people believe in the psychics? This is a guess. We haven't polled the world.

KURTZ: Well, I think the American population is split on this. A number of people do, but there is a great deal of skepticism. Look, we have self proclaimed gurus who say they have these powers, who say that they can connect into spiritual evidence, but that has not been verified. And there's no evidence that there is spiritual evidence. This would violate laws of physics. And if we accept...

BROWNE: Paul, who put you...

(CROSSTALK)

KURTZ: ... universe, that we ought to listen to science, and science says no, inconclusive, not proven.

(CROSSTALK)

BROWNE: I want to know who appointed you, Paul?

KURTZ: No one appointed me. I'm talking about objectivity of science on which the modern world is based.

(CROSSTALK)

BROWNE: I mean, did you one day decide to get up and decide there's nothing else to do, so I think I'll be skeptical?

KURTZ: It's not a subjective test. We want hard evidence. And it seems to me that you've presented nothing but your own claims which are -- have not been supported.

BROWNE: Well, apparently you haven't read enough about us, have you.

KURTZ: I've read your books, and we have investigated these claims, and you give natural psychological deceptive techniques that you are using.

BROWNE: What, finding bodies, and World Trade Center with Ted Gunderson and all that? I couldn't figure that out?

KURTZ: Well, but again, you throw out these wild claims that you've done this, have done that, they don't hold up under scrutiny.

KING: Leon, do you think most people know, the question was, do you think most people agree with the psychics rather than with the skeptics.

JAROFF: Well, I don't know whether most people do. I think a very large percentage of our population does. By the way, I have a quick question for Sylvia if we have time, just very quickly.

KING: Go, quick.

JAROFF: All right. On the Bill Bixby show about 10 years ago, Sylvia was supposed to do readings on group. But the stipulation was that the group could only answer "yes" or "no" to her questions. And she flunked miserably.

BROWNE: And they were all German, and they couldn't understand one word I said. And that was a setup, as you well know.

JAROFF: No, it wasn't a setup.

BROWNE: Oh, it was. Ron Lion (ph) even said so later.

JAROFF: The people were only allowed to answer "yes" or "no"...

(CROSSTALK)

BROWNE: And I couldn't even talk to Randy because he kept running away from me.

(CROSSTALK)

JAROFF: Therefore you could elicit no information from them, for that reason.

BROWNE: Because they couldn't speak English. I found that afterwards They were all Germanic.

KING: James. BROWNE: That was the funniest part.

(CROSSTALK)

PRAAGH: I just want to sat that it's interesting that these people here are in the business to destroy and destruct, while we are here to heal people and to help people grow. And these people, you have to look very carefully at what these people, their jobs are. They are hear to destroy.

KING: Well the Rabbi isn't here to destroy. The writer isn't. Why are they here? They're to investigate or be skeptics. I mean, that's...

PRAAGH: OK, let's hear the skeptics then, Psy-cops, whatever. They're just here to destroy people. They're not here to encourage people, to enlighten people. They're here to destroy people.

KING: Thank you all very much. We promise to do more on this. It is a fascinating subject.

John Edward, Sylvia Browne, James Van Praagh, Paul Kurtz, Leon Jaroff, and Rabbi Shmuley Boteach, and we thank him for staying up so late in London.

You can check into our own Website. You might have opinions on this program. You might have questions. We can send them off to our guests. Log on to my Website and e-mail us your show ideas, anything, cnn.com/larryking. We'd love to hear from you.

Bernie Shaw, Thursday night, Walter Cronkite, Friday. Stay tuned now for CNN tonight.

I'm Larry King for all of our guests. I know you. Good night.

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