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Long Island Women

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LONG ISLAND CLAIRVOYANTS

By Licia Avelar and Lindsay Christ

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Millions of people around the world are familiar with Long Island's most popular psychic mediums—celebrated author and talk show host John Edward and sassy mom Theresa Caputo, star of the hit TLC television show *Long Island Medium*.

Yet what many don't know is that Long Island is a hotbed of paranormal activity, psychic energy and human conduits, ranging from psychic mediums, past-life regression therapists, tarot card readers and even animal communicators—who claim to relay messages from alive and deceased pets.

So in the spirit of the holidays (and to satiate our own curiosities), we sat down with eight of Long Island's other, perhaps lesser-known clairvoyants, entering their oft-whispered-about world to experience whatever it may hold for us firsthand.

What we learned was enlightening, astonishing, a bit bizarre—and in some cases, flat-out hard to believe.

Deceased ancestors professing they've found our Prince Charmings, a past life as an Aboriginal wanderer scouring the dense jungles of Brazil, children in the near future—besides gaining new insights about the afterlife, we also discovered new truths about ourselves along the way. (Though we're still coming to terms with whatever those realities exactly mean.)

Here's a few of our experiences.

LICIA'S LIFETIMES OF LOVE

Past-life regression therapist Richard Scheinberg's home office in Islip is a warm color, with framed diplomas on the walls mixed with kids' paintings and flowers throughout.

"It's very New Age," he tells me as I nervously kick off my black UGG boots

in an attempt to get comfortable for the two-hour session. "You've got to free your mind. I know it's hard and as a reporter you may be thinking of notes to jot down and remember, but try not to, try to relax."

He grabs his notepad, makes sure his recorder is cued, and turns off one of the lamps nearest to the door.

"Breathe in," he says as I cover myself with a blanket and recline on a couch. "Two, three, four, five, six, seven—hold. Two, three, four, five, six, seven—breathe out. Two, three, four, five, six, seven—hold. Two, three, four, five, six, seven..."

Scheinberg says to imagine a bright

light shining through my body, cleansing my body, relaxing my body. His voice leads me down steps into a "peaceful garden" where I am free to recover memories from childhood.

"If you want you can just float above the scene as if watching from a distance," he says. "Or you can be in it, feeling it, seeing it vividly with colors and details, with emotions and feelings, this is always up to you."

Soon, I see visions of kindergarten. A red, blue and green beaded bracelet.

"I want to give the beads to my teacher, the bracelet, but I can't," I say from within a trance. "She makes me too scared, so I give it to my friend."

"I want you to look at your friend right now and tell me what you see," responds Scheinberg.

"She has bangs, long brown hair; she's wearing a collared dress."

"What's her name?" he asks.

"Kristen."

"Okay so here you are getting ready to leave and you've met your friend Kristen and you've given her your bracelet but you're a little disappointed that school wasn't what you thought it would be, and what happens next?" he asks.

"I go home. I tell my mom that I gave the bracelet to my friend Kristen," I say. "I'm just laying on my bed crying."

I was also crying as I lay on the sofa.

of grass and trees and we're running through that, like a light gray tree, trees that are really tall, we seem small compared to what's around us."

"Tell me more," the voice says.

"I feel like we're wearing brown leather-like dresses, or skirts and carrying something in my hand...some sort of blade...I'm a woman and I'm in the front of the people...I don't know where we are going but I'm scared. I just feel like there might be like a tiger...I'm really tan, dark skin and I have really dark hair, I see it, long black hair...someone screamed 'Tiger!'"

"Okay, so somebody spotted the tiger," responds Scheinberg. "Okay, so you knew to get out of the way before the tiger surprised you, that was smart. Okay, so now you feel safe and you're all together with the people behind you? Tell me more about the people that were behind you, what do they look like?"

"They're tall, dark hair, dark skin, they're not, they don't look African. The skin is darker than white but not so, it's like a brown...they're wearing the same skirt I am...I feel like where we are is a rainforest, it's bigger than a jungle, the trees are so high, and it's so wet all over... we're in South America in Brazil...we're climbing trees."

"Do the others have names?" asks Scheinberg.

"I feel like one is Nabu," I respond.

"What do they call out to you?" he asks. "What do they say?"

"Mala."

"What I want to do, because you obviously have to go back down, you have to get food, what I want to do is take you to the next important event in this lifetime," he tells me. "What I'm going to do is count from five to one, you're going to tell me about the next important event in this lifetime: Five, four, three, two, one."

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THE ORIGINAL PSYCHIC FAIR

AS REVIEWED BY
THE NEW YORK TIMES

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Cindi Sansone-Braff

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"This is a relationship in which a guy did not necessarily play fair with you," she tells me. "Were you in one in the past that didn't work out?"

"Yeah," I reply.

"Did you learn your lessons from that? Did you learn that you can't fix people?" asks Sansone-Braff. "That's the big lesson for old souls, we can't fix people. We think we can. Older souls are prone to fall for the princes that become the beast. They have no idea what they sign on for. They believe everybody tells the truth.

"It's hard for old souls," she continues. "They want to see the good in everybody. This is you with a wonderful man in the future but you're a little bit commitment phobic yourself now, are you aware of that?"

"Yes," I tell her.

"You're what I call a closet commitment phobic," says Sansone-Braff. "You're not out there saying, 'I never want love,' but once we've been hurt—and your whole generation is becoming commitment phobics of one sort or another, because you're afraid of getting hurt. But if you learn the lessons that you were supposed to learn, God wouldn't give you the same lessons again."

"This year is your year of love coming, if you want it," she continues. "They're not going to bring another soulmate if you're going to run from it, because that will be your fault. You weren't responsible for the end of that relationship, you were responsible for your behavior. You realized he was going to hurt you. Did you realize that he was going to keep hurting you? So you learned to love yourself. But this is really coming, you know, it will change your whole life, soulmate love will change things."

I had heard that before; it was the same message foretold by psychic medium Josephine Ghiringhelli, who spent a recent afternoon with me at her office in Selden, amid pink couches, a dream catcher and a large, framed photo of her deceased 21-year-old son, James—



Photo by Dan O'Reagan

Christopher Allan

Psychic Medium, Farmingdale
Featured on MTV's *True Life*

The 26-year-old's most memorable reading took place recently, when a young woman's father, who passed away when she was a child, came through. "The only thing she wasn't able to validate was why I kept hearing the name 'Bill.' After the reading, she was emotional and said, 'Thank you so much, let me pay you,' and took out her money. She laid it on the table, and the last bill was a \$10 bill, and on the bill it said, 'I love you forever, love dad.' The odds that she would look at the bill before she gave it to me and see that, that she didn't use that the night before at 7-Eleven, but this night, I mean how do you explain that? That was pretty incredible."

Allan's stint on *True Life* highlighted his trouble balancing his personal life with his psychic gifts. It's something he's struggled with all his life, even as a child—in school he'd constantly see his teachers' deceased families around them. "Sometimes in my head there were more adults in the classroom than there were kids," says Allan, who credits the show in part to helping him adjust. "I said, 'You know what? They have a point there. I have to find a way to control it better and not let it affect my personal life.'" He succeeded. "If I couldn't I would probably be committed somewhere or not have made much of my life I would be so consumed by it, so messed up in the head."

IMSTILLHERE.NET



Cindi Sansone-Braff

Psychic Medium,
Tarot-Card Therapist,
Relationship Coach, Author
of *Grant Me a Higher Love*,
East Patchogue

Sansone-Braff began talking with the dead when she turned 41. "They were really helpful, the dead, telling me where I could buy something cheaper, odd things," she says, adding that prior to communicating with those who've passed she had been an entertainer, writer and playwright. "If someone told me at 40 that I was going to become a psychic medium I would've laughed."

Her craziest reading came from a young girl in her 20s who was afraid to have children. Through her gist, she discovered the girl's fear stemmed from her previous life as a young boy in World War II who died with his two younger siblings in a concentration camp. "She looked at me and she said, 'Do you know that I was obsessed with the Holocaust since I was born and I'm not Jewish? And when I was 10-years-old I only hung out with boys because I was much more comfortable with boys? And I was so obsessed that my teacher invited a Holocaust survivor into the classroom to talk with me one-on-one. And when I saw that someone survived the Holocaust, I put my obsession behind me, and stopped hanging around with boys, and I accepted that I was a girl.'" The woman now has children, who Sansone-Braff identifies as the reincarnated souls of the two younger siblings she took care of during the Holocaust.

GRANTMEAHIGHERLOVE.COM

Josephine Ghiringhelli

Psychic Medium, Selden



It was the tragic death of her brother that led Ghiringhelli to become a psychic medium. "I actually worked for the DEA, Drug Enforcement Administration. I was the scientific intelligence technician for the Northeast regional laboratory in New York City," she explains. "I never went to a psychic, never had any interest in it at all." When her brother, a New York City police officer, was shot to death while she was away on a trip, Ghiringhelli decided to go to a psychic medium she had heard on the radio. "I had to seek out just something to connect with him because there was no closure," she says. The medium was not only able to connect with her brother, but also informed Ghiringhelli that she would one day become a psychic, too.

One of Ghiringhelli's craziest readings came from a young woman who entered her office with a very angry male spirit. "I said to her, 'There's a male energy in here and he's very, very upset.'" she recalls. It was her boyfriend, who had been bludgeoned to death by the woman's estranged husband, just days earlier.

In 2009, she tragically lost her 21-year-old son, James. "Losing your son, it's like having your guts ripped out, it's just so unnatural," she says. Yet she's found solace in her work. "Anytime I do a group [reading], I talk about my son. It's healing for me, and it helps people who've lost children. All these years, I've read for people who've lost children that they've come through, but I have never felt and could never imagine the pain until unfortunately I lost my James."

JOSEPHINEG.COM

Richard Scheinberg

Past Life Regression
Therapist, East Islip
Director of Sunrise
Counseling Center in East
Islip, Author of *Turning
Trauma Into Triumph* and
*Seeking Soul Mates, Spirit
Guides and Past Lives*



Scheinberg had his first psychic experience when he was 19. "My older sister was murdered. I found it very tragic and had a hard time sleeping. She actually came to me in a dream and reassured me that she was okay. That kind of started to open me up to a spiritual life, that really, there is a way to investigate further."

He's gone beyond psychotherapy, into the spiritual realm, frequently taking clients on journeys to recover past life memories as a way of bringing clarity and solutions to problems plaguing their current lives. "When you just suggest the possibility to the person under hypnosis, ask them to go back before a time before you were born, the person will tell you about a whole other lifetime. This can happen with anyone, even if you don't believe in reincarnation. We have an integration with psychotherapy. So if you have had a significant event in a prior lifetime, it gets integrated into your subconscious, it helps determine—it's like karma—what kind of issues you may be dealing with in your current lifetime."

RICHARDSCHEINBERG.COM

whose young, smiling face reminds clients that she knows the pain of losing a loved one all too well.

Her dog, appropriately named Destiny, napped contently on one of the couches as we spoke.

"I feel like in this lifetime you will be married, I do feel children," she says. "I do feel that particularly your uncle, he's the main squeeze up here by the way, your uncle. So I do feel he will bring the possibility of love into your life, but you have to open up your eyes to let him in... It's probably right around, in your 27th year, is when I feel pregnancy by you."

No way, I tell myself—that's right around the corner.

particular point in time, and thankfully, what you can do too is then talk to another animal," she continues. "And my cat chimed in at that point. My cat said, 'It's okay. It's not that bad, it's okay.' And when I got home, sure enough, there was blood all over, but my horse was okay. It ended up being a tooth, a problem with her tooth."

And I thought Misty was a handful.

So, according to the hereafter, I'll be pregnant and wealthy soon, will hook up with my soulmate, and my deceased uncle is not only looking out for me, but playing matchmaker.

Not too bad for an "old soul." Amirite? *

"They're telling me you're a cat lady," she smiles.

Well that's definitely true, I have to admit. I happen to have lost my feline soulmate Misty two years ago, and think about her all the time.

"According to her, she's still the ruler of the roost," Ghiringhelli says about my late beloved tuxedo cat. "She's like, 'She ain't ever going to feel more than what she felt for me,' which I think is hysterical," she adds—pretty much confirming that my pet's sassy outlook continues in the hereafter.

Patty Gibbons, an animal communicator who speaks with living and deceased pets, echoes the message that animals do have spirits, and also have a lot to say, if people would just stop to listen.

"I've had animals convey when there was an emergency going on at home," she tells me over a cup of coffee at a local Starbucks. Because unlike typical psychic mediums who require one-on-one, in-person interviews to contact the other side, Gibbons professes she can communicate with critters through a photograph, or even just out of thin air.

"I was somewhere where I couldn't get to a phone or anything and my horse sent an image that said, 'Problem! Problem! Blood all over!' And I'm going, 'Oh my God,'" she says.

"I couldn't get there, I couldn't get to the phone, I couldn't get to anything, I was stuck where I was at that particular point in time, and thankfully, what you can do

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"Someone died," I say. "I think it might have been Nabu. There's a fire, we're lighting his body on fire, but he's already dead. There's a big group of people around it...I'm really sad, very sad...in my heart and stomach...I don't want to go on, alone. I don't want to go on alone and leave him here."

"I want to take you to the next important event in this lifetime," he says. "Five, four, three, two, one, you're there."

"I think I'm dead," I say, though my voyage doesn't end here.

"Let's go to that moment where you're dying; on the brink of death, let's go there," directs Scheinberg.

"I'm older, I'm sick, my family is around me, my son is older...I'm going up," I tell him.

"As you go up you start to reflect on your life and what your life has been all about," he says. "How do you see yourself? What lessons did you learn in this life?"

"I'm alone a lot, I feel like I hate to be alone and that's what I was," I confess. "It can be a lonely place if you lose people you love, I don't like to be alone... I feel like I'm always scared to be alone...I worry about it being forever."

"Certainly understandable, because you know what it feels like...you had a whole life where it felt alone almost all the time," says Scheinberg. "What lessons about life are there to learn when you're going up toward the light and you're thinking about 'What next?' What might you learn about being less lonely?"

"To not invest in someone totally, to be okay on your own and be happy with yourself, and not having such deep relationships that they ruin your life if you don't have them anymore," I say.

I continue ascending, describing what I see to Scheinberg: a separate world of energies above the Earth, "a light bubble" replete with the transcendental feeling of an all-encompassing love. My mother is there, I say, and so is Nabu, but that's not his name in



Patty Gibbons

Animal Communicator, Central Islip

Gibbons had recently returned from an animal communicator workshop in Vermont when Milieu sat down with her. "It was very funny, we had a woman come in with her dog, and I asked the dog

what his job was, and he kept saying 'To protect the baby boy, to protect the baby.' And the woman sat there and went, 'I haven't told anyone yet, but I'm pregnant.'"

Another memorable reading involved a horse that insisted it liked hockey. Both she and the owner of the horse sanctuary where it resided had no idea where a horse would play hockey. Their answer came weeks later, when a police officer told them the horse used to be his partner. "Of course he likes hockey," he said, explaining that one of the animal's regular jobs was to patrol Nassau Coliseum during New York Islanders games.

Gibbons believes everyone can communicate with animals. "It's just an awareness. I mean, of course, it's varying degrees...I like to compare it to singing. Unless there's something really physically wrong with you, everyone can sing, and with voice lessons, everyone can improve on their singing ability. Not that we're all going to go on to sing at the Met or something like that, but I do believe that everyone has—it's an intuitive awareness and it's just how you focus it."

PATTYGIBBONS.COM



Robert E. Hansen

Photo by Dan O'Reagan

Psychic Medium, Merrick
Former Star of TLC's *Paranormal Court*

Hansen dubbed one of his most memorable readings "Shark Boy." Hansen sat down with the parents of a young man who had passed. "I said, 'I've got to ask you something: Did you bury your son with, in his casket, a 5-foot shark?' He goes, 'I did.' I said, 'Are you shitting me? You put a shark in with your dead son?' He said, 'My son and I went shark fishing.' They buried their son with a 5-foot [stuffed] shark. They took it off his bed and put it in his casket so he would be comfortable with something he loved as a child."

He believes everyone has psychic potential. "The analogy I would use, is that many people can learn to play the guitar. You can learn to play the guitar. But then there are people that not only play by ear, but almost by natural instinct, and they become the Eric Claptons or Pablo Casals, some of the greats. And no matter how hard you play, how much you practice, how dedicated the effort, you can't quite catch their ability because it's instinctive and it's gifted into them."

ROBERTEHANSEN.COM

this new realm.

"Happiness and peace," I tell him. "It feels exciting here...I just feel like I'm not alone but I don't see anyone else. I just feel not alone and very happy. I'm very excited, there's a lot of energy around me."

"So in some ways you were never really alone," responds Scheinberg. "There were all these spirits, all these entities we've known for many lifetimes on the other side, waiting to let you know that you've been here all along. So you're never really alone because once you establish a loving relationship, love never dies. Love never dies and you're never really alone, there's always love around you even if you don't see it clearly.

Dawn Joly

Psychic Medium, Smithtown

Joly was just 10 years old when, while walking through the woods to visit a friend, an angel appeared to her. "I wasn't sure what it was and I thought it was dying," she recalls. "It really wasn't. She took my hand, made these little symbols and told me that I would know tremendous things for my whole lifetime."

Perhaps the most unusual item in her office is the giant cardboard cutout of Elvis that sits behind her chair, watching over her as she conducts her readings. "I'm very connected to Elvis in the spirit world. I have several of Elvis' entourage as advisors," she says, adding that she regularly goes down to Memphis to be with her Elvis family.

Joly stresses that she is not the type of medium who approaches strangers when she is out—a sort of Psychic Code of Ethics to which several other mediums interviewed by Milieu also adhere. "Do I grab people? No, I'm not the type of medium that grabs people... I would never scare somebody, pick out somebody if I'm in the story—it's only in a life-and-death matter. So yes, it's very difficult. But you know, you're not here to scare them, you're here to nurture them, to educate them that your loved ones are with you. I always acknowledge that once you come out of the body you become light, you become energy."

DAWNJOLY.COM



"Enjoy this feeling and know how much you're loved all the time, take it in, you are very loveable, you are loved all the time by all of these spirits and entities from all of your lifetimes as well as your angels and the divine, you are always loved and you were never really alone even if sometimes it may feel that way," he says.

Listening back to Scheinberg's tape, I still can not believe I said the things I did, but I'm beginning to understand why.

LINDSAY'S FULL HOUSE

"This particular deck is from the 1920s, but they were created by mystics, and what they [did] was channel the collective unconscious, the symbols," psychic medium Cindi Sansone-Braff tells me as I shuffle, then pick from a stack of tarot cards, laying them down one-by-one on a table in between us.

"What you have here, and because you're a young woman, this is you being a mom in the future, this is two children in the future," she says of a card bearing the image of two children.

"This is a wonderful husband," she says of a card with a Prince Charming-esque figure on it. "You're a little bit old-fashioned, so it's kind of a wonderful husband here."

"This is you learning your skill," she says, flipping over another. "What you're doing now, you're reporting. This is

oftentimes a writer, but this is you learning your craft and your skill, and eventually making very good money. This is eventually a self-employed person, by the way. What was channeled to me is that self-employed people are the only ones that are going to survive in the new millennium.

"This is you making very good money," she repeats, to my disbelief. "This is you learning a lot of your karmic lessons in life and you're a very, very old soul, you've been around the planet a lot, this is not your first venture."

She points at another.

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