

Analysis of Larry King TV Segments with James Van Praagh

By Laddie Chapman

EXCERPT 1

ORIGINAL TV TRANSCRIPT

CALLER: I lost a daughter in 1987, and I'd like to hear from her.

KING: How old was she?

CALLER: She was 15.

JVP: Was this cancer condition at all?

CALLER: No.

JVP: Was it blood related?

CALLER: No.

No fishing needed, as Caller supplies the opening data.

This Caller looks willing to do all the work. Let's take advantage of it and get some more data.

A little quick math. Mom is probably 20 years or more older than daughter, so Mom may have been 35 in 1987. That would make her 50 in 2002. This may prove useful later on – what guesses can we make about a 50-year-old Mom?

Let's fish some more. We might get lucky.

But not yet.

Try again.

Still nothing, but we're narrowing it down.

So far, the Caller has supplied these facts:

1. Her daughter died at 15
2. Not from cancer
3. Not from "blood related". I suppose this could be "blood disease" or ge-

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netic failure (like in blood relatives), whatever is accepted by the Caller, so this doubles the likely possibilities. And even “blood disease” covers a LOT of ground – heart failure, leukemia, etc.

And so far, JVP has supplied these facts:

1. None

And JVP has made two guesses, both of them wrong, even though they were very broad and might have been satisfied by a large number of things.

JVP: How was she killed?

Time to get some more info. What's the best source for this? Why, the Caller, of course! No need to guess – just ask her!

CALLER: Hit by a car.

OK, so the “Guess The Ailment” game struck out. Way out.

We're getting to know this subject pretty well, aren't we? Still, *JVP hasn't supplied a single fact, and all of his guesses were wrong!* (He hasn't admitted it, either.)

JVP: What's her first name?

Let's get some more data and try a different angle before someone gets wise.

CALLER: Christy. Her first name or mine?

Maybe a miscommunication here. Maybe the Caller is hard of hearing? Can we use that? Hmm...

JVP: No, her first name.

CALLER: It was Christy.

Let's tally it up so far. Facts supplied by the Caller:

1. She had a daughter
2. Whose name was Christy
3. Who died at age 15
4. In a car accident
5. In 1987

Facts supplied by JVP:

1. None

JVP: Let me ask you something, because I don't — you know, I just get what I get, and I can only give you something that I get.

If I tell you something you confirm, it's because I am a gifted psychic. If nothing I tell you rings true, even by a stretch of the imagination, it is because the spirits are playing with me — everybody knows the immortals are great practical jokers. Don't blame *me* for wrong guesses, blame my sources.

Was there a baby born after she passed over?

So far, all questions have been answered, "no." So here's the first one that must be answered "yes," as we are sure that *some-where in the world*, a baby was born since 1987!

In the family?

We can safely narrow it down from world to family. There's a 99% chance, that in the last 17 years, in this family or any family, a baby was born, especially if you include aunts, uncles, and cousins thrice removed. And a "yes" answer will look like a success (the first one so far) to the audience, which *wants* to believe.

CALLER: Yes.

There it is! Success! Ding-ding! How *does* he do it?

JVP: Because this might sound very strange to you, but she wants me to tell you that she's a guide for this baby.

Unverifiable assumption. It's OK to present facts if they cannot be proved. And more likely to be believed if they are pleasant, gentle, heartwarming possibilities. Imagine how the caller would feel if JVP said Christy is Heaven's Biggest Slut, a heavy drinker, murderer and child abuser, and by the way, she hates your guts, so quit calling, Mom!

I don't know if it's a brother's baby.

More facts he doesn't know, presented as knowledge. The chances are great that any baby's father is *somebody's* brother. Brother-in-law, or maybe soul brother can be pressed into service if needed.

CALLER: There's been three.

Ambiguous answer, the best kind. Have there been three brothers or three babies? JVP loves ambiguous answers because it gives him more chances to be right.

JVP: Okay. Does the brother have a baby?

Which brother? *Which* baby? Come on, Caller, surely you can find a brother related to a baby *somewhere* in your extended family and I can look psychic and get richer off the gullible?

CALLER: Let me see — there's been four girls born since her.

Getting better. More babies mean more possibilities. And JVP doesn't even have to guess about their sex, either.

JVP: Okay. Well, there's a baby there that the brother has, that she's a guide to, also.

JVP might be wrong about the baby/brother connection, since the Caller seems confused and hasn't verified it. But the slight confusion is good, so he decides to press it. Adding another unprovable, pleasant fantasy about the "guide" gives the Caller the warm fuzzies.

I'm going to tell you that someone in the family is a teacher, okay,...

Telling the Caller is good. If the Caller verifies it, you score. If the Caller acts confused, you suggest thinking about it, or cast the net a little wider. If the Caller denies it, fall back on "I only know what I feel," or suggest, gently, that the Caller is not remembering correctly, and time will tell; you'll see. And what are the chances that the same Caller, a week later, will call back, be able to get on the air, and say, "I thought about what you said, asked all my relatives, and did extensive genealogical and historical research, and I am positive you are wrong?"

...or wanted to go into teaching. All right?

Always tell them what cannot be wrong. So, somewhere in your family there is:

1. A teacher, a common occupation
2. Or someone who wants to be a teacher
3. Or someone who thought about being a teacher

I'm going to tell you that this girl — she forgives the person that did this to her, very much so.

4. Or someone who was taught by a teacher

5. Or a parent (aren't all parents teachers to their kids, willingly or otherwise?)

Here come the warm fuzzies again. According to JVP, *everyone* in Heaven forgives you. Can you prove otherwise?

It occurred to me that the "person that did this to her," meaning caused the auto accident that killed her, might just be Mom Caller herself. If so, she is probably so riddled with guilt that she desperately wants to contact her daughter and desperately wants to believe. Could she have been the driver in that fatal accident? Or maybe Mom feels responsible for letting Christy go out that night with that bad boy who drinks too much and drives carelessly?

And I'm telling you she's telling me she came to your dreams just recently?

Unverifiable statement. Either a spirit is whispering in his ear (and we know how reliable *they* are), or he just made it up. Let's see how this one goes.

CALLER: I very seldom remember my dreams.

Bingo! A Caller who will believe anything JVP says because she can't remember. If a little nonsense was accepted before, a whole lot of nonsense can be supplied now. You don't remember, do you, Dear? There, there, let me supply you with some nice memories. Just lie back, think good thoughts and relax...

JVP: Well, she said she's been in your dreams.

Unverifiable statement, on two levels, no less.

And I also see a kitten. And I don't know why I'm being shown a cat, or kitten. But I don't know if she had a kitten or a cat?

More warm fuzzies in the extreme. And what JVP *doesn't know* would fill the universe. By his own admission, he *doesn't know if she had a kitten or cat?* What sounds like a statement of fact is really a request for more information.

CALLER: I called her “cat.” Those were her initials.

Close enough! JVP would have accepted a feline-influenced pet somewhere in the family, or a stuffed animal, or a painting. But this is too good, and he got more than he needed. Although he doesn’t use this information here, he might be able to guess Christy’s middle name (begins with “A” and probably female-sounding – Anne, Amy, Alice – a few tries should do it) and last name (begins with “T”). And for all we know, she might really have had a pet cat; the Caller didn’t say “no.”

JVP: Okay. Well, maybe that’s why she’s showing me this.

Maybe. Or maybe JVP just made it up, or used the same guess he uses for many callers. A lot of people like cats. Or dogs. We’ll never know.

But that’s what I’m being given you. I’ll tell you right now, she’s there at night a lot around you in your dream state.

Not only is this unverifiable, the Caller is being told what is happening in the dreams that she doesn’t remember. Poor Mom. Your dead daughter is talking to you nightly and you didn’t know it. But now you do. Maybe you ought to stay awake at night so you can enjoy your dreams.

I’m going to ask you also, did you have a little vegetable garden when she was alive?

To the audience, JVP is saying Mom had a garden sometime in a 15-year period, But he’s not. He’s not telling, he’s *asking*. Can’t go wrong here. And a flower garden, or one planted as a memorial, or a potted plant, or the flowers at Christie’s funeral, would all suffice if necessary.

CALLER: Her grandmother did.

The Caller is really saying, “No, I (Mom) did NOT have a little vegetable garden while Christie was alive. But wait, *somebody* in the family did!”

JVP: Okay. And is her grandmother in spirit now?

Again, he’s not telling, he’s *asking*. And a woman, who, 15 years ago, was of grandparent age then, is a good candidate to be dead now. Although I suppose “in spirit” could be interpreted differently if Granny is still, regrettably, alive.

CALLER: Yes.

The bet paid off and the guess is scored as psychically-obtained knowledge.

JVP: Okay. She's talking about helping her with that garden.

Unverifiable, fuzzy statement.

Do you remember her helping with the vegetable garden?

Request for more information. Whether answered yes or no, doesn't really matter. Of course, a REAL psychic wouldn't have to ask.

CALLER: Yes.

Since this looks like a hit...

JVP: You remember that?

...We'll repeat it. Those in the audience that scored it as a hit will now score it as a double hit, or at least remember it better if reinforced.

CALLER: Yes.

JVP: With tomatoes and carrots, and she's talking about helping grandma doing this.

Unverifiable statement. Even if the historic garden was planted with peas and onions, this is a *conversation in Heaven* that only psychics can hear. Or perhaps invent on demand.

She's with this grandmother, which must be your mother or something.

Unless the family had a lot of divorces, there's a 50-50 chance that this Granny is the Caller's Mom. And it's not so bad if he is wrong, we're still in warm-fuzzy country.

CALLER: Yes.

Another bet paid off. It only goes to show that the more you know about someone, the better your guesses about them can be.

JVP: She's connected with her, with you.

Can't be wrong. We've already established the exact genealogical relationship; JVP is just restating what the Caller already told him.

CALLER: Yes.

JVP: Okay? I'm going to tell you something also.

No, he's not. He's going to say something, that by his own words, he does NOT know.

I don't know if there's a watch of hers you have and also a locket of some sort, but she's talking about that.

There it is. What he *doesn't* know. And if she's talking about it, we have no way of confirming it. *Some* of us might suspect it is fiction. And the Caller doesn't supply any verification of a watch or locket.

I also want to tell you one more thing.

If he's going to *tell us* something, why is this sentence followed by a question?

Is there a footstool in your house?

How many houses do you know that don't have a footstool?

CALLER: No.

Whoops! Here's one. But no matter; surely there's something around one can use to put their feet up...

JVP: Well, who puts their feet up? She helps someone put their feet up with a pillow underneath their feet. I don't know if she's helping grandma, but she's showing me putting a pillow underneath someone's feet.

Wait a minute. Did the footstool-substitute "in your house" get transported to Heaven? In any case, it's another unverifiable, fuzzy-warm statement. How nice. Not only is somebody's Grams giving her gams a rest, but your sweet, angelic daughter is responsible.

CALLER: May have been my mother.

Yes, it may have been. It also may have been the Man In The Moon; equally provable, but "Mother" is more likely to be accepted by the caller.

JVP: I think — would you check that out?

Just how is Caller Mom going to check out what two dead people are doing? Fly to Heaven? Request another session with JVP or John Edward (bring \$)?

EXCERPT 2

CALLER: . . . I lost my mom in December '97, my dad in January 2000. I was wondering if you...

Here's more info than a good psychic would need to start. Both parents died in a 3-year period, and they probably died of old-age-related illnesses. They might have died in the same car crash, too, but there are fewer deaths from that cause. Let's make some guesses and see what happens.

JVP: I'm going to tell you there's somebody here with a cancer condition.

Cancer is a common cause of death in older people. And he's not saying they died of it; he's not even saying either parent had it. "Somebody here" has a cancer condition. What's "here"? In the family? The studio? Can't lose. What if the Caller said "no"? Then you suggest the Caller doesn't know about it yet. Either way, the audience registers it as a hit.

Was it your dad?

We didn't get a "no" after the last statement, so let's try a good guess. 50-50 chance.

CALLER: Yes.

Good. "No, it was my Mom" would have been fine, too. Let's run with it. The Caller told us a fact, but if it comes from JVP's lips, it looks like he derived it psychically.

JVP: Because I feel cancer.

Repeat of Caller-supplied fact.

And I feel lungs, also. I feel with him also, it could be emphysema at one point, too or trouble with his lungs breathing.

Old age and many diseases bring on problems with lungs. And a problem with lungs is more likely to cause problems with breathing than seeing, for example. Also note that, though Dad's health is implied, it could be Mom's health instead without causing a serious backtrack.

CALLER: The lungs it was my mother.

See?

JVP: Well, I am getting lungs and trouble breathing here. I also want to tell you that these two are very connected. I don't know.

You said that before. And if these two aren't "very connected," it sure will be news to the medical establishment. But *just in case*, he says "I don't know." Can't beat that for certainty.

Did you say they passed very closely in time?

How did he know that? Oh, *it's the first thing the Caller said*. Can't hurt to make it look psychic.

CALLER: Two years apart.

Restatement.

JVP: One of them had a brother over there who met them when they passed over.

At least one of them. Two chances for a brother to pop up. Somewhere. Whether the brother "met them" is an unverifiable statement. I guess if Heaven exists, and you go there, you are likely to look up your relatives. / believe.

Hadn't seen this brother for a very long time,...

We know these dead people were not young when they died. We have a better chance that other siblings died before or about the same time than if we were talking about infants. And if the time sequence was not quite right, JVP would have accepted that, too. And just how long is "a very long time"? Would you accept 20 years? 2 years? 6 months?

Okay.

"Okay" really means, "Tell me how close I came with my guess so I can make up some more obvious facts to wow you with."

CALLER: Yes. That would be my father, he had a couple brothers.

So it was a big family. More chances for hits of this type. And it looks like many of them are "up there" where JVC's flights of fancy cannot be questioned.

JVP: Well, there was a brother there for a long time. He hadn't seen him. He was very impressed — he was very happy to see this guy.

The Caller hasn't denied this, so repeat it. Although more unverifiable facts are presented, they certainly seem plausible. Even if the living family was feuding for years, it's hard to keep a grudge in Heaven, right?

Your father, by the way, didn't believe in this sort of thing. Very skeptical of this sort of thing. But he is a true believer now.

Hard to believe that there actually are those skeptical of JVC's powers. Can we find one that changed his mind and became a believer? If not, we can make him up! Prove us wrong, skeptic!

A name Joseph comes in also. Or Joe. And that's interesting, very strong in front of me.

Time to try some wild guesses. A name like Joe or Joseph (with two names, we just doubled the possible hits) is very common in Western society. It's rare that any extended family doesn't have a Joe somewhere. Even a neighbor will do, dead or alive! Think, Caller, have you ever met a Joe in your life? It's easy to see why this could be a "very strong" feeling. So many possibilities!

CALLER: I don't know who that is.

Obviously the Caller hasn't thought about it long enough, but let's cut our losses and move on. Note that this is really a "no, you're wrong" answer to a "very strong" feeling. How much wronger can you get?

JVP: Did you have to give your mother medications?

Mom died of cancer, which is not a quick killer (not as quick as suicide or a car wreck). It would be hard to answer this "no," especially since "when" was not specified. Sometime in your mother's life, did you have to give her medications?

CALLER: Did I have to give her?

JVP: Who gave her the medications? She's telling me that there were medications that she had to receive.

Unverifiable statement. And "medications" could be aspirin or even vitamin C.

CALLER: She did have a lot of medications, nothing I gave her directly.

The Caller has verified a good guess, and supplied the answer to the question about who medicated Mom. Answer: Not me. Nothing psychic about getting this question answered.

JVP: But there was a schedule of medications she had to get. Every hour. She had to receive medications.

Yes, she did have to receive medications. The Caller already said she did. Most meds are given on a schedule (when did you get

	a bottle of pills from a doctor with a label that said, “take whatever you want, whenever you want”?) Note the “every hour” statement was not verified by the Caller, so we don’t know how good this guess was.
I also want to ask you, is there a box of hers you have?	A box, any box, with something in it? Is there anything like this in your family? Did Mom have anything in it? Think hard, now, so I can look psychic!
A jewelry box?	Let’s make it easier for the Caller: How many women <i>don’t</i> have a jewelry box? Or a box that holds jewelry? And isn’t this one of the most likely items to be passed on to survivors?
CALLER: No.	Whoops, struck out on a sure thing. Could JVP’s psychic ability be waning?
JVP: Who has a box of hers, like a jewelry box of some sort?	Keep pushing, and the Caller will find a match somewhere. Surely this woman had jewelry? Ring? Maybe a watch? Glasses?
CALLER: Oh, god, I don’t — I don’t know.	Before, Caller said, “no.” Now, with some more pressure, she says, “maybe.” Could the guilt buttons have been pressed? “Ohmygod, who took Mom’s jewelry box!”
KING: We are running out of time.	Saved by the bell. Now we’ll never know.
JVP: Well, I’m being shown it, and it has flowers on it.	Amazingly, the box that the Caller said didn’t exist now has flowers on it. Unverifiable (and paradoxical) assumption. I have seen very few jewelry boxes illustrated with rutting goats in the city dump, so a floral motif would be a pretty good guess.