

Earlier this month, Prudence Calabrese, a West Coast psychic, flew into New York on business. She had two meetings: One was a catered sushi lunch at an uptown hedge fund that had hired her, for about \$20,000, to predict this year's profit outlook. ("Their investors will be very happy.") The second, she says, was with agents from the FBI. During the Cold War, the Pentagon spent millions training "remote viewers" to spy on Russian military targets. (The Soviets, of course, had their own psychics.) The program, called Stargate, was very controversial, very X-Files, and until funding was cut in 1995, completely classified.

Now some of the psychics connected to that program and others, like Calabrese, say that federal officials are calling upon them again. Lyn Buchanan, a former CIA remote-viewing trainer, says that since September 11 he has received requests for intelligence from three separate federal agencies. And Las Vegas-based psychic Angela Thompson Smith says she has been asked by the Feds (she won't reveal which ones) to help identify perpetrators of the World Trade Center attacks and the anthrax letters, and to pinpoint future terrorist targets.

What do remote viewers see, and how do they see it? Calabrese, 36, mentally visualizes her subject and blindly jots down "doodles" or "squiggles." Then she lists ten words that come to mind. Afterward, she sketches a more complete drawing -- "the big picture." She repeats this process three times, then compares notes with the other fourteen viewers in her firm. "It's about 75 percent accurate," she says. "The data is always correct -- it's the interpretation that's off sometimes."

Before her meeting with the FBI, over coffee at the Algonquin, Calabrese shares some of her report. "It's not very pleasant," she says. "We see more attacks." As for the location -- no big surprises there. "We are all seeing the subway," she says, pulling out three sketches, said to be from three separate viewers, featuring giant wormlike objects snaking beneath crowded streets. The worms are circled: "That's the target." The cryptic diagrams include words like SNOW BANK. "That could suggest a season," she explains helpfully.

A spokesman from the FBI's New York Bureau won't confirm or deny Calabrese's alleged meetings. "We have 1,100 investigators here," says Joe Valiquette. "She could have met with anyone." In Washington, however, her name was more familiar. A former Justice Department lawyer said Calabrese's psychic findings, along with those of other remote viewers, have been looked at in the past, and in some cases, the information was "elevated up the channels."

The FBI does not use psychics as official sources, the lawyer says; it happens "under the table." After September 11, "the attorney general told us to think outside the box," says this person, who still works closely with federal law-enforcement officials. "This is definitely thinking outside

Psychic Ops

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the box." (Perhaps that explains why Calabrese's premonitions sound ever so slightly like Ashcroft's "credible but nonspecific threats.")

But critics wonder if Calabrese's marketing instincts have gotten the better of her. "I doubt she's making it up," says Paul H. Smith, a former military viewer, and now president of Remote Viewing Instructional Services. "But she's also, well, a little out there."

Indeed. On her Website, LargerUniverse.com, Calabrese claims to have had a vision of the World Trade Center attacks way back in 1997, with help from a source she refers to as "the Grey Dude," a three-foot-six-inch extraterrestrial who appears in her bathroom at night. So where's Osama bin Laden? It seems that the Grey Dude's guess is as good as anyone's.