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Psychics among hundreds of tipsters in Ayla case

WATERVILLE -- Hundreds of tips have been phoned in to police investigating the disappearance of 20-month-old Ayla Reynolds, some of which are coming from people who are calling themselves psychics.

BY [DOUG HARLOW](#) STAFF WRITER



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WATERVILLE — Hundreds of tips have been phoned in to police investigating the disappearance of 20-month-old Ayla Reynolds, some of which are coming from people who are calling themselves psychics.

“As of right now, we have received a total of 500 tips — 75 of those have been from psychics,” Deputy Waterville Police Chief Charles Rumsey said Friday. “Each tip we receive — psychic or not — is assigned to an investigator. Contact is made with the person providing the tip, if possible. They follow up on each tip to the extent possible given the specificity of the information provided.”

Psychics claim to have visions of missing people and specific places and offer police tips on where to find missing children. One such psychic from California this week sent the Morning Sentinel a map and a detailed description of his vision of Ayla Reynolds. A reporter went to the site, but there was nothing there.

Rumsey would not comment on the information from the psychic from California or other specific tips.

“I have no personal opinion to share about them and I don’t know the statistics about their reliability in

general,” he said.

The influx of tips from psychics has also been seen 1,600 miles away from Waterville — in Kansas City, Mo. Police in both cities are investigating similar missing child cases.

Reynolds has been missing since Dec. 17 after her father reported her disappearance. Search teams have scoured woods and streams. There are posters and Facebook pages showing the her face, but she has not been found.

In Kansas City, Lisa Irwin, whose first birthday was Nov. 11, has been missing since Oct. 4. Her father also reported her missing and volunteers have been out in full force, despite cold temperatures, searching for any trace of the missing child the media has dubbed “Baby Lisa.” Again, there are posters and Facebook pages showing the girl’s face and details of how she was dressed when she disappeared.

Maine Department of Public Safety spokesman Steve McCausland said Friday there have been cases in Maine in which psychics have offered their assistance, but could not recall a specific case in which psychic information has been used by investigators.

“Their calls are appreciated and their assistance is appreciated,” McCausland said. “As with any member of the public, we appreciate assistance and willingness to help.”

Capt. Steve Young, spokesman for the Kansas City Police Department, said he remembers specific tips from a psychic in Texas on the Lisa Irwin case, but it made a significant difference in their search.

“We’ve really never have had a lot to go on this case and we have pursued well over 1,000 tips that have come in,” Young said Friday. “We have followed up on all tips that are practical to follow up on. So, whether it came from a psychic or not, if the information seemed reasonable, we would follow up on it. We didn’t give any greater or less value to a tip because it did or did not come from a physic.

“A tip is a tip. We’re not any further than we have been in the last month or so.”

In a report about psychics and missing babies broadcast on Kansas City TV station KCTV on Dec. 2, Benjamin Radford, deputy editor of Skeptical Inquirer science magazine, called the Texas psychic’s tip “bogus.”

“High-profile psychic failures are nothing new,” Radford said in the report, published online by Discovery News. “Despite claims to the contrary, there is not a single documented case of a missing person being found or recovered due to psychic information. And despite (the psychic’s) obvious failure in finding Baby Lisa, she insists she is doing a public service and will continue to provide psychic information about missing persons.”

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