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Clarion Review

Thriller

True View
James George
iUniverse
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Four Stars (out of Five)

Quick and compelling, the mystery in this thriller peels open like an onion, offering a unique premise and believable characters.

"Remote viewers" allegedly use extra-sensory perception and out-of-body experiences to find, track, and, in some cases, attack their targets. While these techniques are not fully explained in James George's *True View*, learning about this talent and how the heroine uses it to battle a terrorist is an engrossing voyage of discovery for readers of this psychic-action thriller. Neither prior knowledge of or belief in remote viewing are necessary to enjoy George's tense and clever story.

On the back cover, the author notes he was trained in and "still practices Remote Viewing." A little research reveals there was a U.S. military program (similar to that depicted in the movie, *The Men Who Stare At Goats*) during the later stages of the Cold War that sought to use psychic powers to spy on the Soviets. The controversial program was discontinued in the mid-1990s due to lack of discernible progress.

While a definition of remote viewing and what its adherents claim they can do with it would have been helpful, the concept is revealed little by little in a clever "show, don't tell" manner over the course of the novel. Reading *True View* in that sense is much like peeling an onion one thin layer at a time.

Remote-viewing heroine Ashlee Sutton delivers her tale in a first-person narrative. In the first chapter, she is whisked away by agents of an unidentified government organization who throw her feet first into a mobile mission run out of a mobile home, where she must identify, track, and anticipate the actions of a terrorist. The hunt-the-bad-guy-with-your-mind premise is a clever one, and any reader willing to keep an open mind is in for a tense and thrilling ride.

George's characters, if not their mental talents, are believable. There are straight-laced, no-nonsense Secret Service types, chief among them senior agent Daniel Strepp, whose presence is depicted entirely in telephone conversations, and Angie Smithers, who occasionally lets down her guard to give a glimpse of the human side that hides behind her cold professional exterior. Ashlee is similarly multidimensional—worried as often about her dogs and the fiancé she was forced to leave behind as she is about the mission. That mission, which starts out as a rather routine manhunt, turns into a fight for her own survival when her team discovers the enemy has an ally with mental powers even more powerful—and more deadly—than those which Ashlee possesses.

At just over 180 pages, this small book, with a small cast, can easily be read in one sitting. Or read it in snippets and make it last—at least until the halfway mark. From there, readers need a drink and snack handy because it is unlikely they will be able to put down this crisply and cleverly written psychic thriller.

Mark McLaughlin