



Interview Questions

Life After Death

By Paul Davids

1. In your films, you've taken on a lot of controversial issues – aliens in ROSWELL, LSD in TIMOTHY LEARY'S DEAD, the high price of Van Gogh paintings in STARRY NIGHT – you even investigate Jesus' missing years that aren't mentioned at all in the New Testament, in your film JESUS IN INDIA. Now you take on one of the biggest controversial questions of all time – is there life after death? How did you end up there?
2. You'll have to admit there's been a lot about life after death on TV – especially GHOST HUNTERS – shows that take for granted that there are spirits out there and we can connect. What makes your film different?
3. Life after death covers a lot of ground, from orthodox religious views of heaven and hell, to ghosts, spiritualism, reincarnation, poltergeists, mediums, angels, apparitions, materializations and even near death experience. How did you choose what to emphasize?
4. You make a strong assertion in this film that something very unexplainable happened to you, which set you off on this quest. What happened, why do you think it's important, and do you think you'll be believed?
5. There's a focus in your film on what you call the Forrest J Ackerman case of After Death Communication. Tell us who Forry Ackerman was, and how did you know him?

6. All of Forrest J Ackerman' bios online and in books emphasize the fact that he was a skeptic and an atheist who didn't believe in an afterlife. Some of his friends may think you're not honoring his beliefs by suggesting he's leaving calling cards now that he's gone. What do you say to that?
7. How long have the strange incidents been occurring for you, and why do you attribute them to Forrest J Ackerman? And have these things been happening to other people who knew him too?
8. Your press release says there are 4 New York Times best-selling authors in your film. Who are they, and what do they contribute?
9. Michael Shermer is one of those 4 New York Times best-selling authors in your movie, and everyone knows he's an arch skeptic about all paranormal claims. Why is he in your film? He doesn't usually show up in independent films – he's sort of known as the hatchet man a network brings in when they need someone to contradict someone who has a claim. Did you choose him of your own free will to be in this film, and what does he add to the picture?
10. It's hard to think of another of your films that involves you so personally, except perhaps THE ARTIST AND THE SHAMAN. That was about your reaching out to a shaman for emotional support after your father died, and art as therapy for remorse. Similarly, THE LIFE AFTER DEATH PROJECT isn't just a matter of theory and conjecture and book research for you, it was a personal quest. Isn't that a risky way to do a documentary, people could say you lack objectivity.
11. Actually, several of your films deal with life after death. In THE ARTIST AND THE SHAMAN you speculate about whether a certain 3-year old boy might be the reincarnation of your father. In STARRY NIGHT you bring Vincent van Gogh back from the dead for 100 days, a century after he died. In JESUS IN INDIA, there's speculation about the accuracy of the reports of the disciples that Jesus died and rose from the

dead. And now you have THE LIFE AFTER DEATH PROJECT. Has this topic been a long time obsession for you?

12. You didn't set out to just make one film about this, you've made two, and you're releasing them both at the same time. How did that come about?
13. Anne Strieber is an executive producer of your film. She's married to Whitley Strieber, who has made some very extraordinary claims in his books like COMMUNION, about non-human visitors at his cabin in upstate New York, and alien abductions. How did Anne and Whitley become involved in your project, and why?
14. In your sequel film, THE LIFE AFTER DEATH PROJECT 2, Colonel John B. Alexander is one of the major contributors, an expert in non-lethal weapons and a pretty pragmatic skeptic, especially about UFO claims. For instance, you made the film ROSWELL for Showtime, and John Alexander does not believe Roswell had anything to do with aliens. So how does he end up in your new film, and why?
15. THE LIFE AFTER DEATH PROJECT builds to a pretty astonishing climax involving the research of Dr. Gary Schwartz, a psychology professor at the University of Arizona in Tucson. What is his research trying to show, and how does it apply to your apparent after death communication from Forry Ackerman?
16. There are some mediums in your film – three, in fact. What do you think of mediums, and why should we take them seriously? Do YOU take them seriously? And if so, why?
17. Sir Arthur Conan Doyle, creator of Sherlock Holmes, shows up in your film in some old clips, and he makes some strong claims about the reality of spiritualism and séances. Didn't Harry Houdini do an effective job of discrediting him? Why do Conan Doyle's beliefs about life after death matter today?

18. One of the criticisms you're sure to hear about THE LIFE AFTER DEATH PROJECT is that you give credibility to synchronicities – the odd little coincidences of life – it's easy to jump to conclusions and say they mean something, that they're messages, but surely coincidences are always going to happen to people. That's just a matter of statistics, isn't it – why tie that in with so-called 'Messages from the Other Side'?

19. Here's a personal question for you as a filmmaker. When we look at your body of work, it's pretty clear that you often set yourself up to be attacked by those who disagree with you. Religious Christians think you stepped "over the line" in "JESUS IN INDIA," the U.S. Air Force has taken you over the coals for your film about the so-called alien UFO crash at Roswell, you've even angered some atheists who think you were much too kind to Catholicism in "BEFORE WE SAY GOODBYE," your movie about a Hispanic-American family. And you made "TIMOTHY LEARY'S DEAD," about the so-called Prophet of LSD who most reasonable dismiss as a dangerous lunatic. How are you going to react if people simply dismiss your new film as not credible?

20. One of the most cutting remarks I could find about one of your films was something the Wall Street Journal said about JESUS IN INDIA. The religion writer there said the film was a Cavalcade of crackpots. Is that what you specialize in – crackpots?

21. So Paul, it's now been over four years since you say that strange inkblot showed up on a piece of paper – and you've gone to chemists, universities have studied it, nobody has any clear answers – but can you honestly tell us, after four years, that you REALLY believe it has extraordinary significance? That's it's not just something hard to explain that might not have any particular meaning? Is it still a sort of "psychological gateway" for you to belief in life after death?

22. What's happening with your film – or actually, it's 2 films, isn't it? THE LIFE AFTER DEATH PROJECT 1 and 2. Where can people see them? How can people find them?