

# ARTICLE

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## Scientific Evidence of Life After Death: Messages... and a Friendship from the Hereafter

by Simon Warwick-Smith

**W**hat happens when a steadfast atheist dies and discovers he was wrong about life after death? Although he was a world famous futurist and a pioneering promoter of science fiction books and films, Forrest J Ackerman never believed in an afterlife of the soul, the spirit or the mind; nonetheless, he promised a few respected colleagues that, if when he passed he discovered he had been mistaken (which he sincerely doubted), then if it were possible, *he would send messages from the beyond.*

*“Maybe I’ll drop you a line,”* he told co-author Paul Davids.

Ackerman died in 2008, and since then, a compelling trove of scientific data has accumulated to prove that he continues to communicate with the living, primarily with Paul Davids, his longtime friend and former protégé. The first “line” showed up in 2009 after a tribute to the deceased. In life, Ackerman had been an editor of a popular magazine, and it seems that he altered a document using ink, while Davids was alone in his Santa Fe house. That’s how it began. And all indications are that Ackerman has been involved, post-mortem, with the surprising and inexplicable events that have intruded upon and baffled university scientists who agreed to study this case.

In a new book, *An Atheist in Heaven*, Davids and his co-author, Gary Schwartz, Ph.D., describe in hair-raising detail more than 100 incidents of Ackerman’s unusual and uncanny messages, many of which have defied both chemical and technological explanations.

Laying out details of almost 150 unexplained anomalies, including physical phenomena, synchronicities, Instrumental Trans-Communication (ITC) and studies with mediums related to these contacts from the hereafter, *An Atheist in Heaven* is a 514-page, decisive “monument” to afterlife evidence. It is sure to challenge skeptics,

followers of afterlife research, and scientists who are experts in many fields, from psychology to chemistry.

Both Davids and Schwartz are renowned investigators and authors on the topic of unexplained phenomena. Davids is also well-known as the producer of films including Showtime's *Roswell*, NBCUniversal's *The Sci-Fi Boys* (the Saturn award-winning story of how Forrest J Ackerman brought together the fan boys who became the leaders of contemporary sci-fi filmmaking), *Jesus in India* and a soon to be released feature documentary: *Marilyn Monroe Declassified*. And he has co-authored six books (1992-1993) continuing the *Star Wars* saga for Lucasfilm, and is one of the founders of the original *Transformers* TV series.

Professor of Psychology, Medicine, Neurology, Psychiatry and Surgery at the University of Arizona, Dr. Schwartz didn't just take Davids' word for the astounding series of contacts with the deceased Ackerman. At his Laboratory for Advances in Consciousness and Health, Schwartz discovered that Ackerman's messages were technologically measurable in ways that are part of new exploratory techniques, new breakthroughs in afterlife research. The book also includes the report of a three-year, in-depth chemical analysis of that first "line" that Ackerman dropped to Davids - the mysterious ink obliteration message that continues to mystify scientists. Further, it includes studies of state of the art sensors that are used with computer software to obtain responses from spirits, including the late Ackerman and others. (A Ph.D. from Harvard, Schwartz is also the author of *The G.O.D. Experiments*, *The Afterlife Experiments*, and *The Sacred Promise*.)

The Ackerman case has offered many testable challenges for laboratories at Indiana University-Purdue University Indianapolis (IUPUI), the College of New Jersey and the University of Arizona, resulting in numerous studies, reports and findings that are included in *An Atheist in Heaven*, along with Davids' sworn testimony that his account is true.

Besides the scientific content, the book is also an extraordinary personal story of the relationship between the two men. As a teenager making amateur 8mm dinosaur and dragon films in the 1960's, Davids met Ackerman, who at the time was a Hollywood sci-fi editor and the envy of everyone who wanted to write science fiction books or make sci-fi films; in fact, it is well established that Ackerman is the first person to coin the term "sci-fi." His colossal collection of memorabilia from sci-fi and horror movies was called "The Fort Knox of Science Fiction" by Ray Bradbury.

Paul Davids said: *“An Atheist in Heaven is about a remarkable man whom I knew and loved for more than fifty years, and who I believe has been sending me messages since he passed away. I have come to believe this based on precise and provable incidents that, as it turns out, challenge science and current theories and ideas about after death communication.”*

The older professional took the young man under his wing, and continues to do so, after his death, even today! In 2013, Davids made a documentary film about his friendship with Ackerman and the extraordinary messages. *The Life After Death Project* was shown nationwide by NBCUniversal and Syfy.

The Society for Psychical Research has written that this research and ongoing study of the Ackerman case is *“an important contribution to the database of possible candidates for survival of bodily death.”* And, the publisher of *Skeptic* magazine, Dr. Michael Shermer, who appears in *The Life After Death Project*, wrote that he respects Davids’ integrity and his honest search.

Shermer also wrote, in *Scientific American* in 2015, that it is the *“convergence of evidence”* from different sources that ultimately moves scientific understanding forward. The co-authors of *An Atheist in Heaven* conclude that the convergence of evidence of apparent post-mortem contact from Ackerman is both comprehensive and compelling, and that their accounts and the investigation moves scientific understanding forward.

Professor Charles Tart, Ph.D., the author of *The End of Materialism: How Evidence of the Paranormal is Bringing Science and Spirit Together*, said that this case is so complex and substantive that it required more than a documentary film. It had to become a book for the evidence-based mind.

And Jay Siegel, Ph.D., former Chairman of the Chemistry Department of IUPUI and author of many forensic chemistry books for criminologists, states: *“Sometimes there are circumstances which simply cannot be explained by our five senses or by all the tools of science, and I would say that this case falls into that category.”*

The hardback book, *An Atheist in Heaven*, is available from New Leaf Distributing Company and also Amazon.com. Both companies also offer the DVD of *The Life After Death Project*, which is a 2-disc set of two feature documentary films.