

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

An Atheist in Heaven

By Paul Davids and Gary E. Schwartz with John Allison

1. Not many books these days begin with a sworn and notarized affidavit testifying that the account in the book is true. Why did you decide to do that?
2. Your co-author gives a WARNING in his preface to your book. That's rather unusual. What is his warning? What is he implying?
3. What was the mysterious event that caused you to write this book?
4. For those of us who have long pondered the mystery of life after death – and especially the topic of whether communication is possible from the deceased to the living – what will we find in your book that we haven't found in others?
5. Apart from the fact that both you and Gary Schwartz have Ivy League educations – he has a Ph.D. from Harvard and you have a Bachelor of Arts degree from Princeton – you seem as different as two people could be. Why did you and Dr. Gary Schwartz decide to team up to write this book?
6. The strange thing happened to you that set you on the road toward investigating the question of life after death - why did it have such an impact on you?
7. You attribute the ink incident to your deceased friend. Tell us why.
8. About how many bizarre or unexplained incidents have happened to you in the eight years since Forrest J Ackerman died?
9. Your book is presented as both a personal story and a scientific study. How can it be both?
10. Why do you think the science in your book brings us closer to knowing the truth about life after death?
11. It's not often that chemistry professors are called in to work on a mystery that may have paranormal ramifications. Tell us about them. Do we need to have received passing grades in chemistry to understand your book?
12. There's other science involved besides chemistry – radioactive sensors, photon detectors, computer software, bar graphs measuring bursts of energy in real time. What's that all about?



13. What happened to the scientists who became involved in studying this case? And why would any scientist agree to study something that suggests “the paranormal.” Don’t genuine scientists shy away from those kinds of studies for fear of harming their reputations?
14. When people talk about life after death, they consider all types of things such as near death experience, reincarnation, religious concepts of heaven and hell, channeling, and spiritualist ideas, like spirit worlds and the “Other Side.” Does your book get into all of it, or is it focused on one aspect?
15. It’s an odd title, AN ATHEIST IN HEAVEN. How did you settle on a title like that for this particular book?
16. Your subtitle has a question mark – The Ultimate Evidence for Life After Death? If the book has the potential to finally answer one of the greatest unknown of life, then why the question mark?
17. Skeptics and many scientists long ago closed the door on mediums, séances, spiritualism – a whole litany of things that are dealt with seriously in your book. Why should scientists open the door to these issues now?
18. In 2013 you produced the Syfy documentary THE LIFE AFTER DEATH PROJECT which was about this strange case of Forrest J Ackerman. Now you’ve written the book AN ATHEIST IN HEAVEN, largely about the same case. Doesn’t that usually happen the other way around – why a book AFTER the film?
19. The Society for Psychical Research in the United Kingdom has written in a review of your film, THE LIFE AFTER DEATH PROJECT, that this is a significant case, but they point out that, after all, this whole chain of events for you started with what is basically one single inkblot on a piece of paper. How did something so small and seemingly insignificant become so important in this investigation?
20. Have you always believed in the paranormal and spirits and “the Other Side?” Were you raised with religious beliefs, or to be open to these kinds of ideas?
21. The theory that you and Gary Schwartz put forward in AN ATHEIST IN HEAVEN seems to be primarily that Forrest J Ackerman has been making himself known to you repeatedly since his death by causing bizarre anomalies or impossible physical things to happen that relate to him. Assuming he does exist “on the Other Side,” why do you think he would be doing these things?
22. Would you say that you have witnesses to some of the events that happened to you? And if so, what do those witnesses think about it?
23. The head of the Skeptic’s Society, Michael Shermer, who is a major skeptical author, was in your film as a sort of token debunker. And in your book, AN ATHEIST IN HEAVEN, you publish an inscription he wrote to you in which he says he respects your honest search and your integrity. How do you think that statement helps you, and what do you think he means by it? Has his own skepticism about these kind of phenomena evolved?