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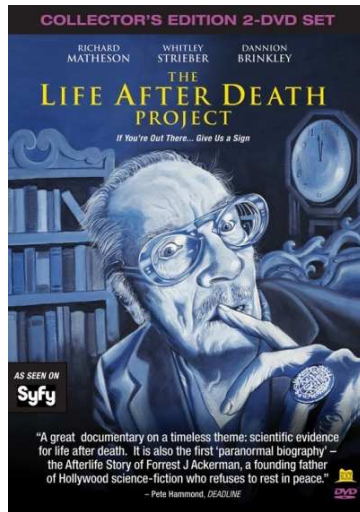
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## "The Life After Death Project" Will Re-Affirm Your Beliefs, Whatever They Might Be Review

by Jason Ratigan



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There are aspects that are unexplained.

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Sometimes, things happen that seem inexplicable. The bell chimes for the first time in years, a feather appears as though from nowhere, and computers act strangely. The scientific method is at least 400 years old and yet people still fall foul of classic logical fallacies. *Post hoc ergo propter hoc*, "after this, therefore because of this," is on full display in *The Life After Death Project* as well as conflating correlation with causation. Writer/director/producer/star Paul Davids correlates his friendship with Forrest J Ackerman with all kinds of odd goings on in his life and that of some mutual acquaintances.

The earnestness of these explanations and eagerness to believe the mediums is slightly absurd. The personality of science fiction fans and conspiracy theorists are not dissimilar. They both have that wild-eyed look and the same sincerity in their voice. There's an extended sequence with the

University of Arizona professor that is just about ludicrous. It looks very like shaking a Magic 8-ball. You ask a question and his device readers don't go off denoting a "no" and if they do go off it's a "yes." You can see how that can seem irrefutable. He asks a question and if time continues onwards, then he gets his answer. It isn't clear if they ever asked the same questions twice, but Ackerman's a big of a jokester, so inconsistencies are covered. That's where these guys show their overwhelming desire to believe. If they were entirely determined to obtain proofs, they would be far less obliging in surrendering information to the mediums and would show the misses as well as the hits. Nobody gets it right all the time, so by selecting only convincing material it undermines their credibility.

The second disc in *The Life After Death Project* Collector's Edition DVD is the documentary *The Life After Death Project: Personal Encounters* and things go a little off the rails. This is, as you might suspect, about paranormal activity from various mediums, hotel owners, and the like. It's interesting how all of these experiences fall into pre-existing paradigms. *Personal Encounters* is episodic without much of a perceptible through-line. The most common element is the sense that this is supposed to make a viewer say "Wow, isn't that something?" and that's about all.

If you're looking to validate your own views, no matter what they are, then have I got a DVD set for you.

### DVD Bonus Features

This two-disc set is loaded with featurettes relating to Ackerman. There is a featurette on Ackerman's career, a featurette concerning Ackerman's home/museum, the relationship between Davids and Ackerman, footage of Ray Bradbury, Rick Baker, and Davids at Ackerman's tribute, an interview with Jacob Murray of the Science Fiction Museum, and a video by Dr. John Allison (one of the forensic scientists) telling his story about Ackerman screwing with his iPhone.

*"The Life After Death Project"* is on sale July 16, 2013 and is not rated. Documentary. Written and directed by Paul Davids.

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**Jason Ratigan** • Staff Writer

A lawyer-turned-something-else with a strong appreciation for film and television. He knows he can't read every great book ever written, but seeing every good movie ever made is absolutely doable. Check out his other stuff on Wordpress.

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