

USA 2013

produced by

Paul Davids, Hollace Davids (executive), Anne Strieber (executive) for Yellow Hat Productions/SyFy

directed by Paul Davids

starring Richard Matheson, Whitley Strieber, Dannion Brinkley, Gary E. Schwartz, Michael Shermer, Forrest J Ackerman (archive footage), Joe Moe, Scot Johnson (narrator), Juanita Sena-Shanon (narrator), John Allison, Gina Ammerman, Dennis Billows, Paul Jeffrey Davids, Sean Fernald, Phyllis Balde, Ian Paul Johnston, Lynne Kitej, Justin Knause, Carl Langspecht, Michael MacDonald, Glennys MacKay, Mark Macy, Todd Easton Mills, Deborah Painter, Leo Sprinkle, Anne Strieber, Claude Swanson, Orit Ish Yemini Tomer, Casey Wong, Catherine Kenney Yunt

written by Paul Davids, music by Herman Beefink, Errol G. Specter

documentary

Life After Death Project

review by

Mike Haberfelner

It all starts with a very innocent incident: One of Paul Davids' freshly printed out documents gets smeared while he has gone to the toilet - but not the whole document, just a certain line. He swears that the line was not smeared when he left for the castle of solitude (of course we only have his word for that) and claims the smeared line was wet when he came back - which might serve as some sort of explanation. However, when Davids investigates a bit further, he finds a vague connection of the obliterated line to the nurse/manservant of his idol, late Forrest J

Ackerman of *Famous Monsters of Filmland*-fame. He soon enough finds more and more (at best) circumstantial evidence that might link the smeared line to dead Ackerman (who by the way made it a point he did not believe in the beyond), including the deceased's trademark brand of humour, and soon is convinced Ackerman tries to communicate with him. (It has to be mentioned here though that Davids did go through the trouble of handing the smeared document over to a forensic scientist, who couldn't explain it.)

The Life After Death Project really goes out of its way to make its point, trying to collect as much evidence as possible for life after death - only, like most documentaries of its ilk, it's not likely it will convince even one person who doesn't actually want to believe - basically, the evidence provided (including sheets of paper blown off a table and an Iphone falling of a mantlepiece) is extremely feeble, often not properly linked to the case at hand, and sometimes the obvious is quite simply overlooked to state its case (like the painting of Ackerman in front of a clock showing it's close to midnight - monsters were the guy's world, for crying out loud, of course his clock would show close to midnight). Basically the whole thing seems to be a fanboy's dream of his idol coming down from above to haunt him ...

That said, as a science fiction fan, you probably will want to see this film anyways, as it shows many artifacts of Ackerman's vast collection of memorabilia including original Harryhausen miniatures, vintage magazine covers, rare stills and snapshots of Ackerman with horror celebs and the like. It's really a treasure trove in that respect ... you just might have to take the story around it with more than a grain of salt.

review © by **Mike Haberfelner**

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