

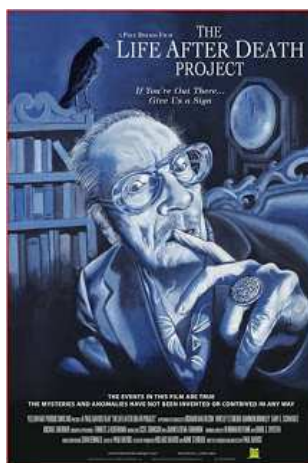
significant event in the history of the phenomenon, and it makes sense that it has permeated our cultural fabric in the form of movies, TV shows, comic books and video games. But are there any other historical UFO-related events that would lend themselves particularly well to a Hollywood dramatization? Davids certainly thinks so, with one case in particular standing out as a yet-to-be-made movie classic: "I think that the untapped gold would lie in Rendlesham Forrest." He is, of course, referring to the Bentwaters case, which, although featuring no UFO crash/retrievals, involved multiple military personnel – including a Lieutenant Colonel – witnessing spectacular UFO incursions at a highly sensitive US military base on UK soil over three nights in December, 1980.

Our discussion about unproduced UFO movies reminds Davids of his own project in this subgenre that failed to launch. He had a long-term working relationship with the outspoken Mars anomalies researcher Richard Hoagland: "We wanted to do a film about the face on Mars and we had a deal at RKO to do it, I was going to direct it, it was far along in development." Unfortunately, the creative director at RKO with whom Davids and Hoagland had been working left the film company unexpectedly. "All of the films he'd been developing were dropped," says Davids, in a sharp tone of frustration. "So we did not get to make that movie."

I offer that perhaps this was a lucky escape on his part – Mars being perennially toxic at the Hollywood box-office. "There have been a lot of problems," Davids acknowledges. "*John Carter!* I don't think anyone now is racing to make another Mars movie." He does, however, hope that cinemagoers might someday see a movie about the famous UFO contactees of the 20th Century, such as George Adamski and George van Tassel, who claimed personal interactions with enlightened space folk bringing messages of peace and brotherhood. "I would have loved to have been the one to make that," he says, wistfully. "It would be wonderful to have a film about Adamski. It would be a great subject matter and it could be done."

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Our conversation shifts now from the past to the present and to Davids' latest TV project – a documentary feature for the Syfy channel. "It's called *The Life After Death Project*. I think it is the most sophisticated look at the evidence for life after death that has been put together so far in a film." This is a deeply personal project for Davids, who has always been fascinated by the idea that our life-essence survives beyond corporeal death. "It's based on a real case involving one of my mentors, the late Forrest J Ackerman, that touched my life very, very deeply," he tells me. "In the old days they called it spiritualism... getting messages from the dead, and it was all dismissed as hokum. But they threw out the baby with the bathwater. There's a lot of real data there. There is a real psychic effect. The case is made that there is something in our personality that survives."



Though very few in the UFO community are aware of it, Davids' other great passion in life, besides film, is painting and drawing, and he recently launched a new website – [pauldavids-artist.com](http://pauldavids-artist.com) – showcasing his artistic accomplishments. "There's about 25 years of work on there," he notes. "A lot of my earlier paintings have been in exhibitions, but my last ten years of work has not yet been seen. Now it can be seen online."

Davids has been painting for as long as he can remember, but it was not until the late 1990s that he truly threw himself into it. In 1999, he directed *Starry Night* – the van Gogh film he'd been penning at the time of his life-altering UFO sighting. The iconic Dutch painter lodged himself deep in Davids' psyche: "He just caught hold of me," he says "and I just started painting and producing a large body of work." *Starry Night* sees Vincent van Gogh – unappreciated in his own time – drink a potato potion he acquired when painting 'The Potato Eaters,' which causes him to return to life in modern-day California where he discovers that his paintings are revered as masterworks.

Today, as a filmmaker and artist, Davids shows no sign of slowing down. "I'm still operating with the same pace and energy and excitement as I did when I was 35 or 40," he declares, with the vim and vigour of a 35 or 40 year old. "Nothing's changed for me." His fascination with the UFO enigma is also as strong as ever. Davids' sighting that fateful day in 1987 opened his eyes to a world hidden from public view, buried beneath sixty years of government denial and ridicule. "When will they ever decide to tell us? What will it take?" he asks, rhetorically. The culture of secrecy still agitates him: "I think the whole cover-up is a disgrace," he fumes. "I'm opposed to it from top to bottom. So that's why I made the film."

The film, it should be noted, was a huge success, both commercially and critically, not only significantly increasing Showtime's subscriber base, but also garnering a Golden Globe nomination for best television movie. "I think the impact was considerable," says Davids of *Roswell*. "It was enormous. Millions of people saw it. Millions."

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| The Forgotten (2004)                      |
| Looney Toons Back in Action (2003)        |
| Dreamcatcher (2003)                       |
| Men in Black 2 (2002)                     |
| Signs (2002)                              |
| Galaxy Quest (1999)                       |
| The Astronaut's Wife (1999)               |
| The Faculty (1998)                        |
| Dark City (1998)                          |
| Contact (1997)                            |
| Men in Black (1997)                       |
| Star Trek: First Contact (1996)           |
| Mars Attacks (1996)                       |
| The Arrival (1996)                        |
| Independence Day (1996)                   |
| Species (1995)                            |
| Roswell [TV movie] (1994)                 |
| Coneheads (1993)                          |
| Stargate (1993)                           |
| Fire in the Sky (1993)                    |
| The Abyss (1989)                          |
| Communion (1989)                          |
| They Live (1988)                          |
| Alien Nation (1988)                       |
| Mac and Me (1988)                         |
| Batteries Not Included (1987)             |
| Predator (1987)                           |
| Flight of the Navigator (1986)            |
| Cocoon (1985)                             |
| Explorers (1985)                          |
| Starman (1984)                            |
| The Thing (1982)                          |
| E.T. The Extraterrestrial (1982)          |
| Hangar 18 (1980)                          |
| Invasion of the Body Snatchers (1978)     |
| Close Encounters of the Third Kind (1977) |
| Escape to Witch Mountain (1975)           |
| The Andromeda Strain (1971)               |
| 2001: A Space Odyssey (1968)              |
| Plan 9 from Outer Space (1959)            |
| The Blob (1958)                           |
| Invasion of the Saucer Men (1957)         |