

BEST-SELLING AUTHOR EXPLORES EVIDENCE FOR LIFE AFTER DEATH

Her experiments with mediums in US and UK are impressive

INDEPENDENT investigative journalist Leslie Kean has a justifiable reputation for accuracy, coupled with the courage to delve into subjects that many prefer to dismiss without proper investigation.

The American author established her credentials in this respect with a book on a topic that interests many in the paranormal field. *UFOs: Generals, Pilots and Government Officials Go On the Record* was a 2010 New York Times No 1 best seller, an unexpected achievement for a non-fiction book about strange, unexplained flying objects which appear to be from another world.

Kean has now followed that with an equally impressive review of the evidence for survival after death which is likely to have a similar impact on the reading public.

Why did her UFO book do so well? Part of the reason, Kean told *Discovery News*, is that "I am trying to be very straightforward as a journalist, laying out what we know based on the official records. Also, many of the chapters were written by other people [including generals and former Arizona governor Fife Symington] and John Podesta [former White House chief of staff] wrote the foreword ... They're not just taking my word for it, the readers get to actually read what these authorities have to say in their own words."

It proved to be a winning formula and one that she has now applied to an equally controversial subject: life after death. The advantage for Kean is that

mediumship provides more certainty in offering evidence that can be probed on the spot, compared with UFOs whose appearances are notoriously difficult to predict or corroborate.

And so, in *Surviving Death: A Journalist Investigates Evidence for an Afterlife* (a 409-page illustrated book, published in March), she is able to share the results of two personal experiments as well as collecting, digesting and analysing a wealth of information and conjecture about the nature of psychic abilities and the possibility that consciousness survives death.

In addition, just as she did with her UFO book, she includes 10 chapters written by experts in their respective fields, which include reincarnation, out-of-body and near-death experiences, mental mediumship, paranormal investigations and physical

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The author conducted test sances with Laura Lynne Jackson in the US (left) and Sandra O'Hara in Belfast (via Skype)



Julie Beischel of the Windbridge Institute (left) and Dr Jim Tucker of the University of Virginia are two of the 10 experts who contributed chapters to the book



phenomena. They include names that will be very familiar to Psychic News readers, such as Dr Julie Beischel, Dr Jim Tucker and Prof Erlendur Haraldsson, all of whom have featured in our columns.

Kean's introduction to her superb new book leaves readers in no doubt about what they can expect. She explains: "I was directly exposed to people capable of perception that seemed to transcend the limitations of the physical brain; unexplainable forces, acting with apparent intelligence, able to move objects; and the delivery of obscure and accurate details of possible discarnate beings communicating through people unknown to them."

She reports on the impressive results of two private sittings she had with professional mental mediums, Laura Lynne Jackson in the United States and Belfast medium Sandra O'Hara (via Skype). Spirit communicators at these sessions included her younger brother and UFO researcher Budd Hopkins, a close personal friend who was well known in UFO circles.

Surviving Death confronts the many arguments that sceptics offer as alternatives to accepting such readings as evidence of the soul's continuing existence after death. Kean's in-depth exploration of the subject includes consideration of the "super-psi" theory that attempts to explain all paranormal phenomena, and "spirit communications" in particular, as an extension of human abilities.

It becomes clear that such a theory is hopelessly inadequate to explain the physical mediumship Kean experienced when she visited English medium Stewart Alexander.

"The sances with Stewart Alexander

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have changed my life," she writes. "Since I witnessed the materialisation of a human hand, touched it, and felt its life and warmth, a door was opened in me. I encountered something utterly incomprehensible yet physically real.

"I have come to know Stewart's spirit guides quite well, through laughing with them, asking them questions, and being indescribably moved by their purity of intention and distinct personalities."

Inevitably, many readers will have difficulty accepting Kean's eye-witness account, not because they doubt her credibility as an observer but simply because what she reports is so astonishing and so unlike anything their minds can comprehend. This is particularly true of her encounter with ectoplasm, at one séance, when she was asked, "Would you like to feel the hand of a man dead to your world for over a hundred years?"

"I watched [it] form again into a living hand, which moved close to my hand and touched it. I held that materialised hand in mine. It felt completely normal and human, with joints, bones, and fingernails, but much warmer than my hand and larger, with sort of stubby fingers and very soft skin. Once again it withdrew."

So impressed was she with what she witnessed that she has given over an entire chapter of her book to Alexander, to discuss his own development and the challenges of being a physical medium. He has also written an autobiography, *An Extraordinary Journey: The Memoirs of a Physical Medium* (Saturday Night Press Publications, 2010).

Regular *Psychic News* readers will be familiar with the way in which Alexander's physical phenomena have manifested and developed over the years.

For example, Katie Halliwell, author of a trilogy of books on his mediumship, produced an illustrated feature, "New physical phenomena in home circle" which described and depicted what the sitters were experiencing (PN 25 Aug - 7 Sept 2012).

And a report of his November 2014 seminar gave a detailed account of a physical séance that included the familiar "matter-through-matter" experiment and provided direct-voice and independent voice communications as well as the levitation of the medium at least 3ft off the floor (PN January 2015).

This year's Spring seminar at Cober Hill (17-19 March), writes Warren James, included a presentation by Alexander about the physical materialisation mediums of the past. What's more, there was a surprise in store for the 60 or more delegates who had gathered at the



Author Leslie Kean with Stewart Alexander at Cober Hill (Photo: Leslie Kean)

picturesque conference centre for this very special weekend!

A true historian, Stewart has a vast collection of firsthand accounts from elderly Spiritualists who had kindly committed to tape their own wonderful experiences with many great mediums that today we can only read about. That night, he told us, they would speak to us about their experiences through recordings that are now a quarter of a century old.

Their accounts evoked laughter and wonder from all delegates present. It must not be forgotten that Stewart is not sitting silently upon a vast historic library of audible accounts, far from it! Two years ago he released a double CD containing a selection of these very recordings and this double CD is available for all interested parties to purchase.

The first full day also saw medium and speaker Peter Egan give a most uplifting and thought-provoking talk. This was followed by various workshops and Stewart himself played host to those who wished to ask questions, to understand and seek advice on their own individual development and that of their circles.

To show her appreciation to Stewart Alexander for providing her with such impressive evidence, as well as contributing to her book, Leslie Kean had flown back to the United Kingdom in mid-March to attend the Cober Hill seminar.

During an afternoon session, which served as a book launch for *Surviving Death*, she spoke particularly about some of the child reincarnation cases she had researched or which were shared with her by investigators, sometimes involving children as young as two with numerous specific memories. Fact after fact was confirmed during each unfolding story, until the "previous personality" was identified and every statement provided was found to be accurate.

Kean also recounted some of her personal experiences with Alexander's mediumship. The evening session that followed in the darkened theatre room allowed the delegates to see some aspects of this themselves, including trance and physical phenomena.

As always, it proved to be not only a joyous and fascinating event but one that was highly evidential for some of the recipients.

And within a month of its publication, *Surviving Death* had become the top seller in Amazon's "Unexplained Mysteries" category and it is already persuading many of its readers to take a more considered approach to the growing evidence for life after death. ■

Surviving Death: A Journalist Investigates Evidence For An Afterlife, published by Crown Archetype, New York (2017)