

WHAT MAKES A GREAT CASE FOR SURVIVAL?

Miles Edward Allen

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Abstract: Effective communication of the reality of Survival is enhanced by accentuating the strongest cases and avoiding the weaker ones that are easy targets for debunkers. Since it is not feasible to achieve a consensus of subjective opinions, an objective rating system has been developed. This system is demonstrated using two cases indicating reincarnation that appear similar but are ranked far apart. The audience/readership is invited to join the organization that is behind this rating system and that seeks to discern and disseminate the most convincing evidence for the continuation of the human personality beyond the demise of the physical body.

Note: Parts of this text refer to tables that are far too complex to reproduce here. They may be viewed on-line by visiting www.SurvivalTop40.com and clicking on "The Evidence Scoring System."

Two stories, two boys, each two years old.

- Kilden Alexandre Waters (a pseudonym) was born in 1980 near Sao Paulo, Brazil.
- James M. Leininger was born in 1998 in San Francisco, USA.
- When Kilden was 2-years old, he began insisting that he was a priest named Alexandre.
- When James was 2-years old, he began claiming that he was a fighter pilot named James.
- Kilden's parents at first thought that their child merely wanted to be called by his middle name.
- James' parents at first thought that their child was merely fantasizing about flying airplanes.
- Then Kilden began saying other things that his mother knew to be true about a priest she had known as Alexandre. The child even accurately identified places in an old photograph of the school grounds where his mother had met the priest.

- Then James said he flew from a ship called *Natoma*, and he had a friend on that carrier named Jack Larsen. He even accurately identified the place in a photograph where he said his plane was shot down.
- Kilden said that he, as the priest, had been killed when his motorcycle was hit by a truck.
- James said that he, as the pilot, had been killed when his plane's engine was hit by anti-aircraft fire over Iwo Jima.
- Several years later, Kilden's mother found out that the priest, whom she had called Alexandre, had been killed when his motorcycle was hit by a truck.
- As a result of several years' research, James' parents discovered that a pilot named James M. Huston was the only airman from the aircraft carrier *USS Natoma Bay* to be shot down in the battle over Iwo Jima. Huston's plane went down when its engine was hit by anti-aircraft fire.

Two cases, both well-researched and well-documented. The tale of Kilden Waters comes from the research of H.G. Andrade of Brazil as published in the book *Reborn For Love*. The second is derived from the book *Soul Survivor* by Leininger and Gross. Which case is the stronger? Assuming that you were familiar with all of the details I had to leave out for the sake of brevity, if you had only one chance to convince a doubtful person, which case would you choose to present?

We could sit here and discuss the strengths and weaknesses of these two cases until classes start again next Fall, and I'll bet we couldn't achieve unanimity on which case was superior. And so, the only statement I am going to make this evening with which every one of you is likely to agree is: "What makes a great case for Survival is a matter of opinion."

And therein lies the problem.

Not that I am against free thinking; not that each of you, and everyone, is not entitled to your own opinions.

When we are conversing with each other, we both enjoy and benefit from sharing an eclectic mix of stories. Sitting around a conference table, or a lunchroom table, or a table at the local tavern, with comrades who are already convinced of an afterlife, the tales that captivate best are those with uncommon characters, strange plot twists, and unexpected endings. But when we are out there, attempting to change the public's

understanding of the life beyond this one, then we need to take a much different approach to our communications.

I am president of an organization called AECES. That is, the Association for Evaluation and Communication of Evidence for Survival. This organization was formed by a few folks who seek a more tolerant, compassionate, and peaceful world for their children and future generations. We work towards such a world by actively and energetically promoting the public understanding that death is not the end, that there are numerous “heavens” of varying desirability, and that our current actions here are key to our future happiness or misery therein.

AECES is neither religious nor political. We simply try to shine a little light into this dark corner of understanding, so that people can see to make better choices for themselves.

The first step is to convince various groups and audiences that there actually is an afterlife. That our personal memories and sense of ourselves do survive the demise of our physical bodies. That this is no longer a question for debate. That it has been proven, time and time again, beyond any reasonable doubt.

That phrase — “beyond a reasonable doubt” — is important, for it suggests a legal venue for any arguments about the validity or acceptability of the evidence. In such a courtroom setting, there is no place for statements as to whether or not there is “scientific” proof of an afterlife. Science is a most useful system for evaluating purely physical events; but it does not deal in “proofs” (other than in mathematics) and is useless when non-physical factors (such as spirits) may arbitrarily and surreptitiously affect its experiments.

Instead, the search for the truth in matters of the spiritual and the psychic must and should depend on well-established legalistic tests of the strength of evidence and the reliability of witnesses. These procedures have been employed for centuries to determine guilt or innocence; to set men free or send them to the gallows. When we apply them to the vast array of solid evidence for Survival, the verdict is clear: Death is but a doorway to other realms of existence.

So, how do we get people to understand their condition? By presenting solid evidence at every opportunity and by aggressively countering the misstatements and faulty logic of debunkers and uninformed skeptics. This talk is about how we can choose the most solid, the most convincing evidence.

The number of cases that have been presented as indicative of Survival is huge. Some of them are strong, others weak. Considering what Professor James said about it only requiring one white crow to prove that all crows aren't black, you might think that a strong case would more than balance out a weak one. In reality, however, one weak case, if promoted as persuasive, will outweigh a raft of strong cases, because it provides debunkers with an easy target and a reason to be dismissive of the entirety of the presented evidence. Thus, it is critical that, when publicly advocating our cause, we stick to those cases that provide the strongest evidence for Survival — and avoid promoting weaker cases.

I said the “strongest” evidence, but I’m not actually concerned with “strong” cases or (despite the title of this talk) with “great” cases. I am only concerned with determining which are the most *convincing* cases.

To determine what cases are the most convincing, AECES utilizes an analytical procedure known as the Evidence Scoring System or ESS. This is an objective system consisting of a series of decision trees. By working one’s way through a succession of questions requiring discrete answers, one can determine a case’s score without endless discussions and arguments. The ESS, therefore, is the only system currently known that gives all of us the opportunity to be more effective in our communications, by speaking with one voice.

The ESS is not perfect, of course. But, when disagreements arise about a score, it is less contentious to tweak the system than to argue the merits of the case.

And so, I shall attempt to demonstrate how this ranking system works.

Just as the first rule of physicians is “do no harm,” so the first rule of being convincing is “do not repulse.” There are a few characteristics that can cause an audience to automatically reject the evidence, to shut down, or turn away from even considering a case, no matter how strong the experts may think it is. These flaws will automatically disqualify a case from consideration by the ESS, no matter how strong it may otherwise seem.

Nothing is more closely associated with deception than darkness. People are justified in being reticent to accept any effect that requires turning out the lights. There are, as you may well know, some ways in which total darkness can actually enhance the evidence for the visitation of spirits. I discuss these in a chapter titled “The Darkness Dialogue” in my latest book. But these points are tangential to the basic issues and have little power to convince on their own.

But even with the lights turned on, seeing is not always believing. Everyone has seen illusionists do seemingly impossible things. This is one reason why physical mediumship will never convince an unbeliever. Not even when filmed with six cameras in broad daylight. After all, if David Copperfield can do it . . . ?

So, when inexplicable information is provided by a medium or manifestation in a darkened room, *we* may be impressed with its evidential value, but the association with trickery is too large a handicap for the case to convince a doubting audience.

Skeptics often denigrate reincarnation by asserting that most people recall lives of famous people. Although it is certainly possible that Napoleon or Lincoln may be born again, any case in which someone claimed such a provenance cannot be convincing. Likewise, cases wherein famous people speak through mediums seem so outlandish that they have no power to convince. Moreover, these cases are worse than useless, because they are especially attractive targets for derision.

Cases that seem to promote causes or try to change the behavior of the listener will always be viewed with suspicion. Blatant attempts to gain followers are, of course, the most distrusted; but moral, ethical, and even environmental discourses can also raise suspicions and detract from the evidential value of an incident.

If there is any evidence or testimony suggesting that the incident was the result of the use of super-advanced technology – whether extra-terrestrial, extra-dimensional, or otherwise alien – then the case comes with too much baggage to be of use as we try to spread the truth of an afterlife.

Once we have determined that a case should not be excluded on the basis of darkness, magic, celebrity, politics, or UFOs, then we can apply the first of two decision-making processes – the Certainty of Discarnate Source or “CS” system. As its name suggests, this system evaluates the likelihood that agents or mechanisms other than discarnate spirits might explain the facts of a case. This process asks a series of questions to which the answers may be yes or no, or which offer a choice of discrete options. It is therefore immune to the opinions of the person answering the questions. Depending upon the answers to various questions, points are subtracted from a base score, starting at 200. The higher the score, the more convincing the case should be.

These scores determine a case’s qualification for, and placement within, a list we call the Survival Top-40. Currently, the lowest CS score of any Top-40 case is 165 and the highest is 192. You might think that the lowest score would be owned by the case in last, or 40th, place, but it is actually ranked 31st. This is because there is a second decision-making process that results in another number, which is added to the CS score

to determine a case's final ranking. This is the "WR" system, which stands for Witness Reliability.

The decision tree for the CS score fills up 14 pages, so I clearly cannot cover every possible choice and contingency in this talk. What I will do, is follow the paths of our two two-year olds so that we see why this objective system ranks one of these cases 35th and promotes the other to the very top of the list.

After determining that the case does qualify for consideration, the initial questions ask about the type of case we are considering. The cases of both young boys elicit a "yes" response to question T-1, so we jump to question R-1.

This question is designed to reject any case in which the subject – that is, the person recalling a past life – had access to all the information recalled prior to it being recalled. The answer for both boys is no, so we move on to question R-2, which asks if any pieces of the recalled information contradict the current public consensus or the views of recognized experts. The answer is no, so we subtract 4 points and go to R-4.

Now, if I haven't put you to sleep yet, you may be wondering why we are subtracting points for agreeing with history. Isn't this imposing a penalty for the correct answer? Well, consider two cases: in one the subject recalls events during a battle in which he describes archers using bows and arrows, and another subject recalls the same battle and describes soldiers firing bolts from cross-bows. A careful review of the history books supports the presence of bows and arrows, but indicates that cross-bows were not in use in that particular locale and decade. Clearly the bow-and-arrow case deserves a higher rating than the cross-bow case, if the latter is not simply rejected as phony. But, wait! Late-breaking news tells us that archeologists digging at the battle site have unexpectedly found remnants of cross-bows. This changes the outcome drastically. Not only is the cross-bow case redeemed for further consideration, it is now more convincing than the bow-and-arrow case. For it is far more evidential to be right when everyone thinks you are wrong than to merely agree with the crowd.

This is one reason that the well-worn case of Bridey Murphy still ranks so highly on the Top-40 list. Over and over again the experts claimed that she was wrong about this or that little thing in mid-19th century Belfast. And over and over again, after careful digging through obscure records, these experts had to admit that Bridey was right after all.

And so, we subtract 4 points from the scores of both Kilden and James because no part of their memories contradicted accepted history. If either memory did contradict

history and was later proven correct, no points would be lost. On the other hand, if the contradictory memory was not shown to be correct, the case would lose 15 points.

The next question asks if more than one person recalled the same scenario. Multiple regressed witnesses to the same past event are quite rare, yet they do occur. (See Top-40 cases 18, 23, and 60.) Since no other subjects recalled the same events as Kilden or James did, we answer “no” and jump to question R-6.

Both the priest and the fighter pilot are confirmed historical persons, so we answer this question “yes” and move to R-7.

We move from R-7 to R-13 for both Kilden and James, but Kilden recalled fewer distinct and confirmable facts, so he loses 3 points while James does not.

There is a possible source of contention here, for some may argue that four confirmable facts are just as evidential as seven or twenty. This is similar to the “one white crow” argument. I concede this to be a valid point from a scientific or absolutist point of view, but when talking to the man in the street, the more facts you can enumerate, the more convincing you will be.

Questions 13, 14, and 15 are concerned with the availability and accessibility of sources of the information other than actual memories of a past life. These do not apply to our boys.

Question R-16 is there to give a credit for recalling characteristics of something that was not known to any person at the time of the recall or regression. An example of this would be the hiding places for escaping slaves described by regressed subjects, and later unearthed in the town of Millboro, Virginia. (See Top-40 case 23.) Neither of our boys gave any such info, so we subtract 2 points from their scores.

Those who believe that super-ESP is the answer to everything, will try to counter the idea of surviving spirits by claiming that the recollections of past lives are actually scenes plucked from the minds of the living. Question R-17 addresses this issue by asking if there is any link that a mind-reader might follow between the events recalled and the person doing the recalling. Such a link does not exist for any of James’ memories. On the other hand, much of what Kilden remembered was known to his mother, but the most telling evidence – the way that the priest died – was not.

Thus, we move on to question 20, which recognizes that cases in which a person recalls only a single time period within a past life are not quite as convincing as cases in which the memories cover various ages, such as Georgia Rudolph recalled in Top-40

Case #60. The negative answer to this question results in two points being subtracted from both boys' scores.

We are now directed to question number 22, which asks if the case involved an attempt to alleviate symptoms suffered by the subject. If so, we would next be asked if the therapy was successful. Since neither Kilden nor James underwent hypnosis, we instead go to question R-25.

Here, for the first time, the paths through the decision tree for Kilden and James diverge. The former's well-being was unaffected by his memories of priesthood – except for the stress it caused in his relationship with his father – while the memories of dying in a flaming cockpit were most traumatic to the latter. And so, three points are deducted from Kilden's case score.

The final CS question concerns the vulnerability of the events to influence by unknown factors. For example, the possibility of a practical joker or a dissatisfied client orchestrating a scam. Clearly, neither of our 2-year olds could have been so influenced.

And so, after making our various subtractions from the base of 200 points, we have total scores of 186 for Kilden Alexandre Waters, and 192 for James M. Leininger.

How, you might ask, does a six-point difference result in one case being ranked 34 places lower than the other?

The answer lies with the second parameter of the Evidence Scoring System, the Witness Reliability scale. This consists of an entirely separate decision tree, one which is applied to every case, although various sections are applied to various types. As with the CS process, this is an objective device. Its base score is 100 points.

Rather than drag you through another maze of tables, I shall simply summarize the differences between our two cases as determined by this mechanism.

The only WR subtraction for the James case is due to the lack of video or film records of his recalls.

The Kilden case loses ten points because it is based on the testimony of a single person (his mother) who is not a certified hypnotherapist. Of course, the testifying witnesses in the James case were not hypnotherapists either, but no points are deducted because there were four or more such witnesses.

Kilden loses another 13 points because not only were there no videos of the boy's recall episodes, there were also no video or audio recordings, or any transcripts, other documents, or photographs that lend support to the case.

And, lastly, 6 points are deducted for lack of follow-up by other researchers or reporters.

Combining these Witness Reliability scores with the Certainty of Discarnate Source scores, results in a final score of 257 for the Kilden case and 286 for the James case. So the difference between the first and 35th place is actually 29 points ... for the moment.

To date, about 70 potential cases purporting to be evidential have been considered. The highest-scoring 40 of these currently populate the Survival Top 40 ... No surprise there.

Another 20 or so resided in the Top 40 at one time but have since been bumped down to our Honorable Mention list.

To the best of my knowledge, the Survival Top 40, is the only objectively ranked list of cases offering convincing evidence of an afterlife. The goal of our organization is to promote those cases, along with some other resources we have developed, in the hope that the more people who are so convinced, the more will understand the value of compassion and tolerance, and the better off this old globe will be.

And so, the answer to the question "What makes a great (that is, a *convincing*) case?" is that it must present irrefutable and easily comprehended evidence of the occurrence of an event or the reception of information that cannot be feasibly explained by any means other than the involvement of a discarnate personality. Furthermore, in order for any case to be convincing it must be part of a collection of similarly impressive cases, and each of them must be effectively communicated over and over again until every living person on Earth cannot turn around without coming face to face with the truth.

A very tough task indeed. Perhaps an impossible one. But one that I, and my fellow members of AECES, believe is worth attempting. You can support us by joining us ... membership is free.

And, may I add, you can support me by buying my books. The collection of cases in *The Survival Files* was the inspiration and genesis of the Survival Top 40. *The Afterlife Confirmed* follows the same pattern by presenting some of the very best cases along with pertinent essays and eye-opening discussions. They will give you an effective,

inexpensive, and portable way of spreading the true and well-evidenced gospel of everlasting life.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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Biography

Miles Edward Allen is the president of AECES and the author of *The Afterlife Confirmed*, *The Survival Files*, and several other books on diverse topics. He is also the sitekeeper for www.TheSurvivalFiles.com, www.aeces.info [aka www.AfterlifeProof.org], and several other websites. He received his B.S. from the University of Maryland School of Journalism, and worked as a writer, editor, and manager for various private and federal offices over three decades.

Contact Information: Miles Edward Allen, P.O. Box 1975, Martinsburg, WV, 25402. E-mail: m-media@comcast.net or aeces@mail.com. Websites: www.aeces.info, www.MomentpointMedia.com.