

# Raymond Bayless

Raymond Bayless (1920-2004) was an American landscape painter and author of books on psychical phenomena.



## Life and Career

Raymond Gordon Bayless was born in Oakland, California, of unknown parents: he was found abandoned on a lawn. He moved to Los Angeles in 1925, becoming a successful illustrator of books and magazines while still in his teens; he also created science fiction fantasy paintings. His works are widely distributed in galleries around the world and are also found in US government buildings.<sup>[1]</sup> He married Marjorie Ann Brinkman in 1957.

## Psychical Research

Bayless was a member of the [Society for Psychical Research](#), the [American Society for Psychical Research](#) and the [Parapsychological Association](#). His eight books on psychical research covered [poltergeists](#), animal apparitions and other [apparitional phenomena](#), direct voice mediumship, phone calls from the dead, evidence of [postmortem survival](#), and the nature of the after-life. He also published a book on his personal experiences and investigations.<sup>[2]</sup>

Bayless was critical of what he believed to be an excessive focus on experimental work and statistical analysis in modern parapsychology, preferring the investigation of spontaneous phenomena.<sup>[3]</sup> He considered that most claims could be attributed to fraud and delusion, while insisting that a fraction were real.<sup>[4]</sup> He planned to publish a paper on methods of fakery in the production of spirit photography; however, this was not completed.<sup>[5]</sup>

Bayless is thought to have been the first to discover so-called electronic voice phenomena, consisting of whispers and raps heard on otherwise silent tape recordings. He reported his first long series of experiments, which had begun in 1956 with Attila von Szalay in Los Angeles, in the *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research* in January, 1959.<sup>[6]</sup> He theorized that raps may not be caused by spirit energy alone, but rather a psychokinetic force which might also be influenced or modified by spirit stimulus.<sup>[7]</sup> The phenomenon only received widespread notice with the later publication of books by Friedrich Jürgenson (*Voice Transmissions with the Deceased*, 1967) and Konstantin Raudive (*Breakthrough: An Amazing Experiment in Electronic Communication with the Dead*, 1971).

Bayless collaborated with [D Scott Rogo](#) to produce the book *Phone Calls from the Dead*<sup>[8]</sup> which described cases and speculated on possible sources and mechanics.

At the time of his death, Bayless was preparing a book of reminiscences which included information about metal-bending, luminous effects, the religious

apparitions at Zeitun and the physical phenomena he experienced with his wife.<sup>[9]</sup>

## **After-Death Contacts**

According to his wife Marjorie Brinkman, Bayless told her he would return after his death to prove that he had survived. She subsequently claimed to have seen his apparition five days after he died, and in later months to have experienced other phenomena such as touches, footsteps, door openings and closing, and raps.<sup>[10]</sup>

## **Selected Books**

*The Enigma of the Poltergeist* (1967). New York: Parker Publishing Co.

*Animal Ghosts*. New Hyde Park, NY: University Books.

*The Other Side of Death* (1971). New Hyde Park, NY: University Books.

*Experiences of a Psychical Researcher* (1972). New Hyde Park, NY: University Books.

*Apparitions and Survival of Death* (1973). New Hyde Park, NY: University Books.

*Voices from Beyond* (1976). New Hyde Park, NY: University Books.

*Phone Calls from the Dead* (1980, with D. Scott Rogo). London: New English Library.

*The Case for Life After Death. Parapsychologists Look at the Evidence* (1981, with E.E. McAdams). Chicago: Nelson-Hall.

*The Exorcism Series Book I: Possessed by the Devil* (nd.). New York: Ace.

## **Selected Articles and Correspondence**

Investigator of the invisible (1954). *Fate* 7/1, 92. IL, USA: Clark Pub. Co.

Correspondence: (1959). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, 53, 35-39.

Mark Twain, a pioneer in telepathy (1960). *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, 54/2, 81-86.

Coincidental dream and obsessive thought (1968). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 44, 267.

Correspondence: (1968, with D. Scott Rogo). Psychic surgery. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 44, 426-28.

Correspondence: (1972). The swinging pendulum trick. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 46, 104-106.

Correspondence: (1975). Low-amplitude, tape-recorded raps. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 48, 248-49.

Correspondence: (1976). Metal bending. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 48, 322.

Tape-Recording of paranormal-generated acoustical raps (1976). *New Horizons* 2/2, 12-17.

Tape-recorded, low-amplitude psychokinesis (1977). *New Horizons* 2/3, 22-26.

Correspondence: (1977). Bristol poltergeist. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 49, 474-75.

Correspondence: (1977). Low-amplitude, tape-recorded psychokinesis. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 49, 475-76; 50, 322.

Voices and raps: tape-recorded psychokinesis (1980). *Theta* 8, 8-10.

An electronic poltergeist (1984) *Journal of SITU Pursuit* 17, 23-24.

General observations (1985). *Journal of South California Society for Psychical Research* 3.

Melvyn Willin

## Literature

Alvarado, C. (2005). Obituary of Raymond Gordon Bayless (1920-2004). *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 69/4, 238-39.

Bayless, R.G. (1959). Correspondence. *Journal of the American Society for Psychical Research*, 53, 35-39.

Bayless, R.G. (1975). Correspondence: Low-amplitude, tape-recorded raps. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 48, 248-49.

Bayless, R.G. (1995). Letter to M.J. Willin re spontaneous phenomena etc.

IANDS (2004). [Obituary: Raymond Bayless](#). *Journal of Near-Death Studies* 22/4, 287.

Rogo, D. Scott (1969). Correspondence re Simeon Edmunds. *Journal of the Society for Psychical Research* 45, 28-31.

Rogo, D. Scott (1980, with R.G. Bayless, first published 1979). *Phone Calls from the Dead*. London: New English Library.

## Endnotes

### Footnotes

1. ^ IANDS (2004).
2. ^ Alvarado (2005), 238.
3. ^ Bayless (1995), personal communication.
4. ^ Alvarado (2005), 239.

5. ^ Rogo (1969), 29-30.
6. ^ Bayless (1959), 35-39.
7. ^ Bayless (1975), 248-49.
8. ^ Rogo & Bayless (1980).
9. ^ Alvarado (2005), 238.
10. ^ Alvarado (2005), 239.

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