

Larry James Stevens – Mailing: 243 S. Escondido Blvd. #747 ~ Escondido, CA 92025.

Voice-mail: 1-888-619-9559

Email: Larry@soulmanlarry.com

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Celestial Fire – A Naval Aviator’s Spiritual Odyssey (excerpt)

By LARRY JAMES STEVENS

Meet a Quintessential Mystic

The Pottenger – Holmes Connection

The developer of Holographic Psychology™, Location of Comprehension, and the syncretistic reality-levels model formulated from Science of Spirit research, is a former protégé of Ernest Holmes—Dr. James P. Pottenger. Concepts and structure devised by this dedicated, multi-sensory, *avant-garde* researcher, serve as a foundational explanation for the often bizarre nature of both ordinary and extraordinary experience. This synchronous biography includes some early history on Science of Mind.

Rendezvous with Destiny. In the late 1940s, Martha Pottenger's youngest son, James, was a senior at the University of Arizona. One evening, James was returning home with his girlfriend from a “Cinco de Mayo” celebration in Nogales, Mexico. As they proceeded north on the dark, desolate, two-lane, state highway, a southbound motorist drifted into their lane. Horn honking failed to alert the other driver to the imminent danger. At the last possible second, James attempted to save their lives by veering to the right shoulder. Overshooting the road surface, the car crashed into a ditch and rolled over. Fade to black.

The police reported that both James and his passenger were thrown from the car. Although his inebriated companion escaped with only minor injuries, James suffered serious head trauma. Unconscious, barely alive, and on his way to the nearest emergency facility, paramedics determined James had expired. They

delivered his body to the morgue for a medical examiner's official pronouncement of death. Upon arrival, handling personnel noted movement under the covering sheet. With the weakest signs of life, James was again in route to a Tucson hospital. Continuing his tenuous hold on the material realm, attending physicians worried that even if James should regain consciousness, probable brain damage would render him permanently incapacitated.

In Another Reality. Eventually, James became semi-conscious. He walked, talked, performed basic functions, but had no realization of who he was or even what planet he was on. Arizona specialists had no remedy for his walking-coma state. Because James possessed little sense of his current reality, he felt no limitation. He seemed to interact with a different, more expanded world—one without Earth's physical laws and barriers. Martha Pottenger, fortunately a woman of means, hired full-time bodyguards to accompany her *ozone-headed* son. Because he firmly believed he could fly, James attempted to leap from roofs, windows, and tall buildings. Most of us can only imagine what a parental nightmare it must have been to care for a strong, physically mature son who had no concept of material limitation. Other than his terrestrial body functions, James appeared to be joyously frolicking in an "elsewhere" area. Examining experts found James hopelessly schizophrenic and delusional. They advised Martha to institutionalize him at once.

Surreal Homecoming. James' mother brought him back to his hometown of Chicago, Illinois, for a consult with one of the country's top neurosurgeons—Dr. Loyal Davis (1896–1982). One would be hard pressed to find a brain specialist with more prestigious credentials: Chair, Department of Surgery, Northwestern University, Evanston, Illinois (thirty-one years); Chief of Surgery, Passavant Memorial Hospital; Chair, Board of Regents, American College of Surgeons (President during 1962 and 63); Founder, American Board of Neurosurgery; Editor-in-Chief, *Journal of American College of Surgeons*, 1938–1982. Incidentally, he was also Nancy Reagan's adoptive father. Yes indeedy, *very* impressive credentials. If ever there was one Human Being in the field of conventional neurology that could bring sanity to her beloved James, Martha believed Loyal Davis was that person.

A Mother's Faith. After an exhaustive examination, Dr. Davis had to reluctantly agree with the Arizona physicians. The physical brain had healed from its injury, and with no evident tumor, remaining clots, swelling, or evolving physiology, well-wishers should not expect any change to James' condition. Once again, a renowned specialist told Martha her son needed to be medicated and institutionalized—probably for the rest of his less than *natural* life.

Mrs. Pottenger listened attentively to this foremost expert. After Dr. Davis finished with his definitive diagnosis, the spirited mother of the future Dr. James P. Pottenger turned to the world-renown neurosurgeon and said: "With all due respect, sir, you're wrong. My James is destined for great things in this world and I will prove it to you and all those other one-dimensional naysayers!" Martha Pottenger, a

strong, independent person in her own right, was having none of it. If she had to travel to every corner of the globe, she was determined to find a cure for her son.

I sat transfixed as James related this amazing, “second-coming” narrative. How could an intelligent, coherent, rationally thinking person evolve from such an inauspicious beginning? This is the place where infomercial telemarketers say, “But wait . . . there's more!” Where most people would surrender to the inevitable, our purposeful, still-optimistic matriarch was just getting warmed up.

In her study and travels, Martha Pottenger was introduced to various metaphysical and religious practices, including “faith” cures. Now that a conventional solution had been ruled out, she turned toward Spiritual Science for transformational healing. After consulting with several top metaphysicians who explained the power of collective petition, she believed her best hope rested with a unified prayer group. Once Martha made her final determination, she relentlessly pursued the top religious and Spiritual leaders in North America. She used every influential method she could think of to mobilize a giant conglomerate of cottage groups. She employed them to focus on one, single purpose—bring her sleepwalking son back to full consciousness!

Martha's recruitment included, among others: Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science organization in Boston, Massachusetts; Unity Church, originated by Charles and Myrtle Fillmore of Lee's Summit, Missouri; the Divine Science organization founded by the Brooks sisters from Denver, Colorado; and what would turn out to be the most influential of all . . . Science of Mind (SOM) founded by Dr Ernest Holmes, of Los Angeles, California. Martha impressed Dr. Holmes with her love and unwavering determination, and he was intrigued by James' fate.

Ernest Takes the Reins. In discussions Ernest would later have with James, he revealed Martha's motivation was most impressively *not* a product of a mother's fear, but a resolute and faithful knowing that her son would awaken. The SOM Founder agreed to help. He coordinated the combined efforts of the unified groups previously enlisted. The entire congregation and Science of Mind staff was added to the mix. James touched the hearts of all those who learned of his ordeal.

Approximately nine months after the accident, and after the top medical experts in the country definitively concluded her insane son would never amount to anything, James awoke.

A New James—A New Quest. Still without past recollections, James remembered nothing of his childhood or the environmental events leading up to his rebirth. Those clustered around him seemed somehow familiar, but James had no direct knowledge of his friends, schoolmates, or family members. His newly awakened personality was also different. Being a child of privilege, he was generally thought arrogantly aggressive, aloof, and self-absorbed. Still quite charismatic, intelligent, and inquisitive, the new model seemed more sensitive, caring, and tolerant toward

others. [Metaphysicians call this type of dramatic personality change—with a normal psyche (no pathology) but no recoverable recollection of past events—a “Soul swap” or “walk-in.”]

Although lacking memory of how he'd obtained a formal education, James intuitively knew things. Our young protégé went back to school and started earning degrees in an effort to resolve those larger-perspective questions no one would or could answer. He did graduate and post-graduate studies in Philosophy, Psychology, Religion, and Business. At Pepperdine University in Malibu, California, he earned his first advanced degree (MBA). James had a new and especially strong interest in the workings of the mind and in the variances of human behavior. While pursuing his business career, James continued his studies and quickly earned additional degrees in philosophy, religion, and metaphysics. Always the voracious student, he soon added anthropology and linguistics. James felt an unexplained motivation to research and teach in unexplored areas of consciousness and humanity's link to the Transcendent.

James meets the Holmes Boys. Not until the middle to late fifties did James Pottenger personally met Ernest and Fenwick Holmes. With Fenwick the intellectual brother of the charismatic, crowd-pleasing Ernest, the three bonded instantly. So much so that James was invited to guest at Ernest's home during the thirty-month period he attended seminary training. James became so enamored with Ernest, Fenwick, and their unifying, all-inclusive Science of Mind philosophy that he decided to enter training and become a Religious Science minister.

Ordination. Dr. Pottenger continued to share his astonishing and previously private history with me. He described a mentoring epiphany—what Zen Buddhists call “Satori”—with Fenwick, and especially Ernest. James and Ernest would often discuss the oneness of life and existence until the wee hours of the morning. 1958–60 were especially joyous years for James. Whenever the spirited seminary student quizzically disclosed some contrasting challenge with an instructor, Ernest would reassuringly say: “Just get your certification, James; *then* you can teach concepts your own way.”

By early 1960, James had completed his training at what would later be known as the “Holmes Institute.” In the same year that the Founders Church of Religious Science was dedicated, the previously insane and written-off James P. Pottenger was ordained. Also in 1960 (April), Ernest, the charismatic and beloved teacher, motivator, and energy healer, made his glorious transition. Although saddened by the passing of his great friend, mentor, and father figure, James felt he'd found a home in Science of Mind principle.

The Question of Oneness. One day—shortly after Ernest's passing—James looked out from his Malibu ocean-home vista and asked this probing question: “Since you, *water*, are out *there*—all wet—and I am standing *here*, dry on the beach, how can it be that you and I are One?”

This unifying concept of Oneness/Universal Mind, provides the foundational principle of Science of Mind. Integrative questioning and the development of testable humanistic applications practical for the here-and-now material world have been the overriding motivation of this theologian turned human-potential researcher. Dr. Pottenger has invested the last 40 plus years bringing forth a teaching combining the science of matter, mind, and Spirit. Holographic Psychology, along with the open-ended Science of Spirit, culminates his tenacious effort. Focused on teaching *self*-realization and *self*-salvation, this facilitation embodies Dr. Pottenger's gloriously abundant gift to the world.

Third Reality and Science of Spirit (SOS) Revealed. As a new Religious Science minister in the celebratory company of the aging founder, James Pottenger witnessed a quantum shift in Science of Mind realization. Regrettably, Ernest passed before writing another book that would transcend (while still including) the humanistically-oriented Science of Mind principles then in publication. James credits Dr. George P. Bendall with preserving many of Ernest's transcendent-based dialogues that were spontaneously generated during weekly free-flow sessions attended by James and other insiders. Helen Heichert, Dr. Holmes' secretary, transcribed the recorded meetings and during Ernest's final months, several of these transcripts were gifted to George. After Ernest's passing, Helen assisted Rev. Pottenger with his new ministry.

Ernest's publisher believed the public unready for his inclusive, "**ALL is God**" message—preferring to emphasize the practical, powerful, humanistic material (cause & effect). Even an essential portion of *The Voice Celestial* was cut, but the intact text is in Volume One of *The Anatomy of Healing Prayer - Holmes Papers*)—a three-volume dialogue series, published by DeVorss.

The empowering new theory that James, Ernest, Fenwick, George Bendall, and other select Science of Mind practitioners began exploring—during those last few precious months of Dr. Holmes' physical life—is now available in a testable format. James Pottenger's SOS/Holographic Psychology™ labels transcendent awareness, "Third Reality." From directed mindfulness, which top neurologists said would *never* manifest, comes an unprecedented tool to assist our ongoing awakening; a heart structure that helps an individual more fully grasp the overriding role *belief* and *imagination* (intent) play in quality-of-life experience.

Spiritual DNA and the Human Personality Matrix. As principle researcher, Dr. Pottenger postulated the theory that a psychologically manifested *Spiritual DNA* component is part of our human personality matrix. He's also credited with the modern discovery of **Location of Comprehension (LOC)** to assist us in our reflective awakening. LOC's observer view of evolutionary behavior provides us the structure to discern the level of understanding we currently express. We learn that thoughts and actions can positively influence and enhance quality of life (for both ourselves and others) *without* any required change to one's external environment. The Pottenger model allows us to see our life, our world, our creative options, *and*

ourselves, from a multi-dimensional and therefore more cooperative viewpoint. Not present in LOC is the need to label any belief or modality “wrong” or “bad.” When fully realized, *Location* is the gateway to allowing for *all* of life’s expressions—not just those a dualistic, separatist orientation prefers . . . imagine *that!*

Progress Check. We have just completed another four-thousand-year-old evolutionary cycle. The *practice* of medicine chronicles humanity’s progress.

I HAVE AN EARACHE!

2000 BC — **Here . . . eat this root.**

1000 AD — That root is heathen; say this prayer.

1850 AD — That prayer is superstition; drink this potion.

1920 AD — That potion is snake oil; swallow this pill.

1950 AD — That pill is ineffective; inject this antibiotic.

2000 AD — Antibiotics are artificial, leading to monstrous bacterial mutations.

Here . . . EAT THIS ROOT!

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Excerpt from: “*Celestial Fire – A Naval Aviator’s Spiritual Odyssey*” – by Larry James Stevens: www.soulmanlarry.com. Email: SoulTalkUnlimited@msn.com

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