

## **BENEDICT CUMBERBATCH MAY HAVE HAD A NEAR-DEATH**

### **EXPERIENCE AS A BABY**

by P. M. H. Atwater, L.H.D.

Benedict Cumberbatch, star of the new hit movie, “The Imitation Game,” and the British television series “Sherlock,” has throughout his life borne all the markers of a child, even as a baby, who had a near-death experience. Little ones, once able to speak, try to tell their parents about what happened to them, or they’ll draw pictures or have conversations with beings no one else can see. Or, just by their behavior, stand out as decidedly different - from siblings, age mates, friends. Some grow up feeling as if they are somehow “alien,” or a mismatch in the family tree.

Cumberbatch cheated death four times: the first from hypothermia when a baby, secondly when a bomb exploded close by in the school he was attending, then from dehydration and near-starvation while hiking in Tibet during the year after he graduated from high school (known as the “gap year”), and again as a young man when he was abducted, tied up, stuffed into a car, driven to an unknown location, forced to his knees, gun muzzle to head, when suddenly his captors just up and fled - no reason given, nothing said.

The December 3, 2013 article in *GQ Magazine-UK* by Stuart McGurk details some of this, but what interests me is the incident as a baby when he nearly froze to death, and how throughout his growing years he has consistently been considered a bit “odd.” The “freeze affair” occurred because of what his half-sister Tracy did. His parents lived in a top-floor flat and would often carry his pram up to the roof whenever he was fussy, pointing him skyward. Tracy did the same thing. . . then forgot him. He was nearly blue when she rushed to the roof. She used the radiator to thaw him out. He grew up remembering “a vision of sky” from his rooftop episodes.

But that's not all that sat him apart from family, friends, and age mates. Gregarious in school, he thrived on challenge and seemed filled with plenty of self-confidence even when he made one mistake after another. He believed in himself, his talent, and his intuitive grasp of what lay before him. Unusually intelligent, he matched brains with creativity to excel in painting. He rejected ideas about good and evil, heroes and villains at an early age; when gap year came he went to Tibet and taught English at a Buddhist monastery, adopting the Buddhist philosophy as his own. Always looking for the infinite, the truth behind what seemed true, he learned hard lessons from over-doing - too much partying, booze, and pills - mostly that his body couldn't handle what others could. He was too sensitive. He is quoted as saying: "I don't seek. I don't avoid. I just follow my path, and do my best." His keen mind led him early on to being an observer; he feels more, notices more, hears more. He is precise, has problems understanding social media, and is more devoted to social justice and charitable projects than pleasing fans. His hyper-aware nature has enabled him to play tormented, brilliant loners in most of his movies, television, and theater roles, as few can.

You see the same or similar traits in child experiencers of near-death states, especially if their episode occurred around birth trauma or as a baby. I go in-depth as to what happens with little ones in my book, *The New Children and Near-Death Experiences* (Bear & Co.). Across the board, these children are smarter, more creative and intuitive, possessed of a knowing about the future, who grow up as if they could see through people and events - and that includes families, crowds, school assignments, and dates. They exist as if resident "elsewhere" and just "know" that what they are taught any at level isn't really what is true or even dependable. They abstract (think in concepts) at very young ages and have little patience for those who are easily influenced by others or who seem content with "normal". Seldom are these children satisfied with "home," preferring instead to extend themselves beyond whatever seems to limit them.

What I have noticed during nearly four decades of investigating thousands of child and adult experiencers of near-death states, is that the very young seem to imprint to the Other Side, not this one. They do not fit standard norms nor are they "aliens" from another dimension. Rather, they appear to be the vanguard of the kinds of changes now

evident in kids, normal youngsters, born since around 1982 and detailed in *Children of the Fifth World* (Bear & Co.). We are changing as a species. Near-death kids are showing us how - as is Cumberbatch, the superstar, a man who daily challenges whatever anyone once thought was the norm. . . just as a child experiencer of a near-death state would.