



Once Dead

Richard Phillips

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Jack Gregory, the CIA's top assassin, went rogue after a mission gone wrong. When a confrontation leaves him bleeding out on death's doorstep, he is faced with an offer from a dark figure named Anchanchu. If Jack is willing to act as a human host for Anchanchu, the entity will revive him and give him another shot at life. Jack takes the deal...but he must now face the consequences of having the same dark creature in his head as some of history's greatest villains. Struggling with desires and memories that are not his own, Jack is not the man he once was.

One year later, he is known internationally as The Ripper, fixer for hire, and is faced with having to wrest control of his dark compulsions while preventing a nuclear attack on the United States.

From the bestselling author of the Rho Agenda trilogy comes a globe-spanning thriller with a twist unlike anything you've ever seen...

Once Dead Details

Date : Published August 19th 2014 by 47North (first published August 5th 2014)

ISBN :

Author : Richard Phillips

Format : Kindle Edition 448 pages

Genre : Science Fiction, Thriller, Fiction, Action, Mystery, Fantasy, Adventure, Spy Thriller, Espionage, Abandoned, Unfinished

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From Reader Review Once Dead for online ebook

Melissa says

Entertaining thriller with great characters, realistic intrigue, and a touch of fantasy to keep me happy.
Already downloaded the second book in the series; looking forward to seeing how these characters evolve!

Koeur says

<http://koeur.wordpress.com/2014/08/25...>

Publisher: 47 North

Publishing Date: August 2014

ISBN: 9781477824108

Genre: Fantasy

Rating: 3.6/5

Publisher Description: Gregory, once the CIA's top assassin, went rogue after a mission gone wrong. When a confrontation leaves him bleeding out on death's doorstep, he's faced with an offer from a dark figure ..If Jack is willing to act as its human host, the entity will revive him and give him another shot at life.

Review: Wow, that is one of the worst covers ever as it doesn't even closely relate to anything in the novel.

So.....Jack, a CIA operative, is attempting to kill a special forces dude in an alley in Calcutta India, surrounded by 6 or so knife wielding (and I mean knives attached to pike poles) in a fight to the death. As Jack slowly dismantles SF dude (whom killed his brother) the Indian gang starts cutting him. Jack „Jiu Jitsu fu's his way past all the bad guys by disarming, disemboweling and just plane dissing all over the sitch. An old leathery nun finds him and Jack is eventually pronounced dead. Later, they find Jack gone, the nun cowering in a corner with a half mumbled phrase on her lips..."JACK THE RIPPER IS BACK!!". Huh? How the fug would a nun in Calcutta India in the 21 Century know that Jack the Ripper had taken up residence in, well Jack? Besides the lame fight scenes and why a gang in Calcutta would stage a fight to the death between two sworn enemies in a dark alley (which makes even less sense now that I write it down) and a nun's discernment of all things ethereal and other-worldly, this was a pretty good read.

Jack eventually becomes a kind of hit-man. I say "kind of" because if an assassin works for the side of good, is he really an assassin/hit-man? I guess it is a matter of perspective, as in "One mans terrorist is another mans freedom fighter". The torture scenes are pretty graphic. I think this helps the reader to build up a full steam of righteous indignation where we can't wait to see the bad guy(s) done in by an almost super human assass....er....hit-ma....er....vigilante. Do vigilante's get paid? There is super hottie spy chick, Janet, who is the only one to beat Jack's 1,000 meter sniper record and the only girl to ever pass the dreaded Special Forces Training (only no one can ever know about it, or her) but she moves like a dancer and is built for speed, if you know what I mean....YAWN. Jack can hold his breath for 6 minutes and quickly get his heart rate to 60bpm while killing bad guys...YAAAAAAAWN. In one scene, Jack is in the shower and the bad guys bust in. Jack takes off into the woods and kills everyone. My question is, does the guy shower with his clothes on because all of a sudden Jack has his clothes and his killing knife, but has no shoes. Ah, well

artistic license and all that.

I still don't know how Jack got the "Ripper" nickname. Besides a nun who said it to herself and is now an addled, insane hunchback, there is no one that would ascribe that moniker to Jack. But somehow the legend of the RIPPER is fluent at all levels of spy-dom. I still don't know how to rate this one. I loved it, but at times it was so fugging stoopid. Jack and Janet are pretty believable at times, then in others its the old suspension of disbelief. I am going to go with pure entertainment value and look past the glaring errors.....mostly.

Liezl Ruiz says

Once Dead is a highly detailed, eventful book, where actions are delivered blow by blow across the pages and the protagonist you'll love instantly. All the events are exciting, only that the tone of the writing is not. *Or maybe it was just my Death Watch hangover.* You get to read so many chapters first, *for which by the way each chapter is so short*, just to get the hang of the narration before you could truly appreciate it.

I remember reading a report of Jack the Ripper's real identity. He was a Polish immigrant and his profile does not indicate as someone being deadly. The only reason for his overwhelming and undeserved infamy, not that he shouldn't be seen with extreme dishonor, rather he did not deserve such global attention, was because he was only identified and indicted 2 centuries after his death. Maybe he had his fits but the kind of Ripper described in this book is way more sinister than the real Ripper I read about. Fine, the classic Ripper was so evil, he'd keep an organ as a souvenir from the female victims he'd violated.

Starting straight to action, instead of getting hooked, I almost balked. That was the prologue. But then surprisingly, when the hero was implied to have died just on the first part of it, I grieved. I felt the same sorrow I felt when *Westley* of **The Princess Bride** died not once but twice or when *James Schweitzer* died albeit necessarily in **Gemini Cell**. It was in this moment that I realized I love the book already even before I get to Chapter One.

Seriously, what woman won't get attached when Jack Gregory was described in this manner,

If the man's will is as strong as his jawline and lean musculature seemed to indicate, perhaps there was yet hope.

This is what I like about books like this. As a girl, there's nothing better than falling in love with the male protagonist of the story. **And I'd love to fall over and over again.** It's not just about his physique alone but the character by which he was mold into. Jack "The Ripper" Gregory is nothing like Jack the Ripper most people know in English history. Where the latter is a depraved psychopath serial killer, the former is an intrinsically good ex-CIA agent. But due to the ill-luck fate that has befallen him, Jack Gregory has now become a host of a sinister worm just to be alive again.

Read more on Zirev

Mike Nemeth says

"Once Dead" catapults Richard Phillips into serious thriller writer status. It's fast-moving. The hero, Jack Gregory, is conflicted in an interesting fashion, and he's good at getting himself out of serious scrapes. In the opening scene, Gregory gets jumped in an alley Return of the Dragon style. But he's not Bruce Lee. He's about as good though and gives worse than he gets. But Gregory is near death. He gets sewn up by a couple of helpful people, but it's not enough. Yet, Gregory pulls through. He dreams that some demon entered his system and gave him enough of a jolt to get out of the poor man's clinic and back into circulation. Gregory is an assassin, but he's not working for the CIA anymore. They think he's dead. He starts working for a model married to a brilliant billionaire and finds himself involved in a massive scheme to depopulate the earth. Nobody figures it out by him and a new and beautiful sidekick. I can't wait to read the next one. Oh, and it's better than his other stuff. At least I think so.

Trish R. says

Ok, so this is about our hero Jack Gregory that managed to get himself killed and was offered his life back IF he would let Anchanchu, a mind worm, tag along in Jack's brain. Now, Anchanchu is a blood thirsty killing machine so Jack has to control that part of his brain or he'd be killing anyone and everyone around him.

Although, Jack does kill a lot of people, all of them deserved it except one old man who asked to be killed because his wife just died and he didn't want to go on without her. So, Jack shot him in the head. There was a lot of killing and torture in this book. I mean, what Vlad did to that guy that failed him was really, really bad. Bloody enough so he could put the killing on the internet. What'a guy! But, I do wish I would have counted how many Jack killed in this book because it was a lot.

It was a good book but it was way too long, 448 pages AND 124 chapters. It wasn't repetitive or anything like that. It just kept putting Jack into one situation after another. So, it could have just gone on forever.

So, you have the bad guy in the CIA, Jacob Knox the killer and torturer, and Russian mob, who are all killers and torturers, too. The NSA and the good guys and you know what I found so unreal? I think the word "shit" was used 2 or 3 times and maybe goddammit a time or two. Really? Like the Russian mob wouldn't be throwing around the F-bomb every other word. I would have enjoyed this book more if the people would have sworn like in real life. But, that's just me.

This is a 3 books series and all 3 are free read and free listen.

As to the narration: MacLeod Andrews did an amazing job on everyone voice and his emotions were great. He laughed, yelled, whispered, groaned in pain, screamed like a girl when one of the bad guys were blinded. He did everything the book asked for.

Odette Cortés says

As I read about Jack "The Ripper" Gregory's adventures I couldn't help but hearing the Bourne

Identity/Supremacy/Ultimatum/Legacy soundtrack in my head. Minutes after dying Jack is approached by a creature (in what he later thinks is a dream). This strange being offers Jack a second chance to return to the world of the living, and so the ex-CIA agent rises from the dead. The book goes on a rapid pace following different characters that have major or minor roles to play in an upcoming international crisis. CIA, NSA, the Russian mob and a private corporation all converge once a couple of key players are put in motion.

What I really loved about the book was how quickly everything moves, I mean the echoes of the Jason Bourne movies are still ringing in my head, not because there are similarities, but mostly because of the way the plot moved. Quickly, zigzagging, cryptically, and in the end it kept you at the edge of your sit. Richard Phillip's *Once Dead* recaptures a lot of that quick pace action and adds a lot more. The strange combo of realistic action with the presence of the covert supernatural works well. I loved the characters and I love watching how they work to tell the story.

I enjoyed this book a lot and I'm still smiling as I write this review.

I got this book from NetGalley.

Maria says

Although this book isn't what I expected and the violence is extreme, by the end of the book I figured that it was supposed to be that way and I will need to read the next in the series to find out if I'm right. I was expecting alien space ship stuff and got a mind worm. Everything else (except the moon-mining thing and hopefully one of the weapons used) could have happened today. The plot is edge-of-the-seat, however, and the characters intriguing, including the mind worm. There are lots of references to places that most people never plan to visit, so that was quite interesting, too. I am definitely going on to the next in the series, which had better include Jack Gregory and Janet Price or I will be very disappointed.

Martha says

This was a NetGalley read that I selected based on the cover. I really wanted to like this book. The blurb sounds pretty darn cool, and the opening prologue kind of reminds me of a Robert Ludlum novel. Unfortunately, I stumbled a lot over the writing and ended up setting it aside as a DNF.

I feel like an otherwise interesting plot is bogged down by a tendency to *tell* the reader, at great length, what is happening in a scene--rather than showing it. That, and lots of clunky paragraphs, such as this one:

Removing his laptop from his case, Jack woke it from sleep mode, plugged it into his seat's power receptacle, typed in his twenty-character password, and launched the wipe utility that would perform the multi-pass digital shredding of all data on the encrypted hard drive.

It's exhausting to read that, and that's just one example of the chunky paragraphs that pepper the pages, not to mention the tech-speak (again, telling not showing). Elsewhere, the detailed physical descriptions of people keep jarring me away from the action so I can focus on how a character has "short, spiked blond hair" or a

"Pilates-tightened ass". There are times when focusing on a physical detail is important to the character itself, but this just feels fluffy and distracting--kind of like reading one of those YA novels where everyone's clothing choices are described in detail.

Speaking of characters--I have to say that jumping through multiple POVs is fine and all, a good way to keep the energy moving in a story; but when you're jumping through several different ones in the space of a handful of chapters, it starts to make one wonder a little bit: is it really necessary to have the POV of these minor characters? Especially when they fill up the pages with their telling (not showing)?

I'm sure some people will like this book, and to be fair, if you can get past the clunky writing, the plot is definitely interesting. I haven't read the original *Rho* trilogy, to which this is a prequel, so I can't say how well the two stories mesh together. But I think that if you're a fan of Ludlum's spy novels or similar books with a slightly supernatural twist, you might enjoy this. It just didn't hold my interest enough to finish it out.

Jacque Holst says

If you haven't read any of Phillips books do yourself a favor and start now.

I don't believe I've connected with an author of this type and caliber since I picked up 'Hunt For Red October' and didn't stop until I read everything Tom Clancy had in print or has put in print since. Do yourself a favor, pick up one of Richard Phillips books and start reading. You will be opening the door to a world of breathtaking action, espionage, black ops and plausible deniability. Governments hang by a thread, Assassination is common and the government office that sends you out to do the job will deny your existence if it's in their best interest. And Phillips never slows down.

Cathy Ryan says

All through *The Rho Agenda* I was intrigued by the characters of Jack Gregory and Janet Price. What was their story? Why did Jack's eyes sometimes seem to have a red glint? In this first of three prequels we get to learn much more about Jack and Janet and what makes them who they are.

Jack, a CIA agent on the trail of his brother's killer, finds himself facing Carlton 'Priest' Williams and a gang of knife wielding thugs in a Calcutta alley. After a bloody fight Jack, well outnumbered and badly wounded, is found by a nun. Taken to a basic clinic and unable to be saved, Jack is pronounced dead. Until, that is, he's visited by the demon, Anchanchu. Jack has an unimaginable decision to make.

Jack has been freelance since his revival and it's his latest client who inadvertently involves him and Janet in a plot, masterminded by an accomplished scientist, the Russian mafia and corrupt members of the CIA, which threatens the safety and security of the United States. Once again the integrity of intelligence agencies and governments, and the way they operate at the highest levels, is called into question.

I love the supernatural twist in the story and how it relates to Jack and his deadly skills. Richard Phillips has created a fascinating and compelling protagonist, fulfilling the promise which began in the *Rho Agenda*. The narrative pulled me into the story totally and, as always, MacLeod Andrews gives a superbly delivered performance whilst actually raising the bar. As each chapter comes from a different point of view so the

narration reflects that person's characterisation. It works really well. Significant character development and an extremely fast-moving plot kept me hooked until the end. This was well worth the wait.

Lisa Otoupal-Robel says

A believed-dead CIA assassin turns back up after a near-death experience, accompanied by a spirit that feeds on extreme emotions. Accompanied as in ... replacing his own life spark.

I enjoyed this book. I think we all wonder if killing kills the assassins' souls! Now, we have an ancient soul inhabiting a human, who strives to maintain his humanity while avenging wrongs.

I especially like the way the spirit could be surprised. I could almost, in my head, hear it saying, "Huh. I didn't see that coming." Cracked me up!

Worth the read!

Philip says

Wow! I LOVED THIS BOOK! Saying that doesn't do it justice. Everything about the book was extremely good...from the storyline to the pace. Once I started reading it I could barely bring myself to put it down.

John says

Jack (Ripper) Gregory is a former CIA operative who is living on borrowed time. ONCE DEAD is how he deals with this situation and how it affects him. Add Janet Price, herself an accomplished former CIA operative, and you have the makings of a cover to cover action story. From the back streets of Calcutta to the cosmodrome at Baikonur they leave a rapidly increasing body count as they work frantically to avert a major disaster on the east coast of the United States. There are several loose ends, leading to BANE'S DOMINION, book 2 in this 3 part prequel to the RHO AGENDA Trilogy.

Sean says

ARC from Netgalley

Thoroughly enjoyed this book, the story was excellent. Loved the dark passenger who resided in Jack(Ripper). Brilliantly written and very quick paced story. Hopefully there will be more from Jack.

David Dalton says

Years ago, when the first Indiana Jones movie came out (Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark) I

read many favorable reviews. A LOT of favorable reviews; almost to the point where I was questioning just how good the movie actually was. Well, the first time I saw that movie I KNEW the reviewers were right. I loved all the cliff-hanger action scenes and the never-say-die attitude of Indiana. Nothing could stop him, he was driven.

Now fast forward to the end of Aug 2014. I came across *Once Dead*, the book description caught my attention. Oh yeah, this sounds like a book I would like to read. A prequel to the Rho Agenda books (which I had read reviews of, but had not read at this point). So I checked out the *Once Dead* reviews. I saw something like 27 out of 27 five star reviews! Oh crud, they can't ALL love the book this much. This must be another case of where the author's friends and fellow authors (most of whom have never rated more than a book or two) got together and handed out five star reviews. Darn.....I really wanted to read it. So, once I signed up for Kindle Unlimited, I put the book down on my TBR list. I got to it last week and darn if those reviewers didn't get it right. I would go with 4.5 stars if I could, but I will go with a solid 4+ stars. I liked this story. Plenty of Jason Bourne style action and a James Bond (the ole style Bond ~ ("You Only Live Twice") threat to the world all rolled into one story.

If you have read the book's description you'll know that Jack Gregory dies early in the book and then comes back after a mysterious dark entity offers him life, but he has to co-exist with the entity. Okay, a little off-beat aspect to the story, but I'll go with it. Despite a few interesting flashbacks in history, the story did not really deal with this too much. I was expecting a little more development in this part of the plot. As far as I am concerned it did not really add too much to the overall plot. Jack is a kick-butt action character either by himself or co-existing with this entity. Same for his action co-star Janet.

As I mentioned, I have not read the Rho Agenda books yet, but I will now, starting with *The Second Ship*. In the reviews I had read for the Rho Agenda trilogy it appears that the trilogy is aimed a bit at young adults. No problem, as I like some YA stories (*Steelheart*). But if Rho Agenda is YA (PG-13) then "*Once Dead*" is definitely rated "R". Lots of European style action (ala Jason Bourne). I thought it was a well written thriller and besides reading the Rho Agenda books, I am looking forward to the next book in this series: *Bane's Dominion*.
