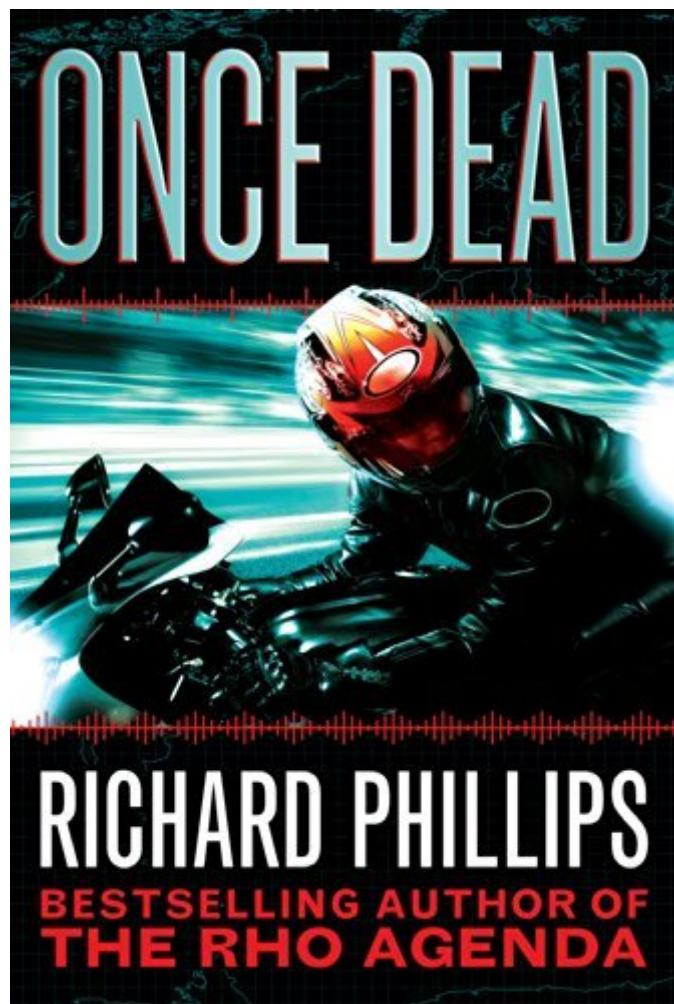


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Once Dead (The Rho Agenda Inception Book 1)



Synopsis

Jack Gregory, the CIA's top assassin, bleeds out on a Calcutta operating table and is about to die. But an alien entity has other plans for him. If Jack is willing to act as a human host for this dark figure, he lives. Jack takes the deal. One year later, he is internationally known as The Ripper, fixer for hire, and finds himself increasingly drawn to dire, world-shattering events. Suffering strange premonitions and compulsions, Jack has more questions than answers. What destiny does this alien mind foresee? Why has it chosen him? From bestselling author Richard Phillips comes a globe-spanning sci-fi thriller series with a twist ... culminating in the cataclysmic events that set the stage for The Rho Agenda.

Book Information

File Size: 3448 KB

Print Length: 448 pages

Publisher: 47North (August 19, 2014)

Publication Date: August 19, 2014

Sold by: Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00IAYG68I

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #10,968 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #80 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers > Technothrillers #84 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers > Assassinations #87 in Books > Mystery, Thriller & Suspense > Thrillers & Suspense > Technothrillers

Customer Reviews

This novel is in a different league than the first two novels. In order to explain that statement I need to make a few comments about the original Rho Trilogy. The first book of the trilogy seemed to start off as children's fiction, even evoking the atmosphere of the old "The Waltons" T.V. series or the home life of Murray family in Madeleine L'Engle's young adult science fiction series beginning with "The Wind in the Door." In fact, if you liked the original Rho series you may want to read L'Engle's

'Time Quartet' four novel series. As it happens, I like children's and young adult novels as well as science fiction, pulp fiction, thrillers, noire and quirky. The thing is that in the original trilogy it seemed Phillips started off writing a young adult sci-fi novel that turned into a much more adult thriller series that at times appealed to more prurient interests than would have been acceptable in "The Waltons." As a consequence the trilogy seemed at times almost like fiction searching for a genre upon which the author had not yet decided. Still, it had a compelling story and characters, albeit characters that lacked a great deal of character development. Once Dead is an adult sci-fi thriller from the get go. In this novel Phillips has taken adult characters, Jack Gregory and Janet Price who were more like supporting actors in the trilogy and fully developed them. The story blends science fiction with the thriller genre of a Jack Reacher/Jason Bourne/Bill Compton from True Blood. Jack Gregory isn't a vampire, but he's definitely possessed. For Janet Price think Maggie Q in Nikita. This book is written to be a franchise for a movie series. The plot unfolds like the screen play for a movie. Seriously.

Just one great read. Jack Gregory was a CIA assassin. A very good one. He threw it all away in order to get to the man who killed his brother. He's in Calcutta to do just that. The killer didn't come alone though. After Jack breaks his arm and is well on his way to killing the SOB, the six men with him attack and leave Gregory covered in knife wounds. Gregory kills them all but the killer of his brother, Carlton "Priest" Williams, ex Delta Force mercenary escapes. Williams was also ex Ranger, ex Green Beret and a betrayal to all that the men of special forces stood for. Jack is badly wounded and does die. While on the way to death a dark force called Anchanchu asks him for a lift. Anchanchu explains that Jack will remain in control of his own being. His nature will be unchanged. The dark force gets to experience the host's emotions for the duration of the ride. The dark force can only exist in one host at a time and once accepted he will remain with Jack until he dies. He explains the overall effect is that Jack will still love what he loves and hate what he hates but much hotter. He will be the same person he always was, just a little bit more so. He will be drawn to situations that spike his adrenaline. He further explains that because of that few of his hosts live to a ripe old age. Jack accepts the challenge and invites Anchanchu along for the ride. Jack comes alive after being declared dead by a Calcutta doctor with pictures and a death certificate as proof. The nun, Sister Mary Judith, who got him to the doctor looks into his eyes and says, "Dear Lord, the Ripper walks the earth." Jack Gregory becomes "The Ripper." The Ripper is for hire. So begins one damned fine read.

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