

A mass murder at a comedy club.

LAUGH, OR I'LL KILL YOU

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/4396.html?s=pdf>

LAUGH, OR I'LL KILL YOU

By Ed Burke

Copyright © 2009 Ed Burke

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means, electronic, mechanical, recording or otherwise, without the prior written permission of the author.

The characters and events in this book are fictitious. Any similarity to real persons, living or dead, is coincidental and not intended by the author.

LAUGH, OR I'LL KILL YOU!

By Ed Burke

Part 1

Chapter 1

June, 1998

U.S. Route 1, in Saugus, Massachusetts is a funny place. In the span of a half-mile there are two comedy clubs. The Comedy Connection is located inside the Kowloon Chinese Restaurant and the Giggles Comedy Club is located next to Prince Restaurant, which is known mainly by most locals for pizza. Both clubs draw a decent crowd on the weeknights they are open and are almost always sold out for multiple shows on weekends.

Living in the greater Boston area can be stressful between the cold, snow, and ice of the early dusk winter days. This is further aggravated by the maniacal driving habits of the caffeine pumped public year round. People around here just need a break and a chance to escape from the calamity that is their usual day. Comedy is one of their favorite outlets. There are several comedy clubs in Boston and Cambridge but the beauty of Route 1 is that there are usually no traffic or parking headaches to deal with after six in the evening.

Several Boston area as well as nationally known comics appear regularly at Giggles. It is very seldom disappointing to the audience and there are very few problems with the type of audience that it attracts.

Mike James worked after hours at Giggles for a short period of time two years ago, cleaning up the spilled drinks, food, vomit, wads of gum, and all other leftover results from the previous night's crowd of revelers looking for laughs, hoping for love, and dying for alcohol. Now he was back in town and back on the job.

Bill Epstein, the manager of the club since it opened, and sadly lacking in the personality department, had hired him originally. At that time Mike was known as Dick. Now he requested to be called Mike. Epstein couldn't care less if his cleaning help was named Bob, Mike, or A-hole. He just wanted the job done and his life made easier. Nobody really wanted to get close to Epstein, including Mike, but within a short time Bill grew to appreciate the thoroughness that Mike brought to the position.

It wasn't difficult for Mike to obtain such lofty employment. One reference call to Larry Tentai, the manager of the Revere theaters, secured the cash position. Mike worked at the 14-screen movie theater, which was located one town away, off and on both during

and after high school. His duties included doing pretty much the same thankless job. Tentai considered him to be a reliable employee and Mike worked his way up to the assistant manager's position at the theater. Mike didn't care much for the clientele that frequented the place and he decided he would much rather be around comedy.

The job reference satisfied Epstein and he took him on even though Mike explained to Bill that he often left town on short notice for months at a time, especially in winter. Epstein was just happy to have a warm body for now and Mike knew he could have the job whenever he was in town. When he wasn't in town the cleaning was only completed in a mediocre fashion by the closing staff.

At six feet three inches and 225 pounds, Mike was strong and strikingly handsome. A full head of thick brown well-trimmed hair and his clean-shaven appearance made him look as if he was the owner rather than the janitor. A squared off jaw and large strong hands added to his muscular appearance. He spent many hours lifting weights throughout the years for as far back as he could remember. It wasn't a compulsion with him but he just felt good about himself when he worked out. He also never wanted to be in a situation where a lack of strength would leave him on the losing end of a possible confrontation.

There was something dark about his gaze though that most of the women he met found just a little disturbing. It wasn't something you could put your finger on, but rather a distant and cold look in his eyes. Still, he did seem to be the kind of man that some single women might want to jump in the sack with - if only for one evening. His life did have its dalliances, but they were not frequent events because of his unusually quiet disposition and his apparent disinterest in developing a relationship.

He did not lack interest in a meaningful partnership, but was concerned about being accountable. This existed because of his proclivity to change his location from state to state on little or no notice. There was also an even greater fear of opening up his inner thoughts.

Mike had recently returned to his tranquility base of the Boston area from the winter warmth of Los Angeles. He bought himself a used Bonneville from the Bargain Hunter's Guide and signed on as a tenant at will in a Stoneham apartment.

The apartment was more like an in-law quarters in an older home, and the only occupant of the main house was an elderly woman. The fact that a strong, young man lived on the premises made her feel safer.

A long sweeping driveway allowed him to park his car toward the back of the house and out of sight from the sidewalk. The location also provided him with a separate address to receive deliveries and adequate space to store several replacement vehicle parts that he had ordered.

Chapter 7

Mike sat in his 1992 Bonneville and watched Jack Vascillo swear his way to his car, slam the door closed and leave a little rubber as he drove out of the parking lot to head southbound on Route 1. For the amount of rum he had ingested since midday, he was driving rather well.

Mike followed him to the Revere exit and along Route 60 to Jack's apartment building off Squire Road in Revere. It was a dimly lit area on a dead end street. Nobody would be on this street if they did not have business in the apartment building. Jack turned off his headlights and remained in the car.

Mike could see that there was a wide area between the parking spaces and the apartments themselves and quickly processed the scene. Jack sat in the car for five minutes drinking a beer that was in a bag on the passenger's seat before he finally decided to call it a night.

Mike was never sure exactly how the scene would play out but he did know the outcome. The intended victim would be dead. He usually just waited until the last minute and let the circumstances dictate the method of disposal. He was ready for anything with the Glock 19 and the hunting knife under the driver's seat but he preferred to take care of business by smashing a glancing blow with his car if possible. This method was quick, more to the point and less investigated than other means of death.

A knife or gun would most often mean a premeditated murder and a protracted investigation; however it was easier to dispose of the evidence if necessary. He read about an investigation of this type in several crime novels over the years. A hit and run death was not automatically put in the premeditated category but it was riskier than other means of killing.

Often, the theory would go to a drunk, or otherwise impaired driver, accidentally slamming into the victim and leaving the scene out of fear. Since in this case there would

not be any easily recognizable connection between the driver and the victim the only concern was a witness to identify the vehicle. Mike always kept this in mind before employing this method of accomplishing the goal. He made a decision that this would be Jack's fate. He looked to see if there was a witness. If there were, Mike would bide his time and take care of business later. Tonight though, there was nobody in sight and there did not appear to be anybody peering out of the apartment building windows. Jack had parked toward the rear of the building and none of the balconies faced in that direction. It would be Vascillo's last night.

As Jack alighted from the car and started walking, or swaying, toward his apartment door Mike pressed down on the accelerator and closed in on his target. Jack probably never heard the Bonneville approaching at about twenty miles per hour until the last second. By that time it was too late. Even if he had more time, the Captain had slowed his reflexes to the point where he could never react quickly enough to avoid being hit. He didn't have time to scream or even make a sound.

Mike slammed into Jack's upper right thigh with the front corner of the passenger's side of the car. He saw him bounce off of the bumper and smash his head on the side of the dumpster before falling motionless to the ground.

Mike was satisfied that his target was dead, but he had to be sure of his status. He parked the slightly damaged car approximately one half mile from the crime scene between two other vehicles where it would attract no attention. Then he wiped off the blood streak down the side of the front panel, checked the cracked headlight, and determined that no pieces of the vehicle were missing.

Mike liked the Bonneville because it was a well made car and required little in repair after an incident such as this. He was prepared though with an extra fender, trim, a few headlights and small miscellaneous parts that he kept both in the trunk and at his apartment. He was a calculating killer and knew that if he left evidence of the vehicle type behind the police would be looking for that specific make and model and for purchases at a repair shop or parts store.

He reached under the seat for the hunting knife. He then walked back to the body. It appeared that no neighbors had noticed any commotion or discovered that there was a body in the parking lot. He checked the smashed corpse for a heartbeat and left Jack's lifeless bones as they were in a heap by the dumpster. The dumpster had crushed Vascillo's head. The knife would not be needed tonight.

Once he determined that a person did not deserve to live any longer, there was no chance that his body or mind would function normally again until the task at hand had been completed. Mike did not know his victim's name and did not care at this point. He would find out in the Boston Herald the next morning while determining if the police had found any flaws in his plan from the information in the story that they chose to release.

Mike quietly walked back to his car, wrote in an entry in his small black diary, which he had appropriately named his “death book”. Then he returned to Giggles for his cleaning shift. Nobody sensed any difference in his demeanor and he completed his assigned tasks without a problem. He just went about his night without a second thought about the life he had snuffed out.

When he left the club in the morning he walked next door to the Dunkin Donuts, purchased a Herald from the box outside and waited in line for his cup of coffee while scanning the pages. On page twelve, in the “NEWS in brief” column he read a two-paragraph blurb about a hit and run death in Revere. It was a late-breaking story so he was sure there would be a more detailed account in the next edition but the key words Mike was looking for were there. Police indicated that there were no witnesses and that the victim lived alone and appeared to have been drinking. He also now had a name to put with the entry he had made the previous night in the little black book he carried. The entry read - **“8/8/98, Revere, John Vascillo, car, Giggles”**. It was the fourth entry on the page.

Chapter 17

Life as a small time criminal had not been the glamorous lifestyle that Vinnie Giovanni had hoped it would be. His hope of moving up the ladder to get out of the bookie/loan sharking business was not happening and he was still driving that shitty Chrysler that he bought from his cousin four years ago.

He had been asked to take part in a couple of thefts of small trucks but for the most part he was considered incompetent, loud, and too quick to lose his temper. This was not a good combination for moving up the criminal ladder any higher than the rung he was on.

Recently he had been out collecting debts and when a regular “client” told him he would have to pay him later that day, Vinnie smashed the man in the face with his pistol.

Vinnie's boss thought this was beyond the usual enforcement policies and had called Vinnie in for a few words. He knew that most of those words would begin with an "F".

He hated to get "dressed up" but he decided to wear his only sport jacket. It was an ugly grey tweed number that looked as if it could use a good cleaning. He also put on a non-matching tweed hat to cover his follicly challenged head.

The meeting with the boss went just as expected and Vinnie left the meeting in a rage. He was ready to explode. He had to knock back some Canadian Club soon.

He jumped in his car with the cigar burns on the seat and floor. He drove from the early evening meeting, which had taken place in the basement of a house on the Revere, Lynn line. He just wanted to drive fast, drink a lot quickly, and swear. He went to Bill Ash's in Revere to suck down a couple of doubles of CC on the rocks. He fired the hat into the trash bucket.

Today, the booze wasn't doing it for him and he was considering going back to his boss, telling him where he could stick his shit collections job, and blasting a couple of new nostrils in his ugly fucking face.

Vinnie realized of course that the satisfaction he got from this very doable task would only be enjoyed for one day, or two at most, before he was hunted down like a dog and cut into small pieces.

He finished up his third CC and drove through Revere and Malden to Route 1. He decided that if he were going to get drunk and be pissed off, it was a good idea to have a shorter ride after that. His two room "mansion" in Stoneham was not much to write home about but he wanted to get closer. He also knew he didn't want to drink in Stoneham. They had what he thought was a ridiculous ordinance that required you to buy a food item after you purchase a second drink.

He could never understand this. He always drank to get drunk and food was just something that got in the way of achieving that goal as soon as possible. When he wanted to eat, he could eat enough for three people. This was drinking time. He decided to cut off Route 1 and go over to Broadway in Malden. Number 621 Broadway was his destination.

He drove there in a rotten mood and wasn't pleased to see that there was some comedy bull shit about to happen. He thought about getting back in the car and driving somewhere else but there weren't a lot of bars between his present location and his apartment. He just wanted his drink and to have everybody leave him alone.

He sat down at the only table available, ordered two drinks and decided that he didn't feel like driving anywhere else. Vinnie wanted to finish a half dozen drinks and go home to consider his empty life. It was a life which he even considered ending.

Chapter 29

From the onset of the situation Mike could tell that he was having a physical reaction to what was happening. He felt that weight on his arms and legs setting in that had taken over his body more than a year ago in Malden, Massachusetts. He couldn't fight it. He tried desperately to keep thoughts of his brother from coming back into his head. He was now imagining the blood all over his legs and his eyes were glazed over again. Suddenly he was in a dark place that he did not want to be in and trying to battle emotions that he could not handle.

Words being spoken by people in the room seemed to blend together and were undistinguishable. He felt that if he did not force himself up he would die.

He mustered all the strength he could, grabbed his backpack, pushed out of the chair and pounded the elevator button. As the elevator door opened there seemed to be laughter in the background. The other patrons had put the incident behind them and were now listening to the humor of the sixth and final act of the night.

Mike slowly dragged himself through the lobby, out the front door of the Ramada and he headed North on Vermont Avenue. He had a difficult time breathing. He felt as if he had to keep moving to stay alive. He took a right on Fountain Avenue and started walking toward his temporary home. Something made him look down the alleyway behind the building on Fountain and there he saw the same man who had just interrupted the show urinating onto the side of a trash container.

The middle-aged man may have been staying at a hotel, but it wasn't the Ramada. He wouldn't be out here in the dark alone if he had a room upstairs to go to.

Since Mike left the hotel and started walking the desperation in his emotional state had started to subside slightly. Suddenly all of that was changing back. He lost control of his emotions again and thoughts of grief, revenge, anger and hatred filled his mind as he walked toward the man that now was peeing all over his pants with both hands up. He was mouthing words but Mike couldn't understand any of them. The man dropped to his knees.

Mike kept approaching and began screaming words of vitriol. No sense could be made of the scene with spit flying with the words as they left Mike's lips and urine, now ceased, having soaked the pants of the terrified man.

"Trying to make a living.... Was my brother.....Why? Just a fucking comic..... Gives you the right.....Just fucking laugh!" Words were not even being understood by Mike as they left his own mouth.

Then Mike stopped no more than ten feet from the cowering man on his knees with the sweat dripping off of his head and the piss running down his legs. If words were being spoken, Mike didn't hear them. His hand held the gun from his backpack and it was pointed directly at the chest of the crying heap in front of him. He pulled the trigger three times and the victim fell back with his head smacking off the pavement. There was no movement. He was dead.

Mike jammed the gun back into the backpack and slung it over his shoulder. He turned and headed toward the apartment. On the walk back he did not think about what had just transpired. He only knew that the heaviness had left his legs. The voices of conversations from passing people were clear. The anger had left him and he felt no desperation. The unknown lifeless body that he left behind was not a concern. Mike was at peace with himself for this minute.

He had never considered the fact that witnesses may have been there or that he had even committed murder. Rational thinking had left him and consequences were not part of the equation.

He returned to the apartment and replaced the spent bullets in the gun from the ammunition box that was in the drawer next to where he had originally found the gun. He put the weapon back in the backpack and went to swim in the pool. Then he returned to the apartment, went to bed and slept very soundly.

Mike knew that there would be no reason to ever associate Chuck Miller's gun with the death in the alley and that Chuck wouldn't even read about the case when he returned in a week. There were too many murders in Los Angeles to have the press dwell on this one.

The next day in the local section of the Los Angeles Times Mike read a two-paragraph story about a murder victim in an alleyway off of Fountain Avenue. He was a banking associate from St. Louis in town on business. His name was Steven Barrett.

There were apparently no witnesses to the crime and it was thought that he might have been involved in a drug deal that went bad since he had an empty plastic bag with cocaine residue on the ground next to him. There were also traces of the drug in his body and his wallet was found nearby with no cash or credit cards in it.

Mike knew that he had killed this man. He read the story with interest since even though he still felt no remorse; he did not wish to be implicated in the crime. He felt he had done what he had to do. He had done the right thing.

His guess was that before the police arrived there must have been others that robbed the corpse of cash and credit cards. Mike could not be sure whether he had taken anything from the victim's wallet or not while in a state of rage, but he was not in possession of any of those items. He knew nothing of any cocaine.

Mike was sure that he would never be a suspect in Barrett's death and that he had successfully completed his mission. There was no way that anybody would be looking for him in connection with this murder. Even if patrons at the club described him, there was no connection to the death and nobody there knew who Mike was. This would just be another unsolved murder.

It did not bring happiness to him in the slightest bit that this man was dead, but no sadness was present either. He went about the business of running the messenger service.

On his way back to the apartment that afternoon he went to Staples and bought a small pocket sized black diary. He wasn't sure why he felt that he had to do this but something inside him told him that he had to document this death. On the first page he made the following entry: **"11/4/97, LA, Steven Barrett, gun, Ramada."**

A mass murder at a comedy club.

LAUGH, OR I'LL KILL YOU

**Buy The Complete Version of This Book at
Booklocker.com:**

<http://www.booklocker.com/p/books/4396.html?s=pdf>