

*A Houston homicide detective investigates his, and his wife's murder... In his next lifetime.*

# Death Unmasked

by Rick Sulik

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# DEATH UNMASKED



Rick Sulik

## **Death Unmasked**

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ISBN: 978-1-64438-715-3

Published by BookLocker.com, Inc., St. Petersburg, Florida.

Printed on acid-free paper.



BookLocker.com, Inc.

2019

Third Edition

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data

Sulik, Rick

Death Unmasked by Rick Sulik

FICTION / Psychological | FICTION / Fantasy / Paranormal | FICTION /

Thrillers / Supernatural

Library of Congress Control Number: 2019906446

Cover Image by [Bruno Glätsch](#) from [Pixabay](#)

## What reviewers have said about *Death Unmasked*

“The author has accomplished an impassioned, arduously written result of crafting together various stylistic elements to tell his story that, combined, engage the reader on different levels and provide different perspectives of social, spiritual and humanistic themes in an entertaining way.”

—Robert M. Tucker, author, *Byron, Chance of a Lifetime, American Landscape*

“Poetry and murder: an unlikely couple, but the twain meet in this fascinating, supernaturally inspired detective thriller.”

—D. Clarke

“*Death Unmasked* is geared toward a technical reader because much of the book details crime solving tactics and lingo. If you're a fan of CSI and enjoy the process as well as the premise, you'll certainly find a great read with this story.”

—Brian, Amazon Reviewer

“Whilst this book has been presented as a sci fi thriller it is also an amazing way to reach many people and inspire them with knowledge of other lives, other ways of thinking and ways to allow their spirits to grow and enrich their lives and those around them!”

—*Raine*, award-winning author  
of *Rainedrops from Heaven*

*“Death Unmasked* is up there with the best books that I have read this year. If you like hard hitting crime novels, I would think that you would love this one.”

— K. Reading

“A fast-paced police thriller centered on instincts finely honed by years of on-the-job police work, reincarnation, and faith in intuition, make this a very enjoyable read.”

—K. Burdick

“With the twists and turns, enhanced with love, crime and the supernatural, well written, what more could you ask for? Get it, Gift it, share it”

—T-Fly, Amazon Reviewer

# Table of Contents

A Jaded Warrior's Warning.....	9
Death Unmasked .....	11
One .....	13
Two.....	28
Three .....	39
Four .....	49
Five.....	52
Six.....	56
Seven .....	61
Eight.....	65
Nine.....	68
Ten.....	76
Eleven.....	79
Twelve .....	82
Thirteen.....	88
Fourteen .....	105
Fifteen .....	114
Sixteen.....	124
Seventeen .....	132
Eighteen .....	151
Nineteen.....	154
Twenty.....	165
Twenty-one .....	172
Twenty-two .....	177
Twenty-three.....	193
Twenty-four.....	200

Twenty-five.....	205
Twenty-six .....	215
Twenty-seven .....	223
Twenty-eight .....	231
Twenty-nine .....	242
Thirty .....	252
Thirty-one.....	261
Thirty-two.....	268
Thirty-three .....	271
Thirty-four.....	274
Thirty-five.....	284
Thirty-six .....	287
Thirty-seven .....	299
Thirty-eight .....	311
Thirty-nine .....	317
Forty .....	321
Forty-one .....	330
Forty-two.....	339
Epilogue.....	343
Quotes on Reincarnation .....	351
Death Unmasked: Afterthought.....	353
Untitled Sonnet .....	355
Closing Verse .....	356
References .....	357
About the Author.....	359

## Three

*Some kill their love when they are young,  
And some when they are old;  
Some strangle with the hands of Lust,  
Some with the hands of Gold:  
The kindest use a knife, because  
The dead so soon grow cold. <sup>6</sup>*

THE OFFICER'S CAR returned thirty minutes later.

The back door swung open from inside, and Laura's limp body fell lifeless onto a shallow cushion of snow.

The demented officer had fingernail scratches on his bloody face, and shrilled a devil's laugh as his sinister eyes found Emil standing near the barred window.

"Hey, asshole! Did you know your wife squealed and moaned like a whore when I ravaged her over and over again?"

Emil focused his attention on Laura's corpse lying in the red-stained snow.

The psychopathic officer used the bloody dagger in his hand to stab Laura three times through Emil's coat.

"Laura! Sunshine!"

Laura didn't answer, nor did she move.



Emil's heart sank. In front of his despondent eyes the joy in his life had been stolen from him.

His zest for life with Laura had lost its purpose. He had failed to protect her.

Emil stared at the officer with callous contempt and yelled from the secured cattle car, "Have you no shame you blasted-cowardly bastard! I'll kill you for what you've done if it's the last thing I ever do! I promise you! I'll hunt you down you dirty-rotten, no-good-son-of-a-bitch!" His voice choked with blood and tears.

Emil heard lyrics playing in his head.

*Nothing's quite as pretty as Laura in the morning.*

No longer would he awake to see her there, so close beside him.

Laura's lifeless body rested in the snow face up. She had fought the deranged officer and lost her life resisting him. Her petrified, unblinking eyes remained wide open. The pupils of her eyes stared skyward. Her sweet lips were shriveled and chapped, her body twisted in an unnatural position, her clothing shredded and in complete disarray.

Falling snow accumulated on Laura's golden hair, her eyebrows and eyelashes. Blood seeped from her side. The unbuttoned coat lay open and Emil could see three mortal stab wounds on her left side. Steam rose from her body, as snow melted in a circle around her.

The officer hooted, hollered and laughed at Emil from the backseat of the military car.

"I want you all to know because of *him*, you're all going for another little ride before you *die*!"

The train jerked forward with a shrill, ear-piercing whistle.

As soon as Laura's body disappeared from Emil's view, he bent down and crawled between the legs of the others. He cowered in the corner of the cattle car and sobbed. The world no longer mattered to him.

No one in the cattle car bothered to console him. They all had their own grief to contend with.

Another day passed before the train came to a sudden stop and jolted Emil from a fitful doze.

They had reached their final destination.

The night was pitch black except for flames shooting into the sky. An abominable odor floated in the air.

Emil heard someone mumble, "We're here. Death awaits us all."

The cattle car door slid wide open with a startling loud racket.

Riotous men with long unkempt hair and gray beards found Emil lying near the door. The men were wearing striped shirts and black trousers, and carried batons and torches.

*Man, these bloody ruffians look like a bunch of losers.*

They grabbed Emil by the hair and dragged him out and forced him face down on the snow-covered ground.

While the cattle car emptied, the men with batons took turns beating him senseless about the head and body. After the beating, Emil heard steady ringing in his ears, and was forced to join the others in formation to march the last two-hundred yards.

Soldiers followed in the rear.

Emil staggered and stumbled in the snow. To avoid another beating, he gripped his trousers and dragged one injured leg in

front of the other. He hauled his skeletal body that seemed to weigh a ton, and moved slowly and awkwardly in line with the others. His head throbbed, and his limbs felt numb, but he kept moving. Every few seconds, he looked over his shoulder at the soldiers who kept a close eye on him.

Cold, freezing, wet snow continued to fall, matting his hair. His parched throat and bursting lungs ached from the frigid air.

He wanted desperately to regain his strength and a chance to fight back. His mind drifted, and he thought of Laura.

As he staggered, he sensed her presence, walking beside him, and holding him up. He glanced to his left and thought he was hallucinating.

*I must be losing my mind. I'm sure of it. But can it be? Yes, indeed, my sunshine girl . . . is here beside me!*

Laura's apparition turned her head and smiled. Her beautiful cat-eyes locked with his, giving him a sense of newfound strength and courage. He sensed her love and soft touch.

He sang a melody to her glorious spirit.

*In sunny days or stormy weather, my Laura is there beside me! And nothing's quite as pretty as Laura in the evening, kissed by the shades of night and starlight on her hair!*

Emil no longer cared what happened to him because, right or wrong, the love they shared together would forever endure.

The song he initiated would remain fragmentary in this lifetime.

Emil heard shots, and more ear-shattering shots as the ranks of victims dwindled. All around him, men and women collapsed. Dead bodies littered the ground everywhere.

Soldiers prodded human targets that remained alive, forcing them to trample over fallen men, women and children in the blood-tainted snow.

There were no prayers said at this massive gravesite. There were no lit candles and no solemn farewells.

Emil envisioned his face in the corpses surrounding him.

*These people had done nothing wrong, and were being cheated from living their lives to the fullest.*

He wanted to wake up from this appalling, unimaginable nightmare. The road to the abyss seemed endless. He wanted the whole hate-ridden world to cease.

*Blast! History is repeating itself!*

He hoped a stray bullet would find its mark soon and put an end to his misery. He wished his spirit would shed his physical body and fly to the safe haven of heaven above.

Emil's head reeled. He felt ashamed of mankind. He glanced skyward and searched for the North Star.

*Why is this happening? Why do people label another human being? Why is there so much hatred in the world? It doesn't make any sense.*

The air smelled of burning flesh.

In front of them, laughing soldiers' brandished machine guns, their steady fingers on the triggers.

Bright orange flames engulfed massive ovens, and coiling black smoke shot high from the chimneys polluting the celestial sphere. Bodies thrown into the colossal furnace turned into wreaths of dark smoke and ashes.

One man broke from the ranks, and ran full stride a short distance, and threw himself onto the electrified fence, frying his body.

From the rear, Emil heard machine gun fire and glanced over his shoulder.

For pleasure, soldiers threw small children into the air for target practice, and butchered them into tiny pieces without compassion or pity. Sharp shots finished off one after another.

The men wearing striped shirts and black trousers gathered up the bullet-riddled bodies and threw the little dismembered corpses into a two-wheeled wooden cart pulled by a horse. In it, flesh and bone accumulated like cordwood. Blood seeped from the tailgate and formed red icicles.

Emil marched with the remaining men, women and children to the huge fiery furnace. An occasional sob broke their silent march. The hour glass controlling their destiny had a few seconds of sand left.

Their minds had been numbed by shock. Imminent death cheated their lives from evolving any further in this lifetime.

Total madness and chaos dominated the free world.

Human bodies shook convulsively from the bitter cold. Teeth chattered.

Emil heard his neighbors praying and bidding farewell to their families and friends. He watched as soldiers forced one after another into the furnace. They disappeared in its huge grim mouth. Flames consumed their faith as the roaring fire snapped and crackled.

Tears melted like drops of wax from hollow eyes, while hearts sizzled and burst. Screams echoed throughout a silent, uncaring world.

Emil hoped Laura waited for him at the golden gate entrance in the afterlife to help him through the tunnel of Love and into the Light.

He stood in line, a broken man, defeated, all his dreams shattered. He counted off the paces to his termination. He wished he could turn invisible and walk away from all this senseless mayhem. The line moved quickly until, finally, he stood next to be thrown in. He felt dizzy. His head throbbed, his heart pounded as sweat beaded on his forehead from the roaring fire.

*Damn it! Let's get this over with.*

He squinted at the intense flames spewing from the sizzling boiler's square mouth. He visualized the faces of his neighbors in the blaze. Strange, he thought he heard a band playing a military death march.

He found himself a stone's throw away from death, soon to be the passing of another lifetime. At the last second, a hand reached out from nowhere and grabbed his arm. Emil glanced to his right and, for a split-second, thought his life had been miraculously spared by a guardian angel.

The dark uniformed figure standing next to him wasn't an angel.

Emil's eyes narrowed into slits and he stared directly into the twisted face of the filthy swine who raped and murdered Laura.

"I wanted to be here to watch you die!" The officer's eyes bulged wildly from a face gone mad with rage. "Nobody threatens me and gets away with it! *Nobody!*" His insane mirth ricocheted into the perilous night.

Emil studied his nemesis up close and memorized every detail of his disfigured face and the scar around his neck. He engraved it all into his mind for future reference. His deep-

rooted memory bank thrummed with a thousand memories of his evolving spirit in former lifetimes.

An anthology of lives, some good, some bad, some bloody horrific, some short-lived, some long. These former existences shaped and molded him into the person he had become in the present. Each lifetime offered a free-will opportunity to be productive and challenge existing ideas in the world, and have dreams to explore and fulfill with a passion to succeed.

After all Emil had experienced in the last few days, he still held a genuine, positive perspective within his heart on the simple ideologies of life evolving in the physical and spiritual world.

Emil gritted his teeth and saw his only opportunity to revolt. He mustered all the energy he had left in his abused body, and in one fleeting moment, unleashed his maniacal wrath.

The soldiers underestimated Emil.

He took the advantage and shocked them all with his last act of defiance.

Emil lunged forward, and gouged out Satan's eyes with his fingers before being struck down and beaten to death by the strong-armed soldiers.

"Fuck! I can't see! I'm blind!" the officer shrieked. "Throw the son-of-a-bitch in! *Do it! Now!*"

The officer's deafening screams reverberated into the cosmos, along with all the horrific death cries.

A long moment elapsed. Emil's physical life ended, and his emergent spirit would return to the spiritual realm again.

As the red orb appeared above snow covered mountain tops, and the shadows of darkness faded at the start of a new day, Emil's freed spirit soared to the secret pathway leading to

the mountains and tranquility where he felt a free-spirited Laura waited to be reunited.

A carefree Emil joined her at the pathway's entrance, and he held his hand out to her.

Laura's lustrous cat-eyes looked affectionately at Emil, and she took his hand. He stood tall beside her. Her slender fingers interlaced with his as they walked and disappeared into the pathway to Shangri-La.

With a heave, the devil's minions hurled Emil's lifeless body headfirst into the fiery inferno and he perished—from this lifetime, until . . .

His next incarnation . . .

Somewhere in time . . .

*By Reading town*

*There is a pit of shame,*

*And in it lies a wretched man*

*Eaten by teeth of flame,*

*In a burning winding-sheet he lies,*

*And his grave has got no name.*

*He is at peace—this wretched man—*

*At peace, or will be soon:*

*There is no thing to make him mad,*

*Nor does Terror walk at noon,*

*For the lampless Earth in which he lies*

*Has neither Sun nor Moon.*

*Yet all is well; he has but passed*

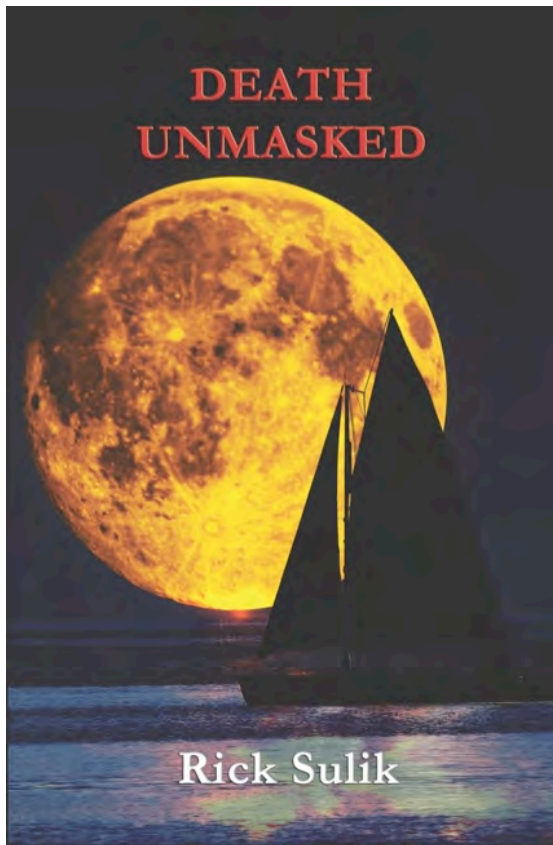


*Rick Sulik*

*To Life's appointed bourne:  
And alien tears will fill for him  
Pity's long-broken urn,  
For his mourners will be outcast men,  
And outcasts always mourn.<sup>7</sup>*

## About the Author

**Rick Sulik** was born and raised in Youngstown, Ohio. After completing high school in Boardman, Ohio, he enlisted and served four years in the United States Air Force Military Police. After receiving an Honorable Discharge, he worked three and a half years with the Houston, Texas Police Department, twenty-two years with the Pasadena, Texas Police Department, and ten years as a courthouse bailiff with the Gonzales County, Texas Sheriff's Department, before retiring in 2013.



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