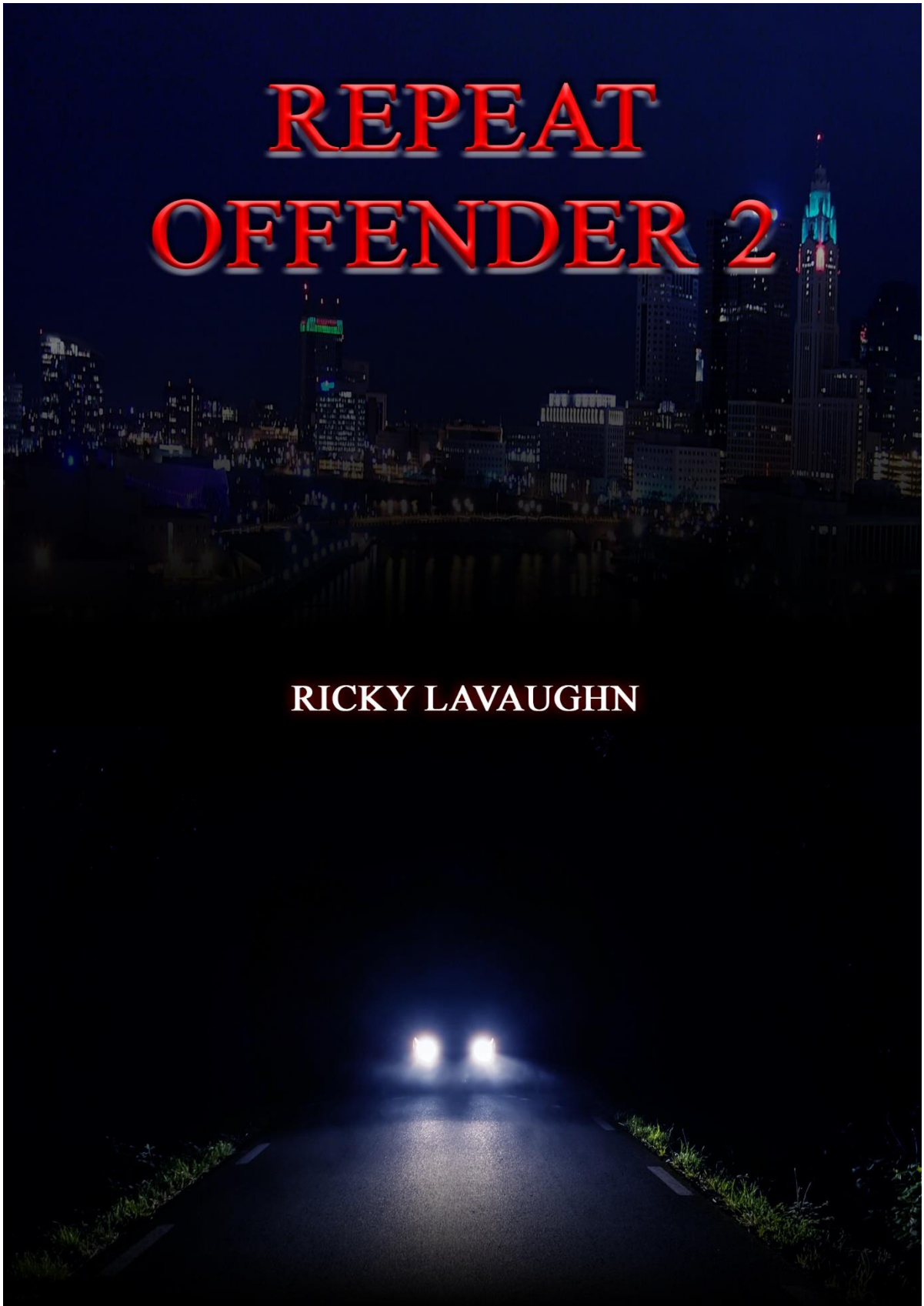


# REPEAT OFFENDER 2

RICKY LAVAUGHN



Repeat Offender 2: Prologue

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Ricky LaVaughn

Sequel to Repeat Offender

## Prologue

For more information on this book visit: <https://lavauri.com/repeatoffender2/freepreview.html>

Where do I begin? With a cold December rain in Ohio. For many, rain can be refreshing, especially when it's July and the air is hot. The cool drops relax your body while calming your mind. However, in December, it's usually annoying and makes everything miserable. Still, cold rain is better than snow. The snow was fun when I was a kid. There was real entertainment in building snow forts, snowmen, and getting into snowball fights. As an adult, I only enjoy the snow at a Ski resort with family and friends.

Nevertheless, it's annoying to drive in a snow shower. Plus, it's night. Driving in the dark with rain is treacherous. Some people's emotions are tied to the weather. For them, the rain can bring on feelings of dreariness, depression, and sadness. I do not care. Leaving prison brightens up any day regardless of the night and rain.

After being incarcerated for ten years, even cool wetness feels excellent to embrace, as the air outside of the prison walls touches my skin. It's strange, but I don't remember the meteorologist calling for thunder, lightning, and flood-like conditions. They might have said something on tv about it, but I didn't pay any attention. Usually, the tv is background noise to the onslaught of random prison talk. These meandering conversations range from past crimes, family issues, women, lying about being innocent, shanking someone, specific smells of women, sports, detailed analysis of women's bodies, to numerous other subjects. For example, women. But who cares? All I can think about is the idea of being free. Being imprisoned was no way to go, and it feels great to be released.

It is strange being released at night. Most prisoners go in the daytime. At least that's what I heard or saw in the movies. To me, that doesn't matter. In winter, nightfall comes early. There were some issues with the paperwork. At least that's what they told me. They say that it can happen, and waiting in the lobby wasn't so bad. Especially when you know freedom is on the horizon. After signing a few release papers, gathering items, I left thrilled to be going. Like I said earlier, the rain was a surprise, but who cares, I was free.

Lightning blazes the sky, shining a light on the trees and road signs. The rain is pouring, making the way back home long and arduous. The wipers are in the highest setting, which is usually saved for extreme downpours. For example, a fierce thunderstorm in the middle of the summer, or even riding through a tropical storm. In December, this kind of rain, in Ohio, is quite rare. I don't care. Although the rain did make it tough to ascertain the lines on the road.

The best solution in overcoming blinding rain is taking control of what I can, which means slowing down. Not driving in years makes my nerves behind the wheel vibrate. It feels as though I had drunk the largest cup of coffee with four espresso shots. A few deep breaths calm my nerves. Now being behind the wheel feels normal again. No alcohol in my system is helpful. The last time I did this, my blood was swimming in the addictive liquid. This reminds me of the horrible mistake, but being sober makes all the difference.

Sure, I want to rush out like bats in a cave looking to dine on moths. But there is no reason to speed. Instead, I take my time and continue listening to...nothing. Strange. In the haste of going home, it doesn't occur to me to turn the radio on. While fidgeting with the dials, I look up and notice a car on the side of the road.

It's a long way away, and the constant falling water makes it tough to see it clearly. The car is far down the road, and I assume it's moving, although it might be stationary. I think the rain is messing with my vision, but nope, the constant flashing red lights mean the hazards are on. Those blinking lights allow me to gauge that the car is possibly a mile away. It won't take long to reach the vehicle, even with the onslaught of water high-fiving my windshield. Yet, there's darkness, a peculiar feeling massages my nerves. There's something about this stranger flashing for help. I haven't seen the person's face or demeanor; still, my mind is tingling. It's like another sense is telling me to speed away. Keep going. I can't treat this driver like other nonchalant riders stranded in the middle of a downpour asking for assistance through the monotones of flashing red light. Something does not feel right.

If I was on the highway, the decision to help or drive away would be simple. Many people are on the road at night. This is exceptionally true on New Year's Eve. So many party-goers are willing to brave

the weather to have fun and bring in 2020 either with family, church members, friends, or a group of strangers. Someone would see the hazard lights, and even in the pouring rain, stop to assist the driver. Especially if the motorist called AAA, a tow truck, family member, or friend. For me, the drive home from prison means mostly country roads. Well, not quite country roads. They were technically state highways or local roads with four lanes in certain areas. Still, it's not as well-traveled as an interstate highway, so it almost behooves me to stop and make sure the person is ok. Even though my instincts and brain say otherwise.

Approaching the stranded car causes a sinking feeling in my gut. It's like I'm fighting an urge more potent than gravity to run. Don't pull over. Keep moving, keep going. Why is this an issue? It makes no sense. It's a person stranded or in need of help on the side of the road. Besides, they could have called someone making my help unnecessary. I fight the urge and know I have to stop. If it was me sitting there on the side of the road, I would want someone to help. That's what superseding the desire to run. This is particularly true if I couldn't reach out to authorities or family members. All it takes is a dead area, and no signal is being sent to reach someone. Strange, but it can happen all the time. That driver with the blinking hazards might be going through that situation now or worst, unconsciousness.

Lightning blazes the sky as I pull behind the flashing hazards. Another deep breath and walk out into the cacophony of rain and thunder. The red glow from the car and a sudden burst of white in the sky plagues the night. Each step feels like I'm approaching the underground lair of a deranged serial killer causing watery looseness bubbling in my stomach. Haunted houses and forests are built to be frightening, a car on the side of the road is not. I blow out two deep breaths to help bring some calm to the nerves. There is no reason, none at all, to be scared. More lightning in the sky and flashing red lights from the back end of the car. Why am I nervous? More flashing and the urge to run returns. Something about this night and feeling is eerily familiar.

I tap on the window, and the rain seems to increase and falls stronger. This downpour is crazy. I already took a shower. Well, sort of. Prison showering is a little different than home. A person better have someone they trust with them or shower alone in case an inmate decides to invade personal space. I was never in the mood of getting to know someone on such an intimate level, so showering quickly and safe was my top priority.

"You ok," I yell at the window and tap some more. The driver's car is on, with the wipers frantically sweeping the onslaught of droplets from the sky. I tap again and notice that it's tough to see inside. The condensation fogged up the windows, but they should be able to hear me unless unconscious. While reaching for my phone, the window slowly rolls down. It's not smooth but staggered like being maneuvered by a hand instead of electronic. Weird. The car looks relatively new, but it's dark and wet.

Before I can say anything, the air in my lungs shudder. The driver. I know this face. I know this person. It's a face I haven't seen in years. Many, many, many years. It is the face of someone attached to my demise and the reason for me being in prison.

"This is impossible," I whisper. More lightning splashes across the sky, highlighting the driver's face. The figure smiles. It's crooked and unsettling. The jaw is slightly unhinged, while blood began to streak down the side of his face. A tooth fell from the broken upper lip as he tries to talk.

"Adam," I say. A sound like sucking in the wind through a ghastly horn begins to emanate from his mouth while a broken finger point at me. "No," I yell. "Impossible. You're dead." I back away from the car, forgetting I'm in the middle of the road when more lights rush my way. The light is constant, meaning an oncoming vehicle. Before I can scream, the car screeches to a stop and slides mere inches from my soaked body.

There is a pause, and then four people get out of the car. "Stacey, Itzal, Pastor Colley, Maria," I say. More lightning strikes, and now thunder accompanies its presence. "What are you doing here?" The rain is constant, and the internal pressure is growing. Anxiety mounting. The memories of a night many years before that caused each of them pain and anguish. All four people point and look to my left. I'm confused and look over to see Adam stepping out of the car. His body is a macabre of various injuries from a car

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accident suffered more than a decade ago. I begin to shout in fear when Adam roars my name and grabs me.

“I’m sorry,” I holler. Adam and the four who exited the vehicle grabs me and continues to bellow my name. The rain should make their grip slippery, but I can’t seem to escape. “I’m sorry,” I say again. “Get off of me, I’m sorry.” They ignore my pleas and yell my name once more.

“Henry, wake up,” a familiar voice shout.

I wake up to find my cellmate, Talmai, hovering over and grabbing my shoulder. It was a dream.

“You ok,” Talmai’s sleep filled voice asks. It’s dark in the room, but one of the few friends I have in prison is breathing just as hard as me.

“Yeah, sorry.”

“Nightmare?”

“Yeah,” I respond. “Strange one.”

Talmai chuckles and says, “tell me about it later and get some sleep. It’s 3 am. You’re a free man in a few hours.”

At least that isn’t a dream. The rain was weird and of course, so was the undead corpse of Adam. But at least out of all the things in the dream, freedom was for real. I smile, and the soothing sounds of Talmai’s snores put me back to sleep.