



# Mickey Thompson: The Fast Life and Tragic Death of a Racing Legend

*Erik Arneson*

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When Mickey Thompson and his wife Trudy were assassinated in their driveway in the pre-dawn hours of March 16, 1988, the salacious details of the crime and the years of legal wrangling that followed made for hundreds of splashy headlines and sexy television soundbytes.

After all, the story had it all . . . unknown hooded gunmen riding into a gated Southern California community on bicycles, ambushing their victims and brutally ending their lives while neighbors ate breakfast and read the morning paper.

Leaving behind more than \$70,000 in jewelry, the killing was an obvious “hit,” and those close to Mickey and Trudy immediately pointed to Mickey’s hot-headed former business partner Michael Goodwin as the mastermind behind the tragedy. Nearly 20 years later, Goodwin was found guilty by a Pasadena Superior Court jury in 2006 of two counts of first-degree murder. The actual gunmen were never identified or apprehended.

John Walsh and America’s Most Wanted did multiple episodes leading up to the conviction. Robert Stack featured the murders on Unsolved Mysteries. CBS’ 48 Hours Mystery got in the act. Everyone wanted a piece of the story.

A good story, however, has much more than a powerful ending.

Who was Mickey Thompson? What made him more than just another victim of violent crime in America? This is what Mickey Thompson: The Fast Life and Mysterious Death of a Racing Legend explores.

Mickey was one of the most influential figures in early American motorsports. While he did have loyal and longtime friends, Mickey always did things one way . . . his way. And he did it with speed . . . he did everything with speed.

From his 1950s adventures in the Carrera Panamericana, ending with five dead and dramatic pictures in Life Magazine in 1953, through making a one-way run of 406.60 miles per hour at the Bonneville Salt Flats in 1960 in his famed Challenger, through multiple trend-setting entries in the famed Indianapolis 500 and into the creation of some of the most popular off-road racing series and motor sports stadium shows, Mickey’s life was full of “firsts.”

And in a world that seems to be moving faster than even Mickey Thompson could have imagined, the complete story of this true American legend is one worth slowing down for.

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