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.

Features:
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My Personal Review:
In the end its not Mickey Thompsons death at the hands of a sociopathic
former business partner, tragic though it was, that defines this remarkable
mans life story -- its what this diminutive son of a Los Angeles policeman
did in the years allotted to him that defines him for posterity and makes him
worth of our attention today. Possessed of restless energy, a love of
speed, an intuitive engineering sense and a wild streak of creativity,
Thompson crammed more into his five plus decades on earth than the vast
majority of humans could were they given five times Thompsons life span.

And speaking of earth, for a time during the early 60s this Southern
California hot-rodder was the fastest man on earth, covering a measured
mile at better than 400 miles per hour behind the wheel of his monstrous
four-engined Bonneville streamliner, Challenger I. He also set scores of
international speed records aboard a series of smaller but no less
innovative racing cars. And during most of the period when he was setting
the racing world -- and occasionally himself -- on fire, Thompson was
holding down a full-time job at night as a pressman in a newspaper plant.
There are thousands of photographs of Mickey Thompson, and many
wonderful ones in the book, but Im not aware of a single one that shows
him asleep.

Thompsons imagination turned, perhaps inevitably, to the Indy 500, and
the cars he produced for that classic American motorsport spectacle were
revolutionary. After helping to successfully introduce the modern rear-
engine design to Indy in 1962, last-minute rule changes hobbled his later
designs. But Thompson ranks, along with Daytona Beachs mad genius
Smokey Yunick, as the most creative thinker at Indianapolis in the last 60
years.

They just dont make them like Mickey Thompson any more, and Erik
Arnesons biography, which presents the whole character, warts and all,
reminds us that we are poorer today for that fact.

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