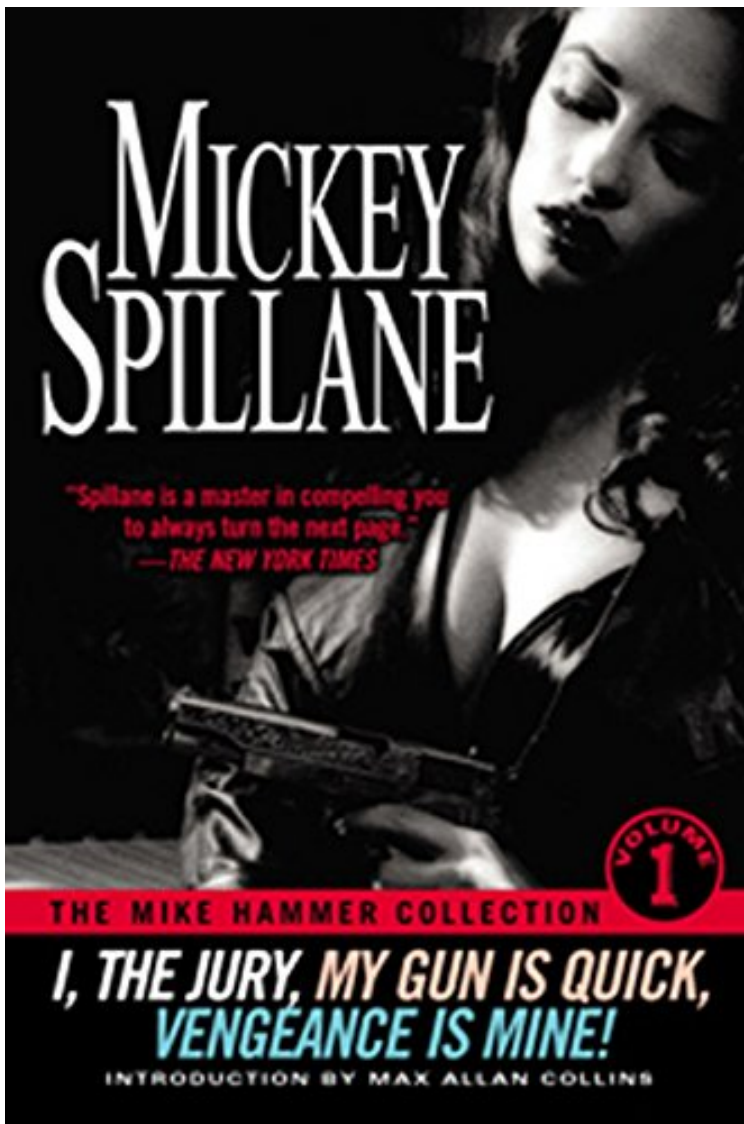


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The Mike Hammer Collection: Volume I



Par Mickey Spillane

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Description : Description du produitSEX AND VIOLENCE. Mickey Spillane, the tough-as-nails, bestselling publishing phenomenon knew what readers wanted. Now he's really letting them have it...times three.MIKE HAMMER-Spillane's ultimate creation, the original no-holds-barred private eye who became homicide's hottest anti-hero. THE MIKE HAMMER COLLECTION, VOLUME 1-the first-ever trade anthology of Spillane's masterpieces of literary mayhem. In one exciting collection, here are the first three novels featuring legendary detective Mike Hammer.I, the JuryMy Gun is QuickVengeance is Mine!Mickey Spillane is a master. (The New York Times)Mickey Spillane is the living master of the hard-boiled mystery. (Detecting Men)

Prsentation de l'diteurA triple-shot anthology featuring the first three Mike Hammer novelsfrom the undisputed master of detective fiction.In Mickey Spillane's classic detective novels, the action exploded in a

bone-crunching catharsis. Men and women didn't make love, they collided. Tough brutes used their fists to drive home a message. Tougher broads used guile. And no one's morals were loftier than the gutter. No apologies. Little redemption. They rendered critics powerless, shocked intellectuals, inspired a new wave of pulp mayhem, and left the public hungry for more. Given their hot, fever-pitch prose and breathless pacing, Spillane's Mike Hammer novels quickly became one of the most successful series in publishing history—an innovative, no-holds-barred, ultravisceral explosion of sex and violence that made Hammer a literary legend, and Spillane, one of the bestselling authors of all time. After fifty years, neither has lost their power to sucker punch the reader. Find out for yourself in this omnibus featuring the first three Mike Hammer novels by the living master of the hard-boiled mystery... Includes: I, the Jury; My Gun is Quick; Vengeance is Mine!

Chapter 1 from I, the Jury: I shook the rain from my hat and walked into the room. Nobody said a word. They stepped back politely and I could feel their eyes on me. Pat Chambers was standing by the door to the bedroom trying to steady Myrna. The girl's body was racking with dry sobs. I walked over and put my arms around her. Take it easy, kid, I told her. Come on over here and lie down. I led her to a studio couch that was against the far wall and sat her down. She was in pretty bad shape. One of the uniformed cops put a pillow down for her and she stretched out. Pat motioned me over to him and pointed to the bedroom. In there, Mike, he said. In there. The words hit me hard. In there was my best friend lying on the floor dead. The body. Now I could call it that. Yesterday it was Jack Williams, the guy that shared the same mud bed with me through two years of warfare in the stinking slime of the jungle. Jack, the guy who said he'd give his right arm for a friend and did when he stopped a bastard of a Jap from slitting me in two. He caught the bayonet in the biceps and they amputated his arm. Pat didn't say a word. He let me uncover the body and feel the cold face. For the first time in my life I felt like crying. Where did he get it, Pat? In the stomach. Better not look at it. The killer carved the nose off a forty-five and gave it to him low. I threw back the sheet anyway and a curse caught in my throat. Jack was in shorts, his one hand still clutching his belly in agony. The bullet went in clean, but where it came out left a hole big enough to cram a fist into. Very gently I pulled the sheet back and stood up. It wasn't a complicated setup. A trail of blood led from the table beside the bed to where Jack's artificial arm lay. Under him the throw rug was ruffled and twisted. He had tried to drag himself along with his one arm, but never reached what he was after. His police positive, still in the holster, was looped over the back of the chair. That was what he wanted. With a slug in his gut he never gave up. I pointed to the rocker, overbalanced under the weight of the .38. Did you move the chair, Pat? No, why? It doesn't belong there. Don't you see? Pat looked puzzled. What are you getting at? That chair was over there by the bed. I've been here often enough to remember that much. After the killer shot Jack, he pulled himself toward the chair. But the killer didn't leave after the shooting. He stood here and watched him grovel on the floor in agony. Jack was after that gun, but he never reached it. He could have if the killer didn't move it. The trigger-happy bastard must have stood by the door laughing while Jack tried to make his last play. He kept pulling the chair back, inch by inch, until Jack gave up. Tormenting a guy who's been through all sorts of hell. Laughing. This was no ordinary murder, Pat. It's as cold-blooded and as deliberate as I ever saw one. I'm going to get the one that did this. You dealing yourself in, Mike? I'm in. What did you expect? You're going to have to go easy. Uh-uh. Fast, Pat. From now on it's a race. I want the killer for myself. We'll work together as usual, but in the homestretch, I'm going to pull the trigger. No, Mike, it can't be that way. You know it. Okay, Pat, I told him. You have a job to do, but so have I. Jack was about the best friend I ever had. We lived together and fought together. And by Christ, I'm not letting the killer go through the tedious process of the law. You know what happens, damn it. They get the best lawyer there is and screw up the whole thing and wind up a hero! The dead can't speak for themselves. They can't tell what happened. How could Jack tell a jury what it was like to have his insides ripped out by a dum-dum? Nobody in the box would know how it felt to be dying or have your own killer laugh in your face. One arm. Hell, what does that mean? So he has the Purple Heart. But did they ever try dragging themselves across a floor to a gun with that one arm, their insides filling up with blood, so goddamn mad to be shot they'd do anything to reach the killer. No, damn it. A jury is cold and impartial like they're supposed to be, while some snotty lawyer makes them pour tears as he tells how his client was insane at the moment or had to shoot in self-defense. Swell. The law is fine. But this time I'm the law and I'm not going to be cold and impartial. I'm going to remember all those things. I reached out and grabbed the lapels of his coat. And something more, Pat. I want you to hear every word I say. I want you to tell it to everyone you know. And when you tell it, tell it strong, because I mean every word of it. There are ten thousand mugs that hate me and you know it. They hate me because if they mess with me I shoot their damn heads off. I've done it and I'll do it again. There was so much hate welled up inside

me I was ready to blow up, but I turned and looked down at what was once Jack. Right then I felt like saying a prayer, but I was too mad. Jack, you're dead now. You can't hear me any more. Maybe you can. I hope so. I want you to hear what I'm about to say. You've known me a long time, Jack. My word is good just as long as I live. I'm going to get the louse that killed you. He won't sit in the chair. He won't hang. He will die exactly as you died, with a .45 slug in the gut, just a little below the belly button. No matter who it is, Jack, I'll get the one. Remember, no matter who it is, I promise. When I looked up, Pat was staring at me strangely. He shook his head. I knew what he was thinking. Mike, lay off. For God's sake don't go off half-cocked about this. I know you too well. You'll start shooting up anyone connected with this and get in a jam you'll never get out of. I'm over it now, Pat. Don't get excited. From now on I'm after one thing, the killer. You're a cop, Pat. You're tied down by rules and regulations. There's someone over you. I'm alone. I can slap someone in the puss and they can't do a damn thing. No one can kick me out of my job. Maybe there's nobody to put up a huge fuss if I get gunned down, but then I still have a private cops license with the privilege to pack a rod, and they're afraid of me. I hate hard, Pat. When I latch on to the one behind this they're going to wish they hadn't started it. Some day, before long, I'm going to have my rod in my mitt and the killer in front of me. I'm going to watch the killers face. I'm going to plunk one right in his gut, and when he's dying on the floor I may kick his teeth out. You couldn't do that. You have to follow the book because you're a Captain of Homicide. Maybe the killer will wind up in the chair. You'd be satisfied, but I wouldn't. It's too easy. That killer is going down like Jack did. There was nothing more to say. I could see by the set of Pat's jaw that he wasn't going to try to talk me out of it. All he could do was to try to beat me to him and take it from there. We walked out of the room together. The coroners men had arrived and were ready to carry the body away. I didn't want Myrna to see that. I sat down on the couch beside her and let her sob on my shoulder. That way I managed to shield her from the sight of her fianc being carted off in a wicker basket. She was a good kid. Four years ago, when Jack was on the force, he had grabbed her as she was about to do a Dutch over the Brooklyn Bridge. She was a wreck then. Dope had eaten her nerve ends raw. But he had taken her to his house and paid for a full treatment until she was normal. For the both of them it had been a love that blossomed into a beautiful thing. If it weren't for the war they would have been married long ago. When Jack came back with one arm it had made no difference. He no longer was a cop, but his heart was with the force. She had loved him before and she still loved him. Jack wanted her to give up her job, but Myrna persuaded him to let her hold it until he really got settled. It was tough for a man with one arm to find employment, but he had many friends. Before long he was part of the investigating staff of an insurance company. It had to be police work. For Jack there was nothing else. Then they were happy. Then they were going to be married. Now this. Pat tapped me on the shoulder. There's a car waiting downstairs to take her home. I rose and took her by the hand. Come on, kid. There's no more you can do. Let's go. She didn't say a word, but stood up silently and let a cop steer her out the door. I turned to Pat. Where do we start? I asked him. Well, I'll give you as much as I know. See what you can add to it. You and Jack were great buddies. It might be that you can add something that will make some sense. Inwardly I wondered. Jack was such a straight guy that he never made an enemy. Even while on the force. Since he'd gotten back, his work with the insurance company was pretty routine. But maybe an angle there, though. Jack threw a party last night, Pat went on. Not much of an affair. I know, I cut in, he called me and asked me over, but I was pretty well knocked out. I hit the sack early. Just a group of old friends he knew before the army. Yeah. We got their names from Myrna. The boys are checking on them now. Who found the body? I asked. Myrna did. She and Jack were driving out to the country today to pick a building site for their cottage. She got here at eight a.m. or a little after. When Jack didn't answer, she got worried. His arm had been giving him trouble lately and she thought it might have been that. She called the super. He knew her and let her in. When she screamed the super came running back and called us. Right after I got the story about the party from her, she broke down completely. Then I called you. What time did the shooting occur? The coroner places it about five hours before I got here. That would make it about three-fifteen. When I get an autopsy report we may be able to narrow it down even further. Anyone hear a shot? Nope. It probably was a silenced gun. Even with a muffler, a .45 makes a good-sized noise. I know, but there was a party going on down the hall. Not loud enough to cause complaints, but enough to cover up any racket that might have been made here. What about those that were here? Pat reached in his pocket and pulled out a pad. He ripped a leaf loose and handed it to me. Here's a list Myrna gave me. She was the first to arrive. Got here at eight-thirty last night. She acted as hostess, meeting the others at the door. The last one came about eleven. They spent the evening doing some light drinking and dancing, then left as a group about one. I looked at the names Pat gave me. A few of them I knew well enough, while a couple of the others were people of whom

Jack had spoken, but I had never met. Where did they go after the party, Pat? They took two cars. The one Myrna went in belonged to Hal Kines. They drove straight up to Westchester, dropping Myrna off on the way. I haven't heard from any of the others yet. Both of us were silent for a moment, then Pat asked, What about a motive, Mike? I shook my head. I don't see any yet. But I will. He wasn't killed for nothing. I'll bet this much, whatever it was, was big. There's a lot here that's screwy. You got anything? Nothing more than I gave you, Mike. I was hoping you could supply some answers. I grinned at him, but I wasn't trying to be funny. Not yet. Not yet. They'll come though. And I'll relay them on to you, but by that time I'll be working on the next step. The cops aren't exactly dumb, you know. We can get our own answers. Not like I can. That's why you buzzed me so fast. You can figure things out as quickly as I can, but you haven't got the ways and means of doing the dirty work. That's where I come in. You'll be right behind me every inch of the way, but when the pinch comes I'll get shoved aside and you slap the cuffs on. That is, if you can shove me aside. I don't think you can. Okay, Mike, call it your own way. I want you in all right. But I want the killer, too. Don't forget that. I'll be trying to beat you to him. We have every scientific facility at our disposal and a lot of men to do the leg work. We're not short in brains, either, he reminded me. Don't worry, I don't underrate the cops. But cops can't break a guy's arm to make him talk, and they can't shove his teeth in with the muzzle of a .45 to remind him that you aren't fooling. I do my own leg work, and there are a lot of guys who will tell me what I want to know because they know what I'll do to them if they don't. My staff is strictly ex officio, but very practical. That ended the conversation. We walked out into the hall where Pat put a patrolman on the door to make sure things stayed as they were. We took the self-operated elevator down four flights to the lobby and I waited while Pat gave a brief report to some reporters. My car stood at the curb behind the squad car. I shook hands with Pat and climbed into my jalopy and headed for the Hackard Building, where I held down a two-room suite to use for operation. Reprinted from *The Mike Hammer Collection, Volume I* by Mickey Spillane by permission of New American Library, a member of Penguin Putnam Inc. Copyright 2001, Mickey Spillane. All rights reserved. This excerpt, or any parts thereof, may not be reproduced in any form without permission. From Publishers Weekly Mickey Spillane's first three Mike Hammer mysteries *I, the Jury*; *My Gun Is Quick*; and *Vengeance Is Mine!* are collected in *The Mike Hammer Collection: Volume 1*, with an introduction by Shamus Award-winner Max Allan Collins, who finds "[s]omething personal...at the heart of every Spillane novel." Hammer is a foul-mouthed, violent vigilante and a sucker for beautiful damsels in distress, some of whom pull the wool over his eyes. With his trusty, sexy assistant Velda keeping him honest (sort of), he exacts revenge on racketeers, cheats and murderers. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.