



## Vengeance Road

*Rick Mofina*

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“*Vengeance Road* is a thriller with no speed limit! It's a great read!”—Michael Connelly, #1 *New York Times* bestselling author

“Gripping, no-holds-barred...lightning paced...with enough twists to keep you turning pages well into the wee hours. *Vengeance Road* is masterful suspense.”—Allison Brennan, *New York Times* bestselling author

The body of Bernice Hogan, a troubled young former nursing student with a tragic past, is found in a shallow grave near a forest creek. Jolene Peller, a single mom struggling to build a new life with her little boy, vanishes the night she tries to find Bernice. Hero cop Karl Styebek is beloved by his community, but privately police are uneasy with the answers he gives to protect the life—and the lie—he's lived.

The case haunts Jack Gannon, a gritty, blue-collar reporter whose own sister ran away from their family years ago. Gannon risks more than his job to pursue the story behind Styebek's dark secret, his link to the women and the mysterious big rig roaming America's loneliest highways on its descent into eternal darkness.

Originally published in 2009.

## Vengeance Road Details

Date : Published June 13th 2016 by MIRA (first published 2009)

ISBN :

Author : Rick Mofina

Format : Kindle Edition 342 pages

Genre : Mystery, Fiction, Thriller, Mystery Thriller, Cultural, Canada, Crime, Suspense, Adult Fiction

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# From Reader Review Vengeance Road for online ebook

## Gwen says

I really enjoyed Vengeance Road. Having never read R. Mofina before I was leary of the "international best-seller" tag on the cover. But Mofina writes brilliantly. He is a former crime reporter and translates his expertise into fiction wonderfully. I couldn't put this book down. Although this is a murder, suspense, fiction, the crime wasn't terribly graphic and descriptive. I appreciated that, because some authors go a little too far with what happened.

The story follows Jack Gannon, a reporter for the Buffalo Sentinel. He has lost his sister to ??? (he doesn't know what she fell into). Gannon dreams of working in Manhattan, NY writing for the big newspaper. Gannon has the nose of a bloodhound when it comes to seeking out a story. He uses a confidential source to secure information and when push comes to shove, he doesn't give up his source and is heavily penalized for it. Gannon is following the story of a murdered prostitute in a local park, somehow a local police hero is implicated in the crime. As Gannon pursues the police hero stories start to change and history comes to the forefront. Can Karl Stybeck escape his past? Will the murders continue?

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## Cheryl says

Vengeance Road is a suspenseful 'hold-your-breath' ride, with twists and turns at breakneck speed!

Jack Gannon, a reporter for The Buffalo Sentinel, investigates the brutal murder of one prostitute and the disappearance of another, a woman who had picked herself off the street and cleaned up her life. The investigation points to one suspect—hero cop Karl Stybeck, a man with a secret past brimming with violence. Then there's the mysterious blue rig that haunts the highways. How is it connected to Stybeck and the victims?

As Gannon digs deeper, he risks losing everything—his career, his reputation and his future. With help from Adell Clark, a former FBI agent turned PI, Gannon gets the inside scoop on the murder investigation. But this puts Gannon and Adell in jeopardy of losing more than their jobs.

Author Rick Mofina has crafted the kind of protagonist that readers will yearn to read more about. Jack Gannon is tough but flawed, and he's like a pit-bull who won't let go. In some ways, he's emotionally disconnected, but the disappearance of his own sister years ago, pushes him onward. I hope the author continues with this character and his back-story. I'd love to see a series!

I think this is my favorite Rick Mofina novel yet! Vengeance Road is a gritty, top-notch thriller, with glimpses of evil thrown in to keep you turning those pages. Mofina's former career as a crime reporter keeps the writing concise and descriptive, the characters well developed and defined, and the dialogue true and believable.

Vengeance Road is a suspenseful 'hold-your-breath' ride, with twists and turns at breakneck speed. I'd recommend it to anyone who enjoys a heart-pounding race against time.

~Cheryl Kaye Tardif, bestselling author of Divine Intervention

### **Sandy Adams says**

Excellent story.....wish we could rate 4.5 stars! Kind of creepy, some weird characters and a great plot; I would definitely recommend this book!

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### **Bryan says**

A great start to the Jack Gannon Series! Fast paced, with a captivating story line.

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### **Marg says**

What a page turner.

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### **Linda Johnson says**

Always a pleasure to read a book by Rick Mofina. This mystery from the perspective of the reporter includes more than just the detective and victims story lines.

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### **Amy Corwin says**

Vengeance Road is a thick book :)387 pages worth, and I only mention that because I'm not always in the mood for that kind of time investment. But Vengeance Road really is a page-turner. It hooks you and moves swiftly, without a lot of maundering about. Not a word, not a phrase is wasted. The characters seem real to you, like your neighbors and whether you like or dislike them, you can't help wanting to know what is going to happen with them.

The main character is Jack Gannon, a Buffalo NY reporter, just hoping he can keep his job, or even better, get the scoop on a really big story and move to NY City. When a young woman, Bernice Hogan is murdered, he falls all over the story, thinking this will be his big chance.

Then the story takes a turn. Gannon discovers that the main suspect is a policeman, Karl Stybeck.

I won't reveal more of the plot, but it's a fascinating story. I appreciated Mofina's style of writing, which could often be terse (perhaps masculine is the word I'm looking for) but fit the suspense very well. I know others have complained about places where Gannon took too many chances (strained their suspension of disbelief) but I had no such difficulties. People in real life do a lot of crazy things and following a suspect for

a story is something that I can totally see happening. Particularly for Gannon who so desperately wants to discover the truth. None of us ever think anything bad will happen to us. We all believe "we can handle it." So I had no problems at all believing Gannon would do precisely what he did.

And that's why the characters worked for me. They acted in ways I could understand and that were right for that character (even if I, in a million years, would never follow a murder suspect alone. LOL).

It's a great read and will keep you engrossed until the end.

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### Kally Sheng says

Fast-paced, attention arresting thriller! This is my first Mofina book and will definitely not be the last. Half way through when the murderer was revealed I thought oh no this is not going to work, how was he (Mofina) going to keep the story going, but he did and more, the story was able to hold my attention and kept me turning the pages till the end!

Plan your work then work your plan. - Pg. 206, Location 2608

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### Ric says

Wow. Spare, concise writing, and **compelling** story-telling. This is reading *heaven*, isn't it? At least that's how the book starts. Then, somewhere around chapter 40, things turn horribly, horribly *bad*. As in **scary** bad. What do I mean? Let me explain.

It begins with Rick Mofina and his Goodreads blurb:

Rick Mofina is a former journalist and an award-winning author of several acclaimed thrillers. His reporting has put him face-to-face with murderers on death row in Montana and Texas. He has covered a horrific serial-killing case in California and an armored car-heist in Las Vegas ...

When Mofina starts to describe details of the horrible crimes of his characters, it *feels* like he is describing something he has actually seen or reported on. It's sort of like reading the *newspaper account* of a real murder involving real people. And to tell you honestly, this **spooked** me, well and truly spooked me. The book stopped being fiction but seemed all **too real**. And that's when it became really, really bad, scary bad. The serial killer is not just *imaginary* but a real person who actually existed, **exists**. This was just too much. I was ready for a nice, neat, spare thriller but this just became **too** real. Then I just *couldn't* read another page.

The writing is **unquestionably** good and compelling and all that, but it can pull you *too far in* and you find that you're no longer in the fictional world but all the way through to a truly messed up real world. And, what is that guy with the boots in the next table at the diner up to?

You start wondering if the flakes you are reading about are the flakes you are seeing everyday. And then you can't leave the house. Spooked, **totally** spooked.

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## Debby Kratky says

### A wild ride

Rick Mofina keeps the action moving from one page to the next. Jack Gannon is a 21st century hero! Now, on to The Panic Zone.

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## Φ?λιππος says

3.5\*

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## Crystal Starr Light says

"You don't let go. You don't let up."

NOTE: I received this book as part of the Amazon Vine Program

Jack Gannon works as a reporter at the Buffalo Sentinel. He catches wind of the murder of a troubled former nursing student and decides to investigate. But as he does, he gets into more and more murky waters as one of the top suspects ends up being an upstanding police officer.

### I Liked:

Rick Mofina doesn't spend an excess of time on details. His writing is pretty cut and dry, minimal details needed to set the scene. This fits the genre (hard crime) very well.

The concept is very interesting, and I felt that Mofina did a good, convincing job of why a reporter would investigate a homicide. I get tired of the "Nancy Drew"-ish mold, which are incredibly challenging to believe that police would allow such amateur investigations.

The mystery is pretty good. I like how Rick Mofina continues to have the "bad guy" kill, that he doesn't stop when he murders the nursing student (I read a mystery where the murders just stop, for no reason, which really deadens the intensity and suspense) and that the police continue to find bodies as they continue their investigation. Also, the story behind Styebek's family is very interesting and sounds very realistic.

Also, I really appreciated the short chapters. At the change of a character or the end of a scene, you get a new chapter. Sure, there are 70+, but since the writing is already choppy, it doesn't matter if chapter length makes it that way too.

### I Didn't Like:

I suppose it is common for the hard biting crime novel to have very choppy writing, but I must admit, it came as a shock to me. Descriptions are few and far between. Things happen quickly and are retold in as few words as possible.

But then, halfway through the book, it's almost as if he were told to "frill it up" a bit, so he stops, mid-action sometimes, to give a one page biography of said person. In the case of Gannon, okay, I understand. Jolene, again, understandable. Styebek, okay, that makes sense too even if it does shave off quite a bit of the excitement and thrill. But Rose, the detective in Kansas? Melody, who is considering hiring Gannon? Zachary, the poor boy who finds a dead body? Valerie, the ex-homicide detective? Why? None of the

characters stand out as it is, otherwise a background would be cool. And many of the characters are "one-shot": they have one section dedicated to their point of view, and then they fade back to oblivion. Why waste the reader's time with Rose and her husband and two kids or Valerie's retirement or how Zachary's older brother picks on him? They appear once and disappear, thus making their life story meaningless in the grand picture (and only page filler).

Also, relating to style, I didn't think it a smart move to have Styebek's point of view shown. In fact, I think overall there are too many points of view in this book. We have Gannon, Jolene, Styebek, Brent, Rose, Valerie, Zachary, Melody...too many people! It really diminishes the tension in the novel, the thrill. I would have kept the point of view to Gannon and Gannon alone. Or perhaps Gannon and Jolene.

I had troubles really relating to any of the characters, as most of them are of the cardboard variety or the stereotype variety. I wasn't fond of the "older sister ran away" angle to Gannon's character, and would have loved to have learned less about Styebek's family...at least when it was told in flashback (it would have been neater to just have Gannon investigate to find that out).

Some of the events I felt didn't occur in a realistic manner. For instance, at one point, Jolene tries to runaway. Her big plan, is to untie wrists (good), remove the door (good), then get behind the bad guy and hit him with a rock (good). But then, instead of making sure he's dead and stealing the truck, she runs away. Of course we know that the bad guy will make a miraculous recovery and stand up (unbelievable! A man survives a serious concussion with no repercussions whatsoever!). If I were Jolene, I would have hit him hard (he wouldn't have gotten up 10 seconds after being hit), tied him up with duct tape (he ought to have it lying around), and steal the truck, driving back to civilization. But then, that would mean the story would be over almost 50 pages before the real ending.

The conclusion is so-so. A little hurried, rushed, status-quo. All the bad guys get their come-uppance (including Nate Fowler, who fired Gannon), and all the good guys get rewarded (Gannon gets a high-profile job, who pays all the expenses he charged up, including flights to Kansas, Canada, AND Texas; Jolene's boss doesn't bat an eye at paying for all her medical expenses even though she hasn't even started working there). Weak and unlikely, if you ask me.

There are quite a few conveniences in the book...convenient revelations of key information that makes Gannon's investigation easier. I could probably take a few, but after a while, it seemed like Gannon had a tendency to trip onto the clues, rather than really investigate.

Repetition is commonplace. Repetition occurs frequently in the book. Many of the details and backstories are repeated in the novel (is it getting annoying yet?). Twice we are told what ViCAP is; once at the beginning (okay, no big deal), then yet again with Rose. Once was enough, thank you. The story of Deke is told twice: once in flashbacks and once when Gannon discovers it. Deke's story is actually kinda interesting...but when you read it in flashback THEN have our protagonist find it out, it really deadens the impact. The reader is like, "Yup, learned that already" and is tempted (or does) skip ahead.

Dialogue/Sexual Situations/Violence:

Mild, with a spattering of f-bombs.

The woman who dies is a prostitute. Styebek is accused of using a prostitute's services.

Pretty gruesome, without being really gruesome. Bernice is said to be found in a nasty state, in a shallow grave. Many other deaths occur in the book, and while none are told in clinical detail, all are given the impression of being terribly icky.

Overall:

The book takes some warming up to, particularly due to the writing style and the choice to include the so many bland characters' points of view. "Vengeance Road" is not the worst book I've read; it did a good job of being a nice distraction without consuming too much of my thoughts. But I didn't find it very thrilling or suspenseful, and it was far too easy to put the book down (a no-no for a thriller). 2.5 stars rounded to 3.

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## **Jim says**

The first book in the Jack Gannon series from author Rick Mofina, "Vengeance Road" is a dark, and twisted thriller. Jack Gannon is the ace crime reporter for the Buffalo Sentinel. Once nominated for a Pulitzer, Gannon is the best at what he does. The Buffalo Police Department has been called out to a dead body found at Ellicot Creek. Something very out of the norm for this area. The body of Bernice Tina Hogan has been partially buried in a very grisly manner. Police are keeping the scene off limits to everyone. Gannon cannot believe this area is sealed off. The Victim who was a hooker, and drug addict who'd been trying to put her life back together. Gannon discovers the prime suspect is a cop. Not only a cop, but a hero cop who coaches kids and has huge number of awards. Karl Stybeck has the appearance of perfect police officer. How could he be involved as a suspect in this case ? Gannon blows it all out of the water by printing the entire story without proper documentation. The paper is forced to print an apology after editor Nate Fowler fires Gannon. Gannon is forced to go freelance. He's got to clear his name and prove his original story was true. Of course nobody in newspaper business wants anything to do with him. But Gannon marches on. He unravels a web of just incredible crimes and sickness. Even as two more bodies turn up and the case slowly moves across country and down into Texas Gannon is like a dog with a bone. The story itself was just riveting. It was just so hard to put down. I kept saying a few more pages, then a few more pages. Before I knew it I'd flew through the book. Author Rick Mofina is a master storyteller. This is the sixth book of his I've read. All six have been excellent. The characters in this one are so sufferable it's hard not to shed a tear as the terror awaits before them. The bad guy(s) come out of the book like the monsters they do appear to be. I'd highly recommend this book to anyone into excellent mystery/thrillers. The Jack Gannon character kind of reminded me of "Jim Rockford". In addition to being a writer, Gannon had to be a hard nosed not willing to back down investigator. Also like Rockford, Gannon never gets the respect he should. 5 stars out of a possible 5 stars for "Vengeance Road" by Rick Mofina. Do not miss this one. I'm for sure going to read the next Jack Gannon book soon.

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## **Deborah says**

### **Good read**

Love reading Rick Mofina books, have read almost every book he has out. You won't be disappointed give them a try

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## **Sandy says**

I keep seeing books by Mofina showing up in my emails so was curious. Good story. Generally I don't like (as characters), journalists as they are so pushy and intrusive but his persistence is warranted. The ending bogged down a bit, but am looking forward to reading more.

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