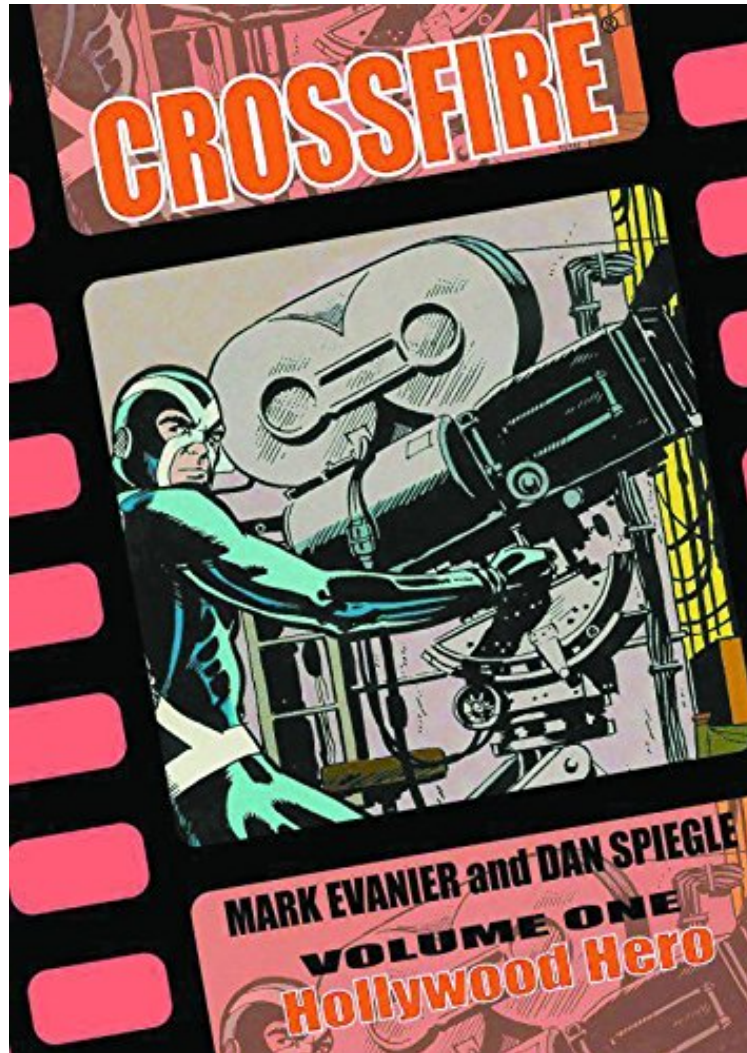


(Read now) Crossfire Volume 1: Hollywood Hero (v. 1)

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Mark Evanier

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Mark Evanier : Crossfire Volume 1: Hollywood Hero (v. 1) before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Crossfire Volume 1: Hollywood Hero (v. 1):

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Low key superheroics done in depraved Tinseltown - it's pretty good stuff By H. Bala If you prefer your superhero comics to have more grit than flash, more realism than spectacle, then take a peek at CROSSFIRE, a series which spun off from the DNAgents comic book, back in 1984. Mark Evanier wrote the stuff; Dan Spigle drew the thing. And both guys were very good at what they did. The first Crossfire's real name was Jeff Baker. A costumed industrial spy, Jeff Baker's murder was chronicled in the pages of DNAgents. As well, that series told of Baker's bail bondsman, Jay Endicott, stumbling onto Baker's costume and deciding to take on

the Crossfire persona. Endicott, long frustrated with the failing criminal justice system, reasoned that he'd be effective in combatting crime as he'd be able to take advantage of Crossfire's reputation and existing underworld contacts. Mark Evanier, a veteran writer of television shows (including *Welcome Back, Kotter*), makes use of his Hollywood insider knowledge to craft stories convincingly steeped in the sleaze and dirt of the entertainment business. Jay Endicott finds himself time and again being pulled into La La Land cases and dealing with shady TV network moguls, sinister movie producers, and hapless starlets. Turns out Tinseltown's underbelly is something you don't want to scratch. Evanier's use of noirish elements and Hollywood politics result in stories which leave you with a faint smudge on your soul and a stronger distrust of your fellow man. This, from the guy who also wrote *GROO*. But the cynical way that "The Starlet" story ends, well, yeah, that's pretty much spot on. Rainbow (who would become Jay's girlfriend) and Amber of the DNAgents briefly appear in "The Starlet" story arc, but, really, there's not much classic superheroics in these pages. Jay Endicott may wear the flashy suit, but he's a workmanlike crimefighter. He barely has fighting skills. In reading his adventures, you get the feeling he's barely surviving his encounters. He gets knocked out a bunch of times. Even though Endicott does tangle with costumed hit men like the Scavenger and the Bungee Jumper, in spirit, *CROSSFIRE* is actually closer to Mike Grell's gritty urban thriller *JON SABLE* (Complete Mike Grell's *Jon Sable, Freelance* Volume 1 Signed Numbered (Complete Mike Grell's *Jon Sable, Freelance*)). For huge scaled comics like *X-MEN* or *FANTASTIC FOUR*, it's okay to have an artist with an affected or exaggerated style. But for a series featuring a costumed vigilante who battles street level criminals, veteran artist Dan Spiegle's realistic illustrations are ideal. Spiegle manages to seamlessly integrate the fantastic with the mundane, and this only makes the stories that much more believable. Dude's been so good for so long, and it's amazing to me that he's not a better known artist. At 176 pages and published in 2004, *CROSSFIRE: HOLLYWOOD HERO* is a digest-sized, black and white trade paperback which collects the first five issues of the *CROSSFIRE* series, as well as reprinting the "Who Shot Danny Scott?" story (and its solution) from the three-issued mystery-contest limited series *WHODUNNIT?* Eclipse Comics published *CROSSFIRE*'s entire 26 issue run. Issue #18 saw a shift to a black and white format and a change in Crossfire's look as Jay is forced to get rid of his costume to avoid capture by the authorities. From that point on, he does his vigilante thing clad in everyday clothing and a mask, which I think is a much cooler look. So far, we have this one trade which compiles only the first five issues of *CROSSFIRE*. With DNAgents Industrial Strength Edition being released, I'm hopeful like Pollyanna that *CROSSFIRE*'s next on the massive trade collection treatment. And, while I'm being hopeful, why not wish for the *CROSSFIRE RAINBOW* mini-series to be thrown in there, as well? That's right - I dream big, baby! 8 of 8 people found the following review helpful. Creator-Owned Excellence from the '80s By Babytoxie '80s comics are lately being reprinted by the ton, and I couldn't be happier. *Grimjack*, *Jon Sable*, *Alien Legion*, and other creator-owned series are surfacing from legal limbo and delighting me all over again. Recently, 2 of Mark Evanier's series for Eclipse, DNAgents and Crossfire, have been reprinted in digest-sized black and white editions. I remember DNAgents quite clearly: I didn't like the flimsy stories at all. A spin-off of that series, *Crossfire*, was a completely different matter. I am happy to have this collection of the first 6 issues, as Evanier's talent for noir-style narrative really shines through. I had forgotten just how good these stories are. As *Crossfire* spins out of DNAgents, this collection begins with issue #1 of his own series, introduced by a too-brief recap of the exploits of the original *Crossfire*, a slippery high-tech industrial spy (if there is any problem with the book, it's that this intro doesn't give enough detail for new readers). After his death, his bail bondsman, Jay Endicott, inherits his personal effects, including the *Crossfire* uniform and hi-tech gadgets. Rather than dispose of them, Endicott uses them for the opposite purpose: to fight crime. He uses the *Crossfire* identity to his advantage, getting information from criminal contacts who don't know he's working the other side. Endicott is based in Hollywood, CA, and Evanier successfully uses this setting to give the stories a seedy quality. There is plenty of interaction with the movie/TV worlds, as well as the hopes and broken dreams that accompany them. Frequently, *Crossfire* finds himself as a sort of guardian angel to a large cast of needy supporting characters who are in over their heads, some of whom bear more than a passing resemblance to actual celebrities. These characters really anchor the stories, and as they don't always have happy endings, they give the stories more gravity. And let's not forget the impressive work of artist Dan Spiegle. This is fine-line at its best, and it would not be out of place in a classic Warren magazine. It slightly resembles Dave Gibbons with a harder edge. I am very thankful that the series was not reprinted in color, as this really gives Spiegle's work a chance to shine: figures, facial expressions, scenery, action shots... he can do it all, and very well.

The glitz, glamour, and lights of Hollywood dazzle the eye, blinding most people to the darker side of showbiz. And yet, that darker side is there, with sleazy producers, organized crime financiers, and performers who will do literally anything to make it big. And when these sorts of people need a little breaking-and-entering done and secrets stolen, they know they can trust the high-priced talent of the mysterious masked man known only as *Crossfire*. At least, they think they can trust him. What they don't know, what nobody knows, is that the *Crossfire* costume and contact phone number have fallen into the hands of Jay Endicott, handsome bail bondsman and all-around good guy. "*Crossfire*" still takes their business, but he works from the inside to protect the innocent. Whether on a brightly-lit movie set or in the dim back alleys of Los Angeles, *Crossfire* gets caught up in the action, the intrigue, and the underhanded dealings in

the TV and movie world.