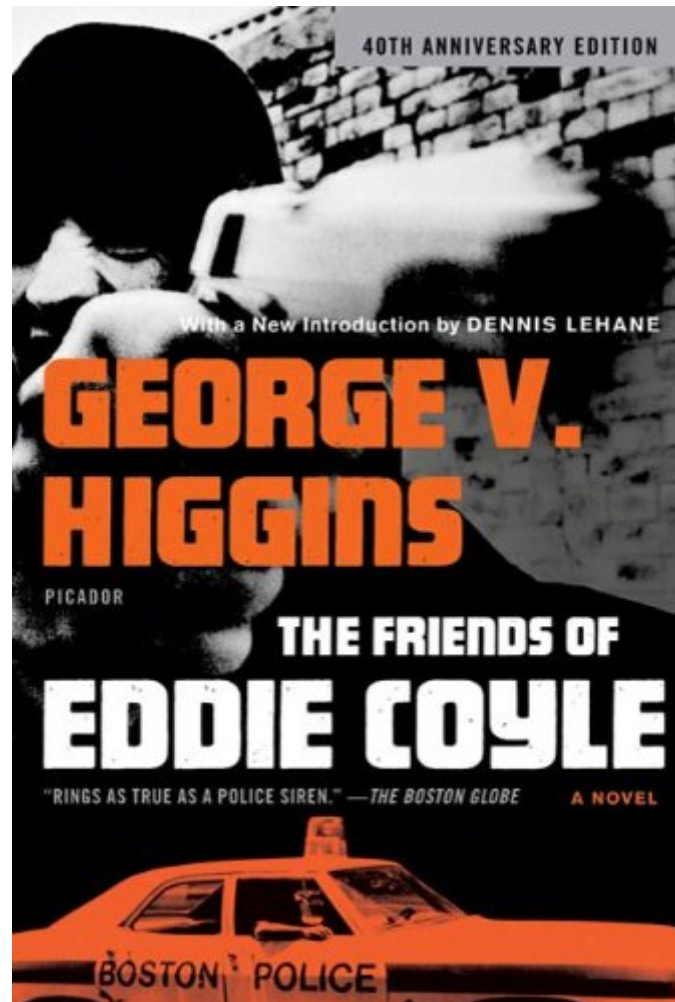


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# The Friends Of Eddie Coyle: A Novel



## Synopsis

The classic novel from "America's best crime novelist" (Time), with a new introduction by Dennis LehaneGeorge V. Higgins's seminal crime novel is a down-and-dirty tale of thieves, mobsters, and cops on the mean streets of Boston. When small-time gunrunner Eddie Coyle is convicted on a felony, he's looking at three years in the pen--that is, unless he sells out one of his big-fish clients to the DA. But which of the many hoods, gunmen, and executioners whom he calls his friends should he send up the river? Told almost entirely in crackling dialogue by a vivid cast of lowlifes and detectives, *The Friends of Eddie Coyle* is one of the greatest crime novels ever written.â œThe best crime novel ever written--makes *The Maltese Falcon* read like *Nancy Drew*.â • -- Elmore Leonard

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I read a list by James Ellroy where he listed Higgins as one of his major influences, so I bought this one. I was pleasantly surprised. The story is very simple, the dialog is incredibly lifelike and readable. The characters are very real and the story is believable. Its not really a mystery as much as it is a story about some criminals and what they think and feel. Warning, though. Don't buy this if you like the 'high concept' plots of Grisham and Patterson. This is a very simple story about real

people and real criminals. If you're an aspiring writer of crime fiction, definitely check it out especially the dialog.

Possibly the best account of real life crime, gangsters, and cut throats ever written...a rare insight into the real world of low level criminals, proving "There is no honor amongst thieves"...having been born, raised, and lived in the neighborhoods depicted in this novel, I can honestly say..."This story is all too real relative to Boston area criminals and their alleged loyalties...this book is a masterpiece...

Eddie Coyle is a low-level Boston hood, supplying mobsters with handguns. He earned his nickname, "Fingers", after one gun deal went poorly & he had his hand slammed in a drawer, giving him an extra set of knuckles on his left hand. Once in a while the mob throws him some more lucrative work, but on the last such opportunity he was arrested in New Hampshire illegally trucking liquor. Now he faces three to five years in prison and as he says: "Well, ...I got three kids and a wife at home, and I can't afford to do no more time, you know? The kids're growing up and they go to school, and the other kids make fun of them and all. Hell, I'm almost forty-five years old."The only way Eddie can avoid prison is to trade information & he's soon caught in between the Feds, his gun dealer & the Mob. George V. Higgins's debut novel (now almost thirty years old) is notable for it's streetwise dialogue and the nearly Shakespearean sense of tragedy (well, at least, Billy "Sonnets" Shakespeare) that surrounds Eddie.GRADE: A

The Friends of Eddie Coyle still remains a classic because George V. Higgins knew how to write dialogue. His voice is as fresh today as when this crime novel first hit the shelf back in 1972. It must've been a screenwriter's dream when Paul Monash was asked to adapt this novel for the film which Peter Yates directed. This Henry Holt edition also includes an introduction from Elmore Leonard. Leonard explains how George V. Higgins taught him, as a writer, how to get into scenes without wasting time and how he realized criminals could appear to be ordinary people and have the same concerns as the rest of us.This book is still a bleak, fascinating read.I had also been searching for the film for years (it was not available on VHS or DVD) but thanks to Unbox, I finally got a chance to see this classic with Robert Mitchum. Highly recommend!!!

I first read The Friends of Eddie Coyle 25 years ago and I can still remember the opening lines (Jackie Brown, at twenty-six, with no expression on his face, said that he could get some guns.) It is a shame Higgins is gone. He was the true master of dialogue. This was the book that drove my

desire to write crime fiction myself. It is the story of the real-life poor SOB's who are just trying to make it day to day in a world moving way too fast for them. It is real, which is why I believe I enjoyed it so much ... and can still remember the characters so well (not to mention the dialogue). This is a story of how it really goes in the underworld. The Godfather is for the simple minded fantasy seekers; George V. Higgins was the real deal.

The Friends of Eddie Coyle centers around Eddie "Fingers" Coyle who is a street-wise, low level, and tired thug who is only 45. He looking at two to three years for bootlegging and that's time he can't spare with children growing up. Eddie is informing the FBI on anything to reduce, or eliminate, his sentence and to make ends meet, he sells guns to the mob and they use them to rob banks. Unlike many films and books, organized crime is looked in the least glamorous means. Nothing about a young man "killing his way to the top" or acting as "head of the family". When you at the bottom of the food chain, you make some money and live long enough to spend it if you don't get caught or killed. Eddie and his bartender friend maintain a life simply keeping their head above water when it comes to the law and the criminal underground. Still, the book is not all dreary. The bank robberies depicted in the book are very ingenious. The robbers hold the families of bank managers hostage at their homes while they carefully rob their respective banks. You never know what will happen everytime. Gun Dealer Jackie Brown's exploits also are interesting because he's very careful and very clever even dealing with the toughest customers though he loses to the world-weary Eddie Coyle who knows how scare someone into a deal that'll suit his needs. Author George V. Higgins' style of writing is just enough descriptions of the environment and the characters have down to earth, masculine, dialogue. The end of the book is cold and unforgiving and cements it's depiction of the mob as a huge, faceless, machine and the law equally as cold and fighting an unending war.

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