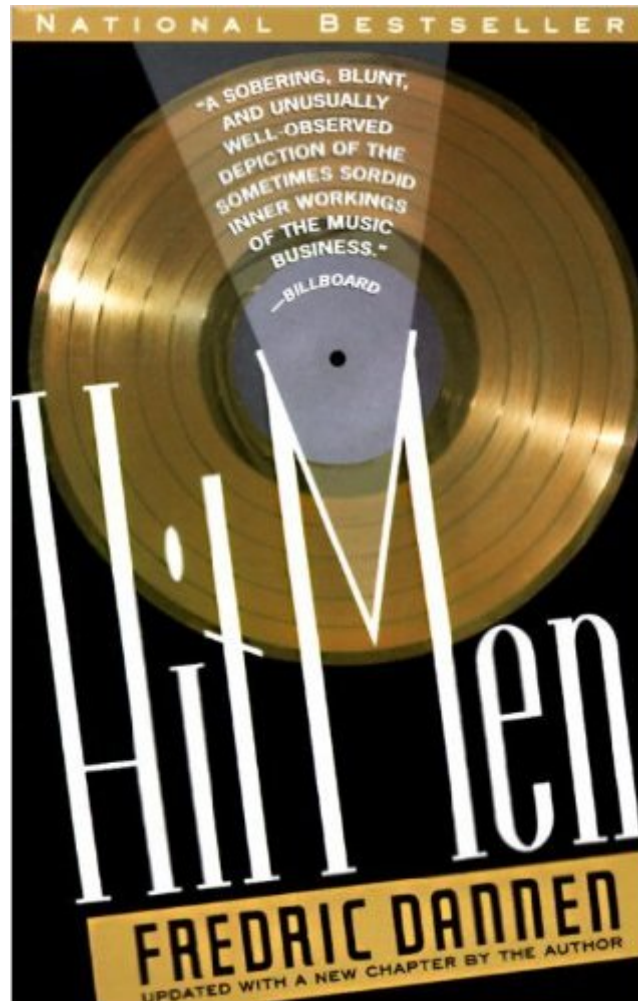


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# Hit Men: Power Brokers And Fast Money Inside The Music Business



## Synopsis

Copiously researched and documented, *Hit Men* is the highly controversial portrait of the pop music industry in all its wild, ruthless glory: the insatiable greed and ambition; the enormous egos; the fierce struggles for profits and power; the vendettas, rivalries, shakedowns, and payoffs. Chronicling the evolution of America's largest music labels from the Tin Pan Alley days to the present day, Fredric Dannen examines in depth the often venal, sometimes illegal dealings among the assorted hustlers and kingpins who rule over this multi-billion-dollar business.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Dannen hit such a home run with this thoroughly researched book that he was honored from within the music industry (Ralph J. Gleason award) and without (national bestseller list). The topic here is unwholesome practices within the music industry, but the most passionate subtopic of Dannen's research is the system of independent promotion through which singles are "added" to radio station playlists and then moved through the charts. I almost think *HIT MEN* should be considered a must read for anyone in the music industry: artist, manager, songwriter or publisher. Since Dannen reports his quotes exactly as they come down, you will not find the dialog exactly suitable for Sunday School. The second edition covers events up to and including 1991 and contains a follow-up chapter not in the original 1990 hardback edition. Now, some years after its original introduction, *HIT MEN* is still gripping and relevant. Aspects of the described litigation still tend to resurface from time to time, and many of the key players identified and profiled by Dannen are still suited up and swinging on the music-business diamond. Ron Simpson, School of Music, Brigham Young University. Author of *MASTERING THE MUSIC BUSINESS*.

Wow. If only you knew how treacherous the music business is. Read this and you'll know. "Hit Men" confirms what many music lovers saddened by the boring state of commercial rock radio already suspected: hit records are bought and paid for by the promoters, not made by the fans. Don't allow yourself for one second to believe ever again that radio stations are pushing songs into heavy rotation because they are responding to what their listeners want. They are doing so because someone is paying a LOT of money to cram those songs down your throat. As bad as this was in decades past, I dare say it is even worse now (in 2010). "Hit Men" pulls back the curtain on the major players and activities in the record business over a period of several decades and reveals some extremely ugly and disheartening truths about how that business operates. I doubt anyone reading this book will regard the music business or the radio business with anything other than contempt from now on. Want to know why certain songs become hits? It's because someone paid for it to happen. It has nothing at all to do with consumer preference. Well, at least not primarily. Are you a fan of The Who? Want to know the REAL reason their 1981 album "Face Dances" tanked? Read this book. Want to know the REAL reason artists on certain labels get massive amounts of airplay while artists on other labels struggle to get heard? Read this book. But here's a hint -- it has nothing to do with the quality of the music. Educated readers will probably make the logical assumption that there are a great many industries that operate as the music business has and does. Welcome to the real world, folks. It's all about the money. In any battle between commerce and art, commerce has the advantage. Get used to it. Fascinating, fascinating reading. Just as relevant today as it was when it was published in 1990.

As an experienced music industry professional with over 15 years of experience, I can tell you that this is the unofficial history book of the music industry that can be used to expose and introduce the truth about the origins and operations of the music business. It's insightful, relevant, and shocking. Buy it today.

I enjoyed this book for its witty stories and quips. I'm a musician and I'm almost convinced that the music business is thoroughly hopeless in a madcap way after reading the book. I mean hopeless because it is impossible not to get ripped off as an artist and that you have to deal with this den of snakes to sell your music successfully. I used to have an innocent joy of listening to pop records but now I know how they are promoted and my innocence is dead. I'm also suspicious of artists who moralize in their songs, but will do anything to get their songs on the air. But I suppose that is the

only way one can have a career. The book also shows how hard it is to obtain justice, fairness, and decency through personal effort or the judicial system. It also revealed how ego-driven the music and entertainment business is; the ones with the biggest egos and worst ethics often rise to the top. I doubt I would, as a musician, would want to live through any of these sordid, sardonic tales though.

This was a long and depressing read for a guy who grew up loving recorded music and who naively transferred his love of records, cassettes and CDs into love for the whole industry that provided these things.. I loved to watch the Grammy's every year and I loved weekly trips to the music aisle or to the record store at the mall. In short, by buying and re-buying the music of the artists I loved, I supported these monsters who ran it all! And they are all despicable people. Every man character in the book from Clive Davis to David Geffen to Irving Azoff to especially Walter Yetnikoff were cut throat capitalists with a capital C. That is their right but it is hard to read about their greed without getting a little upset about it. The main thrust of the book is the mob connection and I think that case is made pretty clear here though the government never managed to win the case and all the names mentioned still deny it or dismiss it to this day. As you get to the end of the book, you start to be really happy that Napster happened and that this industry slipped a great deal. Capitalists like Davis and Azoff managed to find a new place in the new business model. Others, like Yetnikoff, went other directions. It is probably the definitive book on the subject and still stunning. Nice updated epilogue from 2012. Glad I read it but I am done with this particular subject.

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