



# Cowboys and Indies: The Epic History of the Record Industry

*Gareth Murphy*

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## **Cowboys and Indies: The Epic History of the Record Industry** Gareth Murphy

*Cowboys and Indies* is nothing less than the first definitive history of the recording industry on both sides of the Atlantic.

From the invention of the earliest known sound-recording device in 1850s Paris to the CD crash and digital boom today, author and industry insider Gareth Murphy takes readers on an immensely entertaining and encyclopedic ride through the many cataclysmic musical, cultural, and technological changes that shaped a century and a half of the industry.

This invaluable narrative focuses especially on the game changers---the label founders, talent scouts, and legendary A&R men. Murphy highlights:

- Otto Heinemann's pioneer label Okeh, which spread blues and jazz "race" records across America
- how one man, Henry Speir, discovered nearly all the Delta blues legends (Robert Johnson, Charlie Patton, Son House, Tommy Johnson)
- Sam Phillips's seminal work with Chess and Sun Records
- John Hammond's discoveries (Billie Holiday, Aretha Franklin, Bob Dylan, Leonard Cohen, Bruce Springsteen)
- the behind-the-scenes players of the British Invasion
- Clive Davis, Ahmet Ertegun, David Geffen, and the corporate music machine
- the Machiavellian moves of punk impresario Malcolm McLaren (Sex Pistols)
- Chris Blackwell's triumphs for Island Records (Bob Marley, U2)
- Sylvia Robinson and Tom Silverman, the hip-hop explorers behind the Sugarhill Gang, Grandmaster Flash, and Afrika Bambaataa

...and much, much more. Murphy also offers a provocative look at the future through the ruminations of such vanguard figures as Martin Mills (4AD, XL Recordings, Matador, Rough Trade) and genre-busting producer Rick Rubin (Run-D.M.C., Red Hot Chili Peppers, Metallica, Johnny Cash).

Drawing from memoirs, archives, and more than one hundred exclusive interviews with the legends of the record industry, including the founders and CEOs of Atlantic, Chrysalis, Virgin, A&M, Sub Pop, and Sire, this book reveals the secret history behind the hit-making craft. Remarkable in scope and impressive in depth, *Cowboys and Indies* chronicles the pioneers who set the stylus on the most important labels and musical discoveries in history.

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