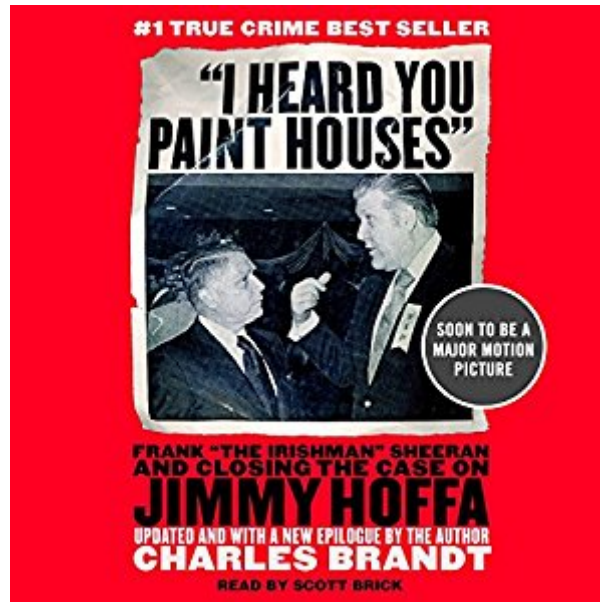


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I Heard You Paint Houses: Frank "The Irishman" Sheeran And Closing The Case On Jimmy Hoffa



Synopsis

A New York Times Bestseller This fascinating account of a dark side of American history takes its title from the first words Jimmy Hoffa spoke to Frank Sheeran; to paint a house is to kill a man. But the book is about far more than killing. It is a rich cultural history told from the inside - a riveting read that is likely to become a true crime classic. And it introduces to the reading public Frank "The Irishman" Sheeran, a figure as ruthless and as fascinating as a mob legend can be. --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Charles Brandt has proved twice over the last twenty years that he is a pretty good author. This non-fiction work (the title refers to the code Mafiosi used to inquire whether someone did hits -- the blood spatter being the paint) detailing the life of Frank Sheeran and his buddy Jimmy Hoffa is first rate. Brandt combines passages of Sheeran's own words with the author's background and fill-in's to tie together an impressive mob memoir. Frank Sheeran, besides hailing for a time from my own Wilmington, Delaware, was one vicious and disciplined mobster. This is his story. His hardscrabble life (his father would make him fight people in bars as a teen for beer -- the beer going to his father, not Frank) perhaps made a life a amorality unsurprising. What is amazing is that this recount by an old man facing death is not a repentance for a life lived horribly wrong, but a simple detailing of the events of that life. The banality of Sheeran describing his career -- hits, butchering, beatings told the way an accountant would detail audits or financial statement presentations -- is fascinating and speaks to a man wholly absorbed in doing his part for organized crime and the Teamsters. Hoffa is

presented as an interesting figure; one who starts using the mob for the benefit of "his" teamsters but makes the tragic mistake of believing he is too big to be bound by mob rules. His story and will to take over what was once the most powerful union in America is a remarkable tale in its own right and told interestingly in this book. Sheeran idolizes Hoffa. Then he kills him (according to Sheeran).

Enough law enforcement officials have given credit to the veracity of Sheeran's account and it certainly rang true to me as I read it. There are no particularly startling revelations here, at least as regards the Hoffa matter. Those who orchestrated the hit are the same people who were always suspect- Bufalino, Provenzano, etc. However, at the very least, we can now dispense with some of the more fanciful notions that have evolved over the years- Hoffa was buried in a NJ dump, Hoffa rests in the end zone of Giants stadium, etc. I was surprised to read about Sheeran's claiming credit for the Joe Gallo hit in NY in 1972. As a frequent patron of the old Umberto's restaurant on Mulberry Street where the colorful Gallo met his end (you could still see the bullet holes that dispatched Gallo for years afterward and the restaurant became something of a tourist attraction), I always credited the claim of Joseph Luparelli that 3 gunmen were involved in the hit. The only real problem I had with the book was that, despite all his forthcoming self-analysis and revelatory details, I ended the narrative with no real sense beyond the superficial of what made Sheeran tick. Impoverished background? The brutality of his combat experiences? How many people have gone through all that and more without becoming underworld killers? Perhaps it's inevitable that someone like Sheeran is destined to remain an enigma. Or perhaps the prosaic reality is that Frank Sheeran was an essentially shallow, empty man whose only true value in the world in which he moved was the brutality and violence of which he was so obviously capable of performing without much notice or preparation. It would have been interesting to hear from his alienated, embittered daughters to get a glimpse of the man's personality from another vantage point.

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