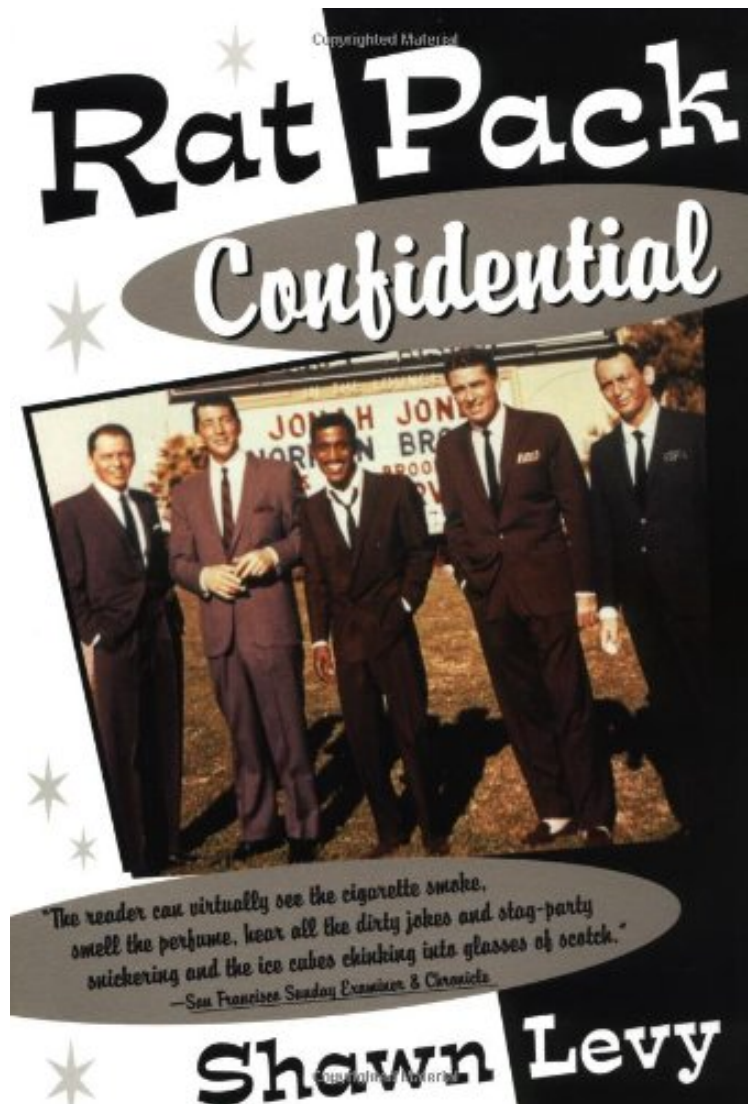


Rat Pack Confidential: Frank, Dean, Sammy, Peter, Joey and the Last Great Show Biz Party

Shawn Levy

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Shawn Levy : Rat Pack Confidential: Frank, Dean, Sammy, Peter, Joey and the Last Great Show Biz Party before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Rat Pack Confidential: Frank, Dean, Sammy, Peter, Joey and the Last Great Show Biz Party:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Enjoyed reading about The Rat Pack since they were famous ...By Mildred McDermott Enjoyed reading about The Rat Pack since they were famous in my younger time. They were really all insecure, talented people with many foibles., Some of the book I knew about from watching TV, reading

papers, and buying their albums. It was a good read and very sad at the same time. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Good writing, good story By A. J. Lawrence As Sammy might say, "it's a hip, groovy book, man". It's intelligently written, moves along at a good tempo, is respectful, even supportive, of its characters' wild ride through American culture, but never fawning, and it does not flinch from the darker and seedier side of the tale. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Two Stars By Mariane I truly did not care for this book. too much "old stuff" and none of interest.... Simply a tiring book.

For the first time, the full story of what happened when Frank brought his best pals to party in a land called Vegas January 1960. Las Vegas is at its smooth, cool peak. The Strip is a jet-age theme park, and the greatest singer in the history of American popular music summons a group of friends there to make a movie. One is an insouciant singer of Italian songs, ex-partner to the most popular film comedian of the day. One is a short, black, Jewish, one-eyed, singing, dancing wonder. One is an upper-crust British pretty boy turned degenerate B-movie star actor, brother-in-law to an ascendant politician. And one is a stiff-shouldered comic with the quintessential Borscht Belt emcees knack for needling one-liners. The architectonically sleek marquee of the Sands Hotel announces their presence simply by listing their names: FRANK SINATRA. DEAN MARTIN. SAMMY DAVIS, JR. PETER LAWFORD. JOEY BISHOP. Around them an entire cast gathers: actors, comics, singers, songwriters, gangsters, politicians, and women, as well as thousands of starstruck everyday folks who fork over pocketfuls of money for the privilege of basking in their presence. They call themselves The Clan. But to an awed world, they are known as The Rat Pack. They had it all. Fame. Gorgeous women. A fabulous playground of a city and all the money in the world. The backing of fearsome crime lords and the blessing of the President of the United States. But the dark side over the thin line between pleasure and debauchery, between swinging self-confidence and brutal arrogance took its toll. In four years, their great ride was over, and showbiz was never the same. Acclaimed Jerry Lewis biographer Shawn Levy has written a dazzling portrait of a time when neon brightness cast sordid shadows. It was Franks World, and we just lived in it.

.com If you're not inclined to read individual biographies of Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, and Sammy Davis Jr., Shawn Levy's *Rat Pack Confidential* is a perfect one-stop resource. Less a group biography than a series of impressionistic snapshots, the book is loaded with can't-miss material--the dirt on the making of *Ocean's Eleven*, information about Sinatra's wild stint as a casino owner, deep background on Peter Lawford's habit of introducing Jack Kennedy to glamorous starlets, wiretap transcripts of mobsters Sam Giancana and Johnny Formosa discussing Dean Martin's lack of respect. Levy, whose previous book, *King of Comedy*, is a serious consideration of Jerry Lewis's life and career, offers similarly well considered insights into the members of the Rat Pack. He covers Davis's lifelong struggle against racism and the complicated intertwinings of the Kennedy political machine and "the Clan," as the performers preferred to be called (they often denied anything like the Rat Pack even existed and resisted collective references). The book's debts to its predecessors are often apparent; much of the material on Sinatra's friendship with Humphrey Bogart and Lauren Bacall, for example, appears to have been gleaned from recent Bogart biographies. The writing style, which tries to capture the ring-a-ding-ding feel of the era, also owes serious debts to Nick Tosches by way of James Ellroy, while only intermittently reaching their level of mastery. But these are minor quibbles. As a synthesis of thirty years worth of journalism and celebrity biography, *Rat Pack Confidential* succeeds in portraying the supernova blowout of old-school showbiz in all its dazzling glory. From Library Journal It used to be Frank Sinatra's world: Women were broads, the whole world was a smoking section, and booze flowed freely. And at no time was it more Frank's world than when the Rat Pack was in session. Sinatra was the center of the group, with Dean Martin and Sammy Davis Jr. completing the nucleus. Peter Lawford, Joey Bishop, and Shirley MacLaine, the only female admitted, comprised the periphery. Since Sinatra's 80th birthday in 1995 was commemorated by at least a half-dozen books, one might think that all that could possibly be written about Sinatra already has. Indeed, most of the material in these books has been seen before in the biographies and autobiographies of the various Rat Pack players, but each book finds its own angle. Quirk (author of a string of movie-star biographies) and Schoell (a novelist and author of books on film) concentrate a bit more on the various Rat Pack films. Levy (author of a Jerry Lewis biography and former editor at *American Film*) digs somewhat deeper into Sinatra's connections with politics and organized crime. In light of Sinatra's recent death, there will likely be demand for more material on him, and these books will be welcome additions to circulating popular culture collections. A Michael Colby, Univ. of California at Davis Lib. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Kirkus s Levy shifts the focus from one of show business's great egotists, Jerry Lewis (*King of Comedy*, 1996), to entertainment's most hedonistic gathering of narcissists, the Rat Pack. Most of its members were larger than life Frank Sinatra, Dean Martin, Sammy Davis, Peter Lawford. Joey Bishop wasn't, of course, but that was his charm. They gathered in Las Vegas in 1960 for the shooting of the less-than-immortal film *Ocean's Eleven*, an event that turned into one huge party, a lengthy day-and-night celebration of booze, broads, and bucks. With this lunatic extravaganza as its pivot point, the book traces the rise and fall of this quintet of famous men, trying somewhat vainly to explain their hipper-than-thou attitudes as some part of the Zeitgeist that produced the wretched excesses of the Kennedy White House. As Levy himself notes in the acknowledgments to the book, the lives and peccadilloes of these

men are amply documented in dozens of books. We are treated to a snappily written retelling of Sinatra's rise from working-class Hoboken, NJ, fueled by his mother's high-octane shoving, to his success as teen idol and band singer, his catastrophic fall from grace in the early '50s and no less meteoric return with the film *From Here to Eternity* and a series of classic recordings for Capitol Records. Levy embroiders on the story of Martin's even more improbable success, which he touched on in the Lewis bio. Indeed, except for the material on Joey Bishop, which is (surprisingly enough) downright delightful, there isn't much that is unfamiliarthe Rat Pack's dalliances with the Kennedys, ties to the Mob, decline and fall. And although Levy's take on all this is suitably critical, there is something creepily voyeuristic about the relish with which he peddles these tales. (16 pages bw photos, not seen) (Author tour) -- Copyright 1998, Kirkus Associates, LP. All rights reserved.