



FM: The Rise and Fall of Rock Radio

Richard Neer

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"It was all so honest, before the end of our collective innocence. Top Forty jocks screamed and yelled and sounded mightier than God on millions of transistor radios. But on FM radio it was all spun out for only you. On a golden web by a master weaver driven by fifty thousand magical watts of crystal clear power . . . before the days of trashy, hedonistic dumb speak and disposable three-minute ditties . . . in the days where rock lived at many addresses in many cities."

—from FM

As a young man, Richard Neer dreamed of landing a job at WNEW in New York—one of the revolutionary FM stations across the country that were changing the face of radio by rejecting strict formatting and letting disc jockeys play whatever they wanted. He felt that when he got there, he'd have made the big time. Little did he know he'd have shaped rock history as well.

FM: The Rise and Fall of Rock Radio chronicles the birth, growth, and death of free-form rock-and-roll radio through the stories of the movement's flagship stations. In the late sixties and early seventies—at stations like KSAN in San Francisco, WBCN in Boston, WMMR in Philadelphia, KMET in Los Angeles, WNEW, and others—disc jockeys became the gatekeepers, critics, and gurus of new music. Jocks like Scott Muni, Vin Scelsa, Jonathan Schwartz, and Neer developed loyal followings and had incredible influence on their listeners and on the early careers of artists such as Bruce Springsteen, Genesis, the Cars, and many others.

Full of fascinating firsthand stories, FM documents the commodification of an iconoclastic phenomenon, revealing how counterculture was coopted and consumed by the mainstream. Richard Neer was an eyewitness to, and participant in, this history. FM is the tale of his exhilarating ride.

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