

Takedown: The Fall of the Last Mafia Empire

By Douglas Century, Rick Cowan

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Seldom has the netherworld of the mafia been revealed with such fascinating detail and sheer suspense. Like the classics of the genre-from *The Godfather* to *The French Connection* to *Wise Guy-Takedown* leads us to the inner ring of a conspiracy of corruption and terror that held the city in its grip for nearly fifty years.

Rick Cowan was a young NYPD detective in 1992 when he dropped by a Brooklyn waterfront warehouse to investigate a recent fire bombing-only one in a string of interviews he considered routine. But what he found there was far from routine, for it would take him on a five-year odyssey and nearly cost him his life. In fact, he had stumbled upon the lead of a lifetime-the suspicion that he might unearth the hard evidence police and federal agencies alike had been chasing for decades: the proof of collusion among the mob families to extort billions from the nation's most influential corporations that call New York their home.

Featuring eccentric, larger-than-life New York characters and an undercover cop on the brink of being discovered-and murdered-at every step, *Takedown* is a riveting real-life procedural and one of the most important investigative books of the season.

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Takedown: The Fall of the Last Mafia Empire By Douglas Century, Rick Cowan Bibliography

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly
In 1992, New York City detective Cowan was investigating a truck bombing at a Brooklyn garbage transfer station when the "mobbed-up" thugs responsible for the crime showed up to further intimidate Sal Benedetto, the facility's owner. Thinking fast, Benedetto introduced Cowan as his "Cousin Danny," thereby averting disaster-and allowing Cowen entry into a landmark investigation in which he went undercover as Danny Benedetto to expose the Mafia's billion-dollar monopoly of the city waste removal business. By the time the grand jury indictments were handed down, Cowan had spent years on the case, helped put away dozens of mobsters and incurred lasting emotional trauma from the strain of leading a double life. Recalling it here in vivid, riveting detail, Cowan (aided by journalist Century) reconstructs a time when he was deeper undercover in the garbage "cartel" than any city cop had ever been, with the close calls to prove it. Whether he's boosting a wiseguy's car to plant a bug, navigating confrontations with goons wielding two-by-fours and baseball bats or suffering through a Mafia Christmas party with a malfunctioning radio transmitter burning into his leg, Cowan's exploits play on the page like scenes from a well-mounted mob movie. The Hollywood producer with the rights to his story won't have to spend a penny juicing it up: this is a well-told, gripping tale of a heroic investigation.
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Review
Utterly serious in scope, it's a nuts-and-bolts tale of how to break down organized crime. -- *Detroit Free Press*, November 17, 2002

About the Author
Rick Cowan is a twenty-year veteran of the New York Police Department, where he remains on active duty as Detective First-Grade. His undercover role in Operation Wasteland earned him a personal promotion from then Police Commissioner William Bratton.

Douglas Century is a contributing writer for *The New York Times* whose work has appeared in numerous other national publications.

Users Review

From reader reviews:

Cory Marshall:

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Edna Brooks:

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Rachel Glidewell:

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