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Rock era gets a Jersey spin in 'One-Hit Willie'

12:38 PM, May. 3, 2012 |

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The mob, murder and mayhem.

A James Cagney movie, right?

Wrong.

It's "One-Hit Willie: A Classic Rock Novel" by longtime Jersey journalist William Westhoven. As we become a little older and wiser, we're learning that the mob had its role in the making of the classic rock canon.

Tommy James recently depicted the wise guy antics in "Me, the Mob, and the Music: One Helluva Ride with Tommy James and The Shondells," and here, Westhoven also delves into the back-alley stuff in "One-Hit Willie."

Written by
Chris Jordan
Twitter.com/ChrisFJJordan

Westhoven's "Willie" is a musical savant who dazzles Vegas en route to music stardom.

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"Once I settled into Las Vegas at that particular time in the early early '60s, it was mob controlled," said Westhoven of the self-published "Willie." "It seemed like a natural."

There's a good helping of mob hanky-panky in "One-Hit Willie," but Westhoven wrote the book before James' tell-all came out in 2010.

"Back then I think they were crazy. They didn't care about royalties," said Westhoven of the mob's tendency to skim off the top. "James lived off of the money he made from touring, and when he needed extra money, he'd throw a tantrum, and they'd cut him a check."

WILLIAM WESTHOVEN

What: 'Researching and Adapting Real History into Fiction'

When: 7 p.m. Monday, May 7

Where: Parsippany Library, 449 Halsey Road, Parsippany

Info: 973-887-5150, ext. 211;

www.parsippanylibrary.org. Visit www.onehitwillie.com

As for "Willie," he's a bit of a free spirit who ambles through the rock milieu — chased by the mob — in a "Forrest Gump" sort of way. Westhoven expertly — and entertainingly — paints the mid-'60s pop era, the progressive rock of the late '60s, the birth of arena rock in the '70s and the big '80s. It's a sentimental

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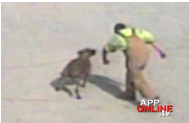


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