



Excerpted from Chapter 5 of BACKSTAGE Nashville

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Nashville

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Radio had been kind to me and so was mother country music. We Turbo Twang-ed from one end of the country to the other and worked with some of the most famous names in the business. This wasn't my first rodeo with radio and even while I had a short stint on Atlantic Records, I had been rewarded kindly on the independent charts.

I liked the word "independent" and what it stood for as far as the nature of a person goes. But sadly, in the music business, the title comes affixed with a stigma. That is to say, if you're an independent artist, the perception is often that you're not good enough to be deserving of the Golden Key that would get you on a major label. That analogy, of course, pegs into the bright red of the bullshit-o-meter.

Many choose to avoid the politics and the mechanics of the majors where money—not music—is the bottom note, and the only one that matters, whether it's on key or not. However, I do deem the stigma as somewhat deserving. Primarily for the fact that anyone who thinks they can sing, because they can bring moisture to Gramma's eye when they squeal out a note or two, while at the same time, has blood oozing from the ears of every poor canine within a four-mile radius, can also go out in the garage with a computer and make a record. And guess what? They lick a stamp and send these sum' bitches to the already overbooked deejays who get a ton of attempts at "independent" success every day.

In the pile is perhaps the next superstar of the year, but who's going to go through the pile? So goes the problem and there comes the discredit of being an "independent." This is, of course, a huge benefit to the dominating and smirking majors and a sad state of affairs for the business as a whole. A business whose corporations will do all they can to keep even the most gifted and even discovered "indies" off their turf.

While I was working on the Turbo Twang album, big news was made by a friend of mine who, as an indie, would rattle the majors and assume one of their coveted chart positions with a song that many of you would know. A Billboard article wrote accurately that it "marked the first time in over 40 years a new artist, on an independent label, had obtained a top 10 hit." What it did NOT say was that it cost well over a million dollars to do so (If you see Mrs. Steven Rudy, tell her I said hello).

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I have sincere passion and concern for the new and struggling artists these days, but go for it anyway, have fun doing it, and take it all the way, baby. This cat's on your side, and so are many others.

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