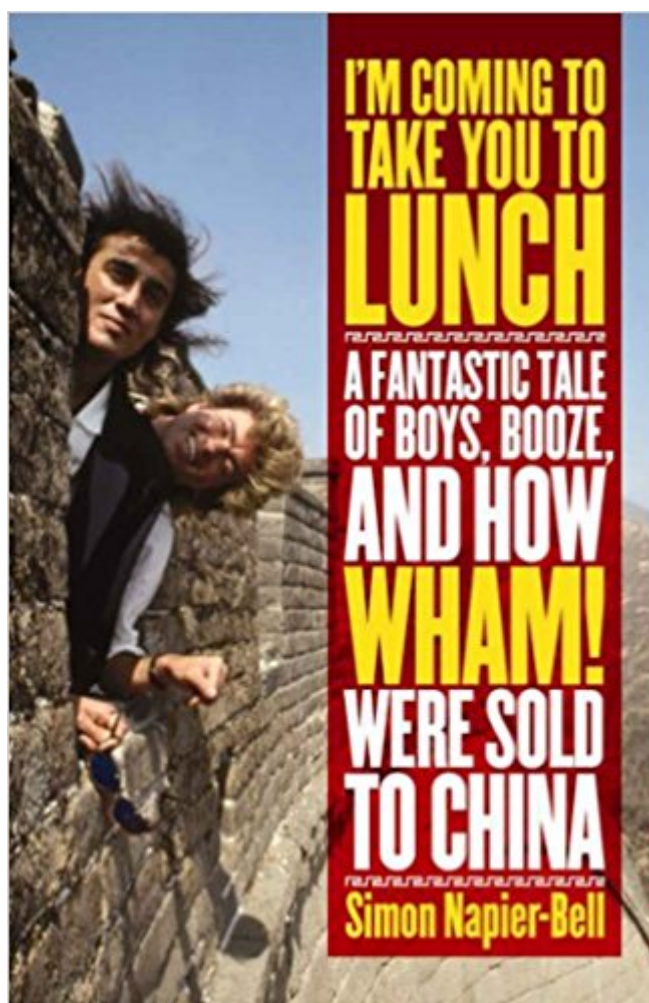


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# I'm Coming To Take You To Lunch: A Fantastic Tale Of Boys, Booze And How Wham! Were Sold To China



## Synopsis

Simon Napier-Bell, manager extraordinaire and world-class raconteur, brings readers along on a Far Eastern pop adventure as he tries to take Wham! behind the bamboo curtain. Wham! were among the world's biggest pop music sensations of the 80s. Simon Napier-Bell began managing the British group in 1983 and, over the next three years, turned them into superstars. This was due in no small part to his ability to get them to perform in China -- the first-ever Western pop band to do so. *Im Coming to Take You to Lunch* is the never-before-told story that recounts Bell's dealings with an extraordinary cast of characters. From heads of state to seedy CIA operatives, *Im Coming to Take You to Lunch* is a behind-the-scenes look at the management of a major international pop act and the diplomatic machinations involved in breaking the walls around Communist China.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

A veteran manager of groups like the Yardbirds, Napier-Bell was just about ready to retire when Wham! fell into his lap. Although the group is little more than the answer to a trivia question at this point, Napier-Bell's account of the group's expedient rise and demise portrays the underhanded antics managers and producers employ behind the scenes, here encapsulated in Napier-Bell's campaign to secure the pop group a high profile concert in communist China. Napier-Bell's account of the struggle to arrange the performance is fraught with twists and turns, from the delicate navigation of a fabulously corrupt Chinese bureaucracy to his misrepresentation of Queen frontman Freddie Mercury to keep Queen from landing the gig before Wham! (Napier-Bell compiled a dossier

on each band to circulate among the Chinese bureaucrats; one portrayed Wham! as wholesome, while the other depicted Queen as a bawdy carnival of homosexual debauchery. "Yet the brochure wasn't at all offensive."), not to mention the struggle for publicity, a band member's bout of insanity and competing mammoth egos. His attempts to weave in a subplot about financially and emotionally supporting two of his ex-lovers does little to further the book; the minor romantic spats and small victories distract from the larger tale of shepherding Andrew Ridgeley and George Michael to fame. That said, those interested in what goes on backstage and behind the scenes will find Napier-Bell's stories worthwhile and entertaining. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

"Tells the story with a raconteur's relish and a cast of shady characters straight out of a Graham Greene novel" \* Q magazine \* "A riot of boys, booze and 80s excess...a great raconteur and his snide asides are a joy...Bitchier than an Elton John put down" \* Elle \* "Reading this is like sitting across a table groaning with foie gras, listening to a raconteur extraordinaire ramble through an alcoholic mist...tremendous fun" \* Gay Times \* "Funny and totally absorbing" \* Pink Paper \* "Richly funny and entertaining..some of it reads like a big, gay Bond thriller; other bits are pure, pungent travelogue" \* Mojo \* --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Vivid, lurid and fascinating. Good read - inside the biz by someone who was there for a fascinating episode. I recommend it.

Not very much about Wham but interesting nonetheless.

Funny book, especially reading about the antics of a young George Michael and Andrew Ridgeley.

Excellent read!

Haven't read it all yet, but it is a good book about Wham and the duo going to China to perform!!

First of all, you don't have to be a Wham fan to enjoy this book, although the author's job of managing that famous pop group forms the basis for most of the tales and anecdotes found within these pages. I'm certainly not a fan of either Wham or George Michael --- and nothing in these pages made me change that opinion or want to listen to their music again --- but Simon Napier-Bell

is a skillful writer and with plenty of wild tales to tell, he kept me entertained from first page to last. In addition to managing Wham!, Napier-Bell was a veteran of the music industry, world traveler, and raconteur who knows how to enjoy life. To quote the blurb on the back of the book, in these entertaining pages "we soon find ourselves in the company of a wonderful cast of petulant pop stars, shady international 'businessmen', and a hilarious confusion of spies, students and institutionalized officials as he edges ever closer to inadvertently becoming one of the first Westerners to break down the walls of Communist China." The author's multiple trips to China in the early 1980s, in his attempt to have Wham! become the first Western pop group to play in that country, is perhaps the main lure or "plot" of this book, but that seemingly impossible quest never becomes the singular focus of the book. Instead, we get to read about all the highs and lows of managing a band and trying to keep everyone happy. In between tales of managing Wham! and going to China, we are introduced to Napier-Bell's colorful cast of boyfriends, colleagues, music industry players, and other odd characters. Never a dull moment indeed! Anyone who has ever worked in the music industry --- whether it be working for a record company or behind the counters at a record store, or even working backstage at a concert ---- will find Napier-Bell's tales of life on the road and behind the scenes to be absolutely fun reading. After being impressed with this book, I'm now looking forward to reading the other music memoirs that he's written.

If you would have killed to be a fly on the wall during the inner workings of "Whamania," you absolutely must read "I'm Coming To Take You to Lunch A Fantastic Tale of Boys, Booze, And How Wham Were Sold To China." Simon Napier-Bell managed the group in their early days. They had signed a pretty bad record deal with Innervision for their debut album "Fantastic." "Fantastic" was a big hit in the UK spawning the hits, "Bad Boys," "Young Guns," "Wham Rap," and "Club Tropicana." Despite the hits, according to Napier-Bell the group were pretty broke. Despite not having hit the proverbial jackpot yet, Napier-Bell describes George Michael as being very business minded and suspicious at all times when it came to business. Although George was serious when it came to business, in the book George and Andrew are described as childhood friends who were so close it seemed they communicated in their own language with snickers and giggles tossed in. Napier-Bell assisted the group in their legal case which brought them into a deal straight with CBS. CBS signed them directly but it did not guarantee U.S. success as the label felt they were a UK act and Napier-Bell had to do a lot of convincing to sell them to the U.S., and he had to convince people that the poppy "Wake Me Up Before You Go Go" was the right song. Despite this closeness, as Napier-Bell was making business moves trying to make Wham a success in the United States,

George Michael was already planning for his solo career and the waters would be tested with a single titled "Careless Whisper." It's a really great book for the Wham! fan wanting to learn little details about the group that only a person on the inside would know. There is not much information about the group's personal life as far as relationships. There is a brief mention of Andrew dating one of the group's early backup singers and maybe a few other tidbits. What's amazing is that at the start of their international success George Michael wanted to end it all, according to the book. As for the group conquering China and becoming the first group to play in the communist nation, Simon Napier-Bell was planning the China trip for the group before they were international stars and it finally happened after years of business meetings and trips to China. It's a really great book and if you are a Wham! fan or someone interested in the music business you should check this book out.

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