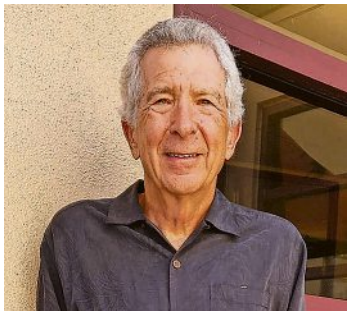




Naples author explores Jimmy Hoffa mystery

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Naples Daily News

MONDAY, OCTOBER 27, 2025 | NAPLESNEWS.COM

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Florida House faces DeSantis over tax cuts

Feud with Perez appears likely to continue into 2026

Gray Rohrer
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

Gov. Ron DeSantis has seen the Florida House’s property tax cut proposals and he’s not a fan. In a late-night social media post on Oct. 22, DeSantis panned the eight bills released by the House earlier this month.

“Placing more than one property tax measure on the ballot represents an attempt to kill anything on property taxes,” DeSantis posted on X. “It’s a political game, not a serious attempt to get it done for the people.” House Speaker Daniel Perez, R-Miami, detailed the bills in a memo to members on Oct. 16, saying lawmakers should have “faith” in voters to decide



DeSantis

which ballot measures to approve. “It is our position that the House does not need to limit itself in presenting one single plan, but instead allow the people of Florida the ability to choose some, all, or none of the proposals on the 2026 ballot,” Perez wrote. On Oct. 23, Perez fired back in a statement to the Florida Politics website,

saying DeSantis has no plan. “It’s unclear what he wants to do. I’ve personally reached out to share with him the House’s proposals and he has, so far, not wanted to engage in a conversation,” Perez told the news site. “So when the Governor says he wants to ‘abolish’ property taxes: How? We don’t have any details.” The dispute is an indication the clash

See TAX, Page 6A

CHANGES UNDERWAY

Visitors to NCH hospital can glimpse site work for cardiac center



Construction site for NCH’s cardiac and stroke center on the campus of NCH Baker Hospital. Groundbreaking for the \$295 million project was in June. The project is expected to take two years.

Liz Freeman
Fort Myers News-Press & Naples Daily News
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

Curious what’s happening at the construction site of Naples Comprehensive Health’s new \$295 million cardiac center? If you’ve driven by NCH Baker Hospital at Seventh Street North you can see the massive drill and other equipment behind the fenced barrier at the site adjacent to the hospital. Groundbreaking was held in June for the 189,000-square-foot heart and stroke center that will be five stories. Construction is expected to take two years. A new parking garage also is planned. The construction site means part of the

hospital’s surface parking lot is fenced off yet valet parking is available for all visitors. A massive drill at the site is a Fundex F3500 and is a fixed mast drill rig used for a lot of different deep foundations, according to Alex McIntyre, senior project manager and licensed drone pilot with Gibrane Building Company. “This one was utilized to drill approximately 800 14” diameter 60’ long piles into the ground and fill with concrete to support the R.M. Schulze Family Heart and Stroke Critical Care Center and the parking garage,” McIntyre said in an email. The drill is expected to be on site until mid-November.

See NCH, Page 6A



In the Know
Phil Fernandez
Fort Myers News-Press
& Naples Daily News
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

Industry Appreciation Awards look to future

Economic development leaders recognized

Big dogs in Southwest Florida economic development and up and comers were honored Friday Oct. 24 in the annual 2025 Industry Appreciation Awards. Attended by hundreds of business professionals at the Caloosa Sound Convention Center in downtown Fort Myers, the awards honor Lee County merchants and leaders driving growth and innovation across the region, according to organizers. The gathering was held by the Horizon Council, the Horizon Foundation and the Lee County Economic Development Office. Many of the finalists are reflective of what’s to come in the future and more, according to John Talmage, the latter’s director who makes the rounds in reports to local governments and organizations such as the Southwest Regional Manufacturers Association, preaching the gospel of county expansion. “Smart manufacturing is where we’re headed,” Talmage said of a shift from traditional production to digitally enhanced systems with efficiency in mind. “It’s about integrating data, automation and human skill. We want Lee County to be a hub for that — where innovation meets production.” What’s potentially ahead for Southwest Florida, and who were Friday’s winners and runner-up companies? Here’s what to know.

See KNOW, Page 6A

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What happened to Jimmy Hoffa?

Naples man tries to answer in new book

Vicky Bowles
Special to the Daily News
USA TODAY NETWORK – FLORIDA

What if a reliable eyewitness had watched Jimmy Hoffa vanish — never to be seen again — from that restaurant parking lot in a Detroit suburb 50 years ago?

Author Lew Paper has some ideas to solve one of America’s most notorious mysteries, so he developed them into his acclaimed novel “Legacy of Lies: An Historical Thriller.”

Paper, a Harvard Law School graduate who previously published five nonfiction books, will talk about “Legacy of Lies” on Thursday afternoon, Nov. 6, as the second speaker in the Author Spotlight Series for the Friends of the Library of Collier County.

Author Spotlight Series supports libraries

This year, the series expanded to three guest authors at The Norris Center in downtown Naples. Sarah Penner, author of “The Amalfi Curse,” spoke on Oct. 9. The series concludes on Thursday, April 9, with Rowan Beard, author of the novel “The Divorcées.”

Through events like the Author Spotlight Series, the nonprofit Friends group raises hundreds of thousands of dollars to support Collier’s public libraries. Only a few tickets remain to see Paper on Nov. 6. Each talk will be followed by a Q-and-A and a book signing. (See info box for details on dates, times and all ticket prices.)

Paper, a New Jersey native who spent his career in Washington, D.C., now lives in Naples. His previous nonfiction books include “In the Cauldron: Terror, Tension, and the American Ambassador’s Struggle to Avoid Pearl Harbor” and “Perfect: Don Larsen’s Miraculous World Series Game and the Men Who Made It Happen.”

His latest, the historical novel “Legacy of Lies,” has been named a finalist for Best Thriller by the National Indie Excellence Awards, whose commendation stated: “Your work exemplifies the passion, creativity, and excellence this award was established to recognize. In a highly competitive field, your book truly stood out, earning the admiration of our expert panel of judges.”

Hoffa’s history of controversy

“Legacy of Lies” also was long-listed for Best Historical Fiction by the Goethe Awards.

The nation’s fascination with Hoffa’s disappearance and apparent murder has barely waned in the past 50 years.

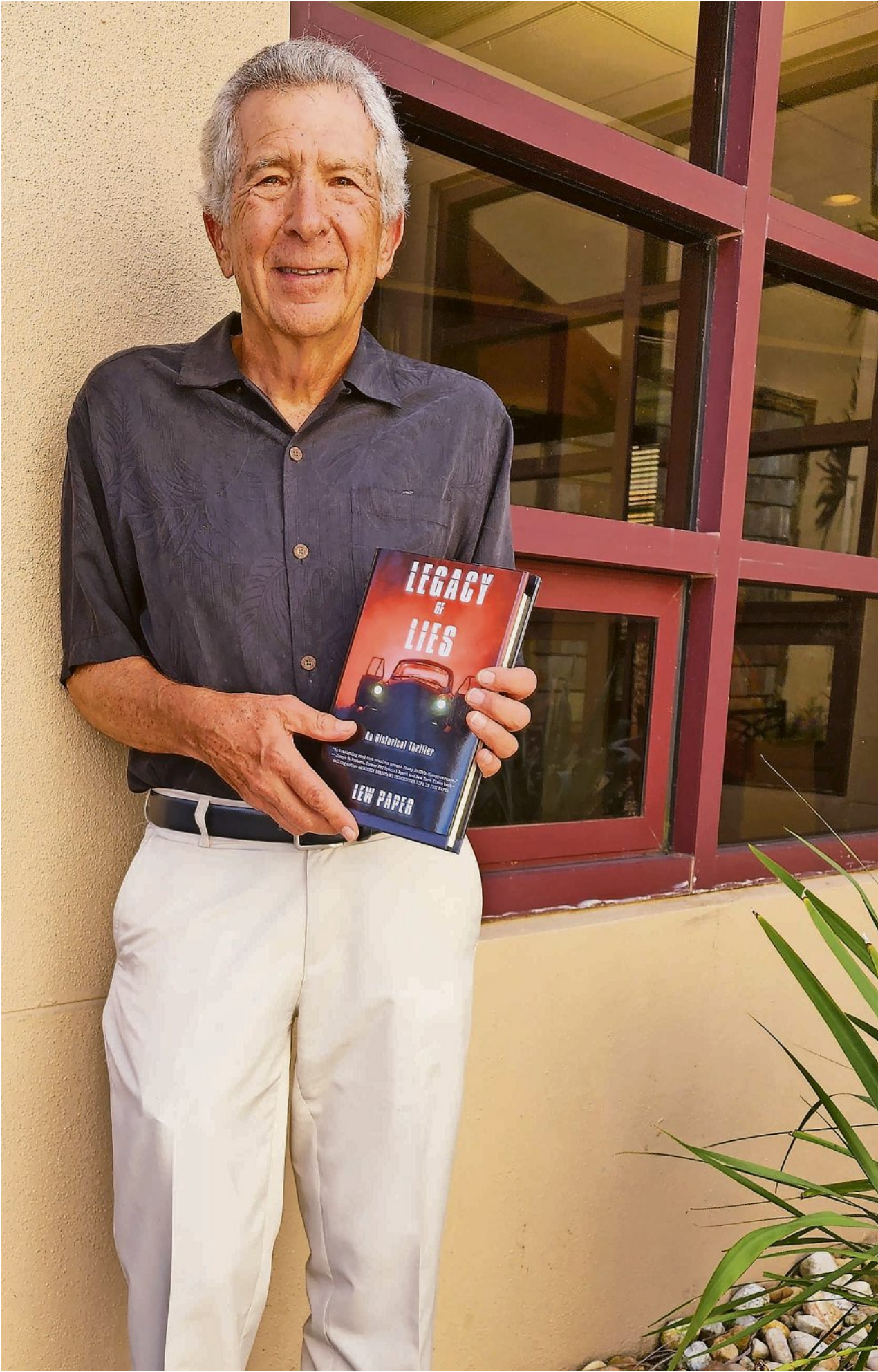
Hoffa was such a striking and controversial figure, as the incredibly powerful union boss of the Teamsters, with his ties to organized crime; his convictions and imprisonment for fraud, bribery and jury-tampering; and his conflicts with Robert F. Kennedy and later with President Richard Nixon’s administration.

So, Lew, let’s talk about Hoffa:

Your first book — a look at John F. Kennedy’s presidency — was published 50 years ago. Since then you’ve authored six other books on topics ranging from baseball to the Supreme Court to Pearl Harbor, and now Jimmy Hoffa. How do you select topics for your books?

I have two basic criteria for selecting a book topic. First, it has to be something that interests me. If I’m going to spend a lot of time dealing with the topic —

See **HOFFA**, Page 3D



Lew Paper, author of "Legacy of Lies," will speak in the Friends of the Library of Collier County's Author Spotlight Series on Thursday, Nov. 6, at The Norris Center in Naples. PROVIDED BY VICKY BOWLES

How to watch new Florida Highwaymen movie on streaming this week

Gianna Montesano and Laurie K. Blandford
Treasure Coast Newspapers
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Florida Highwaymen were an iconic group of Black artists who lived predominantly in Fort Pierce and Gifford in the 1950s. They got their start painting Florida landscapes under the tutelage of founder Alfred Hair, Harold Newton and white artist A.E. “Bean” or “Beanie” Backus.

Jim Crow-era laws prohibited Black artists from displaying their art in galleries, so they sold their paintings on the streets to hotels, offices and on the side of the road for about \$25.

About 70 years later, their story will be released on streaming and DVD beginning Oct. 28.

“Legends of the Highway” is a movie produced by

Triple Hibiscus Productions. It finished filming on location in Atlanta, Georgia, as well as North Carolina and Florida’s Treasure Coast, Kelcie Schwab, vice president of digital for Maverick Entertainment, told TCPalm in May.

Here’s what to know about the movie.

Where can I watch the Florida Highwaymen movie?

The movie will have two release dates:

- **DVD and digital to rent or buy:** Oct. 28, available nationwide on Fandango and Prime Video
- **Streaming:** Nov. 25 on major streaming platforms, according to a news release. The news release

See **HIGHWAYMEN**, Page 3D



The annual Highwayman Heritage Trail Art Show & Sale Festival in Fort Pierce features many of the original and second generation Highwaymen artists. ERIC HASERT/TREASURE COAST NEWSPAPERS FILE

Highwaymen

Continued from Page 1D

does not specify which platforms. There will be multiple in-person premieres at these locations:

- **Red Carpet Premiere:** Oct. 25 at Cinepolis Jupiter
- **Screening:** Nov. 8 at Cinepolis Davenport
- **Screening and Elliott Museum Event:** Nov. 23 at The Lyric Theatre in Stuart
- **Screening:** Dec. 13 at Cinepolis in Coconut Grove

What is the Florida Highwaymen movie about?

The movie follows a group of Black

artists and a pioneering woman in 1950s Florida, navigating segregation while creating landscape paintings and forging their own path to artistic recognition.

“Legends of the Highway” features an ensemble cast led by:

- Julian Horton (Netflix’s “Beauty in Black”)
- Kelvin Hair (“Respect,” BET’s “Ruthless”)
- Johnell Young (Hulu’s “Wu-Tang: An American Saga”)
- Ashani Roberts (“Sweetwater,” BET’s “Average Joe”)
- Daniel Augustin (Max’s “Rap Sh!t,” HULU’s “How I Met Your Father”)

It also features John Dixon, Alec Adams, Jizzixious Bishop and Christopher Thomas. Kelvin Hair will play the role of Alfred Hair, his grandfather and an original Highwayman who died in 1970.

“Legends of the Highway is not just about art, it’s about legacy,” Gifford native and retired NFL star Kenny Holmes said in a news release. “These artists painted their freedom, and their stories deserve to be seen and celebrated.”

Who are the original 26 Highwaymen artists?

- Curtis Arnett
- Hezekiah Baker
- Al Black
- Ellis Buckner
- George Buckner
- Robert Butler
- Mary Ann Carroll
- Johnny Daniels
- Willie Daniels
- Rodney Demps
- James Gibson
- Alfred Hair

- Isaac Knight
- Robert Lewis
- John Maynor
- Roy McLendon
- Alfonso Moran
- Harold Newton
- Lemuel Newton
- Sam Newton
- Willie Reagan
- Livingston Roberts
- Carnell Smith
- Charles Walker
- Sylvester Wells
- Charles Wheeler

Gianna Montesano is TCPalm’s trending reporter. You can contact her at gianna.montesano@tcpalm.com, 772-409-1429, or follow her on X @gon-thescene.

Hoffa

Continued from Page 1D

and we’re talking about years — it has to be a subject that engages me. And second, it has to be something that is marketable. No matter how interesting to me, it has to be a topic that will attract readers. The criteria are easy to articulate but difficult to implement. I’ve gone down a lot of rabbit holes with my agent trying to find a topic that satisfies both criteria.

What made you want to write about Jimmy Hoffa’s disappearance for “Legacy of Lies”?

I have been fascinated with Jimmy Hoffa’s disappearance for a long time. Part of it is Hoffa himself. He was not only the president of the Teamsters Union, the largest union in the country in the 1950s and 1960s, he was also a very colorful figure — a combative, feisty guy who was built like a boxer. But there were forces surrounding Hoffa’s disappearance which added to the allure: Robert F. Kennedy’s vendetta against Hoffa when Kennedy was attorney general (which ultimately led to Hoffa being convicted of crimes and sent to prison); President Nixon’s reelection campaign in 1972 — Nixon wanted the Teamsters’ support, and so in 1971 he commuted Hoffa’s prison sentence to time served, which resulted in Hoffa getting out of jail; and, of course,

the Mafia. Hoffa had a very long relationship with the Mafia, and I think that ultimately led to his abduction and murder.

Almost all of your prior books are nonfiction. Why did you choose to write a fiction book about Hoffa?

I have some thoughts about what happened to Hoffa at the end, but I don’t know for certain. Writing a fiction book gave me the editorial license I needed to write what I hoped would be an interesting story.

I imagine your nonfiction books involved a lot of research. What about “Legacy of Lies” — did that involve much research?

Yes. I spent two years doing research about Hoffa and all those forces and people that were part of his life — and his disappearance. Even though the book is fiction, I wanted it to have a ring of authenticity, and you can’t do that without research. I think you would find that most good books of fiction — even from celebrated authors like David Baldacci and Brad Meltzer — require a lot of research.

What’s your writing style? Did you do an outline before you started writing “Legacy of Lies”?

I did do an outline to get started with the basic premise of the book and the principal characters. But after the beginning, the book took on a life of its own. As I began to write, I also began to wonder what should happen next, and the writing generated ideas that I would

not have thought of when I started. Some fiction writers, like James Patterson, do a very detailed outline of the whole story before they start writing. That approach didn’t work for me.

Do you have plans for another book, and, if so, will it be fiction or nonfiction?

For the time being, I’m focused on marketing “Legacy of Lies” and trying to maximize its reach to audiences. So I haven’t given much thought to my next book. One of my friends suggested I do a book about Amelia Earhart, whose disappearance also ranks as one of the great mysteries of the 20th century. That topic holds a lot of appeal to me. But I think there, too, it would have to be fiction — unless I could do what no one else has done: figure out what happened to her when she was making her round-the-world flight in 1937.

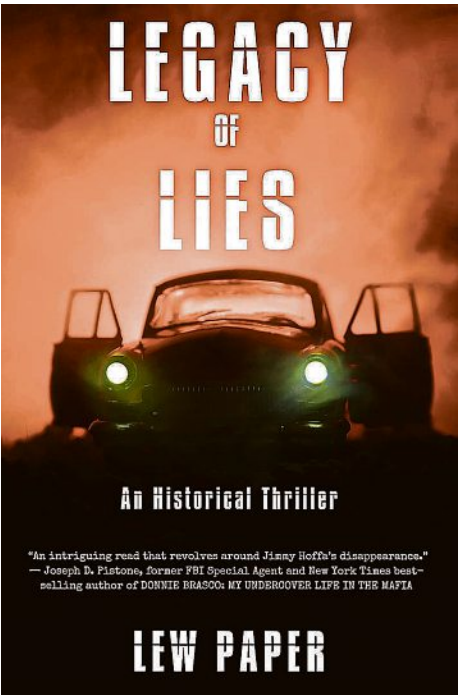
What to know

What: Author lectures that are a fundraiser by the Friends of the Library of Collier County. Kelly E. Capolino of Downing-Frye Realty returns this year as the exclusive sponsor of the Author Spotlight Series.

Where: The Norris Center, 755 Eighth Ave. S., Naples

When: **Lew Paper**, Thursday, Nov. 6, at 2 p.m., followed by a book signing; and **Rowan Beaird**, Thursday, April 9, at 2 p.m., followed by a book signing

Cost: Tickets are \$55 for each lecture



“Legacy of Lies” has been named a finalist for Best Thriller by the National Indie Excellence Awards.

PROVIDED BY SHAWN SIMMONS

for current members of the Friends; \$65 per lecture for nonmembers. All seating is general admission. Friends memberships begin at \$50/year and also provide exclusive access and discounts to many other programs throughout the year. Purchase tickets and become a member: Go to <https://collier-friends.org/>.

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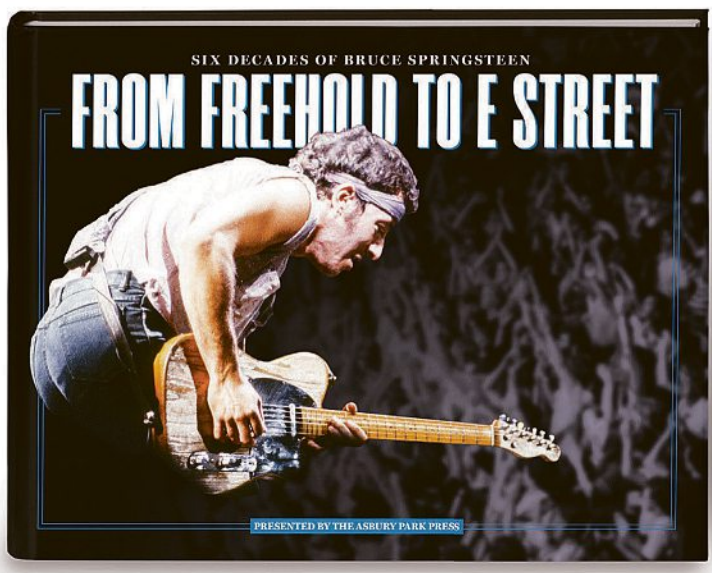
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