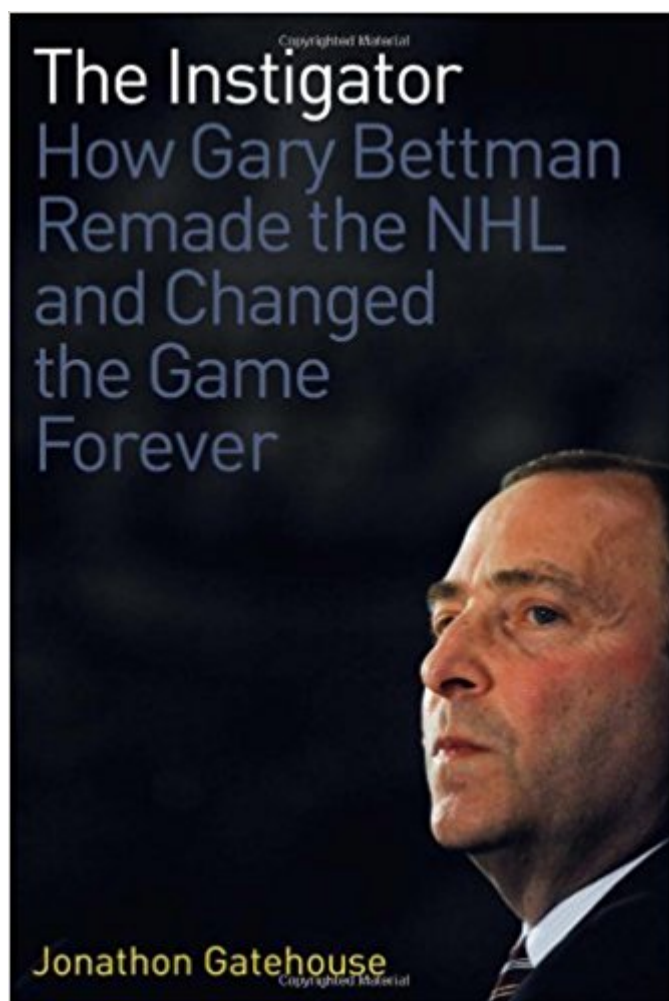


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# The Instigator: How Gary Bettman Remade The NHL And Changed The Game Forever



## Synopsis

Two decades of lockouts, soaring ticket prices, and on-ice tinkering have convinced many hard-core fans that the NHL's long-time commissioner Gary Bettman is the devil in disguise, but this book examines his motivations, peels back his often prickly demeanor, and explains how he manages to lead, confound, and keep order. It details the unlikely ascension of a fatherless Jewish kid from Long Island who never played hockey and can barely skate to the sport's biggest job. The seven-fold increase in gross revenue during Bettman's 20-year tenure as NHL commissioner makes him a business success story, and on his watch, professional hockey has also expanded far beyond its regional strongholds. By taming the NHL's famously fractious owners, all but busting its players' union, and enforcing a lawyerly discipline even on trash talk, Bettman has become a figure of almost unrivaled power in the business of sports, and this biography delves into how his influence shapes rival leagues in other countries, dictates the schedule of the Olympic Winter Games, and spills onto the ice itself.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

"A must-read for any fan that's seen the NHL reshaped during Bettman's reign" and a "treasure trove of anecdotes." *Puck Daddy* "An excellent biography." *Globe and Mail* "I enjoyed the hell out of this book. It was absolute quality." *Mile High Hockey*, *the Colorado Avalanche blog on SB Nation*

Jonathon Gatehouse is a senior correspondent for Maclean's weekly magazine and was

formerly a reporter for the National Post and Montreal's Gazette. He lives in Toronto, Ontario.

The Instigator is a rare chance to take a behind the scenes look at Gary Bettman, the man who has run the game for over two decades. The issue with this book is, it seems as if the entire book is based solely off one brief interview the author had with the Commissioner. Bettman is indeed a complicated man, one who always has to have a certain face on in public, but one who must be tough and strict once the cameras are off. Yet there is still the side of him that just loves the sport he runs. However, this book fails to really capture Bettman. Instead, there are sporadic quotes from the Commissioner and little insight into Bettman himself. The meat of the book is simply a statement of facts and situations that the NHL has found itself in during Bettman's tenure. Most of it you can find on the Internet or in other books. I give the author a lot of credit for a well-researched book, but by the middle of the book, I was skimming and skipping many sections filled with generic information that I already knew. For a casual hockey fan that does not know a lot about the game, I recommend this book, but if you're a diehard familiar with the nuances of the game, I'd take a pass. NOTE: I give the author a great deal of credit for uncovering little tidbits about Bettman such as the fact that he wrote his Masters Thesis on the branches of power within a Mafia organization. Draw your own conclusion!

Did have to stop reading every once in a while to share an interesting fact with Twitter, so on the whole I'm glad I read it. But it's slow in parts, and I kept having to look back to earlier in the book to figure out who was who. At one point Gatehouse mentions a person briefly in an early chapter, then brings him up again over a hundred pages later and expects you to remember who he was.

Jonathon Gatehouse's *The Instigator: How Gary Bettman Remade the NHL and Changed the Game Forever* is a strange hybrid of a book. Not truly a biography, not quite a sports book, and not really a business book, it combines those different non-fiction genres into an informative, easy-to-read book. The author of this book realizes that in order to understand the game of professional hockey as it exists today, you must understand where it was before the current commissioner took over. In order to understand how Gary Bettman pushed through the things he wanted done, you must understand the man's personality and history. And in order to comprehend the difficulty of doing so, you must understand the former and current structure of NHL ownership, as well as the personalities who did and do make up that exclusive circle. Mr.

Gatehouse accomplishes these goals in a book that cannot be *“just one type of hockey fan in order to do its job.”* Highly recommended for hockey fans, both the ones who are enjoying the game played today and the ones who lament for *“the good old days.”* **RATING: 5 stars.**

I really enjoyed this book. I despise Gary Bettman and while this book does not paint him in a positive light, it does add insight into how he got to the NHL. My rating is for the content. The writing is DEPLORABLE. The presentation, order of stories, and layout was insane. I felt like I forgot my place multiple times when reading. I'm a long time Kings' fan, but also a huge hockey fan in general and the story selection was incredibly odd to me.

Despise this commissioner. So any book on Gary Bettman is good reading for me. So nice to find out that this little man is as insecure as they come. Best story was the incident after the Stanley Cup Finals in Vancouver. But, much to his credit, he maintains the job in spite of the fact I think he has just taken hockey to the basement of the 4 major sports. High revenues does NOT always mean a company is flush with money. And I contend that this is the case with NHL. Really enjoyed this book.

Gary Bettman is either loved or hated depending on which side of the 49th parallel you are living...He kicked and dragged the NHL into the 21st century with expansion he also was the first commissioner in a professional sport to shutdown a season and almost a second...He has tried to take what he learned from the NBA and bring it to hockey and since the second lockout their revenues have skyrocketed along with the new Canadian and American TV deals

If you enjoy the business side of hockey, this is a must read. Love him or hate him, by the end of the book you will have a better understanding of who Gary Bettman really is.

I really enjoyed this book. I thought it gave good insight to where Bettman came from and what he's trying to do in the NHL today.

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