Publishing History
- *The Dark Fields* was written by Alan Glynn, designed as a comment on how our whole world of business is full of nonsense disguised as high-end transactions and knowledgeable people.
- Published in 2001.
- Public became spellbound by the idea of a brain-altering drug. Controversies sparked regarding if the idea was plausible.
- Disagreements among the web are still common today.

Critical History
- Mixed feelings.
- Drug-trip “fascinating and unique”
- Story line is a failure.
- Because the novel is still fairly new, both the initial and current views are the same.

Summary
- Thriller/Action
- Going from dead-beat writer, to millionaire executive at a big company, Eddie Spinola gets a taste of fame after trying a new drug. MDT helped Eddie move up the business ladder of success in a matter of a couple months, but it also causes his failure, and destruction.
- Be careful what you wish for.
- Everyone thinks they’re special. “I am aware that this might make me sound obnoxious and manipulative, but it really didn’t play that way at the time, and as the night marched on and they all got drunker, or more wired, and eventually started dropping out, I felt more invigorated and—frankly—like some kind of minor god.” (pg. 249)
- One person can cause a nation-wide commotion. How ridiculous has our society gotten on its reliance on media?

Grammar of the novel
1. Voice
   - The “voice” of the narrator is composed of quality, attitude, and presence; it’s how the narrator “sounds”.
   - 1st person central.
   - Physical presence, yet there are inserts of disembodied behavior.
   - Calm and apathetic tones, but later transforms to frantic and weary as the story progresses.
   - Eddie comes off as superior and harsh to the people around him, yet never seems to express these opinions out loud. “I would know what to do instinctively. I would know what stocks to buy, and when to buy them, and why. I would be good at this.” (pg. 97)
   - The journal-like tone and transitions from apathetic to frantic make the reader focus on the effects of the drug MDT, but also make Eddie’s sense of presence seem very superior yet ironically weak at the same time.

2. Character
   - To know a character, we must know their desires and what kind of “stuff” defines them.
   - Protagonist: Eddie Spinola.
   - Not much is known about Eddie’s past, except for his divorce about ten years ago. Other than that, all we know about are the character’s “shallow qualities” with no in-depth explanations of any kind.
• The story begins with Eddie simply struggling to get his book completed. Time goes on, and more drugs get ingested, resulting in a newfound blood thirst for money and fame. “Hank Atwood was glamorous, not because he was good looking, which he wasn’t, and not even because the product he pedaled was the very stuff of people’s dreams…..Hank Atwood was glamorous because of the unimaginably huge amounts of money he made.” (pg. 163)
• All Eddie wants to do is be “glamorous”, no matter the consequences.

3. Place
• Place is more than setting, a “sense of place” is important in determining the context in which the characters live.
• New York, early 2000’s.
• Society revolves around drugs, lies, and greed.
• Money and power are everything, even if it means you transform into a completely different person.
• Nothing is ever enough. “I had the feeling that I could be doing a lot more than just trading at home on my PC, and that being a guerrilla market-maker wasn’t going to be anywhere near enough to keep me happy.” (pg. 113)

4. Narrative
• This is designed to illicit a response and support our understanding of the books’ message/theme.
• Linear.
• Real-time.
• Lots of instances of stream of consciousness.
• Story split into four “parts” which represent Eddie’s rise to success, then to his downfall, section by section.
• The arrangement forces the reader to focus on Eddie’s current state of level of success, along with the phases of the drug addiction which is Glynn’s satiric view of our shallow society.
• Part 1: Background and obtainment of MDT.
  Part 2: Application of drug, rising to success.
  Part 3: Transformation into separate person (loss of sense of self). Side effects result in Eddie hitting “rock bottom”.
  Part 4: Loss sanity and success. No more drugs and glamour.

5. Style
• Style is the overall effect of the choices an author makes regarding literary elements and devices.
• MDT-48 is a symbol for how the people in our society get success and money any way they can.
• It’s easy to disregard your previous life and become a different person. Nothing else matters.
• The word “noticeable” is used quite often, making one believe it may be a motif. Everything in Eddie’s life became clear and focused after taking the new drug, when ironically it made everything murky and blinding.
• Self-sabotage is consistently apparent in Eddie’s life. (motif)
• MDT is supposedly the “smart drug”, when after a few weeks your brain is no longer able to function properly, and all your success you gained doesn’t matter because you’re most likely dead.
• Lots of metaphors and “fillers” used to make descriptions more complex and stranger than needed. (Symbol on how the business world is revolved around “crap”)
• “I sat back now and stared at the dense rows of figures and mathematical symbols on the first page of the legal pad. Even though it was all in my own handwriting, I had difficulty making any sense of it and felt that I was looking at some strange form of hieroglyphics.” (pg. 211)

- The journal-like storytelling, exaggerated metaphors, sarcastic tone, satiric opinions, and astounding twists create a modern reflection on how callow humans can appear to be no matter what their intentions are. The overall theme is be careful what you wish for; and Glynn does justice to the idea of how damaging a drug can be, no matter the success it can bring you.