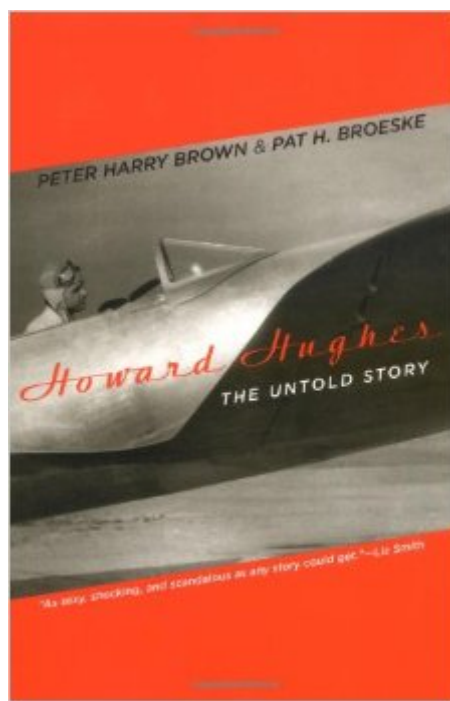


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Howard Hughes: The Untold Story



Synopsis

Howard Hughes was one of the most amazing, intriguing, and controversial figures of the twentieth century. He was the billionaire head of a giant corporation, a genius inventor, an ace pilot, a matinee-idol-handsome playboy, a major movie maker who bedded a long list of Hollywood glamour queens, a sexual sultan with a harem of teenage consorts, a political insider with intimate ties to Watergate, a Las Vegas kingpin, and ultimately a bizarre recluse whose final years and shocking death were cloaked in macabre mystery. Now he is the subject of Martin Scorsese's biopic *The Aviator*. Few people have been able to penetrate the wall of secrecy that enshrouded this complex man. In this fascinating, revelation-packed biography, the full story of one of the most daring, enigmatic, and reclusive power brokers America has ever known is finally told.

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Customer Reviews

I came across this book shortly after seeing Scorsese's `The Aviator', and I can't imagine a better source for those wanting to know more about Howard Hughes. Although the movie may seem fantastic, this book shows an even more outlandish reality. A small example: not only did Hughes restrict himself to a few standard meals, like the steak and peas seen in the movie, but he used a special rake-like utensil to separate out, and discard, any peas above a certain diameter. The film also tones down his womanizing: apparently he slept with almost every screen sex symbol of the 30s and 40s, as well maintaining a private harem of starlets. And there are whole aspects of his life I had no idea about, like his links with Nixon and Watergate. Despite his eccentric, sometimes cruel,

behaviour, the authors maintain their - - and the reader's - - sympathy for Hughes. This sunk in when the book reached his infamous final years. Although I'd started out eager to know the truth about the mad hermit at the top of the Las Vegas hotel, by the time I reached that stage I felt sorry for him and was reluctant to read the sordid details. Here again the book gets the balance right; insightful without wallowing in freakishness. A compelling, well-researched and sympathetic story of an extraordinary subject: you can't ask for much more from a biography.

I read this book in hardcover years ago and loved it. It dispelled a lot of rumors about Hughes and gave this man's life the treatment he deserved, not to be defamed after death. It talks about his womanizing, OCD, and passions for aviation and film. It is a totally comprehensive book. No stone is left unturned. You will leave this book with a great respect and admiration for the man which I did and continue to have. A must read on HH!! A+++++

This bio gave me a pretty good picture of Hughes' life, good enough that I don't feel a strong need to read any other bios. However, the authors don't really deliver everything they promise in the introduction. Yes, you'll learn that he built one of the nation's greatest airlines, founded an industry-leading aircraft company, became a leading defense contractor, became a major player in Las Vegas, indirectly contributed to the Watergate scandal, had shady dealings with the FBI, CIA and DoD, and much more. But you won't learn how; I guess we're supposed to take the authors' word for it. If you're looking for an examination of HH the businessman, the aviator, the inventor, the financier, or the Las Vegas tycoon, this book is very short on detail. It's clear that what really interests the authors most are 1) his love and sex life and 2) his Hollywood career and his life among the rich and famous. For every paragraph discussing his business career--which, after all, made him one of the nation's wealthiest men, and which constitutes a unique and fascinating story all by itself--you'll find 3 paragraphs about which movie stars he was wooing in 1948, where he took them for dinner, who sat next to them at the restaurant, what kind of flowers he gave them, what lies he told to get them in the sack, how much jewelry he gave them, what their mothers thought of Hughes, and the contents of their love letters. Hughes' obsessive womanizing was an important part of his life, and makes an interesting story. However, there were a LOT of women, and with a few exceptions, he treated most of them essentially the same way. We see the same sad story of obsession, manipulation and heartbreak (for the women, not HH) over and over again. My eyes glazed over more than a few times while reading this. I think the book could have been much better with a little less detail about the lovers' quarrels, and a little more about the many other activities that

made Hughes such a brilliant and controversial figure.

Hughes was a man who accomplished most of what he did before my time, so I've only remembered him as a billionaire, eccentric, and recluse, before reading this book. During his time he was a go-getter who tried many adventurous things professionally and both personally and privately. This book brings to light the details of the younger Hughes' extraordinary personal life, which I found more interesting than the business side of it. He spent notable time in Southern California and Los Angeles. Many tales bring Old Hollywood and Los Angeles to light. His involvement in the movie business producing films, influenced in part, as an avenue to get to the ladies of the screen. Details of his relationships with the stars of the day are illuminated. Taking dates to the mounted cross atop one of the Hollywood Hills, overlooking the flatlands and lights of LA. He even crashed a plane into 3 houses in Beverly Hills. His 3rd plane crash, occurred while performing a flying stunt during the shooting of a movie (the stunt pilots refused to do the stunt because they considered it too dangerous). As a result of that crash he was in the hospital with critical life-threatening injuries. This was when HH was introduced to Codeine for the severe pain, something he would become addicted to for most of the rest of his life. The book later progresses in the latter years of Hughes. Today, it is apparent to contemporary psychologists that Hughes was likely suffering from a form of the Obsessive Compulsive Disorder. Nowadays, OCD is more understood and highly treatable with medication. In HH's time, it was not thought of in biological and physiological terms. Hughes' first break came when he entered a screening room and stayed in it for 5 full months. He didn't bathe, watched the same movies 30 times over, and survived on a diet of candy bars. Hughes consciously and voluntarily turned over his business affairs to competent managers. These were employees, and were people who made prudent decisions and looked out for HH's best interests. During this time, other sharks started to gather. Such is the case when large amounts of money is involved. Bill Gay, one of Howard's chauffeur, made crafty and cunning political moves to ascend over the years. He got Howard's ear, and became more influential on him. Gay eventually took the reigns of control over Hughes' wealth. He then deftly purged the other business managers who served Hughes with dedication and integrity. The former chauffeur and his fellow Mormon henchman took over Hughes and his affairs, isolated him, and squeezed out those who cared for Hughes and wanted the best for him. It's sad, for during the latter decades of Hughes life it seemed that no one was really there for him, if he had wanted anyone to be there. In death, over one thousand--yes, 1000--people came out of the woodwork to lay claim to Howard Hughes wealth after his passing. To this day, We're still not sure if his death was natural, self-induced, or the

intentional doings of others....

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