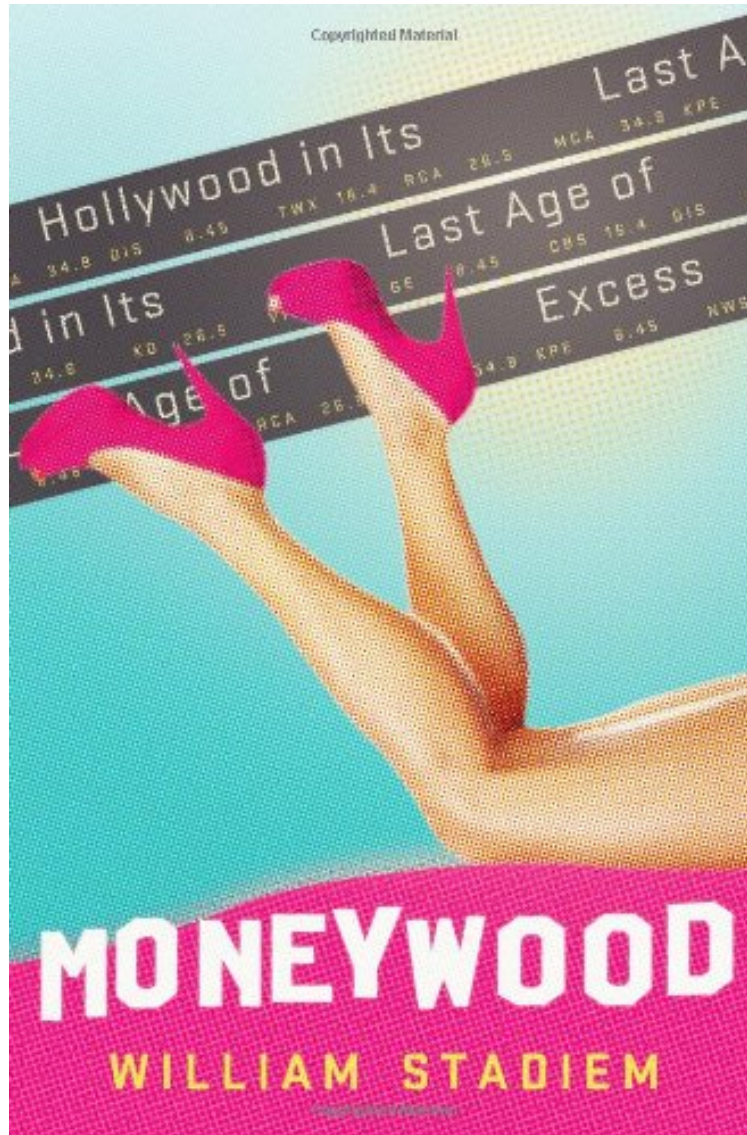


(Download ebook) Moneywood: Hollywood in Its Last Age of Excess

Moneywood: Hollywood in Its Last Age of Excess

William Stadiem

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#2643681 in Books St Martins Press 2013-01-15 2013-01-15Ingredients: Example IngredientsOriginal language:EnglishPDF # 1 9.52 x 1.18 x 6.46l, 1.19 #File Name: 0312656890336 pages | File size: 70.Mb

William Stadiem : Moneywood: Hollywood in Its Last Age of Excess before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Moneywood: Hollywood in Its Last Age of Excess:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Palace of ExcessBy WoodchuckchuckIf Hollywood is the Palace of Excess and the 80's was the Decade of Excess, what does that make Hollywood in the 80's? - a great subject for a book, particularly if that book is written by someone with a bon-mot-a-minute style and an intimate knowledge of some of the most outsize characters ever to roam a boardroom, barroom or bordello. It's all here, the monster egos and

world-class connivers, the chisellers, hondlers, gonifs, four-flushers and even - hold your hats - a few genuine talents. Mixing in a narrative of his own seduction by the siren call of showbiz, Stadiem unleashes his patented blend of sociological analysis, laser-sharp observation, and scintillating wit (add a dash of schadenfreude), making this book a constant, non-stop pleasure to read. 5 of 6 people found the following review helpful. "That was California, which was on the cutting edge, and this was America." By Amelia Gremelspacher America was fascinated with the movies but didn't so much like "liberal, Jewish, bleeding heart, foreign-seeming, and overwhelmingly Democratic Hollywood." This story opens in 1980 when Reagan was forming his "kitchen cabinet." A cabal of Republican best friends who coincidentally also ruled the newly minted Republican Hollywood. This book reads more like a "Vanity Fair" story than a tabloid. Although the stories have some lurid content, the emphasis is not on the sensational, rather on the workings of excess behind the entertainment industry. The numerous cameos reveal humanizing elements of the wealthy, who are indeed different than we. Actually my favorite one occurs early in the book is about Nancy Reagan and her posse of blonde, chic, skinny blondes. The maitre d had to keep a cheat sheet with pictures to make sure he had the right power luncher. This book offers an enticing look on how money, cronyism, and power entwined to dominate the movies and TV shows we all watch. The trail of money is deeply explored and the results are stranger than fact. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Real Thing By Shirley Sacks Bringing them all down to size, Stadiem does it to perfection. He knows who is who in the zoo, and more. It's gossipy and makes you wonder about the world and how awful it really is. Or is it? If you are cynical, this will make you even more so. This is insider stuff, from someone who views the insides, I believe happily, from the dark wings.

As wild and sexy and over the top as the decade it brings to life, author, William Stadiem, tells the inside story of Hollywood producers in the 80s. From hits like Beverly Hills Cop, Top Gun and Batman to flops like Heaven's Gate, Howard the Duck and Leonard Part 6, Hollywood was never more excessive than it was in the 1980s. In this, the Moneywood era, the purse strings were not controlled by reasonably consenting adults but by pop culture cowboys who couldn't balance their own checkbooks. What they could do was sweet talk the talent, seduce the starlets, snowball the Japanese and slither out of Dodge when the low grosses trickled in. Their out of control lifestyles and know-nothing, raging narcissistic personalities make the original brutal studio heads like Sam Goldwyn and Jack Warner seem like Oxford dons. Yet, for all their flops, these Scoundrels of Spago turned Hollywood into a Big Business that was catnip to Wall Street. They were The Producers, and they were way beyond anything Mel Brooks could dream up. The Moneywood cast of characters includes: -Simpson and Bruckheimer; Guber and Peters; Eisner/Katzenberg/Ovitz: An unusual fresh take on the usual subjects. -Ray Stark, the wizard of Holmby Hills, the most powerful producer of the 80s. -Mario Kassab and Andy Vajna, the Rambo boys, who went from making wigs to making blockbusters. -Menahem Golan-Yoram Globus, the Israeli schlockmeisters who proved that every star had a price. -David Begelman, the embezzler, gambler and sex addict who was rewarded for his sins by getting to run both Columbia and MGM. -Roland Betts, the aristocratic Silver Screen Partners founder and former Yale frat-mate of George W. Bush who was a master at playing the Reagan White House card. -Giancarlo Parretti, the Italian cannery worker who bought MGM, with a little help from his (Sicilian) friends. -David Puttnam The high-toned English advertising whiz who was supposed to raise the Hollywood bar, but ended up barred from Hollywood. Moneywood is the ultimate expose of the real hit men of Hollywood's go-go decade.

About the Author WILLIAM STADIEM is the author of eight books, including the bestselling Marilyn Monroe Confidential; Dear Senator; and Mister S: My Life with Frank Sinatra. A Harvard JD-MBA, he abandoned Wall Street for Sunset Boulevard, where as the screenwriter for Franco Zeffirelli's Young Toscanini, he wrote one of the biggest flops of the 80s. As a screenwriter, a columnist for Andy Warhol's Interview, and the restaurant critic for Los Angeles, Stadiem has enjoyed a ringside seat for the decadence and outrageousness he recounts in Moneywood. He lives in Santa Monica, California. Excerpt. Reprinted by permission. All rights reserved. CHAPTER 1 CAPITAL HILL WITH THE EXCEPTION of the McCarthy witch hunt, the public face of Hollywood had never before seemed as Republican as it did on the night of January 19, 1981. The scene was the ball celebrating the next days inauguration of Americas first Hollywood president, Ronald Wilson Reagan. Reagan had been Californias first Hollywood governor. His way had been paved by the states first Hollywood senator, song-and-dance man (and, incongruously, Yale man) George Murphy. Reagan in turn would pave the way for Californias second Hollywood governor, strong-and-death man Arnold Schwarzenegger. Both Murphy and Schwarzenegger were, coincidentally, also Republicans. But that was California, which was on the cutting edge, and this was America, which for all its fascination with the silver screen was always wary of liberal, Jewish, bleeding-heart, foreign-seeming, and overwhelmingly Democratic Hollywood. Ronald Reagan had overcome the countrys prejudices by repackaging himself as the nativist, conservative, Knute Rockne, All American version of the Hollywood dream. He was the pioneer, and the master, of channeling celebrity for right-wing political purposes, just as John F. Kennedy had done it for liberal ones, albeit without having been a member of the Screen Actors Guild, of which both Reagan and Murphy had been president. A major sign of the new times was that Reagans inaugural gala was being staged by the same man who had staged JFKs glamorous kickoff

exactly twenty years before, none other than Frank Sinatra. In 1961, Ol Blue Eyes, who at forty-five wasnt all that old at the time, assembled a dream team of superstars to create the very first Hollywood inaugural. He had everyone from Sir Laurence Olivier to Louis Prima, Bette Davis to Keely Smith, Fredric March to Milton Berle, not to mention a phalanx of black talent that included Ella Fitzgerald, Nat King Cole, Harry Belafonte, and Sidney Poitier. The most conspicuously absent black superstar was Sinatras fellow Rat Packer Sammy Davis Jr., who had been barred from the event by Big Daddy Joe Kennedy for marrying the Aryan Swedish goddess May Britt. Even Democrats had their limits. Now Ol Blue had become Ol Red, a Republican converso. With his new affiliation came a new appellation, Chairman of the Board, more appropriate to his new political party and to his seniority of sixty-five years. To Kennedy he brought Mahalia Jackson; to Reagan he brought Mister T. Bloated and crowned with one of the worst toupees in a lifetime of cover-ups, the superstar introduced the television star of The A-Team, who looked like a psychedelic version of a sommelier in Brazzaville. In a foreshadowing of Reaganomics, Sinatra quipped that if he decides to melt down all his gold chains, he could wipe out the national deficit. Mister T bowed to Mister S and recalled that he had last been to the White House to play Santa Claus for Jimmy Carter, and now he was back. Where else but in America, he exulted, can a black man from the ghetto play a white man from the North Pole? He brought down the house of millionaires. The big evening, held in a basketball arena in Landover, Maryland, home of the Washington Bullets, was like an extended television special, a middling night on Ed Sullivan. Johnny Carson co-emceed with Sinatra, but he wasnt swinging for the fences. There was Rich Little, a Republican favorite for his impressions of Richard Nixon, who was surely having the last laugh tonight, though not here. There were Donny and Marie Osmond and Debby Boone and Mel Tillis, the stuttering country singer who had turned his impediment into stardom. In addition to Mister T, there were numerous other awkward nods to black power, Republican style: Donny Osmond tried, in vain, to channel Chuck Berry by not quite duckwalking the stage and singing Ronnie B. Goode. Charley Pride channeled Hank Williams, after expressing his deep gratitude to Miz Nancy for inviting a poor Delta boy to this Holy Land. Ben Vereen, channeling Stepin Fetchit, put on a kind of minstrel show, covering his visage with a seemingly superfluous layer of blackface while singing (cringe) Waitin for the Robert E. Lee. The only duplication from the Kennedy gala was Ethel Merman, unsinkable at seventy-three and way above and beyond party, belting out Everythings Coming Up Roses. Old Hollywood was represented, sparsely, by Charlton Heston, channeling Moses; by Bob Hope, still game at seventy-eight; and by James Stewart, then seventy-three, who had become a brigadier general in the U.S. Air Force Reserve. Stewart stood proudly beside a real supergeneral, Omar Bradley, at eighty-seven the last of the five-star commanders. Dean Martin was in the front row, drunk. The press was not kind. One critic compared the show to Hee Haw (meow). Here, in all its Republican lack of glory, was Hollywood taking over Washington. But whose Hollywood was it, anyway? Not the New Hollywood of Spielberg, Lucas, and Coppola, whose blockbusters were the only hope of rescuing a moribund feature film industry. Those auteurs were all Democrats, as were the so-called baby moguls, a bunch of exstudent radicals turned studio executives who were green-lighting offbeat fare like Animal House and Airplane! No, the Hollywood that conquered Washington was the Hollywood of the second chance, the Hollywood of television, which was the new cash cow of entertainment. Look at Reagan himself. A basic B-actor turned TV presence was now commander in chief. It was big-time for Bonzo. The same thing was happening in the entertainment business: TV was taking over. B-actors and -actresses, finding themselves irrelevant on the big screen which was itself in danger of becoming irrelevant unless it became even bigger were getting remarkable resurrections on the small. Television was the reanimator. What F. Scott Fitzgerald had written about there being no second acts in American life was totally wrong. TV was the miracle. Ronald Reagan was Exhibit A. The hunky heartland sportscaster had beaten long odds once to get a Warner Brothers contract, but then, despite entering the movie lexicon as the Gipper, he never became the Gable-level star he wanted to be, ending up on the tube in Death Valley Days. Furthermore, he was eclipsed, if not emasculated, by his first wife, Jane Wyman, who had won an Oscar for Johnny Belinda in 1948 at a time when Ronnie could barely get a role and ended up co-starring with a monkey. They divorced that year. Wyman, like her ex, would wind up on television on her own show, Jane Wyman Presents The Fireside Theatre, and ultimately on Falcon Crest, where she, too, was resurrected and won a Golden Globe. Not even television could salvage the career of Nancy Reagan, who had re-created herself as a Republican social lioness. Quickly rebounding from Wyman, Reagan had remarried, in 1952, Nancy Davis, a Chicago society girl and a Smith College Seven Sister who had her own insuperable struggles in the thespian game. Before marrying security and class in her stepfather, a prominent if fanatic right-wing neurosurgeon, Nancys mother, Edith, was a struggling actress herself, who had abandoned Nancy to her sister so she could go on the road and chase her dream, which Nancy also inherited. Using her mothers showbiz connections, Nancy was able to get a screen test through Benny Thau, MGMs resident casting gatekeeper and master of the quid pro quo. How much quid Nancy had to surrender for Bennys quo cannot be known, but they did go out a lot. In the end, it came to naught but a few minor roles. Nancy was coming into the business in the early 1950s, a time when gentlemen preferred blond bombshells like Marilyn Monroe and Jayne Mansfield. No match for Grace Kelly or Eva Marie Saint in the social ice goddess department, Nancy was dismissed as a poor mans Dina Merrill. Ironically, the best Dina Merrill, the genuine Post Toasties heiress, could do was marry Cliff Robertson, the man who played JFK (in PT 109), while Nancys husband would succeed JFK and make Nancy, the lost lady of Hollywood, the First Lady of

America. The country liked comebacks and they liked winners, and the Reagans were providing it in spades. Frank Sinatra had long ago made his comeback, from washed-up singer of novelty ditties with dogs (Mama Will Bark) to 1954 Oscar winner in *From Here to Eternity*. Now he was making his turnaround. No one could have ever been a bigger and better Democrat than the underdog, up from nothing Italian Hoboken crooner and civil rights champion whose mother, Dolly, had been a ward heeler. Sinatra liked to take credit, among his friends, for having done more to get his buddy John F. Kennedy elected (as well as laid) than anyone except maybe Sam Giancana, who was said to have fixed Chicago for JFK. Ah, that toddlin town. But what one Kennedy giveth, another taketh away. Bluestocking Bobby, as much as he might have liked Marilyn Monroe, whom he had met through Sinatra, couldn't stand the stain of Ol Blues gangland ties, particularly with Giancana. Although Sinatra had redecorated his Palm Springs estate to turn it into JFK's informal western White House, Bobby put the nix on his brother's travel plans and arranged for John to stay instead chez Bing Crosby. Crosby was Sinatra's idol as well as his rival, and the unkindest cut of all was that he was also a Republican. Then again, so were a lot of stars, and not just John Wayne. Many of the giants were Republicans: Gable, Grant, Stewart, Mitchum, Holden, Hudson, plus Crosby's Road partner, Hope, and Lucy and Desi, and even Elvis the King. The great moguls who built the studios, Warner, Mayer, Goldwyn, despite thei...