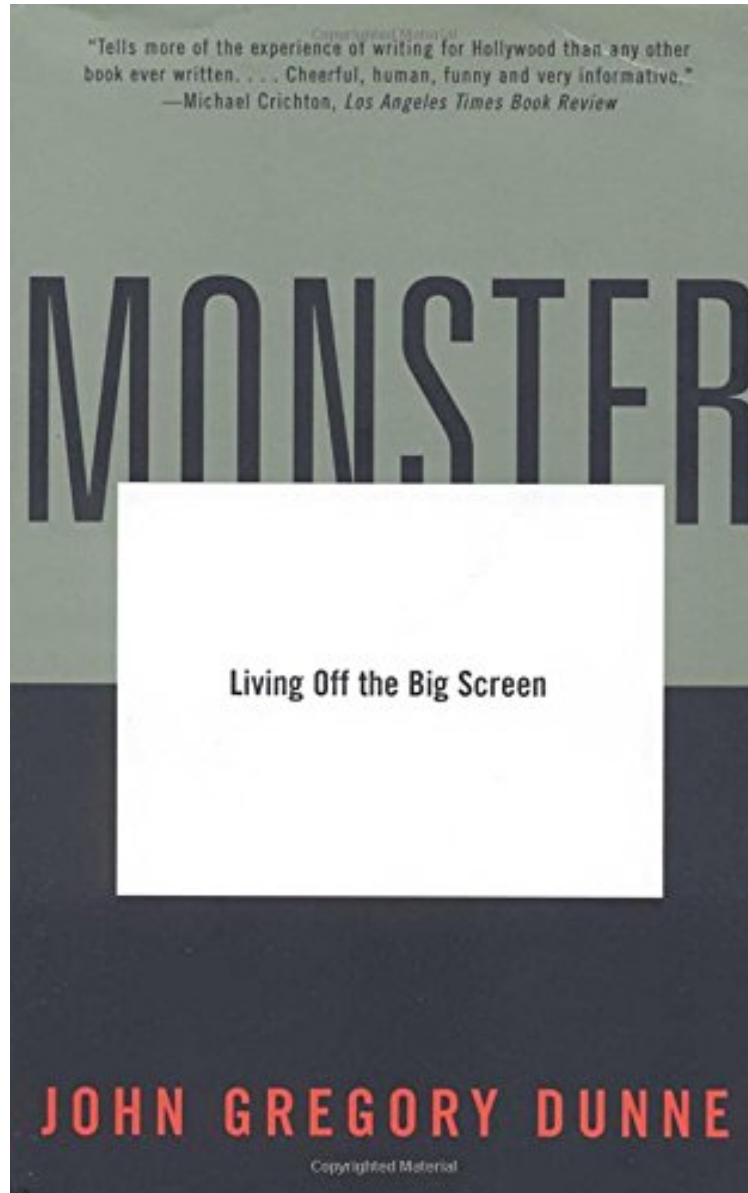


(Download free pdf) Monster: Living Off the Big Screen

Monster: Living Off the Big Screen

John Gregory Dunne

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John Gregory Dunne : Monster: Living Off the Big Screen before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Monster: Living Off the Big Screen:

5 of 5 people found the following review helpful. Dunne and Didion=Gable and LombardBy Patrick CollinsI wasn't looking forward to reading this, but it turned out to be both a fascinating and funny story, as well as much more insight

into author Joan Didion's life and work, which I've been following since the publication of "Slouching Toward Bethlehem." This is the story of the script that became "Up Close and Personal" as it goes through various writers, titles, and stories. But I remember the Jessica Savitch TV meltdown, and wish Hollywood would have kept hands off. Her story would have made a great movie. But Dunne, Didion's husband, who she writes about after his death in "The Year of Magical Thinking" is a writer who can tell a good story and has always been revealing about California from an outsider's perspective as much as his wife has told the story of modern California from the viewpoint of someone born there. Also interesting is the fact that the two writers begin the script because Dunne needs health insurance for heart surgery, and later his heart disease and death begins the story of Didion's great book. A delightful, ironic book even if you like Hollywood and an even better book if you hate it.³ of 3 people found the following review helpful. Monster: Living Off the Big Screen By dirtgirlDunn writes a very clear picture of the emotional and professional challenges of screen writing. The machinations and cross purposes of Hollywood are artfully dissected and laced with humor. He's able to extract what were valuable lessons and gives insight to the process. The personality sketches are spot on.² of 2 people found the following review helpful. very Insightful By Dwight MyfeltI enjoyed it. Offered interesting insight into how screenplay writers work. Well written. A quick read if you are interested in the topic.

In Hollywood, screenwriters are a curse to be borne, and beating up on them is an industry blood sport. But in this ferociously funny and accurate account of life on the Hollywood food chain, it's a screenwriter who gets the last murderous laugh. That may be because the writer is John Gregory Dunne, who has written screenplays, along with novels and non-fiction, for thirty years. In 1988 Dunne and his wife, Joan Didion, were asked to write a screenplay about the dark and complicated life of the late TV anchorwoman Jessica Savitch. Eight years and twenty-seven drafts later, this script was made into the fairy tale "Up Close and Personal" starring Robert Redford and Michelle Pfeiffer. Detailing the meetings, rewrites, fights, firings, and distractions attendant to the making of a single picture, Monster illuminates the process with sagacity and raucous wit.

.com This is a story of a screenplay, how it was initially conceived, "developed" by a number of studio heads and producers, and finally transformed into a movie even its writers admit is mediocre. In 1988, John Gregory Dunne and his wife Joan Didion began work on a film script based on the tragic life of anchorwoman Jessica Savitch. Over the next eight years, studio executives coaxed them to transform it into Up Close and Personal, a toothless star vehicle for Robert Redford and Michelle Pfeiffer. In his account of the script's metamorphosis, Dunne also mentions other potential masterpieces of excess that he and Didion worked on, including Dharma Blue, an aborted Jerry Bruckheimer-Don Simpson movie about UFOs and Ultimatum, a nuclear thriller that was abandoned after its studio spent \$3 million on script development! Dunne makes no bones about being in show biz for the money--his film work financed his heart surgery, legal costs, and vacations in Honolulu. Still, this account of a screenplay's devolution unmasks an industry spoiled rotten by wealth and power. From Publishers Weekly Novelist (Playland) and journalist Dunne makes much of his living by writing screenplays, and this journal covers the eight years it took between the time he and his wife, Joan Didion, were approached to write a screenplay based on Golden Girl, a biography of newswoman Jessica Savitch, and the 1996 appearance of Up Close and Personal, a rather different movie that made no mention of Savitch. The "monster," this veteran of Hollywood knows, is the producers' money, which always takes precedence over creative ego. This account-written while Dunne had much other work but also money worries-is often digressive and undigested, as if it were written to satisfy Dunne's own money monster. Even so, Dunne can be a deft and amusing reporter both of the tricks of the screenwriting trade and of the foibles of the "industry," as Hollywood is known. He explains why studio execs like screenplays with explanatory exposition while good actors don't, and he uncovers the dynamic of a script reading, in which stars need less dialogue than others to establish their characters. He tells of the youthful "creative executives" who give screenwriters critiques laden with peculiar jargon, and he reports on working with a series of charismatic executives-first producers Don Simpson and Jerry Bruckheimer, then producer Scott Rudin and director Jon Avnet. In the end, the film made a nice profit and Dunne not only had a good time but wrung a book out of the experience. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal Dunne turns the movie-making business inside out. Copyright 1996 Reed Business Information, Inc.