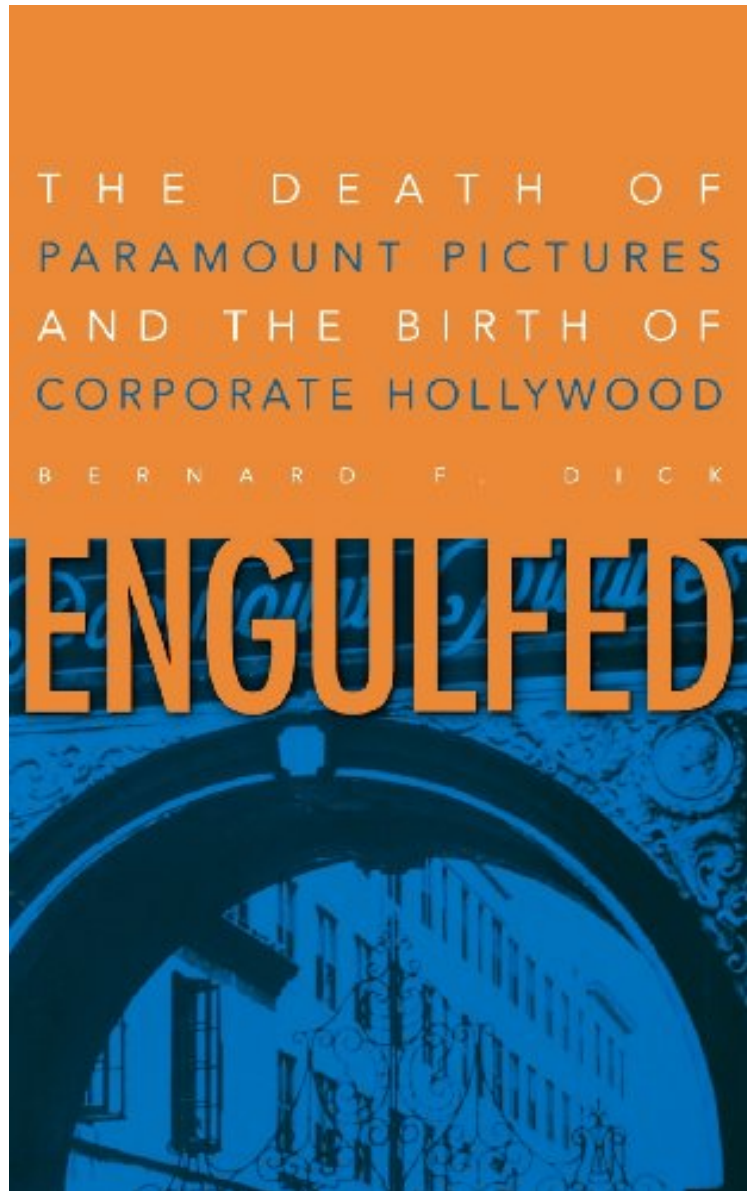


[Download ebook] Engulfed: The Death of Paramount Pictures and the Birth of Corporate Hollywood

Engulfed: The Death of Paramount Pictures and the Birth of Corporate Hollywood

Bernard F. Dick

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Bernard F. Dick : Engulfed: The Death of Paramount Pictures and the Birth of Corporate Hollywood before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Engulfed: The Death of Paramount Pictures and the Birth of Corporate Hollywood:

9 of 10 people found the following review helpful. A little too clinical
By Daniel Friedman
This book probably falls more in the 3 and a half star category, because Bernard Dick does do a good job of laying out the narrative regarding Hollywood's turn toward the "dark side", becoming less about entertainment and more about business. He is thorough and meticulous. However, the book reads a bit too much like a college text. Professor Dick's last book about a studio, *City of Dreams*, was a blow-by-blow history of Universal and he references his studies for that book a bit too much here. Clearly there was plenty of original research done, but it seems like some of it is missing. Also, with the exception of the passages pertaining to *The Godfather*, the examples (perhaps case-studies is a better term) don't really make the point I think the book is trying to make, namely that the film community is most definitely the worse off for having gone down the road of textiles, electronics, and other mainstream industries. I would recommend this book to anyone who is a die hard Hollywood historian or movie fan, but others might be left a bit put off.

From *Double Indemnity* to *The Godfather*, the stories behind some of the greatest films ever made pale beside the story of the studio that made them. In the golden age of Hollywood, Paramount was one of the Big Five studios. Gulf + Western's 1966 takeover of the studio signaled the end of one era and heralded the arrival of a new way of doing business in Hollywood. Bernard Dick reconstructs the battle that culminated in the reduction of the studio to a mere corporate commodity. He then traces Paramount's devolution from free-standing studio to subsidiary first of Gulf + Western, then Paramount Communications, and currently Viacom-CBS. Dick portrays the new Paramount as a paradigm of today's Hollywood, where the only real art is the art of the deal. Former merchandising executives find themselves in charge of production, on the assumption that anyone who can sell a movie can make one. CEOs exit in disgrace from one studio only to emerge in triumph at another. Corporate raiders vie for power and control through the buying and selling of film libraries, studio property, television stations, book publishers, and more. The history of Paramount is filled with larger-than-life people, including Billy Wilder, Adolph Zukor, Sumner Redstone, Sherry Lansing, Barry Diller, Michael Eisner, Jeffrey Katzenberg, and more.

From *Publishers Weekly*
In 1977's *Silent Movie*, Mel Brooks turned his gimlet eye on showbiz, portraying a "megaconglomerate called 'Engulf and Devour'" that attempts to buy a small film company. No one could have missed the reference to Gulf + Western, the multinational that bought up distinguished Paramount Pictures in 1966. Dick, professor of communications at Fairleigh Dickinson University, astutely analyzes the role of outside corporate money in the film industry, and how the changes at Paramount heralded a new, inevitable trend in American film and arts. From its founding, Paramount had been in the forefront of quality Hollywood productions: the studio won the first Academy Award for Best Picture in 1929 (for *Wings*), and received a Best Picture nomination every year between 1949 and 1955 under the visionary leadership of founder Adolph Zukor and close-knit producers and directors. In the mid-1950s, politics, economics and the advent of television caused a decline in revenues and a complex battle between trustees, stockholders and businessmen bent on diversification that ended with the sale of the studio. In the book's second half, Dick charts the dizzying business maneuvers after Paramount (and other formerly independent studios) became line items in the labyrinthine ledgers of large corporations. Dick's in-depth analysis and research (he had access to previously undisclosed papers of Paramount's last president) makes for great and shocking journalism. Less for the general reader than film or business historians, this is nonetheless an important addition to literature on Hollywood and the economics of entertainment. Photos. Copyright 2001 Cahners Business Information, Inc.
From *Library Journal*
Paramount Pictures was always one of Hollywood's most famous studios, turning out hit movies that ranged from *Sunset Boulevard* to *The Godfather*. Here, Dick (communications and English, Fairleigh Dickinson Univ.; *Radical Innocence: A Critical Study of the Hollywood Ten*) studies the many people, events, and trends that contributed to Paramount's evolution from an independent studio to a corporate subsidiary, the result of contemporary culture's increasingly complex practice of mergers and acquisitions. This thoroughly researched story reveals the shift in the industry's primary focus from making a fine film to making a successful, multifaceted business deal and prompts debate over which one is considered to be real art in modern Hollywood. The book is enhanced by historical information about the studio's early days, when it was briefly housed in a barn and shaped by such pioneering individuals as Adolph Zukor and Jesse Lasky. For film students and enthusiasts, as well as for large public media and academic collections. Carol J. Binkowski, Bloomfield, NJ Copyright 2001 Reed Business Information, Inc. "Through the richness in cases, examples and anecdotes it gives a practical, nuts-and-bolts insight into the workings of the film business." *Business History* "Does a fine job of detailing the death of a studio and its reincarnation as a subsidiary of a conglomerate. Dick's forensics peel back history, revealing the passions, politics and power plays of filmmakers and dealmakers that culminated in the dissolution of a Hollywood empire." *Daily Variety* "An important book not only about the history of a studio, but also about the apparently ineluctable direction big business has taken in American society." *Donald Spoto* "A breezy and informative six-reeler about the 'engulfing' of the once proud studio by a mega-conglomerate to which film art was merely another commodity." *EH.NET* "Provides a helpful scaffolding of Paramount's fascinating history thus far and suggests that business historians would do well to engage the film industry further in their explorations of twentieth-century business and economic life." *Enterprise and Society* "Clever,

thought-provoking Dick has the ability to explain the complex in-fighting among studio executives in the corridors of power in a movie studio and their even more complex negotiations with the conglomerates who own the studios in a way that is clear and incisive. "Gene D. Phillips" "The stories behind some of the greatest films ever made pale beside the story of the studio that made them." "Hollywood Inside Syndicate" "Provides historical insight into the death of Paramount Pictures as an autonomous studio and its fall to the conglomerate Gulf + Western in 1966." "Journal of Economic History" "Uses Paramount Pictures to illustrate the evolution of the motion-picture industry from Thomas Edison to Michael Eisner. . . . Always erudite and entertaining." "Kirkus s" "This thoroughly researched story reveals the shift in the industry's primary focus from making fine film to making a successful, multifaceted business deal and prompts debate over which one is considered to be real art in modern Hollywood." "Library Journal" "Everybody knows that Paramount was one of the major studios, but few know the twists and turns of the history of the studio over the years." "Peter C. Rollins" "Traces Paramount's lineage from its 1912 origins to its 1966 purchase by Gulf Western and its present ownership by Viacom/CBS." "Publishers Weekly" "Astutely analyzes the role of outside corporate money in the film industry, and how the changes at Paramount heralded a new, inevitable trend in American film and arts. . . . Dick's in-depth analysis and research makes for great and shocking journalism." "Publishers Weekly" "Dick lends the personalities and events so much emotional colour that his book is as compulsively readable as a biography." "Sight and Sound" "Dick has composed an authoritative account of Paramount Pictures Corporation and accomplished the not inconsiderable feat of making it read less like business and more like history." "Washington Times"