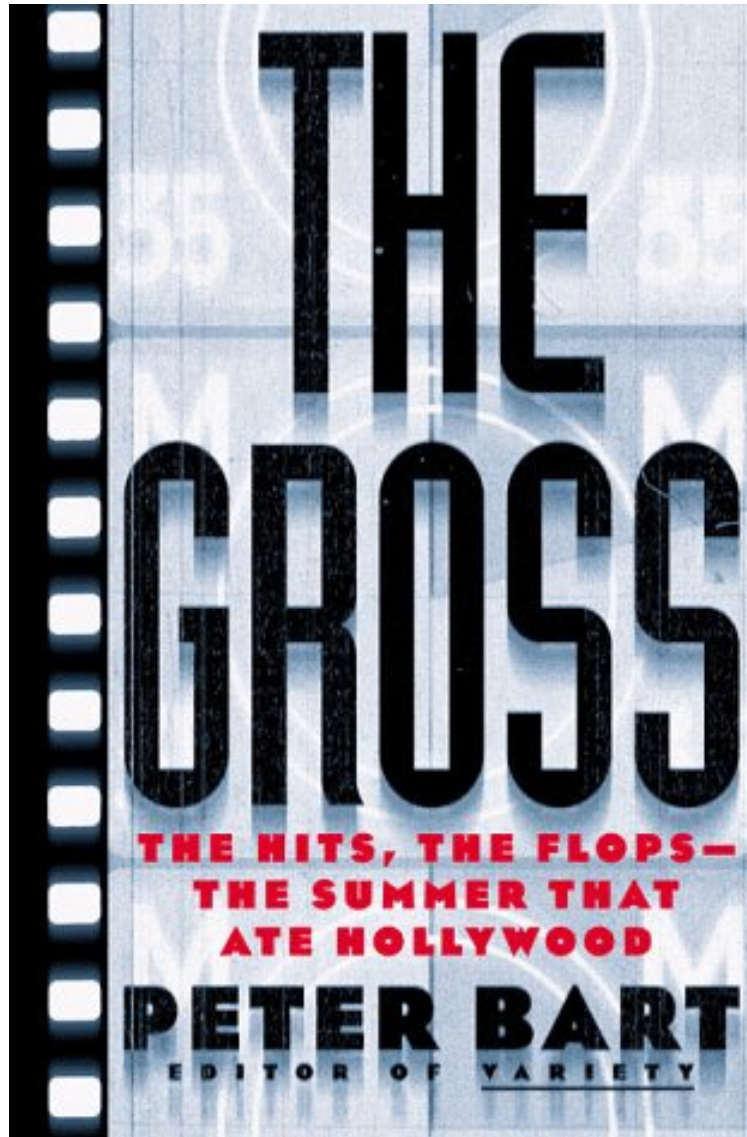


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The Gross

Peter Bart

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Peter Bart : The Gross before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Gross:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. The Gross: Hits, Flops: Summer that Ate HollywoodBy P. SchwabProduct arrived in perfect shape and even before the time specified. Would not hesitate to work with this seller again.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Who better to attempt it than BartBy Pageturner in NYCIn 1969, William Goldman penned The Season, the quintessential insider's guide to the triumphs and failures of one

Broadway season?but no author has since managed to do the same for Hollywood. Who better to attempt it than Bart, a former studio executive at Paramount, MGM/UA and Lorimar and currently editor-in-chief of Variety? Here Bart offers a savvy, gossipy, nuts-and-bolts look at the corporate machinations behind the summer films of 1998, a season of extravagant hype, box-office records and corporate disquiet that spotlighted what he calls the "dysfunctional economics of the movie industry." He divides his book into three sections: Genesis, a rundown of executives at the major studios and an outline of 11 hotly anticipated summer pictures, Armageddon to The X-Files; The Reckoning, a week-by-week listing of box office grosses for the 18 weeks of the summer season; and The Fallout, an assessment of why executives have grown increasingly wary of taking risks in a market dominated by blockbusters. Recounting how each film was put together and sold to the public, he relates chilling anecdotes of studio interference and moneymen making artistic decisions. As Bart shows little interest in the quality of these films, however, his book seems written primarily for the executives pulling the strings (for instance, the box office failure of Godzilla is largely attributed to a backlash against the mega-prerelease hype and rushed release date rather than the generic substance of the film). Whether or not the summer of 1998 marked a major turning point for Hollywood is debatable, but Bart has that rare bird's-eye view of the business that allows him to discern, even in this one fairly random crop of movies, the economic forces shaping American cinema. 1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. Flopzilla!By M. G WatsonI love this book and read it about once a year. Yes, it's shallow and superficial (it's hard to be "deep" when you cover as much ground as Bart does in this book), and yes, there are some errata and other mistakes which could have been easily fixed, but were not (and least in the edition I have), but so what? "The Gross" is not hard history, it's an gossipy, insider's stab at the business of movie-making. If you take as much schadenfreude as I do from watching arrogant and venal studio suits make fools out of themselves, it's a hell of a lot of fun, and I'm pretty sure that is what Bart intended it to be."The Gross" examines the blockbuster year of 1996 ("The summer that ate Hollywood") and how it affected all the major studios. It follows the various big-budget movies from the idea phase to completion and their lives -- or deaths -- at the box office. Included are "Armageddon" "Deep Impact" "Saving Private Ryan" "The Truman Show" "There's Something About Mary" "Bulworth" "Out of Sight" and many others. But my favorite part of the book, bar none, is about "Godzilla." "Godzilla" to me represents everything bad about Hollywood. I am not simply referring to the movie, which is unwatchable garbage, but to the process by which it was made, and the deafening, in your face 24/7 marketing campaign which accompanied it. Commercials, billboards, toys, fast-food tie-ins, T-shirts, promotional junkets....Hollywood pulled out every stop in order to sell this movie, and the suits involved were riding a wave of smug self-confidence that threatened to drown the whole industry. And then it crashed. Hard. Egos were savaged. Fortunes were washed down the drain. Reputations were wheeled off to ICU. Bitterness went around like the Asian flu. And I laugh harder every time I read the tale. There's nothing quite like watching a bomb explode in the face of the shmucks who put it together, especially since they planned to shove it down our collective throat."Godzilla" aside (I'm laughing as I write this!), I enjoyed "The Gross" for its gossipy look at the big players -- studio heads, suits, actors, writers, et al -- as well as the savage and merciless process of getting a movie "green-lighted." The story of "Bulworth", Warren Beatty's pretentious vanity vehicle that caught fire in the driveway, is another howler, since to this day nobody, absolutely nobody, knows who green-lighted it...or if they did, will admit it."The Gross" is kind of like movie popcorn. If you eat it expecting a meal, you'll be very disappointed (not to mention slightly sick to your stomach); if you take it for what it is, it's a finger-lickin' good time.

Summer is crunch time in Hollywood. It is the season when studios roll out their most expensive, effects-laden pictures in a feverish race to win the box-office derby. The magnitude of the wagers is astonishing. Each summer there are at least a dozen movies costing between \$100 million and \$200 million to produce and market. As one blockbuster after another opens to a massive publicity fusillade, careers are made and lost in the same weekend. Yet the spoils of victory are enticing. A studio may see its summer movies gross in excess of \$500 million in the U.S. alone in two short months. Vast riches in the form of bonuses, gross percentages, and other perks rain down upon those who gambled wisely. Filmmakers and stars who figure in the summer hits come away with the power to squander untold millions on their future projects and to compete yet again in next summer's sweepstakes. In *The Gross*, Peter Bart, editor-in-chief of *Variety*, puts the spotlight on the summer of 1998. He takes us through the entire cycle of would-be summer blockbusters, from script through casting and production and finally into release. He gives an in-depth account of the making of such films as *Saving Private Ryan*, *Deep Impact*, *Godzilla*, *Armageddon*, and *There's Something About Mary*. And, most important, he shows us why some succeeded and others failed. The cast of characters in *The Gross* includes the most important and powerful names in Hollywood. Dozens of actors, directors, producers, agents, and studio heads--from Steven Spielberg and Mel Gibson to Warren Beatty and Michael Eisner--all talked at length to Bart. Through these interviews, as well as exhaustive reporting, the author gives us a revealing portrait of how today's movies get made. We also learn the real meaning of the summer season in Hollywood. Can quality movies survive in this pressure cooker? Has an atmosphere been created where only the worst rises to the top? Can the artistic process be managed by multinational corporations? Peter Part, the ultimate Hollywood insider, answers these questions and much more in *The Gross: The Hits, The Flops--The Summer That Ate Hollywood*.

.com In the summer of 1998, as far as Hollywood was concerned, nothing went the way it was supposed to. As Peter Bart recaps that season: A cheaply made gross-out comedy generated twice the revenues of a Steven Spielberg high-concept adventure; two pricey asteroid films collided, yet neither suffered damage; Jim Carrey made a hit movie that didn't offer a single laugh; Eddie Murphy buried his hard edge long enough to make two successful, warm-and-cuddly family films; Harrison Ford made a love story playing opposite a self-avowed lesbian; and finally, defying the mythology of the "youth demos," two stars in their sixties, Robert Redford and Warren Beatty, enjoyed yet another warm moment in the sun. Bart is a seasoned observer of the film industry both as studio executive (holding seats at Paramount and MGM/UA) and as the editor in chief of *Variety* and *Daily Variety*. His insider's perspective, and his ability to gain access to the major players in the business, serve him well here. The *Gross* is filled with juicy behind-the-scenes stories on how certain summer blockbusters got made and positioned for release--even though the book could strongly benefit from both an index, to make finding information on particular films easier, and information on its sources, to determine exactly how much of the story is Bart's original legwork and how much comes from the trades. Along the way, he sketches a grim portrait of an industry whose leaders have become increasingly frustrated with the high cost of filmmaking; even when they're making fun-filled romps like *The Mask of Zorro* and *Armageddon*, people at the studios don't seem to be enjoying themselves. Bart manages to cover almost every major summer release of '98 with enough detail to hold readers' interest, so while *The Gross* may not be the ultimate overview of the film business, it's a captivating snapshot of an industry in flux. --Ron Hogan

From *Publishers Weekly* In 1969, William Goldman penned *The Season*, the quintessential insider's guide to the triumphs and failures of one Broadway season?but no author has since managed to do the same for Hollywood. Who better to attempt it than Bart, a former studio executive at Paramount, MGM/UA and Lorimar and currently editor-in-chief of *Variety*? Here Bart offers a savvy, gossipy, nuts-and-bolts look at the corporate machinations behind the summer films of 1998, a season of extravagant hype, box-office records and corporate disquiet that spotlighted what he calls the "dysfunctional economics of the movie industry." He divides his book into three sections: *Genesis*, a rundown of executives at the major studios and an outline of 11 hotly anticipated summer pictures, *Armageddon* to *The X-Files*; *The Reckoning*, a week-by-week listing of box office grosses for the 18 weeks of the summer season; and *The Fallout*, an assessment of why executives have grown increasingly wary of taking risks in a market dominated by blockbusters. Recounting how each film was put together and sold to the public, he relates chilling anecdotes of studio interference and moneymen making artistic decisions. As Bart shows little interest in the quality of these films, however, his book seems written primarily for the executives pulling the strings (for instance, the box office failure of *Godzilla* is largely attributed to a backlash against the mega-prerelease hype and rushed release date rather than the generic substance of the film). Whether or not the summer of 1998 marked a major turning point for Hollywood is debatable, but Bart has that rare bird's-eye view of the business that allows him to discern, even in this one fairly random crop of movies, the economic forces shaping American cinema. Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.

From *Library Journal* In lively and instructive fashion, *Variety*'s editor-in-chief examines a moviegoing season that seems like yesterday. Because it was. Via interviews with actors, directors, studio executives, producers, and writers, Bart traces the genesis, development, and marketing of, in particular, *The Truman Show*, *Armageddon*, *Bulworth*, *Godzilla*, *There's Something About Mary*, *Lethal Weapon IV*, *The Mask of Zorro*, *Small Soldiers*, *Deep Impact*, *Saving Private Ryan*, and *Six Days, Seven Nights*. We witness the success or failure of these and other films during 18 summer weeks and learn how special effects, star salaries, cooperative ventures, and merchandising deals compromise studio profits. Cinema students as well as casual moviegoers will question some of Bart's conclusions. A special effects movie is not a "distinct genre," and Anthony Hopkins and Antonio Banderas are major stars. And occasionally facts are wrong (e.g., *Splendor in the Grass* was released in 1961, not 1966). These caveats aside, *The Gross* is a fascinating inside look at filmmaking that leaves one wondering how anything cohesive is ever projected on the big screen. For public and academic libraries and performing arts collections. A Kim Holston, American Institute for Chartered Property Casualty Underwriters, Malvern, PA Copyright 1999 Reed Business Information, Inc.