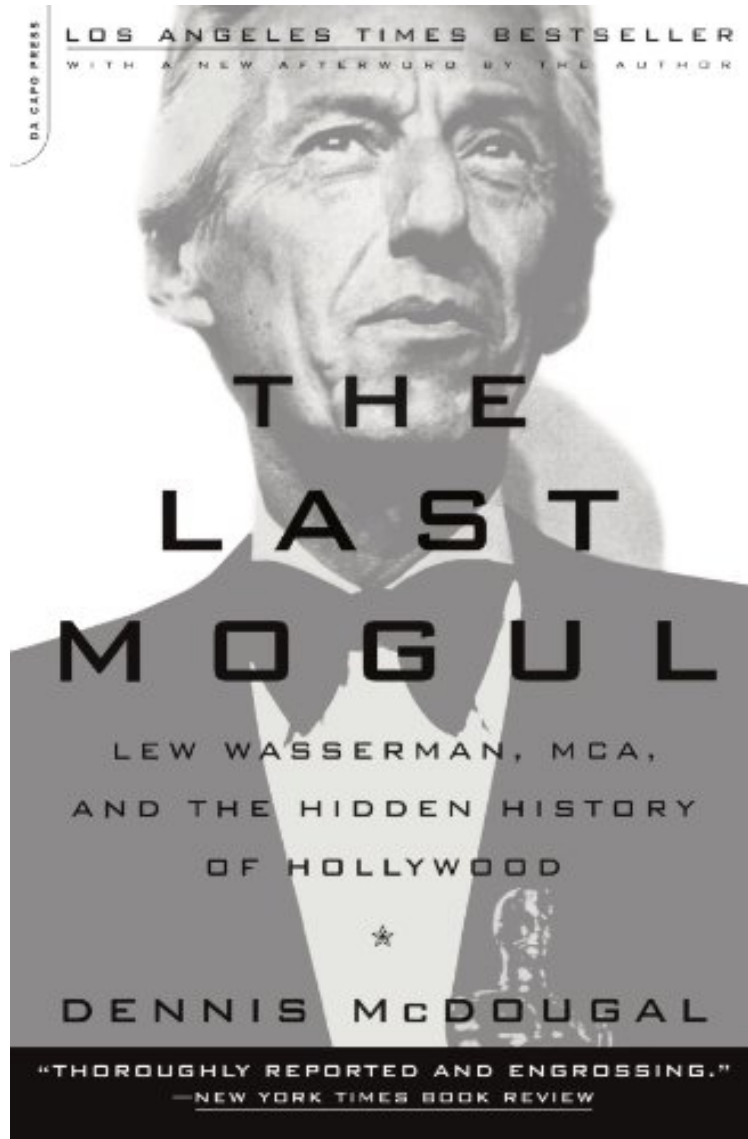


[Download ebook] The Last Mogul: Lew Wasserman, MCA, and the Hidden History of Hollywood

# The Last Mogul: Lew Wasserman, MCA, and the Hidden History of Hollywood

*Dennis McDougal*

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**Dennis McDougal : The Last Mogul: Lew Wasserman, MCA, and the Hidden History of Hollywood** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Last Mogul: Lew Wasserman, MCA, and the Hidden History of Hollywood:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Great bio of a Hollywood legend and MCA By Reading Rocks This book was extremely interesting and hard to put down. Although it is a history of how MCA started it is the story of Lew Wasserman. The book shed much light on how agents, studios, and movie stars maneuver around and survive working in the movie industry. If you enjoy reading about the mechanics of Hollywood's business side this is for you. This book also delves into how some stars got the deals and roles they did and stars who got dumped by MCA. I don't agree with some reviewers on here who praise Lew Wasserman's leadership skills and management style. He led by brutal intimidation and got rid of employees - and movie stars - fast and quick once they stopped serving his purposes and never looked back (including his children because they didn't meet HIS expectations). Reading that there were people who actually went to vomit once he lashed out at them in meeting, doesn't send a signal to normal humanity that Lew Wasserman was anything but a big, unadulterated, unfiltered bully. Yes, he was an innovator regarding setting up packages for film and TV and yes, he made his clients lots of money, and yes again, he made MCA the powerhouse that it was but the book also shows us that he was very manipulative, two-faced, and generally a poor imitation of a human being. Anyway, this book is well written, seems well researched, and I found that it was not biased towards Lew either one-way-or-the-other. Fabulous read!! 11 of 11 people found the following review helpful. A history book of Hollywood By Rick Spell If you enjoy reading about the history of Hollywood, this is the book for you. But be forewarned, it reads like a history book and takes a real time commitment to finish. The author goes back to the beginning career of Jules Stein and booking of bands through the sale of Universal to the Bronfman's. Clearly the focus of the book is Lew Wasserman who led MCA from agency to studio with significant influences in politics. Probably the most entertaining part of the book is the unique stories of the stars of the 40s and 50s since Wasserman was at his peak making careers. Stories are presented about Tony Curtis, Jimmy Stewart and Marilyn Monroe to name a few and are quite entertaining as well as showing Wasserman's power to destroy or make a career. This book tries to intertwine politics, entertainment and the mafia, and while there may be a connection, sometimes he seems to reach too far and lose focus on the principals who grew MCA into the behemoth that it was. I recommend this book to anyone with an in-depth interest in Hollywood history and what it was like from mid-century. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five Stars By J. Jett It was a used book. The description was accurate and, the price was fair

The reviewer of the Boston Globe said point blank: "Over the years, I've read hundreds of books on Hollywood and the movie business, and this one is right at the top." As the elusive, tyrannical head of the Music Corporation of America (MCA) until the 1990s, Lew Wasserman was the most powerful and feared man in show business for more than half a century. His career spanned the entire history of the movies, from the silent era to the present, and he was guru to Alfred Hitchcock, Marilyn Monroe, Marlon Brando, and Jimmy Stewart, and to a new generation of filmmakers beginning with Steven Spielberg and George Lucas. For more than four years, Dennis McDougal interviewed over 350 people who knew the man with the giant dark horn-rimmed glasses: colleagues, relatives, rivals and drew on tens of thousands of pages of documents to produce this extraordinary and first-ever portrait of a legend and his times, a book that the New York Times Book Review called "thoroughly reported and engrossing" and that the Daily News called, simply, "a bombshell."

.com "I run all the studios," 38-year-old Lew Wasserman boasted in 1951 when turning down an offer to run MGM. Indeed, he did. As president of MCA, the most powerful talent agency of its time, Wasserman gained unprecedented artistic and financial clout for Hollywood's top stars, hastening the end of the studio system. Not that he did it out of the goodness of his heart. The canny, ruthless Wasserman was famous for inventing new ways to increase MCA's percentage, most notably by bundling clients into packages the agency produced for the burgeoning television market--a glaring conflict of interest that finally prompted a Justice Department investigation. Veteran movie journalist Dennis McDougal (author of *Fatal Subtraction: The Inside Story of Buchwald v. Paramount*) uses Wasserman's career as a case study in how the entertainment industry has changed over the course of the 20th century. He chronicles MCA's evolution from a band-booking business in wide-open Jazz Age Chicago (where persistent rumors about the company's Mob ties began) to a postwar movie and TV powerhouse to a Japanese-owned subsidiary in the 1990s. Seamlessly blending biography, business reporting, and juicy celebrity anecdotes, this is first-rate showbiz muckraking. --Wendy Smith From *Publishers Weekly* Originally founded as a talent agency in 1924 by Jules Stein, an erstwhile Chicago ophthalmologist, the Music Corporation of America reached the pinnacle of its power from the mid-1940s to the early 1960s, when it perfected the art of delivering complete "packages" to film and television companies. These pictures were not only produced by MCA but also featured stars repped by the "Octopus," as the company came to be known. MCA's market domination was so complete that in 1962, the U.S. Justice Department made the company to choose between the talent agency and its production facilities. It chose the latter. Lew Wasserman, named MCA president in 1946, often played bad cop to Stein's good cop by trying to milk every cent from any negotiation, while Stein excelled at soothing a star's or studio exec's bruised feelings. McDougal (*Fatal Subtraction: How Hollywood Really Does Business*) had no access to Wasserman, but here puts hundreds of interviews and secondary sources to

good use, combining crack business reporting with plenty of Hollywood gossip. As MCA becomes a "rapacious behemoth," McDougal focuses on the dark side of its business dealings (e.g., its alleged ties to organized crime), at times veering into innuendo, as when speculating that MCA had a hand in the death of Marilyn Monroe. Although the company remained a force in the movie and TV business, its strength was never the same after the 1960s, and Wasserman's days as a true Hollywood power broker faded after he sold the company in 1990 to the Japanese electronics firm Matsushita. McDougal has produced a feisty behind-the-scenes account of the multimedia empire MCA was in its glory days—a status no Hollywood studio has attained enjoyed since. Pictures not seen by PW. Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Library Journal

Radio and film were new and virtually unregulated when ophthalmologist Jules Stein decided to moonlight as a band booker. Stein created the Music Corporation of America (1921), the talent agency transmogrified now into Seagram's-owned Universal, and his protege was Lew Wasserman, a workaholic dealmaker whose love for movies and concern for clients won over stars like Bette Davis and Betty Grable. Despite links to unions, mobsters, and politicians, we never sense that Wasserman and his team believed MCA's business practices were unethical or illegal. Los Angeles Times investigative reporter McDougal did not interview Wasserman, and the book includes misleading sketches of certain films?Talk of the Town (1942) is not "a lightweight comedy," and Frenzy (1972) is vintage Hitchcock?but it is well written, thoroughly researched, and broad in scope. Recommended for general and performing arts collections.?Kim R. Holston, American Inst. for Chartered Property Casualty Underwriters, Malvern, PA Copyright 1998 Reed Business Information, Inc.