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Bernard F. Dick

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Bernard F. Dick : The Merchant Prince of Poverty Row: Harry Cohn of Columbia Pictures before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Merchant Prince of Poverty Row: Harry Cohn of Columbia Pictures:

4 of 4 people found the following review helpful. Factual ... but a bit DifficultBy Bill MackHarry Cohn has been a study in Hollywood reality for decades. Since the foundation of Columbia Pictures, Cohn has been referred to as everything from "mean" to "monster". The many memorable stories about "Horrible Harry" have been made public by various reliable sources --- from stage-hands, producers and directors --- to the top stars under contract to the little company once isolated to a small section of Gower Street in Los Angeles. Of course, Columbia Pictures is no longer a Poverty Row film outlet. The company is now recognized as being superior to Cohn's "dream-studio", Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer. However, Harry Cohn still retains the reputation as being "the meanest man in Hollywood" to many of those who collect and cherish movie rumors. This book presents a fair study of Cohn, although the author leaves the impression that he is more dedicated to a "word study" than he is to the subject. To me, the pages fail to fall into the category of "easy-reading" material. Harry Cohn was not only one of Hollywood's leading movie merchants, he was also a "character" who reflected fierce determination. The limited education achieved during his youth seemed to cause extreme anger after he had become a huge success in the complex motion-picture community. It obviously bruised his ego to a point where he seemed to be "searching for a fight" with anyone falling short of his difficult demands. Granted, Bernard F. Dick has done a very good study of Harry Cohn, but falls short of Bob Thomas' book, "King Cohn". Bob presented more simplicity while creating words to describe this tough movie boss and his diversified antics. 3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Harry Cohn Bio inferior to "King Cohn"By Robert Reese This bio of Columbia Pictures Harry Cohn makes a good companion piece to "King Cohn", a far superior effort. Nonetheless, this bio provides glimpses of Cohn from different angles than King Cohn. I recommend reading both bios if you're looking to get under the skin of one of Hollywood's most powerful moguls. 13 of 14 people found the following review helpful. Another solid film book by Bernard F. DickBy Kcorn Although not as detailed or as well-written as it could be, this is a solid book focusing on one of the most talented (as well as one of the toughest) studio presidents ever. Vulgar, often hated, Cohn is still a fascinating figure in Hollywood history. Highlights of this book include Clifford Odets actual Eulogy for Cohn and information about the relationship between Frank Capra and Cohn.

" Ben Hecht called him "White Fang," and director Charles Vidor took him to court for verbal abuse. The image of Harry Cohn as vulgarian is such a part of Hollywood lore that it is hard to believe there were other Harry Cohns: the only studio president who was also head of production; the ex-song plugger who scrutinized scripts and grilled writers at story conferences; a man who could look at actresses as either "broads" or goddesses. Drawing on personal interviews as well as previously unstudied source material (conference notes, memos, and especially the teletypes between Harry and his brother Jack), Bernard Dick offers a radically different portrait of the man who ran Columbia Pictures -- and who "had to be boss" -- from 1932 to 1958.

""The broadest and most insightful look at Cohn and Columbia we are likely to have for some time." --Film Quarterly" -- ""Ever since Cohn died in 1958, writers have been trying to sort out Cohn-the-myth and Cohn-the-man but no one has yet done it in more fascinating detail than Bernard Dick." --The Hollywood Reporter" -- ""Writers have been trying to sort out Cohn, the myth of Cohn, the man, but no one has yet done it in more fascinating detail than Bernard Dick." --Now Playing" -- From the Back Cover Ben Hecht called him "White Fang", and director Charles Vidor took him to court for verbal abuse. The image of Harry Cohn as vulgarian is such a part of Hollywood lore that it is hard to believe there were other Harry Cohns: the only studio president who was also head of production; the ex-song plugger who scrutinized scripts and grilled writers at story conferences; a man who could look on actresses as either "broads" or goddesses. Drawing on personal interviews as well as previously unstudied source material (conference notes, memos, and especially the teletypes between Harry and his brother Jack), Bernard Dick offers a radically different portrait of the man who ran Columbia Pictures - and who "had to be boss" - from 1932 to 1958. A latecomer to the movie business, Harry turned to film only after Jack won acclaim as an editor at Universal. Harry's determination to eclipse Jack drove him to gain control of Columbia and to woo talent like Frank Capra who could achieve his goal of transforming a Poverty Row studio into one of the majors (while maintaining some of the lowest budgets in Hollywood). A study of Columbia's 1930s films, most of them rarely shown, proves that Capra/Cohn - not "Capracorn" - studio policy during that crucial decade. By interweaving biography, studio history, and film criticism, Dick argues a new approach to the studio heads of Hollywood's Golden Age: Harry Cohn was Columbia Pictures, and Columbia's pictures were Harry Cohn in all his complexity.