



Empire: The Life, Legend and Madness of Howard Hughes

Donald L. Barlett, James B. Steele

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Whether he was courting public attention in the roles of aviator, playboy and entrepreneur, or shunning it as a recluse, Howard Hughes commanded headlines throughout his career. Yet the image of his life, his power and his business empire that caught the public imagination was almost completely false. Hughes's fortune actually came from his father's tool company and, later, from the Hughes Aircraft Company, yet these flourished simply because Hughes was prevented from interfering in their workings. In fact, Hughes was a disastrous businessman - no company under his control ever built a successful aircraft, he nearly destroyed TWA and completely destroyed a major film studio, and even his gambling empire in Las Vegas was crippled by corruption. His personal life was even more disastrous - he feared, rightly, that he was mad and spent most of his fortune and the last 18 years of his life trying to prevent anyone finding out. He spent his time naked, eating little, addicted to drugs and tranquillisers, a physical wreck, and died surrounded by men who nurtured his madness for their own ends.

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