



Hughes: The Private Diaries, Memos & Letters

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Howard Hughes is legendary for his success as an industrialist, aviator, engineer, film producer, director, philanthropist & for much of his lifetime, was the richest man in the USA. He's also remembered for his eccentric behavior & reclusive lifestyle in later life, caused in part by a worsening obsessive-compulsive disorder. His desire for privacy so fierce, & his isolation so complete, that even 25 years after his death, inaccurate stories continue to be circulated & published as fact. In HUGHES, Hack shatters the illusion of his life & exposes the man behind the myth. Hughes was a playboy whose sexual exploits with both Hollywood stars & starlets are legendary. He was a man without compassion, an entrepreneur without ethics, an eccentric trapped by his own insanity. Sealed off from reality, Hughes died a lonely &, until now, mysterious death. Newly uncovered personal letters, over 110,000 pages of sealed court testimony, recently declassified FBI files, never-before-published autopsy reports & exclusive interviews reveal a man so devious in his thinking, so perverse in his desires & so influential that his impact continues to be felt even today. From entertainment to politics, aviation to espionage, the influence & manipulation of this billionaire has left an indelibly unique mark on the cultural landscape. Hughes never kept a diary, yet he wrote over 8000 pages of memos, letters & personal notes that chronicle his life & thoughts. Impeccably researched for decades by Hollywood investigative writer Richard Hack, here is the definitive story of an extraordinary life.

Hughes: The Private Diaries, Memos & Letters Details

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From Reader Review Hughes: The Private Diaries, Memos & Letters for online ebook

Ice says

Was ever a life more incredible than that of Howard Hughes? Record-setting aviator, fabled lover, celebrated film director and producer, genius financier and industrialist, the nation's first billionaire. who at one time or another owned TWA, RKO Studios and most of Las Vegas, Hughes (1905-1976) also suffered from severe psychological afflictions that led him to spend his last years in isolation, naked in blacked-out rooms on several continents, devoting days at a time to screening grade-Z movies, dictating long memos to his staff about the proper procedures to keep his room and person free of germs, mostly through the liberal use of Kleenex as a prophylactic, even as he ingested titanic amounts of codeine, his hair and fingernails growing to grotesque length and his back running with untreated sores.

Hughes's story has been told before, of course, but never with the overview, insight and, most important, extraordinarily diligent research applied by Hack in this riveting biography. The author of bios of Ron Perelman and Michael Jackson, Hack has his own second-degree connection with Hughes; he co-wrote the autobiography of Hughes's longtime lieutenant, Robert Maheu. To separate fact from rumor in detailing Hughes's life, Hack read more than 8,000 pages of Hughes's private papers, 2,500 pages of recently declassified FBI and CIA documents, over 100,000 pages of previously sealed legal briefs, corporate papers and inventories, and spoke with hundreds of players, key and minor, in Hughes's drama. What Hack has uncovered is an astonishing tale of rampant ambition, obsession and madness. While his prose doesn't match the poetic heights of, say, a Nick Tosches, he presents his chronicle with bold certitude, not only illumining the amazing events of Hughes's life in a captivating manner but penetrating deep into the billionaire's twisted psyche. Readers will be nailed to these pages as, in the most exciting bio of the year, Hack presents the American dream curdling into the American nightmare, personified in a legend who at last has an accounting worthy of him.

Simultaneous New Millennium Audio. (On-sale: Sept. 11) Forecast: Publicity will roar for this book, which carries rave blurbs from Maheu, Larry King, Dominick Dunne and Sidney Sheldon. Among the schedulings are a one-hour show on Larry King Live; a two-part segment on Entertainment Tonight; an appearance on the Today Show; a 10-city author tour; a satellite TV and radio tour; and a massive print ad campaign.

Bill says

Well ... I read a review (perhaps on goodreads, perhaps on Amazon, who knows) that claimed the reader especially liked this book because “—it wasn't the usual Hughes bio with pages and pages of his idiosyncratic lunacy” ... and while this book didn't quite fit that description, it was pretty damned close.

About one-third is devoted to his pre-cuckoo bird days and the remaining two-thirds to his scurrying between blacked-out hotel rooms, dictating the course of his vast empire to his lackeys ... usually refusing direct communication, only dealing trusted aides who essentially operated with his authority.

I would have enjoyed it more had it focused less on the later part of his life. And actually, there was very little about the possible causes for his descent into madness. As best as I could tell, the straw that broke the camel's back was catching syphilis from some young starlet. After that, he threw out all his clothes, bedding,

towels, etc., and started washing his hands compulsively.

I'm paraphrasing, but you get the idea.

However, the research conducted by the author was exhaustive, having weaved the narrative together based on letters, legal testimony, the notes of others and business communication. Hughes was a stone cold NUT when it came to privacy and absolutely DESTROYED just about everything in his life he had written as far as letters, journals, diaries, etc., as he was intent on remaining enigmatic in death as he was in his later years. Consequently, biographers have little to go on that is readily available ... so if the craft of biography is intriguing to you, this book does a good job of making it seem effortless.

As a final aside, I read this in hopes of learning anything about Hughes time and real estate interests in Arizona. Down the road from my house is the Boeing plant where they currently build the AH-64 Apache & AH-64D Apache Longbow attack helicopters. Though ancient history, the Apache was originally designed and built by Hughes Helicopters. Eventually, the Helicopter division was eventually sold to McDonnell Douglas who then sold it to Boeing ... so it stands to reason that if old man Hughes owned the facility where Boeing makes the Apache, he may have owned the land long before they built the plant, etc.

Of course, the book mentioned nothing ... heh.

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Lady of the Lake says

This story of the life of Howard Hughes says one thing and it says it loud and clear to me... All the money in the world cannot make you happy. What a life this man had. His parents certainly played a huge roll in his lunacy as they coddled and protected and shared their lunacy with him as he grew up. But Hughes was in need of serious psychotherapy and meds. He accomplished so much and yet most likely could have accomplished so much

More had he not been a junkie and seriously mentally ill hiding for at least 35 years of his life. This is a bio not an auto-bio so how much is real how much is sensationalism we really can't know since he was a recluse. But one thing is clear he made goals and did whatever he set out to do. He was a fascinating man no question. I would not want to have lived in his skin that's for sure not for a minute. He was a tortured soul. Certainly makes for great reading!

Jeri Lane says

I am a Howard Hughes enthusiast. I absolutely love this eccentric, horrible, brilliant, immoral, caring, wealthy, germaphobic, genius, spoiled brat, inventive, innovative, selfish, stubborn, fearless, recluse. I can't help but be in awe of him. I have seen the mighty Hercules (Spruce Goose) many times in my life, and it always makes me giddy. This book is so packed with information that it will make your head spin. Every detail of this man's life is in account. I thought I knew everything about him...so to speak...until I read this. Richard Hack really did his homework.

Anne Baker says

One of America's crazy old rich ass coots. Weirdo and entrepreneur, Hughes had affairs with some of America's beloved actresses and hotties of his time. A long-time relationship with Katherine Hepburn probably grounded him for a period, but they never married. His failed marriages certainly didn't do much for him. This is one of those books that begins with the end, which is fascinating - old Howard holed up in one of the grand hotels he owned, windows blocked out, fingernails and beard ragged and grown, pissing in bottles, filthy and paranoid, germaphobe, yet still making executive decisions by phone from his high horse and soon-to-be death bed. This is the stuff of great biographies, my friends.

Greg says

Howard Hughes was a nut-job.

If he hadn't been fucking bonkers he would probably be totally reviled, instead he's something of the uber-off his rocker celebrity. It helps when you have hundreds of millions of dollars at your disposal to really craft the perfect level of crazy.

This book was probably more 'truthful' (who knows though), but I preferred the Hughes from Ellroy's *USA Trilogy*, or as he's known through most of it, Dracula.

I actually don't know how to review this. I wrote, 'review this book' but I didn't read it. And if you don't read the words in a book is it a book? Deep, right? Instead, I listened to it. Which was kind of weird. First, because I didn't trust that the version I was reading (shit, I mean listening to) was the full book, you know that it wasn't abridged. Having never seen the actual book I couldn't tell if it was really as sparse as it felt at times.

Also I have *never* listened to an audio recording of a book in its entirety before. This was a new experience.

Why and why? (why listen to an audio book and why this book)

If you read a recent review of mine you might have stuck around through the long-winded asides and nonsense and read that I've been running. I learned that running is better if I listen to something while I'm doing it. If I don't I just listen to myself gasping for breath and that's not very interesting. I tried listening to music, but I remembered that I don't generally like music anymore, and the fairly small number of songs I can still stand to listen to I'm kind of bored with. Instead, I decided I could listen to podcasts, and that was fun. And then I discovered I could listen to podcasts at 1.5 times the normal speed and that was really fun because I could get through more of them and learn more interesting things.

This led to thinking, I bet I could listen to audio books, too. So I decided to go online and see what his Audible thing is all about. I then discovered that it's basically the price of a trade paperback a month, and for that price you get to listen to one book in the month. I didn't know how long it would take to listen to an audio book (A week and a day would be the answer, but without a long run, it would have been easily under a week if I had done on a long run this past week), but it seemed kind of expensive to get to listen to one book.

So I looked to see if you could borrow and download audiobooks from the library, and you can, and it's free! Huzzah!

The downside is that you don't get that much of a selection and most of the books I happened to want to listen to were being borrowed by other people.

That is the answer to the second why, why did I listen to this book? Because I wanted to see what it was like to download an audio book from the library, and this was one of the more interesting looking books that was actually available (I did put Murakami's memoir about running on a wait list, because that's meta and maybe it's time to try giving Murakami a second chance).

So I listened to it while running, and usually sped up because the narrator's voice sounded pretty much the same at normal speed as at 1.25 times the speed, and even at 1.5 times the speed it was fairly easy to listen to (or maybe it's just that everything is probably read at a fairly slow pace, more akin to the way someone from Idaho speaks (apparently Idaho is the most 'normal' speaking place in the country and people like TV anchorpersons learn how to speak to that standard (this might be a lie. If it is, blame one of my philosophy professors in college)), and being from New York I'm perfectly fine listening to people rattle off at high speed.

I'm not sure I love this new fangled way of 'reading' books, I don't think I would even call it reading, but since I consumed a product that can be rated on this website, and consumed a product that can go towards my 2015 consumption challenge (it's not longer a reading challenge), and I'm not currently consuming nearly enough products to achieve my consumption goals I'll call it 'reading' for the sake of getting one more step closer to not feeling like a failure in this area of my life.

Next time I listen to an audio book I will hopefully not feel the need to be a total ass in describing ever dumb thought that went into deciding to listen to a book. Or maybe I'll just repeat all of this but in a slightly different way.

What about the book?

It was entertaining to listen to while running through the streets of Woodside. I wouldn't have wanted to listen to it if I was doing anything else (because I don't listen to anything most of the time, I sit in my apartment most of the time in total silence except for ambient noises (maybe this is the start of my own Howard Hughes-esque decline)). It felt a little light and unsubstantial, but that could have been because it could have been abridged (I couldn't figure this out from the information (c'mon app that connects to libraries, give up the MARC records, yo!)) or it could have been because I was sometimes more focused on not getting run over, not stepping on passed out homeless people on the side walk or that gaggle of kittens that were just hanging out on the sidewalk one morning than paying full attention to the 'book'.

(I saw another review talk about how Hughes would throw feces at the TV screen when RFK would appear on it, this wasn't in my version of the book, was it in this person's version? Or is this just some piece of knowledge gleaned from another source?)

Dan Domme says

This is the first biography I ever read, and I wasn't disappointed. Hughes was a renaissance man before he was a nutcase, and this biography gives you the entire picture of his life.

I actually started reading this book in 2004 and got perhaps halfway through it when the film *The Aviator* was released. Any fans of the enigmatic figure that was presented by DiCaprio should definitely check out this book.

The book covers both hero and villain in the same man, and forces you to draw your own informed conclusions. Personally, Hughes will always be a personal inspiration, being a unique thinker and visionary engineer. Despite his mammoth inheritance, he undertook massive challenges and settled for no less than perfection. Of course, the image is tarnished by the occasional evidence of prejudice and ruthlessness, and eventually addiction and insanity.

At the very least, this biography should give you an appreciation and sense of respect for the entire life of the 20th century's greatest eccentric.

Erik Graff says

The subtitle of this biography, "The Private Diaries, Memos and Letters", is misleading. This is not a collection of such materials but rather a straightforward biography which has utilized a whole host of resources including personal interviews with principals.

The life of Howard Hughes, as represented here, is a cautionary tale. It was not, on whole, a happy one. Nor was much of it edifying. Hughes inherited his wealth, living off of the proceeds of the company his father had founded and off the public trough as he moved into aerospace and military research and development. Those businesses of his expanding empire as he actually managed himself generally did not do well, his attentions being increasingly drawn to large busted women, his own public image and, ultimately, obsessive compulsive concerns about germs. Indeed, the last decades of his life are pathetic, exemplifying perhaps what it might be like to give a child almost limitless power.

Although Hughes' life was, on whole, a sad one, author Hack covers it all with a light touch, maintaining a distance from his subject which prevents this book from being overwhelmingly depressing.

thewestchestarian says

In this book, Hughes' life story cascades in a rapid series of jaw-dropping anecdotes from childhood to death in an epic but credulity-straining biography. All accounts about the life of Howard Hughes should be taken with several grains of salt given the legend that has coalesced around him. This is unfortunate given that much of these are likely true and therefore astonishing to think they happened to a single individual. Hack's book is a long series of encounters with legendary actors, historical power brokers, stories about crashed experimental planes, mistreated ex-wives and deep-seated insanity. Hack's recounting of these stories is expert; he includes juicy and often ugly details and has an excellent eye for telling detail without weighing down the book's pace. The book is a must read because no retelling of the movies made ("Hells Angles" for which he shot 249 feet of film for every foot actually used), business deals done (at one point he owned three hundred million dollar companies), legendary Hollywood starlets dated (despite his personal hygiene habits)

and later insanity (he lived largely in dark, sealed rooms and eventually only a few men in the world knew what he looked like).

Lance says

America's first billionaire. He "had it all", almost from day one - fame, fortune... yet he died of self-imposed, staff assisted starvation, dehydration and drug addiction. The sad story of a wasted life.

Tim Jin says

All great minds has its downfalls. Howard Hughes was his obsessions and paranoia of his own self. The book goes into great detail of Hughes' riches and businesses in planes, films, monopoly of Vegas, Mormon staffs, his consistence womanizing and his hatred of paying taxes. If you want to find out more of business side of Hughes' estate, there is plenty of information out there. If you want to find out more about his corks, paranoia and isolation from everyone and everything, this title is a must read.

Hughes' ego and arrogance has to be the best of his personality and his downfall was the obsessions, depressions, addiction to prescription drugs and probably every mental illness in the book.

For example a manual of how to open a can of peaches and so on.

Even after his death, his Will was being question for its accuracy. Such as Mormon Will and others coming out from the wood work. .

You have to think highly of the man and his mind for modern day invention that we use everyday. These type of corks and kinks and even mental illness, is common to great thinkers of the world, such as Bill Gates and his Aspergers, and others with their obsessions. I have to believe, these people are wired differently from the norm. They were born to invent outside of the drawing board.

This biography is very complete and flow smoothly as you listen to the narration.

The author spare no detail on Hughes personal side and his deterioration of his health, due to his manic behaviors. I'm looking for a complete biography, like this one, on William Randolph Hearst.

Ben Iverson says

Howard Hughes has got to be one of the most eccentric characters of American history. He ranged from constantly seeking the public spotlight early on in his career, to hiding inside his hotel with all light blocked out for the last 35 years of his life. While he had major psychological problems, he was also a brilliant business man (becoming one of the wealthiest people in the world) and daring aviator. This particular book was well written and had tons of interesting insights into his life. There are lots of other Hughes biographies out there that likely give more details on the major events of his life--how he made his money, the details of him flying across the U.S. in record time, etc. Instead, this book delved a bit more into his personal life, focusing on his hopes and frustrations, his relationships with others, and his eventual seclusion from the

world. While I found this quite interesting, I probably would have preferred to read a more standard biography first just to get more information on the main details of his life. Still, it was really interesting to get a glimpse into the onset of his insanity. It was especially interesting to consider how this insane man with essentially unlimited money likely ruined himself, as he was able to simply purchase anything he desired including drugs, entire hotels (to enhance his seclusion), and endless amounts of tissues (for "insulation"). If he had been forced to actually go to a psychologist, I think it's likely that he could have enjoyed much better years before his death. Anyway, it was an interesting book.

Ryan Sprague says

I really enjoyed this book. Richard Hack did a great job keeping the long book entertaining. It wasn't written like a history book but more like a story which helped keep my interest. I also enjoyed learning why and how some of the real reasons the mega rich people and companies may do things. If you pay attention you'll see many similarities to what he did and what they do now.

Sarah S says

Construct a Venn diagram with "money can't buy me love," "it is easier for a camel to pass through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter Heaven," and "it is not good for man to be alone." Howard Hughes is at the intersection of that diagram.

Hughes was an imaginative risk-taker who pushed every boundary he encountered. He could have been a successful visionary, but he needed to be in conversation with more practical people. Hughes did not treat anyone like an equal. No one was allowed to question the architecture of his castles in the sky, nor build a stable foundation under them.

Utterly unable to set practical priorities, Hughes created a series of business disasters. Dogged by legal battles, eventually his neuroses climbed into the pilot's seat. He began to dissipate all his energy on pointless details, and got tangled up in an endless film reel of his own imaginings. For the last two decades of his life, he spent his days in a dark hotel room, utterly isolated from human society. Eventually, all his castles in the sky crashed down in a gigantic, flaming wreck. He died alone and unmourned.

Howard Hughes, America's first billionaire.... what a tragic, wasted life.

Nathan says

Howard Hughes suffered from obsessive compulsive disorder. Howard Hughes kept his urine in a jar. Howard Hughes liked to sprawl naked in a lounge chair and hurl his feces at the television when Bobby Kennedy came on TV. Howard Hughes was the archetype of the modern military industrialist. Howard Hughes was so angered by seeing an African American boxer on television that he bought the television channel and fired everyone. Howard Hughes liked to burn all his clothes when he was convinced someone foul had touched something. Howard Hughes surrounded himself with a Mormon security squad and his only contact with the outside world was via a former CIA operative who had been influential in early Bay of Pigs contacts. Howard Hughes had his CIA mouthpiece try to bribe Richard Nixon, an act Nixon was later

worried the Democrats knew about, so he had them bug their campaign headquarters, leading to the greatest political scandal of the 20th Century - a scandal Howard Hughes managed to keep his name out of! Howard Hughes knew more dirty secrets about the US government than anyone with the possible exception of J. Edgar Hoover. Howard Hughes was one of the most influential men to shape modern America yet his legacy remains hidden, as the man himself did for more than the last decade of his life. Howard Hughes let his fingernails grow to obscene lengths. Howard Hughes died riddled with needle marks, including needles that had broken off in his skin years before. Howard Hughes' true impact on America and the world will likely never be known. Howard Hughes was uniquely crazy. Here's the side they wouldn't show you in the Leonardo Dicaprio movie.

NC
