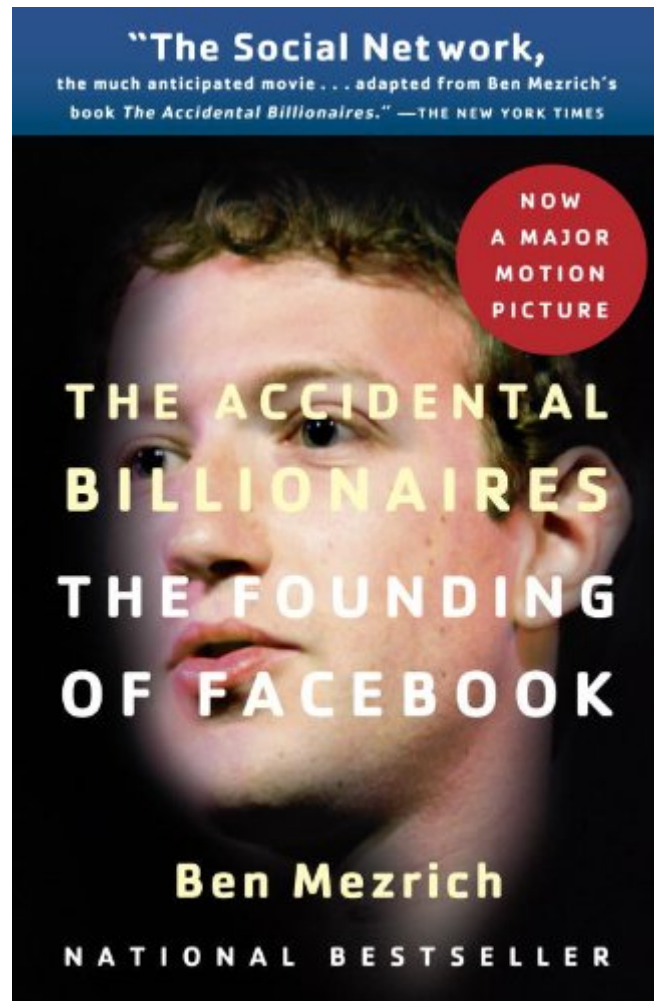


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The Accidental Billionaires: The Founding Of Facebook: A Tale Of Sex, Money, Genius And Betrayal



Synopsis

NATIONAL BESTSELLER • The Social Network, the much anticipated movie adapted from Ben Mezrich's book The Accidental Billionaires. "The New York Times Best friends Eduardo Saverin and Mark Zuckerberg had spent many lonely nights looking for a way to stand out among Harvard University's elite, competitive, and accomplished student body. Then, in 2003, Zuckerberg hacked into Harvard's computers, crashed the campus network, almost got himself expelled, and was inspired to create Facebook, the social networking site that has since revolutionized communication around the world. With Saverin's funding their tiny start-up went from dorm room to Silicon Valley. But conflicting ideas about Facebook's future transformed the friends into enemies. Soon, the undergraduate exuberance that marked their collaboration turned into out-and-out warfare as it fell prey to the adult world of venture capitalists, big money, and lawyers. From the Trade Paperback edition.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

People who have panned this book are mostly missing the point in my judgment. Author Ben Mezrich is raconteur with a story to tell, and he doesn't expect us to accept it as business history or even serious journalism. He offers the necessary disclaimers in his introduction, acknowledging that

he did the best he could with fragmentary sources and connected the dots where necessary with a fair amount of probabilistic imagining. One senses he captures the gist of this story pretty well, in much the way a talented sketch artist can draw an uncanny portrait despite distortion and a lack of details. Allowing for such limitations, this is quite a good book. The digital economy has spawned a series of meteoric companies and overnight billionaires over the past three decades. And just when it seemed this phenomenon had passed its zenith, along came Facebook and Mark Zuckerberg. Yet another geeky kid with a high IQ and anarchistic tendencies, Zuckerberg created the precursor to Facebook as a hacker's prank during his short stint as a Harvard undergraduate. When the prank "went viral" literally overnight within the Harvard community, Zuckerberg knew he was onto something much bigger than he bargained for. There were other ideas for online social networks being explored at the time. At Harvard itself, a couple of wealthy six-foot-five crew champions - identical twins - had a similar notion. The Winklevoss brothers knew little about computers, however, and had hired a programmer for the project, who dawdled with it for a while and then quit suddenly. To complete the task, the twins turned to Mark Zuckerberg, who was miles beneath them in social status at Harvard but had become an instant campus celebrity when he hacked the University computers.

I enjoyed Ben Mezrich's "Bringing down the House" but his latest books have been terrible. First the very boring "Rigged", and now "The Accidental Billionaires", about the history of Facebook. All of his books follow the same formula: A young, brilliant man suddenly finds fortune and girls by using his skills to make money in interesting ways. Usually he has a mentor. His success causes some friction with his friends, but he eventually wins out, albeit at a price. This formula is so rigid one wonders if Mezrich begins his books with a Word Template... Chapter Five - Hero realizes the idea will make lots of money... Chapter Eight - Hero gets with girl way out of his league... The characters seem like hand-puppets even though they are allegedly real-life personas. You have the unlucky-in-love nerd, his pushover sidekick, and the jealous jocks. The dialogue is so mundane and contrived you can't imagine anyone talking that way. As for women, they exist only as status symbols in Mezrich's books. Now, the story about the founding of a website will not excite most readers, so Mezrich tries to sex it up with stories of lavish parties and groupies. The problem is Mezrich admits to creative storytelling in the Forward-- collapsing time frames, combining characters, even imagining scenarios. So, in effect, everything not publicly documented could be fabricated. As a history or biography, then, we already know that the book is useless. But it also fails as a compelling drama. In some chapters basically nothing happens. Mezrich will spend pages

describing the setting in detail, the characters will make a few remarks, and then the chapter ends. What was it about? Why was it important? Who knows.

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