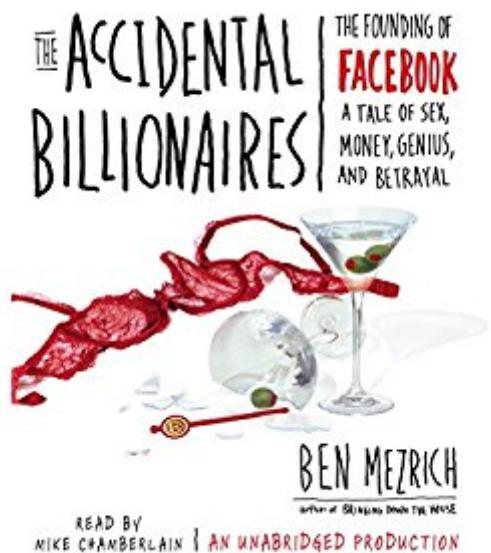


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The Accidental Billionaires: The Founding Of Facebook



Synopsis

The high-energy tale of how two socially awkward Ivy Leaguers, trying to increase their chances with the opposite sex, ended up creating Facebook. Eduardo Saverin and Mark Zuckerberg were Harvard undergraduates and best friendsâ “outsiders at a school filled with polished prep-school grads and long-time legacies. They shared both academic brilliance in math and a geeky awkwardness with women. Eduardo figured their ticket to social acceptanceâ “and sexual successâ “was getting invited to join one of the universityâ ™s Final Clubs, a constellation of elite societies that had groomed generations of the most powerful men in the world and ranked on top of the inflexible hierarchy at Harvard. Mark, with less of an interest in what the campus alpha males thought of him, happened to be a computer genius of the first order. Which he used to find a more direct route to social stardom: one lonely night, Mark hacked into the university’s computer system, creating a ratable database of all the female students on campusâ “and subsequently crashing the university’s servers and nearly getting himself kicked out of school. In that moment, in his Harvard dorm room, the framework for Facebook was born. What followedâ “a real-life adventure filled with slick venture capitalists, stunning women, and six-foot-five-inch identical-twin Olympic rowersâ “makes for one of the most entertaining and compelling books of the year. Before long, Eduardoâ ™s and Markâ ™s different ideas about Facebook created in their relationship faint cracks, which soon spiraled into out-and-out warfare. The collegiate exuberance that marked their collaboration fell prey to the adult world of lawyers and money. The great irony is that while Facebook succeeded by bringing people together, its very success tore two best friends apart. The Accidental Billionaires is a compulsively readable story of innocence lostâ “and of the unusual creation of a company that has revolutionized the way hundreds of millions of people relate to one another. Ben Mezrich, a Harvard graduate, has published ten books, including the New York Times bestseller *Bringing Down the House*. He is a columnist for *Boston Common* and a contributor for *Flush* magazine. Ben lives in Boston with his wife, Tonya. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

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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