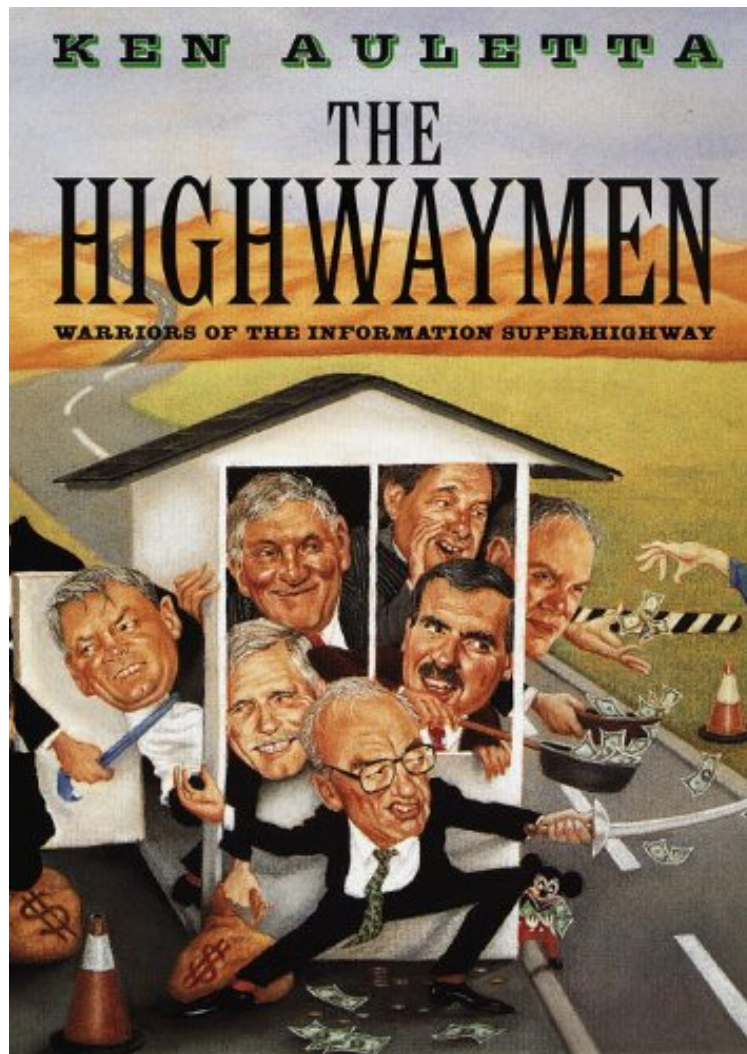


The Highwaymen: Warriors of the Information Superhighway

Ken Auletta

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Ken Auletta : The Highwaymen: Warriors of the Information Superhighway before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Highwaymen: Warriors of the Information Superhighway:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Media and PowerBy Ravi MadhavanThis book made up of 17 New Yorker articles by Ken Auletta written during the 1990s chronicle the major power players in the media business. I enjoyed reading most of the articles especially the ones involving, Time Warner, Viacom, Disney and News Corp and the media moguls behind them. Auletta focuses in many of the ariticles about "The Human Factor" determining the decisions made at the highest levels. Quite often this factor trumps business factors such as increased revenue and profits. The perfect examples are the firing/resignation of Jeffrey Katzenberg at Disney and Frank Biondi at Viacom.

Both made large contributions to their respective companies but in the end their personal relationship with their boss made the difference. Michael Eisner at Disney and Sumner Redstone at Viacom seemed to feel their personal power at risk and therefore decided to go forward without Katzenberg and Biondi. I enjoyed reading them as most of them are very well written and uses the narrative style that most business writing unfortunately does not use enough. 7 of 7 people found the following review helpful. well reported; worth reading By A Customer Ken Auletta already proved with *Three Blind Mice*--his book about the Big Three traditional broadcast networks--that he's a dogged reporter. Few thoughts, musings, or nuances of expression go unrecorded. "The Highwaymen" continues in that tradition. Auletta aims to offer some sense of the men (and they're almost all male) who make the decisions about what the rest of us will be seeing, listening to and seeking for entertainment and how that software will be delivered. He delivers well-wrought profiles of these people through their deeds--which often contrast with their words, and that tension is illuminating. Finally, at the end of each piece are postscripts which offer the reader a scorecard; which of the fearless mogul's bold predictions came true, which crashed and burned: everybody thought interactive/VOD TV was going to take off--so far, it's been a stalled cash-disposal scheme that sucks in capital with no discernable result. The point is that for all their visionary claims, these people are no better at predicting the future than anybody else. If you missed the original pieces as they ran in *The New Yorker* and have an interest in the thinking (or lack thereof) behind movies like *Basic Instinct* or any of Oliver Stone's noxious fantasies, buy the book 2 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Insight on Superhighway Creators By Dr. W. G. Covington, Jr. The highway being described in this book is the information superhighway and the people being discussed are its developers. Jumping to the postscript at the very end, Auletta observes "while the Highwaymen enjoy immense power, they remain vulnerable" (p. 355). This is the paradox presented throughout the book. The regulators, entrepreneurs, and public do a dance of vulnerability in the development of the new technologies as niches are being carved out. One of the realities of corporate growth is that as they become large, they sometimes lose the freshness associated with risk and creativity. Auletta says "it becomes more difficult for them to maintain a focus, to make quick decisions, to stay creative" (p. 134). The ancient concept of pathos is explored in 21st century corporate America. In describing how business decisions are made in Sumner Redstone's organizational culture, he quotes an associate as saying "most deals are fifty percent emotion and fifty percent economics" (p. 61). Auletta spends a little time on media content, pointing out the hypocrisy of film producer Oliver Stone, who sees his distortions (to be even more accurate fabrications) as "artistic freedom, while he demands strict accuracy from reporters covering him. The reader is left with numerous insights that would not be attained anywhere else. This book is a worthy read.

A struggle is taking place--not just among corporate titans, but among entire industries. At stake is control of the world's fastest-growing industry: communications. The contestants are Hollywood studios, television networks, and cable, telephone, computer, publishing, and consumer-electronics companies. All are vying to collect a toll on the information superhighway. And as they jockey for control, they tread on volatile ground, as one fixation after another (cable, interactive TV) is dumped in favor of the next (satellite, the Internet). There is no better account of this turmoil than the one provided here by Ken Auletta, bestselling author of *Three Blind Mice* ("the best book ever written on network television"*) and *Greed and Glory on Wall Street*, who for five years has brilliantly tracked the communications industry for *The New Yorker*. Auletta's access to the principal players is unparalleled (six days with Rupert Murdoch, summit meetings with John Malone), and his grasp of the issues--from boardroom politics to regulatory and technological pressures--is unmatched by any other journalist. In this riveting collection of his best pieces Auletta takes the reader on a behind-the-scenes tour of such companies as Disney, Viacom, Microsoft, Time Warner, and Telecommunications, Inc., and keenly chronicles the vanities and visions of the new Highwaymen--Rupert Murdoch, Ted Turner, Michael Eisner, Sumner Redstone, Bill Gates, and more. Just as *Three Blind Mice* was heralded as "the new bible of the broadcasting business,"
The Highwaymen will be received as an indispensable guide to the future of this explosive new world.* Frank Stanton, former president of CBS From the Hardcover edition.

.com Few industries can grab the world's attention these days--and hold the promise of totally reshaping its future--like communications. Bestselling author Ken Auletta profiles many of the field's leading lights in great depth in *The New Yorker*, and 17 of his most compelling essays since 1992 have been collected in a book that offers close-up details as well as long-range perspectives on movers and shakers such as Bill Gates, Rupert Murdoch, and Ted Turner. Available in paperback, *The Highwaymen: Warriors of the Information Superhighway* has been extensively revised and expanded since its original publication. --Howard Rothman From *Library Journal* In his latest work, Auletta (*Three Blind Mice*, LJ 9/15/91) covers the people behind some of the changes in the communications industry from 1992 through 1996. Those profiled include Rupert Murdoch, John Malone, and Barry Diller. Auletta examines issues such as changing technology, FCC regulation, censorship, and the erosion of independent journalism, focusing on the traditional media of television, movies, and print; only the final article deals with the Internet. The author had extensive access to industry leaders through interviews and attending internal meetings. The book's 16 articles, which

appeared previously in the New Yorker, are tied together by the introduction; each has a postscript updating events to early 1997. Auletta offers most perceptive insights into the communications industry, along with a clear and entertaining writing style. Recommended for all readers.-?Lawrence Maxted, Gannon Univ., Erie, Pa. Copyright 1997 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist

From 1992 to 1996, Auletta's ringside seat as media columnist for the New Yorker magazine allowed him to witness the information revolution from the inside. In the 16 articles of Highway, Auletta displays his considerable knowledge of the major players in network and cable television, movie studios, the press, publishers, computers, and telephone companies. With so many powerful media people and their interests tied to each other's communication business, you need a scorecard--or this book--to keep them straight: After Rupert Murdoch assumed control at Fox, Barry Diller used an Apple laptop to free him "from secretaries, meetings, memos, press leaks" and find himself a new job; Diller joined the QVC cable shopping network, which is owned in part by John Malone of Tele-Communications, Inc. (TCI); TCI, the largest cable operator in the world, worried Sumner Redstone at Viacom and Michael Eisner at Disney, neither of whom wanted to miss out on any pay TV action; Seagram's Edgar Bronfman bought a 15 percent share of Time Warner, which went on to acquire Turner Broadcasting; and Michael Kinsley left the security of Washington, D.C., to become editor of Slate, a brand-new online magazine whose parent company, Microsoft, has television ties via an alliance with NBC. Although a major drawback of this collection is the inherently dated nature of the articles, it can be easily remedied with news items in the Wall Street Journal, Forbes, Business Week, or The Economist. Jennifer Henderson