



## The Mailroom: Hollywood History from the Bottom Up

By David Rensin

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### The Mailroom: Hollywood History from the Bottom Up By David Rensin

It's like a plot from a Hollywood potboiler: start out in the mailroom, end up a mogul. But for many, it happens to be true. Some of the biggest names in entertainment—including David Geffen, Barry Diller, and Michael Ovitz—started their dazzling careers in the lowly mailroom. Based on more than two hundred interviews, David Rensin unfolds the never-before-told history of an American institution—in the voices of the people who lived it. Through nearly seven decades of glamour and humiliation, lousy pay and incredible perks, killer egos and a kill-or-be-killed ethos, you'll go where the trainees go, learn what they must do to get ahead, and hear the best insider stories from the Hollywood everyone knows about but no one *really* knows. A vibrant tapestry of dreams, desire, and exploitation, *The Mailroom* is not only an engrossing read but a crash course, taught by the experts, on how to succeed in Hollywood.

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## The Mailroom: Hollywood History from the Bottom Up By David Rensin Bibliography

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### Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Rensin (coauthor, *Don't Stand Too Close to a Naked Man*) captures the ambition, manipulative plotting and hustler mentality of a few Hollywood mailroom employees in this series of raunchy, realistic interviews with some top agents who started out in the mailroom. As with any entry-level gig, "the hours are long, the pay... abysmal." Star mailroom grads from the William Morris Agency, Creative Artists Agency, ICM and others voice conflicting views, making Rensin's book an uncompromisingly truthful tell-all of what it takes to make it in the movie biz. William Morris's Norman Brokaw recalls, "I made it a point to develop relationships early on," while Bernie Brillstein's a bit more blunt: "I kissed ass." Most of the agents admit opening up private correspondence and packages, insisting, "everybody did it." Rensin also exposes affairs with secretaries to learn company secrets, fights over use of phones that led to wrestling matches, and homophobia. Sam Haskell, William Morris's worldwide head of television, offers a different take: "Your primary power is your character and your integrity." Rensin furnishes fresh anecdotes about an embarrassed novice who didn't recognize Judy Garland, or another who believed in Marilyn Monroe despite a casting specialist calling her "just another blonde." Clashing views of Mike Ovitz, from "a superb leader" to someone who preferred "style over content" and to whom "appearances were everything," help explain Ovitz's meteoric rise and massive collapse. Most notably, Rensin shows that the road from mailroom to mogul is a rough one. The stories are amusing, intriguing and sometimes horrifying, but Rensin, to his credit, never dilutes sordid details.

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From [Booklist](#)

Rensin's upward-mobility saga suggests that aspiring Hollywood conquistadors should start in the mailroom of a talent agency instead of hanging around soda fountains in tight sweaters, waiting to be discovered, or essaying other such fabled, fame-and-fortune-seeking ploys. Focusing on the cesspools of power behind the stars--the William Morris Agency, Creative Artists Agency, and lesser stokers of the dream machine--Rensin outlines the path to real power in filmdom by relaying the personal stories and reminiscences of the back-channel operatives who wield it. He reveals no shortages of backbiting, antisocial behavior, and power politics in the mailroom, though the place lacks the glamour usually gleaned to gild such showbiz exposes. Do readers dig the dirt on the David Geffens and Barry Dillers of the world as much as that on the Winona Ryders and Mickey Rourke's? Well, if they're money minded, they ought to. The goods Rensin's got on the likes of Michael Ovitz makes his ilk as exciting as the stars an Ovitz lucratively manipulates. *Mike Tribby*  
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Review

"Entertaining, instructive, and irresistible . . . Readers will feast on plenty of name-dropping . . . and hair-raising accounts of backstabbing."

—*Variety*

"A TERRIFIC BOOK . . . Loaded with great stories, unusual insights, and laugh-out-loud humor. You will love this one."

—LARRY KING

"FASCINATING . . . A bracing lesson in the acquisition and exercise of power . . . with a big emphasis on the maxim that what doesn't kill you will make you stronger."

—*Los Angeles Times*

“*THE MAILROOM IS A BLAST TO READ*. This is the way Hollywood operates—the fun, the giddy high, the espionage, and the wrenching twists of luck and disaster. David Rensin is a master at eliciting the truth nobody else captures.”

—CAMERON CROWE

“SHAMELESS SCHMOOZING, casting couch know-how, plotting and hustling are all detailed in *The Mailroom*.”

—*The New York Post* (Required Reading)

“FASCINATING . . . [*THE MAILROOM*] REALLY DELIVERS.”

—*People*

“A-LIST HONCHOS . . . DISH ON THEIR RISE FROM PEONS TO POWER PLAYERS.”

—*US Weekly*

“This is indeed Hollywood history, more specifically a cogent account of how talent agencies have evolved since [William] Morris was ruled by executives in size 36-short suits. Rensin’s clever use of personal memories as mosaic pieces, arranged in patterns to form an industrywide portrait, is history for grown-ups.”

—*Variety*

“Coming from the William Morris mailroom as I have, [I found] this book [to be] the truth of what I experienced. . . . It’s hilarious, a bit crazy, and it should make anyone wonder why people put their careers in the hands of these idiots . . . and remember, I’m one of them. If you have a child, make sure he or she reads this before starting at the bottom—anywhere.”

—BERNIE BRILLSTEIN

Founding partner

of Brillstein-Grey, WMA 1955

“A riotous history of all the Hollywood movers and players who came into the industry through the mailrooms of the big talent agencies.”

—*The Globe and Mail* (Toronto)

“A worthy successor to Studs Terkel, Rensin delivers not only a riveting history of one of the most powerful springboards in Hollywood but a must-read for anyone with grand ambitions.”

—CATHERINE CRIER

Author of *The Case Against Lawyers*

“A THOROUGHLY ENTERTAINING ORAL BIOGRAPHY OF A TINSELTOWN INSTITUTION.”

—*The San Francisco Examiner*

“Here is the quintessential Hollywood Roshomon. . . . David Rensin has impossibly and heroically channeled Studs Terkel and Harold Robbins all at once. This is a pinball machine clanging secret truths that move and careen as brashly as the movers who blurt their guts onto every shockingly entertaining page. And the best part is that we learn that people who are now very, very rich were forced to do very, very humiliating things to achieve such. What a refreshing equalizer for all of us.”

—BILL ZEHME

Author of *The Way You Wear Your Hat*:

## *Frank Sinatra and the Lost Art of Livin'*

“David Rensin’s book offers a fascinating look at some of the most powerful people and institutions in Hollywood. It’s packed with entertaining anecdotes . . . cautionary tales, and survival tips for those who dare to try their luck in one of the world’s most unpredictable businesses.”

—KIM MASTERS

Author of *Keys to the Kingdom*

“As the maven of the mailroom, David Rensin puts forth an often-hilarious glimpse of life at the bottom.”

—PETER BART

Editor in Chief, *Variety*

“Rensin captures the ambition, manipulative plotting, and hustler mentality . . . in this series of raunchy, realistic interviews . . . making [the] book an uncompromisingly truthful tell-all of what it takes to make it in the movie biz. . . . The stories are amusing, intriguing, and sometimes horrifying, but Rensin, to his credit, never dilutes sordid details.”

—*Publishers Weekly*

“An oral history of a crucial Tinseltown institution, related by some folks who make Machiavelli look like a pussycat . . . Edgy, frenetic, and entertaining reports from the room that launched a thousand deals.”

—*Kirkus Reviews*

## **Users Review**

### **From reader reviews:**

#### **Anna Thompson:**

Your reading sixth sense will not betray an individual, why because this *The Mailroom: Hollywood History from the Bottom Up* e-book written by well-known writer we are excited for well how to make book which might be understand by anyone who read the book. Written in good manner for you, leaking every ideas and composing skill only for eliminate your current hunger then you still question *The Mailroom: Hollywood History from the Bottom Up* as good book not only by the cover but also by content. This is one e-book that can break don't judge book by its deal with, so do you still needing another sixth sense to pick this specific!?! Oh come on your studying sixth sense already alerted you so why you have to listening to an additional sixth sense.

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