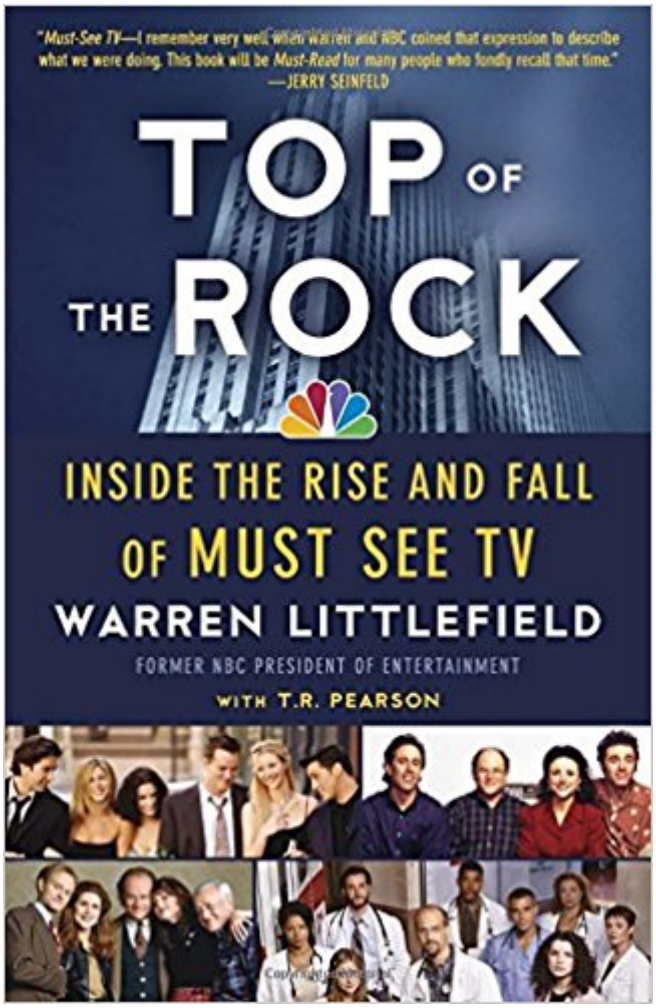
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Top Of The Rock: Inside The Rise And Fall Of Must See TV



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Synopsis

Top of the Rock is an absorbing insidersÃ¢â ¬â„¢ account of an incredible time and place in television history: the years when Must See TVÃ¢â ¬â •led by Cheers, Seinfeld, Friends, ER, and Law & OrderÃ¢â ¬â •made NBC an unstoppable success. Here the story is vividly told through the words of the actors, writers, producers, creators, and network executives who helped the Peacock rise to its greatest heightsÃ¢â ¬â •and then saw it all fall apart.Ã Â Under the supervision of President of Entertainment Warren Littlefield, NBC went from being an also-ran, losing millions of dollars in failed shows, to the number one station, generating billions of dollars in profit. At its height, the Thursday night lineup alone brought in more revenue than the other six nights of programming combined. Top of the Rock dishes out behind-the-scenes stories from all the biggest shows, revealing the highly risky business decisions, creative passion, and blind leaps of faith that made Must See TV possible.Ã Â Jerry Seinfeld | Jason Alexander | Kelsey Grammer | Sean Hayes | Helen Hunt | Lisa Kudrow | Eriq La Salle | Matt LeBlanc | John Lithgow | Julianna Margulies | Eric McCormack | Debra Messing | Megan Mullally | David Hyde Pierce | Paul Reiser | Noah Wyle | and more

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Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“Must-See TVÃ¢â ¬â •I remember very well when Warren and NBC coined that expression to describe what we were doing. This book will be Must-Read for many people who fondly recall that time.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •Jerry SeinfeldÃ¢â ¬Å“The first and last word on NBCÃ¢â ¬â„¢s . . . critically

acclaimed and crucially profitable Thursday night lineup.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •The Wall Street JournalÃ¢â ¬Å“Fascinating anecdotes and tidbits . . . . ThereÃ¢â ¬â„¢s no denying the magic NBC conjured in the ’80s and ’90s.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã¢â ¬â •VarietyÃ¢â ¬Å“Engrossing and lively . . . [Littlefield] enlists the voices of many of the actors and creative forces behind such hits as Seinfeld, Will & Grace, Cheers and ER to help him chronicle the glory days of Ã¢â ¬ËœMust See TV.Ã¢â ¬â„¢Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã Â Ã Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •The Chicago Sun-TimesÃ¢â ¬Å“A chronicle of the last golden age of network television, [Top of the Rock] is the literary equivalent of a former NBC Thursday night lineup . . . . Littlefield is the ultimate Must See insider. The mini-histories are a blast . . . full of fresh detail.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •The Hollywood ReporterÃ¢â ¬Å“[An] essential oral history.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •Detriot Free PressÃ¢â ¬Å“Warren Littlefield has reminded us of what was possible not so long ago. . . . [recounting] his successful run at NBC and the inside stories of the shows that made it happen.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •TV GuideÃ¢â ¬Å“A fascinating oral history of shows like Seinfeld that defined an era.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •Daily NewsÃ¢â ¬Å“While the general public will likely focus on how Seinfeld got made and what made the cast of Friends tick, industry insiders will be looking for dirt, and there is no shortage of that.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •Los Angeles TimesÃ¢â ¬Å“You are what your record says you are, and LittlefieldÃ¢â ¬â„¢s record at NBC in the Ã¢â ¬â„¢90s was tremendous.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •The Newark Star-LedgerÃ¢â ¬Å“With an entertaining insider’s perspective, Littlefield transports readers back to a seemingly magical time when half the country would watch the same show.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •Kirkus ReviewsÃ¢â ¬Å“Littlefield unleashed a Ã¢â ¬Ëœfinancial geyserÃ¢â ¬â„¢ at NBC, and these revelatory glimpses of those glory days make this one of the more entertaining books published about the television industry.Ã¢â ¬Â• Ã Â Ã Â Ã¢â ¬â •Publishers Weekly

WARREN LITTLEFIELD is the former NBC president of entertainment. Previous to that, he was the NBC comedy executive who developed such hit shows as The Cosby Show and The Fresh Prince of Bel-Air. He currently runs his own television production company. T. R. PEARSON is the author of fourteen novels, including A Short History of a Small Place, and a dozen screenplays.

Very juicy. Slow start but ramps up quickly. I tend to favor magazines like Fast Company so I suppose it makes sense that once I fully bought in, I couldn’t read through it fast enough. The fact that this is not an autobiography is refreshing as it lacks any of the one sided biases associated with a singular point of view. Instead, you’re treated to the collective perspective of those who were

simultaneously in the trenches as well as top of their food chain. These movers, shakers & creators have poured so much passion into their projects & expended a tremendous amount of energy fighting battles that the emotions are palpable (usually boiled down to a concentrated form of fear, anger or joy). It felt as if these titans allowed me to be a fly on the wall during their intimate round table discussion. So much so that upon finishing the book, I actually felt privileged to be allowed into their world during this period in time & wanted to thank each & everyone of them.

The book isn't so much written as it is transcribed... a collection of raw excerpts, snippets really, from interviews conducted with the key actors, writers, producers, agents, schedulers, and lawyers behind NBC's 1990s hits... and, of course, quotes from Littlefield himself. He and co-author T.R. Pearson are going for the feel of an oral history, but it comes off as disjointed and scattershot.There are some interesting facts and anecdotes revealed along the way, but much of the book felt like an excuse for Littlefield to settle a couple of old scores. Way too much of the book involves Littlefield and his former subordinates trashing Kelsey Grammer (described as a difficult actor with bad judgment and a substance abuse problem) and NBC president Don Ohlmeyer (depicting him as a boorish drunk with no creative instincts who contributed nothing to the success of the network's schedule) and touting his creative brilliance. It may all be true, but it still felt like sour grapes and became very tiresome.All in all, it's worth reading if you're student of TV history, but it's not a very good book... not nearly as fascinating, revealing or well written asÃ Â Season Finale: The Unexpected Rise and Fall of the WB and UPN, Susanne Daniels' recent memoir of programming the WB, which later merged with its rival UPN to create the CW, a book I highly recommend.

Top of The Rock: Inside the Rise&Fall of "Must See TV" written by Warren Littlefield.I enjoyed this book,written by the ex head of NBC programming,Warren Littlefield. The title of the book details when NBC was the #1 network in the 80's.The book goes into detail how NBC's powerhouse Thurs night shows e.g "Seinfeld, CheersFamily Ties, Hill St. Blues" all became hits.It was interesting reading the actors/writers/producers account how the shows made it from pilots to the primetime schedule. Its a fast paced book,I recommend it. Sue Adams

Warren Littlefield and his co-author T.R. Pearson used the device of providing excerpts from oral interviews (from around 50 people) to demonstrate all that he accomplished as the former NBC President of Entertainment. There is so much back-story available here, real inside information as to the production and eventual end of such great shows as Cheers, Frazier, Seinfeld, E.R. and Will

and Grace that makes this book a very worthwhile read to people interested in television show production. Essentially, Mr. Littlefield's overarching theme is that the best way, in fact, the only way, to secure quality television is to let the creative people do their work with minimal involvement from the network suits. Based on NBC's ratings during most of his reign (as set forth by Mr. Littlefield), he may be right but, of course, as he points out, thanks to technology, the television business was quite different in the 1990s than today.Given the amount of people involved in each show, it is unclear for a reader to determine how much credit should be given to Mr.Littlefield's contributions to each of these and other shows through the years but the quotes attributed to the people interviewed (from Jerry Seinfeld to Jim Burrows to Bob Wright to Jack Welch) suggest that it was indeed substantial. If this book has a second theme, it would be to serve as documentation that James Burrows was the greatest thing to ever happen to television sitcoms and that former NBC executive Dan Ohlmeyer (who was eventually allowed to fire Littlefield) was a chronic and moving obstacle.Mr. Littlefield's former boss, the now deceased Brandon Tartikoff, once said that Mr. Littlefield was like a cockroach who could survive a nuclear war. We get to see those survival instincts in this book. For example, little credit is given to Mr. Littlefield's predecessors (Grant Tinker and Brandon Tartikoff) until the closing acknowledgments at the back of the book. In the last full chapter, Mr. Littlefield completes his attack on who proved to be his ultimate successor (Jeff Zucker) but with an eye to the future (the back cover suggests that Mr. Littlefield owns a television production company), he blows a kiss to the current NBC programming head, Comcast's Bob Greenblatt.So Littlefield gets to fire the first shots. I can't wait to read the sequels from Jeff Zucker, Dan Ohlmeyer and Bob Wright.

I really enjoyed this book. I will definitely read again. I love reading stories about the behind the scenes of TV series development. I found this book to be as entertaining as it was informational.

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