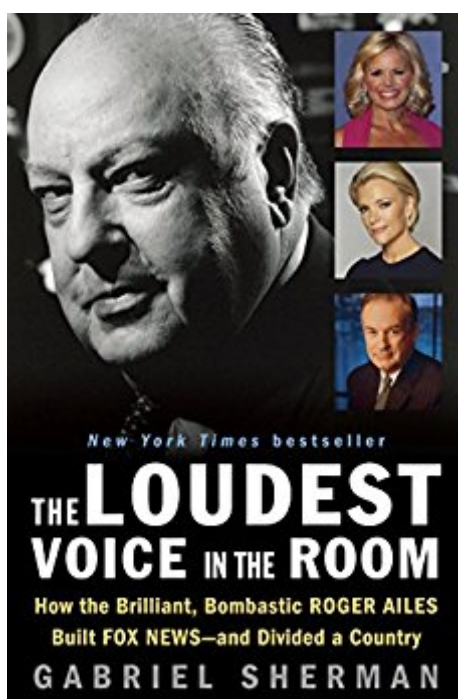


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The Loudest Voice In The Room: How The Brilliant, Bombastic Roger Ailes Built Fox News--and Divided A Country



Synopsis

NEW YORK TIMES BESTSELLER • A revelatory journey inside the world of Roger Ailes—the founder of Fox News—detailing his rise in TV, political consulting, brash business style, conservative agenda, and relationships with his network stars. When Rupert Murdoch enlisted Roger Ailes to launch a cable news network in 1996, American politics and media changed forever. With a remarkable level of detail and insight, New York magazine reporter Gabriel Sherman brings Ailes's unique genius to life, along with the outsize personalities—Bill O'Reilly, Sean Hannity, Megyn Kelly, Sarah Palin, Karl Rove, Glenn Beck, Mike Huckabee, and others—who have helped Fox News play a defining role in the great social and political controversies of the past two decades. From the Clinton-Lewinsky scandal to the Bush-Gore recount, from the war in Iraq to the Tea Party attack on the Obama presidency, Roger Ailes has developed an unrivaled power to sway the national agenda. Even more, he has become the indispensable figure in conservative America and the man any Republican politician with presidential aspirations must court. How did this man, whose life story has until now been shrouded in myth, become the master strategist of our political landscape? In revelatory detail, Sherman chronicles the rise of Ailes, a sickly kid from an Ohio factory town who, through sheer willpower, the flair of a showman, fierce corporate politicking, and a profound understanding of the priorities of middle America, built the most influential television news empire of our time. Drawing on hundreds of interviews with Fox News insiders past and present, Sherman documents Ailes's tactical acuity as he battles the press, business rivals, and countless real and perceived enemies inside and outside Fox. Sherman takes us inside the morning meetings in which Ailes and other high-level executives strategize Fox's presentation of the news to advance Ailes's political agenda; provides behind-the-scenes details of Ailes's crucial role as finder and shaper of talent, including his sometimes rocky relationships with Fox News stars such as O'Reilly and Hannity; and probes Ailes's fraught partnership with his equally brash and mercurial boss, Rupert Murdoch. Roger Ailes's life is a story worthy of Citizen Kane. The Loudest Voice in the Room is an extraordinary feat of reportage with a compelling human drama at its heart. NAMED ONE OF THE BEST BOOKS OF THE YEAR BY NPR • "An actually fair and balanced, carefully documented biography."—Jacob Weisberg, The New York Times Book Review "The book excels at compiling data establishing Ailes's control freakishness and authoritarian nature. . . . A veteran of the New York media-reporting scene, Sherman nails the Fox News palace intrigue and brings to light interactions that Ailes clearly never wanted to go public."—Erik Wemple, The Washington Post "An enormously entertaining new biography."—The New Republic "A thoroughly reported look behind that curtain . . .

Part of the reason [Ailes] and his allies have campaigned against the book is not because it is false, but because it tells a true story.â •â "David Carr, The New York Times Â â œSherman is at his best writing with sweep about the history of cable news and placing Ailes in context.â •â "Los Angeles TimesFrom the Hardcover edition.

Book Information

File Size: 4909 KB

Print Length: 576 pages

Publisher: Random House (January 14, 2014)

Publication Date: January 14, 2014

Language: English

ASIN: B00AD6O6BU

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Not Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #69,788 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #12 inÂ Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Business & Money > Industries > Media & Communications #31 inÂ Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > Ideologies & Doctrines > Nationalism #35 inÂ Books > Business & Money > Industries > Media & Communications

Customer Reviews

Just finished this book. It was well written and thoroughly researched. Ailes is a media genius. That's the point of the book. Good or bad, Ailes changed American politics more than any person since Reagan. This book won't cause anyone to change their political views. It will, however, explain how our polarized political culture got from point A to point B. Ailes himself has always boasted that he's not a news person ("newsie"). In fact, he disdains news people. Before anyone else, he realized that people vote by how they feel rather than how they think. Ailes seeks to persuade people to his politics through pure entertainment. He's impervious to shaming by fact-checking because he's the first one to admit he could care less about facts. That's "old thinking." He's proven himself right. He was the first to mix politics and religion with electronic entertainment. He just happens to have right wing views, but that's not the author's point. Fox News is not a news organization. It's a political and profit making organization that employs anchor people and talk show hosts. That's the point of the

book and it was well made. The left believes that's blasphemy. But Ailes laughs all the way to the bank. Ailes is not hollow. His conservative views are genuine. He believes his politics justify his means. Any means. Again, reading this book won't convince anyone to switch political parties. But it will give you insight into our culture. For me that's enough. Editing note: After I wrote my review, I realized I omitted some points.

Sherman, a contributing editor at New York magazine, delivers a portrait of a manipulating, conniving, controlling, petty and fear-mongering man -- which suggests that the only worthwhile biography of Roger Ailes is an unauthorized biography of Roger Ailes. When Sherman attempted to secure Ailes's cooperation for the book, Fox News PR honcho Brian Lewis, who has since left the network, stipulated that the author must "refrain from using any background quotes or anecdotes that Ailes could consider 'negative,'" according to the book. No deal, said Sherman. Ailes's cooperation, as we've seen, yields mush. Zev Chafets's 2013 book, "Roger Ailes: Off Camera," relied on extensive cooperation from his subject and many others who'd gotten word that Ailes had signed off on the project. The hagiographic result was viewed as a patent attempt by Ailes and Fox News to get out in front of the story, to cement Ailes's image before Sherman could come in and wreck it. It didn't work. Although Ailes can muzzle himself and most all of his subordinates at Fox News, he lacks that power over others. Sherman exploited that opening: He interviewed 614 people, according to his note on sources. Sherman shapes those interviews -- along with documents and previous work on his subject's life -- into a detailed Ailes chronology, starting with his upbringing in the northeastern Ohio town of Warren, home to Packard Electric Co., employer of Ailes's father, Robert Ailes. Dad could be a cruel character, as when a young Roger was standing on the top bunk in his bedroom: "His father opened his arms wide and smiled. 'Jump Roger, jump,' he told him. Roger leapt off the bed into the air toward his arms. But Robert took a step back. His son fell flat onto the floor.

I'm only two and a half chapters into the Kindle version; clearly too early to write a comprehensive review. Still, I can see that it is good. I'm giving 5 stars for courage. Based on everything I've ever heard, the blowback at the author from this powerful and vindictive man is likely to be considerable. I'm not far enough through to give the entire work a five star rating, but it is fascinating, well written, and well researched. I think the 5 will stick. Gabriel Sherman is saying what needs to be said. The curtain needs to be pulled back to reveal the actual man operating the powerful puppet show of Fox "News." Politics aside, the impact of this TV station on older American's sanity and state of mind is

considerable. I've watched my parents go from reasonably laid-back and somewhat equanimous to being highly anxious and caught in the spell of fear and anger. Ailes manipulates his victims by expertly playing on their fears, triggering their anger, channeling that fear and anger to play into his personal politics. This level of manipulation applies even more to the people who are caught directly in the forcefield of his power. It also applies quite directly to the levers of power driving major events in the world: the run up to the Iraq war, and countless contemporary political machinations. So this is an interesting and powerful figure in our time. The book so far is well written and seems well researched. I don't believe he is just making anything up here. The main criticism of this book that I've encountered is that the author never interviewed Ailes directly. OK, yes, we should all have a chance to define ourself, clear up the facts of our lives. But Ailes is not one to clear things up with facts, as far as I can tell.

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