



# **The King of Content: Sumner Redstone's Battle for Viacom, CBS, and Everlasting Control of His Media Empire: Sumner Redstone's Battle for Viacom, CBS, and Everlasting Control of His Media Empire**

*Keach Hagey*

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The remarkable story of Sumner Redstone, his family legacy, and the battles for all he controls.

Sumner Murray Redstone, who lived by the credo "content is king," leveraged his father's chain of drive-in movie theaters into one of the world's greatest media empires through a series of audacious takeovers designed to ensure his permanent control. Over the course of this meteoric rise, he made his share of enemies and feuded with nearly every member of his family.

In *The King of Content*, Keach Hagey deconstructs Redstone's rise from Boston's West End through Harvard Law School to the highest echelons of American business. Today the ninety-five-year-old mogul's life has become a tabloid soap opera, the center of acrimonious legal battles throughout his vast holdings, which include Paramount Pictures and two of the largest public media companies, Viacom and CBS. At the heart of these lawsuits is Redstone's tumultuous love life and complicated relationship with his children. Redstone's daughter, Shari, has emerged as his de facto successor, but only after she ousted his closest confidant in a fierce power struggle.

Yet Redstone's assets face an existential threat that goes beyond his family, disgruntled ex-girlfriends, or even the management of his companies: the changing nature of media consumption. As more and more people cut their cable cords, CBS, with its focus on sports and broadcast TV, has held steady, while Viacom, with its once-great cable channels like MTV and Nickelodeon, has suffered a precipitous fall. As their rivals merge, the question is whether Shari's push to undo her father's last big strategic maneuver and recombine CBS and Viacom will be enough to shore up their future.

A biography and corporate whodunit filled with surprising details, *The King of Content* investigates Redstone's impact on business and popular culture, as well as the family feuds, corporate battles, and questionable alliances that go back decades—all laid bare in this authoritative book.

## **The King of Content: Sumner Redstone's Battle for Viacom, CBS, and Everlasting Control of His Media Empire: Sumner Redstone's Battle for Viacom, CBS, and Everlasting Control of His Media Empire Details**

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# **From Reader Review The King of Content: Sumner Redstone's Battle for Viacom, CBS, and Everlasting Control of His Media Empire: Sumner Redstone's Battle for Viacom, CBS, and Everlasting Control of His Media Empire for online ebook**

## **Erik Surewaard says**

This book is especially relevant due to the current speculation on what will happen with Viacom and CBS. I always thought that Sumner Redstone still was an important factor in the discussions, but this book will give you better insights on what is ongoing.

I read the autobiography as authored by Sumner Redstone himself a couple of years ago. I must say that "The King of Content" is a way better alternative. This since it also includes the nasty things and is also complete until today (2018).

Since it is not often that a good biography of an important media player is released, I decided to immediately buy it. And it was a good choice:) I give this book a four star rating.

Note: I don't understand why FT/McKinsey did not include this book in the long list for the Best Businessbook of 2018. This book is a way better and relevant read than the book of Philip Green.

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## **William Krasne says**

Sumner Redstone is one of those people who has been old, rich, and powerful for my entire life - I imagined he was born fully formed at 65 with a few billion dollars under his belt. I knew basics of his background, but not the entire story. I didn't realize he was such a late bloomer - his biggest move (the takeover of Viacom) didn't happen until his 60s. That move was so successful that it seemed to reenergize him and instill in him the idea that he was immortal and had superpowers. From there Hagey digs into the Redstone family's legendary litigiousness - the amount of internecine battles these people have fought among themselves is just jaw dropping. This is a solid book that I'd recommend.

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## **Erik Benjamin says**

A backdoor biography of Shari Redstone, this is a gripping biography of a true empresario of our time

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## **Lucas Brandl says**

This book takes on multiple themes, from gangster novel, to the history of the American media industry, to the sordid tale of gross people being gross to each other. It is rare for the subject of a biography to be barely in focus for the first 20% of the book, and then suddenly 60 years old when the story begins to truly revolve around them. But in Sumner Redstone's case this seems appropriate. He really became a genuine media

mogul around this age, and the juicy details of his falling outs with family members and co-workers kick into high gear at that point as well. He is such a living stereotype of a billionaire (many marriages/divorces with much younger women, endless lawsuits, unbelievably rude to wait staff, thinks he can live forever) that almost nothing about him is really surprising.

Despite his unsavory personality, he is clearly victimized by others around him in old age. He is taken advantage of by several people who manipulate his declining mental capacity to incur money or favor. At one point this book seemed similar to HBO's Succession show in that basically none of the characters are protagonists and it's just a bunch of unlikeable people jockeying for self interest. The author puts forth daughter Shari Redstone as a protagonist at the end of the book, although a great deal of her legacy and the future of Viacom/CBS is obviously still to be written as of 7/8/18.

There were also some interesting stories about the ups and downs of Viacom in this book. I found it interesting to learn how much of a deathblow to MTV it was to sue YouTube for playing copyrighted music videos, essentially ruining a relationship with the future platform of music videos.

Author Keach Hagey does a great job telling a very twisted and complex story. I'm not totally clear why this book needed to be written at this time, since Sumner Redstone is still alive and there's a lot to be decided still. Any reader with subject matter interest will likely enjoy this book although it may at times feel off putting, since the main subject of this book is also the main antagonist and he's often surrounded by other antagonists.

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