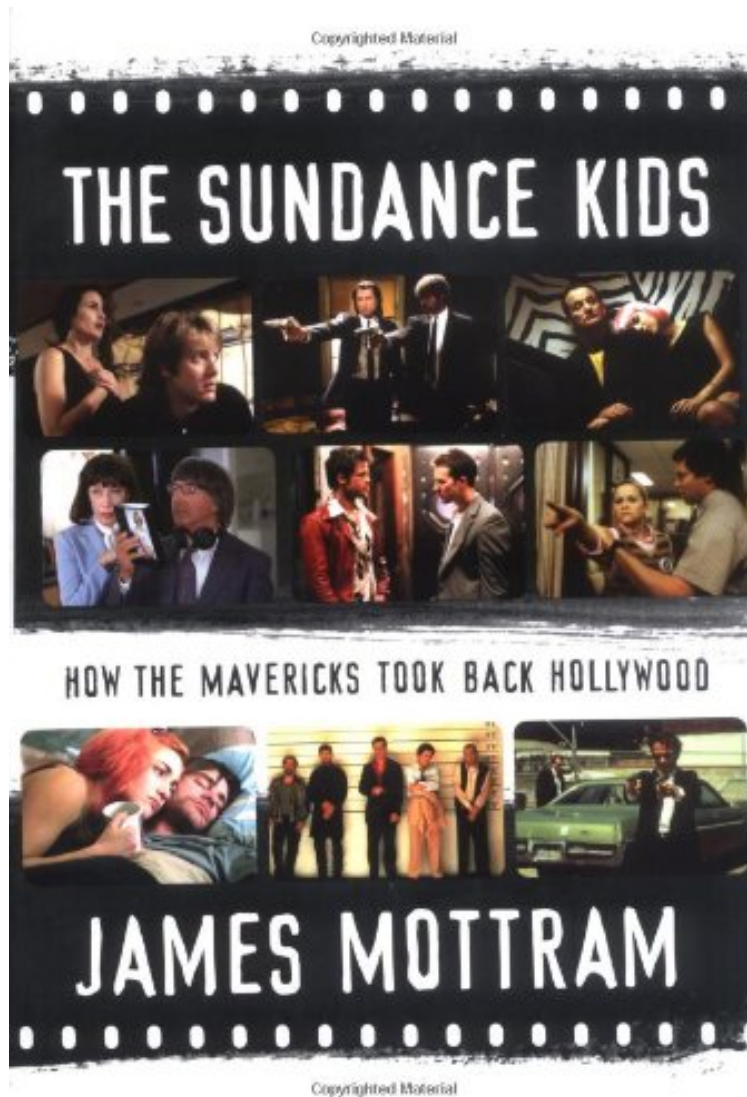


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# The Sundance Kids: How the Mavericks Took Back Hollywood

*James Mottram*

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**James Mottram : The Sundance Kids: How the Mavericks Took Back Hollywood** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Sundance Kids: How the Mavericks Took Back Hollywood:

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Hollywood, Chopped and SplicedBy Addison DewittMottram's "Sundance Kids" is subtitled "How the mavericks took back Hollywood". Except, of course, in the end they didn't. And that is only the beginning to some of the problems that plague this book (which I bought for a dollar on a sale table at the local book store).Long on history but short on style, Mottram gives the reader a 3-decade glimpse of what

the "mavericks" were up to during the 80s, 90s and early 2000s. Using The Sundance Film Festival as his yardstick, he cherry-picks various directors, writers and producers to cover, showing their beginnings, their inspirations and their cumulative output to date. It's a good primer on art films, outsider films and indie productions and anyone interested in Hollywood as seen through the independent lens will enjoy what content it has to offer from an educational standpoint. But that's where the enjoyment ends. The tone of this 512-page encyclopedia of indie films is slanted towards popular writers and directors he obviously loves and it leaves out multitudes of others he apparently does not. Mottram waxes lovingly of Soderberg, Tarantino and the like in an apparent move to stay on the good side, possibly in order to garner future interviews. What's left out are the crass egotistical interviews, on-set tantrums, belligerent badgering and horrifying treatment of actors, set crew and others - most notably from director Russell, whose fights with actors are legendary (see: YouTube's viral video of actor Lily Tomlin tangling with him on the set of *I Heart Huckabees* and losing her temper after he's made so many instant changes she can't tell which end is up). It's akin to watching a loving biopic by the very directors themselves, wherein almost everything negative is left on the cutting room floor. Mottram's writing style is pre-college-level at best. Sentence structure is poor in many places and the work does not flow well from one subject to the next. I found it difficult to get through some chapters since his knowledge of subject and predicate seem to be lacking. The absence of these basic writing tenants hurt an otherwise revealing book, but don't let that stop you from reading it. There are very few other books out there like this one - as mediocre as it is. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Excellent story of the best bunch By Marie DI love films from the 90s and I think this one of the best books I have read on the subject. James Mottram's writing is enjoyable and informative and I feel it is an excellent essay on these films and their makers. There has been other books but they usually focus solely on Quentin T where this particular piece of work documents others like spike jonze, David fincher, Sofia Coppola, Alexander Payne and pt Anderson plus more. If you love filmmaking books and those mavericks from the 90s then this is a top read to add to your collection.

An appreciation of the young turks who took hold of Hollywood in the nineties: from P. T. Anderson to Spike Jonze to the godfather of them all, Steven Soderbergh Hollywood is undergoing a renaissance, spawned by a vanguard of auteurs who for more than a decade have managed to turn La-La Land upside down. With films like *Boogie Nights*, *Rushmore*, *Being John Malkovich*, and *Memento*, young filmmakers have in many ways forced the major studios to march to the beat of their very different drummer. In *Sundance Kids*, James Mottram paints a vibrant portrait of Hollywood as it stands today. Focusing on writers and directors who made their debuts in the nineties, Mottram takes a close look at how these mavericks have impacted the cinematic landscape. He explores the current state of the Hollywood studios; what it can mean now to be independent in the wake of mini-majors like Miramax and New Line; the particular influence of uncompromising artists like Steven Soderbergh and Quentin Tarantino; the unique platform provided them by the Sundance Film Festival; the contribution of British filmmakers like Sam Mendes to the mix; and how, for the first time since Paddy Chayefsky, writers such as Charlie Kaufman are becoming household names while playing a key part in the new Hollywood.

From Publishers Weekly Mottram covers the same territory Sharon Waxman did in 2005's *Rebels on the Backlot*, including extensive considerations of directors Steven Soderbergh and Quentin Tarantino, but the British film journalist adds several filmmakers into the mix, including Sofia Coppola and Wes Anderson, concentrating primarily on hot young talents discovered at the Sundance Film Festival. He's also more interested in what's on the screen than Waxman was, so nearly every chapter has lengthy analyses of the movies discussed. But these interpretive flights distract from the reportage, especially when Mottram dismisses successful directors like Robert Rodriguez (who arguably have taken back Hollywood) because he doesn't consider movies like *Spy Kids* mature enough for serious consideration, or when he insists on linking every modern maverick to a counterpart in '70s cinema. He also links some films together by simplistic means, grouping a trilogy of films set in high schools in one chapter and building another chapter around Elmore Leonard adaptations. Mottram does give insight into the career trajectories of a few of his subjects, most notably Soderbergh, David Fincher and Bryan Singer, making his history a useful starting point. 50 bw photos. (Apr.) Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. From Booklist The 1989 surprise success of Steven Soderbergh's *sex, lies, and videotape* after making a splash at the Sundance Film Festival is said by Mottram to have opened the doors to succeeding young Turk directors whose critical breakthroughs prefigured mainstream commercial triumphs. Covering much the same ground that Sharon Waxman did in *Rebels on the Backlot* (2005), Mottram makes a broader survey. Whereas Waxman focused on Soderbergh, Quentin Tarantino, Paul Thomas Anderson, David Fincher, Spike Jonze, and David O. Russell, Mottram encompasses those six; such peers of theirs as Richard Rodriguez, Richard Linklater, and Alexander Payne; and relative youngsters like Sofia Coppola and Wes Anderson. Mottram also covers the F-64 filmmakers collective, Soderbergh and other directors' abortive effort to maintain artistic control, and screenwriter-auteur Charlie Kaufman. Although Waxman got here first, and Mottram's premise that these mavericks have seized control of the studios is dubious, Mottram's broader scope and greater currency (he touches on Soderbergh's *Bubble*, whereas Waxman ends

five years earlier, in 2000) gives the nod to The Sundance Kids. Gordon Flagg Copyright American Library Association. All rights reserved "I've never been to Sundance--however, after reading this book, it feels as if I've been there and back. James Mottram makes clear the impact Sundance and all its players has had on the so-called Hollywood studio system, while breaking down the nature and structure of storytelling, something I continually struggle with, and articulating it in a manner that will enable the average movie lover to more fully understand the metaphorical undertones a writer/director is trying to achieve. The result is an enjoyable read, full of a wealth of information that leaves us asking, "what next?" --Milo Addica, Oscar-nominated screenwriter of Monster's Ball