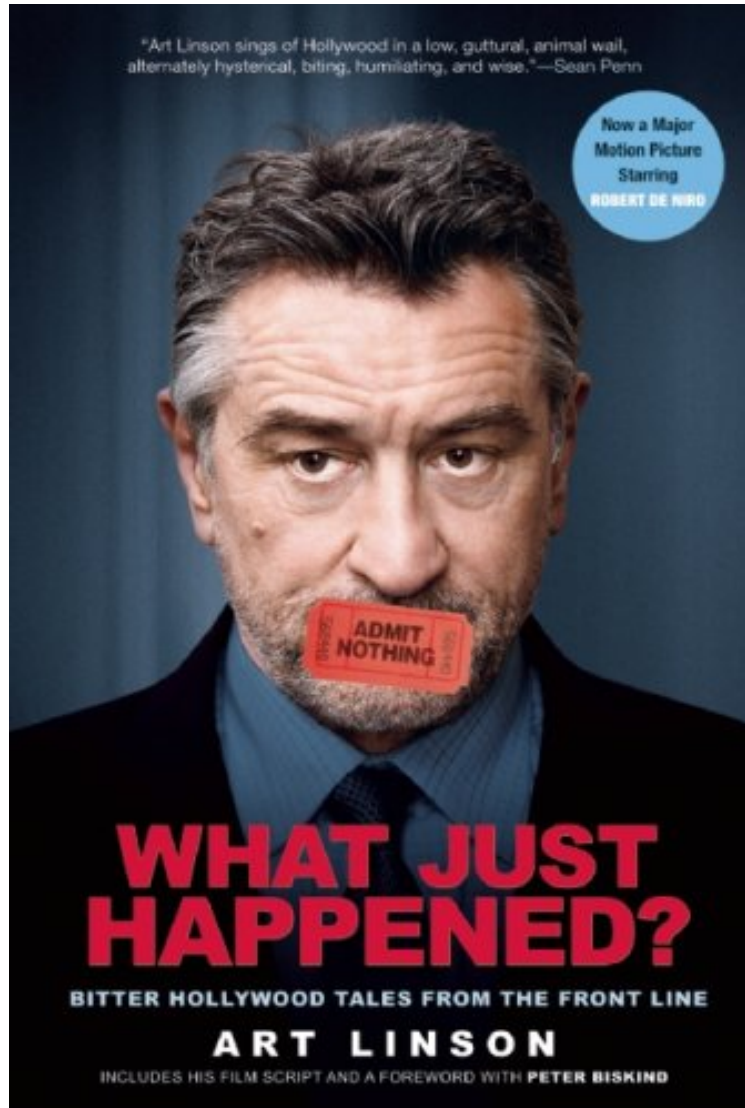


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## What Just Happened?: Bitter Hollywood Tales from the Front Line

Art Linson

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**Art Linson : What Just Happened?: Bitter Hollywood Tales from the Front Line** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised What Just Happened?: Bitter Hollywood Tales from the Front Line:

11 of 12 people found the following review helpful. The short version of how movies are made By Rick Spell like books on Hollywood biz and this one fits the bill by a real pro, Art Linson. Anyone involved with classics like Fast Times at Ridgemont High, Fight Club and Heat knows his way around the business and how it has changed in the last 30 years. Linson throws one kink in the normal Hollywood tell-all. He introduces a fictitious former studio head that

has lunches with Linson generating a lively dialog of the business by to former players. While I enjoyed this book, I have one major complaint. There are only four Hollywood stories in the book. It's like Linson has found his hit and can issue many sequels so he does so little at a time. The book is only 180 pages and is a very fast read. Also, the stories are not in great depth. For example, he describes the movie *The Edge* with Alec Baldwin and Anthony Hopkins. He does a good job describing how these two are selected and the great respect he has for both actors. But the story line quickly ends as Baldwin shows up overweight and with a long beard. Linson has to deliver the bad news that he must change his appearance. End of story. Let's move on to the next. While this story is anticlimactic after a flirtation with Robert Deniro in the movie, I like Linson's writing style for the subjects. It's short, uncomplicated and humorous. Other stories covered include *Pushing Tin*, *Great Expectations* and *The Fight Club*. All interesting stories but all written about very briefly. Irrespective, I still recommend this book if you enjoy reading Hollywood stories. Linson had a great career and I'm sure there is another book coming in the future.

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. If you like insider Hollywood stories, this is for you. By A Customer I'm a Hollywood junkie, so I enjoyed this book. Art Linson isn't nearly the natural storyteller that William Goldman is, meaning the book isn't quite the joy Goldman's books were to read, but, on the other hand, Art is a PRODUCER and he sees films further through than Goldman and his stories are a deeper vision. The device used in the book, of the author talking to another has-been, is (as it was noted) very, VERY annoying and I suggest you just skip it by (it adds nothing). The book is a quick, one-sitting read, and it's as frivolous as a cookie wafer. Art certainly whines -- and I'm sure "Great Expectations" bombed because it was a bad movie, not because "Titanic" had the same scene in it (Art even implies the naked-drawing idea was stolen!) -- but if Art wasn't a whiny guy who took no responsibility...he wouldn't have written this book. So the trade-off is okay with me.

0 of 1 people found the following review helpful. A Zany Laff Riot. By Steven Daedalus We don't usually think of producers as "literate types." They're the guys with the million-dollar Armani wardrobes and the thousand-dollar Gucci Pucci shoes up on their huge shiny desks. The last thing they ever wrote, aside from their signatures, was a high school term paper on the three branches of government. But Art Linson is a different breed. His memoirs -- for that's what these are -- are informative, perceptive, sometimes hilarious, unsentimental, and treat the reader as intelligent enough to understand messages that are left covert. It reminds me a little of William Goldman's experiences as described in "Adventures in the Skin Trade" and his second book, which was even more entertaining but the title of which I forget. The difference is that Goldman viewed events from the perspective of the underdog, the screenwriter, whereas Linson sees things from the top, as a movie producer. There's no particular sentimentality in the book. Linson doesn't heap his calumny on any special individuals. Betrayals and insincerity come with the territory. It's the way things work, and Linson spreads his cynicism around generously. A friend of his "pissed everybody off by dying of a cerebral aneurism" at an early age. And he's got moviespeak down pat. If you send a script to an actor and he replies, "It's a good movie," that means "no." If he says "I'm interested," that means "maybe." There's no hogwash about esthetic integrity. "We're just trying to make quality movies here." Instead he expresses a certain envy of the people who establish and inherit a franchise like the Rocky movies or the Die Hards. He doesn't envy them for the product, but for their luck. Their futures are secure, while nobody else's is. He's anything but egotistical. He limns in the development of his flops (eg., "Sunset Strip") more in sorrow than in anger. And his description of the first studio viewing of the controversial "Fight Club" is neither angry nor said. It's frankly hysterically funny. The expressions on the bloodless faces of the men and women shuffling out of the screening. The comments -- "I don't care what anybody says. I think it's still a good movie." The internal dynamics of the movie business are explored, maybe not thoroughly but accurately. We get to know the structure of the Hollywood totem pole. The guy at the top whose head is on the chopping block. The guy like the head of marketing who has little to lose, no matter how he handles the distribution of the movie, because he can always claim it was lousy to begin with and nothing could have saved it. The temperamental star, Alec Baldwin, who is supposed to be a greedy and murderous fashion photographer in "The Edge" but shows up porky and with a full beard, looking the way his co-star Anthony Hopkins is supposed to look, then throwing a tantrum when it is tentatively suggested that the beard might as well go. There's a complete screenplay tacked on at the end for reasons I didn't quite get. And I don't think I'll bother with more of the many felicities in the book. I'll bet Linson had fun writing it. I know I would have. Some might find it boring if they're not film buffs or pros, or if they're not especially interested in descriptions of an alien life style. The rest will read it with relish.

As a Hollywood film producer, Art Linson has had a hand in producing some of the most unforgettable films of the last half century--*Fast Times at Ridgemont High*, *The Untouchables*, *Fight Club*--and has worked with some of America's finest actors and directors. Dubbed by the Los Angeles Times a breezy anatomy of ritual humiliation, Art Linson's Hollywood memoir *What Just Happened?* gives us a brutally honest, funny, and comprehensive tour through the horrors of Hollywood. To be released in 2008 as a feature film starring Robert De Niro and featuring appearances from Bruce Willis, Sean Penn, and John Turturro, among others, Grove Press's reissue of Linson's hysterical memoir will include a new foreword, the film's script, and several black-and-white shots from the film.

From Publishers Weekly In this latest addition to the spate of Hollywood tell-alls, the producer of *The Untouchables* and *Fight Club* details the planning, handholding and power games involved in making movies. Each film brings its own problems, which Linson recounts in sardonic discussions of his own less-than-boffo features, including *Pushing Tin* and *Great Expectations* (the 1998 remake). His account of *The Edge* is particularly remarkable, as it demonstrates the difficulties of putting together a deal (De Niro had a problem with fighting a fake bear), placating the stars (Alec Baldwin didn't want to shave his beard) and finding a title (*The Bear and the Brain* was a contender, as was the screenwriter's choice, *Bookworm*). Linson's insights into why some movies fail are revealing: no one wants to see John Cusack naked (which explains *Pushing Tin*), for one, and you don't stand a chance if an earlier, bigger release (*Titanic*) uses the same erotic scene as your movie (*Great Expectations*). To hear Linson tell it, it's a jungle out there, with loads of fussy, nave, brazen and unlucky monkeys swinging from the trees. He reels out one conversation after another, unearthing the bar banter, telephone exchanges and studio tte--ttes that reveal just how much quibbling goes on behind the scenes. Although Linson's book lacks the polish of William Goldman's *Adventures in the Screen Trade* or the all-around savvy of Peter Bart and Peter Guber's *Shoot Out*, it provides a decent bird's-eye view on what a producer actually does and the pressures it involves. Copyright 2002 Cahners Business Information, Inc. Art Linson's dark gem of a book is a wickedly funny and sardonic insiders look at life in the belly of the beast. It is the best users manual to Hollywood I know. Peter Biskind, author of *Down and Dirty Pictures: Miramax, Sundance, and the Rise of Independent Film* Art Linson puts a film freak exactly where he or she wants to be: in the Fox screening room during the studio brass's horrified first look at *Fight Club*. . . . Linson gives readers a glimpse into a bizarre world where its good is the absolute worst thing you can say about a movie. Entertainment Weekly Art Linson sings of Hollywood in a low, guttural, animal wail, alternately hysterical, biting, humiliating, and wise. Sean Penn