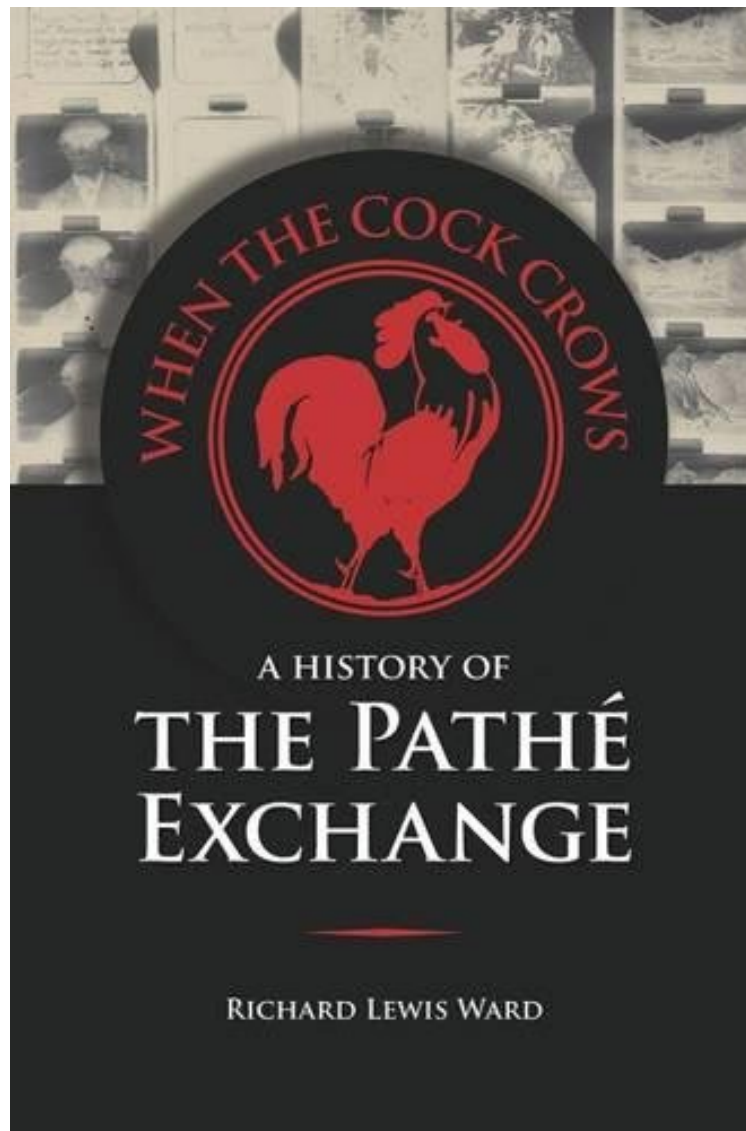


When the Cock Crows: A History of the Path Exchange

Richard Lewis Ward

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Richard Lewis Ward : When the Cock Crows: A History of the Path Exchange before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised When the Cock Crows: A History of the Path Exchange:

Influential during Hollywood's silent-film era, the Path Exchange was a multinational film company with a production

and distribution model very different from the self-contained units of most major studios. When the *Cock Crows: A History of the Path Exchange*, by Richard Lewis Ward, tells the unconventional story of this unique company, examining its triumphs and failures on the margins of the Hollywood system and its legacy in the movie business. Ward traces the companys turbulent evolution from its roots as an American distributor for Path Frres, its French parent studio, through its many subsequent changes in ownership, to its final years under the controversial leadership of Joseph P. Kennedy and the eventual merger of the companys production department with RKO. Included are the stories of the unlikely survival of Paths nonproduction assets, such as Path Industries, Inc., Path-America Distributing Co., Inc., and Path Communications Corporation, which continued to operate as part of the industry long after the Exchange had ceased to exist. Ward also provides a fascinating glimpse into the silent movie era and the business and creative decisions that led the Exchange to fail. Film historians have largely ignored the Path Exchange, despite its having produced some of the most famous early serials (including the series that began with *The Perils of Pauline*) and distributed the first films of comedy legends Harold Lloyd, Harry Langdon, Laurel and Hardy, and *Our Gang*. When the *Cock Crows* reveals the promise and peril of early Hollywood and establishes the companys vital place in film history, creating a more vivid picture of this era.

Wards thoroughly researched book provides an indispensable history of the Path Exchange. ... [It] traces the companys tribulations on the fringes of Hollywood and, more important, illuminates the complex and ever-shifting corporate world of Hollywood itself during these formative years. Joshua Yumibe, author of *Moving Color: Early Film, Mass Culture, Modernism* [A]n extensively researched and lucidly explained chronicle of one of the film industrys overlooked corporate players. . . . Neither a part of the oligopoly that controlled Hollywood nor a denizen of Poverty Row, Path Exchange, an offshoot of the venerable French company, occupied a unique niche. Ward provides us with a revealing account of a self-marginalized company constantly at the economic mercy of a vertically integrated system it could never fully penetrate. Charlie Keil, University of Toronto