



The Trust: The Private and Powerful Family Behind the New York Times

Susan E. Tifft , Alex S. Jones

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The Private and Powerful Family Behind The New York Times. With full cooperation from the families and unconditional access to the Times archives, Susan E. Tifft and Alex S. Jones have written the first insiders biography of the most powerful media clan in North America. When Adolph Ochs, the son of poor Jewish immigrants, bought the bankrupt New York Times in 1896, he transformed it into North Americas most respected and powerful newspaper. His familys values and prejudices set the agenda for the paper. The Trust is a dramatic saga set against a backdrop of world events, succession battles, and the burden and privilege of wealth and power. Spanning four generations, The Trust tells the story of Ochs, a visionary plagued by depression and insecurity; his daughter Iphigene, who fiercely guarded the family mystique; her husband, Arthur Hays Sulzberger, the papers most controversial publisher; their son Punch, whose amiable nature masked a steely toughness; and Arthur Jr., the brash successor, who is leading the Times into the future. Despite the authors access, The Trust was written independent of family control.

The Trust: The Private and Powerful Family Behind the New York Times Details

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From Reader Review The Trust: The Private and Powerful Family Behind the New York Times for online ebook

Bob says

A thorough history of the Grey Lady and the family that controls her. The authors take their time walking through the century of ownership, taking detours through the various family members' lives, quirks and peccadilloes. While it's an interesting read, it's a bit long and may not be of interest to all.

Seeking Sister says

Great book about a still very powerful entity. A very interesting story that is well written. The authors relate the history of the family who created the New York Times, both the personal history of the family, including marriages, births, conflicts, etc. and, not as detailed or as in depth, a history of the origins and evolution of the New York Times. The narrative immediately engages the reader and keeps him rapt throughout. If there were not so many books that I want to read, but have yet to read, I would re-read this one.

annemarie says

a fascinating history of the new york times but the best part is showing how the very smart FEMALE members were passed over for sons, even nephews, to run the paper. in addition to the family gossip it tells the stories behind the times taking controversial positions (publishing the pentagon papers for instance).

Susan Krich says

Very interesting book especially family vignettes.

Marci says

I trained the man who co-authored the book...sounds fascinating.

Hardy says

Although the NYT is a publicly traded company, for the past 5 generations, and over 100 years, it has been controlled by a very wealthy Jewish family. This book uncovers its history, but only leaves the reader wanting to ask more questions.

Adolf S Ochs acquired the NYT in 1896, after a reckless and almost Duddy Kravitz-like career in the

newspaper business. However, the reader can sympathize with Adolf, who is described as "the boy with no childhood" because he started working at a young age to help his family pay the bills. His family was very strict but he developed "a distrust of rigid ideology and an affinity for compromise." He may have had a moment of genius when he cut the price of the newspaper, which increased its revenues, and saved the company, shortly after acquiring it. In a moment of self-reflection, he said "I am at my best in adversity".

The rest of the book describes how the family's life becomes progressively more privileged (at least in a materialistic or economic manner), and further removed from the adversity faced by an average Joe. There is the normal family drama, that one probably expects from this age, such as the husband being unfaithful, or a young man joining the military.

The head of the newspaper has always been a male member of this Jewish family. And the head of the newspaper has always been able to meet with the President of the United States. For over 100 years, the NYT family has stayed the same, while Presidents have come and gone. The family seems to believe this is a sign of moral superiority, however, this reader is less convinced.

In older generations, the family was apprehensive to place Jews in prominent roles at the NYT. However, those fears have subsided. Adolf's only child and daughter, Iphigene, served admirably as the matriarch of the family, and its living connection to the industrial spirit of Adolf. But she passed away in 1990. Around this time, Arthur Jr took over as patriarch of the newspaper. He declared that the newspaper would focus more on selling to and hiring minorities, women, gays, etc. and less on white males. Arthur Jr did not see any irony or hypocrisy in the fact that he got his job by coming out of the right womb with a penis between his legs. Nonetheless, the family worked to ensure the purity of their controllership by working with expensive lawyers to construct elaborate legal structures.

As you might expect, the authors of this book worked for the NYT, and the family probably had influence on the topics discussed. This is why the most pertinent questions are left unaddressed. In particular, the book ends shortly before the 9-11 terrorist attacks in New York City. Initially, the vast majority of Americans initially believed that a Sunni Muslim man living in a cave was responsible for the attacks. But less than half of Americans believe that narrative today. The newspaper has never addressed this disparity, which implies that less than half of Americans trust the most prominent newspaper in the country to tell the truth. That is very troubling.

Anita Smith says

I just finished this today... fantastic book! Very interesting and detailed history of The New York Times. It's not a page-turner by any means, seeing as it's almost 800 pages long... I kept picking it up and coming back to it. But it was a very engaging read that certainly didn't FEEL 800 pages long! A great look into the family that built this newspaper empire. Lots of interesting tidbits and stories about the family, but it wasn't scandalous or gossipy. I'm so glad I found this book and bought it at a book sale! One of the best \$1 I ever spent!

Rock Conner says

For us NY Times junkies only, but wonderful! Origins & intrigues of the Ochs family & descendants.

Laurie Siegel says

The Ochs and the Sulzberger families truly created an institution in the New York Times. I think that Susan Tifft and her husband Alex Jones created a very personal account of the family and the various generations. A good read, although it felt long by the end.

Straker says

An in depth history of the New York Times which focuses on family dynamics & the business side of the paper. Those who already believe that Pinch Sulzberger is an idiot will find little to dissuade them here.

Flora says

It's a good book, and it's extremely thorough. I now know more about the Ochs-Sulzberger clan than I really wanted.

Otis Chandler says

A fascinating history of the NY Times. Interesting tidbits were:

- The family was Jewish but so afraid of being dubbed a Jewish paper that they barely covered the holocaust
 - most stories about the mass graves were buried on page 7 and didn't mention the fact that the victims were mostly Jews.
 - Adolf Ochs, the first of the family to own the times, bought it completely on borrowed money. He was so in debt it took him 20 years to truly own it. That guy had some large cojones...
 - The author really played up the stiff competition each generation for publishership. Seems as the the names (ie Arthur Sulzberger) always won..
-

Noah says

This was great - I've been talking about it in the context of the WSJ debacle.

Bap says

Aldolph Ochs arrived in New York from Chattanooga and managed by bluster to secure ownership of the NY

Times and turn it to the best newspaper in the country. The ownership has passed from father to son with son in laws stepping in when no sons were available. Hence the Sulzbergers.

This is an entertaining, gossipy account but the history of the paper and significance of the paper, its great reporters, and columnists is totally subordinated to tales of the family which isn't all that interesting. The coverage of the turbulent 12 years of the paper's struggle with New York Typographical Union is so incomplete and shoddy that one must wonder about how reliable the rest of the book is.

The book ends in 1999 which is unfortunate because the last decade has been a disaster for newspapers in general and the NYTimes in particular and one wonders whether newsprint, hard copy newspapers are a business model that can continue to exist for another twenty years.

Read the book, the Paper an account of the Herald Tribune which is far more impressive.

Melinda Sweeney says

The New York Times has been owned and operated by one family for over a century and for four generations. As I was reading this, I happened upon an article discussing the next publisher (another family member). If you like hearing about and reading about the Bush Family or the Kennedy Dynasty, this is a good book for you. If you enjoy reading about how a common, every-day product like a newspaper became such an iconic part of America and American history, this book is for you.
