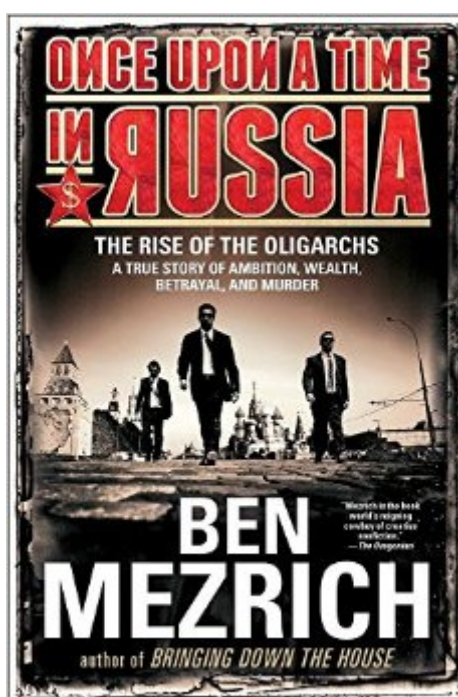


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Once Upon A Time In Russia: The Rise Of The Oligarchs _A True Story Of Ambition, Wealth, Betrayal, And Murder



Synopsis

The New York Times bestselling author of *Bringing Down the House* and *The Accidental Billionaires* tells his most incredible story yet: A true drama of obscene wealth, crime, rivalry, and betrayal from deep inside the world of billionaire Russian oligarchs that Booklist called "one more example of just how talented a storyteller [Mezrich] is." Meet two larger-than-life Russians: former mathematician Boris Berezovsky, who moved into more lucrative ventures as well as politics, becoming known as the Godfather of the Kremlin; and Roman Abramovich, a dashing young entrepreneur who built one of Russia's largest oil companies from the ground up. After a chance meeting on a yacht in the Caribbean, the men became locked in a complex partnership, surfing the waves of privatization after the fall of the Soviet regime and amassing mega fortunes while also taking the reins of power in Russia. With Berezovsky serving as the younger entrepreneur's krysha "literally, his roof, his protector" they battled their way through the "Wild East" of Russia until their relationship soured when Berezovsky attacked President Vladimir Putin in the media. Dead bodies trailed Berezovsky as he escaped to London, where an associate died painfully of Polonium poisoning, creating an international furor. As Abramovich prospered, Berezovsky was found dead in a luxurious London town house, declared a suicide. With unprecedented, exclusive first-person sourcing, Mezrich takes us inside a world of unimaginable wealth, power, and corruption to uncover this exciting story, a true-life thriller epic for our time "Wolf Hall on the Moskva" (Bookpage).

Book Information

Paperback: 288 pages

Publisher: Atria Books; Reprint edition (June 14, 2016)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 1476771901

ISBN-13: 978-1476771908

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 0.6 x 8.4 inches

Shipping Weight: 7.8 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.2 out of 5 stars "See all reviews" (163 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #64,350 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #50 in Books > Politics & Social Sciences > Politics & Government > International & World Politics > Russian & Former Soviet Union #61 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Historical > Europe > Russia #134 in Books > History > Asia > Russia

Customer Reviews

Once Upon a Time in Russia bills itself as a story of the rise of the oligarchs in the subtitle, and as the behind-the-scenes, true story of two larger-than-life billionaire oligarchs in particular "Boris Berezovsky and Roman Abramovich" in the introduction. But this is Berezovsky's story. Abramovich plays a surprisingly small role, arguably less important than Georgian strongman and Berezovsky's right-hand muscle Badri Patarkatsishvili, former-FSB agent Alexander Litvinenko, and Bond villain Russian dictator Vladimir Putin, even Boris Yeltsin and his daughter Tatiana. Berezovsky was one of an early wave of Russians from all walks of life "he was a half-Jewish former academic" to make his fortune in the wake of perestroika. Berezovsky made his first fortune selling cars bought from the manufacture on credit during a period of gross inflation. From there he moved into TV (his eventual downfall), oil, and aluminum. It was oil that sprang from his initial partnership with Abramovich. Abramovich, already owner of a pipeline, approached Berezovsky with the idea to take a state oil company private, and Berezovsky used his connections to make it happen. Berezovsky, along with his fellow oligarchs, also uses his connections, his millions, and his TV station to get Yeltsin reelected when it looked like the Communists were going to regain power. It is hard as an American to grasp post-perestroika Russian business. Berezovsky and Abramovich didn't make millions, they made billions. Berezovsky and the six confederates he recruited to finance Yeltsin's reelection accounted for half of Russia's GDP. Berezovsky lived surrounded by heavily-armed bodyguards and traveling in armored cars. And with good reason.

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