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Once Upon A Time In Russia: The Rise Of The Oligarchs And The Greatest Wealth In History



Synopsis

The best-selling author of *Bringing Down the House* (63 weeks on the New York Times best-seller list and the basis for the hit movie *21*) and *The Accidental Billionaires* (the basis for the Academy Award-winning film *The Social Network*) delivers an epic drama of wealth, rivalry, and betrayal among megawealthy Russian oligarchs - and its international repercussions. *Once Upon a Time in Russia* is the untold true story of the larger-than-life billionaire oligarchs who surfed the waves of privatization to reap riches after the fall of the Soviet regime: "Godfather of the Kremlin" Boris Berezovsky, a former mathematician whose first entrepreneurial venture was running an automobile reselling business, and Roman Abramovich, his dashing young protégé, who built a multibillion-dollar empire of oil and aluminum. Locked in a complex, uniquely Russian partnership, Berezovsky and Abramovich battled their way through the "Wild East" of Russia, with Berezovsky acting as the younger man's krysha - his roof, his protector. Written with the heart-stopping pacing of a thriller - but even more compelling because it is true - this story of amassing obscene wealth and power depicts a rarefied world seldom seen up close. Under Berezovsky's krysha, Abramovich built one of Russia's largest oil companies from the ground up and in exchange made cash deliveries - including \$491 million in just one year. But their relationship frayed when Berezovsky attacked President Vladimir Putin in the media - and had to flee to the UK. Abramovich continued to prosper. Dead bodies trailed Berezovsky's footsteps, and threats followed him to London, where an associate of his died painfully and famously of Polonium poisoning. Then Berezovsky himself was later found dead, declared a suicide.

Book Information

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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 Litivenko, 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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