Howard Hughes

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"I am by nature a perfectionist, and I seem to have trouble allowing anything to go through in a half-perfect condition. So if I made any mistake it was in working too hard and in doing too much of it with my own hands."

-- Howard Hughes describing his way of working and the mistakes made in building the "Spruce Goose."

GRIL OFFIC 05:16 OF OF L OF E OFL Howard Robard Hughes Jr. (1905-1976) was arguably the most secretive and self-destructive man ever to win fame in Southern California's two glamour industries --- movies and aviation. Hughes was certainly an American original, and to many he represented the ultimate unconventional Californian.

The peaks and valleys of his life were startling. As an aviator, he once held every speed record of consequence and was hailed as the world's greatest flyer, "a second Lindbergh." At various points in his life he owned an international airline, two regional airlines, an aircraft company, a major motion picture studio, mining properties, a tool company, gambling casinos and hotels in Las Vegas, a medical research institute, and a vast amount of real estate; he had built and flown the world's largest airplane; he had produced and directed "Hell's Angels," a Hollywood film classic.

Yet by the time he died in 1976, under circumstances that can only be described as bizarre, he had become a mentally ill recluse, wasted in body, incoherent in thought, alone in the world except for his doctors and bodyguards. He had squandered millions and brought famous companies to the financial brink. For much of his life, he seemed larger than life, but his end could not have been sadder.

goodd teksis 6 COK 105 Orzou 6 OK Hughes was born in Houston, Texas, the son of a flamboyant oil wildcatter, Howard Hughes Sr. Four years after Hughes Jr.'s birth, his father patented a rotary drill bit with 166 cutting edges that penetrated thick rock, revolutionizing oil drilling worldwide. Hughes Sr. and a partner formed what would become the Hughes Tool Company and began leasing the rotary bits to drillers for as much as \$30,000 per well. They also bought up patents for other rock bits and devised new drills for the oil industry. The Hughes family was now wealthy. ··· MARINER MALAS

Hughes Jr. grew up an indifferent student with a liking for mathematics, flying, and things mechanical (he once built a motorcycle from parts taken from his father's steam engine). He dropped out of Rice Institute in Houston and, through his father's influence, audited math and engineering classes at Caltech in Charley yi's that ad h- Stork, Pasadena, Calif. Untra Lão

Upon his father's death in 1924, the 18-year-old Hughes inherited an estate valued at almost \$900,000, including 75% of Hughes Tool Company, whose control he assumed a year later. As Otto Friedrich writes in City of Nets, a book about Hollywood in the1940s: So it was the Hughes Tool Company's control of an indispensable oil drilling bit that enabled Howard Hughes to imagine himself one of the kings of Hollywood. No matter what he did, no matter how much money he wasted, the Hughes drilling bit would always pay his bills, would always protect him from harm."

Although shy and retiring, Hughes became enamored with the motion picture industry and moved to Los Angeles in 1925. The city was already the world capital of film production. Hughes financed three films of varying quality (one of them won an Academy Award for director Lewis Milestone) before undertaking an

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epic movie about Royal Air Force fighter pilots in World War I. The film was "Hell's Angels," which Hughes came to direct as well as produce.

Undeterred by the cost, he acquired the largest private air force in the world -- 87 vintage Spads, Fokkers and Sopwith Camels -- for \$560,000, then spent another \$400,000 to house and maintain them. He even bought a dirigible to be burned in the film. Hughes personally directed the aerial combat scenes over Mines Field (what is now LAX). Three stunt pilots died in crashes during the filming; Hughes also crashed in his scout plane and was pulled unconscious from the wreckage, his cheekbone crushed. With expenses already exceeding \$2 million, Hughes was forced to re-shoot large segments of the film with dialogue to accommodate the advent of talking pictures. And because the female star, Greta Nissen, spoke with a thick and inappropriate Norwegian accent, Hughes cast about for a replacement, finally deciding on a bit actress with platinum blonde hair named Harlean Carpenter, also known as Jean Harlow, the first Hollywood "Blond Bombshell."

The film cost Hughes \$3.8 million, a record for the time. Released in 1930, "Hell's Angels" was a runaway success and set box office records, but it never recovered its costs. ("Hell's Angels" is now regarded as a Hollywood classic. Among the other films made by Hughes, two receive high marks from critics -- "The Front Page" and "Scarface." His most sensational film, "The Outlaw," starring Jane Russell, was described as "more to be pitied than censored.") In their 1979 book, *Empire: the Life, Legend and Madness of Howard Hughes*, Donald L. Bartlett and James B. Steele summarize the typical Hughes movie as "rich in entertainment, low on philosophy and message, packed with sex and action."

A boyish Hollywood legend, these were halcyon years for Howard Hughes. As Otto Friedrich writes in *City of Nets:* No photographic record of that period would be complete without a picture of the tall, scarred and inarticulate millionaire ambling into some neon-lit nightclub, outfitted in Hollywood's black-tie uniform and displaying a beautiful blonde on his abow." Hughes kept company with such stars as Ava Gardner, Katherine Hepburn, Ginger Rogers, Terry Moore and Lana Turner, who once described him as "likable enough but not especially stimulating." (He eventually married, and divorced, actress Jean Peters.)

Throughout his Hollywood years, Hughes maintained his passion for flying. Like the movies, aviation was booming in Southern California, making the region a center for new technology. Hughes was in the thick of it, but unlike other aircraft entrepreneurs, he preferred spending his time in a cockpit rather than a boardroom.

In 1934 he won his first speed title flying a converted Boeing pursuit plane 185 miles per hour. He and a young Caltech engineer, Dick Palmer, then built a plane called the H-1 (featuring a unique retractable landing gear) which Hughes piloted to a new speed record of 352 mph near Santa Ana, Calif. This was in 1935, the year that Hughes founded Hughes Aircraft Company as a division within Hughes Tool Company, operating out of a hangar in Burbank, Calif.

In 1937 he flew from L.A. to Newark, N. J., in 7 hours and 28 minutes, a new coast-to-coast record. That same year he won the Harmon International Trophy as the world's outstanding aviator and was honored by President Roosevelt in the White House. The following year, 1938, he set an around-the-world record of 3 days, 19 hours and 17 minutes: in the process he cut Charles Lindbergh's New York-to-Paris record in half. (Radio equipment developed by Hughes Aircraft engineers for this flight would later serve as an entry into the electronics field.) Upon his return, Hughes was given a ticker tape parade down Broadway in New York City. He was at the height of his popularity.

The years of World War II were frustrating years for Hughes, who hoped to transform Hughes Aircraft into a major airplane manufacturer after winning government contracts for two experimental aircraft. All around him, Southern California aircraft manufacturers were producing fleets of new planes. As it turned out, Hughes Aircraft produced armaments, but not a single plane for the war effort.

One contract was for a photo-reconnaissance plane, a prototype of which (the XF-11) crashed in Beverly Hills shortly after the war during a test flight with Hughes at the controls, almost killing him. The other contract was for a plane with which Hughes is forever linked in the public mind -- a troop and cargo carrier made of wood and known by various names (the H-4 Hercules, the Hughes Flying Boat, the "flying lumberyard"), but most popularly as the "Spruce Goose."

When Howard Hughes thought he thought big and he never hesitated to take new directions. Conceived when German U-boats were ravaging Allied shipping in the Atlantic, the "Spruce Goose" was built primarily

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of birch -- not spruce -- in response to a wartime metal shortage. It had eight engines and the capacity to carry 700 troops or a load of 60 tons. In terms of wingspan (320 feet, which is longer than a football field) and weight (400,000 pounds) it is still the largest plane ever built. The war ended before it was completed. But it was flown -- once -- in Long Beach Harbor on Nov. 2, 1947.

With Hughes at the controls, the Flying Boat achieved a top speed of 80 mph, lifted 70 feet off the water, and flew a mile in less than a minute before making a perfect landing. The plane was then towed to a Terminal Island dry-dock, cocooned inside a giant hangar, and never seen again by the public during Hughes' lifetime. Hughes' Summa Corporation spent close to a million dollars a year for the lease and maintenance. After his death, the Flying Boat was put on exhibit in Long Beach Harbor beside the Queen Mary; it has since been moved to McMinnville, Ore., for display in an aircraft museum.

SUMA "It was as if he was missing the gene for corporate success," write Bartlett and Steele in their biography of Hughes. In 1948, he bought a controlling interest in RKO Radio Pictures, which he almost brought to ruin with his aberrant management style. He did much the same with Trans World Airlines (TWA), whose controlling interest he bought in 1939. Although he did much to transform TWA into a major international carrier, his secretive ways and quixotic decisions nearly plunged the airline into bankruptcy. In 1966 he was forced to sell his TWA shares after losing a lawsuit that charged him with illegally using the airline to finance other investments. The sale netted Hughes over half a billion dollars. To many, it seemed more like a victory than a defeat. Sbank MAZIN KLATEN

That same year, 1966, Hughes moved into the Desert Inn Hotel in Las Vegas, which he proceeded to buy (rather than be evicted), along with four other Las Vegas casinos, a radio station, and other Nevada properties. He hired an ex-FBI agent, Robert Maheu, to protect his privacy and keep him out of court, even when his own legal interests were at stake. He had become "the hermit gambling entrepreneur of Las Vegas."

Even before moving to Nevada, while he was living at the Beverly Hills Hotel, Hughes had exhibited alarming behavior. In 1958, he apparently suffered a second mental breakdown, the first having occurred in 1944. Of his days at the Beverly Hills Hotel, Bartlett and Steele write: "Hughes spent almost all his time ... sitting naked in [his white leather chair] in the center of the living room - an area he called the germ free zone' his long legs stretched out on the matching ottoman facing a movie screen, watching one motion picture after another." The same pattern was repeated in Las Vegas, made worse by a drug habit that included both codeine and Valium. (The codeine had first been prescribed to alleviate pain from injuries incurred in the XF-11 plane crash years earlier.) OFEIL

Although Hughes managed to attend to business and had many periods of lucidity (he held a telephone conference call with reporters in 1972 to repudiate a book by Clifford Irving purporting to be Hughes' taped reminiscences), his physical health had turned precarious. A doctor who examined him in 1973 likened his condition to prisoners he had seen in Japanese prison camps during World War II. That same year, ironically, Hughes was inducted into the Aviation Hall of Fame in Dayton, Ohio. He was represented by a member of his 1938 around-the-world flight crew. One of the inductees defended Hughes, calling him "a modest, retiring, lonely genius, often misunderstood, sometimes misrepresented and libeled by malicious associates and greedy little men." SNOZOLEN

In the final chapter of his life, Hughes left Las Vegas for the Bahamas where he stayed until he moved to Mexico, reportedly to have greater access to codeine.

(X-rays taken during the Hughes autopsy show fragments of hypodermic needles broken off in his arms.) He Idied of apparent heart failure on an airplane carrying him from Acapulco to a hospital in Houston.

Mana Clinic Minsota "Such was the mystery and power surrounding his life that when he was pronounced dead on arrival at Methodist Hospital in Houston, Texas, on April 5, 1976, his fingerprints were lifted by a technician from the Harris County Medical Examiner's Office and forwarded to the Federal Bureau of Investigation in Washington," write Bartlett and Steele. "Secretary of the Treasury William E. Simon, for federal tax purposes, wanted to be sure that the dead man was indeed Howard Hughes. After comparing the fingerprints with those taken from Hughes in 1942, the FBI confirmed the identity." He had not been seen publicly or photographed for 20 years.

Howard Hughes' greatest legacy to Southern California is the family of Hughes companies founded during his lifetime. These include Hughes Aircraft Co. (1935) and Hughes Space and Communications Co. (1961), a

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Howard Hughes Page 4 of 4 sbrin, shins give string gins Fbrin unit of Hughes Electronics Corp. Based in Westchester, Calif. Hughes Space and Communications is the world's largest manufacturer of commercial satellites, the designer and builder of the world's first synchronous communications satellite, Syncom, and the producer of nearly 40% of the satellites now in commercial service. Hughes Electronics is owned by General Motors. Hughes Aircraft merged with Raytheon Company in 1998 and is now called Raytheon Systems Co. Prior to the merger, Hughes Aircraft was a world leader in high technology systems for scientific, military and global applications. All the technological prowess of these Hughes companies would almost certainly have pleased their founder, who always had a passion for building things. Kigg Kigg 13099 Contributed by Albert Greenstein, 1999 OILL GIENS-KEN Home ent F#M Æ) - ESET will with MMIY 42-81 (J.N) :5 Crude Brent 36-26 (Feb) Crude 41-49 (Jm) Pabri Crube Tapo 46-28 (J --West Terns Int. FAZZA fizer 24.29 Cok Cocy Lol, 40-93 3 and shar G.I.C.S.N. http://www.socalhistory.org/Biographies/h_hughes.htm

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