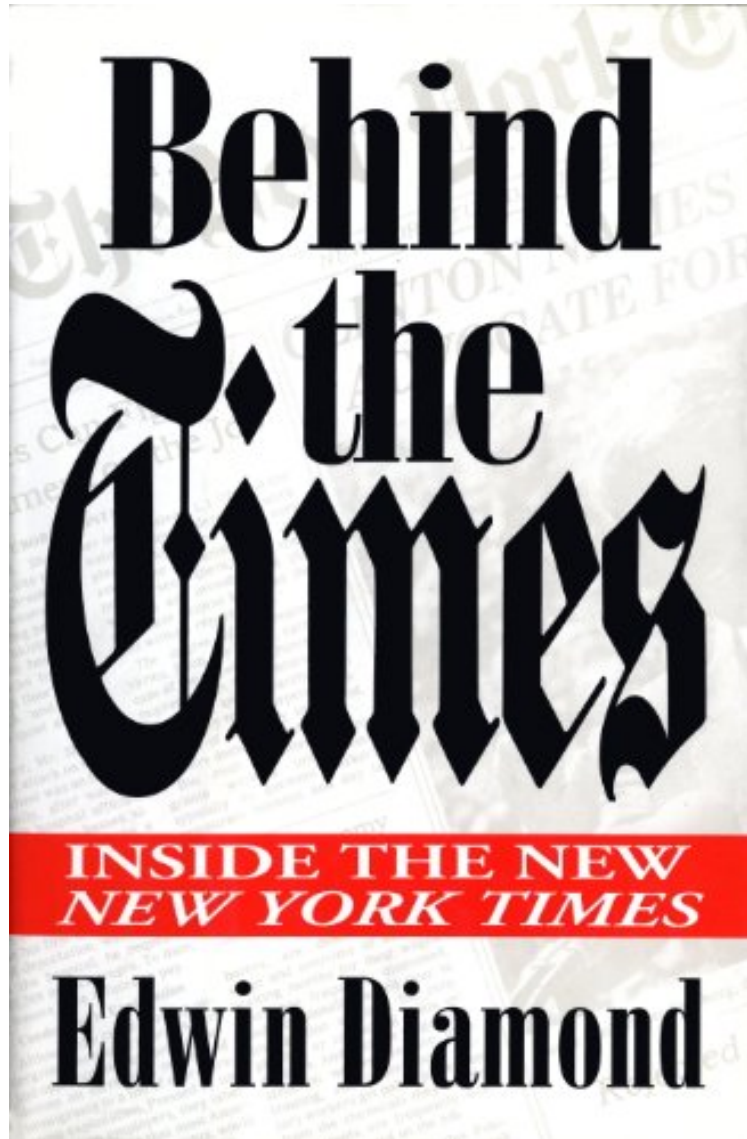


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Behind the Times:: Inside the New New York Times

Edwin Diamond

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Edwin Diamond : Behind the Times:: Inside the New New York Times before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Behind the Times:: Inside the New New York Times:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Journalism SchoolBy JournalistaThis book seemed so disjointed. I believe Diamond is or was a journalism professor and perhaps he collected his research and lectures to compile this book. A bit pedantic, it eventually picks up steam. While reading the last half of the book, I found myself going back to the earlier chapters to see if I had the same impression. I did. Still, there's a lot of worthwhile and interesting information about the Times dynasty, how it operates, and how it came to be that way. Ever the professor, Diamond

gives an interesting lecture.

An incisive examination of the world's most respected paper, *Behind the Times* tells the story of changing Timesian values and of a new era for the paper; a tale of editorial struggles, star columnists and critics, institutional self-importance, and the political and cultural favorites of the Times' owners and editors. Taking the reader inside the Times' newsrooms and executive offices, Diamond offers an expert, insider's appraisal of how the Times and its editors continue to shape coverage of major public events for over one million readers. Diamond goes behind the scenes to recount the paper's recent and much heralded plan to win larger audiences and hold on to its dominant position in the new media landscape of celebrity journalism and hundred-channel television.

From *Publishers Weekly* Diamond, a journalism professor at New York University and media columnist for New York magazine, here dissects the progression of the New York Times from the formidable Gray Lady of the '50s and '60s to the multi-sectioned, reader-friendly bundle of the '90s. However, this is no slash-and-burn expose. Diamond had access to the players, from many Sulzbergers (the owning family) to rising stars (columnist Anna Quindlen) and veterans (former editor and current columnist, A. M. Rosenthal). What emerges is a portrait of a still inward-turned, often isolated culture. Diamond describes what makes "good Timesmen" in terms reminiscent of taking holy orders; Arthur Sulzberger Jr., who succeeded his father "Punch" as publisher in 1992, has tried to encourage more women to join the Times' s priesthood. The chapter on the Book goes over familiar ground of outraged authors and supposed ax-grinding. Rebecca Sinkler, the present editor, as quoted here, responds to every accusation with the wry, resigned good humor of one who has said all this before. Although Diamond reports the paper's story as well as anyone, this book may tell more than anyone, except perhaps a Sulzberger, needs to know about the Gray Lady. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Library Journal* Those people who enjoy the tiny classified ads on the front page of the New York Times will relish all the minutiae media-watcher Diamond sees fit to print in this history of the venerable newspaper. Whether others want the blow-by-blow, day-in-the-life commentaries that run throughout the book is another question (Do we care when columnist Anthony Lewis reports to work?). Still, Diamond, the media columnist at New York magazine, has obviously had amazing access to the inner workings of the "Gray Lady," and though he was a past contributor to the Times magazine section, he is certainly more objective--and more critical--than Times men Russell Baker and James Reston, both of whom have penned more avuncular, rose-colored histories. Diamond convincingly indicts the paper's recent sellouts to the bottom line and the lowest-common denominator, the most egregious being the "little wild streak" reporting in the William Kennedy/Patricia Bowman rape case. An essential update to all serious journalism collections, this will be news for serious scholars and the ever-growing legions of media buffs.- Judy Quinn, formerly with "Library Journal" Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. From *Booklist* As Corry and Nan Robertson (in *Girls in the Balcony*, 1991) carry on the tradition of the Times person's testimonial, so media writer Diamond addresses the newspaper's external performance and internal politics. Over the past 20 years, the span of his autopsy, the Ochs Sulzburger dynasty turned out old horses and installed a new set of editors to whom it appeared that hard news attracted fewer readers. Their come-hither solution for colorizing the gray lady? Lifestyle, fashion, and gustatory pieces for the sybarites of society; more op-ed pieces for professional bloviators; and a middle-brow elevation to page one of trashy ideas, such as the now-notorious review of Kitty Kelly's book on Nancy Reagan. Diamond disdains this as "enticement journalism," dedicated to snaring "omnidirectional yuppies." The snappy new dispensation extended to the Times' culture sections, including that "Tweedy Backwater," the weekly *Book*. Bibliophiles will relish the routine blurb-swapping and a classic in cronyism, a gusher review for first-time author Eric Lax, Sulzburger's son-in-law. Diamond also sates the aficionados of personnel intrigue with a mountain of anecdotes, and for devotees of the day-to-day news cycle, he narrates the newsroom activity on February 28, 1989. Diamond is a standout in the crowded field of journalism's scolds, and his studied objectivity and head-shaking commiseration on the decline of the Times will inspire wide interest--especially on that insular isle of Manhattan. Gilbert Taylor