



Outrageous Fortune: The Rise and Ruin of Conrad and Lady Black

Tom Bower

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The rise and fall of media tycoon Conrad Black and his journalist wife, Barbara Amiel, is one of the great stories of the modern business world. In *Outrageous Fortune*, London-based journalist Tom Bower reveals how Conrad and Lady Black used other people's money to finance a billionaire's lifestyle, winning friends and influence in London and New York along the way. Their story of overweening ambition and greed is a modern-day classic of hubris.

Born into considerable wealth in Canada, Conrad Black bought and sold (but never effectively managed) several businesses, from mining and tractors to broadcasting companies and newspapers. In 1985 Black's holding com-pany, Hollinger, bought the Telegraph Group, the British newspaper publishing conglomerate. In the years that followed, Black additionally became the proprietor of the *Chicago Sun-Times*, the *Jerusalem Post*, and a host of other magazines and newspapers in the English-speaking world.

In 1992 Conrad married Barbara Amiel, who later famously said, "I have an extravagance that knows no bounds." Besotted by his wife, he began living way beyond his means. Fabulous parties, jewelry, clothes, and multiple mansions followed, and by 2001 Black had renounced his Canadian citizenship—which he called "an impediment to my progress in another more amenable jurisdiction"—in order to become a life peer in the British House of Lords.

But the scheming deceptive duo's lies came crashing down when, in November 2003, an American report accused Black of "outright fraud," "ethical corruption," and "corporate kleptocracy." Black was forced out as Hollinger's chief executive, and two years later he was charged with eight counts of fraud—allegations that he will vigorously deny at his trial in Chicago, beginning in March of 2007.

Based on hundreds of interviews with bankers, politicians, journalists, mega-deal makers, and close friends of Conrad and Lady Black, *Outrageous Fortune* is packed with lively anecdotes and salacious gossip. It is a hugely enter-taining and engrossing account of gullibility in high places.



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