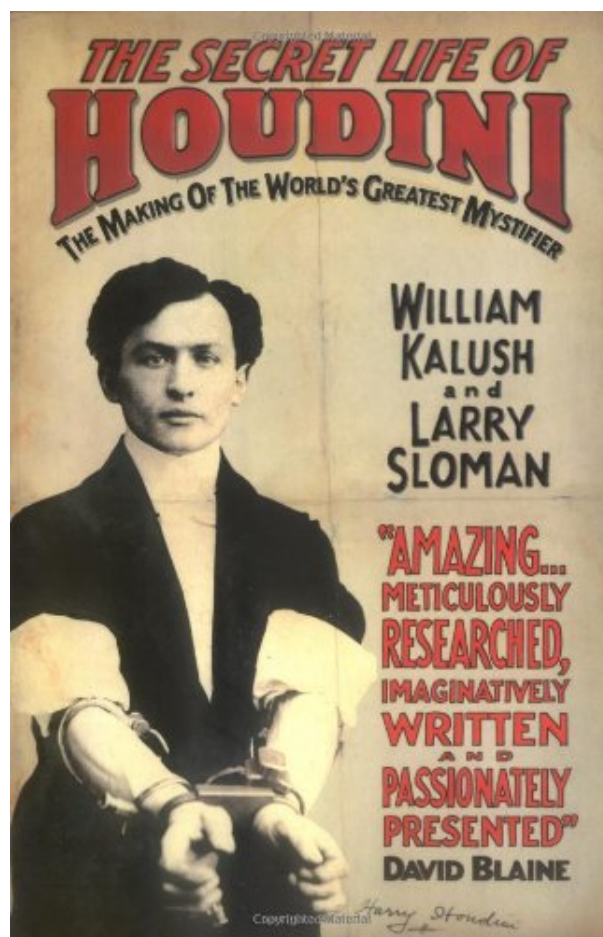
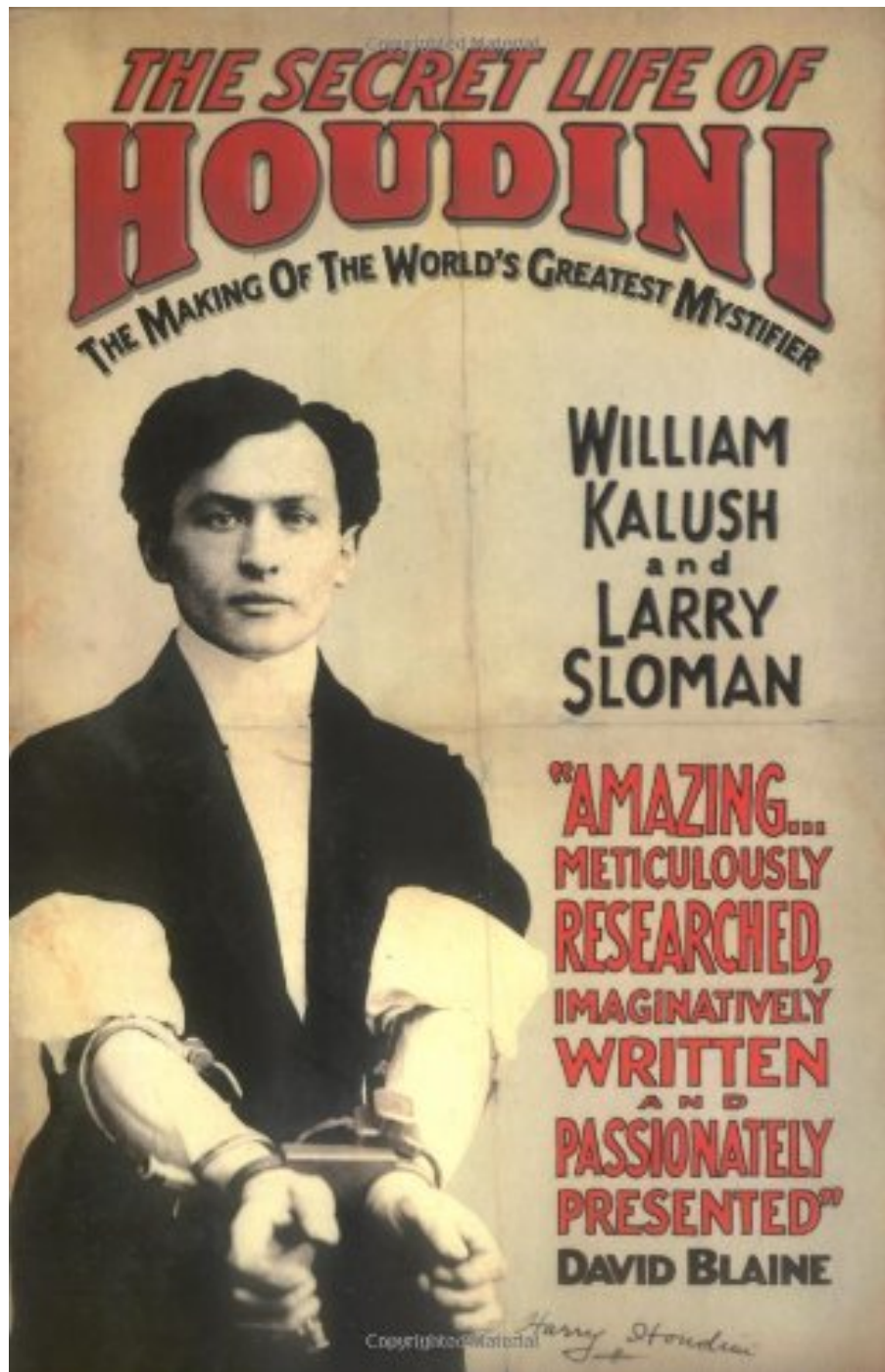


SECRET LIFE OF HOUDINI BY WILLIAM KALUSH



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Review

"Kalush and Sloman appear to have raked through every known Houdini archive to produce the most comprehensive and controversial biography ever written about the man, with its contention that he was a spy who may have been murdered by a cult."-- Tony Barrell, "London Sunday Times"

About the Author

William Kalush has been a dedicated student of the art of magic for more than twenty-five years. Founder of the Conjuring Arts Research Center and publisher of *Gibecière*, an esteemed magic history journal, he has helped create several world-famous magic stunts and prime-time network television specials.

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Using exclusive access to newly uncovered archives, Kalush and Sloman reveal the clandestine agreements in which the British and Americans recruited Houdini to be an active secret agent. In exchange for his cooperation, the governments of these two countries facilitated his rise to the top of the world stage. The authors give thrilling accounts of his assignments, such as his participation in early aerial surveillance and his use of his own magic magazine to communicate espionage-related information. After the war, Houdini embarked upon what became his most dangerous mission when he took on the Spiritualist movement. Convinced that Spiritualist mediums were frauds, he became obsessed with exposing them. But the Spiritualists were a powerful adversary. An organized network of fanatics, led by Sherlock Holmes creator Arthur Conan Doyle, worked relentlessly to orchestrate a campaign that would silence Houdini forever. Grounded in solid research, but as exciting and dramatic as a good thriller, **THE SECRET LIFE OF HOUDINI** traces the magician's long and circuitous route from struggling vaudevillian to worldwide legend.

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- 608 pages

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88 of 98 people found the following review helpful.

Extraordinary Story! A Must Read.

By Peter Thomas Senese - Author.

This is simply put a remarkable and groundbreaking historical book on Harry Houdini: world renown magician, mischievous scoundrel, and clever spy. Reading like the best of intriguing novels, authors William Kalush and Larry Sloman have created a masterpiece worthy of every person's library in *The Secret Life of*

Houdini: The Making of America's First Superhero'.

This is one of the finest historical prose I have ever read. I can't recommend 'The Secret Life of Houdini: The Making of America's First Superhero' enough. It will be 'The' gift I give during the holiday season.

Why am I doing cartwheels?

First off, the extraordinary research put into this work was incredible. The execution and presentation of the material easy to understand and intriguing on its own, yet, the more fact presented, the more material I needed to have. Additionally, by collecting what I take was nearly everything ever written or presented previously on Houdini and viewing it carefully as a whole, Kalush and Sloman actually present to the public the full picture on Harry Houdini: Master of Deception! And what a life it was!

From a humble beginning in Chicago, to entertaining the most prominent individuals in society across the globe, to clearly participating in a spy network, to in his own way, being a pre-Nadar watchdog by going after con-artists pretending to be connected to the supernatural world, Harry Houdini's life was extraordinary . . . and so to was the footprint he made on society, as evident of his acclaim 90 years later. Was Houdini murdered by a cult? What was he getting close to? What threats did he hold?

Overall, this is a brilliant book, and I tip my hat to authors William Kalush and Larry Sloman: superior storytelling readers everywhere will enjoy.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

Superb Biography Filled With Intrigue

By Sharon A. Hutchinson

This book must be ranked as the best biography on Houdini. It is so well written that I literally could not put it down.

I knew only Houdini the master magician, but he was so much more--possible spy for the US and Britain, inspiration for countries to develop an Air Force for the coming conflict (WWI), and even devulging some of his secrets in order to teach soldiers how they might escape from enemy prisons, etc. But of course the biggest story of all is his intense fight against fake mediums and their bilking the grieving of both their money and playing with their emotions.

Of particular interest is the conflict between Conan-Doyle and his band consisting of, among others, Dr. Crandon and his "medium" wife Margery. It is amazing how the creator of the world's greatest fictional detective, Sherlock Holmes, could drop all reason when it came to these con artists. Doyle was obviously emotionally wrought over the death of his son, and it made him abandon the very aspects of rationality. His fictional character would have quickly proven that there was not just a million dollar industry based on fraud, but also there existed an equally strong possibility that Houdini was murdered. Doyle was not a fuzzy, warm guy when it came to another who challenged his irrational belief system, and it is unfortunate that one who is justly admired for his writing became so intertwined with the fake "religion" of spiritualism .

After reading this book, which dispels many of the myths and unlocks the real story not told by the media, I myself believe there is enough circumstantial evidence that Houdini was at the very least a victim of people who wanted to injure him enough that he would give up his anti-medium crusade. It is also possible that certain people intended for him to die--they certainly had the money and influence to have it done. Houdini himself towards the end of his life acted as though he knew he was doomed, realizing that the people against him were powerful enough to accomplish his end.

I now have a totally different view of this wonderful man and believe he was a martyr to the cause of exposing these predators of grieving people who used conjuring tricks to pull off their "schtick". He was truly a "Superhero" and this book brings the man back to life. The sad part is that he did not succeed and we are still plagued with these cruel charlatans. I recommend this book 100% without any hesitation.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful.

This is one of the coolest biographies ever. I've read it at least three times and it never gets old. What an absolutely amazi

By mike mihalov

This is one of the coolest biographies ever. I've read it at least three times and it never gets old. What an amazing story !

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