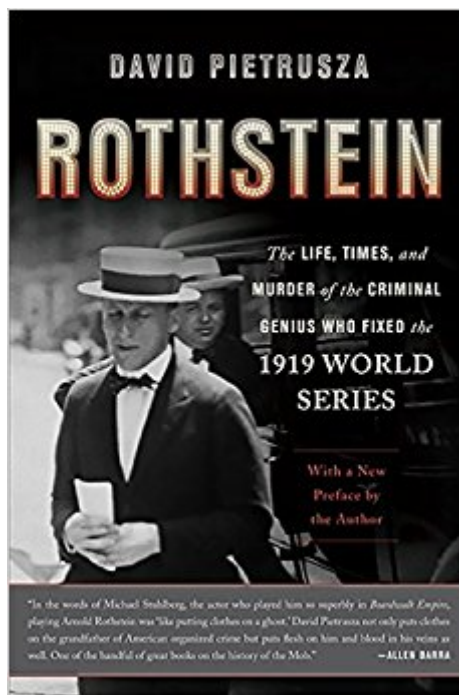




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Rothstein: The Life, Times, And Murder Of The Criminal Genius Who Fixed The 1919 World Series



Synopsis

History remembers Arnold Rothstein as the man who fixed the 1919 World Series, an underworld genius. The real-life model for The Great Gatsby's Meyer Wolfsheim and Nathan Detroit from Guys and Dolls, Rothstein was much more "and less" than a fixer of baseball games. He was everything that made 1920s Manhattan roar. Featuring Jazz Age Broadway with its thugs, speakeasies, showgirls, political movers and shakers, and stars of the Golden Age of Sports, this is a biography of the man who dominated an age. Arnold Rothstein was a loan shark, pool shark, bookmaker, thief, fence of stolen property, political fixer, Wall Street swindler, labor racketeer, rumrunner, and mastermind of the modern drug trade. Among his monikers were "The Big Bankroll," "The Brain," and "The Man Uptown." This vivid account of Rothstein's life is also the story of con artists, crooked cops, politicians, gang lords, newsmen, speakeasy owners, gamblers and the like. Finally unraveling the mystery of Rothstein's November 1928 murder in a Times Square hotel room, David Pietrusza has cemented The Big Bankroll's place among the most influential and fascinating legendary American criminals. 16 pages of black-and-white photographs are featured.

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Customer Reviews

Writing a biography of the notoriously secretive Arnold Rothstein, a rum-and-drug-running, bookmaking loan shark who became one of the richest men in the world, is a gamble that, for the most part, pays off for Pietrusza (Judge and Jury: The Life and Times of Judge Kenesaw Mountain Landis). After a brief look at Rothstein's Jewish upbringing, Pietrusza concentrates mostly on his

"business" interests and does an especially fine job of analyzing the involvement of the "Great Brain," as Rothstein was known, in fixing the 1919 World Series. Quick to point out that the fix "was not the perfect crime," the author tracks down almost every lead associated with what is still one of America's most astonishing crimes thanks to how the caper was played out in the public eye. Strong investigative journalism helps Pietrusza make sense of the complex back stories of Rothstein's fathering of the American drug trade and the gambling debt that led to his murder. While seeking to expose the truth behind Rothstein's dealings and death, the author sweeps readers into the seedy world of Tammany Hall politics, violent mobsters, dirty cops and paid-off judges. While many of these side stories prove worthwhile entertainment, the vast amounts of information needed to explain them allows the reader only glimpses of Rothstein's true personality. Still, while some readers may clamor for a more intimate portrait of the subject, Pietrusza persuades in his assertion that Rothstein really had only one true emotion: greed. Copyright 2003 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

If the name Arnold Rothstein is recognized today, it's as the man who fixed the 1919 World Series (Meyer Wolfsheim in *The Great Gatsby*). But the Black Sox scandal was only one item on Rothstein's resume. In this scrupulously sourced biography, Pietrusza portrays the quintessential Jazz Age gambler and underworld kingpin as the black sheep in his Orthodox Jewish family. Enraged by his brother's piety, Rothstein vowed to go a different way. That he did, earning the nickname "the Big Bankroll" for his involvement not just in sports betting but also in labor racketeering, rum-running, Wall Street shenanigans, and even the beginnings of the drug trade. Pietrusza's prose is a bit clunky, but he's saved by his compelling subject matter and by the hundreds of cameos from some of the Roaring Twenties' biggest names: Dempsey, Runyon, Luciano, et al. The question of who killed Rothstein is investigated thoroughly, but fascination with that case has dimmed over the years. Not so Rothstein's life, which remains as intriguing as it was when he occupied his corner table at Lindy's. Bill OttCopyright © American Library Association. All rights reserved --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Really an eye-opening work!! Meticulously researched, I realized that what I thought were exaggerated, dramas made for TV were actually based on truths that were much much stranger than fiction. I felt it was especially applicable for us for the times in which we live. My only reason for not giving this a five star rating is that the voluminous amount of names initially became very confusing, and, at times, somewhat overwhelming. It was, however, very definitely a read worthy of

that effort.

This is a very good read but the story gets increasingly complex as it moves forward. According to author David Pietrusza, Arnold Rothstein was the original Dr. Moriarty, that evil criminal genius that every thread in the web of organized crime leads back to. Narcotics, gambling, prostitution, loan snarling, alcohol, real estate and stock fraud on a massive scale, payoffs to politicians, policemen, lawyers, juries and judges - you name it Arnold Rothstein was not only involved in it - he controlled it! According to Pietrusza he even fixed the 1919 World Series. A great book - with a cast of hundreds. The author would have been better served by a book a chapter or two shorter. By the end the story is so heavily laden with countless no-goodniks and a myriad of plots and supporting characters that the reader is praying for release. Still, if you love reading about New York City, organized crime, baseball, and show girls galore, this book is for you!

Rothstein, by David Pietrusza is an essential read for anyone wanting to understand the creation of modern organized crime. Arnold Rothstein was much more than a gambler or "the man who fixed the world series". He was the financier for the most despicable criminal enterprises, from white slavery to drug dealing. His ingenious method of being the financier for a cut, kept him out of the actual operations, but gave him both influence and filled his pockets with millions. He was a political and criminal fixer without equal and it can be said that it was his skill at negotiating settlements that held back the crime wars that came after his death. He was arguably the most pervasive influence peddler and fixer of the 20th century. He was the mentor and supporter of some of the most famous criminals in American History. Meyer Lansky, Charles Luciano, Ben Seigel, Legs Diamond, Dutch Shultz and many more were mentored, financed and let loose on society by A.R. (as he was called). In Mr. Pietrusza's biography, this elusive enigma comes to life as a flesh and blood reality. Some of his information is new and extremely enlightening and this book is well worth the read. My only criticism is minor, with some of the logic he uses when analyzing the death of Rothstein. These meet his conclusions, while overlooking some other options that might exist. This is not to say his conclusions are wrong, but merely not as thoroughly thought out as they might have been. But these flaws are to be expected as there is much not available to the historian. Not only is history elusive, in Rothstein's case, where he kept detailed notes and records, much was destroyed to cover up the breadth and corruption that connected politicians, judges, cops, lawyers, gamblers and crooks, local, state and national, that was so vast as to take one's breath away. Rothstein the book, is, like its subject, intriguing, revolting, mysterious, compelling and haunting. Like the time in which

he lived, Rothstein was a unique product the like of which will never come again. A one-of-a-kind type that was created by time and place and opportunity. He was a genuine genius, it is just a sad tragedy that he turned it to amoral, immoral advancement. If the twenties roared, they roared with the impact of Arnold Rothstein.

Another book my Dad is looking forward to reading

After reading David Pietrusza's book on Arnold Rothstein I have come to the conclusion that Rothstein was a man with only one love in his life, that of gambling. He doesn't appear to be an individual who was able to develop any genuine feelings of affection to another human being. Any interest in another person was limited to what they were able to do for Arnold. His only interest in sports was limited to what the gambling odds were. Although married he spent his evenings, not at home, but sitting at a table at Lindy's Restaurant conversing with business associates, not friends. The author also relates Rothstein's role in developing the drug trade in America. Gambling and bootlegging were activities that you need not be embarrassed about. Trafficking in drugs, however, was something that was considered dirty and he masked his interest in the drug trade. The book also goes into detail of Rothstein's role in the 1919 World Series and others involved in the crooked World Series. Details of Rothstein's death by shooting in the Park Central Hotel in New York by George McManus are also provided. The author admits that some of the details are speculation, and will never be known for sure. This is a book that will take you back to the era of turn of 20th century New York and through the 1920's. It is also the story of people from the world of sports, theatre, politics, and the gangsters that made up this time period. The book is most certainly worth your time and money.

Good book.

Extremely well-researched and infinitely detailed.

Pietrusza does a great job of thoroughly researching Rothstein and his many scams and schemes. Despite the author's skillful presentation of the material in a manner that, for me, evoked a lost era, I still couldn't figure Rothstein out. The risks that he took made no sense to me. He died by welshing on a small-time debt. Why would he expose himself over such a puny thing? Why did he live by a weird code of honor, with occasional acts of philanthropy mixed in, and pursue schemes that he had

to know were destroying innocent people? But the big unanswered question for me is this: Pietrusza demonstrates that endemic corruption made Rothstein's success possible. When, if ever, did we stop being corrupt???

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