



Murdoch's World: The Last of the Old Media Empires

David Folkenflik

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Rupert Murdoch is the most significant media tycoon the English-speaking world has ever known. No one before him has trafficked in media influence across those nations so effectively, nor has anyone else so singularly redefined the culture of news and the rules of journalism. In a stretch spanning six decades, he built News Corp from a small paper in Adelaide, Australia into a multimedia empire capable of challenging national broadcasters, rolling governments, and swatting aside commercial rivals. Then, over two years, a series of scandals threatened to unravel his entire creation.

Murdoch's defenders questioned how much he could have known about the bribery and phone hacking undertaken by his journalists in London. But to an exceptional degree, News Corp was an institution cast in the image of a single man. The company's culture was deeply rooted in an Australian buccaneering spirit, a brawling British populism, and an outsized American libertarian sensibility—at least when it suited Murdoch's interests.

David Folkenflik, the media correspondent for NPR News, explains how the man behind Britain's take-no-prisoners tabloids, who reinvigorated Roger Ailes by backing his vision for Fox News, who gave a new swagger to the *New York Post* and a new style to the *Wall Street Journal*, survived the scandals—and the true cost of this survival. He summarily ended his marriage, alienated much of his family, and split his corporation asunder to protect the source of his vast wealth (on the one side), and the source of his identity (on the other). There were moments when the global news chief panicked. But as long as Rupert Murdoch remains the person at the top, *Murdoch's World* will be making news.

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