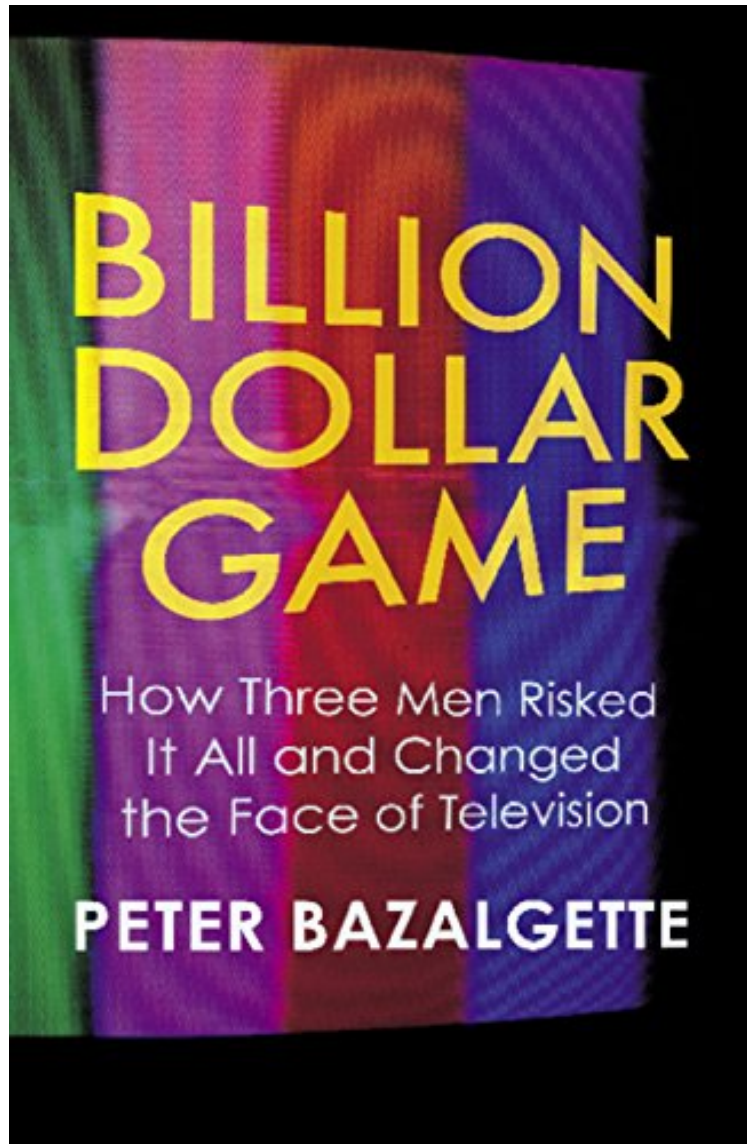


[Download] Billion Dollar Game: How Three Men Risked It All and Changed the Face of Television

## **Billion Dollar Game: How Three Men Risked It All and Changed the Face of Television**

*Peter Bazalgette*

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**Peter Bazalgette : Billion Dollar Game: How Three Men Risked It All and Changed the Face of Television**  
before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Billion Dollar Game: How Three Men Risked It All and Changed the Face of Television:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Five StarsBy Old SoulExcellent customer service. Would use again.2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Two books in one or half a book?By Jeremy JonesBillion

Dollar Game is a difficult book to pitch. On one hand it's the story of how 3 of today's most popular TV formats came into being. On the other it's a business study of the company Endemol and how John DeMol became a rich man. For this reason it's difficult to imagine who this book would appeal to most. As a member of the TV production industry I was fascinated by the story of the 3 shows - from initial ideas, to the constant rejection by networks and subsequent tweaks in format, to eventual success - Bazalgette gives a terrific insiders view. I was less interested though in the big business story - share prices, stock markets, deals and takeovers - all got in the way of the story I wanted to read. I'm sure there are many readers out there who would be fascinated by the business study Bazalgette presents - but it's equally possible that these people couldn't care less about how a TV show comes into being. So Billion Dollar Game is really two books in one - or half a book, depending on your point of view. The book is actually broken into 2 parts. Part 1 is the story of the 3 formats and the rise of Endemol. Part 2 is a detailed look at Big Brother around the world - the characters and stunts, community reaction, and tales of sex and relationships in the various houses. I enjoyed the first series of my local edition of BB, but as each new series came round the housemates got more annoying and the stunts more contrived. The novelty of the show quickly wore off. So Part 2 really didn't appeal to me and I found myself skipping page after page. Big Brother fans will probably be enthralled - but then they too could well be put off by the earlier study of Endemol's share price and talk of the NASDAQ and the dot.com boom. The story of the rise of the 3 formats can be difficult to follow too at times. Bazalgette often jumps suddenly from one show to the other, continent to continent, network to network and it can be difficult to keep track of which production head at which network has rejected which show. While obviously well researched, the book names just about every person at every network who was ever approached by the respective creators, and you can easily lose track of who's who. If you're interested in how a TV show comes into being, or how a company can become a multi-billion dollar juggernaut, or how Big Brother took over the world then you'll undoubtedly find parts of this book fascinating. But you may well find yourself wishing Bazalgette had taken a smaller bite of the apple, and eventually put this book back on the shelf with many of the pages untouched.

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Educational, interesting, highly recommended. By MythBuster DownUnder I've learned a lot from this book, not just about the TV show business but about human nature, even about myself. I agree with the other reviewer, I was also less interested in the detailed accounts of merger meetings, IPO details and stock fluctuations, but without them the book would be incomplete - these are all an integral part of the story. There are many general business lessons and a few specific negotiating tips in them pages. Reading through the three intertwined stories of perseverance and rivalry, I even got a few ideas that could be turned into a few new reality TV shows. Now I need a book that will teach me how to protect my ideas before disclosing them to production houses and TV executives. Pity Bazalgette does not address that in his accounts of the pitches and negotiations. That would be my only gripe about this interesting and useful book.

In the mid-1990s, three men had three unique and revolutionary ideas for television shows entitled Cash Mountain, Survive, and Project X. Time and time again, they were each rejected by major the networks as their projects were declared unfit for production. Rather than give up on their dreams, Paul Smith, Charlie Parsons, and John de Mol instead pushed ahead and went on to produce shows which quickly became the biggest and most successful programs on Earth: Who Wants To Be A Millionaire?, Survivor, and Big Brother. This is the compelling story of how three men defied overwhelming odds to take the television industry by storm, make personal fortunes, and transform the map of popular culture.

'Bazalgette writes as you would expect - with style, erudition and authority. His account is big and brainy, a hugely impressive appreciation of the technological, social and economic factors shaping our times. The businessman in Bazalgette clearly admires de Mol, the entertainer in him leavens the plot with laugh-out-loud anecdotes while the scholar gets down the fruit of his 160 interviews in details. He is authoritative on social change, the democratisation of content and the opportunity created by change on this scale . . . the book is a fine account of an extraordinary time in the history of television, a time when its activities transcended the small screen and became a part of everyone's conversation, young and old, believers and dissenters, powerful; and powerless' Richard Eyre, former ITV chief, BROADCAST MAGAZINE 'This book is breathtaking' NEW STATESMAN 'Bazalgette is plainly well qualified to write this book: in effect, a history of the origins and worldwide success of Big Brother. The book is always readable; it accounts of the shock and outrage that have accompanied Big Brother's various manifestations are particularly enjoyable' INDEPENDENT 'This is a rattling good business story as well as a tale from medialand' GUARDIAN About the Author Peter Bazalgette is a television executive.