



Toy Monster: The Big, Bad World of Mattel

By Jerry Oppenheimer

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An eye-popping, unauthorized exposé of the House of Barbie

From Boise to Beijing, Mattel's toys dominate the universe. Its no-fun-and-games marketing muscle reaches some 140 countries, and its iconic products have been a part of our culture for generations. Now, in this intriguing and entertaining exposé, *New York Times* bestselling author Jerry Oppenheimer places the world's largest toy company under a journalistic microscope, uncovering the dark side of toy land, and exploring Mattel's oddball corporate culture and eccentric, often bizarre, cast of characters.

Based on exclusive interviews and an exhaustive review of public and private records, *Toy Monster* exposes Mattel's take-no-prisoners, shark-infested corporate style. Throughout this scrupulously reported, unauthorized portrait, you'll discover how dangerous toys are actually nothing new to Mattel, and why its fearsomely litigious approach within the brutal toy business has helped their products dominate potential rivals such as Bratz.

- Introduces you to the larger-than-life personalities that have shaped Mattel's eccentric world
- Offers an inside look- from an experienced author-at the scandals that have been a part of this iconic company
- Jerry Oppenheimer is also the author of *Madoff with the Money*, an in-depth look at Bernie Madoff the man and his billion dollar scam

Engaging and accessible, *Toy Monster* shows you why today's toy business isn't always fun and games.

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Editorial Review

Amazon.com Review

Five Questions for Jerry Oppenheimer, author of *Toy Monster: The Big, Bad World of Mattel*



Mattel is a beloved and iconic toy company – what first inspired you to write an expose of the “secret side” of the company?

All of my previous books have been about iconic people and dynasties – The Kennedys, Clintons, Hiltons, Martha Stewart, Barbara Walters, Jerry Seinfeld. But for my ninth book I decided to write about an iconic institution, one that was a household name whose products had a profound impact on generations. Mattel fit the profile – especially since it was in the headlines for the massive toy recalls in 2007, and with the iconic Barbie doll’s 50th anniversary looming this year.

How did you gather all the information that you discuss in the book?

I gathered everything that was in the public record about Mattel, going back to its earliest days to the present, more than 60 years worth. That kind of organization is important for a biography such as the one I planned to write about Mattel. Then I began doing the legwork, tracking down former and present Mattel employees and executives, and interviewing them on the record about their experiences at Mattel, about the company’s corporate culture, and cast of characters. Then came the immense job of organizing all of that material and research and writing what I hope readers will enjoy and from which they will learn.

What was the most shocking revelation you uncovered in the course of writing *Toy Monster*?

There were many jaw-droppers and shockers that surfaced during my research. One especially was the vicious feud between Jack Ryan, the Father of Barbie, and Ruth Handler, the co-founder of Mattel, over who conceived and developed the company’s best-known and biggest-selling toy, Barbie.

The book reveals many little-known facts about the company history of Mattel and the odd corporate culture. What, in your opinion, is the most misconstrued assumption in popular opinion that you address in *Toy Monster*?

During the course of my research, I discovered that Jack Ryan was the key person to bring Barbie in to the world, but that Handler, after Ryan’s death, dismissed and denigrated his major contributions, taking all credit for the iconic doll. After Ryan committed suicide, Handler wrote an autobiography and etched her story in stone that Barbie was all her idea from start to finish, and that myth has since been perpetuated. For the first time *Toy Monster* gives Ryan’s side of the previous untold story, and flips the birth of Barbie 180 degrees.

What’s the one thing you’d like readers to take away after reading *Toy Monster*?

Don’t be fooled by those wonderful playthings. Behind the scenes the big business of toys is a highly

competitive battleground, and is far from fun and games.

Bob Eckert

Eckert became the big cheese at Mattel as CEO after a long career at Kraft Foods. A shrewd, but mild-mannered Midwesterner who is compared to the likeable Chevy Chase character Clark Griswold in "National Lampoon's Vacation", he was at the helm during the Toy Terror summer of 2007 when millions of Mattel toys made in China had to be recalled because of dangerous lead in the paint. The media, the U.S. Congress, and furious parents scandalized Mattel. Also during his reign, Eckert saw Barbie's sales and popularity plummet when an upstart series of sexy dolls – the Bratz Pack – hit the toy scene, leading to the Barbie vs. Bratz toy trial of the century. Review

"Jerry Oppenheimer, best known for mordant biographies like "Just Desserts" (about Martha Stewart) or "State of a Union" (on Bill and Hillary Clinton's marriage), has now trained his sights on the world's biggest toy company -- its egos, scandals and flawed products. In his toyland, nothing is cute." (*The Wall Street Journal*) Oppenheimer (*Just Desserts*) takes a tour of Mattel's seamier side, highlighting its dubious corporate practices and kooky cast in this scathing portrait to be published to coincide with Barbie's 50th anniversary. Drawing on personal interviews and public sources, Oppenheimer paints a bleak picture of the peculiar practices of the adults running the toy company—including the "playboy" Jack Ryan, known as the "Father of Barbie" and rumored to be sexually obsessed with his creation, and Mattel cofounder and white-collar criminal Ruth Handler, who took credit for Barbie's invention. The author chronicles the "Doll Wars"—the fierce competition and eventual litigation between Mattel and the creators of the rival Bratz line, as well as 2007's "Black Friday the 13th," when potentially deadly magnets and lead paint in the company's most popular toys led to two massive recalls. Executive scapegoats and backpedaling resulted in public lashing from the media and intense public mistrust. Fast-paced and engaging, this exposé will absorb readers until the last page and will forever change the way they think about the company. (Mar.) (*Publishers Weekly*, January 26, 2009)From the Inside Flap

From Boise to Beijing, Mattel's toys dominate the universe. Its no-fun-and-games marketing muscle reaches some 140 countries, and its iconic products—Barbie, Hot Wheels, and Chatty Cathy, to name a few—have been a part of our culture for generations. Now, in this intriguing and entertaining exposé, *New York Times* bestselling author Jerry Oppenheimer places the world's largest toy company under a journalistic microscope, uncovering the dark side of toy land, and exploring Mattel's oddball corporate culture and eccentric, often bizarre, cast of characters. Based on exclusive interviews and an exhaustive review of public and private records, *Toy Monster* exposes Mattel's take-no-prisoners, shark-infested corporate style.

Throughout this scrupulously reported, unauthorized portrait, you'll discover how dangerous toys are actually nothing new to Mattel, and why its fearsomely litigious approach within the brutal toy business has helped their products dominate over potential rivals such as Bratz. But this is only part of the story. Along the way, you'll also become familiar with the larger-than-life personalities who have shaped Mattel's eccentric world. There's cofounder Ruth Handler, a "one-woman sales-merchandising-promotion-administrative force, a sort of industrial Orson Welles," who becomes a white-collar criminal. There's Jack Ryan, the "Father of Barbie," whose second of five wives calls him "a full-blown seventies-style swinger into wife-swapping and sundry sexual pursuits as a way of life." And don't forget CEO Robert Eckert, who came from the worlds of processed cheese and hot dogs to lead Mattel—only to get grilled by the U.S. Congress, and the world press, in the lead-paint-and-dangerous-magnets cause célèbre. The phenomenal Barbie brand's 50th anniversary arrives in 2009, hot on the heels of the China Toy Terror recall scandal that has tarnished Mattel's image in the hearts and minds of millions of people worldwide. *Toy Monster* takes you inside the many scandals that have been a part of this company, and shows you why today's toy business isn't always fun and games. Users

ReviewFrom reader reviews:

Sharon Gaines:What do you think of book? It is just for students as they are still students or this for all people in the world, the actual best subject for that? Just simply you can be answered for that issue above.

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Geraldine Carlson:The book untitled Toy Monster: The Big, Bad World of Mattel contain a lot of information on the item. The writer explains her idea with easy approach. The language is very easy to understand all the people, so do certainly not worry, you can easy to read it. The book was published by famous author. The author gives you in the new time of literary works. You can actually read this book because you can read on your smart phone, or device, so you can read the book throughout anywhere and anytime. If you want to buy the e-book, you can start their official web-site as well as order it. Have a nice examine.

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