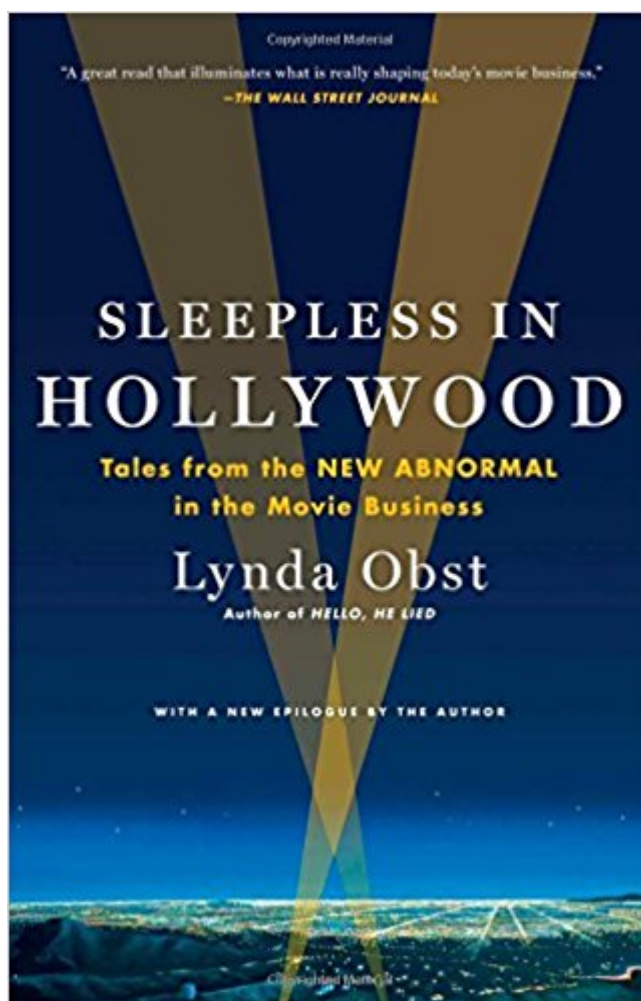


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# Sleepless In Hollywood: Tales From The New Abnormal In The Movie Business



## Synopsis

The veteran producer and author of the bestseller *Hello, He Lied* takes a witty and critical look at the new Hollywood and why the movie business is floundering. In a new introduction, she describes the tumultuous seasons that followed and predicts the crises still to come. Over the past decade, producer Lynda Obst gradually realized she was working in a Hollywood that was undergoing a drastic transformation. The industry where everything had once been familiar to her was suddenly disturbingly strange. Combining her own industry experience and interviews with the brightest minds in the business, Obst explains what has stalled the vast movie-making machine. The calamitous DVD collapse helped usher in what she calls the *New Abnormal* (because Hollywood was never normal to begin with), and studios are now heavily dependent on foreign markets for profit, a situation which directly impacts the kind of entertainment we get to see. Can comedy survive if they don't get our jokes in Seoul or allow them in China? Why are studios making fewer movies than ever—and why are they bigger, more expensive, and nearly always sequels or recycled ideas? Obst writes with affection, regret, humor and hope, and her behind-the-scenes vantage point allows her to explore what has changed in Hollywood like no one else has. This candid, insightful account explains what has happened to the movie business, and explores whether it'll ever return to making the movies we love—the classics that make us laugh or cry, or that we just can't stop talking about.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Obst's Hello, He Lied (1996) was both a survivor's guide to Hollywood and a memoir; her latest outing mixes her firsthand account of navigating the changing movie- and television-making business with the perspectives of other industry bigwigs. The producer of hit movies such as Sleepless in Seattle and Contact, Obst left a deal at Fox to work at Paramount in the late 1990s, just before a decade of upheaval hit the studio. As DVD revenues began to disappear, thanks to the rise of digital streaming and piracy, the studios saw their profit margins cut drastically and looked to other forms of revenue, such as international box-office numbers. Obst weathered the storm at Paramount for a decade, making the hit How to Lose a Guy in 10 Days, before losing her deal and moving over to Sony, where she ventured into television, which she found to be overtaking features in terms of quality and star power. Written in warm, conversational prose, Obst's tales from the movie front together offer an engrossing look at the state of the entertainment industry today. --Kristine Huntley --This text refers to the Hardcover edition.

"[A] fascinating memoir-primer on the movie industry. A great read that illuminates what is really shaping today's movie business. (The Wall Street Journal)" "[A] witty and wise new primer" (The Washington Post) "[A] must-read on the ever-evolving movie industry accessible and entertaining. Obst pulls back the curtain on an industry built on lies and illusion, allowing readers to get in on the ongoing joke. (Publishers Weekly)" "From her unique perch as a maker of real movies not sequels, prequels, or reboots Lynda Obst explains why the movies we all loved growing up don't get made anymore. With her sharp wit, she gives an inside account of how the industry has changed but also offers hope that Hollywood will meet the challenges of the digital age and the global marketplace. If you love movies, this is a must read. (Arianna Huffington)" "A useful primer if you haven't quite figured out why so many blockbusters take place in China these days. (Forbes)" "A real pro Lynda Obst has written a realistic book about making film into reality in these days of extremes....She describes what might, may, will happen...A wonderful text book full of mysteries, loss and longing. I just couldn't stop reading it, even though I have never had movie-making impulses." (Liz Smith, Huffington Post) "If you find yourself reaching for any excuse not to walk into a movie theater these days, here's producer Lynda Obst to explain why in her wildly readable X-ray of contemporary Hollywood. A must read for anyone wondering what happened to the movies we used to love. (Peter Biskind, author of Easy Riders, Raging Bulls)" "Written in warm, conversational prose, Obst's tales from the movie front together offer an engrossing look at the state of the entertainment industry today."

(Booklist) — "Obst...casts a sharp eye over recent developments in Tinseltown. Depth of detail and shrewd illustrative examples make this a must-read for anyone interested in the movie business." (Kirkus Reviews)

It's really frustrating as a movie lover to have so many weekends with nothing for me to see. This happens to many as they age and don't care for the youthful, tent pole, special effects movies that are now offered. The movies that are created to spin off sequels. THIS BOOK EXPLAINS THIS TREND! And it does it from the point of view of a very bright successful producer, Linda Obst who previously wrote another fascinating book, "Hello, He Lied" which I strongly recommend. In this book she examines the trends that are changing Hollywood and not to the better for people like me. Maybe the most salient fact is the percentage of foreign viewership going from 20% to over 50% so character stories where the dialog doesn't translate well are very difficult to get made in this environment given the high cost to produce movies. Another subject touched briefly but well is the trends in financing movies and the micro movie trend. Also interesting is her move to television producing as she sees her movie job disappear. This is followed by great dialog about her relationships as an on site producer at different studios. Just look at the great and popular series being done on TV like "Breaking Bad" to see where some talent is now being directed. Overall, this is the ultimate current book about the movie business, the good and the bad. I couldn't recommend this book higher.

Just as her first book "Hello, He lied" is the best book written about a studio producer navigating the political games played and survival in Hollywood, Lynda Obst's second book is beyond excellent. Former NY Times reporter, she writes with an impressive powerful competence and first class stylization re her transformation from a studio feature film producer to studio TV produce. For me this book was a game changer as following her sage advice and insights, I am guided by the light of her inspiration in my own transformation. I highly recommend BOTH her books. This is a lioness of a woman, which one must be to succeed in Hollywood, and she her writing is gripping, and highly informative, invaluable to anyone interested in a Hollywood studio career. Having a brother, Rick Rosen, who is head of the TV Dept. at WME helps.

Lynda Obst's second book is a gem. If you really want to know the inner-workings and future of Hollywood, this book is the one to read. I learned a great deal about how studio's select projects and where their motivation is coming from -- International money and audiences. As a screenwriter,

this book gave me insight into why certain genres are more likely to sell than others (and get produced). There are many solid interviews with studio moguls and top producers here as well. I found Obst's writing to be candid, often humorous, and clear about an industry that can be a mystery. The ending sections about streaming and the future of television producing and writing are terrific. Great job.

Written from an insider's point of view, Linda Obst has been instrumental in producing some of the great romantic comedies we may be saying good bye to. Even as she chronicles the fall of Paramount as an effective studio, she also provides some vivid clues as to why we're only getting big-budget action flicks or franchise vehicles since it is the motto of every business to adapt to survive, perhaps not noticing the failure to promote quality becoming a marker of why the box office is stuffed with nothing but formula and fluff. Part of this is due to our digital age. Where before the luncheon meetings were a staple of chewing over new ideas and pitching pithy scripts, now it's all done in email and texts, robbing personal contact from the Hollywood equation. Now, in order to adapt to survive, Hollywood is increasingly allergic to "one-offs," the name Obst gives to original productions. She has a chart for the number of sequel-oriented movies or franchise offerings compared to original movies released by big studios, a comparison completely unnerving: 17-0 in favor of the big budget "preawareness" movies. She will continue to give us terminology so helpful in navigating the brave new Hollywood world. These "big" movies she calls tentpoles, while the Indies get the moniker, tadpoles. In a hopeful analysis, she suggests the tadpoles may actually start driving the industry. She concludes the book with the announcement of a Golden Age for television, as the best actors, producers, and writers are now migrating there. If we just look at J.J. Abrams, fully invested in Hollywood blockbusters, Mission Impossible: Ghost Protocol and Star Trek, and it has recently been announced he's been handed the Star Wars franchise, he still found it worthwhile to do a series called Fringe, which may go down as one of the best science fiction series of all time, despite its shortish five seasons. TV has an advantage over movies in the room to meander and also the freedom producers and writers are granted to guide what turns out to be a rather grueling undertaking, causing the slang "The Tube," meaning that your life stops for the duration of the project, like living in underground captivity. But, if the two means of producing entertainment play off each other, it could mean a revival in cinema, especially with the anomalous Bridesmaids unanticipated success. Her news isn't all gloomy, but it's concerning, so the voices of the audience need to be heard through attending movies that don't have that big aura attached. Otherwise, it's all bad aliens, vampires, and zombies. We can do better.

I read HELLO HE LIED & enjoyed it, but this book is even better, containing as it does the reasons for Hollywood's extreme paradigm shift resulting in BENEATH THE PLANET OF THE BATMANS, PART XXVCCII, and the reboot of AVENGERS before the second one comes out. . .Obst dissects what she calls The New Abnormal, giving a cogent analysis of why the death of DVDs, the rise of International, and the surprising rise of quality television have forever altered the ways that movies are made & sold.I worked in the business for 15 years (feature marketing) and I still learned a great deal about the New Hollywood and its MO. Written eruditely, and helped by interviews with many of the real movers & shakers, I pored through this in 2 days!A little surprised at no mention of her longtime partner, the late Debra Hill, but Hill (perhaps fortunately for her) did not survive to see this Brave New World of sequels, reboots, and utter dearth of original ideas.Bravo, Lynda.

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