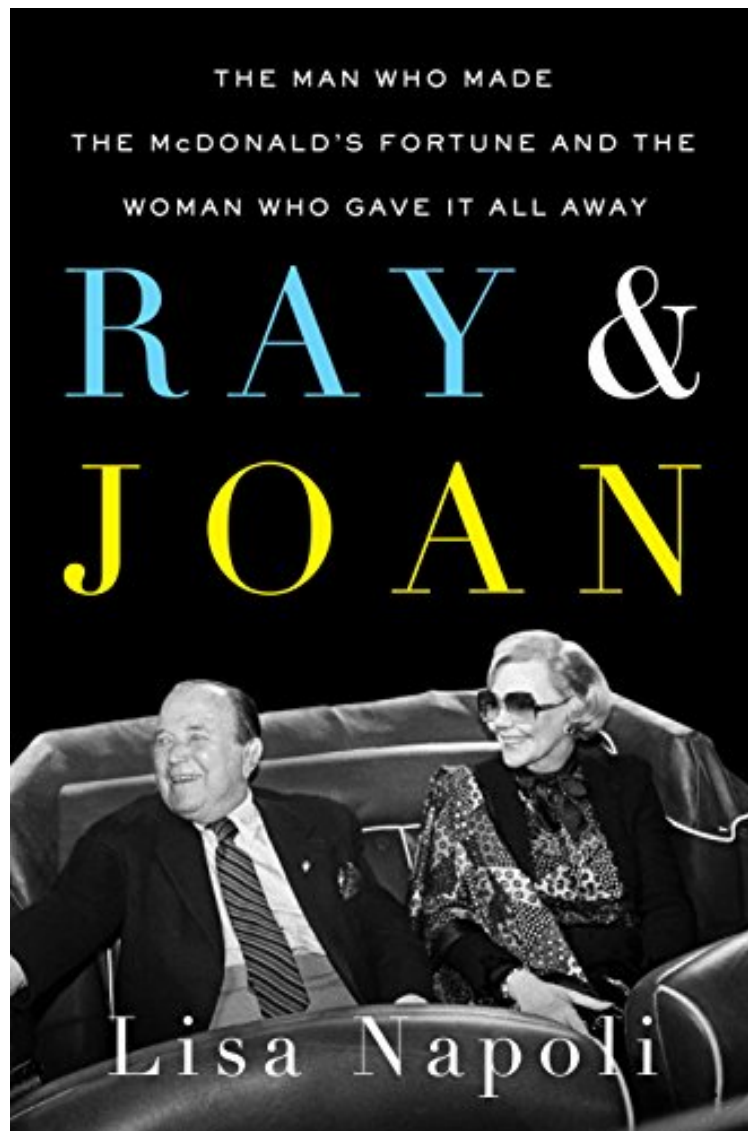


(Free download) Ray Joan: The Man Who Made the McDonald's Fortune and the Woman Who Gave It All Away

## Ray Joan: The Man Who Made the McDonald's Fortune and the Woman Who Gave It All Away

*Lisa Napoli*

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**Lisa Napoli : Ray Joan: The Man Who Made the McDonald's Fortune and the Woman Who Gave It All Away** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Ray Joan: The Man Who Made the McDonald's Fortune and the Woman Who Gave It All Away:

33 of 33 people found the following review helpful. Burgers, booze and brawls - A sparkling new history of the Golden Arches, their chairman - and the billions his wife gave away. By David Kusumoto\* Was Ray Kroc really "The

Founder" of McDonald's? A new movie starring Michael Keaton in the title role - suggests he wasn't. The actual truth is more complicated.\* Lisa Napoli's "Ray Joan" is a sparkling new history that spans from 1902 - the year McDonald's chairman Ray Kroc was born - to the present day - placing everything in the context of America's obsession with fast-food - recreating the entrepreneurial atmosphere of the 1930s through the 1960s - in ways which crackle with electricity and excitement - while exploring the mysteries of a marriage between two people who could not have been more starkly different in domestic and political temperament.\* Whatever antipathy some might have for fast food and the lives of the "top one percent" - it was billions of burgers and fries sold by McDonald's - which built the fortune Ray's wife Joan inherited after Ray died in 1984, triggering a \$3 billion charitable giving spree of the likes not seen before nor since in Southern California. Joan was the greatest female philanthropist of her time - and yet I wonder how many people know her name - or even Ray's name, for that matter.-----\* With the corporate vaults at McDonald's barred from prying eyes - Ms. Napoli interviews company survivors, friends, associates and their children - poring over court documents and scores of publications - uncovering new details about how Ray Kroc - a jovial, larger-than-life and imperious blue-eyed man from Chicago - took control of the Golden Arches from Dick and Mac McDonald of San Bernardino, California - who themselves arrived from New Hampshire during the 1920s. Ray bought the automated fast-food ideas the brothers unveiled in 1948 - which Ray himself did not see until 1954 - for \$2.7 million in 1961, making them his own. He then erased the brothers from his life. The brothers were fine staying small. But it was Ray who transformed McDonald's into a global empire.\* Simultaneously, Ray courts and breaks the hearts of many women - marrying and discarding two of them - while carrying a torch for Joan Mansfield Smith, a beautiful piano-playing blonde twenty-six years his junior - who he meets in Minnesota in 1957 - when she was 28 and married to someone else. Theirs would become a union for the ages, filled with booze and brawls and the kind of behind-the-scenes, plate-throwing turbulence you'd find in a movie - but wrapped in the benevolent flag of the Golden Arches.-----\* I thought I knew most everything about Ray and Joan Kroc. But Ms. Napoli engagingly reveals new details about how Ray enlisted financial wizard Harry Sonneborn to recruit investors - to help him "buy out" the brothers McDonald; how Sonneborn was the brains behind taking McDonald's public in 1965, turning its officers into instant millionaires - and how Sonneborn himself later quit, cashed out his stock and then diminished in Ray's account of the company's history.\* The author also explores how Joan accepted Ray's marriage proposal in 1961, but then changed her mind weeks later. They finally marry in 1969 - but then Joan files for divorce in 1971 - presumably because of Ray's non-stop drinking. A few months later, she changes her mind again, rescinding her filing.\* Meanwhile, Joan's charitable contributions are still being discovered today because she donated impulsively, writing checks while demanding anonymity. A long list of beneficiaries never before published in a single volume is provided - yet its completeness, the author writes, is uncertain.\* Other, better known highlights are re-visited, e.g., Ray buying and saving the San Diego Padres from moving to Washington, D.C.; Ray taking over the P.A. during the team's 1974 home opener, apologizing to fans for their "stupid" and "lousy" play; Joan becoming the team's owner after Ray dies in 1984, the same year the team makes it to its first World Series - just three months after a nearby McDonald's franchise becomes the scene of what was then - the worst mass shooting in U.S. history.-----\* As Ms. Napoli describes, from 1984 onward, Joan became "Saint Joan," a larger-than-life figure in her own right, released from the shackles of playing the obedient wife of a hard-drinking tycoon. Ray was a dedicated Republican - and would have loved Joan's \$87 million gift to the Salvation Army - (and another \$1.5 billion she gave posthumously in 2003). But he would've recoiled at her support of the Democratic Party and her \$225 million gift to NPR (National Public Radio). By the time Joan was done, she had given billions to the homeless, to hospitals and to AIDS treatment centers; she had produced books and films about alcoholism; she had supported anti-nuclear causes and given to universities, parks and zoos.\* Yet Joan was no saint - and the author notes her contradictions and occasionally petty behavior. She told raunchy jokes and kicked people out of parties to make room for others she preferred. She saw herself as an "egalitarian spirit" - perhaps because of her own dirt poor beginnings - but had a blind spot about her priceless jewelry and royal lifestyle. To some, she was a chain-smoking prohibitionist and a sometimes apathetic philanthropist - who couldn't wait to sneak out to smoke a cigarette - or to jump on her private jet for some frivolous reason. She also embraced Ray's habit of having others fire people she didn't like, e.g., she dumped her ex-son-in-law as her proxy on the McDonald's board - by flying in her chief advisor from Chicago to deliver the axe - even though he "lived just up the street from her."\* Yet there's something beguiling about Ms. Napoli's prose - which enhances the paradox of Joan Kroc - without diminishing the achievements which made her the most beloved woman in San Diego's two-hundred-and-fifty-year history. Rarely have so many business- and charity-related details - been packed into a single, fast-moving volume. "Ray Joan" is so entertaining that it glides, page after page. I didn't want it to end. But when it does, the author adds a beautifully detailed postscript - that reveals what became of all the key players in the McDonald's empire - and to those closest to Ray and Joan.\* Before their tumultuous "reign" - San Diego had been a sleepy conservative town that some believe Joan molded into her own image - to be more inclusive and caring, while honoring Ray's patriotism. Despite their roots in the upper Midwest, locals will always feel Ray and Joan Kroc belong to San Diego.\* In sum, Ms. Napoli has provided a spectacular chronicle filled with the grand themes of epic fiction. But this is non-fiction. As a result, in my view, "Ray Joan" is a sterling work of classic journalism - and one of the best

books of ANY year.0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Don't waste your moneyBy DahlinThis book is really nothing more than a rehash of newspaper articles and gives little real insight. I doubt this was the author's intent but she has painted a portrait of a frivolous, shallow, self centered gold digger who impulsively scattered Ray Kroc's fortune about in impulsive, feel good bursts, that is what was left of it after her compulsive gambling and adolescent spending. Not that the alcoholic Ray would have done much better.1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. This is a good book to go with the new movie soon out ...By vgpyleThis is a good book to go with the new movie soon out about Ray Kroc. I discovered that I knew very little about the lives of the Kroc's and they did have some interesting moments. It certainly points out to what happens when people come into great wealth.

The movie *The Founder*, starring Michael Keaton, focused the spotlight on Ray Kroc, the man who amassed a fortune as the chairman of McDonald's. But what about his wife Joan, the woman who became famous for giving away his fortune? Lisa Napoli tells the fascinating story behind the historic couple. Ray Joan is a quintessentially American tale of corporate intrigue and private passion: a struggling Mad Men-era salesman with a vision for a fast-food franchise that would become one of the world's most enduring brands, and a beautiful woman willing to risk her marriage and her reputation to promote controversial causes that touched her deeply. Ray Kroc was peddling franchises around the country for a fledgling hamburger stand in the 1950s; McDonald's, it was called; when he entered a St. Paul supper club and encountered a beautiful young piano player who would change his life forever. The attraction between Ray and Joan was instantaneous and instantly problematic. Yet even the fact that both were married to other people couldn't derail their roller coaster of a romance. To the outside world, Ray and Joan were happy, enormously rich, and giving. But privately, Joan was growing troubled over Ray's temper and dark secret, something she was reluctant to publicly reveal. Those close to them compared their relationship to that of Elizabeth Taylor and Richard Burton. And yet, this volatility paved the way for Joan's transformation into one of the greatest philanthropists of our time. A force in the peace movement, she produced activist films, books, and music and ultimately gave away billions of dollars, including landmark gifts to the Salvation Army and NPR. Together, the two stories form a compelling portrait of the twentieth century: a story of big business, big love, and big giving.

...this wonderfully moving and entertaining biography will have you thinking differently about what it means to give generously and spend lavishly. Marie Claire; Napoli's narrative skills are outstanding. She depicts Ray and Joan in vivid detail and with deep sympathy, something that's especially difficult given how neither Kroc was an especially appealing person. Chicago Tribune; Journalist Lisa Napoli's Ray Joan is remarkable; a playful, even waggish work of biography. Christian Science Monitor; Napoli weaves together the Krocs' personal and business dramas with considerable intelligence; [her] portrait of Joan in her final two decades, impulsively writing multimillion-dollar checks and dispatching her private jet like a pickup truck to run personal errands for friends, is charming and engaging. Boston Globe "Lisa Napoli shows herself to be both a storyteller and a journalist as she pulls back the curtain." San Diego Union-Tribune; Fabulous; entertaining; Ray Joan is a moving, extremely well-written story of big business, big love, and big giving. Huffington Post; [Ray Joan is] a fascinating story, and it arrives at an auspicious moment. The Associated Press; Napoli has done an impressive job of researching and writing the story of two extraordinary people and their considerable accomplishments. Dallas Morning News; [An] in-depth examination; Napoli provides a fascinating look at the founding couple behind a world-altering corporation and far-reaching generosity. Booklist; (starred review) Napoli skillfully assembles the saga of their lives as a couple and just as skillfully portrays Joan's blossoming as a philanthropic force after Ray's death. A book characterized by deep research and a seamless weaving together of the details of different lives. Kirkus; (starred review) The author does an outstanding job; Napoli clearly addresses the flaws of these larger-than-life characters while also endearing them to audiences. A great book that will cause readers to never look at McDonald's the same way again. Library Journal; Part corporate success story, part soap opera, this tale has a lot of territory to cover, and Napoli recounts it all in a breezy, amusing style. She's at her best on the subject of Ray and Joan's complicated relationship, but the backstories; Ray's rise from milkshake machine salesman to titan of commerce and Joan's journey from a difficult childhood to beloved philanthropist; are just as riveting. BookPage, Non-Fiction; Pick of the Month; Napoli's energetic, slightly tabloidesque narrative style make this a must-read for anyone who loves a good love story behind a business success. Publishers Weekly; Napoli's well-researched, compelling portrayals of Ray and Joan Kroc shed light on a dynamic and influential power couple whose generosity continues to improve a world where McDonald's is a household name. Shelf Awareness About the Author Born and raised in Brooklyn, New York, Lisa Napoli has lived for the last dozen years in southern California, where she was inspired to write this book by a public artwork with a mysterious provenance. In her three decades as a journalist, she's worked for The New York Times, MSNBC, the public radio show Marketplace,

and a variety of other outlets. She's covered everything from presidential campaigns, to hacker conventions and a hostage standoff, to the dawn of the World Wide Web. Her first book, *Radio Shangri-La*, is about the impact of media culture on the mysterious Kingdom of Bhutan, where she was invited to help start a radio station at the dawn of democratic rule. A graduate of Hampshire College, Lisa leads an award-winning volunteer cooking group at the Downtown Women's Center on Skid Row in Los Angeles. She's also the founding board chair of the Bhutan Media Society, an all-volunteer news outlet created by Bhutanese refugees in diaspora.