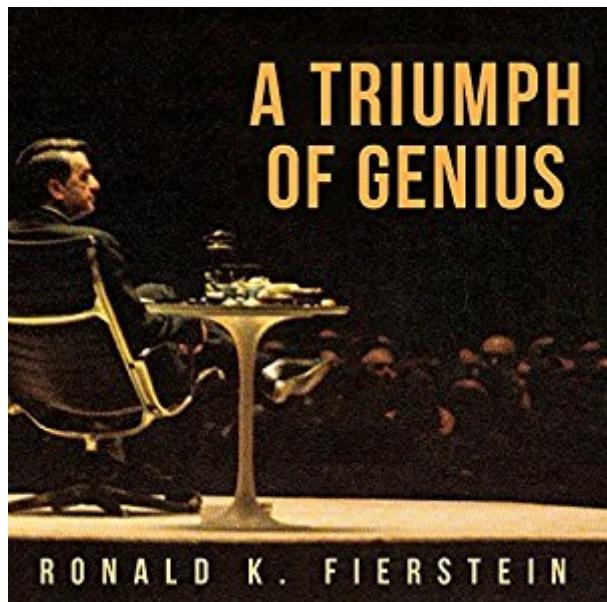


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A Triumph Of Genius: Edwin Land, Polaroid, And The Kodak Patent War



Synopsis

This riveting biography from the American Bar Association visits the spectacular life of Edwin Land, breakthrough inventor. At the time of his death, he stood third on the list of our most prolific inventors, behind only Thomas Edison and one of Edison's colleagues. Land's most famous achievement was the creation of a revolutionary film-and-camera system that could produce a photographic print moments after the picture was taken. In *A Triumph of Genius*, you'll learn details of Land's involvement over four decades with top-secret U.S. military intelligence efforts during World War II and through the Cold War in the service of seven American presidents. Additionally you'll thrill to the compelling firsthand look at one of our nation's most important legal battles over intellectual property--Polaroid versus Kodak. The conflict led to an epic legal battle, a dramatic event for Land, who, from the witness stand, personally starred in a compelling courtroom drama.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Finally a Dr. Land Book that could be a great movie!As a 27 year employee of Polaroid, who has read most of the Polaroid books, notably, Victor McElhenyâ™s, *Insisting on the Impossible* and Peter Wensbergâ™s, *Landâ™s Polaroid*, I think Ronald Fiersteinâ™s, *A Triumph of Genius* captured Dr. Edwin H. Landâ™s true persona with remarkable clarity. My own Polaroid history, *Fall of an Icon- Polaroid* after Edwin H. Land chronicles the rise and fall of Polaroid as seen from inside this once great company; but after several years of personal research on Land, I learned a lot in reading *A Triumph of Genius*.The first quarter of this book describes Landâ™s early life; Harvard

experience; Polarizer development and World War II support. I had always thought Land was being a smart businessman when he engulfed the new Polaroid in applying his Polarized film to the war efforts. Fierstein paints Land as true patriot, wanting to rid the world of the evil Naziâ™s- connected to his Jewish familyâ™s escape from oppressive Russia. When Land met with President Eisenhower (as part of Landâ™s decades long service on Presidential Scientific advisory committees), Ike posed the question during early cold war with Russia, âœI wish I knew what was going on over there with their long range missiles.â• Land responds, according to Fierstein: âœWhy donâ™t we go look?â• This was the genesis of the U2 spy plane program led on several fronts by Dr. Land. Truly a great scene in a Dr. Land movie!The next quarter of the book dwells a bit too tediously, in my mind, on the discovery portion of the Polaroid vs. Kodak lawsuit. The actual trial sections were however, detailed but exciting and suspenseful, even for someone who knew the results.

Having just read Ron Fierstein's riveting work, let me invite you to return with us now to those thrilling days of yesteryear, when photographs were captured on film, and "instant photography" had just been pioneered by Edwin Land's Polaroid Corporation.Fierstein's work profiles a company built by a visionary techie in competition with the reigning monarch of photography, Kodak of the Yellow Box. It will be instructive to those who aspire to chart the path of businesses that battle for hegemony by introducing products embodying "disruptive" technology. (Are you listening, denizens of Silicon Valley?)Fittingly, I write this on April 26, 2015, being celebrated as World Intellectual Property Day. The fulcrum of Fierstein's narrative is the patent litigation that Polaroid pursued and won against Kodak, after Kodak introduced its own version of a one-step instant color photography system. As an attorney in the law firm that represented Polaroid in that suit, the author was in the catbird seat to gain intimate knowledge of the facts and strategy. He now has effectively realized the opportunity that arises with the passage of time, to reveal in detail the hitherto-secret backroom machinations of the disputing parties. For my colleagues in the patent profession, it is a "must read" case study that illuminates strategy and tactics that eventually succeeded in eliminating the me-too Kodak product from the marketplace. To me, it demonstrates the ultimate triumph of the U.S. patent system. At this point in history, the public value of having a system of patents is under question, and the courts and Congress are being encouraged to whittle away at the protections ostensibly provided by patents.

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