



# David Susskind: A Televised Life

*Stephen Battaglio*

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*A rich biography of one of the most important cultural figures of the '50s, '60s and '70s—maverick television producer and talk show host David Susskind*

A flamboyant impresario who began his career as an agent, David Susskind helped define a fledgling television industry. He was a provocateur who fought to bring high-toned literary works to TV. His series *East Side/West Side* and *N.Y.P.D.* broke the color barrier in casting and brought gritty, urban realism to prime time. He indulged his passion for issues and ideas with his long running discussion program, first called *Open End* and then *The David Susskind Show*, where guests could come from The White House one week and a whore house the next. The groundbreaking program made news year in and year out. His legendary live interview with Nikita Khrushchev at the height of the Cold War inflamed both the political and media establishments.

Susskind was an enfant terrible whose life—both on and off the screen—makes fascinating reading. His rough edges, appetite for women, and scorn for the business side of his profession often left his own career hanging by a thread.

Through extensive original reporting and deep access to David Susskind's personal papers, family members and former associates, Stephen Battaglio creates a vivid portrait of a go-go era in American media. *David Susskind* is as much a biography of an expansive and glamorous time in the television business as it is the life of one of its most colorful and important players.

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