

The Life and Times of Paul Raymond: A Journey into London's Soho and the World of Showbiz

Paul Raymond was a larger-than-life figure in London's Soho district. Known as "The King of Soho," he was a property magnate, theater owner, strip club impresario, and philanthropist.

Early Life and Career

Raymond was born in Liverpool in 1925. After serving in the Royal Air Force during World War II, he moved to London and began working in the entertainment industry.



Members Only: The Life and Times of Paul Raymond

by Paul Willetts

★★★★☆ 4.4 out of 5

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In 1958, he opened his first revue bar, the Windmill Theatre. The Windmill was a notorious haunt for celebrities and royalty, and it quickly became one of the most popular nightspots in London.

Property Empire

In addition to his entertainment ventures, Raymond was also a shrewd businessman. He began buying up property in Soho in the 1960s, and he eventually amassed a portfolio worth millions of pounds.

Raymond's property empire included some of the most iconic buildings in Soho, such as the London Pavilion, the Criterion Theatre, and the Trocadero Centre.

Controversies

Raymond's career was not without controversy. He was often accused of exploiting women and promoting a seedy image of Soho. In 1979, he was convicted of obscenity for distributing pornographic material.

Despite the controversies, Raymond remained a popular figure in Soho. He was known for his generosity and his support of local charities.

Philanthropy

Raymond was a generous philanthropist who donated millions of pounds to charities throughout his life. He supported a wide range of causes, including education, healthcare, and the arts.

In 1991, he established the Paul Raymond Foundation, which continues to support charitable work in the UK.

Personal Life

Raymond married three times. His first marriage, to Jean Kennedy, ended in divorce. He then married Lorna Luft, the daughter of Judy Garland, in 1971. The couple had two children, but divorced in 1976.

In 1987, Raymond married his third wife, Nina Calvert. The couple had one child. Raymond died in 2008 at the age of 82.

Legacy

Paul Raymond was a complex and controversial figure. He was a property magnate, theater owner, strip club impresario, and philanthropist. He was also a notorious figure in London's Soho district.

Despite the controversies, Raymond's legacy is a mixed one. He was a successful businessman who helped to transform Soho into a thriving nightlife destination. He was also a generous philanthropist who supported a wide range of charitable causes.

References

- The Guardian: Paul Raymond obituary
- The Independent: Paul Raymond obituary
- BBC News: Paul Raymond: The man who owned Soho



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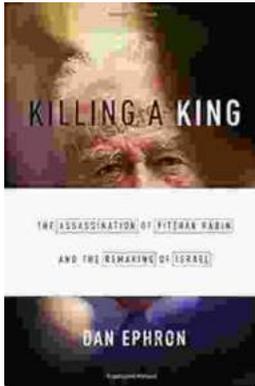
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