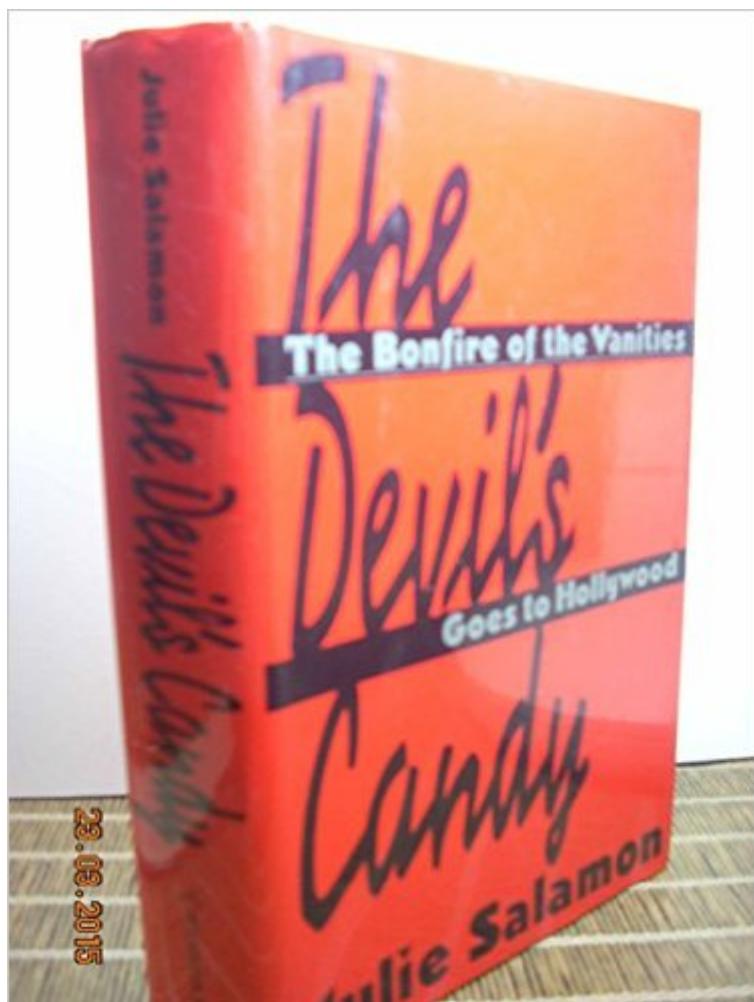


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# The Devil's Candy: The Bonfire Of The Vanities Goes To Hollywood



## Synopsis

When Brian De Palma agreed to allow Julie Salamon unlimited access to the film production of Tom Wolfe's best-selling book *The Bonfire of the Vanities*, both director and journalist must have felt like they were on to something big. How could it lose? But instead Salamon got a front-row seat at the Hollywood disaster of the decade. She shadowed the film from its early stages through the last of the eviscerating reviews, and met everyone from the actors to the technicians to the studio executives. They'd all signed on for a blockbuster, but there was a sense of impending doom from the start; heart-of-gold characters replaced Wolfe's satiric creations; affable Tom Hanks was cast as the patrician heel; Melanie Griffith appeared mid-shoot with new, bigger breasts. This riveting insider's portrait provides a timeless account of an industry where art, talent, ego, and money combine and clash on a monumental scale.

## Book Information

Hardcover: 434 pages

Publisher: Houghton Mifflin Company; 1st edition (November 1, 1991)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0395569966

ISBN-13: 978-0395569962

Product Dimensions: 9.2 x 6.2 x 1.6 inches

Shipping Weight: 1.8 pounds

Average Customer Review: 4.5 out of 5 stars See all reviews (42 customer reviews)

Best Sellers Rank: #334,565 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #17 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Movies > Adaptations #126 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Movies > Industry #929 in Books > Humor & Entertainment > Movies > History & Criticism

## Customer Reviews

The Devil's Candy is the story of the making of *The Bonfire of the Vanities*. It is the best (and possible only) book in recent times to describe how a movie is made, in depth, from inception to casting to production to editing to screenings and focus groups through release and box office. The subtitle, "The Anatomy of a Hollywood Fiasco" is misleading. This is not a book that analyses why a movie production went wrong. It is a journalistic look at how a movie is made, any movie, and this book uses the example of the *Bonfire of the Vanities* because that happened to be the production Julie Salamon was invited to observe from beginning to end. Tellingly, the original version of the book was subtitled instead "Bonfire of the Vanities Goes to Hollywood" and the new subtitle was

obviously added for the paperback version to try to pump up sales. Most of the other reviews have said this book is for industry insiders, but it isn't. For insiders, there is nothing new here. This book is for people on the outside who want to know how the movie industry works. And what we learn is that for all the glamour, movie production is mostly meetings and sitting around sets doing endless takes of scenes that eventually get cut. Assuming you're interested in learning how Hollywood works, from the endless scouting of locations to who is responsible for carrying the director's thermos of coffee, you will be educated. This book, at more than 400 pages, goes into gory detail, from just about everyone's point of view, from the director to costume manager.

This is an exceptional documentary analysis of what goes on in the making of a film. The author, Julie Salamon, was given the opportunity to follow Brian De Palma for the total duration of a very difficult film project, *Bonfire of the Vanities*, the remake of the famous Tom Wolfe novel. It is an exceptional replay of everything that happened from original purchase of the rights to the novel, to the publicity and reviews of the famous movie, to the ultimate collapse at the box office. One only wonders how this book would have read had the movie been a success. While I really enjoyed this book, I would not recommend this book to anyone that does not have an intense interest in Hollywood and the making of movies. Excessive time is spent poring over the roles of line producers, second unit directors and production assistants. The book gives you a great understanding not just of the stars but also what it takes to break into the business and what the career path can be. Particularly as it relates to De Palma's assistant looking for an assistant producer credit and the second unit director looking to break out and become a director of his own films. In addition, it does touch on the stars, both actors and director, and how their idiosyncrasies shape the movie and its making. This is not a short book. So if you are looking for an exciting page turner, this is not for you. You will spend many pages following the tale of obtaining rights to shoot at certain locations, tales of screen tests of local judges, and boycotts and publicity by Bronx politicians. Overall, this controversial book detailing separation of the haves and have-nots of the 80s becomes an even more controversial movie with screw-ups in producing of the movie and casting of the roles.

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