



What Makes Sammy Run?

Budd Schulberg

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Everyone of us knows someone who runs. He is one of the symp-toms of our times—from the little man who shoves you out of the way on the street to the go-getter who shoves you out of a job in the office to the Fuehrer who shoves you out of the world. And all of us have stopped to wonder, at some time or another, what it is that makes these people tick. What makes them run?

This is the question Schulberg has asked himself, and the answer is the first novel written with the indignation that only a young writer with talent and ideals could concentrate into a manuscript. It is the story of Sammy Glick, the man with a positive genius for being a heel, who runs through New York's East Side, through newspaper ranks and finally through Hollywood, leaving in his wake the wrecked careers of his associates; for this is his tragedy and his chief characteristic—his congenital incapacity for friendship.

An older and more experienced novelist might have tempered his story and, in so doing, destroyed one of its outstanding qualities. Compromise would mar the portrait of Sammy Glick. Schulberg has etched it in pure vitriol, and dissected his victim with a precision that is almost frightening.

When a fragment of this book appeared as a short story in a national magazine, Schulberg was surprised at the number of letters he received from people convinced they knew Sammy Glick's real name. But speculation as to his real identity would be utterly fruitless, for Sammy is a composite picture of a loud and spectacular minority bitterly resented by the many decent and sincere artists who are trying honestly to realize the measureless potentialities of motion pictures. To this group belongs Schulberg himself, who has not only worked as a screen writer since his graduation from Dartmouth College in 1936, but has spent his life, literally, in the heart of the motion-picture colony. In the course of finding out what makes Sammy run (an operation in which the reader is spared none of the grue-some details) Schulberg has poured out everything he has felt about that place. The result is a book which the publishers not only believe to be the most honest ever written about Hollywood, but a penetrating study of one kind of twentieth-century success that is peculiar to no single race of people or walk of life.

What Makes Sammy Run? Details

Date : Published May 7th 2002 by Random House (first published 1941)

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From Reader Review What Makes Sammy Run? for online ebook

Lewis Weinstein says

I am about to eat serious crow. When "Sammy" was selected for my book club read, I wondered (aloud) why we should be reading an old book that could not possibly be relevant today. Oh how wrong I was!

Aside from being splendidly written, fast paced and absorbing ... the story, the quest, the always fragile success ... are totally relevant to life in America today.

Who do we know who, like Sammy Glick, is so completely absorbed in himself, who lies constantly and without remorse, and who destroys everyone and every good thing he touches? Who has built the slick facade of his unearned success on a foundation of swirling slime? Who do we know who is never happy, and never will be?

I could go on, but you get the point. Read the book. Turn on the news. It's the same story.

Ben Loory says

a book about an asshole, narrated by a dickhead.

Shelley says

3.5

Jon Boorstin says

He knows whereof he speaks. It's remarkable that he had the perspective to write this book as a young man, having grown up at the center of power in Hollywood. A smart and empathetic assessment of the state of the business he was steeped in from birth. Movies aren't the center of the culture, as they were then, before television, much less the web. If the Sammy Glicks of the world are now hustling Apps, only the details have changed.

Andrei Alupului says

"A grand book, utterly fearless and with a great deal of beauty side by side with the most bitter satire." Right on, F. Scott Fitzgerald.

Marc Gerstein says

Imagine novels can talk and *The Great Gatsby* says: "All right, no more Mr. Nice Guy." The result could be *What Makes Sammy Run*.

Narrator Al Manheim, a run-of-the-mill drama critic for a New York newspaper introduces us to Sammy Glick, a teenage copy boy who wants to rise. Al swats him aside briskly, no surprise given Sammy's irritating personality and the absence of any apparent talent. Bad move. really bad move.

Since when did a outsized ego and lack of talent stand in the way of success! Actually, reading this book might lead one to believe those are the two most important ingredients to success. And its not as if looking around at the real world would paint a different picture. I know it. You know it. We all know it. We've all seen it. And we've all bemoaned it at one time or another.

Are you one of the gazillions who wondered how Hillary Clinton could lose an election to Donald Trump? Read this and wonder no more. During the time I was reading, I heard a podcast in which Tina Brown complained that HC's being a woman got in the way of her being evaluated for who she really was. Uh, no! This isn't the occasion to discuss gender politics except to point out that most people, male and female, fail to be appreciated for who they are unless . . . well, read *What Makes Sammy Run*.

What I appreciate most about this particular approach to this character study is the relationship between author Bud Schulberg and his anti-hero protagonist. It would have been so easy for Schulberg to have written in a sneering judgmental way. And his first-person narrator sure as heck tries to be just that — in fact Manheim's contempt for Sammy is over the top and frequently (almost monotonously) stated. But, but, but . . . neither author nor narrator are every really able to be completely all in on their contempt. They walk a thin tightrope and manage to keep from falling.

Definitely a worthy read, not just for the era in which it was written, but just as much for today.

Viktor says

KINDLE EDITION: An incredible amount of typos and formatting errors.

Very good book. Awesome even. Maybe a bit long on the union politics -- ok, VERY long on the union politics -- but it pays off a bit later on.

Also included are the two original short stories that started Sammy running. Well worth the extra effort to read them -- not that they add to Sammy's "legacy", but rather to see the acorns that grew the mighty oak.

Col says

Synopsis/blurb....

Sammy Glick is a winner. Aggressive, ruthless, belligerently self-centred, “sprinting out of his mother’s womb, turning life into a race in which the only rules are fight for the rail and elbow on the turns.” Sammy storms his way out of the New York slums to reach the top of the Hollywood film world in the 1930s.

Sammy is a way of life, a way that was paying dividends in America’s Depression era and is paying dividends today. For the “Sammy-drive” is still to be found everywhere and will survive as long as money, prestige and power are ends in themselves.

Witty, clever, action-packed and acutely observed, this classic of American literature, which has sold over a million copies, is as compelling and revealing now as it was when first published in this country in 1941.

“The tone is akin to Raymond Chandler.” WALL STREET JOURNAL

My take....

A 1941 novel for Past Offences December meme and fair to say it’s a novel as opposed to a crime novel.

(Click here to see what others have read.)

<https://pastoffences.wordpress.com/20...>

We observe Sammy Glicks’ rabid ambition and ruthlessness as he rises from copy boy to Hollywood big-shot, trampling over all in his path, through the eyes of his “friend” Al Manheim. Sammy doesn’t do friendship, but if he ever did Al’s the only one.

An interesting observation on Hollywood and the American dream played out to the nth degree. Probably the closest modern comparison, I could make would be Gordon Gekko in Wall Street.

Naked feral ambition, lack of a social conscience and lacking totally in any empathy, compassion or consideration for his fellow man – what’s not to like about Sammy? Haha.... you don’t ever totally abhor him, in fact a sneaking admiration for his particular skill-set lingers.

Manheim banished from Hollywood after Sammy double-crosses the fledgling writer’s guild eventually discovers the roots of Sammy’s *raison d’etre* and “what makes him run” in an uncovering of a poverty stricken childhood in a Jewish slum in New York.

Eventually Sammy meets his match, when he encounters someone who can run faster than himself.

I thought unconsciously, I had been waiting for justice suddenly to rise up and smite him in all its vengeance, secretly hoping to be around when Sammy got what was coming to him; only I had expected something conclusive and fatal and now I realised what was coming to him was not a sudden pay-off but a process, a disease he had caught in the epidemic that swept over his birthplace like plague; a cancer that was slowly eating him away, the symptoms developing and intensifying: success, loneliness, fear. Fear of all the bright young men, the newer, fresher Sammy Glick’s that would spring up to harass him, to threaten him and finally to overtake him.....

It was too late to hate him or change him.....Sammy's will had curled in on itself, like an ingrown hair festering, spreading infection.

Budd Schulberg was an American screenwriter, television producer, novelist and sports writer. He was known for his 1941 novel, *What Makes Sammy Run?*, his 1947 novel *The Harder They Fall*, his 1954 Academy Award-winning screenplay for *On the Waterfront*, and his 1957 screenplay for *A Face in the Crowd*.

Bought copy recently from Amazon.

Read in December, 2015

<http://col2910.blogspot.co.uk/2015/12...>

Nick says

Tight, succinct writing. Schulberg is a master storyteller who doesn't waste a word. He knows how to stick to a theme. This moral cautionary tale about a Hollywood writer consumed by his ambition should be a textbook for good writing.

Nicholas says

This is what you could become. Running forever to reach what? Whatever. The quotes'll capture it.

Quotes:

"I can still see Sammy racing between the desks, his tie flying wild-eyed, desperate."

"The world was a race to Sammy. He was running against time."

"Ability to absorb insults and embarrassment like a sponge was turning out to be one of his greatest accomplishments."

"That was because I didn't know as much about Sammy Glick then as I do now, or about the world either. It was funny as time went on how the more I learned about one the more I understood about the other."

"Most of us are ready to greet our worst enemies like long-lost brothers if we think they can show us a good time, if we think they can do us any good or if we even reach the conclusion that being polite will get us just as far and help us live longer."

"The theater entrance was full of excitement that came mostly from women who were attracted to the leading man, and men resentful or regretful that they would never go to bed with anybody like the star, and unimportant people who idealized their envy into admiration and kids who wanted to have more autographs than anybody else in the world."

"It struck me that Julian and Sammy must have been just about the same age, twenty-two or -three, probably brought up in the same kind of Jewish family, same neighborhood, same schooling, and started out with practically the same job. Any yet they couldn't have been more different if one had been born an Eskimo and

the other the Prince of Wales. And there were so many Julian Blumbergs in the world. Jews without money, without push, without plots, without any of the characteristics which such experts on genetics as Adolf Hitler, Henry Ford and Father Coughlin try to tell us are racial traits. I have seen too many of their lonely frightened faces packed together in subways or staring out of thousands of dingy rooms as my train hurled past them on the elevated from 125th Street into Grand Central, too many Jewish nebs and poets and staving tailors and everyday little guys to consider the fascist answer to What Makes Sammy Run?"

"Truth is never hard to recognize. Nothing is ever quite so drab and repetitious and forlorn and ludicrous as truth."

"But I've been dreaming. Know who it was about? Sammy Glick. He was climbing up a rope and I was chasing him, only the rope didn't seem to be tied to anything-just going straight up in the air. And every time he got near the end, it just kept getting longer. And then I fell off..."

"Sometimes it left me sick to think what a tremendous burning and blinding light ambition can be where there is something behind it, and what a puny flickering sparkler when there isn't. Sammy's flame was deceptive because you were always looking at it through the powerful magnifying glass of his own ego. But when the telephone wires failed to transmit the magnetic current it was like standing off and looking at a small, cold star."

"I wonder what would happen if Sammy used all that energy and imagination to create something-not just to devise ways of reaching the top without creating anything."

"Sammy Glick may get everything else, I thought, but by God this is a pleasure he'll never know, the joy of writing that first line on the pad, which sounds so beautiful now and so lousy later, the tremendous pleasure and labor of creating something you believe in."

"It would have been funnier if it hadn't contained so much horror, the horror of a foetus called Sammy Glick sprinting out of his mother's womb, turning life into a race in which the only rules are fight for the rail and elbow on the turns and the only finish line is death."

"He didn't seem to know what to do with himself when he wasn't talking to somebody."

"No matter where he would ever be, at banquets, at gala house parties, in crowded night clubs, in big poker games, at intimate dinners, he would still be wandering alone through all his brightly lit rooms. He would still have to send out frantic S.O.S.'s to Sheik, that virile eunuch: Help! Help! I'm lonely. I'm nervous. I'm friendless. I'm desperate. Bring girls, bring Scotch, bring laughs. Bring a pause in the day's occupation, the quick sponge for the sweaty marathoner, the recreational pause that is brief and vulgar and titillating and quickly forgotten, like a dirty joke."

"I thought how unconsciously, I had been waiting for justice suddenly to rise up and smite him in all its vengeance, secretly hoping to be around when Sammy got what was coming to him; only I had expected something conclusive and fatal and now I realize that what was coming to him was not a sudden pay-off but a process, a disease he had caught in the epidemic that swept over his birthplace like plague; a cancer that was slowly eating him away, the symptoms developing and intensifying: success, loneliness, fear. Fear of all the bright young men, the newer, fresher Sammy Glicks that would spring up to harass him, to threaten him and finally to overtake him."

"You had to make individualism the most frightening ism of all. You act as if the world is just a blindfold

free-for-all."

"All alone in sickness and in health, for better or for worse, with power and with Harringtons till death parts you from your only friend, your worst enemy, yourself."

"Someday he's going to lie in a museum, stuffed, labeled: THIS IS SAMMY GLICK. IN AN AGE THAT COULD NEVER STOP RUNNING, HE RAN THE FASTEST."

"It was America, all the glory and the opportunity, the push and the speed, the grinding of gears and the crap."

Richard Derus says

Book Circle Reads 82

Rating: 4.5* of five

The Publisher Says: Everyone of us knows someone who runs. He is one of the symptoms of our times—from the little man who shoves you out of the way on the street to the go-getter who shoves you out of a job in the office to the Fuehrer who shoves you out of the world. And all of us have stopped to wonder, at some time or another, what it is that makes these people tick. What makes them run?

This is the question Schulberg has asked himself, and the answer is the first novel written with the indignation that only a young writer with talent and ideals could concentrate into a manuscript. It is the story of Sammy Glick, the man with a positive genius for being a heel, who runs through New York's East Side, through newspaper ranks and finally through Hollywood, leaving in his wake the wrecked careers of his associates; for this is his tragedy and his chief characteristic—his congenital incapacity for friendship.

An older and more experienced novelist might have tempered his story and, in so doing, destroyed one of its outstanding qualities. Compromise would mar the portrait of Sammy Glick. Schulberg has etched it in pure vitriol, and dissected his victim with a precision that is almost frightening.

When a fragment of this book appeared as a short story in a national magazine, Schulberg was surprised at the number of letters he received from people convinced they knew Sammy Glick's real name. But speculation as to his real identity would be utterly fruitless, for Sammy is a composite picture of a loud and spectacular minority bitterly resented by the many decent and sincere artists who are trying honestly to realize the measureless potentialities of motion pictures. To this group belongs Schulberg himself, who has not only worked as a screen writer since his graduation from Dartmouth College in 1936, but has spent his life, literally, in the heart of the motion-picture colony. In the course of finding out what makes Sammy run (an operation in which the reader is spared none of the grue-some details) Schulberg has poured out everything he has felt about that place. The result is a book which the publishers not only believe to be the most honest ever written about Hollywood, but a penetrating study of one kind of twentieth-century success that is peculiar to no single race of people or walk of life.

My Review: Budd Schulberg got a lot of grief for writing this "anti-Semitic" shriek of outrage at the backstabbing, grasping, greedy, hollow culture of Hollywood. Well, how else could he tell the story? The moguls of the time were almost all Jewish, and they weren't nice little yeshiva boys but street toughs with

chips on their shoulders hell bent for leather to make it to the top.

Today it is a lot less true of Hollywood's power elite. Not the behavior, the Jewishness. The behavior is intact! Of this I assure you from personal experience. And people of both genders and all religious and cultural affiliations enact it there. Awful place. As one would expect from any place where there is that much money floating around. *Breathtaking* amounts of money. The greed of these people is utterly beyond the comprehension of mere mortals. "Enough" is what you say to the chauffeur you're firing who complains it's unjust.

Reading this book was a bitter and painful reliving of my education in how "no good deed goes unpunished" and I will never re-read it for that reason. But dayum! What a glorious excoriation of the moral midgets who make our movies, TV shows, and music! I am in *awe* that Schulberg got away with writing it and stayed in Hollywood! Steven Spielberg, that maker of iconically positive movies, said the book should never be made into a movie because it's too anti-movie-biz.

Guess what: It never has been. Even Ben Stiller, who wanted to star and direct, couldn't get it done when he was at his peak of fame and power.

Shows you just how true it was, is, and will remain. *shudder*

David says

You might think a book written in 1941 about Hollywood would be too dated to be of interesting to anyone but Hollywood historians. Wrong, baby, wrong! This modern classic is a must-read for anyone who is fascinated by Hollywood, or interested in character studies of incredibly compelling anti-heroes. In the 21st century, *What Makes Sammy Run?* is essentially a historical novel, but it's still a damn fine character-driven story, and let's face it, Hollywood is still crawling with Sammy Glicks.

The novel's eponymous question, "What makes Sammy run?" is asked by the narrator, Al Manheim, a reporter at a New York City paper who first meets Sammy as a bright-eyed, bushy-tailed 15-year-old copy boy.

"I'll keep my ear to the ground for you, kid. Maybe in a couple of years I'll have a chance to slip you in as a cub reporter."

That was the first time he ever scared me. Here I was going out of my way to be nice to him and he answered me with a look that was almost contemptuous.

"Thanks, Mr. Manheim," he said, "but don't do me any favors. I know this newspaper racket. Couple of years at cub reporter? Twenty bucks. Then another stretch as district man. Thirty-five. And finally you're a great big reporter and get forty-five for the rest of your life. No, thanks."

I just stood there looking at him, staggered. Then...

"Hey, boy!" And he's off again, breaking the indoor record for the hundred-yard dash.

Sammy runs, runs, runs, and Al Manheim is as obsessed as he is horrified as he watches Sammy shamelessly lie, cheat, and steal (ideas) and promote himself with the unselfaware genius of the truly narcissistic. He stabs his "patron," Al, to get a newspaper column of his own, and when a young writer comes to him with a story idea, Sammy calls up a big-name Hollywood agent, having no idea just how ridiculous the thing he is doing is, and soon is saying goodbye to the Big Apple and hello to Hollywood, leaving behind his friends, his family, his cast off fiancée, and the guy who wrote the story he's now launching his career with.

Al manages to get snagged into the Hollywood writing gig himself a little later, and soon he's also making more money than he ever did as a reporter, but watching Sammy outstrip everyone. When Sammy becomes a \$500-a-week writer (big money in the 30s!), he's seething with dissatisfaction because he knows some writers are making \$2500 a week. When he becomes a \$2500/week writer, he wants to join the inner circle of \$5000/week writers. And when he joins them... well, who wants to be a mere writer, at the bottom of the Hollywood totem pole, when the big money and power comes from being a supervisor, a producer, a studio head...

Sammy keeps running, and Al is there to witness it. Sammy Glick never writes a word himself or has a single original idea, yet he manages to keep rocketing up into the big time. Al trails behind him, modestly successful, held back by his own basic decency, a trait for which Sammy mocks him contemptuously and yet makes him Sammy's confidant and the closest thing he has to a friend, since whenever Sammy does something lowdown and dirty, Al is the only one he can confide in.

Sammy's rise is the epic journey of an anti-hero. He's a louse, he's a creep, he's despicable! And as horrifically entertaining as watching the Grinch drive a lawn tractor over Smurfs.

Al's obsessive quest to find out what makes Sammy run eventually leads him back to the Jewish New York ghetto where Samuel Glickstein grew up, and then back to Hollywood after being temporarily exiled for his participation in the struggle of the Writers' Guild against the big studios, where he witnesses Sammy's final triumph: marriage to the heiress of one of the Wall Street men who finances the studio, elevation to studio head, being feted and brown-nosed by all, and still, of course, running.

I thought of all the things I might have told him. You never had the first idea of give-and-take, the social intercourse. It had to be you, all the way. You had to make individualism the most frightening ism of all. You act as if the world is just a blindfold free-for-all. Only the first time you get it in the belly you holler brotherhood. But you can't have your brothers and eat them too. You're all alone, pal, all alone. That's the way you wanted it, that's the way you learned it. Sing it, Sammy, sing it deep and sad, all alone and feeling blue, all alone in crowded theaters, company conventions, all alone with twenty of Gladys's girls tying themselves into lewd knots for you. All alone in sickness and in health, for better or for worse, with power and with Harringtons till death parts you from your only friend, your worst enemy, yourself.

Almost as interesting as the story is the historical background behind the novel and the author. Budd Schulberg was a "Hollywood prince," son of B.P. Schulberg, a founding member of the AMPA and a producer for the big Hollywood studios. Budd Schulberg grew up among a Who's Who of Hollywood in the 30s and 40s, so when he wrote *What Makes Sammy Run?*... it made a splash. A big ugly splash. Louis B.

Mayer himself called for Schulberg's exile from Hollywood, and Schulberg heard from his own father those immortal words: "You'll never work in this town again."

Much of the acrimony was over the character of Sammy Glick, whom Schulberg insisted was not based on any one person but a composite of Hollywood personalities and anecdotes he had heard over the years, yet apparently most of Hollywood thought they knew who Sammy "really" was.

However, perhaps the real grievance was what's just a subplot in the novel, the attempted unionization of the Hollywood writers' guild. Schulberg was called a Red because of his sympathetic portrayal of an event that was still remembered bitterly by the major studios decades later.

The edition of the book I read included an afterword by the author, written in 1989, 50 years after the original publication of his novel. Besides containing more amusing anecdotes and name-dropping (apparently John Wayne himself was one of those who never forgave Schulberg for siding with the unions, and the two of them nearly had a fistfight in Mexico), Schulberg observes that when the novel first came out, and over the next couple of decades, Sammy was viewed with fear and loathing, a sleazy anti-hero who is the personification of Hollywood's id. Yet in the 80s, young film and writing students started coming up to him and *praising* Sammy as an inspiration, a role model for ambitious career advancement! Schulberg, still a liberal after all these years, was appalled.

And thus Sammy Glick is not only a fascinating anti-hero, a brilliant portrayal of a rags-to-riches narcissist, but also a textbook case of an author's creation who runs out of control, taking on a meaning and significance his creator never intended.

Highly recommended!

BlackOxford says

I know this guy.

Thomas J. Hubschman says

Good stuff. Great perennial American character, like Gatsby.

A good example, though, of what Pritchett said about psychology being reduced to motivation in contemporary literature. The narrator is obsessed with finding out, well, what makes Sammy run--and run over so many people as he does so.

I admire Schulberg if for no other reason than his old-fashioned attitude that there is more to write about than one's own ethnic group. Waterfront (the novel) could have been written by an Irish-Catholic from Hoboken, e.g. And Sammy would be a great creation if he were Hindu or Zoroastrian.

Richard Knight says

A criticism not only of Hollywood moguls but also of ruthless ambition, *What Makes Sammy Run?* is a landmark work from the 40s that turned out to be hauntingly prescient. Sammy's stab you in the back to ahead mentality represents America, and this book makes for an interesting Hollywood story that is relatable in every aspect of modern day business. You may even have a Sammy Glick in your life, which is scary to say the very least.

The story centers on the aforementioned Glick, and it's told from the perspective of somebody Glick walks over to get ahead, which paints an interesting story unlike the naive narrator from *The Great Gatsby*. In this book, the protagonist, Al Manheim, knows Sammy is slime and you get to see his outlook on the ambitious character. It makes for fascinating narration. In his climb to the top, Sammy screws over anybody and everybody (But they're all Jewish people like himself, which the author, Budd Schulberg, made sure of), making him a pretty repugnant character. That said, he's not one-dimensional, and you even start to feel sorry for him since he can't help himself. Some might even see him as a non-violent sociopath, taking his licks and accepting them if it means it will further his barreling career.

If I have only one complaint with the book, it's that the ending comes rather abruptly for my taste. That said, the book is enjoyable and has well thought out characters and excellent pacing. If you love movies, and more importantly, the story behind making movies, then you should definitely read this book. Maybe you'll uncover for yourself just what makes Sammy run.

Max says

Schulberg hits on something really archetypal here. He chronicles the rise of fictional film mogul who's part C. F. Kane and part Howard Hughes, from the perspective of a narrator who's part Salieri and part Nick Carraway. And it's pretty amazing, actually. On one level, it's a sharp dissection of a 40s insider Hollywood: a takedown of what was wrong with the studio system. But then it becomes more: a portrait of Jewish angst and hardship at the turn of the century. But really, it's an absorbing read simply because the characters are so fascinating. Sammy Glick might seem like a cliché, but he feels real. And the whole thing shines with the crackling dialogue of a great period screenplay. No surprise-- Schulberg went on to write "*On the Waterfront*" and "*A Face in the Crowd*."

Michelle says

This is a great little book. And very indicative of the type of "me first" thinking that has come to infect and identify American culture as we have come to know it of late.

Sammy Glick is the fore-runner to all of the Wall Street bankers of today - the oil industry execs - all of the "contestants" on the reality shows who think that they deserve the prize more than anyone else (and they'll pay people to vote for them, bribe people, etc) - of the fashion industry wannabes who stab people in the back and steal ideas and hoard information - and even more so of today's entertainment industry assistants and self-entitled peons who will stop short of nothing until they are recognized as what they see is their God-

given right to be number one.

Sammy embodies the "you snooze, you lose" mentality of people who haven't the ability or desire to be introspective because what they would see inside themselves would be too frightening and disgusting for them to go on. So they don't look and keep stepping on and crushing anyone in "their" path. He is a fascinating character study and anyone who reads this will recognize someone that they know or have worked with - maybe even themselves - in this character.

As the author wrote in the Afterword of 1989....."The book I had written as an attack on antisocial behavior has become a how-to book on Looking Out for Number One." I think too many people over the past thirty to forty years have read this book as just that and it's very disturbing.

Jessica says

What Makes Sammy Run tells the story of Sammy Glick, a man with boundless ambition and no morals to stand in his way. It is told from the point of view of Al Manheim, who watches Sammy's meteoric rise with anger, jealousy and awe. It has come to be one of the classic "Hollywood Novels" portraying Hollywood at its worst and most truthful, and as someone who works and lives in Hollywood, a lot of what Schulberg was trying to convey still remains true to this day. The book got a lot of criticism for being anti-semitic, but I don't see it that way. Sammy is a money hungry, story spinner who happens to be Jewish. There are a lot of Jewish characters in the book, and they are not all greedy "Shylocks", but a whole range of personalities, as is the case in life.

I think I liked this book because I could relate to its setting, although not necessarily to its characters. It moves at a brisk pace, with biting dialogue and straightforward prose. It reads like an insightful character study of the unscrupulously ambitious Hollywood executive. However, the story doesn't really seem to sustain itself. Eventually the narrator's obsession with the question "what makes Sammy run?" reads more as a desperate fixation than an interesting story point. Most people who have read this have said "we all know a few Sammy Glicks", and I agree with that, which means that we shouldn't find Sammy's behavior all that shocking, or even novel. I found the book to be enjoyable, but when compared with other Hollywood classics like *The Player* and *The Day of the Locusts*, I would definitely put it at the bottom of the pile.

Andy says

Plans to film "What Makes Sammy Run?" have been bandied around for decades, but the movie has already been made more or less via another Budd Schulberg story, "A Face In The Crowd", i.e. boy-meets-girl as casualties of an arrogant, greedy media climbing monster. Anyone who has enjoyed films like "The Player", "The Bad And The Beautiful" or "Barton Fink" will have a great time reading this, and Schulberg never runs out of great dialogue.

Writer's Relief says

Hollywood is a very different place today than it was in the 1930s. Back then, the studio system was in full force, stars were essentially slaves to their studios, and a few major movie moguls ran Hollywood. Budd Schulberg's father, B.P. Schulberg, was the head of Paramount, so the author had a lot to draw from when he wrote his 1941 debut "What Makes Sammy Run?"

"What Makes Sammy Run?" is narrated by newspaper columnist-turned-screenwriter Al Manheim, who is working for a newspaper in New York when he meets a young whippersnapper named Sammy Glick. Eager, ambitious, and ruthless, Manheim quickly develops an admiration and disgust for the young man. Over the following years, Manheim (and the reader) witness Sammy Glick lying, double-crossing, and steamrolling over almost everyone who comes his way in order to reach the top of the Hollywood food chain. While Sammy is unappealing, sociopathic, and downright cruel to his friends and loved ones—his rise to prominence is darned entertaining to read. He isn't known as "the all-American heel" for nothing.

It's no surprise that Schulberg, who would go on to write the screenplay for *On the Waterfront*, writes dialogue that crackles with wit, elegance, and intensity. While reading it, it's almost like watching a screwball comedy from the 1930s with fast-paced dialogue and clever repartee. But underneath the sparkling writing, there is a touch of the philosophical. The title comes from Al Manheim's constant questioning of "what makes Sammy run?" As we learn more about Sammy's life, we gradually learn what he was running away from all those years, and the result is perhaps more universal than we'd like to acknowledge.

There are a few politically incorrect epithets used throughout the book owing to the date of its publication. But for anyone who wants to dive into a world that doesn't exist anymore, or who wants a great portrayal of Old Hollywood, "What Makes Sammy Run?" is highly recommended.
