

= Outrageous Betrayal =

Outrageous Betrayal : The Dark Journey of Werner Erhard from est to Exile is a non @-@ fiction book written by freelance journalist Steven Pressman and first published in 1993 by St. Martin 's Press . The book gives an account of Werner H. Erhard 's early life as Jack Rosenberg , his exploration of various forms of self @-@ improvement techniques , and his foundation of Erhard Seminars Training " est " and later of Werner Erhard and Associates and of the Est successor course , " The Forum " . Pressman details the rapid financial success Erhard had with these companies , as well as controversies relating to litigation involving former participants in his courses . The work concludes by going over the impact of a March 3 , 1991 60 Minutes broadcast on CBS where members of Erhard 's family made allegations against him , and Erhard 's decision to leave the United States .

Representatives of Werner Erhard and of Landmark Education , the successor company to The Forum , regarded the book as being " defamatory " . There are no references or citations provided in the book .

= = Author = =

Pressman worked as a journalist after graduating from college in 1977 . He worked as a journalist for Orange City News , the Los Angeles Daily Journal , California Lawyer magazine , and Congressional Quarterly 's Weekly Report . During his time performing research for and writing Outrageous Betrayal , Pressman published articles for the Legal Times newspaper and wrote articles and served as a senior editor for California Republic . In 1993 , Pressman worked as a San Francisco @-@ based legal journalist for California Lawyer .

= = Research = =

In the " Acknowledgments " section of Outrageous Betrayal , Pressman wrote that he relied upon both named and unnamed sources for information in the book , in addition to " previously published accounts , court transcripts , depositions , and other documents in which various individuals have recounted earlier conversations " . In an article on fair use for Columbia Journalism Review , Pressman noted that he " gathered reams of written materials -- some of it private and confidential -- that were helpful in drawing a comprehensive portrait of my subject " . In the Daily Journal , Pressman wrote that legal counsel for the book 's publisher insisted on numerous changes to the book " in order to reduce , if not eliminate , the possibility of a successful suit for copyright infringement " .

By 1993 , Pressman and St. Martin 's Press had received approximately two dozen letters from Erhard 's attorney Walter Maksym , though Erhard 's representatives had yet to see the book itself . Maksym told the San Francisco Daily Journal in March 1993 that he wanted to " fact check the book " , because he believed that " this is a first @-@ time unknown author who apparently has interviewed only people who have negative things to say " , and stated " We have cautioned the publisher that they are responsible for the accuracy of the book . " Charlie Spicer , a senior editor at St. Martin 's Press , described the actions of Erhard 's representatives with regard to the book as " a desperate campaign by someone with something to hide " . The author himself made specific reference to his legal support , mentioning " the potential legal rapids that confront authors writing these days about controversial subjects " .

= = Contents = =

In Outrageous Betrayal , Steven Pressman gives a chronological account of Erhard 's life and businesses , from high @-@ school years through his formation of companies that delivered awareness training and the later controversies surrounding his business and family life . The book goes into detail regarding his early life as Jack Rosenberg and his name @-@ change to Werner

Erhard , his move to California , and the initial inspirations behind the training that would become " est " . Pressman writes that Erhard took inspiration from the self @-@ help course Mind Dynamics , cybernetics , from the books Think and Grow Rich by Napoleon Hill , and Psycho @-@ Cybernetics by Maxwell Maltz , and from Scientology and the writings of L. Ron Hubbard . He also notes how an attorney skilled in tax law helped Erhard in forming his first awareness @-@ training company , Erhard Seminars Training .

Pressman notes how Erhard and his businesses became successful within two years of foundation , and writes that his awareness @-@ training programs trained over half a million people in his courses and brought in tens of millions of dollars in revenue . The book then describes controversies relating to both Erhard 's businesses and his reported treatment of his family . Pressman also describes the successor company to Est , Werner Erhard and Associates , and Erhard 's decision to sell the " technology " of his course The Forum to his employees and to leave the United States . The book 's epilogue includes a firsthand account of a Landmark Forum seminar led by the former Est @-@ trainer Laurel Scheaf in 1992 .

= = Reception = =

St. Martin 's Press first published *Outrageous Betrayal* in 1993 , and Random House published a second edition of the text in 1995 .

An analysis in *Kirkus Reviews* , noting the choice of title by the author , asserted that Pressman : " makes no pretense to objectivity here . " *Kirkus Reviews* criticized the book , saying " What the author dramatically fails to provide by bearing down on the negative ( to the extent that nearly all his informants denounce est and its founder ) is any real understanding of est 's teachings--and of why they appealed so deeply to so many . " Paul S. Boyer , professor of history at the University of Wisconsin ? Madison , reviewed the book in *The Washington Post* . Boyer wrote that the book " nicely recounts the bizarre tale " of Werner Erhard , saying " Pressman tells his fascinating story well . " However he also commented that the book gives " only the sketchiest historical context " of est and its roots in societal experiences .

A review by Mary Carroll published in the *American Library Association 's Booklist* noted that the controversy surrounding Erhard was not new , but she wrote that " Pressman pulls the details together effectively . " Carroll went on to comment : " *Outrageous Betrayal* is a disturbing but fascinating object lesson in the power of charisma divorced from conscience . " Frances Halpern of the *Los Angeles Times* called the book a " damning biography " .

In 1995 , *Outrageous Betrayal* was cited in a report on the United States Department of Transportation by the United States House of Representatives Committee on Appropriations in a case unrelated to Erhard or Est . This was in reference to a Congressional investigation of Gregory May and controversial trainings given by his company Gregory May Associates ( GMA ) to the Federal Aviation Administration . The testimony given stated that , according to *Outrageous Betrayal* , a member of GMA 's board had been influenced by Erhard Seminars Training and the Church of Scientology .

Dan Wakefield , in his review of the book in " *Tricycle : the Buddhist Review* , " questioned Pressman 's primarily critical description of Erhard 's character . Wakefield suggested that one of the reasons the press or " media " paints a negative view is because " nobody in the media bothers to speak to the people who value in his programs . " Wakefield refers to a study done by opinion analyst Daniel Yankelovich in which " seven out of ten participants in The Forum found it to be ' one of their life 's most rewarding experiences , ' while 94 percent felt the program had ' practical ' and ' enduring ' value . " While Pressman describes the est training as " a mish @-@ mash of self @-@ help theories , common @-@ sense psychology , and dime @-@ store ideas of motivation , " Wakefield , who had experienced the est training personally states , " If I was " conned " by that " mish @-@ mash " when I did est in 1984 , I 'm grateful I was conned into losing the addiction to alcohol that had plagued me for a quarter of a century . "