



# **The Nudist on the Late Shift: And Other True Tales of Silicon Valley**

*Po Bronson*

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## The Nudist on the Late Shift: And Other True Tales of Silicon Valley Po Bronson

As a novelist and writer for *Wired* and other publications, Po Bronson has earned a reputation as the most exciting and authentic literary voice to emerge from Silicon Valley. In his national bestseller **The Nudist on the Late Shift** he tells the true story of the mostly under-thirty entrepreneurs and tech wizards, immigrants and investors, dreamers and visionaries, who see the Valley as their Mecca. Taking us inside the world of these newcomers, brainiacs, salespeople, headhunters, utopians, plutocrats, and innovators as they transform our culture, **The Nudist on the Late Shift** is a defining portrait of a new generation in the whirl of an information revolution and an international gold rush.

Po Bronson is the author of two novels and one book of nonfiction. **Bombardiers**, a dark satire of high finance, was an international bestseller that was translated into twelve languages. **The First \$20 Million Is Always the Hardest**, soon to be a feature film from 20th Century Fox, is a comedy of Silicon Valley. His third bestseller, **The Nudist on the Late Shift and Other True Tales of Silicon Valley**, demonstrates that Bronson's wit and imagination apply as well to nonfiction as to fiction.

## The Nudist on the Late Shift: And Other True Tales of Silicon Valley Details

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# **From Reader Review The Nudist on the Late Shift: And Other True Tales of Silicon Valley for online ebook**

## **Tonydowler Dowler says**

This book was WAY cooler in the mid-90's, when working in a tech firm was still the coolest thing you could be doing in America. Nevertheless, it's still an insightful read. Po Bronson has a good head on his shoulders, and his writing is as relevant in bust today as it was back then. I really need to find out what he's up to now.

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## **Hank Stuever says**

In the mid-late '90s, I lived in Austin ("Silicon Hills"), during what felt like the roaring '20s of tech. I guess it was just the current wave in a series of tech booms. Anyhow, we feature writers were obsessed with finding and reporting and brilliantly writing the story that would sort of bring tech a little bit out of the Wired magazine realm and into the minds of everyday newspaper readers who were still dialing-up once in a while to their AOL accounts. This book was kind of a guiding light for how to do that, for a while; I'm not sure how it holds up. Probably it's a nice time capsule of a certain era in tech.

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## **Peter Aronson says**

Reading this in 2016 makes it a bit of a period piece -- there's no mention, for instance, of Google (Eric Schmidt is mentioned, but as the CEO of Novell), which is a bit of a sign of the changes that have happened in the Valley since then. This book provides an interesting overview of the culture of Silicon Valley in 1998-2000, but I don't think Bronson really got engineers or programmers (but the chapter on Danny Hillis was rather interesting), which kind of limits the understanding you can get of the culture from him.

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## **Michael says**

This book was OK. It was surprisingly dated in it's sproach. That is, it seemed to be a snapshot of Silicon Valley between 1995-1997, and while that is partially interesting for the stories of Sabeer Bhatia, Jack Smith, and Ben Chiu it doesn't really speak to universals like masterpieces "Soul of a New Machine", "Cuckoo's Egg", and "Fire in the Valley".

Worth a weekend read however.

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## **Rahim says**

re-read some of the chapters. Still a great read. Anyone who is a 'true entrepreneur' will enjoy this. I read it when it first came out, when real strains in the dot-com bubble were appearing. Far too many people were coming to the valley with the 'get rich scheme' mentality rather than as true entrepreneurs - who simply want to make something better and maybe change the world in the process. great to read again now, as it seems we're entering another bubble... this isn't a 'how-to' book, more of a 'day-in-the-life-of' book

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## **Irwan says**

This is a book about life in the Silicon Valey when the bubble economy was still booming. People were in frenzy investing, starting up a company, changing jobs to the highest offer, etc.

Being an IT student at that time, I was a little discouraged. That is not the kind of life I want to lead. Despite the heroism, I think they just simply dont have a life.

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## **'stina says**

I read that book in late 2000, right at the end of the dot.com boom. The book went into the culture and atmosphere of Silicon Valley, how weird it was, how exciting it was, how people came to find their fortunes, how money was thrown around like no tomorrow. It was fascinating, and around that time, my boss and I were working on a dot.com thing that never took off.

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## **Patrick says**

Overall I thought this book was somewhat dull though there were nuggets of interesting information in the book.

Silicon Valley blurs the line b/w work and play so that work takes over once life. The problem with Silicon Valley at the turn of the century is that there was nothing present there. Because everything they do is guarded by intellectual property laws, they kept everything they have secret. Whereas the East Coast are populated by the movers and shakers, the West Coast is populated by people who want the opportunity to be a mover and shaker. "For young people, it is very important not to be able to see one's fate, very important to have the sense that one's life is not preordained." Bronson is interested in people's pursuit of an unusual life. I agree with the thinking that as long as people get there work done, there is no need for face time. It seems all Asian countries businesses are based on "relationships" or bribing the right people at the right time. It is hard being a first generation immigrant especially if you are the first from your country to come to the US. Just like Asia, for a company to get noticed they have t know the right people. People in Silicon Valley are optimistic that things will turn around for them when they fail.

Entrepreneurs are willing to defy convention in order to succeed. It is interesting how even leaders of companies freeze when they are in front of many people to pitch an idea. Whereas entrepreneurs have control of all aspects of their company, once they join the market they lose control to the whims of the market forces that may have nothing to do with the fundamentals that they have. People do not get rich on

the IPO rather they get rich afterwards when they are with the company for awhile. Companies who make IPO are beholden to Wall Street's quarterly earning reports. So if they do not make target growth set by Wall Street though they have solid fundamentals, they become a liability and thus their stock sinks. Going public is the only path to liquidity for the VC and the owner though the company will have to suffer the arbitrariness of the market of saying the company is not growing in a clipped pace as it is supposed to grow. For the owners going public confers on them a certain amount of prestige that they would normally not have. Peer pressure causes entrepreneurs to take their companies public so they know what that they have made their companies public too. Stock options are free stock paid to the employees without them having to buy them. For West Coast people, it is the opportunities for success minus the risk since it is stock that was given to them. Since IPO's have become routine, the world of high finance and high tech have met in the middle and have seen the light.

Entrepreneurs are combination of people with ideas and the blind determination to see their ideas come into fruition. Although the founder of hotmail happened to be mathematically a genius, he also came to Silicon Valley that allowed him to pursue his dreams of making a company out of nothing. In his case, he wanted to make a huge company before a product was even in his radar. He had a vision and convinced other people to buy into it. Besides his networking abilities, he also enabled and harmonized the workers he was working with. He relishes the big risk and working toward his vision with a sense of mission.

For Silicon Valley entrepreneurs being cheap initially means being richer once they go for the IPO b/c they save on equity. For programmers, they are highly skilled employees who forgo the chance at millions for a salary and creating a schedule around their part-time careers. An interesting question to ask is if nothing lasts forever should people still form attachments. Max is an autistic programmer who does not know if something will make money or not that is the reason he wants cash up front instead of "worthless" options.

In tech world where products look similar, the sale usually goes to the sales person one likes. Salespeople are motivated by money. While salespeople are motivated by money, they have to have a product which they can sell. They do not necessarily have to believe in the product, they just have to believe they can sell it. Salespeople should listen more and talk less in order for the client to tell them exactly what he needs. If a tech company is a publicly traded company then they have to continue selling stuff per quarter. Each quarter should outgrow the previous quarter's quota in sales which targets are set by Wall Street analysts. Sales people only sell to companies who use their products. In technology, buyers decide the price. According to Bronson, the hardest part of sales is to abruptly say goodbye so the customer will not have time for buyers remorse.

Gilder was a guy who says sensational things to get media coverage so he would get his point across. He believes in supply-side economics and that today's problems will change by tomorrow's entrepreneurial engineering. He believes in the libertarian motive of how the Internet will disrupt Hollywood and the music industries. George was correct in his guess that the Internet would replace the baby bells with ISP and his theory that the Internet would make personal computers obsolete in favor of smart phones and tablets.

In the Information Age, whomever can manipulate information the fastest will lead the future of the world. CEOs love to debate because it is only through debating that they keep their thoughts sharp. He wants companies to think about the long term implications of what they do. Danny's history suggests that he trouble shoots in resource poor places in order to maximize things that work.

Everyone in Silicon Valley is attempting to make things that have not existed before. Bronson believes that to create and risk failing is the essence of feeling alive. In Silicon Valley, having money is a sign of respect. But because there is a lot of money floating around, they do not care about where the money goes so they

allow needless spending all over the place. In the era of Internet expansion, talent is the limiting factor for rapid expansion. People want to work for a company that will succeed not just some company that will make money but tank in a few years. Silicon Valley personnel believe in competition in order to motivate their workers to create value in society via libertarian point of view in motivating their workers toward self-interest the allocation of resources would be maximize which ultimately benefits society and workaholic viewpoint in that anything worth doing is hard. Although Silicon Valley financiers have inside knowledge on how things should run, their knowledge ideally should be kept open to all. So in a way, insider trading occurs in Silicon Valley circles more than traditional circles. Although there is no such thing as company loyalty in the US since the advent of multinational firms laying off people, the Silicon Valley industry people are generally loyal to the industry but not necessarily a specific company. Silicon Valley entrepreneurs tend to think in the short term instead of the long-term effects of their products or their creation of their companies. Silicon Valley employees are motivated by the chance to revolutionize the world via technology and stock options. The Silicon Valley entrepreneur culture is to spread ones interest to different companies so if one goes down then it is no big deal as well as spreading the risk. The companies are also look for VC buyout ASAP unless they believe that their company can revolutionize the world. People in the valley are motivated by totally changing the world through technology. He states that the key to success is to find away to make a difference and everything will follow from personal success to promotions to financial gain. He encourages complainers b/c it is only through complaints that objectives for progress are identified. The tech culture influences other valley non-tech businesses in that the thought process becomes one of not if we can do it but how we are to accomplish the " impossible". The success in Silicon Valley are not scalable b/c it runs on word of mouth of small subset of people who are in the know. (Networking)

Status in Silicon Valley has to do with scarcity so it has to do with what is done right now not what what is done down the line. Thus, status is given to a company that has done the most with the least amount of resources. The new economy rewards those entrepreneurs who listen to the untapped demand of its users. He has faith the Information Age will create added value into people's lives and inject income into the economy.

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### **Sandy says**

I thought this book would be more interesting than it was. It follows some unusual stories about techies in the corporate world. Who cares if a guy likes to work naked in a corporate office when no one is there. It may have been just me but I would have been more interested in it if there wasn't the presumption that techies don't do stupid things that normal people do. I also found the writing style to be more critical of its subject than I cared for. Almost like he was making fun of them and not in a nice way.

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### **Scott says**

You might not learn a massive amount of business know-how, but it's got some good stories on just how manic life can get in start-ups, and how unique some of the people working in them can be...then be thankful of how stable Soupees actually are.  
Plus you can easily read a chapter, then leave it for however long and come back to it later.

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## **Nicholas Moryl says**

Really captures the zeitgeist of the '99 bubble. Still interesting reading for Silicon Valley entrepreneurs today. Focuses a lot on the hustle aspect of building a startup, but I think that's often underestimated. Startups are tough and it's not easy being a founder. The book doesn't gloss over failure stories, and it's important to keep in mind that's (statistically speaking) how most startups end.

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## **Kelsey says**

I loved the author's writing style; it reminds me of Stephen Ambrose. He tells other people's experiences and links them together to illustrate the boom and plunge of the .commer era of the 90s in Silicon Valley. This is not the typical book I would have read, but it furthered my theory that real life is more interesting than fiction.

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## **Jennifer says**

Fascinating, though scattershot, collection of interviews from the dot com ground zero around the turn of this century. You get a real sense of the youth and energy and optimism of the people who came to Silicon Valley. Most seem sincere and almost idealistic. A few are self absorbed and callow but only. George Gilder comes across as a twat.

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## **Carl says**

Although this is a little bit dated, this collection of disparate stories has some very interesting and telling tales of the odd and confused life of people in venture capital fueled software development. The section on sales is one of the best descriptions of the motivations of high tech sales people I have ever read. Some may think these days are over; I can tell you there not.

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## **Two Readers in Love says**

Sample passage (p.248):

"I had a Realtor down in Santa Clara show me a three-bedroom ranch home 'priced to move' at half a million'

'Who can afford to buy a house now?' I exclaimed.

Then she told me how housing prices had gone up \$1,000 a week this past year, with no end in sight.

She said, 'At that rate, who can afford not to buy a house now?'"

Reading journalism about the near past always seems help me put the present media into better perspective; and so, in 2008, I reread this portrait of Silicon Valley when it was at the height of the Internet bubble in 1999.

I think Po Bronson is one of the best contemporary 'new journalists' at capturing the timeless human element of business stories. But, Po Bronson is at his worst when he starts pontificating about 'what it all means.' (For example, in the introduction he makes the blanket statement that "every generation that came before us had to make a choice in life between pursuing a steady career and pursuing wild adventures." Really? The employees of the East India Company, or the space program, or thousands of other endeavors since the dawn of time might feel differently.) While there is plenty of 'here's how the rules have changed' bluster in this same vein, the benefit of hindsight makes it easier to just grin and move past these pronouncements and onto the next part of the story.

The fact that this book still makes for a worthwhile read even when so much of the 'irrational exuberance' has now been tempered by reality is a testament to Mr. Bronson's contagious fascination with people who follow their passions.

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