



# Legal Document

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Massachusetts District Court  
Case No. 1:11-cv-12000-RBC  
**Greenspan v. Random House, Inc. et al**

Document 77, Attachment 5



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**[PROPOSED] EXHIBIT E**

**July 19, 2009 *New York Times* Book Review of *The Accidental Billionaires* by Janet Maslin**

The New York Times

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July 19, 2009

BOOKS OF THE TIMES

## Harvard Pals Grow Rich: Chronicling Facebook Without Face Time

By JANET MASLIN

Though we cannot know exactly what went through Ben Mezrich's mind as he wrote "The Accidental Billionaires," his nonfictionish book about the creation of [Facebook](#), we can perhaps speculate hypothetically about what it possibly might have been like. After all, wild guessing was, or could have been, or possibly seems to have been, Mr. Mezrich's own working method. He didn't have a lot of access. He didn't have a lot of information. Most crucially, he didn't have [Mark Zuckerberg](#), the former Harvard student who is famed for having cooked up the Facebook algorithms and is at the heart of the Facebook story.

So Mr. Mezrich had to do some guesswork about Mr. Zuckerberg. And guesswork — long, lyrical, hash-slinging, protracted feats of guesswork, based only glancingly on the rare incontrovertible detail, like the fact that Mr. Zuckerberg liked to wear flip-flops in college — is Mr. Mezrich's specialty. It served him lucratively, if not well, in "Bringing Down the House," the book that became the basis for the film "21" (another story of smart college kids striking it rich in the real world, in that case in Las Vegas casinos). It should not go unnoticed that Mr. Mezrich started out as a writer of science fiction.

In "The Accidental Billionaires" he so enthusiastically favors hot air over specifics that he waits until the end of the book to offer up three little words that speak volumes about Mr. Zuckerberg's Sphinx-like persona. However shy, vague, withdrawn, affectless and computerlike Mr. Zuckerberg is said by this book to be, he turns out to have business cards that say "I'm CEO — Bitch." That phrase outweighs all 258 pages of Mr. Mezrich's stalling. (The last two pages of this 260-page book are devoted to a list of published sources. Mr. Mezrich relied heavily on The Harvard Crimson.)

The main person to whom Mr. Mezrich *did* clearly have access is Eduardo Saverin, a Harvard contemporary of Mr. Zuckerberg's. "You're the one with the hedge fund, right?" someone asks Mr. Saverin bluntly in this account. Yes, he had done some investing by the time Mr. Saverin, then a junior, met the "moppet-haired sophomore" who was Mr. Zuckerberg at a Harvard party in October 2003. Mr. Mezrich's creative way of emphasizing the time of year is to write that "a stiff, crisp breeze whipped through the thin material of Eduardo's shirt" as Mr. Saverin and Mr. Zuckerberg took their first campus walk together.

We can only guess whether Mr. Zuckerberg shared Mr. Saverin's three principal obsessions: seeking status, meeting hot girls ("hot" is easily this book's favorite modifier) and making money. Cover art depicting martini glasses and a red lace bra may help us with our guesswork there. But what we do know for sure is that when Mr. Zuckerberg figured out how to siphon data out of Harvard's computer system and use it to form a social networking site that became immensely popular, Mr. Saverin was enough of a friend to Mr. Zuckerberg to lend him \$1,000.

And we know that the facts about the early provenance of [thefacebook.com](http://thefacebook.com) (as it was once called) would wind up being debated in courts of law. (We also know that Mr. Zuckerberg has had to make a financial settlement with the founders of a rival Harvard site called ConnectU. They also figure in Mr. Mezrich's story.)

Mr. Mezrich churns up Mr. Zuckerberg's Eureka moments with such inadvertent hilarity that he uses the words "if Balzac had somehow risen from the dead," envisions Mr. Zuckerberg in a "James Bond-like lair," adds an imaginary couple's sexual tryst to complicate Mr. Zuckerberg's surreptitious efforts to plug his computer cable into a port in a dimly lighted room, and describes the first flow of data as a whiz-bang movie scene full of animated special effects. Then he really hits for the bleachers with a few final flourishes about Mr. Zuckerberg. So: "We almost hear the James Bond theme running through the kid's head." And when Mr. Zuckerberg leaves — after the lovers have scampered out of the dark room, laughing of course — we "imagine him noticing, as he goes, that the girl's floral perfume still hangs, seductively, in the air."

Did Mr. Zuckerberg do anything wrong in pirating Harvard's data? "The Accidental Billionaires" does just enough harrumphing about ethics to raise that question. And along those same lines: Has Mr. Mezrich done anything wrong in grossly embellishing, exaggerating and tarting up his material as if he were writing a screenplay? Should the tactics of a script or roman à clef be used for a purportedly nonfiction chronicle?

Should Mr. Mezrich have written about "speeding up the spine of a massive, San Francisco skyscraper" accompanied by "the sickly, soft chords of a brutally mangled Beatles song, pumped through speakers embedded above the fluorescent lights that lit the carpeted, cubic lift" when all he's describing is an elevator ride? (For the record it's an elevator ride that he himself doesn't seem to have been on.)

Probably not. But "The Accidental Billionaires" is so obviously dramatized, and so clearly unreliable, that there's no mistaking it for a serious document. (Julia Angwin's "[Stealing MySpace](#)" is an incisive, well-reported book that provides a vastly better look at the gold-rush origins of the social networking business.) And Mr. Mezrich really is a vigorous storyteller in his crass, desperately cinematic way.

Facebook readers can discover from [Aaron Sorkin](#)'s Facebook page that Mr. Sorkin, of "The West Wing," is adapting this book into a movie. Some of its scenes are bound to be more plausible on screen than they are on the page. Facebook also reveals that Mr. Saverin's favorite actors include [Vin Diesel](#) and [Ashton Kutcher](#), and that he likes [Starbucks](#), iTunes and Facebook, despite the

uncertain note on which “The Accidental Billionaires” concludes. Mr. Mezrich winds up leaving Mr. Saverin and Mr. Zuckerberg in one of his favorite places: cornball limbo. “Maybe he’d never really known Mark Zuckerberg,” the book says of Mr. Saverin. “He wondered if, deep down, Mark Zuckerberg ever knew himself.”