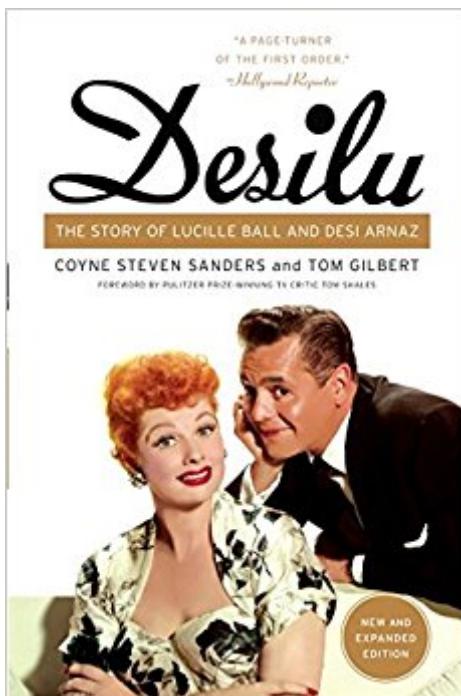


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# Desilu: The Story Of Lucille Ball And Desi Arnaz



## Synopsis

âœFans of The Lucy Show will find Desilu fascinating.â•â "San Francisco ChronicleâœExcellentâ•â "Entertainment Weekly Updated and revised, Desilu is the classic insider account of Lucille Ball and Desi Arnazâ™s romance, collaboration, and success. Hollywood journalist Tom Gilbert and author Coyne Sanders, whose critically acclaimed books on The Judy Garland Show and The Dick Van Dyke Show offer unparalleled insight into some of classic televisionâ™s greatest behind-the-scenes stories, deliver a captivating look at Lucy and Desiâ™s on-and-off relationship, their creative melding of minds, and their rollercoaster ride of fame and fortune. Desilu is an inspiring journey back to the Golden Age of Television, and a winning, unforgettable look at one of TVâ™s best-loved couples.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Forty-two years after I Love Lucy premiered on TV, this first dual biography of Lucille Ball (1911-1989) and Desi Arnaz (1917-1986) painstakingly details their business and personal dealings. The famed redhead and her Cuban husband, who met as young Hollywood contract players, pioneered TV situation comedy by starring in their own series and founding Desilu Productions, which was responsible for such other hit shows as Star Trek and Mission Impossible. Colleagues, friends and relatives--particularly daughter Lucie Arnaz--contribute to this telling of the team's successes and failures. Lucille's obsessive involvements with her co-stars and children and Desi's alcoholism and womanizing come to stand out in sharp contrast to the zany TV antics of Lucy

and Desi, who remain beloved by the viewing public worldwide. The book will disappoint fans, however, due to excessive attention paid to the finances of Desilu Productions. Sanders is the author of *Rainbow's End: The Judy Garland Show* ; Gilbert is an editor for *Daily Variety*. Photos not seen by PW. Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

Claiming to be the first dual biography "supported by family members and close friends," Desilu is actually something more. Here are the familiar stories of the stormy Ball-Arnaz marriage, their phenomenal success with *I Love Lucy* , and their inevitable parting. The real value of this book lies in its detailed charting of the fortunes of the couple's TV studio, which launched *The Untouchables* , *Mission Impossible* , and *Star Trek* , as well as a host of forgettable programs. The authors' something-for-everyone approach--interweaving dishy tales of Lucy's insecurity-fed tantrums and Desi's drinking with yearly accounting of the studio's profits--doesn't always work, but this is still a valuable book about the inner workings of television. Recommended for most public libraries.

Previewed in *Prepub Alert*, LJ 10/1/92.- Thomas Wiener, formerly with "American Film"Copyright 1993 Reed Business Information, Inc. --This text refers to an out of print or unavailable edition of this title.

This book is an eye-opener about Lucy, and even more, about Desi. He was a brilliant businessman who did not get the respect he deserved outside of the movie business. Lots of interesting information about the two of them.

I read this book more as a fan of 50's tv and the historic aspects than as a big Lucy fan. To be honest, I like the old Lucy show, especially the one-hour concept at the end, but have never been a super big Lucy fan. From that POV I did enjoy the book. The author gave us considerable insight into the relationship between Desi and Lucy over the years and how that effected their public and private lives. Since Desi ran the business operations knowing a bit about the personal life helped figure out some of the various moves he made over the years. I'm not an expert on Lucy lore, but I would imagine the author covered her life in great detail here, and Desi as well. What I enjoyed most about the book was how the author filled in the background on various decisions Desi made while running Desilu. Since what he did had a great deal to do with our early TV history it's a kin to being there at the beginning. Much of what we now know as network TV has its roots in Desi Arnaz running Desilu. Desilu started life as a production company formed in 1950 and rocketed Ball and Arnaz to

great success in the business to being sold and merged into Paramount in 1967 and eventually ending up as Desilu Too LLC, which exists to capture proceeds from I Love Lucy residuals, products and projects today. For example, the Lucy Museum in Jamestown, NY is a joint venture between Desilu Too LLC thru Lucie and Desi IV and local businessmen. The Center hasn't been doing well as of late and was rumored to be losing money. Some key managers were fired or replaced and a Gift Shop closed. Some locals are concerned the operation may be closing down soon. However, the Center has enjoyed a small rebound since and has redirected its focus to promoting comedy and young performers, often hosting comedy shows at its Desilu Playhouse facility. Desilu Too also does business with a marketing firm that specializes in departed celebs, like Elvis, etc. It controls use of Ball and Arnaz image but not the 'Lucy' shows, all of which are owned by CBS Distribution at this time (2014). On the weak side I think the book comes up short detailing why Arnaz sold his share of Desilu (in 1962 to Lucy for \$3,000,000). Although it prepares some detail on Desilu operations after the Ball/Arnaz 1960 divorce it leaves out much of the reasoning behind the 1962 buyout. I was curious why Arnaz wanted to sell and what terms he and Lucy had agreed to. All we get is the standard 'Lucy bought Desi's share of Desilu for xxx'. It could have provided more detail of any interaction between the two owners at that time, or any discussions. Arnaz had wanted out of the company since 1956 or 1957 so it's an interesting point as to why he went out when he did. The book does basically the same when Ball sold Desilu in 1967. Suddenly, the subject comes up without any real background or history as it follows Ball to Miami where she is forced to make a decision on the sale. Again, the book gives no details and background on the negotiations with Paramount's owner Gulf & Western. That would have added to why Ball sold out. It does detail the program side of Desilu at the time and its efforts to convince the major networks to buy programs they produced and owned. For years 'The Lucy Show' was the only one Desilu owned with most of its cash flow coming from studio rentals to other programs (like Andy Griffith, Gomer Pyle, etc). Desilu eventually sold three programs; Star Trek, Mission: Impossible and later Mannix. Further research showed that Desilu needed something on the air and turned to the shows at the last minute implying the move was designed to improve its position for potential buyers. Lucy wasn't involved in development of any shows and, unlike Arnaz who actively worked in pilot development, maintained considerable distance from day to day operations. One review at the time said adding the shows increased the value of Desilu by up to \$7,000,000. Ball made over \$12,000,000 on the sale. The book follows Arnaz and Ball after Desilu and details their new production companies. It spends considerable time on Ball's second husband, Gary Morton and his role in her life and business affairs. Finally, the book ends with their deaths, Arnaz in 1986 and Ball

in 1989. Overall a good book. And, I'm sure, not the last on the subject. It has been updated at least twice (2001 & 2011). Lucie Arnaz, their daughter, contributes a lot to the book with special insights about her parents home lives. The content she provides more than makes up for what could have been a direct lack of objectivity from her protecting her parents image. Finally, I find myself rooting for Arnaz. I felt sad the way he turned out. Lucie gave a quote which sums his life up when she noted that, at some point, Arnaz came to realize it was all over, that *I Love Lucy* was it and that his career in show business was finished. His son noted that his dad should have 'had a house and a boat and stayed in Cuba' where he could have lived the life he was best suited for. It was clear that the pressures of running Desilu and his addictions led to his leaving Desilu, ruined his marriage and eventually led to his early death. Without him Ball would have never become the major icon she did under his direction. You could say that he gave his life for show business and building Lucy into a major tv star and Desilu into the industry leader in tv's early days. Arnaz just never gets enough credit but nearly all the blame in the history of Desilu.

This book is just fascinating! A look at two people that were so in love but just couldn't make it work. Tells you ALL about Lucy and Desi from the start of their romance, the years of *I Love Lucy* and after. If you wanted to know what these icons were really like, this is the book for you. The low price for which I purchased this book was well worth it and it arrived in very good condition. Funny, but when it came it had a \$2.50 price tag on the back! Someone got an even better deal than I did!

Don't even remember how many times I watched *I Love Lucy*. Lucille and Desi are the legendary couple. Too bad their marriage didn't last til the end and both of them remarried but they both still love each other. This book give me tears.

I loved the book. It came at a great time also. Only problem which isn't really a big deal I guess is that it is missing one page. I wish that it was written in the description of the book before I bought it but it's okay not a big deal. It was still a great read!!! Thank you

i loved learning all the insider extra stuff about lucy and desi it is a real treat for my collection.

Awesome book

Interesting reading. Rather wordy at times. Learned things I did not already know, especially

regarding Desi.

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