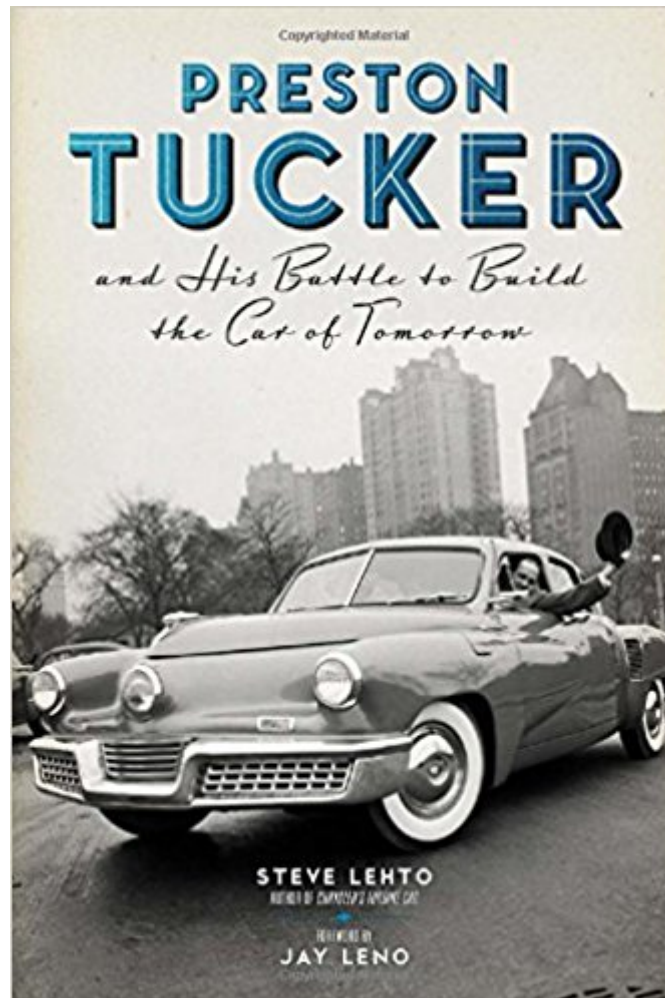




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Preston Tucker And His Battle To Build The Car Of Tomorrow



Synopsis

After World War II, the American automobile industry was reeling. Having spent years building tanks and airplanes for the army, the car companies would need years more to retool their production to meet the demands of the American public, for whom they had not made any cars since 1942. And then in stepped Preston Tucker. This salesman extraordinaire from Ypsilanti, Michigan, had built race cars before the war, and had designed prototypes for the military during it. Now, gathering a group of brilliant automotive designers, engineers, and promoters, he announced the creation of a revolutionary new car: the Tucker '48, the first car in almost a decade to be built fresh from the ground up. Tucker's car would include ingenious advances in design and engineering that other car companies could not match. With a rear engine, rear-wheel drive, a safety-glass windshield that would pop out in case of an accident, a padded dashboard, independent suspension, and automatic transmission, it would be more attractive and aerodynamic and safer than any other car on the road. But as the public eagerly awaited Tucker's car of tomorrow, powerful forces in Washington were trying to bring him down. An SEC commissioner with close ties to Detroit's Big Three automakers deliberately leaked information about an investigation the agency was conducting, suggesting that Tucker was bilking investors with a massive fraud scheme. Headlines accused him of perpetrating a hoax and claimed that his cars weren't real and his factory was a sham. In fact, the Tucker '48 sedan was genuine, and everyone who saw it was impressed by what this upstart carmaker had achieved. But the SEC's investigation had compounded the company's financial problems and management conflicts, and a superior product was not enough to keep Tucker's dream afloat. Here, Steve Lehto tackles the story of Tucker's amazing rise and tragic fall, relying on a huge trove of documents that has been used by no other writer to date. It is the first comprehensive, authoritative account of Tucker's magnificent car and his battles with the government. And in this book, Lehto finally answers the questions automobile aficionados have wondered about for decades: Exactly how and why was the production of such an innovative car killed?

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Customer Reviews

The book was interesting which made for an easy read. It was also quite informative -- even for those who have seen the Tucker movie. The book clearly shows the evils of our own government trying to choose favorites and how that same government can destroy adventurous entrepreneurship and the associated jobs. It also makes one wonder why Ford, G.M., and Chrysler weren't able to come up with the same futuristic design and safety features that a lowly salesman came up with. If you are an automobile enthusiast I think you will enjoy this book. Kudos to the author.

I have grown up hearing the Tucker story. I have know people who worked for Tucker, seen the photos, read the news articles, and read the other books. This is the most complete story to date, and probably the most complete story that will ever be written. The amount of research that the author has done is staggering. While many authors have offered the story of the origin of the Tucker 48 and its general demise, Lehto finally brings together the details of the SEC action, the Grand Jury, and the trial. This book offers insights into the final days of the Tucker never before offered. It is a very enjoyable and insightful read.

The author presents a very balanced look at the life of Preston Tucker, starting when he was young and following until after his death. The man had a very interesting life, and while the majority of the book focuses on his attempts to build his remarkable car, there is a lot of additional information about Tucker that is amazing. He started out working with cars at a young age, and loved them. He floated around at various jobs, including as a police officer, until he got involved with automobile performance. That was sidetracked during the war and at that time, he worked to invent products needed by the government to win the war. When the war ended, Tucker sets his ambitious sights on creating a car like none other seen from Detroit. The public loved it, but the big auto makers in Detroit were not happy. For any number of reasons, the government persecuted and prosecuted Tucker, ending his company just prior to it taking off. You have to decide, in reading the book, if

Tucker was taking people for a financial ride, or if he was truly a genius that was on to something big. Personally, I thought he got screwed and the government did an excellent job of covering for itself. A wonderful book for anyone interested in Tucker and his car, the auto industry, and post WWII manufacturing. It is an excellent read that will be enjoyed!

While anyone interested in Tucker and his car will want to read the books by Charles Pearson and Philip Egan, Lehto's book is by far the most complete, accurate, and in-depth treatment of the entire exhilarating, maddening, bizarre saga. It's not just that this is a really fun read; Lehto got access to court documents (a huge trove of documents that has been used by no other writer to day • says the dust jacket, and that's not an exaggeration) including a deposition by SEC accountant Joseph Turnbull himself that had been sealed by the court for decades, and Lehto's dual background as a lawyer and a writer/historian made it possible for him to present a riveting account of the legal shenanigans that killed one of the most beautiful automobiles ever made, and to do so accurately and in deeply satisfying detail. The generous helping of photographs (a bunch in color) is fabulous, and covers the entirety of Tucker's life. I'm a huge fan of Lehto's other car-related books, but this is his best yet, in my opinion, and for my money he is the best auto historian around right now.

I've read several accounts of Preston Tucker, and this book jibes well with all of them. It does seesaw a bit in its coloring from Tucker as calculating to Tucker as naive; but in the last few chapters it redeems itself. It is a very good read for its historical perspectives

If you are a car person, this is a very good book, I have seen the movie "Tucker, a Man and his Dream" several times. I am old enough to remember as a teenager going downtown to see the real thing when one of them came to Tulsa on a promotional tour. Many years later my son and I got to have a "hands on" experience with one.

This is a great book, especially for young people, and those creative minds that think about ideas for new products and services. The author has covered everything about Preston Tucker and his struggle to create a completely improved automobile for the American market after the end of World War II. His biggest obstacle was lack of sufficient funds to start a fully functional automobile plant from surplus manufacturing facilities owned by the U.S. government. He was hounded by SEC investigators who leaked information to people who didn't want another auto manufacturer

competing with a potentially superior product in the Tucker '48. Tucker was the subject of a criminal trial by the U.S. government, and a jury found him not guilty of all charges, but the damage destroyed Tucker Corporation financially and the firm's assets were auctioned off by 1950. I encourage people to get the DVD version of "Tucker: The Man and His Dream," starring Jeff Bridges as Preston Tucker.

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