

英语读物



美国汽车业奇才

亚科卡自传

(原名: IACOCCA)

◎ 国际文化出版公司

249

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〔美〕LEE IACOCCA, WILLIAN NOVAK 著

徐存尧 注释

◎ 国际文化出版公司

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如闻其声，如见其人

(代序)

朔 望

李·亚科卡(Lee Iacocca)其人其事，近年在我国企业界和知识界或已有所闻。1984年11月他的自传出版后，京沪两地都作过专栏介绍，现在它的中译本也出版了。其间，乔治·布什今秋访华过广州时说过，1988年总统选举时，他将以亚科卡为主要对手，云云。看来，这位克莱斯勒汽车公司的董事长还真的想问鼎白宫呢。(美舆论界早有此说。)

亚氏是当代美国实业界的“奇才”，六十年代即有“野马之父”的美誉(“野马”是福特汽车公司当时的畅销车)。后来，他与福特老板不和而离职，受聘于福特的劲敌而其时却濒于破产的克莱斯勒公司。亚氏临危受命，大刀阔斧整顿内部，千方百计开拓业务。几年内便使一副烂摊子面目焕然，在美国企业界中目为一大奇迹。这书的故事耐看不说，自传的文字也写得清新锐利，活泼可人，通篇皆是当代美式口语。读到克莱斯勒的前董事长退位让贤时，亚氏说“*He blew himself out of the water to save Chrysler*”，这时仿佛听得水下砰然一响，人就飞腾了出来。又如：他在形容自己准备大干时，说“*hit the ground running*”，其磨拳擦掌的神气又跃然纸上。

据美国《时代》周刊透露，亚氏平日出言俚俗，开口“*guy*”，闭口“*helluva*”(hell of a)，所谓“快人快语”。因之，这本自传与其说是“写的”，不如说是“说的”。实际上，亚氏正是对录音机侃侃而谈，过后才请一位文人略事加工而成。有人说，此书可以称得当代美国口语大全，不无道理。国际文化出版公司

节选了原著的主要篇章,倩徐存尧君精心作了注释,使广大英语读者得以领略其大不同于一般宏文巨著的趣味。薄薄一册而兼有新事、新人、新语,想来是当代为学之士所欢迎的。

1985年12月

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PROLOGUE

序言

You're about to read the story of a man who's had more than his share of successes. But along the way, there were some pretty bad times, too. In fact, when I look back on my thirty-eight years in the auto industry, the day I remember most vividly had nothing at all to do with new cars and promotions and profits.

I began my life as the son of immigrants, and I worked my way up to the presidency of the Ford Motor Company. When I finally got there, I was on top of the world. But then fate said to me: "Wait. We're not finished with you. Now you're going to find out what it feels like to get kicked off Mt. Everest!"^①

On July 13, 1978, I was fired. I had been president of Ford for eight years and a Ford employee for thirty-two. I had never worked anywhere else. And now, suddenly, I was out of a job. It was gutwrenching.^②

Officially, my term of employment was to end in three

① 埃佛勒斯峰,即珠穆朗玛峰。

② 令人痛断肝肠。

months. But under the terms of my “resignation,” at the end of that period I was to be given the use of an office until I found a new job.

On October 15, my final day at the office, and just incidentally my fifty-fourth birthday, my driver drove me to **World Headquarters**① in **Dearborn**② for the last time. Before I left the house, I kissed my wife, Mary, and my two daughters, Kathi and Lia. My family had suffered tremendously during my final, turbulent months at Ford, and that filled me with rage. Perhaps I was responsible for my own fate. But what about Mary and the girls? Why did they have to go through this? They were the innocent victims of the **despot**③ whose name was on the building.

Even today, their pain is what stays with me. It’s like the lioness and her cubs. If the hunter knows what’s good for him, he’ll leave the little ones alone. Henry Ford made my kids suffer, and for that I’ll never forgive him.

The very next day I got into my car and headed out to my new office. It was in an ^{偏僻的仓库} obscure warehouse on Telegraph Road, only a few miles from Ford’s World Headquarters. But for me, it was like visiting another planet.行星

I wasn’t exactly sure where the office was, and it took me a few minutes to find the right building. When I finally got there, I didn’t even know where to park.

As it turned out, there were plenty of people around to show me. Someone had alerted the media that the newly

① 福特汽车公司的总部。

② 迪尔本,在密执安州,与有“世界汽车之都”称号的底特律毗邻。

③ 此处指福特汽车公司当时的董事长亨利·福特第二。

deposed president of Ford would be coming to work here this morning, and a small crowd had gathered to meet me. A TV reporter shoved a microphone in my face and asked: "How do you feel, coming to this warehouse after eight years at the top?"

I couldn't bring myself to answer him. What could I say? When I was safely out of camera range, I muttered the truth. "I feel like shit," I said.

My new office was little more than a cubicle^① with a small desk and a telephone. My secretary, Dorothy Carr, was already there, with tears in her eyes. Without saying a word, she pointed to the cracked linoleum^② floor and the two plastic coffee cups on the desk.

Only yesterday, she and I had been working in the lap of luxury.^③ The office of the president was the size of a grand hotel suite. I had my own bathroom. I even had my own living quarters.^{地土表} As a senior Ford executive,^{行政部} I was served by white-coated waiters who were on call all day. I once brought some relatives from Italy to see where I worked, and they thought they had died and gone to heaven.

Today, however, I could have been a million miles away. A few minutes after I arrived, the depot^{仓库} manager stopped by to pay a courtesy^{免费的} call. He offered to get me a cup of coffee from the machine in the hall. It was a kind gesture,^{善意的举动} but the incongruity^④ of my being there made us both feel awkward.

-
- ① 斗室。
② 油毡；漆布。
③ 在奢华的环境中。
④ 不协调；不相称。

笨拙的。

For me, this was Siberia. ^{放逐流放} It was exile to the farthest corner of the kingdom. I was so stunned that it took me a few minutes before I realized I had no reason to stay. I had a telephone at home, and somebody could bring me the mail. I left that place before ten o'clock and never went back.

This final humiliation ^{羞辱} was much worse than being fired. It was enough to make me want to kill—I wasn't quite sure who, Henry Ford or myself. Murder or suicide were never real possibilities, but I did start to drink a little more—and shake a lot more.① I really felt I was coming apart at the seams.②

As you go through life, there are thousands of little forks in the road, and there are a few really big forks—those moments of reckoning, moments of truth. This was mine as I wondered what to do. Should I pack it all in③ and retire? I was fifty-four years old. I had already accomplished a great deal. I was financially secure. I could afford to play golf for the rest of my life. ^{财务上的 无条件的}

But that just didn't feel right. I knew I had to pick up the pieces④ and carry on. ^{坚持下去}

There are times in everyone's life when something constructive is born out of adversity. ^{办法} There are times when things seem so bad that you've got to grab your fate by the shoulders and shake it. I'm convinced it was that morning at the warehouse that pushed me to take on the presidency of Chrysler only a couple of weeks later.

- 一对一月
- ① 身体大为衰弱;或步履更见蹒跚。
 - ② 浑身散了架子。
 - ③ 承认彻底失败。
 - ④ 收拾残局。

The private pain I could have endured. But the deliberate public humiliation was too much for me. I was full of anger, and I had a simple choice: I could turn that anger against myself, with disastrous results. Or I could take some of that energy and try to do something productive.

“Don’t get mad,” Mary reminded me. “Get even.”^① In times of great stress and adversity, it’s always best to keep busy, to plow^② your anger and your energy into^② something positive.

As it turned out, I went from the frying pan into the fire.^③ A year after I signed up, Chrysler came within a whisker of bankruptcy.^④ There were many days at Chrysler when I wondered how I had got myself into this mess. Being fired at Ford was bad enough. But going down with the ship at Chrysler was more than I deserved.

Fortunately, Chrysler recovered from its brush with death.^⑤ Today I’m a hero. But strangely enough, it’s all because of that moment of truth at the warehouse. With determination, with luck, and with help from lots of good people, I was able to rise up from the ashes.

Now let me tell you my story.

① 冷静下来。

② 化……为……; 或把……投入……。

③ 跳出油锅却进了火坑。

④ 濒于破产边缘。

⑤ 差一点送了命(破产)。

THE FAMILY

Nicola Iacocca, my father, arrived in this country in 1902 at the age of twelve—poor, alone, and scared. He used to say the only thing he was sure of when he got here was that the world was round. And that was only because another Italian boy named Christopher Columbus had preceded him by 410 years, **almost to the day.** ①

As the boat sailed into New York Harbor, my father looked out and saw the Statue of Liberty, that great symbol of hope for millions of immigrants. On his second crossing, when he saw the statue again, he was a new American citizen—with only his mother, his young wife, and hope by his side. For Nicola and Antoinette, America was the land of freedom—the freedom to become anything you wanted to be, if you wanted it bad enough and were willing to work for it.

This was the single lesson my father gave to his family. I hope I have done as well with my own.

When I was growing up in Allentown, Pennsylvania, our

① 几乎是(410年前的)同一天。

family was so close it sometimes felt as if we were one person with four parts.

My parents always made my sister, Delma, and me feel important and special. Nothing was too much work or too much trouble. My father might have been busy with a dozen other things, but he always had time for us. My mother went out of her way to cook the foods we loved—just to make us happy. To this day, whenever I come to visit, she still makes my two favorites—chicken soup with little veal^① meatballs, and ravioli^② stuffed with ricotta cheese.^③ Of all the world's great Neopolitan cooks,^④ she has to be one of the best.

My father and I were very close. I loved pleasing him, and he was always terrifically proud of my accomplishments. If I won a spelling contest at school, he was on top of the world. Later in life whenever I got a promotion, I'd call my father right away and he'd rush out to tell all his friends. At Ford, each time I brought out a new car, he wanted to be the first to drive it. In 1970, when I was named president of the Ford Motor Company, I don't know which of us was more excited.

Like many native Italians, my parents were very open with their feelings and their love — not only at home, but also in public. Most of my friends would never hug their fathers. I guess they were afraid of not appearing strong and independent. But I hugged and kissed my dad at every opportunity

① 食用小牛肉。

② 意大利小包子。

③ 用酸奶做的一种意大利干酪。

④ 那不勒斯(意大利)的名厨。

— nothing could have felt more natural.

He was a restless and inventive man who was always trying new things. At one point, he bought a couple of fig trees^① and actually found a way to grow them in the harsh climate of Allentown. He was also the first person in town to buy a motorcycle — an old Harley Davidson, which he rode through the dirt streets of our small city. Unfortunately, my father and his motorcycle didn't get along too well. He fell off it so often that he finally got rid of it. As a result, he never again trusted any vehicle with less than four wheels.

Because of that damn motorcycle, I wasn't allowed to have a bicycle when I was growing up. Whenever I wanted to ride a bike, I had to borrow one from a friend. On the other hand, my father let me drive a car as soon as I turned sixteen. This made me the only kid in Allentown who went straight from a tricycle to a Ford.

My father loved cars. In fact, he owned one of the first Model T's. He was one of the few people in Allentown who knew how to drive, and he was always tinkering with cars^② and thinking about how to improve them. Like every driver in those days, he used to get a lot of flat tires. For years he was obsessed with finding a way to drive a few extra miles with a flat. To this day, whenever there's a new development in tire technology, I always think of my father.

He was in love with America, and he pursued the American dream with all his might. When World War I broke out, he volunteered for the Army — partly out of patriotism, and

① 无花果树。

② 摆弄汽车。

partly, he admitted to me later, to have a little more control over his destiny. He had worked hard to get to America and to become naturalized,^① and he was terrified at the prospect of being sent back to Europe to fight in Italy or France. Luckily for him, he was stationed at Camp Crane, an army training center just a couple of miles from his home. Because he could drive, he was assigned to train ambulance drivers.

Nicola Iacocca had come to America from San Marco, about twenty-five miles northeast of Naples in the Italian province of Campania. Like so many immigrants, he was full of ambition and hope. In America he lived briefly in Garrett, Pennsylvania, with his stepbrother. There my father went to work in a coal mine, but he hated it so much that he quit after one day. He liked to say it was the only day in his life that he ever worked for anybody else.

He soon moved east to Allentown, where he had another brother. By 1921, he had saved up enough money doing odd jobs, mostly as an apprentice shoemaker, that he could return to San Marco to bring over his widowed mother. As it turned out, he ended up bringing over *my* mother, too. During his stay in Italy this thirty-one-year-old bachelor fell in love with the seventeen-year-old daughter of a shoemaker. Within a few weeks they were married.

Over the years a number of journalists have reported (or repeated) that my parents went to Lido Beach in Venice for their honeymoon and that I was named Lido to commemorate that happy week. It's a wonderful story, except for one

① 入了美国籍。

problem: it's not true. My father did take a trip to Lido Beach, but it was before the wedding, not after. And since he was with my mother's brother at the time, I doubt that his vacation was very romantic.

My parents' voyage to America wasn't easy. My mother came down with typhoid fever and spent the entire trip in the ship's infirmary. By the time they reached Ellis Island, she had lost all her hair. According to the laws, she should have been sent back to Italy. But my father was an aggressive, fast-talking operator^① who had already learned how to manage in the New World. Somehow he was able to convince the immigration officials that his new bride was merely seasick.

I was born three years later, on October 15, 1924. By this time, my father had opened a hot-dog restaurant called the Orpheum Wiener House. It was the perfect business for somebody without much cash. All he really needed to get started were a grill,^② a bun warmer,^③ and a few stools.

My father always drilled two things into me: never get into a capital-intensive business,^④ because the bankers will end up owning you. (I should have paid more attention to this particular piece of advice!) And when times are tough, be in the food business, because no matter how bad things get, people still have to eat. The Orpheum Wiener House stayed afloat all through the Great Depression.

Later, he brought my uncles Theodore and Marco into the

① 精明圆滑、能说会道的人。

② 烤架。

③ 小圆面包保温箱。

④ 资本密集企业。

business. To this day, Theodore's sons Julius, and Albert Iacocca, are still making hot dogs in Allentown. The company is called Yocco's, which is more or less how the Pennsylvania Dutch used to pronounce our name.

I came pretty close to going into the food business myself. At one point in 1952, I seriously considered leaving Ford to go into food **franchising**.^① Ford dealerships operated as independent franchises, and it occurred to me that anyone who could franchise a food operation would get rich in a hurry. My plan was to have ten fast-food outlets with one central buying location. This was long before **McDonald's**^② was even a gleam in **Ray Kroc's**^③ eye, and I sometimes wonder if I missed my true calling in life. Who knows? Maybe today I'd be worth half a billion dollars, with a sign out front proclaiming: Over 10 billion served.

A few years later, I did open my own place, a little sandwich shop in Allentown called The Four Chefs. It served Philadelphia cheese steaks. (That's thinly-sliced steak with melted cheese on an Italian roll.) My father set it up, and I put in the money. It did very well — too well, in fact, because what I really needed was a **tax shelter**.^④ We made \$125,000 the first year, which raised my tax bracket to the point where I had to get rid of it. The Four Chefs was my first exposure to **bracket creep**^⑤ and the progressive nature of our tax

① 经政府或公司特许,专营某种生意。

② 麦克唐纳快餐馆,是美国最大的联营快餐馆,专售汉堡包、牛奶冰淇淋等。

③ 雷·克罗克,麦克唐纳快餐馆的创办人。

④ 赋税优惠。

⑤ 逐级上升的(赋税)等级。

laws.

Actually I was in the food business long before I got involved with cars. When I was ten, one of the country's first supermarkets opened in Allentown. After school and on weekends, my little pals and I would line up at the door with our red wagons, like a row of taxicabs outside a hotel. As the shoppers came out, we would offer to take home their bags for a small tip. In retrospect, it makes a lot of sense — I was in the transportation end of the food business.

As a teenager, I had a weekend job in a fruit market run by a Greek named Jimmy Kritis. I used to get up before dawn to get to the wholesale market and bring back the produce. He paid me \$2.00 a day — plus all the fruit and vegetables I could lug home after a sixteenhour workday.

By this time, my father had other enterprises besides the Orpheum Wiener House. Early on, he bought into a national company called U-Drive-It, one of the very first car rental agencies. Eventually he built up a fleet of about thirty cars, mostly Fords. My father was also good friends with one Charley Charles, whose son, Edward Charles, worked for a Ford dealership. Later Eddie bought a dealership of his own, where he introduced me to the fascinating world of the retail car business. By the time I was fifteen, Eddie had convinced me to go into the automobile business. From that day forward, all my energies were directed to doing just that.

My father is probably responsible for my instinct for marketing. He owned a couple of movie houses; one of his theaters, the Franklin, is still in use today. Old-timers in Allentown have told me my father was such a great promoter that