

## Papa's Girl

"God knows what the late Frederick G. Bonfils, who . . . built The Denver Post into one of the most raucous and annoying papers in the country, would think of his paper and his favorite daughter, if he could see either of them now. " . . . She has married a man connected with the stage, has become an actress, lives a good part of the time in New York and gives a lot of the Bonfils money away, sometimes without a receipt." Thus began an article in the December 23, 1943 issue of The Saturday Evening Post, at that time the country's most widely circulated magazine. Obtaining a one-on-one interview with Helen Bonfils was in many ways a coup for the magazine's editorial staff, resulting in a profile that exposed and exploited the private and heretofore protected world of one of a handful of women who controlled major newspapers during that era in American history. In her fascinating book Papa's Girl, author Eva Hodges Watt paints a multi-faceted picture of the woman who became majority stockholder and director of The Denver Post, and benefactor of the arts and charities in her hometown. By interviewing those who knew this enigmatic woman best and providing personal insight obtained during her years at the newspaper and association with Helen, Watt puts supposed scandals, personal vendettas, colorful observations, and countless contradictions to paper for the reader to absorb and contemplate. Who was this complex woman who "gifted" Denver with a downtown church (the Holy Ghost), a little gem of a theater (the Bonfils), an elephant for the zoo, a Rembrandt for the Denver Art Museum, and much, much more? And, who was this woman who inexplicably, at sixty-eight and widowed, married her chauffeur, a high school dropout half her age? She was none other than Helen Bonfils...Papa's girl.

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