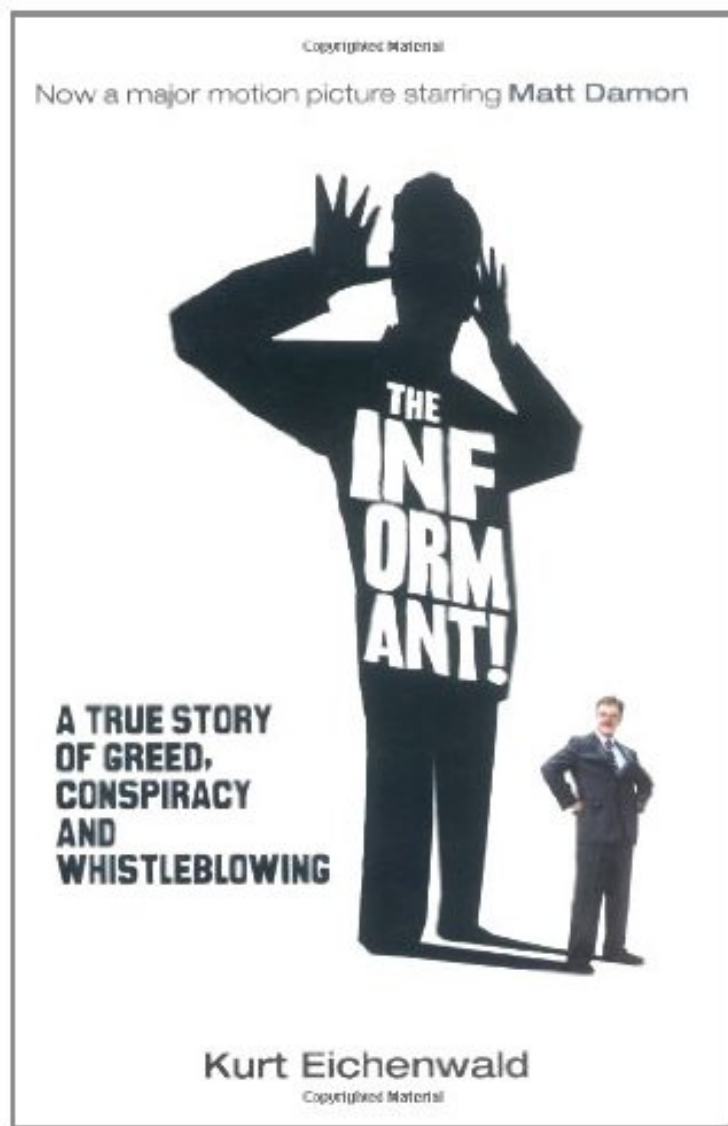


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The Informant



Par Kurt Eichenwald
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Description : Description du produitFrom an award-winning New York Times investigative reporter comes an outrageous story of greed, corruption, and conspiracywhich left the FBI and Justice Department counting on the cooperation of one man . . .It was one of the FBI's biggest secrets: a senior executive with America's most politically powerful corporation, Archer Daniels Midland, had become a confidential government witness, secretly recording a vast criminal conspiracy spanning five continents. Mark Whitacre, the promising golden boy of ADM, had put his career and family at risk to wear a wire and deceive his friends and colleagues. Using Whitacre and a small team of agents to tap into the secrets at ADM, the FBI discovered the company's scheme to steal millions of dollars from its own customers. But as the FBI and federal prosecutors closed in on ADM, using stakeouts, wiretaps, and secret recordings of illegal meetings around the world, they suddenly found that everything was not all that it appeared. At the same time

Whitacre was cooperating with the Feds while playing the role of loyal company man, he had his own agenda he kept hidden from everyone around him his wife, his lawyer, even the FBI agents who had come to trust him with the case they had put their careers on the line for. Whitacre became sucked into his own world of James Bond antics, imperiling the criminal case and creating a web of deceit that left the FBI and prosecutors uncertain where the lies stopped and the truth began. In this gripping account unfolds one of the most captivating and bizarre tales in the history of the FBI and corporate America. Meticulously researched and richly told by New York Times senior writer Kurt Eichenwald, *The Informant* re-creates the drama of the story, beginning with the secret recordings, stakeouts, and interviews with suspects and witnesses to the power struggles within ADM and its board including the high-profile chairman Dwayne Andreas, F. Ross Johnson, and Brian Mulroney to the big-gun Washington lawyers hired by ADM and on up through the ranks of the Justice Department to FBI Director Louis Freeh and Attorney General Janet Reno. A page-turning real-life thriller that features deadpan FBI agents, crooked executives, idealistic lawyers, and shady witnesses with an addiction to intrigue, *The Informant* tells an important and compelling story of power and betrayal in America

Presentation de l'auteur *The Informant* is Mark Whitacre, a senior executive with America's most powerful food giant, who put his career and his family's safety at risk to become a confidential government witness. Using Whitacre's secret recordings and a team of agents, the FBI uncovered the corporation's scheme to steal millions of dollars from its own customers. But as the FBI closed in on their target, they suddenly realized that Whitacre wasn't quite playing the game they'd thought ... This is the gripping account of how a corporate golden boy became an FBI mole and went on to double-cross both the authorities and his employers in one of the most extraordinary cases of global corporate corruption of the last thirty years. .com "The FBI was ready to take down America's most politically powerful corporation. But there was one thing they didn't count on." So reads the cover of this high-powered true crime story, an accurate teaser to a bizarre financial scandal with more plot twists than a John Grisham novel. In 1992 the FBI stumbled upon Mark Whitacre, a top executive at the Archer Daniels Midland corporation who was willing to act as a government witness to a vast international price-fixing conspiracy. ADM, which advertises itself as "The Supermarket to the World," processes grains and other farm staples into oils, flours, and fibers for products that fill America's shelves, from Jell-O pudding to StarKist tuna. The company's chairman and chief executive, Dwayne Andreas, was so influential that he introduced Ronald Reagan to Mikhail Gorbachev, and it was his maneuvering that ensured that high fructose corn syrup would replace sugar in most foods (ever wondered why Coke and Pepsi don't taste quite like they used to?). There were two mottoes at ADM: "The competitors are our friends, and the customers are our enemies" and "We know when we're lying." And lie they did. With the help of Whitacre, the FBI made hundreds of tapes and videos of ADM executives making price-fixing deals with their counterparts from Japan, Korea, and Canada, all while drinking coffee and laughing about their crimes. The tapes should have cinched the case, but there was one problem: Their star witness was manipulative, deceitful, and unstable. Nothing was as it seemed, and the investigation into one of the most astounding white-collar crime cases in history had only just begun. Kurt Eichenwald, an investigative reporter, covered the story for *The New York Times* and interviewed more than 100 participants in the case. He methodically records the six-year investigation, leaving no plot twist or tape transcript unexplored. While his primary focus is on deconstructing the disturbed Whitacre and revealing the malleability of truth, the portrait of ADM (and even the Justice Department) is damning enough to make anyone a cynic. --Lesley Reed Extrait Chapter 1 The large gray van, its windows tinted to block the glances of the curious, pulled away from the Decatur Airport, heading toward Route 105. Inside, four foreign visitors watched as images of the modest town came into view. Working-class houses. An Assembly of God church. A man-made lake. The vast fields of corn that could be seen from the air were no longer visible, replaced instead by an entanglement of industrial plants and office buildings. These were the sights of a thousand other blue-collar neighborhoods in a thousand other Midwestern towns. Still, on this day, September 10, 1992, it was hard not to feel a slight sense of awe. For years, world leaders had seen these images, perhaps from this very van, in a virtual pilgrimage of power. In the last few months alone, this road had been traveled by Mikhail Gorbachev, the former Soviet leader, and by Dan Quayle, the American vice president. Those men, like leaders before them, had been drawn to this out-of-the-way place in the center of America largely by one company and often by one man: Archer Daniels Midland and its influential chairman, Dwayne Andreas. Few Americans were familiar with who Andreas was or what he did. But among the world's moneyed and powerful, he and

his grain processing company were known well. In Washington, anyone who mattered was acquainted with Andreas more likely, with his money. For decades, he had been one of the countrys foremost political contributors, heaping cash almost indiscriminately on Democrats and Republicans this year alone, Andreas money would be used by both George Bush and Bill Clinton in their battle for the presidency. The largesse helped transform Andreas into one of Washingtons most important men, even as he remained comfortably ensconced in its shadows. But it also thrust him into controversy. It was the \$25,000 from Andreas that operatives of President Nixon laundered into the bank account of a Watergate burglar. Following the wide-ranging investigations that stemmed from the Watergate scandal, Andreas was tried and acquitted on charges of violating campaign-finance laws but that was for the \$100,000 he gave to Nixons 1968 rival, Hubert Humphrey. The foreign visitors traveling to ADM on this day hoped for an opportunity to meet Andreas but were uncertain if they would. At this point, they were scheduled only to speak with others in ADM management, the people who ran its day-to-day business. If all went well, the visitors expected the meeting to last some time. After all, before the days end, there were several important things that they needed to learn. But there was also one important thing that they needed to steal. The van turned onto Faries Parkway, heading directly toward ADMs homely, sprawling complex. Yellow flowers planted along the side of the road did little to soften the effect of the propertys jagged barbed-wire fence. At the main gate, the driver gave a nod to the guard before turning right toward the squat, nondescript building that housed ADMs top brass. The van came to a stop beside the seven-foot bronze statue of Ronald Reagan, mounted on a two-ton granite base, that Dwayne Andreas had erected to commemorate a 1984 visit by the then-president. Hirokazu Ikeda stepped down from the enormous vehicle, trailed closely by Kanji Mimoto, both senior executives from Ajinomoto Inc., a giant Japanese competitor of ADM. Two other Ajinomoto executives followed one Japanese, one European. Shading their eyes from the morning sun, the men headed into the buildings lobby and introduced themselves to a receptionist. She placed a call, and within seconds a young, energetic man came bounding down a hallway toward them. It was Mark Whitacre, the thirty-four-year-old president of ADMs newest unit, the Bioproducts Division. He was a man whom in recent months they had come to know, if not yet to trust. Whitacre smiled as he stepped into the lobby. Welcome to Decatur, he said, shaking Ikedas hand. And welcome to ADM. Thank you, Mr. Whitacre, Ikeda said in halting English. Happy to be here. Whitacre turned and greeted Mimoto, a man closer to his own age who spoke English fairly well. The other two men were strangers; they were introduced to Whitacre as Kotaro Fujiwara, an engineer at the companys Tokyo headquarters, and J. L. Brehant, who held a similar job at its European subsidiary. With introductions complete, Whitacre escorted the executives down the hallway toward ADMs huge trading room, the corporate nerve center where it purchased tons of corn, wheat, soybeans, and other farm products for processing each day. On the front wall of the vast room, a screen flashed up-to-the-minute commodity prices. At row after row of desks, an army of traders barked buy and sell orders into telephones. Around the edges of the room were various executive offices, most with the doors open. Whitacre stopped at one office and tapped on the door frame. Terry? he said. Theyre here. Terry Wilson, head of the companys corn-processing division, looked up from his desk and smiled. The expression was more a reflection of strategy than delight; he was hoping to finish with the Ajinomoto executives quickly, in time for an early afternoon round of golf. Like many American businessmen, Wilson often felt frustrated with the Japanese. In negotiations, they seemed loath to horse-trade; they would listen but often retreated into ambiguity, making no specific commitments. Such tactics were considered a sign of virtue in Japan, the vague responses praised as tamamushi-iro no hyogen o tsukau, or using iridescent expressions. Whatever its elegant description in Japanese, for Westerners like Wilson, a hard-drinking ex-marine, the approach was tiresome. He was not looking forward to it today. Wilson stepped from behind his desk, past a television that was broadcasting the days news. Mr. Ikeda, Mr. Mimoto, its been a long time, he said. Youve come on a day with such nice weather, its a shame youre not here to play golf. The men chatted about their golf games as Whitacre led them to the executive meeting room, where they found their places around a conference table. A kitchen staffer appeared, serving iced tea, water, and orange juice. As everyone settled in, Whitacre walked to a wall phone and dialed 5505 the extension for Jim Randall, the president of ADM. Jim, our guests are here, Whitacre said simply. He hung up and returned to his seat. Everyone knew this could be a tense moment. Randall had been at the company since 1968. His skills as an engineer were indisputable; his hands-on role kept the huge processing plants running. Still, the sixty-eight-year-old Randall was no Dwayne Andreas. As much as Dwaynes smooth and polished style made him the perfect Mr. Outside for ADM, Randalls gruff, plainspoken approach ensured that he would remain Mr. Inside. He often rubbed people the wrong way,

whether he was boasting about his sports cars or ADMs market dominance. The visitors today expected to hear about the companys might; they knew that ADMs invitation to visit was partly for the purpose of scaring them. Randall walked into the room a few minutes later, introduced himself, and took his place alongside Wilson and Whitacre. Instantly he took control of the meeting and the conversation, describing how ADM was transforming itself into a new company. Over slightly less than a century, ADM had grown into a global giant, processing grains and other farm staples into oils, flours, and fibers. Its products were found in everything from Nabisco saltines to Hellmanns mayonnaise, from Jell-O pudding to StarKist tuna. Soft drinks were loaded with ADM sweeteners and detergents with ADM additives. Americans were raised on ADM: Babies drinking soy formulas were downing the companys wares; as toddlers, they got their daily dose of ADM from Gerber cereals. The health-minded consumed its products in yogurt and canola oil; others devoured them in Popsicles and pepperoni. While most people had never heard of ADM, almost every American home was stuffed with its goods. ADM called itself the Supermarket to the World, but in truth it was the place that the giant food companies came to do their grocery shopping. Now, Randall said, ADM was entering a new era. Beginning three years before, in 1989, ADM had taken a new direction, creating the Bioproducts Division. No longer would the company just grind and crush food products. Instead, it was veering into biotechnology, feeding dextrose from corn to tiny microbes. Over time, those microbes, or bugs as they were known, convert the sugar into an amino acid called lysine. As people in the business liked to say, the bugs ate dextrose and crapped lysine. In animal feed, lysine bulked up chickens and pigs just the product needed by giant food companies like Tyson and Conagra. Until ADM came along, the Japanese largely controlled the market, with Ajinomoto the undisputed giant. Start-up costs alone kept out potential competitors; tens of millions of dollars were required just to develop the proprietary, patented microbes needed to ferment lysine. But ADM abounded in cash; it had already invested more than \$150 million in the new business. Now, the worlds largest lysine plant was in Decatur, ready to produce as much as 113,000 metric tons a year. And running it all was Whitacre, a whiz-kid scientist who was almost certainly the first Ph.D. ever employed at ADM as the manager of a division. Were going to be the largest biochem company in the world, Randall said. It just makes so much sense for us. We have the raw materials available, we have ch...