Chapter IV

Success But at What Cost?: What Makes Sammy Run?

“It was a terrifying and wonderful document, the record of where Sammy ran, and if you looked behind the picture and between the lines you might even discover what made him run. And some day I would like to see it published, as a blueprint of a way of life that was paying dividends in America in the first half of the Twentieth Century” (WMSR, 303).

Budd Schulberg, an American screen writer was born in New York City, but raised in Hollywood. He exposed the dark side of American ambition in his acclaimed Hollywood novel, What Makes Sammy Run?. It is about Sammy Glick, a kid from New York’s Lower East Side, who is determined to escape the ghetto there and seek opportunity and success in Hollywood, even if it requires deception and betrayal.

Budd Schulberg’s What Makes Sammy Run? is a story of Shmerka Glickstein, a Jewish boy born in New York. Discarding his Jewish identity, he finds a job as a paper boy. Then starting as an office boy, he slowly makes his way up the rungs of the ladder of success with determination. His ambition takes him further up his career as he unscrupulously uses people around him. Using Julian Blumberg’s story titled “Girl Steals Boy” he finds a place in Hollywood. With his name changed to Sammy Glick, we find that the protagonist does not stick to anything, becomes an egoist, and shows preference to Hollywood over his girlfriend leaving her behind in the process. Blumberg has unwillingly metamorphosed into a ghost writer and Sammy Glick shamelessly takes all
the credit. This unsurprisingly does not amount to heresy; in fact, all it does is reinforce our belief that in Hollywood, anything goes. This incident in the novel by itself is a testament to the ugly truth of Hollywood; a man commits intellectual fraud and uses extortion and uses psychological warfare to get what he wants and it’s saddening to see that such happenings are construed as commonplace in Hollywood! The “Dog-eat dog” world in Hollywood has been brought about very crudely in the novel. But there is also a small minority of honorable men working in pictures, who are highlighted in this novel. Sidney Fineman, a producer is one of these rare gems. His character portrayal invites the reader to change their perception of the movies and almost makes us feel that this industry does hold promise for the talented and benign men. Alas, this feeling is ephemeral as we come to see that Sammy Glick usurps his position and brings down Sidney with revolting deviousness. Sammy Glick despite getting everything in life stands alone, desperate, and self-conscious towards the end of the novel, because of the faithless act of Laurette whom he had loved sincerely. But the irony is that this marriage was nothing more than a business deal. Whilst there were ulterior motives in their union, Sammy Glick never loved her any lesser, and towards the ending it irks him as it does all men that his love wasn’t reciprocated. The demeaning of a sanctified union such as marriage by viewing it as a business deal shocks the readers to the core and shows us the extent of avarice that has been instilled in the people in showbiz. And close to the ending the readers are exposed to the truth about human mentality and personal relationships as despite all the materialistic pleasures that are ever present in Sammy’s life, he only craves for true love reciprocated. This can either be construed as a case of sour grapes if we as readers adopt a cynical misanthropic view of society, or we could take a higher road and
believe in the ideology of romanticism as Hollywood has thought us and perhaps give Sammy the benefit of doubt and accommodate his philandering misgivings to the despairing situation that he’s in. All in all, this book has explored not only the many faces of Hollywood, but also has delved into the intricacies of human relationships and how they can or can’t withstand the pressures of showbiz. Julian Levinson reviewed in his “Movies and Monotheism” about Schulberg’s novel.

In Schulberg's novel, the brutally ambitious Sammy Glick abandons family and friends on the Lower East Side in a mad dash for success. According to Schulberg's own diagnosis, Sammy Glick is somebody who, having thrown over the religious ways of his pushcart salesman of a father, has "nothing except naked self-interest by which to guide himself." Jews are not alone in their fascination with the mythical allure of Hollywood, of course, but they have been among the most adept at crafting moral fables that decry its corrupting force. This makes sense not only because Hollywood has generated unheard-of success for legions of actual Jews, but also because it has provided a ready symbol for the Jewish experience in America, an experience that to many has seemed miraculous, perhaps too good to be true. (Levinson, Online)

Al Manheim is the narrator, introducing the reader to young Sammy Glick, a copy boy with ambition. At the start of the novel, Manheim is a reporter at a New York City paper, and he's trying to figure out what makes this kid Sammy so eager. Sammy runs and runs and runs, and Manheim describes Sammy's capers as he shamelessly lies, cheats, and plagiarizes, promoting himself with the amoral genius of the truly narcissistic.
Mr. Al Manhein introduces us to 16 yrs old Sammy Glick, “a little ferret of a kid, sharp and quick” (WMSR, 3). Further he adds on and says that he, “Always ran. Always looked thirsty” (WMSR, 3). Glick’s tenaciousness or his drive to acquire power itself is reflected in his self-introductory lines to Manhein, “I’m the new office boy, but I ain’t going to be an office boy long.” (WMSR, 3) What is more Sammy Glick is compared with “Paavo Nurmi” who was a Finnish middle and long distance marathon runner and nicked named as “Flying Finn” did less running in his whole career. He was even equate him to Niagara, when Manheim says, “That was like cautioning Niagara to fall more slowly” (WMSR, 4)

He stabs his "patron," Al, to get a newspaper column of his own, the first incident where Sammy Glick is being recognized by the managing director O’Brien becomes a turning point in his life. Sammy Glick rescripts the last paragraph of Al Manheim where he had omitted all the verbs. Glick was eager in learning grammar from Al Manheim, for which he blandish him. We also find that Sammy “wasn’t what you’d call a loving son” (WMSR, 9). After a lengthy speech by Al Maheim, regarding the interdependent way of life in society, Al remarks, “I might as well have been talking to a stone wall. In fact that might have been better. At least it couldn’t talk back.” (WMSR, 10) From Sammy’s answer we find him intelligent. Going on explain about Sammy Glick, Al Maheim tells us an incident when Sammy Glick sold the tickets to Osborne for four bucks. He did not have any sentimental attachment towards it though they were given by Al Maheim as a token of gratitude. We see Sammy Glick’s blooming into maturity and his face is described as, “... a face that reminded you of an army, full of force, strategy, single will and the kind of courage that boasts of never taking a backward step.” (WMSR, 17)
Growing sign of Sammy Glick was seen when he started writing radio columns. He was seen in all the fields that Al Mahein gets a dream. To quote him:

That night I dreamt about Sammy Glick. I dreamt I was working in my office, minding my own business and peacefully writing my column, when all of a sudden I looked like Sammy Glick. There must have been thirty or forty of them, and every time one of them passed me he’d say, “Hello, Al, I’m the new drama editor”; or “Hello, Al, I’m the new city editor”; or Hello, Al, allow me to introduce myself, your new publisher, S.Glick,” and, finally, when I couldn’t stand it anymore, I started to run, with all the Sammy Glicks behind me and I got into the elevator just in time and heaved a sigh of relief when, so help me god, who do I see driving the elevator but Sammy Glick, and when I finally get out onto the street, sure enough there’s nobody but Sammy Glick waiting for me, thousands of Sammy Glicks all running after me. (WMSR, 19-20)

With all efforts Sammy Glick became the radio columnist. While commenting about Sammy’s writings Al Maheim makes an elaborate, insightful observation:

He was just smart enough never to crib from the same writer twice. He was glib.” (WMSR, 21) Further he tells: As a columnist, Sammy had no scruples about printing what he overheard. He always managed to get on the inside with the key secretaries. He had a well-developed talent for squeezing news out of victims by pretending he already had it. He had no qualms about prominently featuring what he knew to be lies and then
printing the truth a day or so later in an inconspicuous retraction at the bottom of the column.

He even found a way of turning those retractions into a good thing. For instance, if some big shot happened to demand a correction, Sammy would call him by some private nickname and say, “Sorry, Jock,” or “Pidge” or “Deac, thanks for the help.” He learned to play all but the most complex and suspicious minds like a harp. He pumped and he promised and he did small favors. He managed to get near the best of them and he picked up much of his hot news from the worst. He overcame the fact that he had absolutely no literary ability whatsoever by inventing a lingo which everyone mistook for a fresh and unique style when it was really plain unadulterated illiteracy. But all of these achievements were overshadowed by one stupendous talent; his ability to blow his own horn. He blew it so loud, so long, and so often, that nobody believed all that sound could possibly emanate from one person and so everyone really began to believe that Sammy Glick’s name was on everyone else’s lips.(WMSR, 21-22)

Al Maheim keeps on advising Sammy: “Try to learn before it’s too late. Don’t be cheap. Cheapness is the curse of our times. You’re beginning to spread cheapness around like bad toilet water”(WMSR, 29). Al Maheim insists that Miss Goldbaum might have been linked with Sammy Glick in the column after the birthday party, but Sammy reveals his corrupted nature, by saying, “She gets her break three times a week”.(WMSR, 29)
Julian Blumberg and Sammy Glick have a suspicious affair. Sammy Glick steals the story of Bumberg “Girl Steals Boy”. For doing this, Al Maheim hates him but expresses his complex feelings on Sammy:

I stared at him. I felt as I did when I stared at a photograph of the man who walked across Niagara Falls on a tight rope. With such a stunt I could have absolutely no sympathy, yet I was held fascinated by its crazy boldness. In Sammy was everything hated most: dishonesty, officiousness, bullying. But I felt I wasn’t only staring at him with dislike, I was staring at him with actual awe for the magnitude of his blustering (**WMSR**, 35)

Sammy sold the story for 5000 bucks. Al Maheim does not hesitate to call him “obnoxious”. Sammy goes to Hollywood World-Wide studios while his short history is composed by Al Maheim:

…complete from twelve to two hundred and fifty a week, analyzing it from the sociological, psychological, philosophical and zoological points of view. It was America, all the glory and the opportunity, the push and the speed, the grinding of gears and the crap. It didn’t take nearly this long to think. It went zingo, just a look, a blank look. (**WMSR**, 39)

Rosalie Goldbaum calls Al Maheim. She thinks she can contact Sammy through Al Maheim. Though Sammy promises to take her to Hollywood, he does not respond to her. We find that, “Sammy Glick had used her and thrown her away” (**WMSR**, 45) Al Maheim meets Sammy Glick in Hollywood and Sammy decides to send 1500 dollars to
Rosalie Goldbaum. He disposes her with the money. Al remarks that, “Hollywood was the perfect track for him “(WMSR, 53) and that Sammy was running. Al writes a letter advising Rosalie Goldbaum to forget Sammy and “not to pine for Sammy “. He further says that, “he was one of those geniuses who could only be married to his work.” (WMSR, 53)

Description of Hollywood is made by the author, when he discloses,

“You have to stay up till two o’clock to realize what a small town Hollywood is. It goes to sleep at twelve o’clock like any decent Middle Western Village. The gay night-life you dream about there is confined to private houses and the handful of hot-spots which enjoy special privileges for which they are taxed in a very special way”. (WMSR, 58)

Further Al details in length about the night clubs:

“The Back Lot was a noisy, gaudy example of what most people seem to imagine all Hollywood is after dark. But expect for an occasional celebrated face, it might have been any night spot in any American city. It was a montage of hot music, drunken laughter, loud wisecracks and hostesses like lollipops in red, green and yellow wrappers. The music took the old sweet melodies and twisted them like hairpins. It was a symphony strictly from hunger, to which everybody beat their feet in frenzy of despair, trying to forget luck that was either too good or too bad, festered ambitions or hollow success. It made me realize again how true
jazz music was, how it echoed everything that was churning inside us, all
the crazy longings raw and writhing.” (WMSR, 58- 59)

Al continues further on Hollywood: “Some people call that the Hollywood tug of
war, though that concept is a little narrow. Hollywood may be one of its most blatant
battle-grounds, but it is really a world war, undeclared”(WMSR, 62).

Al meets Kit Sargent whom he describes vividly:

She was in her middle twenties, tall, probably five foot six, and neatly put
together though there was something about the masculinity of her carriage
and gestures that scared you off. Her skin was tanned and seemed to have
been pulled too tight across her face, revealing the bone structure. Her
lips seemed even fuller than they were in her lean face. She left her
eyebrows pretty much alone and I noticed that her nails were cut short and
unpainted. She might have done things with her hair, which was walnut
brown, but she just combed it back into a thick coil.(WMSR, 71)

Al observes Sammy’s activities in Hollywood even when he is dancing with Kit.
To quote from the novel:

She was dancing under wraps but looked as though she really enjoyed it,
even with Sammy. But not he. He looked desperate and busy. He was
working at it; he was working at having fun. Recreation never seemed to
come naturally to him. In fact the only activity that did seemed to be that
damned running. I don’t think he ever drank because he liked the taste of
whiskey or frequented the Back Lot through any craving for hot music.
He just went through the motions of relaxing because he was quick to discover and imitate how gentlemen of his rank were supposed to spend their leisure. It wouldn’t have surprised me if this even extended to sex. *(WMSR, 75-76)*

Sammy’s motto was: “Work hard, and, if you can’t work hard, be smart; and, if you can’t be smart, be loud” *(WMSR, 89)*.

In the novel, Sidney Fineman was a producer. “Fineman was one of the magic names like Goldwyn and Mayer” *(WMSR, 97)*. Kit recognizes some of the qualities of Sidney Fineman as she says: “His idea of how to spend one hell of an evening is to lock himself in his library alone. He built a special house for his books at the back of his estate” *(WMSR, 98)*.

And again she interprets Sidney’s relationship with Hollywood. “He had just as much as Thalberg and more guts. Hollywood was his girl. He loved her all the time. He had ideas for making something out of her...” *(WMSR, 98)*.

Al meets Julian Blumberg and learns about his life. Later, Al meditates on Blumberg and Sammy:

It struck me that Julian and Sammy must have been just about the same age, twenty-two-or-three, probably brought up in the same kind of Jewish family, same neighborhood, same schooling, and started out with practically the same job. And yet they couldn’t have been more different if one had been born an Eskimo and the other the Prince of Wales. And there were so many Julian Blumbergs in the world. Jews without money,
without push, without plots, without any of the characteristics which such experts on genetics as Adolf Hitler, Henry Ford and Father Coughlin try to tell us are racial traits. I have seen too many of their lonely, frightened faces packed together in subways or staring out of thousands of dingy rooms as my train hurled past them on the elevated from 125th Street into Grand Central, too many Jewish nebs and poets and starving tailors and everyday little guys to consider the fascist answer to What Makes Sammy Run? And yet, if the same background that produced a Sammy Glick could nurture a Julian Blumberg, it wasn’t an open and shut case of environment either. I filed a mental note to mull over Kit’s idea again, that Sammy’s childhood environment was the breeding ground for the predatory germ that thrived in Sammy’s blood, leaving him one of the most severe cases of the epidemic. (WMSR, 118)

The conversation between Julian Blumberg and Al highlights the irritation and enmity of the former against Sammy Glick.

“Sammy Glick!” I said. “You don’t mean to tell me that your wife and Sammy…?”

“Oh, no,” he said. “I don’t mean that. But I swear to God, Mr. Manheim, even that wouldn’t be as bad. It isn’t my wife that Glick’s stolen- it’s my – my whole life.”

I wished his eyes could have been angry, but they weren’t. They only cried.” (WMSR, 119)
Julian and his wife Blanche decide to meet Sammy in Hollywood and they come to Hollywood where they do not find him. Thus goes the conversation of the couple: “If I didn’t love you it wouldn’t get me so sore to see you let a gonof like Glick make a dope out of you when I know you could be a fine writer” (WMSR, 120-21).

They undertook a perilous, tortuous journey only to be jilted by Sammy: “They had three blowouts, their radiator cracked from over-heating crossing the Continental Divide, Julian drove a hundred miles out of their way one night when Blanche fell asleep and when they arrived in Hollywood Sammy wouldn’t see them.” (WMSR, 121)

Their search does not give them any fruitful result at the beginning but towards the end Julian managed to receive a call from Sammy.

“They called the studio every day for a week, but Sammy was never in. They couldn’t reach him at home because the studio wouldn’t tell them where he was living. They frequented places they couldn’t afford, hoping to run into him. It wasn’t until their money had dwindled to the margin Blanche had laid aside in case they had to drive East again that Julian managed to get Sammy on the other end of a telephone.” (WMSR, 121)

Sammy becomes ruthless and cruel to him during the conversation.

“Sammy dispensed with the overtures. His voice grated: “Listen, shtunk, for Chri’sake who the hell told you to come out here?”

“But Mr. Glick, I thought …”
“The hell you did. If you thought you would have stayed home. Didn’t I tell you I’d send for you when the time came?”

“Yes, but I didn’t think it would take …”

“Listen, kid,” Sammy’s voice suddenly soft-pedaled. “Don’t think I’m having any cakewalk. As soon as I get set I’ll be able to fix you up, but right now they’ve got me going around in circles.” He paused, trying to suck Julian in on the laugh. “I guess we’re just a couple of kids who didn’t know when we were well off, hey, Julian?”(WMSR, 121)

Dejected and disheartened at the response of Sammy, Julian spent his days “trying to get by the studio reception desks.” A vivid picture of Julian’s ordeal in Hollywood is portrayed by the author:

So he spent three weeks riding the street cars and the buses and trying to get by the studio reception desks. His Hollywood wasn’t that exclusive night club where everyone knew ever-body else. He learned that Hollywood extended from Warner Brothers at Burbank, in the valley beyond the northern hills, to Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer, twenty-five miles southwest in Culver City. He found a new side of Hollywood, the ten-man-for-every-job side, the seasonal unemployment, the call-again-next-month side. The factory side. He learned how many Julian Bulmbergs there were, who found nothing but No Admittance signs, for every Sammy Glick who opens the lock with a wave of his cigar like a magic wand.(WMSR, 122)
Sammy finally appoints Blumberg as his script writer and his intention becomes clear when he utters,

The studio canned the writer who was working with me because they seemed to think I could get along better alone. But I haven’t got time to knock the script out myself so I thought it would be a swell idea to get you out here to give me a hand. And as soon as you have a couple of scenes under your belt it’ll be a cinch for me to get you a regular job by showing ‘em what you can do. Meanwhile you can move in with me and I’ll loan you twenty-five a week to keep you going till you’re on your feet. (WMSR, 124-125)

Sammy made Julian feel awful enough and told him that his scenes were not accepted as he expected. He then added: “But I haven’t lost faith in you. In fact just to show you where you stand with me I’m going to throw in ten bucks a week extra with that twenty-five” (WMSR, 126).

We are able to find “That it was more money than Julian had ever made before, enough for him and Blanche to take a flat of their own in one of the cheap apartment houses above Hollywood Boulevard.” (WMSR, 126).

Julian explains to Al how Sammy has usurped his writings:

“Because that picture was the biggest shock in my life, Mr. Manheim. How do you think you’d feel going in to a movie cold and suddenly starting to realize you’re hearing all your own scenes?”
Oh, God I thought, I’m going to explode. Sammy Glick is a time bomb in my brain and its going to go off any moment and blow me to bits.

“The whole picture,” Julian was saying. “All those scenes I thought I was just doing for practice- actually showing on the screen- all mine-every line, mine-you know what I felt like doing, Mr. Manheim? I felt like jumping up right in the middle and screaming. I wanted to tell everybody there that the only line Glick wrote on Girl Steals Boy was the by-line on the cover. (WMSR, 128)

Julian is placed into mental agony and trauma. Sammy becomes cold and indifferent to him and he does not want to discuss anything to him in the theater.

Al comes to aid and is described himself, “as a kind of self-appointed first-aid station, trying to revive the victims he left behind him as he kept hitting and running his way to the top” (WMSR, 132). Sammy Glick’s reaction terrifies when Al finds out that he has seized Blumberg’s writing:

Sammy had looked at me in a lot of interesting ways since that first meeting, but I had a gangster pass death sentence on me with his eyes, but now I know what it is to see not only friendship but even recognition iris out of them, the pupils contracting and ossifying till they looked as if they could be plucked out and fired through a shot gun. (WMSR, 133)

Climbing the ladder of success Sammy, Al talks about him, compares him during his first visit to Hollywood and the present stage.
The Sammy Glick I met when I first came to Hollywood was a cream-puff compared to the one with whom I now found myself caged. He was still in his early twenties but no sign of youth remained. The little knives of ambition had already begun to cut lines into his face and the way he hunched over his cigar somehow suggested middle age. (WMSR, 133)

Al tries all different methods to break Sammy down. But it is not possible for him to do so: “I tried everything I could think of to break him down, flattery, nostalgia, the brotherhood of man, the camaraderie of the newspaper game and even, as a last resort, the need of Jews to help each other in self-defense” (WMSR, 133).

Sammy becomes annoyed on Al when he talks about his Jewish origin. He blasts out to Al saying, “Don’t pull that Jewish crapola on me,” and further says “what the hell did the Jews ever do for me?-expect maybe get my head cracked open for me when I was a kid.”(WMSR, 133)

Kit is approached by Al to help Blumberg. When Al asked Kit whether she had to give promise to marry Sammy she says, “Sammy is only infatuated with me and respects me. Marriage is one of the trump cards he has to hold until the pot is big enough.” (WMSR, 138)

She tells Al about her arrangement for Julian with Sammy, “One hundred dollars a week” and proceeds saying, “No contract, just week to week, but that doesn’t matter as long as he’s teamed with Sammy. Sammy’s option was lifted for another year and I have a hunch he won’t let Julian stray very far from him.” (WMSR, 138) Kit insisted upon Sammy that members of The Guild are supposed to protect writers from unfair practices
and it was not only from the employers but also from other writers. Kit was the one who
did some good for Julian Blumberg. He was recognized as a ghost writer of Sammy
Glick.

Hollywood has been pictured so well that the author has not left out even the
minute details. These words from Al show us the innermost picture of Hollywood during
1930s. “…for the studio was having one of its periodic drives to cut overhead – which
seemed to mean shaving stenographers’ wages first and gradually working their way up
to firing small-fry writers like me-so I had been working like a bastard trying to hang
on.” (WMSR, 141) The workers were without any assurance about their job. This was
well said by Al in the novel, “The situation was so tense that I got the jitters every time
an inter-office memo arrived, for fear of being informed that I was no longer employed.”
(WMSR, 141)

Again here Al speaks about Screen Writers Guild, “The low-paid writers wanted
the Guild to be a real bread-an-butter union, and the congenial five-hundred-dollar-a-
week guys thought what writers needed most was a communal hangout like the old
Writers’ Club where they could sit around and get to know each other.” (WMSR, 142).
Al and Kit start spending more time together but Al believes she only sees it as Guild
relations. The Guild starts to have its own tensions when they decide to seek assistance
and support from the Northern Authors League and writers start speaking out, opposing
the idea and the Guild. There is an elitist group among the writers in the industry who
not only want the Guild to cater to wealthy writers but also to exclude the North or any
"outsiders." Schulberg adds praise of union activities and eloquently extols the dignity
and joy of good work in the film industry.
Al gets a job with Sidney Fineman, the top named producer that oversees Kit and Sammy's projects. Al is hired to complete a piece he came up with on the life of Thomas Masaryk. Al quickly learns that Fineman is a great producer to work with and he is excited about digging into the project. Al tells, “After Masaryk died, it struck me that the story of his life ought to be a natural for pictures. His ties with American democracy gave it special significance for us, and with Mussolini shooting off his big guns in Ethiopia and Hitler his big mouth in Germany, an anti-fascist picture seemed like a good idea.” (WMSR, 173) Al remarks about Sidney Fineman, “Fineman was a refutation of everything I had ever heard about producers. His office was large but in good taste, with real books in the bookcases and theatrical prints on the walls. He could express a thought without making you find the words for it and an emotion without resorting to profanity.” (WMSR, 173) The show biz is described by Al rightly, “Hollywood that was splendid and crazy and hopeful and terrifying.” (WMSR, 180)

Julian Blumberg associated with Sammy was not changed. He looked healthier. Sammy has given screen credits to him who says, “Story by Sammy Glick – Screen play by Sammy Glick and Julian Blumberg.”(WMSR, 177)

Fineman is seen very kind and Al reflects on this when he leaves the job.

“I really felt sorry for Mr. Fineman when he had to call me in and tell me I was being closed out. This was not his way. He felt guilty and powerless. ‘I’m afraid Masaryk is going on the shelf for a while and I haven’t got another assignment for you at the moment.”
“He wanted to say more, but even if he had been able to, it would have been superfluous because the sympathy in his eyes, in his handshake, said it for him.” (WMSR, 203)

Nearly all of the Hollywood studios (except MGM) suffered financially during the early 30s, and studios had to reorganize, request government assistance, cut budgets and employees, and close theatres when profits plummeted. The Hollywood situation was best reflected through these lines from Al: “For the next two weeks my agent tried to get me an interview at the studios, but everywhere he went he got the same answer: they weren’t taking on new writers just now. I sat by the phone like an extra boy hoping for that call from Central Casting” (WMSR, 203).

Sammy, George Pancake, and Henry Powell Turner were members of the Association of Photo dramatists. Sammy nominated Pain as President, and when Henry Powell Turner was nominated for Vice-President Post he rejected it and Sammy was elected for it. Sammy was noted frequently as a “Hollywood’s Ten Most Eligible Bachelors, or he was off to Hawaii for a much-needed rest.” (WMSR, 218)

Al shuffled the cards to find the records of Sammy Glick and wondered when he dropped his “Stein” from his name. Al was determined to know and trace Sammy back to his roots. He goes to see his family members. His mother says,

“But Sammele’s good boy,” Mrs. Glickstein added hastily. “Every month regular comes his check in the mail. Only he is all the time so busy he never has time for writing.”
She looked at me and her face creased into the deeper wrinkles of a smile.

“So maybe my son sent you, you should tell me something from him?”

Here I go again, I thought Sammy’s trusted friend bringing the message of devotion from the faithful son. Why do I always have to be defending the bastard?”

“He said to be sure and tell you how well he’s feeling,” I heard myself saying. “He said that even if he hasn’t much time to write he wants you to know he is always thinking of you.” (WMSR, 222)

Al went to Sammy’s school and spoke with Miss Carr, a middle-aged woman. She talked on, about Sammy and the reminiscences of him she thought she had forgotten began to return, and she passed them on willingly. We also find something about Max Glickstein, Sammy’s father. As Al finds out,

Max Glickstein was a diamond cutter in the old country, proud of his trade and his religion. After the pofrom that took his first-born, Max brought his wife and other son to America. The child died in mid-ocean. “We must be brave, Momma,” Max tried to console her. “Maybe God is trying to tell us that we will carry none of the troubles of the old world into the new. We will have new sons, little Americans. In America we will find a new happiness and peace. (WMSR, 231)
Al also discovers that,

He [Sammy] walked before his first birthday. Talked before his second. When he was three-and-a-half, he changed his own name. One of Israel’s friends always teased him with: Whadya say yer name is, Smell ya? One of Israel’s friends always teased him with “Whadya say yer name is, Smell ya?” One day Momma called, Shmelka, come here,” and he paid no day. Momma called, “Shmelka, come here,” and he paid no attention. She called his name again. (WMSR, 231)

Sammy used to sell newspapers by giving false messages, false headlines. Sammy worked a year before he entered school. Sheik was the older student and Sammy had taken his seat and he refused to budge. There was a fight after school. Sammy accepted Sheik’s beating as a part of school routine. Sheik beat Sammy every day during his first weeks of school. The beatings only subsided when Sheik tired of fighting someone who never fought back. Eventually Sheik went to jail for a crime Sammy refused to go in on and when he was released he looked Sammy up for a job. Sex was also forced on him at his younger age. He always argued with his father and did not accept his views about the ceremony celebrating boy’s reaching the state of manhood at the age of thirteen. “He shows off all his knowledge and makes a speech which always begins, “Today I am a man…” and everybody gives him presents and congratulates the father and feels very good. It is a vital to the Orthodox Jews as Baptism is to the Christians.” (WMSR, 244) Sammy did not want to accept this and he want to establish himself with the money in his pocket. “Yes money, money,” Sammy mimicked. “You
know what you do with lousy Bar-mitzvahed. Its money in the pocket-that’s what makes you feel like a man.” (WMSR, 244)

These words of Sammy killed his father. His father was hurt with these words of Sammy and he was knocked down by the cart in the street. Israel did not know what to do and he went to see Sammy upstairs. Sammy was found smoking a butt.

“Is it over? Sammy said when he saw his brother.

Israel nodded. He had not really broken down yet, but the question did it. He cried, deep and soft, as only Jews can cry because they have so much practice at it.

Israel was eighteen, but now he was a little boy crying because he had lost his papa. Sammy was thirteen, but he was a veteran; he had learned something that took the place of tears.

When Israel realized that he was the only one crying he became embarrassed and then angry.

“Damn you, why don’t you say something? Israel said. “Why don’t you cry?

“Well, what’s there ta say? said Sammy.

“At least, can’t you say you’re sorry?”

“Sure,” Sammy said. “I’m sorry he was a dope.”(WMSR, 245)
Al’s thoughts run riot after knowing Sammy’s childhood days:

I thought of Sammy Glick rocking in his cradle of hate, malnutrition, prejudice, suspicions, amorality, the anarchy of the poor; I thought of him as a mangy little puppy in a dog-eat-dog world. I was modulating my hate for Sammy Glick from the personal to the societal. I no longer even hated Rivington Streets of all nationalities allowed to pile up in cities like gigantic dung heaps smelling up the world, ambitions growing out of filth and crawling away like worms. I saw Sammy Glick on a battle-field where every soldier was his own cause, his own army and his own flag, and I realized that I had singled him out not because he had born into the world any more selfish, ruthless and cruel than anybody else, even though he had become all three, but because in the midst of a war that was selfish ruthless and cruel Sammy was proving himself the fittest, the fiercest and the fastest. *(WMSR, 249)*

Al is greeted by a new member of Sammy's entourage, Sheik Dugan. Sheik Dugan had an official status in Sammy’s office. He was a sort of combination secretary, valet, business manager, companion and procurer. He had become Sammy’s shadow and had been promoted as an agent.

Sammy was immersed in Hollywood that his handshake was also a “Hollywood handshake”. He also talked with Al while dressing. Al comments on his actions. “Sammy had caught the Hollywood habit of putting every waking moment to use. It
reminded me of the famous director who even had his secretary go on reading scripts to him through the bathroom door.” (WMSR, 252)

Kit and Al both notice that Fineman is becoming less sure of his own success and is looking to Sammy for reassurance. It is not long before Fineman makes the mistake of turning to Sammy for support with the company owners and Sammy starts preying on Fineman’s weakness. Sammy does not have any respect for Fineman and he does not reveal it before them. He called Fineman, “Fineman Grandma” behind his back and commented by adding “The corpse is climbing back into his hearse.” (WMSR, 261) Sammy began to assist Fineman. While speaking about Fineman, Kit adds, “Sometimes I think the three chief products this town turns out are moving pictures, ambition and fear.” (WMSR, 261)

Sammy’s wealth showed off when he moved to one of those Hollywood Colonial manors in upper Beverly Hills. The first thing he did was to show it to Al, “every room, rattling off the names of all celebrities who had lived there before him and the marquee names he had for neighbors.” (WMSR, 262, 263) He also showed “the floodlights that illuminated the garden.” And adding to it he said, “I’ve got my own barbecue pit and my own badminton court. And have I got flowers! Do you realize you’re looking at twelve hundred dollars’ worth of hibiscus plants?” (WMSR, 263)

When Al speaks about Fineman, Sammy says, “He’s beginning to lean on me like a crutch.” (WMSR, 264) Fineman wanted help from Sammy. He puts it,

“I know you appreciate how much I’ve done for you-and I felt you’d be willing to help me.”
Help. That was the turning point. That was the moment Sammy had been waiting for. He sat there trying to look noncommittal, like a poker player who has just discovered he is holding a royal flush.”(WMSR, 265)

Sammy thinks about his marriage. Kit says, “Of course not! All Sammy is looking for is a nice simple housewife like his mother told him to marry, who looks like Dietrich, whose only interest in life is Sammy Glick, and whose father is a millionaire who can finance Sammy’s company and put him in with the Best People.”(WMSR, 269)

One find Sammy’s running behind Laurette:

Everywhere . . . Sammy seemed to be running after Laurette. I had the impression of a chunky, gutty pony, stepping way up in class, coming up on the outside to challenge the tall, graceful thoroughbred on the rail. He was filling her plate for her, drinking brandy with her, dancing with her out on the patio to the rhumba orchestra. As they danced she looked a head taller because she danced it professionally, with her shoulders straight and her titled up while Sammy tore into it with his head down like a prize-fighter.(WMSR, 271)

Laurette was thus commented:

Laurette was different. She wasn’t a whore and she wasn’t an extra-girl, and she wasn’t a star and she wasn’t a working girl, and she wasn’t a home-body and that perplexed him. Her job was not to do anything and do it attractively and amusingly. Sammy couldn’t bribe her with a day’s work, or slap her on the funny, and he couldn’t even talk about himself
without being heckled. She was someone he had to be polite to and that cramped his style. He felt she was laughing at him because his manners weren’t up to her standard and this undermined his confidence. And Sammy Glick without his confidence was not a pretty sight. (WMSR, 273)

In the novel, every inch of Hollywood has been shown in stark realism.

He [Sammy] crossed to the window that looked out over the lot. The studio street was full of the pretty girls in slacks going home in twos and threes and carpenters and painters in overalls carrying their lunchboxes and cat-calling to each other; a director exhausted from the day’s shooting and already worrying with a couple of assistants about the camera set-ups for the next; a star clowning as he climbs over the door into his silver Cord; the crazy-quilt processional of laborers, extras, waitresses, cutters, writers, glamour-girls, all the big cogs and the little ones that must turn together to keep a film factory alive. (WMSR, 284)

Almost towards the end Sammy says proudly: “Now it’s mine,” Sammy said. “Everything’s mine. I’ve got everything. Everybody’s always saying you can’t get everything and I’m the guy who swung it. I’ve got the studio and I’ve got the Harrington connections and I’ve got the perfect woman to run my home and have my children.” (WMSR, 284).

We find Fineman committing suicide when he was separated from World-Wide. “The day after he died a whistle blew in all the studios at eleven o’clock, a signal for all activity to cease for a full minute of silence while we rose in memory of Sidney Fineman.
At one minute after eleven another whistle sounded, the signal for us to forget him and go on about our business again.” (WMSR, 288)

Sammy’s funeral speech made everybody silent.

Sammy’s speech had women digging frantically for their handkerchiefs. In presenting Mrs. Fineman a gold life-pass to all World-Wide pictures, he said, “The greatest regret of my career is that I had to take the reins from the failing hands of a man who has driven out couch so long and so successfully. And I can only say that I would gladly step down from the driver’s seat and walk if I thought it would bring Uncle Sid back to us again. (WMSR, 288).

But Sammy did not cry. Kit said:

“The columnists reported tears in Sammy’s eyes as he sat down.”

“Perhaps the camera flashlights made his eyes water,” I suggested to Kit.

“No,” she said. “I don’t think it’s all impossible that those were real tears. Sammy has the peculiar ability to cry to phony situations but never at genuine ones.”

“I didn’t think he had any tears in him for any occasion,” I said. “I thought that well had run dry long ago.” (WMSR, 288)

Sammy and Laurette’s wedding ceremony with a white silk banner with gold letters, “Long Life and Happiness Always.” (WMSR, 290) It was the greatest wedding
Hollywood ever had. “Even bigger than the Mac Donald Raymond.” (WMSR, 290) It was the comment by someone.

After the wedding, Sammy called Al. Al describes the state of Sammy after the shock: “He seemed to be suffering from a severe shock, terrifyingly becalmed, like an injured motorist wandering around after a bloody collision.” (WMSR, 294) Al finds out immediately that Laurette has left him.

Thus, the novel proves to be a classic Hollywood story. It involves a newspaper copyboy from the Lower East Side of New York who wants to improve his status. Sammy rises up using guile and energy, intelligence, and a complete lack of ethics—to become one of the most prominent producers in Hollywood. This is an outstanding, funny, tragic, and entertaining novel about a despicable main character who epitomizes every venal Hollywood stereotype. What Makes Sammy Run? is still appalling and entertaining; it may be about Hollywood in the 30s, but Hollywood is still full of Sammy Glicks.