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Media mogul Maxwell dead



The Associated Press

PUBLISHING BILLIONAIRE: Robert Maxwell, 68, center, who took control of New York's *Daily News* in March, was found dead Tuesday in waters off the Canary Islands, officials said. He apparently fell from his luxury yacht. Pictured with him at the *News* building are Editor Jim Willse, left, and *News* Publisher James Hoge.

Publisher's life was drama straight from his tabloids

The Associated Press

LONDON — Robert Maxwell's life was a drama worthy of the sensational prose of his tabloid newspapers: Penniless immigrant to socialist lawmaker to publishing billionaire nicknamed "Captain Bob."

He bitterly fought Britain's powerful press unions, pushed his politics through the papers he ran, boomed out orders in one of the eight languages he spoke and bragged that he bullied editors like a field marshal.

"Working for him was never easy," said George White, president of *The Racing Times*, a 7-month-old Maxwell publication. "But everybody who has been close to him would feel a great loss."

In a recent interview, Maxwell, who purchased New York's *Daily News* in March, said he was "as hard as nails" when something needs to get done.

His adversaries had portrayed him as unsavory; his tactics too aggressive, his pay too low. "My

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Robert Maxwell

primary duty is to hire and fire editors," he said recently.

Maxwell was born Labji Hoch, the son of Czech Orthodox Jewish peasants killed by the Nazis during World War II.

He likened his early life to that of downtrodden characters in Charles Dickens novels. "Until the age of 8 I had no shoes," he said once.

He immigrated to Britain as a teen-ager in 1940 and said he arrived penniless, clutching a rifle and speaking no English.

He joined the British army, became a captain and won the prestigious Military Cross for bravery on the plains of Normandy.

"I refused an order to retreat because my mates had been cap-

tured and I had to go to free them. But I was young and foolish then," Maxwell once said.

After the war, Maxwell spent six years in the House of Commons with the Labor Party.

Maxwell, estimated to be worth \$1.9 billion by *Forbes* magazine, lived in a mansion near Oxford. He entertained lavishly and sometimes commuted to his office near Fleet Street in a helicopter.

Rotund with swept-back black hair and bushy eyebrows, Maxwell and his French-born wife, Elizabeth, were married for 46 years. They had three sons and four daughters. Five of his children work for him.

Maxwell's career stumbled in the late 1960s when one of his first major acquisitions, *Pergamon Press*, was accused of irregularities in its accounts. Maxwell and other directors left the board.

"I'll never give in," he pledged while embroiled in the *Pergamon* controversy. "I survived because

See PUBLISHER'S/5C

Publisher's body discovered in waters off Canary Islands

The Associated Press

MADRID, Spain — Robert Maxwell, the flamboyant billionaire who built a global newspaper and communications empire, was found dead Tuesday in waters off the Canary Islands, officials said. He apparently fell from his luxury yacht.

The 68-year-old publisher disappeared from the 180-foot *Lady Ghislaine* while taking a week-long rest after being accused by an investigative journalist of having close links with the Israeli secret service Mossad.

Maxwell's death ends the reign of one of the world's best-known and controversial entrepreneurs, who emigrated penniless to Britain in 1940 and built a \$2 billion media conglomerate that provided news for millions of readers.

Now questions emerge about the future of Maxwell's debt-burdened holdings, which he ruled with a fierce profit-driven philosophy but with room for money-lovers like the *Daily News* in New York and risky ventures such as an all-Europe newspaper.

Maxwell's body was found 20 miles northwest of Grand Canary Island after an extensive air-and-sea search, said Fernando Cano, spokesman at the rescue center in Madrid.

The body was being taken by helicopter to the Gando air base on the island of Tenerife. The cause of death was not immediately known, but an autopsy was planned for today.

Cano said Maxwell's wife, Elizabeth, and their son, Phillip, arrived to identify the body.

Maxwell was last seen alive on the deck of his yacht at 4:45 a.m. (11:45 p.m. EST Monday), said John Campi, a *Daily News* spokesman.

At 11 a.m. a business call arrived from New York and the crew discovered Maxwell was not on board. The captain, Gus Rankin, radioed a distress call, said Campi.

In London, Charles Wilson, director of Maxwell's Mirror Group Newspapers, said there had been no suggestion of foul play. "We can only assume that Mr. Maxwell slipped and fell overboard," he said.

Maxwell had been due to deliver a speech to the annual dinner of the Anglo-Israel Association at a London hotel Monday night, but organizers were told about 30 minutes before the event began that he was ill. His son Ian delivered the speech instead.

The yacht docked afterward at Los Cristianos, a resort town on the southwestern tip of Tenerife. Weather officials said the skies were clear at the time of Maxwell's disappearance.

"Everyone is extremely shocked," said David Shaffer, president and chief operating officer in charge of most of Maxwell Communication Corp.'s U.S. operations, based in Greenwich, Conn.

Before the announcement of Maxwell's disappearance, Maxwell Communications and its affiliate, Mirror Group Newspapers PLC, asked the London Stock Exchange to suspend trading in their shares.

See MAXWELL/5C



The Associated Press

MAXWELL'S YACHT: This is a photo of the late publisher Robert Maxwell's yacht, the 180-foot *Lady Ghislaine*, moored in New York last March.