



Harry Reasoner: A Life in the News (Focus on American History Series)

Douglass K. Daniel

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Harry Reasoner was one of the most trusted and well-liked journalists of the golden age of network television news. Whether anchoring the evening newscast on CBS in the 1960s or on ABC in the 1970s, providing in-depth reporting on *60 Minutes*, or hosting numerous special programs covering civil rights struggles, the Vietnam War, and Watergate, Reasoner had "that almost mystical quality it seems to take for good television reporting, exuding this atmosphere of truth and believability," in the words of Walter Cronkite. Yet his reassuring manner and urbane, often witty, on-air persona masked a man who was far more complex and contradictory. Though gifted with the intelligence and drive to rise to the top of his profession, Reasoner was regarded by many colleagues as lazy and self-indulgent, a man who never achieved his full potential despite his many accomplishments.

Harry Reasoner: A Life in the News covers the entire sweep of this enigmatic journalist's life and career. Douglass K. Daniel opens with Reasoner's Depression-era Midwestern upbringing and follows him through his early work in newspapers and radio before he joined CBS in 1956. Focusing on Reasoner's thirty-five-year tenure in television news, Daniel presents fascinating, behind-the-scenes accounts of Reasoner's key role in founding the top-rated newsmagazine *60 Minutes*. He also explores Reasoner's highly publicized move to ABC in 1970, where he anchored the nightly newscast, first with Howard K. Smith and later with Barbara Walters—a disastrous pairing from which Reasoner's career never fully recovered.

Based on scores of interviews and unpublished letters, memos, and other primary sources, this first biography of the man once rated second in credibility only to Walter Cronkite illuminates an entire era in broadcast journalism, as well as many of the unique personalities, from Andy Rooney to Mike Wallace, who made that era distinctive.

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