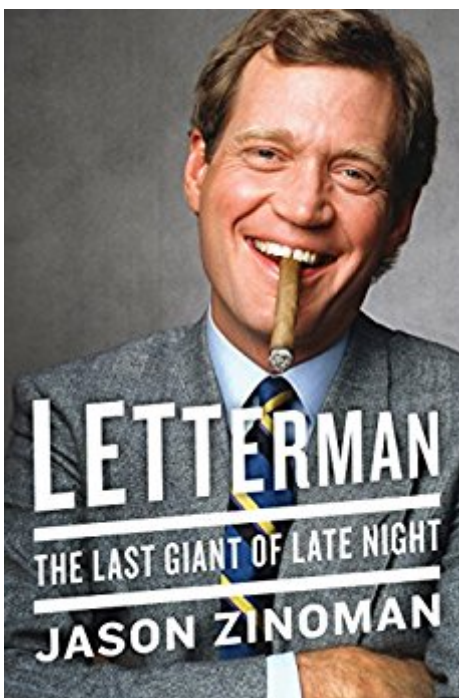


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Letterman: The Last Giant Of Late Night



Synopsis

New York Times comedy critic Jason Zinoman delivers the definitive story of the life and artistic legacy of David Letterman, the greatest television talk show host of all time and the signature comedic voice of a generation. In a career spanning more than thirty years, David Letterman redefined the modern talk show with an ironic comic style that transcended traditional television. While he remains one of the most famous stars in America, he is a remote, even reclusive, figure whose career is widely misunderstood. In *Letterman*, Jason Zinoman, the first comedy critic in the history of the New York Times, mixes groundbreaking reporting with unprecedented access and probing critical analysis to explain the unique entertainer's titanic legacy. Moving from his early days in Indiana to his retirement, Zinoman goes behind the scenes of Letterman's television career to illuminate the origins of his revolutionary comedy, its overlooked influences, and how his work intersects with and reveals his famously eccentric personality. Zinoman argues that Letterman had three great artistic periods, each distinct and part of his evolution. As he examines key broadcasting moments—"Stupid Pet Tricks" and other captivating segments that defined *Late Night with David Letterman*—he illuminates Letterman's relationship to his writers, and in particular, the show's co-creator, Merrill Markoe, with whom Letterman shared a long professional and personal connection. To understand popular culture today, it's necessary to understand David Letterman. With this revealing biography, Zinoman offers a perceptive analysis of the man and the artist whose ironic voice and caustic meta-humor was critical to an entire generation of comedians and viewers—and whose singular style ushered in new tropes that have become clichés in comedy today.

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Customer Reviews

Very well written book about Letterman and the Letterman mystique, particularly for someone like me who was never cowed by the Letterman mystique. It was entertaining and enlightening to learn about the dynamics behind Letterman's ascendancy to talk show prominence and dominance.

Reading Zinoman's book helped me to understand why Letterman never really appealed to me and why I nevertheless had a grating appreciation for him whenever I would watch. "His attitude was that of an irreverent kid who refused to take anything seriously." "His smirking tone was so consistently knowing that he seemed as if he must know something." Such apt descriptions of David Letterman's personality and presence throughout the book make the case for the cult of personality he engendered and his influence on the world of comedy. One of my most memorable experiences was seeing comedian David Letterman at the Ice House Comedy Club in the summer of 1979 before his move to television. His performance was electric that night. His presence filled the room and we all knew we were witness and party to a special personality whose career was in ascendance.

This book far exceeded expectations. It is an impeccably researched look at David Letterman's career. The pages fly by, and the reader gets both sides of the stories. Zinoman isn't afraid to give his opinion, but it is fully supported. I smiled often as he recreated so many classic moments.

Highest recommendation.

I love David Letterman. I thought he was, and still is compared to other late night hosts, the best interviewer on TV. This book holds nothing back. You hear about his depression, the sex scandal and more. I highly recommend this book.

Enjoyed this book! I felt it was an honest portrayal of David Letterman, good and bad!

Read it a day, enjoyed it, not sure if letterman can ever be fully understood. This is probably the as close as we'll ever get to the truth about him.

I was a big fan of Letterman when he was on Late Night with David Letterman. I really missed the show when it went off the air. The book mentioned things that I had no idea about and had very interesting facts behind the scenes and about Letterman's personality.

It was a well appreciated gift. You can't go wrong purchasing this book for yourself or as a gift.

A well written book about the good and challenging times of David Letterman. A lot of great and unknown material as the curtain is lifted

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