



Walter's Perspective: A Memoir of Fifty Years in Chicago TV News

Walter Jacobson

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Walter Jacobson's highly readable book *Walter's Perspective: A Memoir of Fifty Years in Chicago TV News* provides a unique glimpse into the rough-and-tumble Chicago news business as seen through the eyes of one of its legendary players. From his first news job working as a legman for *Daily News* columnist Jack Mabley in the 1950s to his later role as a news anchor and political commentator at CBS-owned WBBM, Jacobson battled along the front lines of an industry undergoing dramatic changes. While it is ultimately Jacobson's story, a memoir of a long and distinguished (and sometimes highly controversial) career, it is also an insider's account of the inner workings of Chicago television news, including the ratings games, the process of defining news and choosing stories, the media's power and its failures, and the meddling by corporate and network executives.

As a reporter, Jacobson was regularly contentious and confrontational. He was fired on a number of occasions and was convicted of libeling tobacco company Brown and Williamson, resulting in a multimillion-dollar federal court judgment against him and CBS. Yet it was this gutsy attitude that put him at the top of the news game, enabling him to get inside information on Chicago government and politics, and helped him become the first local television reporter to be granted a visa to visit Communist China. With an engaging writing style, Jacobson relates these experiences and much more. He recollects his interactions with Chicago mayors Richard J. and Richard M. Daley, Jane Byrne, Harold Washington, and Rahm Emanuel; recounts his coverage of such fascinating news stories as the violent 1968 Democratic National Convention and the execution of convicted mass murderer John Wayne Gacy; and recalls his reporting on and interviews with Louis Farrakhan, governors George Ryan and Rod Blagojevich, and Barack Obama. More than a memoir, *Walter's Perspective* is the extraordinary journey of one reporter whose distinctive career followed the changing face of Chicago's local news.

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