

Cover Me Boys, I'm Going In: Tales of the tube from a broadcast brat

Keith Hirshland

CreateSpace (Aug 8, 2013)

Softcover \$19.99 (530pp)

978-1-4827-6052-1

A broadcast veteran dishes about the evolution of TV as we know it.

Welcome to the world of television, from a man who has spent his life chasing, writing, and producing the next big story. In *Cover Me Boys, I'm Going In*, Keith Hirshland relates his experiences with broadcasting, early cable TV, and the launch of the Golf Channel. Hirshland's easy, conversational style tends to be abundant with detail; he leaves no name unspoken—from a station manager thirty years ago to the van driver on that particular day. Altogether, the memoir is a fascinating personal record that might serve as a compendium of people, places, and events from one niche of television history.

Cover Me Boys begins with Hirshland's account of his network-founding father, from whom Hirshland caught the passion for television and, in particular, televised sports. In many later chapters, the author shares both the mechanical and human aspects of TV production. His perspective highlights just how much technologies and processes have changed. Also of interest are the fledgling—and in many cases, now-famous—TV personalities that Hirshland worked with or met over the years.

Hirshland's gentle humor and friendly tone are, for the most part, entertaining, and his unique riffs on "on-air talent" serve to be fresh and funny. When describing the personality it takes to be "on-air talent" he says, "It involves a weird combination of interest, insecurity, and ego." Hirshland continues, "The best in the business, from my personal experience, have a ton of the first ingredient, a healthy dose of the one in the middle, and almost none of the last."

Throughout the memoir, Hirshland's passion for sports is palpable, but it also serves as a weakness. His devotion to putting down the names, the players, and the sundry essential and inessential data can be taxing. This overabundance of detail also reaches into the dialogue—though a conversation may be a pivotal one, a casual reader doesn't need to know every word. While indicative of the author's formidable memory and substantial research, this level of detail does not necessarily result in an engaging read.

Despite a handful of missteps, *Cover Me Boys, I'm Going In* has the potential to be a memorable personal chronicle of a very public phenomenon. Hirshland offers a unique glimpse into the world of television, and his enthusiasm and positivity make for an inspiring treatise on dedication and success.

LEIA MENLOVE (October 1, 2013)

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