

## The Twilight Man: Rod Serling and the Birth of Television

**Koren Shadmi**

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The career of Rod Serling—the screenwriter, playwright, and television producer best known for creating *The Twilight Zone*—is traced in Koren Shadmi's graphic novel *The Twilight Man*.

The young Serling, after proving his mettle as a US army paratrooper in World War II, suffered from what would today be called PTSD. Eventually, he gained entry into the world of scripting radio shows and had success with teleplays, establishing his reputation as a top writer. Trading on that reputation, he launched the anthology series *The Twilight Zone*, which became a classic of early television.

The strains of producing that show, along with his other television series, *Night Gallery*, weighed heavily on Serling, who constantly fought with television executives over censorship issues. Combined with his familiar cigarette habit, the stresses contributed to his premature death at age fifty.

Shadmi tells Serling's story in a clever way, drawing on *The Twilight Zone*'s format, trademark twists, and Serling's own style as a narrator. The influences on Serling's most famous works are made clear, including his amateur boxing career, his wartime experiences, and even a trip to Las Vegas. Discussions of the birth of television are limited to Serling's career.

Shadmi's art is expert at portraying Serling's distinctive look, along with a number of key images from *The Twilight Zone* and Serling's other work. These are strong visual reminders of the stories that cemented Serling's legacy. *The Twilight Man* is an informative biography of a television pioneer.

PETER DABBENE (November / December 2019)

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