



# **Booknotes : Life Stories : Notable Biographers on the People Who Shaped America**

*Brian Lamb*

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From presidents to generals, from civil rights activists to poets, from inventors to scientists, Brian Lamb explores the lives of our most fascinating Americans on Booknotes, his weekly C-Span interview program. He and his guests have examined the lives of Thomas Paine, Paul Revere, Abraham Lincoln, Walt Whitman, Woodrow Wilson, Robert McNamara, Adlai Stevenson, Albert Einstein, Will Rogers, Amelia Earhart, Martin Luther King, and Thurgood Marshall, to name just a dozen of the seminal figures now found in Booknotes: Life Stories. The biographers featured here are often no less legendary than their subjects: David Herbert Donald on Abraham Lincoln, Ron Chernow on John D. Rockefeller, Doris Kearns Goodwin on Franklin and Eleanor Roosevelt, David McCullough on Harry Truman, Norman Mailer on Lee Harvey Oswald, Robert Caro on Lyndon Baines Johnson, and Katharine Graham and Frank McCourt on their own lives.

In his first book, *Booknotes: America's Finest Authors on Reading, Writing, and the Power of Ideas*, Lamb showed a remarkable ability to elicit fascinating insights into the creative process from authors eager to explain their craft. In **Booknotes: Life Stories**, Lamb extends his vision by taking an intimate look with our favorite biographers at the historical figures they've devoted their careers to portraying. He encourages these writers to open up about their methods, their sources of inspiration, and their fascinating subjects. As in the first book, Lamb's original questions have been omitted from the edited text, producing seamless conversational essays that allow the storyteller in each writer to fully emerge. Like Booknotes, this new book also includes full-color photographs by Brian Lamb that enrich our appreciation of these biographical portraits.

This volume highlights celebrated lives while also providing memorable portraits of the era in which each figure lived, lending a rare sense of immediacy to history. For instance, David Hackett Fischer, biographer of Paul Revere, reflects on the birth of an American myth and whether Revere's heroism actually took place as Longfellow recorded it in his famous poem "The Midnight Ride of Paul Revere." In quoting Susan B. Anthony, Lynn Sherr shows how her activism profoundly changed America: "Once we get women to their full equality and independence, then men will be freer also. Families will be better off when men can stay home and do more of the child-rearing." Brian Lamb has achieved a deserved place in American letters for coaxing hundreds of writers from the anonymity of their writing studios into the living rooms of every American home. His interviews are themselves great biographies.

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