

Author Says No One Will Ever Match Seymour Hersh's Work

Author Rob Miraldi said that despite dramatic changes in the way people find their news and the declining revenues of the mainstream media he remains optimistic about the future of American journalism and of investigative reporting.

But, Miraldi added, even with the vigorous investigative reporting presence in America today, he doubts that anyone will ever match Seymour Hersh's four decades of exposés, scoops and impact on American public policy.

"Will anyone persist for 40 years?" he asked in a recent speech. "Will anyone ever turn out such a body of work as Hersh. That I doubt." More importantly, he added, "What I doubt most of all is that anyone could for so long be so indignant and angry at conditions" to keep churning out his brand of exposé journalism.

Miraldi, the author of *Seymour Hersh: Scoop Artist*, made his comments in a recent talk as part of the New York Public Library's author series. The talk, entitled "Chasing the Great Muckraker," was televised on C-span's Book channel (www.c-span.org/video/?317573-1/book-discussion-seymour-hersh)

The book was published last fall by Potomac Books/University of Nebraska Press and was named one of the 10 best investigative books in the nation by Harvard University's *Nieman Reports*.

In the book Miraldi traces the career of Hersh, who many consider to be the best investigative reporter in America. In his talk at the mid-Manhattan branch of the NY Public Library, Miraldi traced his pursuit of Hersh, from the days in the mid-1970s when he closely followed Hersh's work at the *New York Times* to recent years when he had telephone conversations and exchanged emails with the author and journalist.

Miraldi emphasized that *Scoop Artist* was not an authorized book, saying: "In fact, I knew that Sy Hersh would be appalled at an authorized book. Nothing he ever did in his career

was authorized. Just the opposite. He has spent a lifetime pulling out information and details that the authorities have been trying to hide or coverup.”

Miraldi told a number of humorous anecdotes about his pursuit of Hersh, and made clear that, at least partly, Hersh declined to sit down for long interviews because he insisted that his work was most important, not his opinions or even what his childhood growing up in Chicago was like.

Miraldi told the audience that the debate about who is the best investigative reporter in America boils down to a rivalry between Hersh and Bob Woodward, the *Washington Post* reporter and author who was a key player in the exposé of the Watergate scandal in 1974.

But Miraldi said it is an apples and oranges comparison. “They are different kinds of journalists today,” he said. “Woodward is able to gain access to the halls of power in Washington and tells us what goes on. But Hersh insists that what Woodward tells us is useful but not the truth.”

Hersh, Miraldi said, “is the ultimate outsider. That will never change.”

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