



Hunter S. Thompson

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Early Life

A journalist almost from birth, Hunter Stockton Thompson began writing for his neighborhood newspaper at age ten. In 1956, Thompson joined the United States Air Force and penned a weekly sports column for the Elgin base's newspaper, *The Common Courier*. Between 1959 and 1965, he served as a correspondent for *Time*, the *New York Herald Tribune* and the *National Observer*. In 1963, in Greenwich Village, he married Sandra Dawn, with whom he had a son, Juan.

The 1960's

In the 1960's, the radical youth of the United States demanded a mode of journalism that would divorce itself from a media they viewed as pandering to the political hierarchy. They found it in Thompson's work. In 1964, Thompson wrote an article for the *Nation*, "Motorcycle Gangs: Losers and Outsiders," and began to challenge the media's representation of the Hell's Angels motorcycle gang. He rode and lived with the motorcycle gang until 1966 when he completed *Hell's Angels: A Strange and Terrible Saga*, one of the best examples of New Journalism participant-observer reporting.

Impact

Thompson became known as a champion of the New Journalism, a form noted for its participant-observer approach and that would later become known as "gonzo journalism."

Subsequent Events

In 1972, Thompson published *Fear and Loathing in Las Vegas: A Savage Journey to the Heart of the American Dream*, his best-known work, which was widely read by 1970's remnants of the counterculture. Thompson married for a second time in 2003. On February 20, 2005, Thompson killed himself at his home in Woody Creek, Colorado.

Bibliography

Carroll, E. Jean. *Hunter: The Strange and Savage Life of Hunter S. Thompson*. New York: Dutton, 1993. Full-length biography. Includes the essay "Young Doctor Thompson," which appeared in *Esquire* (February, 1993).

Crouse, Timothy. *The Boys on the Bus*. 1973. Reprint. New York: Random House, 2003. Thompson is featured in Crouse's depiction of the press corps on the 1972 campaign, offering an alternative account to Thompson's *Fear and Loathing: On the Campaign Trail, '72*.

Draper, Robert. *Rolling Stone Magazine: The Uncensored History*. New York: Doubleday, 1990. Mentions Thompson's contributions to the magazine.

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McKeen, William. *Hunter S. Thompson*. Boston: Twayne, 1991. Offers biographical information and analyses of Thompson's major works through the early 1990's.

Perry, Paul. *Fear and Loathing: The Strange and Terrible Saga of Hunter S. Thompson*. New York: Thunder's Mouth Press, 1992. An unauthorized biography by an editor who has worked with Thompson.

Whitmer, Peter O. *When the Going Gets Weird: The Strange Life and Twisted Times of Hunter S. Thompson*. New York: Hyperion, 1993. Full-length biography by a clinical psychologist that attempts to demythologize Thompson's raucous life and reputation.

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