



Sundays with Sullivan: How the Ed Sullivan Show Brought Elvis, the Beatles, and Culture to America

Bernie Ilson

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When forty-six-year-old Ed Sullivan—a gossip columnist for the *New York Daily News*—stepped on stage at CBS Television Studio for the first time in 1948, no one could imagine the great success that lay in store for *The Ed Sullivan Show*. Sullivan didn't sing, dance, or act, but he became one of the country's greatest showmen, hosting what would become television's longest running variety and music show.

For twenty-three years, from 1948 to 1971, *The Ed Sullivan Show* was America's premiere variety show, airing live every Sunday night. Sullivan used the one-hour program to bring stars of the entertainment world into living rooms across the nation, turning acts such as the Beatles and Elvis Presley into household names. But Sullivan certainly didn't limit his show to rock musicians. The performers featured on *The Ed Sullivan Show* were an eclectic array of talent that included everything from opera singers to dancing bears, high-wire walkers to classical violinists.

This book is an inside view of *The Ed Sullivan Show* and the unusual story of one of the most unlikely television stars who played host to such diverse talents as Van Cliburn, Rudolf Nureyev, Robert Goulet, Richard Pryor, and the Rolling Stones. With his distinctive nasal voice, Sullivan regularly promised audiences a "really big show" and delivered by offering up virtually every form of twentieth-century entertainment.

Bernie Iltson, one the most famous publicists in the field of public relations, and the press representative for the final eight years of *The Ed Sullivan Show*, gives the reader a unique inside view of the amazing newspaperman and television host, Ed Sullivan, who anticipated the interest of 35 million viewers each Sunday and presented them with the greatest talent in show business, week after week, for almost a quarter of a century.

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