



Serling: The Rise and Twilight of TV's Last Angry Man

Gordon F. Sander

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"Serling's complex life was very like an extended episode of *The Twilight Zone*, and Gordon F. Sander uniquely captures all the twists and ironies of a talented man struggling against the conventions of society and the insecurities of self. Sander's haunting portrait is of a writer indeed caught between light and shadow."?from the Foreword by Ron Simon

Gordon F. Sander's acclaimed biography of Rod Serling is at once a portrait of a prodigiously talented writer and a history of the first-quarter century of television. A former paratrooper in World War II, Serling rose to fame in the 1950s with his hard-hitting plays *Patterns* and *Requiem for a Heavyweight* during the "golden age" of live television in New York City. In 1959, excited by the prospect of writing and producing his own dramatic anthology show, the angry young man of television followed his fortune?and the burgeoning video medium?to Hollywood.

Serling's anthology show, of course, was the landmark *The Twilight Zone*. Still considered one of the greatest television shows ever produced, Serling's surreal video showcase ran for five seasons, adding to Serling's record clutch of Emmys, and continues to be a cult favorite today. Meanwhile Serling also tried his hand at writing for movies, turning out the screenplays for *Seven Days in May* and *Planet of the Apes* before his death in 1975 at age fifty.

Sander's historical biography?for which he interviewed more than two hundred of Serling's friends, family members, and colleagues, including Robert Redford, Sydney Pollack, Kim Hunter, and William Shatner?follows the video bard's odyssey from Binghamton, the small upstate city that served as the template for some of the best-remembered episodes of *The Twilight Zone* to his searing and equally influential wartime experiences in the South Pacific; from his apprenticeship as a Midwestern radio and television writer to his successes in New York and Hollywood, before he himself was consumed by the commercialism of the medium he had helped create.

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