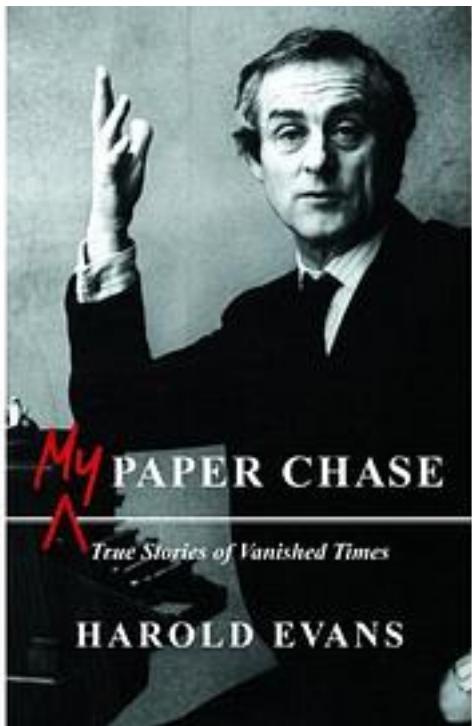


My Paper Chase: True Stories of Vanished Times



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著者:Evans, Harold

出版者:Little, Brown and Company; 1 edition

出版时间:(November 5, 2009)

装帧:

isbn:9780316031424

From The Washington Post's Book World/washingtonpost.com Reviewed by Leonard Downie Jr. Harold Evans, a Manchester-born British newspaper editor who became an American citizen in 1993, is not as well known as he should be in his adopted country. He has written two best-selling books about American history, published a record number of bestsellers by other authors as president of Random House, started Conde Nast Traveler magazine and served as editorial director of U.S. News & World Report. In Britain, however, before he moved to the United States in 1983, Harold Evans was nationally known as the most influential newspaper editor of his time. As the crusading editor of the Sunday Times from 1967 to 1981, he championed investigative journalism

that, among other accomplishments, achieved justice for the deformed child victims of the drug thalidomide and exposed the treason of Soviet spy Kim Philby. He repeatedly and successfully challenged heavy-handed British government secrecy and censorship, significantly increasing freedom of the press in a country without a First Amendment. He mentored countless prominent British journalists and filled bookstores with their *Sunday Times* books. He was knighted by Queen Elizabeth II in 2004. Evans's memoir, aided by prescient personal diaries, is a victory lap, recounting in detail his remarkable climb from teenage cub reporter, raised in a working-class family in England's Midlands, to the top of British journalism, without the usually requisite Oxbridge pedigree. Although his engaging, conversational narrative is sprinkled with wry self-deprecation and generous credit for many people he worked with over the years, its hero is clearly the first-person narrator, to a sometimes cloying degree. At one point, Evans describes his editorship of the *Sunday Times* as "my power base as a defender of press freedom." As its subtitle implies, his memoir also is an excursion into nostalgia for the pre-computer days of swashbuckling, competitive British newspaper journalism with metal type, multiple editions, crowded newsrooms, constant deadlines, gruff editors, reputation-making scoops, groundbreaking investigative reporting and tense conflicts with unions and the government. Some of the dense detail is too peculiar to British life and newspapering, even for the journalists among American readers. But the story picks up when Evans narrates campaigns he directed as an editor, first at the provincial *Northern Star* and then at the London-based *Sunday Times*. His campaigns combined aggressive reporting, editorializing and even lobbying to right wrongs. They included a drive at the *Northern Star* to exonerate a man who had been wrongly executed for murder and the *Sunday Times* crusade to win financial compensation for children born with foreshortened or no limbs after their mothers had taken thalidomide for morning sickness between 1958 and 1962. The latter effort included one of Evans's many confrontations with criminal contempt and official secrecy laws that had restricted reporting in Britain. Evans's campaigns and his creation of the pioneering *Sunday Times*'s investigative team paralleled the expansion of investigative reporting in the United States, following the U.S. Supreme Court decision allowing publication of the *Pentagon Papers* and *The Washington Post*'s *Watergate* reporting. But there was a difference that Evans does not really address. Most American newspapers keep their news reporting, including investigative reporting, separate from their editorial opinions -- and their editors do not personally lobby for reform of problems revealed by their reporting. Evans does make clear his pride in his campaigns, the hallmark of his career. And he lists rules for them. "The paper had to have investigated the subject thoroughly enough to be sure that there was a genuine grievance, it had to have defined a practical remedy, it had to be ready to commit the resources for a sustained effort, and had to open its columns to counterarguments and corrections of fact," he writes. "No campaign should be ended until it had succeeded -- or was proven wrong." When Rupert Murdoch bought the daily and *Sunday Times* newspapers, he persuaded Evans to become editor of the daily *Times* in 1981, only to force him out a year later, apparently because Evans was too independent of his control. That, and Evans's divorce from his first wife and marriage to a much younger British journalist, Tina Brown, were eventually followed by the couple's move to America. "If he hadn't given me a shove," Evans writes about his showdown with Murdoch, "I wouldn't have enjoyed twenty-five exuberant years exploring new frontiers." In addition to Evans's busy second act in American magazine and book publishing, Tina Brown has been editor, in succession, of *Vanity Fair*, the *New Yorker* and *Talk* magazines, and founder of the *Daily Beast* Web site. They have lived in a two-story apartment on New York's Upper East Side and a beach house in Westhampton, an area that reminds Evans of the English seaside. Yet he races through their quarter-century in America at the tail end of a book that dwells on his life in Britain working at newspapers. In this readable, almost wistful memoir, Sir Harold

Evans remains the rare self-made Englishman who changed British journalism.
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