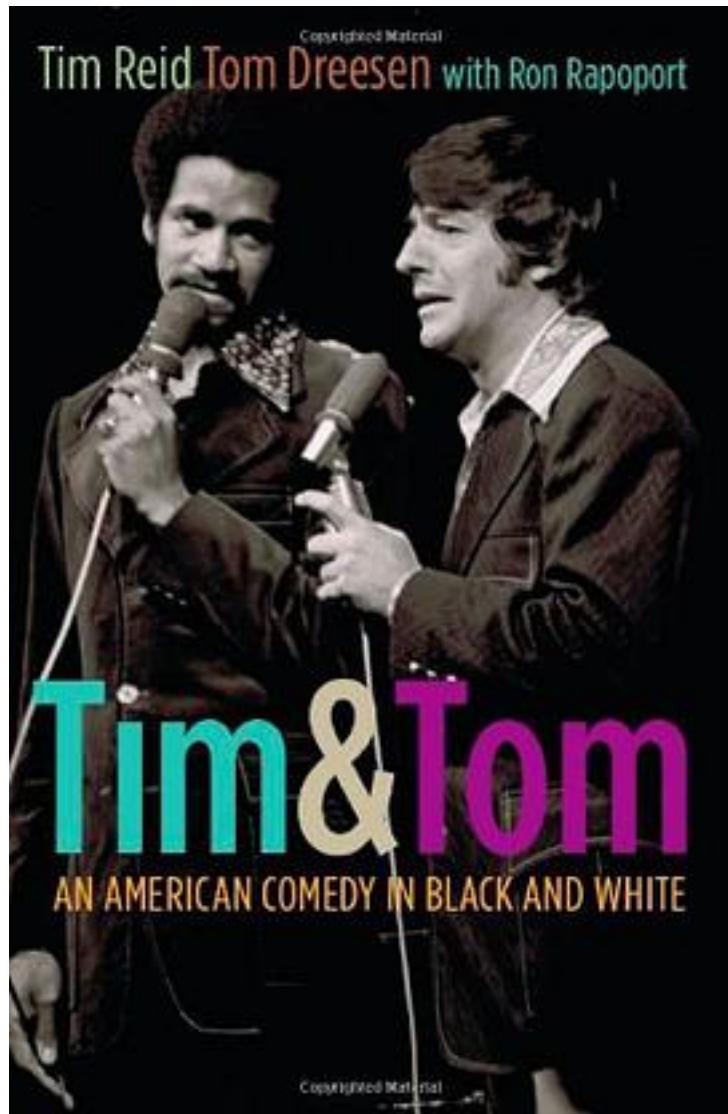


Tim and Tom



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As the heady promise of the 1960s sagged under the weight of widespread violence, rioting, and racial unrest, two young men - one black and one white - took to stages across the nation to help Americans confront their racial divide: by laughing at it. "Tim and Tom" tells the story of that pioneering duo, the first interracial comedy team in the history of show business - and the last. Tim Reid and Tom Dreesen polished their act in the nightclubs of Chicago, then took it on the road, not only in the North, but in the still-simmering South as well, developing routines that even today remain surprisingly frank - and remarkably funny - about race. Most nights, the shock of seeing an integrated comedy team quickly dissipated in uproarious laughter, but on some occasions the audience's confusion and discomfort led to racist heckling, threats, and even violence. Though Tim and Tom perpetually seemed on the verge of making it big throughout their five years together, they grudgingly came to realize that they were ahead of their time: America was not yet ready to laugh at its own failed promise. Eventually, the grind of the road took its toll, as bitter arguments led to an acrimonious breakup. But the underlying bond of friendship Reid and Dreesen had forged with each groundbreaking joke has endured for decades, while their solo careers delivered the success that had eluded them as a team. By turns revealing, shocking, and riotously funny, "Tim and Tom" unearths a largely forgotten chapter in the history of comedy.

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目录:

[Tim and Tom 下载链接1](#)

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评论

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