

# TELEVISION

## Hewitt describes how 60 Minutes ticks

One of America's most successful television shows in the history of television celebrates its 20th anniversary this Sunday, 7pm on CBS.

Since its debut on September 24, 1968, 60 Minutes has changed the face of television and television news.

Its hard hitting, often controversial style of journalism has made millions love it and just as many hate it.

What makes 60 Minutes tick? Some would say it's that hard hitting style of journalism. Others would say the five talented CBS correspondents are what makes 60 Minutes work. And still others would say the real force behind 60 Minutes is its creator and Executive Producer Don Hewitt.

For 20-years, Hewitt has

been the guiding force behind the show. His opinions about 60 Minutes and broadcast journalism in general are interesting, if not controversial.

The following are excerpts of an interview with 60 Minutes Executive Producer Don Hewitt. The interview is courtesy of CBS News press information.

**Q. What strengths do each of the 60 Minutes correspondents bring to the broadcast?**

**A. Mike brings out the best in everyone he works with. He's uncompromising. And that's contagious. Morley is the stylist. Morley adds the flavor to 60 Minutes, the salt and pepper. Ed is a solid reporter. He is the blocking back, without whom no one scores touchdowns.**

Harry Reasoner is the voice of everyman. He's got

those craggy, midwestern good looks. He may be the most believable of all broadcasters working in television. Diane may very well be the smartest broadcaster I've ever worked with. She's got a razor-sharp mind. Her dazzling intellect outdazzles her dazzling good looks. And she's so smart that you almost--repeat, almost--forget she's that beautiful.

Andy Rooney. If Walter Cronkite is Uncle Walter to a whole generation of Americans, Andy Rooney is Cousin Andy. He touches a familiar chord in everyone, and his contributions is invaluable.

**Q. The 60 Minutes correspondents are always asked whom they would most like to interview. Whom would you like to interview?**

Well, I think probably

Jackie Onassis, if she really wanted to let her hair down and talk about life in the White House with Jack Kennedy and that terrible day in Dallas and how she came to marry Aristotle Onassis. No one has really ever gotten her to tell that story. I kind of agree with Mike Wallace that Pat Nixon would be a sensational interview. I think if Nancy Reagan wanted to really let her hair down and talk candidly about her husband, who he is, who he isn't, I think it would be a marvelous interview.

**Q. Has the Pentagon's position regarding 60 Minutes changed over the years?**

**A. You know, the Pentagon still refuses to cooperate with 60 Minutes on anything. Well, we went and had lunch with them and, we said, "Are you**

against television or are you against 60 Minutes?" They said, No, we're against 60 Minutes."

**Q. Does 60 Minutes have a political or ideological bias?**

**A. I get a good laugh out of the label, "liberal left/wing media." The liberal media are a bunch of guys trying to make their mortgage payments, pay the rent and send their kids through school. This is one of the things that I am most proud of at 60 Minutes either right or left. There are just as many stories, news stories about poor people ripping off rich people, as stories about rich people ripping off the poor people. Personally, I have little or no use for zealots of the right or the left.**

**Q. What is the most gratifying part of your job?**

**A. Well, the most gratifying part is sitting in the screening rooms and watching a producer and a correspondent give a birth to a story. And then assist in any small way I can to help bring up the baby, until we finally finished and now he's healthy, happy, fine little worthwhile kid.**

**You've said the 60 Minutes correspondents are probably television journalism's best storytellers. You're a pretty good storyteller yourself. Do you have a favorite story or quotation?**

**A. My favorite quotation — When H.L. Mencken was on his deathbed, he wrote a note to a reporter at the Baltimore Sun who was doing his obit. And he said simply, "Don't overplay it." I love that. Isn't that wonderful?**

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