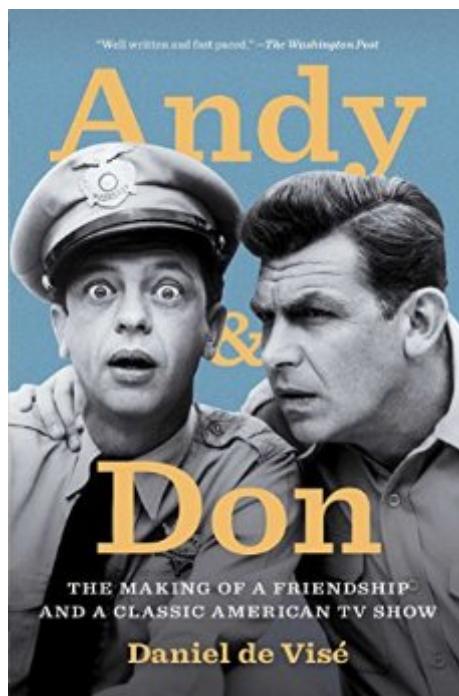


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Andy And Don: The Making Of A Friendship And A Classic American



Synopsis

A lively and revealing biography of Andy Griffith and Don Knotts, this âœhumorous, informative, and poignant bookâ • celebrates the powerful real-life friendship behind one of Americaâ™s most iconic television programs and âœshows how the magic was createdâ • (Library Journal). Andy Griffith and Don Knotts first met on Broadway in the 1950s. When Andy moved to Hollywood to film a TV pilot for a comedy about a small-town sheriff, Don called to ask if Andyâ™s sheriff could use a deputy. The friendship and comedy partnership between Sheriff Andy Taylor and Deputy Barney Fife ignited *The Andy Griffith Show*, elevating the folksy television sitcom into a timeless study of human friendship. Together, they created a program with a uniquely small-town dynamic that captured the hearts of Americans across the country who watched these two men rocking on the front porch, meditating about the pleasure of a bottle of pop. But behind this sleepy charm, de VisÃ©â™s exclusive reporting âœcaptures the complexity of both men and the intimacy of their friendship with extreme detail and sensitivityâ • (Publishers Weekly), from unspoken rivalries, passionate affairs, unrequited loves, struggles with the temptations of fame, and friendships lost and regained. Although Andy and Don ended their Mayberry partnership in 1965, they remained best friends for the next half-century. Written by Don Knottsâ™s brother-in-law, Andy and Don is âœa rewarding dual biography that is also a lively look inside the entertainment industry in the latter half of the twentieth centuryâ • (News & Observer). Entertaining and provocative, it âœcaptures a golden moment in modern Americana. Youâ™ll not only return again to Mayberry, youâ™ll feel as though youâ™ve never leftâ • (Tom Shales, Pulitzer Prizeâ™winning television critic).

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Customer Reviews

[Reviewed from an advance copy of the book.] What American is there who hasn't seen THE ANDY GRIFFITH SHOW? TAGS (as the show's diehard fans call it) is an enduring piece of Americana, its two central characters " Sheriff Andy Taylor and Deputy Barney Fife " as indelible a pair as Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. While there have been a number of other books dealing with this television classic, ANDY AND DON is the surely first one to focus on the professional and personal relationship between Andy Griffith and Don Knotts. Griffith and Knotts had an enduring friendship that started when they met during the Broadway production of NO TIME FOR SERGEANTS in the mid-1950s. The two men immediately bonded over their shared southern backgrounds and difficult childhoods. The delightful chemistry that Andy and Don displayed on screen " worthy of the greatest comedy duos, of Laurel and Hardy or Abbott and Costello " was based in their real-life friendship. ANDY & DON is written by Daniel de Vise', an author and journalist who is the late Don Knotts' brother-in-law. He is a sophisticated prose stylist and has given a cogent structure to his double biography, first pursuing Andy's and Don's separate strands of narrative and then bringing them together. Don's childhood was nothing short of Dickensian, with grim poverty, persistent health problems and a mentally ill father who once nearly killed him. Andy's was outwardly more comfortable, yet he too had his battles to contend with, including persistent bullying. Throughout his life Don Knotts was insecure, neurotic and anxiety-ridden, much like Barney Fife. Andy Griffith's personality was more complex, with some of Andy Taylor's magnanimity coexisting with less attractive qualities.

Often with biographies or autobiographies of actors, who were on a popular TV show, there will be reviews complaining there was not enough about that TV show in the book. With this book, there should be no such complaints. While author Daniel de Vis© covers the entire lives of Don Knotts and Andy Griffith, from childhoods to deaths, the majority of the book still seems to be about The Andy Griffith Show: The Complete Series. What's talked about is not a lot of trivial filler, either. Mr. de Vis© instead does an excellent job describing what went on all the years the show was

filmed, what was going on with the actors in it, what happened to everyone after the show ended, why the show was so popular even after Don Knotts left and the scripts went downhill, why the show is still so popular today, etc. From start to finish, *Andy and Don: The Making of a Friendship and a Classic American* is an exceptional research and writing job, which appears to treat both actors fairly. Only, a couple of days after finishing the book, I didn't feel so warmly about it, but that's not because of the book itself. It's because of the personal lives of Don Knotts and Andy Griffith. They were both such hard working actors so good at their acting jobs. Yet, they both cheated like crazy on their first wives, both married younger and younger women, both ended up being old men cared for by wives who were 30-40 years younger.

Sheriff Andy Taylor and Deputy Barney Fife were the best of friends on TV in the fictional world of Mayberry. In real life, Andy Griffith and Don Knotts were also great friends. *Andy and Don* is a dual biography of the two men, told by journalist Daniel de Vise, whose wife's sister was married to Don Knotts. As Knotts' brother-in-law, de Vise had a little extra access to Knotts and other actors in their circle, but only for a short time. Knotts died only four years after marrying his third wife, who was de Vise's sister-in-law. The two men had difficult childhoods in common, as well as both having grown up in the South. They met when they both had parts in *No Time For Sergeants* on Broadway. Griffith had the lead role and Knotts had a role that became a prototype for his Barney Fife character. The childhoods and early careers are well documented here, but for my money the book doesn't really get going until both men finally make it to Hollywood. Then we get into the story of how a hit TV show was made in the 1960s. *The Andy Griffith Show* was an unlikely hit, with little conflict and a bucolic setting. Griffith, unlike his even-tempered character, had an angry streak and he and his wife would often have shouting matches, sometimes coming to physical violence. Many people were unhappy witnesses to the shouting matches. When the couple were not shouting at each other, they enjoyed partying, particularly in the company of swingers. Hey, it was the 60s! Knotts, on the other hand, liked a quieter existence when not on camera. While de Vise goes into the post Mayberry careers and marriages of both men, right up until their deaths, the story of *The Andy Griffith Show* is the most interesting part of the book.

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