

what it takes richard ben cramer

What it takes Richard Ben Cramer to be considered one of the most influential and respected journalists of his time is a testament to his remarkable talent, relentless work ethic, and profound understanding of the complexities of human nature. Cramer's ability to weave intricate narratives that delve deep into the personalities and motivations of his subjects set him apart in the world of journalism. He was known not only for his exceptional writing skills but also for his dedication to uncovering the truth behind the stories that shaped American politics and culture.

The Early Life of Richard Ben Cramer

Richard Ben Cramer was born on February 12, 1950, in the small town of Rosedale, New York. His upbringing in a middle-class family instilled in him a sense of curiosity and a passion for storytelling from an early age. Here are some key aspects of his early life:

- **Education:** Cramer attended the University of Maryland, where he pursued a degree in journalism. His time in college helped him hone his writing skills and develop a keen interest in political reporting.
- **Inspiration:** Influenced by the works of great journalists and writers, Cramer sought to emulate their dedication to uncovering the truth through compelling storytelling.
- **First Steps in Journalism:** After graduating, he began his career as a reporter for various newspapers, where he gained invaluable experience and built a reputation for himself.

The Journey to Becoming a Celebrated Journalist

Cramer's career was marked by several significant milestones that contributed to his reputation as a master journalist.

1. Political Reporting

Cramer's deep dive into political reporting began in the 1970s. He covered various elections and political events, setting the stage for his future success. Notable aspects of his political reporting include:

- **In-depth Analysis:** Cramer was known for his ability to analyze the motivations and strategies of political candidates, offering readers a glimpse into the complexities of American politics.
- **Personal Stories:** He often included personal anecdotes and interviews with candidates, providing a more humanized perspective on political

figures.

- **Unique Angle:** His unconventional approach to political stories distinguished him from other journalists, as he focused on the emotional and psychological aspects of politics.

2. Key Publications

Richard Ben Cramer authored several influential books and articles throughout his career that solidified his legacy in journalism. Some of his most notable works include:

- **"What It Takes: The Way to the White House" (1992):** This seminal work chronicles the 1988 presidential campaign, focusing on the lives and aspirations of the candidates. It is celebrated for its comprehensive portrayal of the political landscape and the personal sacrifices involved in running for office.
- **"Joe DiMaggio: The Hero's Life" (2000):** In this biography, Cramer delves into the life of the legendary baseball player, exploring the complexities of his character and the impact of fame on his personal life.
- **"How Israel Lost: The Four Questions" (2004):** Cramer's analysis of the Israeli-Palestinian conflict showcases his ability to tackle sensitive topics with nuance and depth.

The Art of Storytelling

What set Richard Ben Cramer apart was his exceptional storytelling ability. He had a unique talent for transforming raw data and facts into compelling narratives that resonated with readers.

1. Character Development

Cramer believed that understanding the characters behind the stories was crucial. He developed detailed profiles of the individuals he wrote about, whether they were politicians or athletes. This approach included:

- **Interviews:** Cramer conducted extensive interviews, not only with his subjects but also with their families, friends, and colleagues, to gather a comprehensive view of their lives.
- **Empathy:** He approached his subjects with empathy, seeking to understand their motivations and struggles, which allowed him to portray them authentically.

2. Immersive Research

Cramer's commitment to research was unparalleled. He often spent months or even years gathering information before writing a story. His research methods included:

- **Fieldwork:** Cramer immersed himself in the environments he was reporting on, whether it was a campaign trail or a baseball diamond, to gain firsthand experience.
- **Archival Research:** He dug into archives, documents, and historical records to provide context and depth to his narratives.
- **Observation:** Cramer was a keen observer of human behavior, using his observations to enrich his storytelling.

Legacy and Impact

Richard Ben Cramer's impact on journalism and literature is profound. His work has influenced countless journalists and writers who aspire to follow in his footsteps. Some aspects of his legacy include:

- **Inspiration to Future Generations:** Cramer's approach to storytelling and his dedication to uncovering the truth continue to inspire aspiring journalists to this day.
- **Recognition and Awards:** Throughout his career, he received numerous accolades, including the prestigious George Polk Award, which highlights his contributions to journalism.
- **Continued Relevance:** His works remain relevant, as they explore themes of ambition, sacrifice, and the human condition, resonating with readers across generations.

Conclusion

In conclusion, **what it takes Richard Ben Cramer** to be a renowned journalist is a combination of talent, hard work, and an unwavering commitment to storytelling. His ability to capture the essence of his subjects and present them in a relatable manner set a standard for journalistic excellence. Through his remarkable works, Cramer not only informed the public but also enriched the literary landscape, leaving behind a legacy that will continue to inspire future journalists and writers for years to come.

Frequently Asked Questions

Who was Richard Ben Cramer?

Richard Ben Cramer was an American journalist and author, known for his in-depth political reporting and biographies, particularly his book 'What It Takes', which chronicles the 1988 presidential election.

What is the significance of 'What It Takes' in political journalism?

'What It Takes' is significant because it provides a comprehensive, behind-the-scenes look at the 1988 presidential campaign, exploring the personal and political struggles of the candidates.

How did Richard Ben Cramer conduct his research for 'What It Takes'?

Cramer conducted extensive interviews with key political figures, campaign staff, and the candidates themselves, immersing himself in their campaigns to capture the nuances of the electoral process.

What themes are explored in 'What It Takes'?

The book explores themes of ambition, sacrifice, the nature of leadership, and the complexities of the American political system.

What impact did 'What It Takes' have on future political writing?

'What It Takes' set a high standard for narrative political writing, influencing how journalists approach campaign coverage and the human stories behind politics.

What style of writing is used in 'What It Takes'?

Cramer employs a narrative nonfiction style, blending storytelling with rigorous journalism to create a compelling account of the political landscape.

Did Richard Ben Cramer receive any awards for his work?

Yes, Cramer received numerous awards for his journalism, including the Pulitzer Prize for National Reporting in 1979.

How did 'What It Takes' influence public perception of politicians?

The book humanized politicians by detailing their personal struggles and motivations, allowing the public to see them as complex individuals rather than just political figures.

Is 'What It Takes' still relevant today?

Yes, 'What It Takes' remains relevant as it provides insights into the political process and the character traits that drive individuals to seek the presidency.

What can readers learn from Richard Ben Cramer's approach to storytelling in 'What It Takes'?

Readers can learn the importance of thorough research, empathy, and the ability to weave personal narratives into broader political contexts to create engaging stories.

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