



Introduction to Peter Alson + David Michaelis. 2:15 min. Interview: Raymond Elman. Editing & Production: Lee Skye. Recorded: via Zoom. 9/29/2020

Peter Alson + David Michaelis: Book Talk

Hosted by Raymond Elman in collaboration with the Miami Book Fair 2020

PETER ALSON grew up in Greenwich Village and was educated at UC Berkley and Harvard. He is the author of five books of nonfiction, including the memoirs Confessions of an Ivy League Bookie, now reissued by Arbitrary Press under the title The Vig, and Take Me to the River, a Wayward and Perilous Journey to the World Series of Poker. His latest book is a novel called The Only Way to Play It. He's also an editor, the founder of Arbitrary Press, and a one-time professional poker player. He still lives in Greenwich Village with his wife and daughter.

DAVID MICHAELIS grew up in Cambridge, Mass., and Washington, D. C., He was educated at Concord Academy and Princeton University, and is the author of six books, including the national bestselling biographies of artist N. C. Wyeth, and of Peanuts creator Charles Schulz. His most recent book is Eleanor, and a biography of Eleanor Roosevelt. He lives in Westchester County, N. Y. with his family.

The videos below were recorded via Zoom are organized by topic and run between 30 seconds and 5 minutes. Click on any video. You must be connected to the Internet to view the videos.

CREATES A UNIQUE PERSONAL BRAND: 3:43 min.



Why did you create a protagonist who is both a serious artist and a big stakes poker player?

INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 3:23 min.



In your novel the protagonist is shaped by the life and actions of his wayward father, often unintentionally. Is that a somewhat universal truth for you?

CRITICAL THINKING: 4:12 min.



If I was a poker player looking across the table at you in the World Series of Poker in Las Vegas, what would I be seeing?

EMPATHY: 3:12 min.



One of the ironies of the novel is that the protagonist makes a living by "reading" his opponents, yet he has so much trouble "reading" his wife. Is that the nature of marriage?

CREATIVE FLEXIBILITY: 2:16 min.



The title of your novel, "The Only Way to Play It," is very intriguing. Is that in fact true of life? Is there in the end only one way to play it?

OVERCOMES CHALLENGES TO SUCCEED: 2:57 min.



As a novelist, do you get to a point when you realize that there is in fact only one way to write the novel, and that allows you to complete it?

INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 1:21 min.



Because your memoirs read like novels, I always had problems getting my arms around your difficulties with completing the writing of a novel.

CREATIVE FLEXIBILITY: 5:01 min.



I have stories I have been telling for decades that I have refined and honed over the years until I reach a point when I am not sure if the story actually happened the way I am telling it.

CREATES A UNIQUE PERSONAL BRAND: 3:06 min.



Since there have been numerous biographies written about Eleanor Roosevelt, what motivated you to write another one?

EXPOSURE TO BROAD INFLUENCES: 6:33 min.



Was the three-volume biography of Eleanor Roosevelt by Blanche Wiesen Cook the genesis of your biography of Roosevelt?

CRITICAL THINKING: 17:35 min.



In Dan Okrent's book "The Guarded Gate," he cites an anti-Semitic letter that Eleanor sent her mother-in-law after attending a dinner party at Felix Frankfurter's home. Did you find other such surprising material?

EMPATHY: 2:01 min.



The story you just told us about Eleanor Roosevelt's racial ignorance is so resonant with the movement in 2020 to tell the truth about African-American history.

CRITICAL THINKING: 5:58 min.



How were Black people treated in the media during Eleanor Roosevelt's lifetime?

EMPATHY: 5:24 min.



What happens when you are doing research for a biography and you discover that you really don't like the person you're writing about?

INSIGHT & INSPIRATION: 6:43 min.



David. All the biographies you've written are about people who were not alive. Have you ever considered writing a biography about someone who is living, and what challenges that might entail?