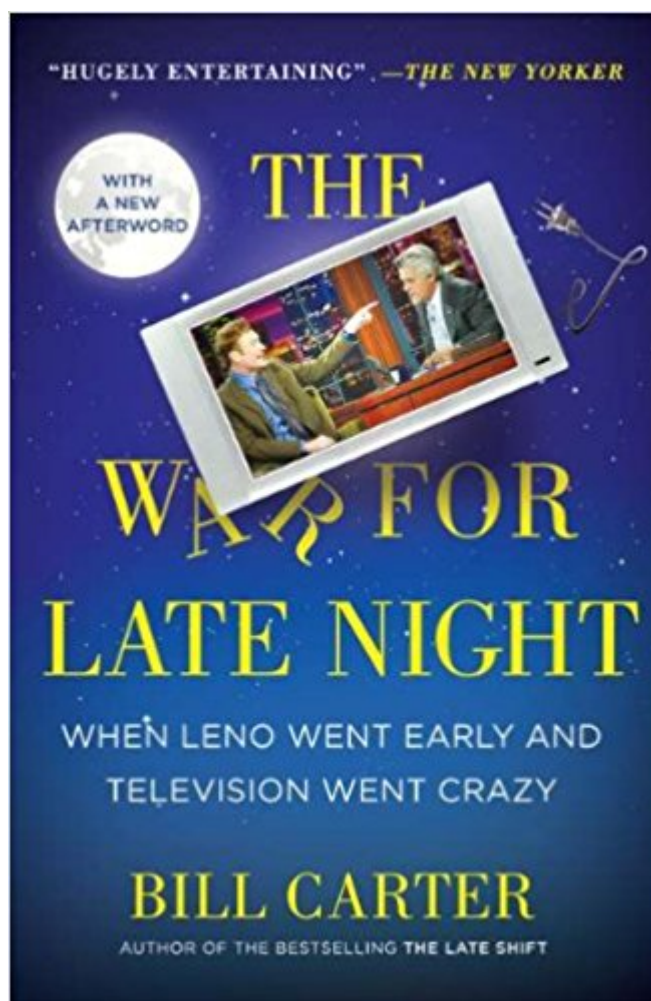




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# The War For Late Night: When Leno Went Early And Television Went Crazy



## Synopsis

The New York Times bestselling author of *The Late Shift* delivers "a boisterous, two-timing, high-stakes drama about the business of comedy" (The Associated Press). No one is more uniquely suited to document television's latest late-night travesty than veteran media reporter and bestselling author, Bill Carter. NBC's CEO, Jeff Zucker, had it all worked out when he moved Jay Leno from behind the desk at *The Tonight Show*, and handed the reins over to Conan O'Brien. But as everyone knows, his decision was a spectacular failure. Ratings plummeted, affiliates were enraged-and when Zucker tried to put everything back the way it was, that plan backfired as well. In candid detail, Carter charts the vortex that sucked in-not just Leno and O'Brien-but also Letterman, Stewart, Fallon, Kimmel, and Ferguson as frantic agents and network executives tried to manage a tectonic shift in television's most beloved institution.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Bill Carter joined The New York Times as a national media reporter in 1989. He is the author of the New York Times bestseller *The Late Shift*, two other books on the television industry, *Monday Night Mayhem* and *Desperate Networks*, and has written numerous articles for The New York Times Magazine and other publications. He has been a guest on *Nightline*, *Today*, CNN, Charlie Rose, NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams, and many other shows. A graduate of the University of Notre Dame, he lives in New Jersey with his wife. They have two children.

A very fascinating, well-written story about what all of us, at one point, watch: late night TV. As a fan

of Jay Leno, Johnny Carson, Jimmy Kimmel, Letterman and Conan, I found that Bill Carter's book gives the reader a knowledgeable and "So tell me how this really works" type narrative. If you're a fan of late night TV and what goes on behind the curtain to make it all work - or crash & burn - you can't go wrong with this book.

If you are a fan of late-night TV, entertainment news, or interested in the TV business, it's hard to go wrong with this well-researched and balanced look at NBC's crazy experiment with Leno at 10 pm. What a Jeff Zucker disaster! Bill Carter goes inside all the lawsuits, the dealings, the strategy, the players and comes up with a story that's stranger than fiction -- a fun and informative read.

This book is not only an examination of the most recent "late shift", but it's a look at the fragmenting of television and those reluctant to embrace it. I highly suggest reading this directly after reading Carter's "The Late Shift". Many characters appear in both books. Just as Conan is lurking in the wings during "The Late Shift", Jimmy Fallon is doing the same in this one.

Wow, was I wrong. A lot of people were. Leno was not a greedy so-and-so after all. (Well, not much.) Of course I've read *The Late Shift*, years ago when it was new, and again in preparation for this. Bill Carter's writing is clear and concise. I kind of wish, though, that he'd include a few excerpts from the shows themselves, to give an idea of what makes them good or bad.

I really enjoyed Carter's 1994 book *The Late Shift*, which was about the way NBC messed up the transition from Johnny Carson. So it was with great pleasure that I read what could be considered the sequel; which explains how NBC messed up their attempt at transition from Carson's successor, Leno... back to Leno! And once again lost a promising talent. This is a well-written book which provides suspense and enjoyment even if you followed Leno's disastrous prime time debut and the subsequent struggles with late night star Conan O'Brien. There's always more information you didn't know at the time. Mr. Carter always provides a wealth of information, commentary, analysis, and a vivid picture of the personalities involved. A great read for anyone interested in how television works.

The long and sustained incompetence of NBC late night execs is breathtaking. Five drunken raccoons smoking crack could have done a better job.

This book is a very detailed and thorough look at the events that precipitated the 2010 Late Night

fiasco. Carter's behind-the-scenes account provides the reader with a very balanced and accurate understanding of what happened- and more importantly- why. The book is fair to both Leno and O'Brien. It provides a fascinating look into what motivated them to make the decisions they did from 2004 to 2010.

Informative book and easy to read. Biased in Conan's favor but it still allows for dissenting arguments, mainly derived from quotes of others, such as Jerry Seinfeld or Lorne Michaels, and not the narrator, who is an unabashed Conan fan.

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