

# 'A Great Obit Really Is About Someone's Life, Not Their Death', Mo Rocca Talks "Mobituaries" At Miami Book Fair

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MIAMI (CBSMiami) – Mo Rocca has a way with words and a unique way of thinking about most things. It's clear on his weekly reports on CBS Sunday Morning.

"CBS Sunday Morning show is a special show. Our boss, who is a genius, calls it a news variety show and it kind of is and I love variety shows," Rocca said.

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CSB4's Lisa Petrillo had the pleasure of interviewing Rocca in front of an audience at the Miami Book Fair to talk about his new book 'Mobituaries: Great Lives Worth Reliving.'

It began as a podcast that quickly gained fans. In the book, Rocca, a self-described history buff, "writes" the wrongs (literally) by profiling people, places, events, and things that are gone. The idea began with his late Dad and a saying he had.

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"A great obit really is about someone's life, not their death," said Rocca.

"This seemed like a good way for me to profile people from the past in pop culture, politics, objects, things like the station wagon, things that didn't get obits the first time around. I also do believe certain people didn't get the send-off they deserved," he added.

Such as President Jimmy Carter's younger brother Billy.

"He was a garish, cartoonish guy going on Hee Haw, doing belly flops contests, selling Billy Beer which even Dan Rather told me the dogs wouldn't try, it was so bad," Rocca said laughing.

President Carter told Rocca that Billy later tried to help others who were alcoholics like him.

"He spent the last chapter of his life crisscrossing the country, speaking to people who could relate to that about their own struggles with alcoholism and really made a difference," he said.

Then, Audrey.

"Audrey Hepburn died on the same day that Bill Clinton was inaugurated so she was pushed off the front page. I talked to Bill Clinton about this and he didn't know that she had died the day he was inaugurated. Granted, he was busy that day, it was understandable," he said.

There's a chapter on famous people who died on the same day, like Michael Jackson and Farrah Fawcett. For Mo and his Mobituaries, it's a way to look back and well, be kind.



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"I'd rather err on the side of generous and I think, in general, with obituaries, they are the one place in journalism where the rule of thumb is generosity," he said.

And as for Mo's Mobituarie?

"I think I'd like the first line to be 'Mo Rocca made people interested in things they didn't expect to be interested in died today. He was 135,'" he said to huge applause.

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