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## I'd Hate Myself in the Morning: A Memoir

*Ring Lardner Jr.*

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**Ring Lardner Jr. : I'd Hate Myself in the Morning: A Memoir** before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised I'd Hate Myself in the Morning: A Memoir:

20 of 20 people found the following review helpful. The definitive book on the Hollywood 10By Rick SpellThis is a very, very good book. Yes, it starts a little slow as he sets the stage from his young life. And the chapters on his involvement with communism do not fully explain what his attraction to communism was. But I think after much research and book reading, this book allowed me to get as close as I could to the answer. And the answer is, in the current political environment of my life, you can never fully understand the travesty of the depression and the Spanish

issues in the 30s and therefore, we can never totally feel why free Americans would feel so strongly about communism. So, I've finally closed my research on this subject thanks to Ring Lardner, Jr. This book has some great highlights which should be cherished by the readers. Dalton Trumbo may be the most celebrated of the Hollywood 10 and his humorous attempts to write and get credit for writing are quite interesting during the Blacklist period. The book correctly conveys the lives which were altered or damaged by this horrible period in America freedom. Another interesting subject is the few movies that are mentioned showing how the screenwriting process changed the movie completely from the original story. For example, I had read the great sports novel, "Semi-tough", by Dan Jenkins. Lardner wrote a screenplay and a new director had it completely rewritten focusing not on football but on mystical self-improvement gurus. I had always wondered how a movie could so butcher a very funny book so it was nice to get closure on a 30 year old question. Lardner wrote and won an Academy Award for "Mash". This provides more interesting reading on a movie which is still significant in the landscape of American cinema. The next to last chapter provides a look not at history but directly into the soul of this interesting man. What starts out as a description of growing old turns into an exceptional essay on his beliefs or nonbeliefs in religion. Regardless of your feelings, this is a fascinating chapter that may challenge your own beliefs. In closing, I believe you will enjoy this read of a man who led a full life suffering through the Hollywood 10 tragedy and early deaths of brothers in Spain and WWII. I recommend this book specifically to readers interested in Hollywood, American history in the 20th century, or biographies of famous writers. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Eloquent and Funny By Tanner the Seeker Anyone who loved MASH, and anyone who cares about the enterprise of American freedom will love this book. Lardner was one of the writers imprisoned for contempt of Congress when he refused to answer questions before HUAC about his affiliation with the Communist party. Despite the injustice to which he was submitted, Lardner is honest and candid about his own faults and guilt in the episode. It reads like a who's who of Hollywood's golden age. Definitely recommended. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Worth reading By DanFGood read about a black time in our history.

Ring Lardner, Jr.'s memoir is a pilgrimage through the American century. The son of an immensely popular and influential writer, Lardner grew up swaddled in material and cultural privilege. After a memorable visit to Moscow in 1934, he worked as a reporter in New York before leaving for Hollywood where he served a bizarre apprenticeship with David O. Selznick, and won, at the age of 28, an Academy Award for *Woman of the Year*, the first on-screen pairing of Spencer Tracy and Katherine Hepburn. In irresistibly readable pages (*New Yorker*), peopled by a cast including Carole Lombard, Louis B. Mayer, Dalton Trumbo, Marlene Dietrich, Otto Preminger, Darryl F. Zanuck, Bertolt Brecht, Bert Lahr, Robert Altman, and Muhammad Ali, Lardner recalls the strange existence of a contract screenwriter in the vanished age of the studio system existence made stranger by membership in the Hollywood branch of the American Communist Party. Lardner retraces the path that led him to a memorable confrontation with the House Un-American Activities Committee and thence to Federal prison and life on the Hollywood blacklist. One of the lucky few who were able to resume their careers, Lardner won his second Oscar for the screenplay to *M.A.S.H.* in 1970.

From Publishers Weekly An Oscar-winning screenwriter and the last surviving member of the Hollywood Ten, Lardner who passed away only 13 days ago takes the title for his slender memoir from his famous reply to the chairman of the House Un-American Activities Committee. "I could answer," he said when asked if he had ever been a member of the Communist Party, "but if I did I would hate myself in the morning." Responding with humor when others would be indignant is one of Lardner's most appealing characteristics, along with his refusal to exaggerate the importance of the Hollywood blacklist. While quietly elucidating the professional harm and personal suffering experienced by screenwriters, directors and actors denied employment for more than a decade, the author also comments, "My nine months in prison is hardly to be compared to, say, the punishment endured by Andrei Sakharov or Nelson Mandela" Not even, he adds, to the struggles of civil rights activists. This levelheaded perspective is also notable in passages on the physical indignities of old age where Lardner, 85, remarks of treatment for his many ailments, "The best you can hope for is essentially a stay of execution." In addition to his political life, the author sketches his screenwriting career, whose highlights include *Woman of the Year* in 1942 and *M\*A\*S\*H* in 1970, and briefly profiles his famous father, Ring Lardner Sr., his mother and three brothers. Most of this material will not be new to readers of his previous book, *The Lardners* (1976) Indeed, some of it is word for word the same but a new generation of film buffs and others interested in the McCarthy era will probably be just as charmed by Lardner's wit and unpretentiousness as their parents were. (Jan.) Copyright 2000 Reed Business Information, Inc. From Booklist The only thing wrong with this book is that it's a memoir and not a full-blown autobiography. Lardner was a two-time Academy Award winner--he won the best original screenplay award for *Woman of the Year* and best adapted screenplay award for *M\*A\*S\*H*--and a member of the "Hollywood Ten," the group of writers and directors who went to jail rather than name names to the House Un-American Activities Committee (HUAC). In this book, he easily blends sketches of his famous father, which almost belie the popular notion of the man, with those of his student days

in Moscow and anecdotes of his Hollywood and blacklist years. In fact, the book's title comes from his response to the infamous HUAC question: Are you now or have you ever been a member of the Communist Party? Lardner assesses his Communism and that of some of the others who also went to jail; he also places the testimony of still others in context (though by no means exonerating them). Lardner, who died on 31 October at age 85, remained as opinionated as ever, offering his views on aging, the auteur theory of filmmaking, his colleagues' work, his own unproduced screenplays, and the revival of the religious right in America. In the best tradition of entertainment, this book leaves you wanting more, but sadly, it's the final fade-out for Ring. Frank Caso

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About the Author

RING LARDNER is considered the greatest writer of all time on the sport of baseball. His works include "You Know Me, Al, Gullible's Travels, Treat 'Em Rough, The Real Dope, Own Your Own Home, The Big Town," and many others. He died in 1933, at the age of forty-eight.

JEFF SILVERMAN, a former columnist for the "Los Angeles Herald Examiner," has written for "The New York Times," "the" Los Angeles Times," and several national magazines. He is also editor of "The Greatest Baseball Stories Ever Told" (page 206), "Classic Baseball Stories" (page 14), "The Greatest Golf Stories Ever Told" (page 169), "Classic Golf Stories" (page 170), "Bernard" "Darwin on Golf" (page 21), and "The Greatest Boxing Stories Ever Told" (page 206). He lives with his family in West Chester, Pennsylvania.

Victor S. Navasky came to "The Nation" as editor in 1978, was made publisher and general partner in 1995, and is now publisher emeritus. The Delacorte Professor of Journalism at Columbia University and Director of the George Delacorte Center for Magazine Journalism, he chairs the "Columbia Journalism ". He was the founder, editor, and publisher of "Monocle", " an editor for the "New York Times Magazine", " and a columnist for the "New York Times Book ". The author of "Naming Names, "which won the National Book Award in 1982, and "Kennedy Justice, " he lives in New York City.