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## “ROCKFORD FILES” BOOK PAYS TRIBUTE TO ONE OF TELEVISION’S TOP SLEUTHS

A new book celebrates America’s ongoing love affair with Jim Rockford, the wise-cracking private eye played by James Garner on television’s “The Rockford Files” – and a character recently named one of “America’s Top Sleuths” on a national cable TV special.

**THIRTY YEARS OF THE ROCKFORD FILES: An Inside Look at America’s Greatest Detective Series** (ASJA Press, \$31.95) by pop culture historian Ed Robertson tells the inside story of “The Rockford Files” (NBC, 1974-1980), one of TV’s most popular, successful, and influential series. Winner of five Emmy Awards during its original network run, including Best Actor (Garner) and Best Drama (1978), “Rockford” returned as a popular series of specials on CBS in the 1990s. Reruns of the original NBC series have played continuously worldwide since 1980, while the CBS episodes remain a fixture on cable. “Rockford” also thrust Stephen J. Cannell (“Wiseguy,” “Hunter”) and David Chase (“The Sopranos”) into the upper echelon of television writer/producers.

Originally conceived by Roy Huggins as an update of “Maverick” – the irreverent Western from the 1950s that first made Garner a star – “Rockford” reinvented itself after Chase came aboard in 1976. Though “Rockford” remained a detective series with a freewheeling sense of humor, it also began commenting on social issues and controversial news stories – a device later perfected by Dick Wolf on NBC’s “Law and Order.” Garner won an Emmy for an episode that addressed inequities in the federal grand jury system, while Chase’s satire of new age cults earned “Rockford” the Best Dramatic Series award in 1978.

“Rockford” thrived despite an array of behind-the-scenes turmoil. NBC was reluctant to greenlight the pilot because of its prior experience with Garner, while concerns over the show’s approach to humor led to an angry confrontation between Garner and a studio executive. A power play between Universal and Garner led to the departure of one of the show’s most popular characters, while a dispute between Garner and the studio over the show’s distribution of profits triggered a lawsuit that would last nearly ten years.

"The Rockford Files" also featured a host of major guest stars, including Larry Hagman, Lauren Bacall, James Woods, Rita Moreno, Ed Harris, Rob Reiner, Lindsay Wagner, Dyan Cannon, Hal Linden, Louis Gossett Jr., Stefanie Powers, Linda Evans, Isaac Hayes, Dionne Warwick, Rick Springfield, Kathryn Harrold, Joan Van Ark, Paul Michael Glaser, Jill Clayburgh, Suzanne Somers, William Daniels, and Mariette Hartley.

Author Ed Robertson provides interesting details and entertaining anecdotes for all 118 NBC episodes and the eight CBS movies. Tom Selleck's guest appearances as Rockford's rival Lance White led directly to Selleck's own series, the long-running "Magnum, p.i." A neurotic mobster introduced by Chase in "Rockford"'s third season was a forerunner to Tony Soprano, the central character of Chase's "The Sopranos."

The book also includes interviews with Garner, Cannell, producers Charles Floyd Johnson and Juanita Bartlett, and other key participants. Over 100 behind-the-scenes photographs, including rarely seen pictures of Garner relaxing with cast and crew members, complete the volume.

**THIRTY YEARS OF THE ROCKFORD FILES** is a comprehensive history of a show that continues to make news today. The Screen Actors Guild honored Garner with its prestigious Life Achievement Award in 2005. National cable TV network The Sleuth Channel named Rockford one of "America's Top Sleuths" in a 90-minute special that premiered in October 2006 and continues to air regularly.

"The Rockford Files" airs daily on superstation WGN. The series also remains an audience favorite in syndication throughout the world, while the first two seasons of the series are available on DVD.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR:** Ed Robertson has written extensively about pop culture and entertainment since 1990. His books include *Maverick: Legend of the West*, a history of the classic television Western starring James Garner, and *This is Jim Rockford*, a behind-the-scenes look at Garner's other signature series, *The Rockford Files*. Robertson was also a consultant and onscreen commentator on two documentaries: "James Garner," an hour-long film produced by NBC, and "Hollywood Maverick," which continues to air regularly on the Biography Channel. Robertson currently covers television for *Media Life Magazine*, and also contributes to a variety of publications and media venues, including the liner notes for many titles currently available through Columbia House Video Library.

A recognized expert in pop culture, Ed Robertson is contacted regularly by journalists across the country for comments on topics related to film and television. He has been quoted in such publications as *TV Guide*, *FoxNews.com*, *ABCNews.com*, *USA Today*, *The London Observer*, *The Toronto Star*, *The Christian Science Monitor*, *The Dallas Morning News*, *The San Francisco Chronicle* and *The Los Angeles Times*. He has appeared on over 200 radio and TV shows, including *CNN Showbiz Today*, *Up All Night* (BBC Radio), *Talk to America* (Voice of America Radio Network), *First Light* (Westwood One), *The Todd Mundt Show* (National Public Radio), *The Mancow Muller Show*, *E! News Today*, *The High Price of Fame* and *Entertainment Tonight*. Ed Robertson is also a regular guest on *The Ronn Owens Program* (KGO-AM, San Francisco), *Hot Talk with Tony Gill* (WAIC-FM, Springfield), and *Talking Television with Dave White* (Share-a-Vision Radio).

**THIRTY YEARS OF THE ROCKFORD FILES:  
An Inside Look at America's Greatest Detective Series**

**By Ed Robertson**

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