

Beat: News

BOB SIMON: TRAGIC LOSS OF A GREAT JOURNALIST

AT 73 HE DIES IN CAR ACCIDENT

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USPA NEWS - During a distinguished career that spanned five decades, television journalist Bob Simon found himself in dangerous situations in hot spots around the world. Simon was on one of the last helicopters out of Saigon. He spent 40 days in Iraqi custody after he was captured during the Persian Gulf War.

He was on the scene in Yugoslavia and Somalia, Haiti and Grenada. Yet he died Wednesday night in a car accident on the streets of New York City.

Simon, 73, a 60 Minutes correspondent who joined CBS in 1967, was the real deal. More than a decade ago, the Bronx native won a Peabody Award for "a body of work by an outstanding international journalist on a diverse set of critical global issues." He also won an Emmy for lifetime achievement.

CNN's Anderson Cooper tweeted that Simon "was the best writer, in my opinion, working in broadcast news. I have admired him from the time I was a kid."

Jeff Fager, 60 Minutes' executive producer, called Simon "a reporter's reporter," adding that his sudden death was "a tragedy made worse because we lost him in a car accident, a man who has escaped more difficult situations than almost any journalist in modern times."

Said Paul Friedman, a former CBS executive now teaching at Quinnipiac University: "Bob was one of the finest reporters and writers in the business. He, better than most, knew how to make pictures and words work together to tell a story, which is television news at its best."

Simon's death comes in the midst of an intense period of news about television, with NBC News' Brian Williams, the TV anchor with the highest ratings, suspended without pay for six months for embellishing his exploits, and Jon Stewart announcing he will step down from Comedy Central's influential and beloved The Daily Show by the end of the year.

But Simon's death is also a reminder of something else. At a time when television news has been buffeted by cutbacks, particularly when it comes to overseas coverage, and a general decline of seriousness, Simon's career is emblematic of the distinction and the aspiration that have at times characterized television news' past and remain possible in the future.

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