



Hero's Journey: John Ritter; the Chip Hilton Goshen, Indiana; A Memoir

Jeff Rasley

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What makes a real hero?

Chip Hilton was an ideal hero for boys growing up in small Midwestern towns in the 1950s and 60s. Chip was an A-student, loving son, and hard worker at the local drug store. He had a gang of loyal friends and was the star player on his high school sports teams. But Chip was just a fictional character in a series of sports-action books.

John Ritter was a real-live boy who seemed to be as close to Chip Hilton-like perfection as humanly possible. He grew up in Goshen, Indiana, to become a record-breaking All-Star basketball player and captain of Bob Knight's first outstanding Indiana Hoosiers team. After his college heroics, John Ritter's star faded and his life took a tragic turn very different from the expectations of his hometown fans. When he finally cracked under the pressure to perform perfectly, Ritter's life diverged radically from his fictional twin.

Jeff Rasley's childhood memories of his story book and real-life sports heroes are the launch pad for an exploration of how we create, treat, and mistreat our heroes. *Hero's Journey* taps voices as diverse as Patti Smith, Homer, Shakespeare, the Grateful Dead, and Dennis Rodman in an examination of the cultural shifts in the meaning of hero. The lustrous triumphs and pitiable travails of mythical heroes, like Achilles and Lancelot, are compared to ethical martyrs, like Gandhi and King, and to more troubling champions like Allen Iverson, Mike Tyson, Caitlyn Jenner, and Donald Trump.

The term Hero has been trivialized by its excessive use in popular media. Reporters refer to all veterans, cops, and firefighters as heroes. They will even call victims of terror heroes. But the media also delights in scandals that reveal our heroes to have feet of clay.

The mythologist Joseph Campbell, building on the work of Freud and Carl Jung, explained how archetypal heroes are created in myth and legend. *Hero's Journey* explains how the Hero Archetype has influenced contemporary culture and how the meaning of hero has been transformed by recent historical and cultural developments. Interwoven into the discussion is Rasley's memoir about his childhood heroes and the story of John Ritter's hero journey.

Our heroes exemplify the greatest human qualities and virtues, like courage, wisdom, and compassion. We will tear some of them down as false idols and knock them off their pedestals. But we need our heroes. Real heroes reveal the best in us and point the way toward a better world.

Other books by Jeff Rasley -

Bringing Progress to Paradise; What I Got from Giving to a Mountain Village in Nepal describes an astounding Himalayan adventure which becomes a critical reflection on the damage charitable giving can do to the intended beneficiaries.

The rest of the story of Basa Village is told in *Light in the Mountains - Namaste, Rakshi, and Electricity in a Himalayan Village* and its prequel *India - Nepal Himalayas In the Moment* (an honest Three Cups of Tea).

To get out of the snow and mountains and onto sandy beaches and swaying palms, check out the lyrical *Islands in my Dreams*

For a change of pace curl up with *False Prophet*. It's a romantic mystery and inspirational tale based on a

case Rasley handled in his 30-year Indianapolis law practice.

If you enjoy sports action, history, humor, romance, set during the cultural revolution of the 60s, check out ***MONSTERS OF THE MIDWAY 1969: Sex, Drugs, Rock 'n' Roll, Viet Nam, Civil Rights, and Football.***

Pilgrimage: Sturgis to Wounded Knee and Back Home, a Memoir begins with a motorcycle road trip to the Bacchanalia of Sturgis Bike Week, then takes a detour to the massacre at Wounded Knee, and crosses the ocean to a remote village in the Himalayas. Reconciliation is found back home in Indiana.

GODLESS - Living a Valuable Life beyond Beliefs makes the case that beliefs divide us, but values unite us. So we should fight religious and political violence with positive values.

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