

# Rather, Dan (1931-) Encyclopedia Article

## Rather, Dan (1931-)

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## Rather, Dan (1931—)

Dan Rather succeeded Walter Cronkite as anchor of the *CBS Evening News* on March 9, 1981. After he took over the anchor desk, CBS News dissolved into turmoil due to budget cuts and new owners, and the ratings slipped. Rather had solid credentials, having been with CBS since 1962 (including a stint on *60 Minutes*), but his expertise soon proved less noteworthy than the often bizarre happenings that began to occur around him. His signoff one week was "courage"; he tended to use the vernacular of his Texas upbringing during broadcasts ("that dog won't hunt"); he let CBS "go to black" for six minutes when U.S. Open tennis ran too long, and he tangled on air with then Vice President George Bush. Perhaps oddest was Rather's assault on New York streets by a man asking, "What's the frequency, Kenneth?" (later, during an appearance on *The Late Show with David Letterman*, he joined rock band REM in a performance of their song based on this incident). From 1993 to 1995, Rather co-anchored with Connie Chung, but she was forced out and Rather subsequently trumpeted a "hard news" program. In 1998, he signed a contract to stay with CBS until 2003. Along with Peter Jennings and Tom Brokaw, Rather was one of the leading news broadcasters of the 1980s and 1990s.

**Dan Rather at the Democratic National Convention, 1968.**

### Further Reading:

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