



# Shooting from the Lip: The Life of Senator Al Simpson

*Donald Loren Hardy*

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Shortly before Wyoming's Alan K. Simpson was elected majority whip of the United States Senate, he decided to keep a journal. "I am going to make notes when I get home in the evening, as to what happened during each day." Now the senator's longtime chief of staff, Donald Loren Hardy, has drawn extensively on Simpson's personal papers and nineteen-volume diary to write this unvarnished account of a storied life and political career.

Simpson gave full authorial control to Hardy, telling him, "Don, just tell the truth, the whole truth, as you always have. Leave teeth, hair, and eyeballs on the floor, if that results from telling the truth." Taking Simpson at his word, Hardy shows readers a thrill-seeking teenager in Cody and a tireless politician who has thoroughly enjoyed his work. Full of entertaining tales and moments of historical significance, *Shooting from the Lip* offers a privileged and revealing backstage view of late-twentieth century American politics.

Hardy's richly anecdotal account reveals the roles Simpson played during such critical events as the Iran-Contra scandal and Clarence Thomas's confirmation hearings. It divulges the senator's candid views of seven American presidents and scores of other national and world luminaries. Simpson is a politician unfettered by partisanship. Among President George H. W. Bush's closest compatriots, he was also a close friend and admirer of Senator Ted Kennedy and was never afraid to publicly challenge the positions or tactics of fellow lawmakers, Democratic and Republican alike.

Simpson's ability to use truth and humor as both "sword and shield," combined with his years of experience and issue mastery, has led to an impressive post-Senate career. In 2010, for example, he co-chaired President Barack Obama's Commission on Fiscal Responsibility and Reform. *Shooting from the Lip* portrays a statesman punching sacred cows, challenging the media, and grappling with some of the nation's most difficult challenges.

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