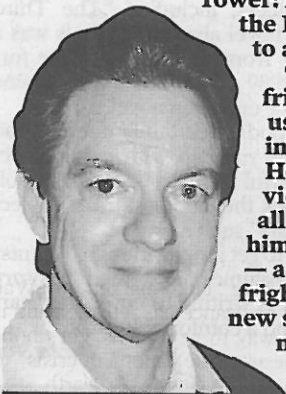


September 26, 2010

## IN MY LIBRARY

### Lawrence Wright



What's harder: meeting terrorists, writing about it — or doing a one-man show on the topic? Lawrence Wright says it's no contest.

"The toughest thing is facing a blank page," says the Pulitzer Prize-winning writer of "The Looming Tower: Al Qaeda and the Road to 9/11," the book the New Yorker staffer turned into "My Trip to al Qaeda" four years ago.

"People are always asking me if I'm frightened, hanging out with al Qaeda, but usually those encounters are one-on-one interviews," he tells The Post's Barbara Hoffman. "I'm talking to people whose views I don't agree with, but that happens all the time." He says a witch once told him, "Where there's fear, there's power" — a thought that helped him master stage fright as well. Which is good, because his new show, "The Human Scale," about hostage negotiations, starts Saturday at the Public Theater. Here's what's in his library.

### The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell



I think "Politics and the English Language" is one of the most important essays on language ever written. There are four volumes here, and great stuff in the letters and incidental pieces — the kind of elevated observation rare in literature today. When I need a little boost, I'll pick up the Orwell.

### The Moviegoer

by Walker Percy



When I was a student at Tulane, I wrote an honors thesis about the influence of Kirkegaard on the novels of Percy. I'd never met a writer, so I wrote him a plaintive letter. I got a postcard back scrawled, "OK, call." The hero of this book drives a red MG. Turned out I was driving a red MG and Walker had never actually been in one, so we went for a ride.

### The Earl of Louisiana

by A.J. Liebling



A.J. Liebling was a New Yorker staff writer; he covered WWII. In 1959 or so, he was sent to write about Earl Long, [Louisiana governor and senator] Huey Long's ne'er-do-well brother. Earl Long was governor of Louisiana when his wife had him committed to an insane asylum. He escaped, and it was his campaign for re-election that Liebling covered with delight. The stories he relates are priceless.

### All the King's Men

by Robert Penn Warren



I think it's the great American novel, the most powerful political novel ever written about the strengths and weaknesses of a man who wants to do good in a system that inevitably corrupts him. It's one of those novels you can pick up and be electrified by its narrative line.