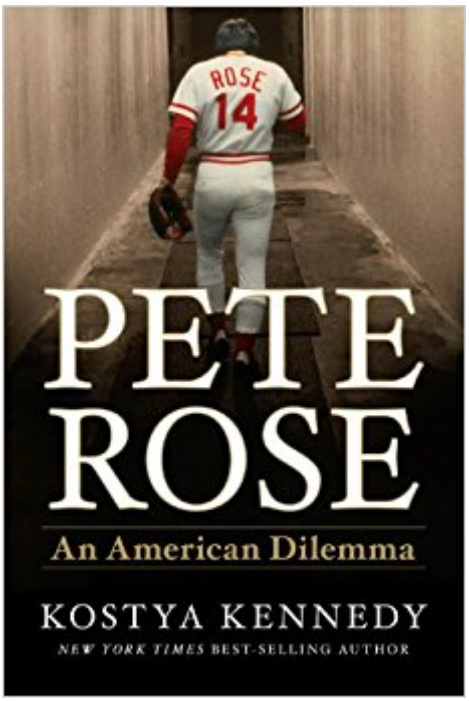
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Pete Rose: An American Dilemma



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Synopsis

"Kennedy’s book on the tarnished and enigmatic Rose is exceptional. Like the best writing about sport--Liebling, Angell--it qualifies as stirring literature. I’d read Kennedy no matter what he writes about." --Richard FordPete Rose played baseball with a singular and headfirst abandon that endeared him to fans and peers, even as it riled others--a figure at once magnetic, beloved and polarizing. Rose has more base hits than anyone in history, yet he is not in the Hall of Fame. Twenty-five years ago he was banished from baseball for gambling, then ruled ineligible for Cooperstown; today, the question "Does Pete Rose belong in the Hall of Fame?" has evolved into perhaps the most provocative in sports, a layered, slippery and ever-relevant moral conundrum.How do we evaluate the Hit King now, at a time when steroid cheats appear on the Hall of Fame ballot even as Rose is denied? What do we make of this happily unrepentant gambler, this shameless but beguiling showman whose postbaseball journey has led him to a curious reality show and to the streets of Cooperstown to hawk his signature, his story, himself?Best-selling author Kostya Kennedy delivers an evocative answer in his fascinating re-examination of Pete Rose’s life; from his cocky and charismatic early years through his storied playing career to his bitter war against baseball’s hierarchy to the man we find today--still incorrigible, still adored by many. Where has his improbable saga landed him in the redefined, post-steroid world? Do we feel any differently about Pete Rose today? Should we?

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Starred Review Pete Rose hit the baseball safely 4,256 times in his major league career, more than any other man who played the game. But Rose is not in the baseball Hall of Fame. He was

accused of betting on baseball and in 1989 agreed to banishment from the game. In 1991, the Hall of Fame formally agreed that anyone banned from baseball was also ineligible for the Hall. After years of maintaining his innocence, Rose finally admitted heÃ¢â ¬â„¢d bet on games while the manager of the Cincinnati Reds. Now heÃ¢â ¬â„¢s a sideshow at the annual HOF induction ceremony every year, selling autographs and, essentially, himself. Sports Illustrated editor Kennedy delves deeply into RoseÃ¢â ¬â„¢s life and the factors that contributed to his competitiveness and on-field success. He also looks into RoseÃ¢â ¬â„¢s personal life and continuing charisma, noting that gambling was always part of RoseÃ¢â ¬â„¢s life; he was a regular at horse tracks and never tried to hide his constant action on football and basketball. Kennedy isnÃ¢â ¬â„¢t campaigning for RoseÃ¢â ¬â„¢s induction into the Hall of Fame, but he does suggest that, in the postÃ¢â ¬â œperformance enhancing drug era, perhaps the Rose situation should be reopened for discussion. This is a wonderful biography as well as a thoughtful examination of a moral quandary. --Wes Lukowsky

"Even readers who know who Mr. Rose is will learn much from...this book’s stacked roster of interviews and anecdotes [and] fascinating and well-chosen tangents....Kennedy covers the [Big Red Machine] period expertly." --Craig Fehrman, The Wall Street Journal"Will absorb you immediately...a fascinating study of one of America’s most enduringly fascinating athletes. Masterful." --Mike Vaccaro, New York Post"An exceptionally well-written book that lays out both sides of what remains a highly-charged issue." --Paul Hagen, MLB.com"Kennedy takes that familiar story and delves deeper, presenting an artful portrait....With writing of such quality and a subject of such complexity, it deserves to be read by anyone who appreciates good biography." --John C. Williams, BookPage"Kennedy’s book on the tarnished and enigmatic Rose is exceptional. Like the best writing about sport--Liebling, Angell--it qualifies as stirring literature. I’d read Kennedy no matter what he writes about." --Richard Ford"Kostya Kennedy has given us the real Pete Rose at last. Perhaps Pete does not deserve him, but baseball fans and readers who appreciate superb and subtle writing will be grateful." --David Maraniss"This is a wonderful, clearly written book about a dark and complicated tragedy that continues to beset the purity of our national pastime. The whole story is here: the deeply talented, passionate ball player, ’Charlie Hustle,’ and the deeply morally challenged hustler who bestrides essential questions about our national game." --Ken Burns"Pete Rose is too rich a character to fit on a bronze plaque. He requires a good, trenchant, poignant (ah, Petey) book, and this is it." --Roy Blount Jr. "Better than any previous account. Kennedy leaves no doubt about Rose’s greatness as a player or his guilt as a gambler." --Allen Barra, The Boston

Globe"A remarkable book about a fascinating, vexing figure." --Kirkus (starred review)"Kennedy's ambitious account is an anecdote-rich read." --Publishers Weekly

I am 58 and from Youngstown, Ohio and when younger was a rabid baseball fan. So Pete Rose is a huge part of my growing up, I admired his skill , his hustle and his work ethic. So this book was a nice walk down memory lane for me.The author does a good job reviewing Pete's career, the people who influenced him and I think he does a good job in getting the reader to understand him as much as he can be understood. What I appreciated the most though is the author did take a stance on whether Pete should be in the Hall of Fame. The author thinks the HOF banning Pete was the biggest injustice that it has ever done. I had forgotten or not realized that although Pete was banned from baseball due rule 21, that did not automatically make him ineligible for the Hall of Fame, the directors passed a special rule to keep him out.The author treats everyone fairly in the book, Giamatti, Vincent, Pete. He recognizes Pete did wrong, Pete needed to be punished and tries to have us understand what inside of Pete made him unable to react in a way that would have allowed him to be reinstated. The author clearly thinks if Pete had handled the situation surrounding his banning better, he would be in the HOF and probably back in baseball.I think the most important part of the book is what the author in the chapter about the book Pete wrote/cooperated with "Prison without Bars" -- "What hits home by the end of the book and what is reinforced by years of watching his public life, is how ill equipped he (Rose) is to answer the public demands for humility, contrition and self - awareness that society asks of him. It is indeed enough to make you feel, if not empathy, some sympathy after all. There remains something heart breaking about the way Rose revealed himself at the time of his public confession -- a man trapped like many men by his own pathology, trapped by his own delusions and denials. Indeed a prison without bars"I liked the author's style of writing, the book was a fairly quick read. I will be buying his book on Dimaggio "56"

This is a very fine biography that highlights the ups and down of an American enigma. The book is an easy read and fortunately doesn't dwell on minutiae as some biographies often do. It focuses on the personality of Rose as influenced heavily by his father Harry but there is no deep pycho- babble analysis of Rose. Indeed it appears that no one truly understands the man; not his brother Dave, his son Petey Jr. and perhaps not even his first two wives. Yet we can all agree from reading Kennedy's book that Rose is crude, coarse, and often a total jerk.(And yet he was never a drinker or one to stay up late) As former Baseball Commissioner Fay Vincent said, " Rose is a man without a moral compass." Money seems to be the driving force behind the man since his 1989 banishment. And yet

Rose will treat the average Joe or acquaintance with utmost respect at social events where the elite meet to drink and eat. He is in that sense the common man; a blue collar man of a different uniform who knows how to lick the hard times in life. And as a leader or cheerleader there can be no doubt of his prowess and commitment to his team and to the game of baseball. No man, except perhaps Cobb, ever played with as much intensity and desire to overcome his limited skills to become a living legend. He was so admired that he made the all-century team in 1999 despite his banishment from the game that was his life. Kennedy raises the often debated questions that still occupy Facebook/ Goodreads baseball discussions and provides a balanced take on them. Did Rose gratuitously crush Ray Fosse's shoulder unnecessarily in the 1970 All-Star game or was it a collision caused by Fosse's block of the plate in the 14th inning of a game with few opportunities to win. Was Jim Gray a jerk for his postgame interview(Hint- he still is) or was it newsworthy? Should the man who steadfastly lied about gambling on baseball for 15 years and who was sentenced to federal prison be permanently banned from eligibility to the Hall of Fame, or should a 25 year ban from baseball be sufficient deterrence and punishment? Should an ad hoc committee picked by the Hall's directors, stacked against Rose at its inception, continue to block admission to one of the greatest players of any generation? I can judge the man morally flawed and egocentric and still find that he belongs in baseball's shrine of honor. To do otherwise is to turn a blind eye to a man who humbled himself before hundreds at the 25th anniversary of his 4,193rd hit and begged for forgiveness for having disrespected the game that he loved. Rose never cheated the game: his numbers are not artificial. He belongs. Thank you again Mr. Kennedy for writing a very fine and timely book.(PS I loved "56" as well.

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