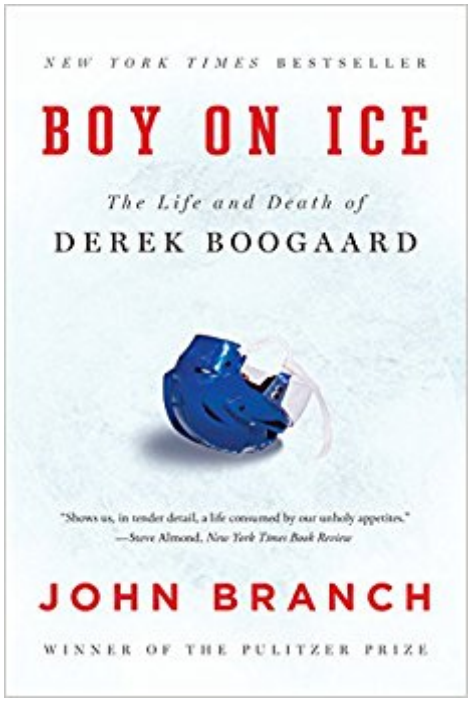
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Boy On Ice: The Life And Death Of Derek Boogaard



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Synopsis

Ã¢â ¬Å“Shows us, in tender detail, a life consumed by our unholy appetites.Ã¢â ¬Â•Ã¢â ¬â ¢Steve Almond, New York Times Book Review The tragic death of hockey star Derek Boogaard at twenty-eight was front-page news across the country in 2011 and helped shatter the silence about violence and concussions in professional sports. Now, in a gripping work of narrative nonfiction, acclaimed reporter John Branch tells the shocking story of Boogaard's life and heartbreaking death. Ã Â Boy on Ice is the richly told story of a mountain of a man who made it to the absolute pinnacle of his sport. Widely regarded as the toughest man in the NHL, Boogaard was a gentle man off the ice but a merciless fighter on it. With great narrative drive, Branch recounts Boogaard's unlikely journey from lumbering kid playing pond-hockey on the prairies of Saskatchewan, so big his skates would routinely break beneath his feet; to his teenaged junior hockey days, when one brutal outburst of violence brought Boogaard to the attention of professional scouts; to his days and nights as a star enforcer with the Minnesota Wild and the storied New York Rangers, capable of delivering career-ending punches and intimidating entire teams. But, as Branch reveals, behind the scenes Boogaard's injuries and concussions were mounting and his mental state was deteriorating, culminating in his early death from an overdose of alcohol and painkillers.Based on months of investigation and hundreds of interviews with Boogaard's family, friends, teammates, and coaches, Boy on Ice is a brilliant work for fans of Michael Lewis's The Blind Side or Buzz Bissinger's Friday Night Lights. This is a book that raises deep and disturbing questions about the systemic brutality of contact sportsÃ¢â ¬â ¢from peewees to professionalsÃ¢â ¬â ¢and the damage that reaches far beyond the game. 16 photographs

Book Information

Paperback: 384 pages

Publisher: W. W. Norton & Company; 1 edition (October 13, 2015)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 0393351912

ISBN-13: 978-0393351910

Product Dimensions: 5.5 x 1 x 8.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 12.6 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.4 out of 5 stars 79 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #140,582 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #9 inÃ Â Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Sports & Outdoors > Hockey #22 inÃ Â Books > Sports & Outdoors > Hockey #49

inÃ Â Books > Sports & Outdoors > Winter Sports

Customer Reviews

Ã¢â ¬Å“A haunting tale.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Ed Sherman, Chicago TribuneÃ¢â ¬Å“Expos[es] the violent tradition that pushed this young man to the brink.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Kate Tuttle, Boston GlobeÃ¢â ¬Å“A thorough, compassionate, if ultimately devastating profile.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Kurtis Scaletta, Minneapolis Star TribuneÃ¢â ¬Å“Meticulously reported and beautifully written.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Bryan Cronan, Christian Science MonitorÃ¢â ¬Å“Anything written by John Branch is a compelling must-read. Boy on Ice is transcendent and riveting and his best work yet.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Al Michaels, SportscasterÃ¢â ¬Å“Fascinating and chilling. In meticulous detail, John Branch creates a blood-drenched parable for the hidden human toll of sports violence staged for our entertainment. The rise and fall of Derek BoogaardÃ¢â ¬â ¢quintessential NHL goonÃ¢â ¬â ¢is unlike any sports biography you will ever read.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Steve Fainaru, best-selling coauthor of League of DenialÃ¢â ¬Å“A beautifully written and haunting journey into the jagged psychology of the modern athlete. It compels fans to examine their own roles in the spectacle and reminds us in often brutal terms that for our sports heroes, the real struggles take place far beyond the ice or the field of play.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Warren St. John, best-selling author of Outcasts UnitedÃ¢â ¬Å“Best Book of the Year. Branch captures the sorrow and anguish of a young athleteÃ¢â ¬â„¢s career collapsingÃ¢â ¬Â¦and asks piercing questions about violence in sports.Ã¢â ¬Â• - Publishers Weekly

John Branch is a reporter for the New York Times. His 2012 piece Ã¢â ¬Å“Snow FallÃ¢â ¬Â• won the Pulitzer Prize for feature writing. He lives near San Francisco.

First off, I can’t believe I’m the first person to review this book.Second, if you love fighting in hockey, please don’t read this book. If you love fighting in hockey, please read this book. This book truly is a book of contradictions. I can guarantee that you’ll never look at pugilists dropping the gloves and putting on the foil the same way again.I feel the book does a very effective job illustrating the positives and negatives of life as an enforcer. In Derek’s case, he dies at 28, but the years he lives involve him experiencing a life that he never would have experienced as someone who had limited academic attitude even before the repeated head trauma. (It’s similar to a hypothetical question my friends and I have bantered about at the bar. Wikipedia has told us that two celebrities have come from the school our houses are districted to: Patrick Swayze and The Undertaker from WWE. Would

you rather have the more years of the undertaker or the higher quality years of Swayze?)As far as the book itself, it starts with a great premise, but it’s a difficult read for two reasons.1) The first is no fault of the author. The story that is being told is a real life Flowers for Algernon in that you become emotionally attached to the likeable character, and then watch the downward slide that you know won’t be reversed. Each page comes with snowballing dread.2) the part that was under the author’s control is that this book is an extension of an excellent series of articles, and it reads like it too. I think Branch realized he didn’t have the content for a full-length book, so he threw in a bunch of filler, like I used to do to stretch the word count for high school essays. He feels the need to repeat himself several points throughout (he talks about Derek being a good guy off the ice so often it’s like Rainman) and goes into unnecessary detail into the fights fought and pills taken (no exaggeration, play by play for most fights and a day by day account of what pills he was getting from each doctor. It reads like an academic journal)In the end, the format of being a full-length book might not have been ideal, and the content is at times hard to get through, but this is a book that has the potential to change sports. It poses the tough questions that can’t be explored in a mere article, and helps personify the dangers of CTE and what the personality effects entail.If you’re a fan of any sport with blunt head trauma, reading this book will give you an early insight into the future. It’s coming...

Derek Boogaard was so much more than just the 6’8", 240 lbs piston-fisted ice locomotive we saw on the ice. "Boy On Ice" gives the reader an objective view of Boogaard’s life from childhood until his tragic death at the young age of 28. The author stays objective, not taking sides in the "fighting in hockey" debate. Instead, he gives the reader nonjudgmental facts which could reasonably support either side. However, a couple of chapters into the book the reader sees, with heartbreaking clarity, an ongoing pattern throughout Boogaard’s life. From the oversized 10-year-old boy bullied by opponents’ parents because they feared for their child’s safety when he towered over them on the ice, to the man who loved hockey and had NHL dreams, but learned early that his hockey skills alone would not get him into The Show. Whether you’re for or against fighting in hockey, whether you hated Derek Boogaard or loved him, when you finish this book you will know who he was, what his struggles were, and the world of constant pain endured by hockey enforcers. Best, most heartbreaking hockey book I’ve ever read.

Great look at the behind the scenes problems of a modern day "enforcer" and the possible link to long term health problems like CTE & addiction. Crazy to read this & realize this all happened not too long ago. Author does a great job going into detail of the rise & fall of Boogaard. The book

begins the same as any other hockey book, where you're rooting for the player, then when the pain killer prescriptions start to get listed in great detail, you remember that unlike those other books, this one will not have a happy ending. This is a must-read for hockey fans & anyone looking for some of the untold stories & problems of a fan favorite.

Avid hockey fan here and I am into reading biographies, hockey or non hockey related... I thought the beginning of the book covered too much on Derek's childhood, but it made the ending that much more tragic once you read about his struggles with painkillers/alcohol. The eulogies cemented that notion.To see who Derek was, who he became and accomplished as an athlete, only to see it fall apart was the main reason I bought the book - I wanted to know why. The author does a great job of detailing this.What I wish for is more information post-Derek's death. With all the prescriptions from NHL doctors and random drug dealers that Derek crossed paths with, what was their final judgment from a legal standpoint? Were any fired, caught or sent to jail (besides Aaron getting some legal troubles)? The truth lies somewhere in Derek having an addiction and his former doctors/friends enabling him. Not sure if Derek's dad is still pursuing this question.At the end of the day, the book was worth it. Hope the Boogard family heals over time.

A well presented story behind the story of a boy with a dream which turned into the ultimate nightmare. Derek had drive and talent, just not enough of the right kind of talent to avoid being pigeon holed into a role which ultimately cost him his life. The author follows Derek as he grows from a boy to become a feared enforcer in the NHL. As his career unfolds, the story becomes not just the tale of one man's dream gone bad, but a damning condemnation of the system of pro hockey which ruthlessly sacrifices the very lives of its players for the sake of profit. As Derek's life gets pounded out of him, bit by bit, the book describes how the NHL flouted its very own so called "rules" to keep him on the ice and keep the money rolling in. The author does an excellent job of describing the effects on Derek and those who loved him as the damage to Derek's body and brain mounted and his life unraveled. It's heartrending to see how they trusted the NHL to protect their boy and treat his addiction--a trust which was broken spectacularly again and again. Anyone who wants to understand the real dynamic behind professional hockey should read this book.

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