



The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Dreams

By Darcy Frey

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It ought to be just a game, but basketball on the playgrounds of Coney Island is much more than that — for many young men it represents their only hope of escape from a life of crime, poverty, and despair. In *The Last Shot*, Darcy Frey chronicles the aspirations of four of the neighborhood's most promising players. What they have going for them is athletic talent, grace, and years of dedication. But working against them are woefully inadequate schooling, family circumstances that are often desperate, and the slick, brutal world of college athletic recruitment. Incisively and compassionately written, *The Last Shot* introduces us to unforgettable characters and takes us into their world with an intimacy seldom seen in contemporary journalism. The result is a startling and poignant expose of inner-city life and the big business of college basketball.

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The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Dreams By Darcy Frey Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #233479 in Books
- Published on: 2004-03-03
- Released on: 2004-03-03
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 8.25" h x .56" w x 5.50" l, .54 pounds
- Binding: Paperback
- 240 pages

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Editorial Review

From Publishers Weekly

Coney Island, Brooklyn, once New York City's playground, is now an archetypal ghetto, filled with high-rise housing projects and populated almost exclusively by African Americans. High schoolers there attend Abraham Lincoln High, known all around the East Coast for its outstanding basketball teams, where players see the sport as their way out of second-class citizenship. In his first book, Frey, a contributing editor at Harper's and the New York Times Magazine, has composed a sensitive account of a year in the lives of four exceptional players (three seniors and one freshman), their coach and their families, and he shows that the game can indeed be a means of escape in spite of their school's poor academic reputation. But the way out is fraught with difficulties. For instance, Frey offers devastating anecdotes about dishonest college recruiters and about the NCAA. This excellent book is not only about basketball but about realizing a dream, and its appeal should be very wide.

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From Library Journal

For many adolescents on Coney Island, basketball is their only escape from the urban hell of poverty, crime, and drugs. The Last Shot chronicles a group of teenagers playing for one of the best teams in New York, the Abraham Lincoln Secondary School Railsplitters. These young males continually cope with circumstances beyond their control in a society that has failed miserably to provide a safe environment and, more importantly, a good education. The author, who won a National Magazine Award for the story upon which this account is based, also explains how those living in high-risk areas suffered the most when the National Collegiate Athletic Association raised the standards of acceptable SAT scores for athletes. The young men whose stories Frey so poignantly captures exist in a world of "mean streets and basketball dreams."

Recommended.

L.R. Little, Penticton P.L., British Columbia

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Review

James North *Chicago Tribune Books* Soars toward the basket...a brilliant portrait of what has gone wrong in our cities, and by extension, in our country. -- *Review*

Users Review

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Nelson Berg:

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