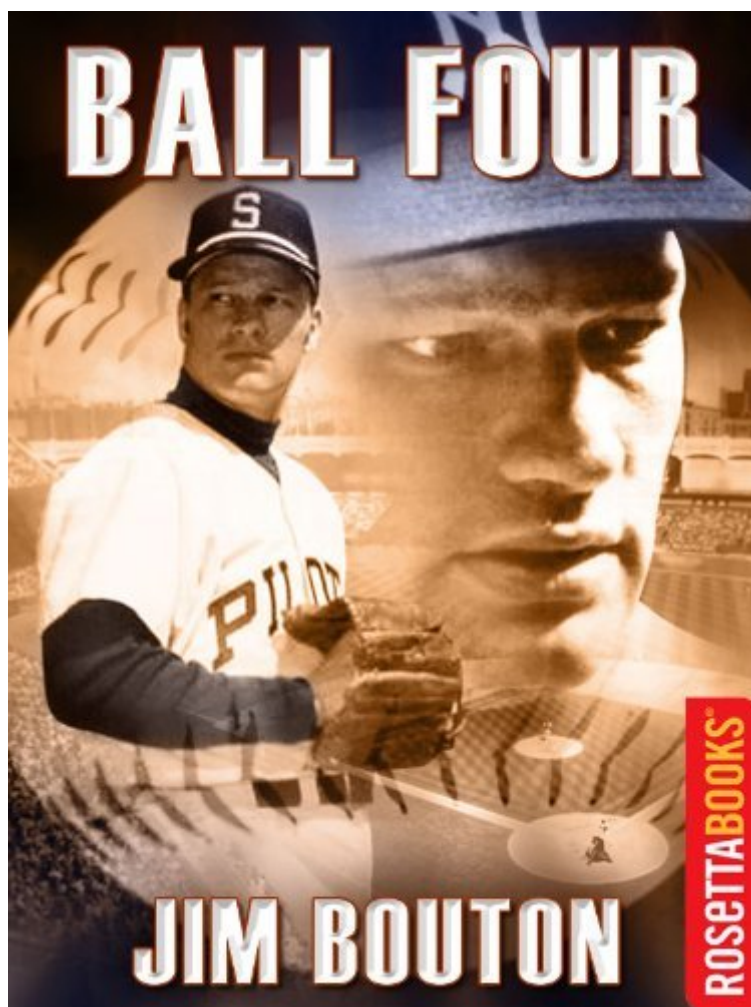


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# Ball Four (RosettaBooks Sports Classics)



## Synopsis

Ball Four: The Final Pitch is the original book plus all the updates, unlike the 20th Anniversary Edition paperback. When Ball Four was published in 1970, it created a firestorm. Bouton was called a Judas, a Benedict Arnold and a "social leper" for having violated the "sanctity of the clubhouse." Baseball commissioner Bowie Kuhn tried to force Bouton to sign a statement saying the book wasn't true. Ballplayers, most of whom hadn't read it, denounced the book. It was even banned by a few libraries. Almost everyone else, however, loved Ball Four. Fans liked discovering that athletes were real people--often wildly funny people. Many readers said it gave them strength to get through a difficult period in their lives. Serious critics called it an important document. David Halberstam, who won a Pulitzer for his reporting on Vietnam, wrote a piece in Harper's that said of Bouton: "He has written a book deep in the American vein, so deep in fact that it is by no means a sports book." In 1999 Ball Four was selected by the New York Public Library as one of the "Books of the Century." And Time magazine chose it as one of the "100 Greatest Non-Fiction" books. Besides changing the image of athletes, the book played a role in the economic revolution in pro sports. In 1975, Ball Four was accepted as legal evidence against the owners at the arbitration hearing, which led to free agency in baseball and, by extension, to other sports. Today Ball Four has taken on another role--as a time capsule of life in the sixties. "It is not just a diary of Bouton's 1969 season with the Seattle Pilots and Houston Astros," says sportswriter Jim Caple. "It's a vibrant, funny, telling history of an era that seems even further away than four decades. To call it simply a 'tell all book' is like describing The Grapes of Wrath as a book about harvesting peaches in California." This ebook version of Ball Four includes the first edition, the 1980, 1990 and 2000 updates, and 138 photos.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR** Jim Bouton was born in Newark, NJ, in 1939. He grew up in Rochelle Park, a blue-collar town that was too small for Little League. The result was that kids learned to play baseball without uniforms, parents, coaches, or umpires. In high school, his nickname was "warm up Bouton" because he never got into the games. Advised that becoming a major league pitcher was "unrealistic," Bouton wrote his Careers Week report on the life of a forest ranger. He got a C on his report and an A on the cover--a nice drawing of a squirrel in a tree. Bouton was an All-Star pitcher and won 20 games for the Yankees in 1963. The next year he won 18 games and beat the Cardinals twice in the World Series. Eventually a sore arm got him sold to the Seattle Pilots--for a bag of batting practice balls. That's when he began taking notes for his diary Ball Four, published in 1970. In the 1970s he was a top-rated TV sportscaster in New York City, acted in a Robert Altman film called The Long Goodbye, and made a brief comeback with the Atlanta

Braves. In 2003 Bouton wrote and self-published *Foul Ball*, a diary of his battle to save a historic ballpark in Pittsfield, MA. Bouton says he only writes when he's bursting to say something. "Ball Four was a book I wanted to write," he says. "Foul Ball was a book I had to write." Today Bouton lives in a forest in western Massachusetts.

## Book Information

File Size: 4876 KB

Print Length: 508 pages

Publisher: RosettaBooks (March 20, 2012)

Publication Date: March 20, 2012

Sold by: Amazon Digital Services LLC

Language: English

ASIN: B00CME4ROM

Text-to-Speech: Enabled

X-Ray: Enabled

Word Wise: Enabled

Lending: Not Enabled

Enhanced Typesetting: Enabled

Best Sellers Rank: #8,538 Paid in Kindle Store (See Top 100 Paid in Kindle Store) #2 in Kindle Store > Kindle eBooks > Nonfiction > Sports > Baseball #2 in Books > Sports & Outdoors > Baseball #2 in Books > Biographies & Memoirs > Sports & Outdoors > Baseball

## Customer Reviews

When "Ball Four" was published in 1970, Jim Bouton was attacked by players, sportswriters, and the owners for revealing the secret, sordid underbelly of professional baseball. Which should be enough right there to get you to read this thing. But in "Ball Four," Bouton also reveals the humanity of baseball, the fear, the hate, and the fun, which makes it one of the classics of baseball literature and a must read. Basically, "Ball Four" is a diary of the 1968 season written by a journeyman middle-relief knuckleballer. Before injuring his arm, and turning to the knuckleball, Bouton was a fireball pitcher for the New York Yankees. In his rookie season in 1962, Bouton won two games for the Yanks in the World Series. He played with Mantle and Ford. Then his arm went dead, and he found himself back in the minors, where he taught himself to throw the knuckler. The Yanks didn't think much of him anymore and traded him to the expansion Seattle Pilots (which left Seattle after a single year for...get this...Milwaukee), where he earned a spot as a spot starter and mopup long

relief man. The book reveals the personalities of the players and managers and owners. It tells what the players do on the road, in the bullpen, in the minors. It reveals the petty nature of the coaching staff, who are usually all old-time baseball men, not very clever, not prone to trying new ways. It talks about the dicey contract negotiations by players in the days of the reserve clause, when average players made an average wage. Bouton travels in the world of boys. The players are mostly kids in their 20s, not educated, and spent their formative years in baseball. They like pranks. They like women, but they don't know either how to talk about them, or how to talk with them.

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