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The Bad Guys Won, award-winning *Sports Illustrated* baseball writer Jeff Pearlman returns to an innocent time when a city worshipped a man named Mookie and the Yankees were the second-best team in New York.

It was 1986, and the New York Mets won 108 regular-season games and the World Series, capturing the hearts (and other assorted body parts) of fans everywhere. But their greatness on the field was nearly eclipsed by how bad they were off it. Led by the indomitable Keith Hernandez and the young dynamic duo of Dwight Gooden and Darryl Strawberry, along with the gallant Scum Bunch, the Amazin's left a wide trail of wreckage in their wake—hotel rooms, charter planes, a bar in Houston, and most famously Bill Buckner and the hated Boston Red Sox.

With an unforgettable cast of characters—including Doc, Straw, the Kid, Nails, Mex, and manager Davey Joshson—this “affectionate but critical look at this exciting season” (*Publishers Weekly*) celebrates the last of baseball's arrogant, insane, rock-and-roll-and-party-all-night teams, exploring what could have been, what should have been, and what never was.

The Bad Guys Won! Details

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From Reader Review The Bad Guys Won! for online ebook

M. Thomas Apple says

This book was written in 2004, well before social media existed. Which means that by now, nearly all the escapades of the '86 Mets have been circulated ad nauseum across Facebook, Twitter, and so forth. (The most famous being the food fight and vomitorium plane ride after the NLCS, which Lenny Dykstra and many others have been eager to explain, accompanied by line drawings on YouTube.)

As a 14 year old living in Upstate - and no, Jeff Pearlman, you do NOT live in Upstate, you live barely north of Westchester which is only Upstate to obnoxious New York City folk who have think the world ceases to exist outside Manhattan - I had no clue that any of my favorite players were the complete and utter pricks they turned out to be. Imagine how they would have fared had Twitter existed.

The writing style does seem like an extended Rolling Stone column, but then again, what do you expect from an SI contributor? Smarmy metaphors and cliches are part and parcel of the business. The blow by blow account of the NLCS and WS are fluff; most of the players were already quoted time and time again by various newspapers and magazines of the time. No doubt the play by play was added to justify making this a book and not an SI special issue article.

But despite the interesting stories of hard drinking, fornicating, pranking disgusting excuses for human beings, I can't say I agree with the author who claims that sports would be more interesting with "characters." Sports players are role models whether they like it or not, and it's a good thing I had little notion of how these players actually behaved when I was a kid. I had my fair share of high school and college experiences with similar student athlete "characters" who thought the world revolved around them and I always infinitely preferred the more down to earth, respectful and humble players who didn't feel the need to shove everything in your face.

As a Mets fan the stories in this book came as a revelation; the Mets front office situation the past few years has been less than inspiring (thank you, Wilpons, who obviously have no clue what they're doing). But at least the Mets have managed to avoid having such a group of arrogant bastards for a while.

Do the bad guys always win? Let's hope not.

Will Byrnes says

An inside look at the 1986 Mets, the entire season, this is a very compelling read, with information that was new to me. It reads quickly and does not pretend to be more than what it is, a recollection of a magical season. (unlike 2017).

Sean Chick says

The 1986 Mets were ahead of their time in use of PR and computer guided analytics but they were at heart a throwback club. That is why Pearlman wrote this book: to discuss the drama and exploits of one of baseball's

finest and rowdiest teams. Today, the clean cut image is what advertisers want. Think of Tiger Woods and Michael Jordan, both assholes but they knew how to present themselves. They show us what we want to see. I am no Ali fan, but at least the man had blood running through his veins. I for one miss the days when Jim Mora gave a honest press conference.

The Bad Guys Won is funny, but also knowing. You really get a feel for each player, and can see why the group was perhaps never destined to last. They were combustible and management pushed that implosion along. The game descriptions are riveting. I learned a lot about baseball strategy just from reading this.

Brent Soderstrum says

Pearlman does an excellent job giving you a behind the scenes glimpse at the 1986 Mets. Who could ever forget the comeback by the Mets with Boston on the verge of winning the World Series. Mookie Wilson hitting a ball through the legs of Bill Buckner to cap the comeback in game 6 and send the Series to game 7 which the Mets win is something I will never forget.

You get to really know the Mets circa 1986 and quite frankly they weren't a likeable group. Gooden and Strawberry were the young stars who were unable to deal with their fame. Drugs, booze, women etc were rampant. I was always a Gary Carter fan but he is painted as being an ego manical jerk. The only really good people on the Mets appears to have be Mookie Wilson and Tim Lincecum.

The story about a man thinking Tim Lincecum was hitting on his wife by autographing a baseball with the notation Rom. 116 is hilarious. The man thought Lincecum was giving her his room number when he was referring to Romans 1:16.

I was also a big Kevin Mitchell fan. Before his star years with the Giants he was a young thug from San Diego learning to play baseball in New York. To think the Mets got rid of him because they thought HE was the bad influence on Doc Gooden and Darryl Strawberry is amazing.

Very good book that shows that it isn't always the good guys that win.

Ray says

I remember the 1986 NY Mets World Series championship very well, even 30+ years later. What I never knew about that season is how it all came to be, and how it happened. Jeff Pearlman does a terrific job of putting together all the elements that went into that year. From the management that built the team, to the players, coaches and field manager, this eye-opening expose of a group of misfits, bad boys, carousers, ladies men, alcohol and drug abusers is all on display. Fan favorites Dwight Gooden, Darryl Strawberry, Ron Darling, Gary Carter, Keith Hernandez and Lenny Dykstra are all aboard for the ride. The book also examines the demise of the team in the years after their great accomplishments. I enjoyed it and I think most sports fan will agree with me.

Michael Shore says

Thanks Eric and Matt! I thought because I lived through the '86 Mets that i knew it all. Well like Jon Snow (sorry about the GOT reference but i have to), i knew nothing!

This book goes deep inside the locker room, as well as the plane rides, and hotel antics that made them the "Bad Guys". I remember how disappointed i was when Doc Gooden and Darryl Strawberry went from 1st round HOF to drug busts and issues with women. What i didn't know was how much they lied and were so out of it. The extent of the drinking and abusive behavior was also something that i had no inkling of, and the relationship between Cashen and Johnson was one of two opposites. This team was built to win, and was arrogant and cocky, but luckily for us Mets fans, they delivered. So many of my 'former' heroes were on the dirtbag side but Mookie Wilson comes thru looking like the true All-American hero.

Besides the inside stories about the bad behavior, the book really set up the NL Championship Series vs Houston w Mike Scott, and the World Series with great insight into the entire Buckner affair. Thanks to my sons for buying me this one and getting me to go outside my normal reading comfort zone. Fun read, and if you were a Mets fan back then, or are one now, it's a must read.

Roy says

A must read for any NY Mets fan with a vivid memory of their 1986 championship season. This book made for a lightning fast read. On the field of play they were amazing to watch and root for. As this book taught me, off the field they were even more entertaining. Apparently they managed to win almost in spite of themselves as their talent overrode team harmony. It seems like it was only yesterday but somehow more than 20 years have passed. Ya gotta believe that's Amazin'.

Jeff says

I love a good story about a great heel. And somewhere, under all the clumsy turns of phrase, that story's in here. But that story is also on Wikipedia.

Listen: this is so far out of my wheelhouse that I don't know how to evaluate it. Surely I can't criticize a book about the '86 Mets for containing too much boring baseball stuff. But if you're looking for salacious details, you can stop reading once the team hits the playoffs.

Is this what sports writing is like? Nearly every page contains an unwieldy metaphor strained to the breaking point, each of which feels like a cliché that never quite caught on. My list of highlights, started a quarter of the way and restricted to turns of phrase that made me laugh or shake my head, numbers 48. It'd be a lot longer if I allowed myself to highlight the merely bad, but I wanted to be done with this ungodly thing.

So I can't speak to it as a baseball book, because I'm still not sure what an ERA is (I think you want it to be low?), but as a work of prurient "literature," it fails utterly.

If you're looking for a book about the '86 Mets for an audience that already knows about the '86 Mets, maybe this is for you. If you're looking for reflections of larger-than-life dirtbags, check out that Wikipedia

article, and the article on Cootergate, and listen to Get Metsmerized. Then pick up Leigh Montvale's Evel and be entertained.

Jill Hutchinson says

What can you say about the 1986 World Series Champs, the NY Mets? They were without a doubt the nastiest bunch of immature drunks, druggies, skirt chasers and practical jokers in both leagues. The author, Jeff Pearlman, was in the position to know as a long time writer for Sports Illustrated and had the inside track to interviews and confessions from those who played with this amazing team. Whether sports fans like it or not, the Yankees were **the** team from New York and then along came the bad-boy Mets and took away their crown. The orange and blue was plastered all over the Big Apple and the antics of the players were always good for a lead story in the sport section of the Times. With the exception of Mookie Wilson and Howard Johnson, who came to play ball and not raise hell, the rest of the team ran wild, destroying hotel rooms, bars, and their charter planes and screaming obscenities at the opposing teams. But all was forgiven as they moved toward the World Series and glory.

The 1986 series against the Red Sox was a dandy and went to the 7th game, even as the two Mets stars, Gooden and Strawberry were snorting coke before they took the field. As we know, it destroyed their careers and lives but they were "the boys of summer" during that run for the championship.

This book will make you angry and laugh at the same time. Fame often does terrible things to those who obtain it and the brawling rowdies of the Mets were a perfect example. But if you love baseball with all its ups and downs, this book is worth reading.....even if some of the players' antics are almost beyond belief. Let's Go Mets

Eric says

The team of my youth & enthusiasm! Great to revisit this memorable season, tho the author finds he needs to constantly stress his chosen title/premise with all the sordid stories he can dig up. It wears thin after a while; there were plenty of other crazy characters on other teams. Lots of great stories about these characters, their differences & their chemistry together, & it is also chock full of fascinating history & information alongside the madness, like the "origin" of GM Frank Cashen & a review of the lengthy, remarkable career of Bill Buckner. Also notable is the (radical?) notion that both Doc & Daryl were innocent, albeit very different, kids when drafted, and the recognition of the cruel & capricious forces that changed them with such terrible results. The writing when describing actual baseball games is first rate, and there were some great ones that year, & particularly that postseason, for sure. I wish there were more of that, because I really loved this team & these characters. With the obligatory "where are they now?" section sadly more than ten years out of date, the deflating feeling that accompanies the book's end - which covers the Mets' failure to achieve dynasty status & the quick dismantling of this team - is now amplified.

Dan says

The 1986 Mets: 108 wins, two incredible play-off series that included the infamous Bill Buckner error that prolonged the "curse of the bambino", the beginning of the fall of Daryl Strawberry and Dwight Gooden,

both of whom had such potential and such a meteoric rise to fame that their falls take on the dimensions of Shakespearean tragic heroes.

This story deserved so much better. The ingredients are there for a serious work that transcends sports journalism, such as "The Summer of '49". If writing strictly as a fan the entry-style account utilized by Bill Simmons' "Now I can die in peace" about the Red Sox finally winning the world series would have been effective. If a character study was desired, Gay Talese's "the Silent Season of a Hero" could have been the model.

Instead, Jeff Pearlman wrote a book-length tabloid.

For some reason there is a trend toward taglines, blame the internet. Discerning readers are deemed incapable of deciding on a book based on subject matter and browsing a few passages. We now have taglines, as if we are online and being tempted to "click" for the full story.

The tagline for this book is alliterative, ridiculous and accurate:

"A season of brawling, boozing, bimbo chasing, and championship baseball with straw, doc, mookie, nails, the Kid, and the Rest of the 1986 mets, the rowdiest team ever to put on a uniform---and maybe the best."

As the tagline promises, Pearlman teases the reader with lascivious morsels and insinuations---no character study, no scholarship. He merely collects the good bits from various autobiographies and interviews and arranges them in chronological order. The book has the depth expected from a pseudo sports journalist working in the 24 media world where everything needs to be loud, outrageous, and unique. How else can he expect to get our attention?

Fortunately for Pearlman, he chose a great topic. My hope is that this book inspires a good writer to give this team the book it deserves.

Brina says

Growing up I detested the New York Mets for an event that happened before I was born. Many people refer to 1969 as the year of the Miracle Mets, and I refer to it as the year of the black cat that perpetuated the Cubs ever present curse. The year 2015 brought a new era of detesting the Mets in the form of a post season playoff sweep, bringing my level of abhorring the Mets to a new high. When we moderators of the baseball book group agreed to read *The Bad Guys Won* by Jeff Pearlman this month, featuring the 1986 edition of the Mets baseball team, I begrudgingly agreed to read along. Surprisingly, I found myself ahem enjoying this narrative, not because the Mets won, but because of the hair raising stories that the team got into along the way.

The 1980s were a time of transition for baseball in New York. The Yankees, the preferred New York baseball team in our home, had not won the world series since 1978 and would not do so again until 1996. The Mets had not been to the world series since 1973 and fought the Cubs each year for the right to finish last. The team was even in need of a 5th Avenue advertising agency to promote the woeful product on the field because the team itself was downright awful. The new millionaire owners of the Mets desired to win but had no idea how to run a baseball team. Recommended to them was Frank Cashen, the architect of the Baltimore Orioles teams of the early 1970s that challenged for and won two world series crowns. Slowly but surely, Cashen was entrusted with the job of putting together a winning team in Manhattan, a team that would surpass the Yankees in wins, attendance, and capture the pathos of the city.

The book is aptly titled *The Bad Guys Won* because to me the Mets are the bad guys, the villains. Here, however, the 1986 Mets who went on to win 108 games, really were a bunch of bad guys. Nicknamed the Scum Bunch, the team pulled some downright awful pranks and left the rest of baseball in its wake. Before

major league baseball cleaned up its act, players would be snorting cocaine in the locker room on game day. There were massive amounts of booze, drugs, and women on every road trip. Drugs ruined the career of one Dwight Gooden, also known as Dr K, who looked like he would be the most dominant pitcher of the decade. Instead, cocaine got to him and he was in and out of rehab for the rest of his career. The moniker of best hurler of the decade instead went to Boston's Roger Clemens, who ended up being associated with drugs and drug usage during the latter part of his career. Beside the drugs, players pranked one another left and right whether it was replacing golf balls with hard boiled eggs or setting shoes on fire. The Mets did it all, and the few wholesome characters were either alienated or forced to play along with the stunts. Most chose to do the latter as they wanted to be along for the ride that was the 1986 season.

The Mets, as most championship teams do, featured household names as Darryl Strawberry, Keith Hernandez, and Gary Carter, along with role players as Tim Lincecum and Mookie Wilson. Before baseball split into three divisions, the Mets played in the same national league east as the Cubs so I remember these players well, mainly because they always trounced the Cubs on the field. The 1986 team trounced the entire national league en route to their championship. Besides the pranks and stunts, the team was loaded at every position and featured a pitching staff that enjoyed collectively the best year of their careers. Position players enjoyed career years as well, and the team went on to win 108 games. While Pearlman's writing will not win any literary awards, his language captured the essence of this team well- bad if not downright vulgar. As a result, I actually found myself grinning while reading about the team I love to hate the most.

I doubt that I will ever change my allegiance and find myself rooting for the Mets to win a game much less a playoff series unless they are playing against the equally detestable Cardinals. Besides bleeding Cubbie blue, I am married to a Yankee fanatic, so wanting the Mets to win is a double whammy. Yet, *The Bad Guys Won* showed the Mets at their best which was also their worst so it became an enjoyable weekend read. I just hope that the bad guys never win again.

3.5 stars

Lance says

Plenty has been written about the 1986 New York Mets, one of the most colorful teams to win a World Series in the past few decades. Just HOW colorful they were is captured in this terrific book by award winning author Jeff Pearlman.

Because that particular team had so much talent, the belief was that they were going to win many championships. Why they failed to do so as been discussed in many of the aforementioned books, but instead, Pearlman writes about the character (and characters) of the team instead of analyzing them. This is what sets this book apart from other books about this team.

It didn't matter whether a player was a tough guy from a rough place (Kevin Mitchell) or a nice guy (Mookie Wilson), a superstar (Darryl Strawberry and Dwight Gooden) or a bench player (Ed Hearn, Tim Lincecum), no Mets player goes unnoticed by Pearlman. While the title may seem to imply that there will be a lot of critical stories about the players and the team, the material is presented in a fair manner to all mentioned. This material is also very entertaining and that makes the book a joy to read.

Whether the topic is the “Scum Bunch” of Jessie Orosco, Doug Sisk and Danny Heep having drinking contests, manager Davey Johnson running the team as he sees fit no matter what General Manager Frank Cashen and the press think, or George Foster becoming an outcast (something that wasn’t easy to do on that team, according to the author), the reader will either learn something new about this team or be thoroughly entertained by the story.

The baseball sections are written just as well. The National League Championship Series against the Houston Astros is covered in great depth, with a lot of space devoted to the Mets’ fear of facing Astros ace Mike Scott. Many times, teams will psych themselves out of a win when doing that, but the Mets were able to avoid facing Scott for a game 7 in that series. Then the writing about the World Series against the Boston Red Sox is just as good. Everything from Jim Rice NOT scoring on a double in the first inning of the fateful game 6 to the elation when Orosco threw his glove in the air after the final out of game 7, the Series is covered in great detail. The culmination of all those drunken parties and incidents is reached with a championship for the Mets and the reader feels like he or she is there in person.

Mets fans will especially enjoy this account of that magical season, but readers who are interested in learning about that team and its place in history will also want to add this book to their reading collection.

<http://sportsbookguy.blogspot.com/201...>

Dan says

This book absolutely stomped my mindgrapes. I didn't realize it was possible for me to have a more irrational love for the 1986 New York Mets than I already did -- but then I found out what scumbags they were, and somehow loved them more. Pearlman's reporting, honesty and acerbic wit make a perfect match for the Mets' slimy pursuit (and achievement) of baseball immortality. Worth it for any sports fan, and if you're a Mets fan, you really have no excuse for not owning a copy.

Lawrence A says

I've been a Mets fan since 1964, when I was 6. The 1986 season was, of course, Amazin'. While this book provides accurate descriptions of key moments in that championship season, and a literally gut-churning, pee-in-your-pants funny recounting of the various puerile shenanigans surrounding the '86 ballclub, the writing is geared towards your average 14-year-old male too young to identify with Jim Bouton's "Ball Four." There are more cheesy metaphors and similes on each page than maggots stuck to a rotting trout. The number of adolescent metaphors in the book is equal to the number of Rice Krispies it would take to fill up Shea Stadium to the brim. If you removed all of the similes that cause a severe case of groaning and eye-rolling, the book would sag like a post-coital condom. I think you see what I mean.
