



## Munson: The Life and Death of a Yankee Captain

*Marty Appel*

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Our captain and leader has not left us, today, tomorrow, this year, next? Our endeavors will reflect our love and admiration for him.??Honorary plaque to Munson in Yankee Stadium Thurman Munson is remembered by fans as the fiercely competitive, tough, and?most of all?inspiring Yankee captain and champion from the wild Bronx Zoo years. He is also remembered for his tragic death, at age thirty-two, when the private plane he was piloting crashed in Canton, Ohio, on August 2, 1979. Munson is the intimate biography of a complex and larger-than-life legend. Written by former Yankees public relations director Marty Appel, who worked closely with Thurman throughout his career, Munson captures the little-known details of the young man from Canton and his meteoric rise to stardom in baseball?s most storied franchise. Appel examines the tumultuous childhood that led Thurman to work feverishly to escape Canton?and also the marriage and cultural roots that continually drew him back.

## Munson: The Life and Death of a Yankee Captain Details

Date : Published July 7th 2009 by Doubleday (first published January 1st 2009)

ISBN : 9780385522311

Author : Marty Appel

Format : Hardcover 384 pages

Genre : Sports and Games, Sports, Baseball, Biography, Nonfiction



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## **From Reader Review Munson: The Life and Death of a Yankee Captain for online ebook**

### **Steve says**

One of the fastest and riveting reads I've had in a long time. I couldn't put the book down once I got started on it and I spent most of my DC commuting time focused on its pages. I was at Fort Bragg, NC when I got the news of Munson's tragic accident, but I never really got the full story about how it happened and the impact it played on future Yankees teams. Marty Appel did an amazing job on this book -- although I felt the Jerry Anderson-Tom Rinaldi interview was a little too much for the book. Appel focused on Munson and his two families -- the ones in pinstripes and the real family in Canton. He showed Munson's desires and ambitions to be the best at what he did and what he could be for his family and teammates -- ambitions and desires that played a part in taking this person away from his family, his team and the fans who thought the world of him. Yankee fans still believe he did enough in his 10 year career to be in the Hall of Fame. It now depends on the Veterans and Hall of Famers to place him with Berra, Bench, Fisk and Carter as Hall of Fame catchers. Hopefully, this book will convince some veterans that he does belong.

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### **Logan says**

I heard of this book on a sports radio talk show about the Yankees. I thought it was going to be a good book because I am a catcher and I love baseball. I think this author wanted us to take away from this book that a true hero for the Yankees died in a terrible accident and no one really acknowledges that fact anymore. I would recommend this book to any die hard baseball fan because of the information it gives you about a great baseball player. I learned that Thurman Munson was a true all around player and was not only loved for the way he played baseball but also for how much respect he had for people outside of the game. I would not change this book at all I thought that it was very well explained and it had a lot of great information.

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### **Daniel Nelson says**

Written by the former PR director for the New York Yankees, Marty Appel. Here you get an insiders view of the Yankee captain, Thurman Munson. I've always been intrigued by sports figures that are beloved as Munson was, yet their actions often paint a picture of conflicted individuals. Here you get a wide ranging view of a terrific ball player, leader and family man mixed with baseball, controversy, and even a little drama.

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### **Charles says**

this book is about a star yankee thurman munson he was an amazing catcher and literally everyone who was a yankee fan loved this man. he could have possibly been a hall of fame player but tragically he died in a plane crash and devastated all of baseball players and fans. Thurman munson will always be remembered by the yankees, mlb and the fans. i never got to watch thurman but by reading this book and hearing his life to death i know i would have liked him

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### **Amy says**

Riveting! Thurmon Munson was a Yankee and this alone should have turned me against the man and this book. But, Munson was also an Ohioan and a dedicated one at that!

This was a fascinating look at the life and death of Thurmon Munson. Munson was killed on August 2, 1979 when the Cessna he was piloting crashed just short of the runway at Akron-Canton Regional Airport.

I am amazed by the people he played ball with and those who were good friends. I spent quality time at my local library digging up more information on people such as: Bobby Murcer, Lou Piniella, Graig Nettles, Ron Guidry, Willie Randolph, Reggie Jackson and Jerry Narron.

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### **Jonathan says**

A fitting and complete tribute to the Yankee captain, number 15. Marty Appel knew Munson well in life, helping him to write his autobiography. What is fascinating about this book is that it tells about his family, birth, growing up, superstardom, death, and post-mortem. The book quotes famous athletes, celebrities, and Munson's friends and family. Well-done with respect and class, this book makes you feel like you were there.

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### **Tommy says**

this book counts as 1

this book is about therman munson, a yankee, a yankee captain and a all time yankee great. this book shows us who he was as a person and talks about him on and off the field.

during this book, it talks a lot about the 1977, 78 and 76 seasons. it talks about how munson won the american league most valuable player. it describes the 1977 world series on how they won, how they beat the dodgers then same in 1978. it also sums ups his problems with reggie jackson. something that this book talked about that i didn't know was that munson had an abusive father. and i think because of his rough childhood he took up becoming a pilot. towards the end of his career it talks about how he argued with Steinbrenner about his contract. sadly munson died in a plain crash, that he was driving that cut his life and his career short.

i would recommend this book to any yankee fan or anyone who needs to get a quick easy read and to catch up on baseball history.

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### **Phil says**

Thurman Munson = a hard working ballplayer, with talent, with compassion, a ball players player, a team

player extraordinaire, a lover of life, his family and most important of all - being a Yankee. A very moving story that will captivate any reader who appreciates good work ethic, family values and a damn good sense of humor.

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### **Tom Stamper says**

I have lately come to appreciate what a great writer Marty Appel is. Every team should be lucky to get a book as good as Pinstripe Empire. His Casey Stengel was compelling as any baseball biography I can remember. It's every bit as good as Leavy's Sandy Koufax book. So why not try his Munson book.?

I remember Munson from the end of his career, I remember the day he died in the midst of a already frustrating Yankees season. I watched baseball with my dad whenever it was on and we saw his last game the night before on a Chicago TV station. Munson played first base that last game but I didn't remember that he left hurt. Appel tells us that Munson and Piniella stayed in Bobby Murcer's Chicago apartment during that series. They drank scotch all night and rode together to the ballpark the following day. That Old Comiskey park. The great old stadium torn down a decade later to make room for the last of the cookie cutter ballparks.

I don't know how much everyone loved Thurman before he died because ballplayers don't go around telling everyone how much they love each other. I do remember his name coming up often in the 1980s. Graig Nettles said in his own book that the Pine Tar game in 1983 was a result of Thurman Munson being called out for a similar play years before.

Long before I watched baseball Munson was a Rookie of the Year and an MVP, playing the most difficult of defensive positions. 1978 was the first season I collected baseball cards. Munson was older than his years by now. Even as a kid he didn't look like an athlete. He looked pudgy and walked gimp. It made him all the more interesting. They kept his locker as he left it. It stayed that way for 30 years until they tore down the old stadium. Had he lived and retired a few years later we would remember him as we do Nettles or Randolph. Appel sort of gives us that alternate reality at the end of the book. It's a welcome thought experiment.

I want to also mention that Jim Bouton was working as a reporter during Munson's last season and Munson wouldn't talk to him. He thought Bouton's book Ball Four was a betrayal of his teammates that should expect locker room conversation to be kept between players. He cites Mickey Mantle, Ralph Houk, and Elston Howard as guys who were treated unfairly. He has a point and it's not one I had considered when I read that book.

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### **David Pomerico says**

I always wanted to know more about Munson, but I have to say that Appel is not the best writer. The story is all over the place, probably because he realized that Munson's career wasn't that long and, ultimately, he was a pretty bland character. I think there are probably better books about the era (I really want to read "Ladies and Gentlemen, the Bronx is Burning" now), and I just couldn't help be disappointed by someone who had been such a mythical figure for me as a Yankees fan.

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## **M. Milner says**

As a player, Munson represented the gritty everyday kind of persona. He played through injuries, logging time at the demanding role of catcher. In his lifetime, he was seen as gruff, blue collar, a regular kind of guy. Needless to say, he resonated with a lot of fans. It's too bad only glimpses of this man come across in Marty Appel's biography.

Appel had a unique relationship with his subject. For most of the 1970s, Appel was Public Relations director for the Yankees. And in 1978, he worked with Munson on his autobiography. Appel has sources and resources most sportswriters would dream of; he was actually there in the clubhouse for most of Munson's career. He mixes his firsthand experiences with detailed reporting, having spoken with teammates and family, plus occasional extracts from other books. At his best, Munson was a tremendous athlete, someone who could control a baseball game from behind the plate and a good slap hitter and battled through a series of injuries.

Still, the book feels padded, even though it's just 350 pages. Appel regularly block-quotes sources, letting them talk for pages at a time. He runs the full, 22-page transcript of an ESPN interview with a survivor of the Munson crash; lets Keith Olbermann (who has no connection to Munson's life) recount his experience as a young reporter on the night of the Munson crash for three pages. Elsewhere he goes off on tangents - how much money would Munson have made? comes to mind - and occasionally, unfollowed threads pop up. For example, near the finish, Appel casually mentions Munson's friendship with Wayne Newton and how it factored into Munson buying a jet. It never comes up again in the book (Newton doesn't even crack the index!)

On the whole, Munson is a bit of a messy book, long on some details and short on others. It's an incomplete picture of an interesting man, but what picture comes through makes Munson seem even more remarkable: a rock in the roaring sea of the late 1970s Yankees. Still, not especially recommended, even for Yankee fans; I'd go with Sparky Lyle's *The Bronx Zoo* or Jonathan Mahler's *The Bronx is Burning* instead.

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## **Daniel says**

Munson was special. One of the great Yankee catchers. This book was a somber book, not filled with the antics of Sparky Lyle (*Bronx Zoo*) or "*The Bronx is Burning*." Munson was the Captain. The first Yankee Captain since Lou Gehrig. I came away with a greater appreciation for Munson, and even some identification with him. Both of us were slowed down by bad knees. But what makes Munson remarkable is how he overcame family difficulties, particularly a brutal father who walked out on his mother and who bitterly resented his son. It is remarkable that a child who never played catch with his father or never had his dad as a role model could become Munson. But I get it. Here was this blue collar guy who completed three years at Kent State and he had to stand up as a man, negotiating his own contract with the Yankees, including that formidable new owner, George Steinbrenner. He also had to navigate a press which in large part instigated his conflict with Reggie Jackson. Great admiration for the Captain.

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## **Marti says**

This book was interesting to me because of Thurman Munson's connections to Canton, Ohio, where I lived

for about a decade. Also interesting were the connections in modern baseball to the Yankees and Mets teams of the 1970's. Appel's storytelling was sometimes hard to follow, but overall it was an enjoyable read. Those who don't like baseball or biographies probably would not enjoy this book.

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### **Ralph says**

This is a straight-ahead biography of one of New York's favorite sons - Thurman Munson. His hustle, grit, determination to win packed into an average body type made him a favorite amongst Yankee fans. Munson was a true American "gamer", who seemed to come through in clutch situations all too frequently. His memory is still alive and well today, and any visit to Yankee Stadium will result in seeing dozens of Munson T-Shirts. This book does justice to the complexity of the man, and the things that drove him to succeed at everything he did.

When compared to the today's primadonna players, reading about Thurman was refreshing. The author mixes in enough personal information, coupled with his baseball relationships to make this an interesting read. I would have liked to see more "game" material - but that's just me.

For any Yankee fan, or any fan of Thurman, this book is a must-read.

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### **Riley Cooper says**

It makes sense that Munson's biographer before the tragic accident would be a good person to write the definitive biography afterwards. Appel covers all the bases in a rather short life. The author also describes the circumstances of the crash in great detail. This is a far better book than I had expected. Well worth the time.

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