

After Friday Night Lights: When the Games Ended, Real Life Began. An Unlikely Love Story. (Kindle Single)

Buzz Bissinger

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Nearly twenty-five years ago, H. G. (Buzz) Bissinger, then a young reporter for the "Philadelphia Inquirer," moved to Odessa, Texas, family in tow, to follow the fortunes of the 1988 Permian High School football team. He hoped to write a celebratory treatment of a team and a town. The result: "Friday Night Lights," a bestselling American classic that spawned the popular film as well as the series, considered by many one of the best on television.

The original book's most compelling character was James "Boobie" Miles, and his experience in Odessa was, as Bissinger puts it in his daringly honest sequel "After Friday Night Lights," "a symbol of everything that was wrong with high school football." The complex friendship between subject and author has deepened over the years, and is, Bissinger writes, "the most lasting legacy of 'Friday Night Lights,' or at least the legacy I care about most."

Heading into the 1988 season, Miles looked like a star-in-the-making, a sure bet to ascend to college and the NFL. Abandoned by his mother, beaten by his dad, he had scraped through a rough upbringing, but it appeared that success on the field was soon to redeem his pain. Then, in a meaningless preseason scrimmage, Boobie blew out his knee. By midseason he was off the team, no longer needed by his coaches, who had found themselves a new running back.

"After Friday Night Lights"—an original 45-page story written to be read in a single sitting—follows Boobie through the dark years he suffered after his injury right up to a present that is imbued with a new kind of hope. It is the indelible portrait of the oddest of enduring friendships: that of a writer and his subject, a "neurotic Jew" and a West Texas oil-field worker, a white man raised in privilege and a black man brought up in poverty and violence, and a father and his "fourth son." Their story encompasses the realities of race and class in America. And reveals with heartbreaking accuracy how men rise again after their dreams are broken.

It is a must-read for fans of the book, the movie, and the television series.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

H.G. "Buzz" Bissinger is the Pulitzer Prize—winning author of the bestselling "Friday Night Lights," "A Prayer for the City," and "Three Nights in August." He is also a contributing editor to "Vanity Fair" and a columnist for "The Daily Beast." His new book, "Father's Day: A Journey into the Mind and Heart of My Extraordinary Son," will be published May 15 by Houghton Mifflin Harcourt.



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