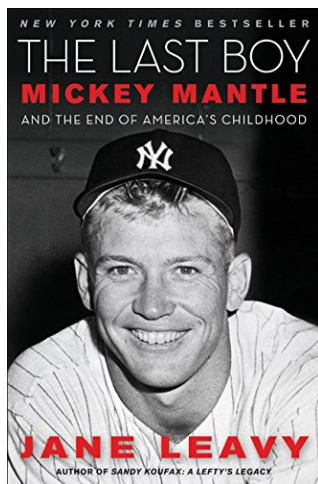


# [PDF] The Last Boy: Mickey Mantle And The End Of America's Childhood

Jane Leavy - pdf download free book

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## Description:

### Product Description

Jane Leavy, the acclaimed author of the New York Times bestseller , returns with a biography of an American original—number 7, Mickey Mantle. Drawing on more than 500 interviews with friends and family, teammates, and opponents, she delivers the definitive account of Mantle's life, mining the mythology of The Mick for the true story of a luminous and illustrious talent with an achingly damaged soul.

Meticulously reported and elegantly written, The Last Boy is a baseball tapestry that weaves together episodes from the author's weekend with The Mick in Atlantic City, where she interviewed her hero in 1983, after he was banned from baseball, with

reminiscences from friends and family of the boy from Commerce, Oklahoma, who would lead the Yankees to seven world championships, be voted the American League's Most Valuable Player three times, win the Triple Crown in 1956, and duel teammate Roger Maris for Babe Ruth's home run crown in the summer of 1961—the same boy who would never grow up.

As she did so memorably in her biography of Sandy Koufax, Jane Leavy transcends the hyperbole of hero worship to reveal the man behind the coast-to-coast smile, who grappled with a wrenching childhood, crippling injuries, and a genetic predisposition to alcoholism. In *The Last Boy* she chronicles her search to find out more about the person he was and, given what she discovers, to explain his mystifying hold on a generation of baseball fans, who were seduced by that lopsided, gap-toothed grin. It is an uncommon biography, with literary overtones: not only a portrait of an icon, but an investigation of memory itself. How long was the Tape Measure Home Run? Did Mantle swing the same way right-handed and left-handed? What really happened to his knee in the 1951 World Series? What happened to the red-haired, freckle-faced boy known back home as Mickey Charles?

"I believe in memory, not memorabilia," Leavy writes in her preface. But in *The Last Boy*, she discovers that what we remember of our heroes—and even what they remember of themselves—is only where the story begins.

### **Amazon Q&A: Bill Madden Interviews Jane Leavy**

**For more than 30 years has covered the Yankees and Major League Baseball for the New York Daily News. The author of several books about the Yankees, including , Madden is also the 2010 recipient of the Baseball Hall of Fame's J.G. Taylor Spink Award.**

**Madden:** Your best-selling biography of Sandy Koufax was a tour de force, partly because Koufax was a very private man whose life story had never really been told before. Mickey Mantle's life is quite the opposite, it's been in the subject of a spate of different "autobiographies," some of which he even wrote. Under those circumstances, what made you want to take up another book about him?

**Leavy:** Originally, I wanted to write about Willie, Mickey and The Duke in New York in the Fifties. The publisher said, "Do The Mick. Everybody loves The Mick." I was wary because so much had been written about him—he left a paper trail as long as the drive from Commerce, Oklahoma to the Bronx, so I didn't expect to learn that he'd been raised by a den of Alaskan she-wolves. My challenge was to strip away all the layers of myth that had accumulated and let Mickey breathe. And he, of all people, was my worst source. For example: the knee surgery he said he had after tripping over a drain in the 1951 World Series trying not to run into Joe DiMaggio in centerfield. In fact, he didn't have surgery until two years later. I only learned that because I went through every day of the *New York Times* from October 1951 to November 1953 looking for the date the knife fell! That's why this book took five years and nearly 600 interviews. I wanted to try to understand why after all these years, and all these revelations, Mickey Mantle still means so much to so many people—including me—and the first step was to get the basic facts straight.

**Madden:** You make the point early on in the book that Mickey was a childhood hero, but you also have a recurring sequence in the book of your first interview with him in Atlantic City in 1983, where—at one point—he drunkenly makes a pass at you. What lingering effect did this have on how you ultimately approached your book?

**Leavy:** I was plenty nervous when I met him. Mickey was my hero. But, he was also a

very particular kind of role model. I was born two months prematurely (in a hospital a mile from Yankee Stadium) and came with some of the flaws that afflict those who don't incubate as long as we're supposed to. Mickey taught me how to function with pain and without complaint—his triumphs were mine. I was devastated with how he acted. After I'd taken his hand from my knee, I called the only person I could think of still awake at that hour, a new mother, who basically told me to grow up.

The next morning, over breakfast, I vented my anger and disappointment, railing at him for, among other things, greeting my youthful autograph request with flatulence. He was stunned and remorseful, albeit in a hilariously idiosyncratic manner. He gave me an 8 x 10 glossy that said, "Sorry, I farted, your friend, Mick." For a moment, I felt I saw behind his crude façade. I decided the only way I could write this book was to acknowledge my lack of dispassion and scrutinize him completely. That's what happened that weekend in Atlantic City. It forced me to see the world as it was, not how I wanted it to be.

**Madden:** One of the people I wish I'd been able to interview for my Steinbrenner book was Mantle, if only because I detected a very strained relationship between the two of them. Steinbrenner made a point to deify DiMaggio and had memorial services for Joe, Billy Martin, Roger Maris and Mel Allen, but did nothing for Mickey when he died. In your conversations with Mickey did he ever talk about Steinbrenner and anything that might have led to ill feelings toward each other?

**Leavy:** When I told Mantle I'd heard the Boss was thinking of turning Monument Park in centerfield into a water park for the disadvantaged youth of the South Bronx, Mantle was completely incredulous. He told me, "It was 480 in centerfield when I played. It's 420 now and he's talking about bringing them in farther," and shook his head. "I was at a banquet one time and I said to him, 'they ought to let those boys throw the ball up and hit it.' That pissed him off."

Mantle was interested in Yankee history—he grilled a friend who saw Babe Ruth lying in state in the rotunda at the Stadium about what it was like to be there that day. But I don't think he had a whole lot of patience with "Yankeeography." It was a quick disillusionment. When he signed with the Yankees, reporters asked which Yankee had been his childhood hero. He said, "Stan Musial." George Weiss, the general manager, immediately "corrected" his memory and from then on Joe D. was his hero. Furthermore, I think he was deeply disappointed with the baseball community's response—or lack of response—when commissioner Bowie Kuhn banned him in 1983 because of his affiliation with the Claridge Hotel and Casino, a job he had taken to pay for his son Billy's treatment for non-Hodgkin's Lymphoma. He told me, "I feel really kind of bad no one took up for me." By "no one" I was pretty sure he meant Steinbrenner. The Yankees did little more than observe a moment of silence when Mantle died.

**Madden:** It would seem that most everybody pertinent to the book cooperated with you, especially the Mantle family. I was grateful for the cooperation I had from George Steinbrenner's friends and associates when I wrote Steinbrenner, but I had an advantage that you didn't in that most of them knew me personally and, I suppose, trusted me. As a stranger, did you meet any significant resistance?

**Leavy:** Danny and David Mantle—Mickey's sons—and their late mother, Merlyn—were extremely generous with their recollections and insights. Their openness about their lives and their relationship with their father was extraordinary. Like him, they are extremely honest. There's no put on, as folks in Commerce, Oklahoma like to say. I hope they'll come away from the book with a deeper understanding of the forces that formed him and contributed to his downfall, but I don't know how they'll react.

**Madden:** This is the definitive “warts and all” biography of Mickey, with heavy emphasis on all of his demons. How do you think Mickey himself would feel about the book?

**Leavy:** I think it’s an honest book and Mantle was a very honest man. I don’t see this is as a dark book. I hope it’s enlightening in the most literal sense of the word and I hope that critics—and readers at large—will agree. I think the tragedy of Mantle is that he had so little time, at the beginning of his baseball career, and at the beginning of his sober life, to be his best self. He was a decent man who was genetically pre-disposed to alcoholism and enabled his whole life by the trappings of his celebrity. That’s his story. As Billy Crystal told me about his movie, *61\**, Mickey wouldn’t have wanted the sugar coat.

His late wife, Merlyn, wrote about the sexual abuse he suffered as a young boy in the family memoir, “A Hero All His Life” and she elaborated on it when we spoke, as did several of his close friends. It turned out that his half sister wasn’t his only abuser and experts tell me that many of the destructive behaviors he manifested are seen in victims of childhood sexual abuse. So, I came away with enormous compassion for him and, I hope, with an answer to the question posed by one of his minor league teammates: “Mickey, what happened?”

**From Publishers Weekly** Starred Review. Bob Costas eulogized the Yankee great as "a fragile hero to whom we had an emotional attachment so strong and lasting that it defied logic." The "we" in Costas's remarks--with author Leavy (*Koufax: A Lefty's Legacy*) as stand-in--is as much the subject of this fascinating biography as the ballplayer himself. Mantle, who succumbed to cancer in 1995 at age 63, was justly famous for his baseball exploits, but what Costas described as Mantle's "paradoxical grip" on a certain generation of baseball fans is exactly what Leavy tackles in this book. She should know. She spent much time in her childhood in the shadow of Yankee Stadium, a tomboyish "Mickey guy" listening to the roar of the crowd from across the Grand Concourse. While a sportswriter for the *Washington Post*, she won a 1983 assignment to interview Mantle for his upcoming golf tournament in Atlantic City. What happened that day and night between the fading, embittered Mantle and the former fan girl trying to do her job is the drama that structures Leavy's narrative--she has never reported the truth till now, and she does so without judgment. Instead, she proceeds with steely determination to understand what brought this onetime golden boy from the zinc mines of Oklahoma to center stage at Yankee Stadium and made him into America's quintessential tragic hero, a freakily gifted athlete haunted by a deadly genetic inheritance, including alcoholism. With storytelling bravado and fresh research, Leavy weaves around her own story the milestone dates in "the Mick's" career, which as often burnishes the legend as tarnishes it. Leavy concludes that Mantle cavorted in a more innocent time, when people believed in sports heroes and would not hear otherwise. That's hardly a new idea, but no matter: by the end of this book, readers will know what made Mantle rise, fall, and survive into recovery for his last 18 months. In Leavy's hands, the life of Mantle no longer defies logic: it seems inevitable. She's hit a long home run. 8 pages of color and 8 pages of b&w photos. Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved.

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Read *The Last Boy* by Jane Leavy with a free trial. Read unlimited\* books and audiobooks on the web, iPad, iPhone and Android. There is a baseball embroidered over the left breast with raised seams and the words MICKEY MANTLE INVITATIONAL GOLF TOURNAMENT stitched around the circumference. On the sweet spot it says, the Claridge, the hotel where Mantle had accepted a job as Director of Sports Promotions. I went there to interview him for *The Washington Post* in the spring of 1983. Forty-eight absurdly tumultuous hours later I headed home flaunting his sweater. *The Best American Sports Writing 2011*. by Jane Leavy & Glenn Stout. 2011. 3.84/134 Ratings. The Best American Series® First, Best, and Best-Selling The Best American series is the premier annual showcase for the country's finest short fiction and nonfiction. Each volume's series editor selects notable works from hundreds of magazines, journals. Similar Free eBooks. Discover the power of KAIZEN to make lasting and powerful change in your organization. Maurer uses Load more similar PDF files. Editor's Picks. Most Popular. Academic & Education. Art. Biography. Originally published in hardcover: New York : Harper, c2010. Drawing on interviews with friends and family, as well as teammates and opponents, "New York Times"-bestselling author Leavy delivers the definitive account of one of the biggest talents and most tragic figures ever to play baseball--Mickey Mantle. Includes bibliographical references (p. [433]-450) and index. Jane Leavy ignored her childhood idol's most boorish behavior in a 1983 newspaper profile she wrote about the Yankee legend, but their encounter, in which Mantle hit on her before passing out, frames this study. Despite the book's ambitious title, *The Last Boy: Mickey Mantle and the End of America's Childhood*, Leavy does little more than recount Mantle's feats on the diamond and recycle the crude off-the-field behavior exposed in Jim Bouton's *Ball Four*. There's little new info; the Mick seen here is familiar, a brittle demigod who never saw himself as the golden boy his public demanded. C+. See all of this week's reviews. *The Last Boy: Mickey Mantle and the End of America's Childhood*.