



The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Dreams

Darcy Frey

[Download now](#)

[Read Online](#) ➔

The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Dreams

Darcy Frey

The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Dreams Darcy Frey

It ought to be just a game, but basketball on the playgrounds of Coney Island is much more than that — for many young men it represents their only hope of escape from a life of crime, poverty, and despair. In *The Last Shot*, Darcy Frey chronicles the aspirations of four of the neighborhood's most promising players. What they have going for them is athletic talent, grace, and years of dedication. But working against them are woefully inadequate schooling, family circumstances that are often desperate, and the slick, brutal world of college athletic recruitment. Incisively and compassionately written, *The Last Shot* introduces us to unforgettable characters and takes us into their world with an intimacy seldom seen in contemporary journalism. The result is a startling and poignant expose of inner-city life and the big business of college basketball.

The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Dreams Details

Date : Published March 3rd 2004 by Mariner Books (first published 1994)

ISBN : 9780618446711

Author : Darcy Frey

Format : Paperback 233 pages

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

 [Download The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Dreams ...pdf](#)

 [Read Online The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Dreams ...pdf](#)

Download and Read Free Online The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Dreams Darcy Frey

From Reader Review The Last Shot: City Streets, Basketball Dreams for online ebook

Julia says

This is an account of six months in the life of 4 Coney Island projects living, public school attending, basketball superstars, and their potential for escape from their lives with the skills that they show on the court. It's interesting, but it has a few major downfalls in my mind. One is that it never faces up to the fact that the writer has a place in the story. You can't be a middle-aged white man hanging out with a bunch of inner city black kids and not take that into account. I think Frey has to face up to the fact that just like the recruiters and the Nike sponsors, he too has a vested interest in the lives of these kids, and as a writer he's not just some invisible observer on the sidelines.

I also thought that the narrative relied too heavily on the drama of what happens next (will he make the shot? will he pass his SATs? will he get recruited?) but then never satisfies the reader's hunger for the answers to those questions.

Still, in terms of sports writing, this managed to keep me interested, and it also does a good job of giving a voice to a population that otherwise would remain silent.

Benoit Lelièvre says

Becoming a high level athlete is some sort of American Dream for every young man around the world. It's what we would all be if we had the breeding and the work ethic to get there. It's the top of the food chain for boys. But there's a gap between the idea and the reality of elite sports and THE LAST SHOT tries its best to illustrate what it feels like for four young boys of Coney Island, including a 14 years old Stephon Marbury, who would grow up to become a tormented NBA superstar.

Frey has a great pen, although sometimes he indulges in overwriting and the necessary sensibility to translate the wild and frantic recruiting process into great literature. It's a solid book about the broken business of college sports recruiting and that, I thought it was interesting, attempts to explain what kind of pressure elite athletes are under. It's not just about Bentleys and hoes when multimillion dollar businesses sell dreams and hopes using your performances.

Tootah says

3.5 stars

THE LAST SHOT follows the lives of immensely talented black basketball players at Lincoln High School through one season of the game. All of these players, with the exception of one, are from the Coney Island projects ("hulking, prisonlike, and jutting straight into the sea"). Frey uses these poor, black kids sort of as an example of the belief that yeah, college sports/recruiting/the NCAA are reeeeeally shady. Which, no shit, dude.

There was some pretty disturbing stuff in here, or at least disturbing to *me*, like the fact that Nike is running fucking farm systems full of teenage student-athletes. And for what? SHOES! Money! That's insane to me. Or the way these (mostly black) kids are being described by (mostly white) coaches and recruiters: for

example, at one point, an assistant coach refers to the aforementioned kids practicing basketball as "horses." Talk about dehumanizing.

"Yup, a lotta horses here," remarked Tom Sullivan, one of Seton Hall's assistant coaches, on the first day of camp."

There was also some pretty heartbreaking stuff, like everything Russell Thomas was going through. He seemed so disturbed, like there was a lot more than just anxiety going on. And also just seemingly regular stuff like this, that's just a side effect of living somewhere like Coney Island:

"And despite their athletic skills, and the crowds of coaches who watched them all summer, most of the players have returned to Coney Island completely broke and have found no legitimate options for making money besides hawking sodas on the boardwalk. It's hard work, lugging a case of Cokes from the nearest supermarket a mile away, then selling them one by one as the brutal summer sun hangs like a surgeon's lamp in the afternoon sky. For their trouble the players often get a summons from the police. Meanwhile, the drug business directly across Surf Avenue seems as brisk as ever and appears to draw less official attention."

I think the biggest flaw of this book is something that Donald Marbury, a father of one of the players, hinted at. In a way, Darcy Frey is no different than the coaches and the recruiters. They all want a piece of these kids. That's something the author only partially admits to.

Will Johnson says

This review was reprinted from my website Secure Immaturity. Please check out the site and comment on this review and others.

Not a lot of books had made me cry and in my extensive non-fiction book reading, I've read some horrific things. But sometimes the event of something horrible like rejection, failure and even death, is not enough to stir an emotional response. Sometimes the character that experiences one or many of those things is, even with full textual explanation, too far removed from the reader to be appreciated on a human level. In a biography of, say, George Clooney, can you really, actually, feel connected to a man so far removed from you?

The Last Shot manages to not only provide a deep connection with its 'characters' but makes me realize how, frankly, easy my life is. I'm not one to flaunt the luxuries of my life but I realize how lucky I am. . .and I suppose that is half of Mr. Darcy's point in writing The Last Shot. The book takes place in Coney Island and centers around four talented but troubled basketball players that attend Lincoln high school. Three of them, Tchaka, Russell, and Corey, are entering their senior year and are beginning the stressful process of college recruitment. The fourth, a young, wiley freshman named Stephon Marbury, is making a name for himself. . .and awaits four long years of trials and tribulations and the ability to finally make it to the next level (something his three brothers almost did, but couldn't).

Frey manages to stay as neutral as possible during his eight months with the players but, as he discovers first hand and brilliantly displays with his writing, we start to get connected to the characters (though the book takes place in the early 90s and some of the fates, like Marbury's, are obviously well known by now) and start to feel both trapped by their environment and equally seduced/repulsed by the NCAA and the college system. Much like the film Hoop Dreams, which I will be reviewing later on the site, the point of the project was initially basketball. . .but turned into the soul and essence of humanity. In the end, basketball becomes as trivial as it should be: a sport that is a joy to play and watch but not the end all be all of existence. However,

in Coney Island, and for many families, changing that distinction isn't an option.

Frey is an invested observer and isn't approaching the work as if it is a objective report. He is there in the harsh, dangerous settings and is playing narrator/overlord to the men and, for the most part, letting them play their part without his input. But what is so unique about the book is that, at some point, Frey begins to realize he is, just by being around second-hand, starting to play a part in the boy's lives and effecting them in ways that wouldn't be if he wasn't around. And by book's end, he starts to put aside journalistic integrity and actually reach out to lead the player's down a path that will be beneficial to them. This isn't so his book can create drama. . .but so he can save the people he (and the readers) have learned to love.

The most fascinating case is Russell. The most talented of the senior players (Marbury is the best overall player of any of the boys), Russell is a few brain cells away from crazy. He is immensely intelligent and has a work ethic matched by hardly anyone in his zip code. Yet he dips into periods of odd social behavior that has, in its most trivial moments, led him to act odd in public and, at its most serious, caused him to threaten suicide. He is fragile and one suspects in any other neighborhood, the kinks could be worked out. But Russell is a ticking time bomb and as his college recruitment days go up and down, so do his moods. We, as invested observers, and the author can't help but try to reach out. . .and by the time you reach the '12 Years Later' afterward, though I won't tell you what happens, you're heart will be literally ripped out of your chest and stomped on with abandon. Like I said, few books have made me cry. . .I literally had to put the book down in mid-sentence and had to look up at the sky and ask 'why'. It was that moving. . .and sad.

Tchaka, whose height, and not his inferior skills in comparison to Russell, seemingly grant him the dream the other players work so hard for (with little results) and this adds to both Russell's depression and the oppressive claustrophobia that starts to infect the book. Coney Island always feels dangerous due to the drugs and gangbangers but as the stakes get higher, even for the author, the surroundings begin to get grim. At one point, you feel like the author and the player's lives are in danger and the corners of every block get more dangerous. And as the author starts to get excluded from access due to jealousies and fear, the author, and therefore the reader, start to get placed in the dark. . .and it is uncomfortable. I started getting a sick feeling in my stomach towards the end. . .like something bad was going to happen.

The book is captivating from beginning to end but for different reasons. The author's (and player's) innocence is beautiful to watch in the beginning. It's all about the game and how great it is. But then things turn darker and darker as basketball becomes a twisted cousin of the joy it is perceived as in the beginning and as we watch the boys become men and experience hardships beyond anything I can imagine, we also see an author go through immense changes as well. Frey probably represents the common white middle-class man like myself so his initial joy at doing this project leads to shocking revelations and a darkness often unseen when placed behind the televised games and 'glory'. If you want a book that will shake you a bit. . .read this. I highly recommend it but prepared to be sad.

This was the first book I read in my own personal Quest for 100 challenge (read 100 books in 2010).

Manav Singh says

This biographical account gives a wonderful insight into the lives of the residents of Coney Island and the many hardships faced by them. How every young boy has to make a decision - the easy one of getting involved in drug peddling, or the tough one of struggling it out on the basketball court - which is the only escape.

Another aspect this book touches upon is the extremely competitive college recruitment scene in the US.

How, in spite of excellent skills on the court, many players fail to make it anywhere, owing to years of bad schooling.

Darcy Frey touches upon these through the lives of four boys - Tchaka, Corey, Russell and Stephon (Marbury) - all potential superstars, but with very different fates.

I would say that this is a must-read for any basketball enthusiast. After a point, it becomes unputdownable.

Vilis says

Lielisks stāsts par trīsarpus vidusskolniekiem ceļā no Ņujorkas Steitenailendas, kas ceļas un iet gulēt ar sapņiem par koledžas basketbolu. Šī da dokumentāla literatūra (un filmas), kas pievēršas pēris cilvēkiem ilgā laika posmā ir mans vājais punkts, bet vajadzētu patikt, kurus varētu interesēt jauno basketbola zvaigžņu ražošanas sistēma ASV.

Jennifer says

This was the book we chose for our City Reads project (Durham Reads Together) and I can not recommend it highly enough. Frey's writing is lyrical and highly personal. He had an insight into these boys that few authors get into anyone. They are not characters, they are not young black men, they are not basketball players--they are very clear people he is writing about. Frey also makes you angry about the situation these boys are in is horrible; not just the poverty, but also the trap of basketball. I recommend this book to nearly everyone. If you don't like basketball, the book has enough other stuff to pull you in (characterization, social commentary, etc). If you do like basketball, this book will bring to life another side to basketball, one you might not want to know about.

Brittany Young says

When I chose this novel, I was thinking about a different group of students than I usually think about. I was thinking that in my own classroom, I want to make sure that all the students in my class can be able to go to my book shelf and pick a book they would like to read. I was thinking about the young boys in my future class. They would love a book like this. I would suggest it to middle school readers and above, but advanced fifth grade boys may be able to read and understand it as well. I was surprisingly emotionally affected by this book in a way that I never thought I would be. This book is not just about Basketball. It follows four high school boys who live in a very run down urban area on Cooney Island. Abraham Lincoln High School was known for its basketball program, and all four of the chronicled boys believed it was their only way to succeed in life. Even if that success had nothing to do with basketball, they needed it to get where they wanted to go in life. The book covers social issues like living in a struggling urban area, sketchy recruiting tactics by colleges, and dealing with drugs and violence. The book is well written and descriptive in the text, which allows the reader to put themselves right into Cooney Island. We get to feel what the four boys feel, and struggle as they do. This book would be useful in exposing to young students what it is like to live in such an urban area. It is a very real and raw book, it deals with tough issues that people who are less fortunate than most deal with every day. I liked the book altogether, it was emotional and "real" in the way it was written. There was no sugar coating, and that tactic worked well for this nonfiction novel.

7703 Emil says

For me, this book was a great read. The book was about 4 people growing up in the Coney Island Projects. It was focused around Stephon Marbury, a former basketball player, Russell Thomas, Tchaka Shipp, and Corey Johnson. It is an exciting book on the 4 trying to pass their high school exams and get to college, and hopefully the NBA. The author did a great job in giving every detail he heard and saw, and gave you the feel of how the games on the street court went. If this was the last book in the world I had, I would read it over and over again.

Andrew Garvin says

The Last Shot is a concise portrayal of institutional racism, localized to college basketball. Frey follows four teenagers as they navigate the NCAA recruitment process while living and balling in the projects of Coney Island, New York. As the stars of their high school team, each young man represents hope for their otherwise blighted community.

That hope is overwhelmed by a pervasive pressure associated with the expectation of making it to a D1 school - an expectation that most of Coney Island's best prospects fail to meet. The Last Shot now has - like Hoop Dreams from the same year - a thick layer of irony. As a basketball fan, I know that three of the boys never made it to the professional level. Hearing their dreams deferred (even just their desire to leave Coney Island) is a sad and powerful experience.

Frey's prescience renders The Last Shot enduring. His observations about the NCAA and black culture around athletics remain controversial, poignant, and contemporary twenty years later. Put simply, the NCAA treats its recruits with a systemic hypocrisy that is most impactful to and repressive of black athletes. Frey makes his points with a light touch, drawing them out of reflection on actual conversations - including Rick Barnes' magic-act-as-recruitment pitch and Stephon Marbury's dad demanding Frey pay-to-play.

Particularly if you are a basketball fan and know who Starbury is, The Last Shot is a must read.

Companion Music: Outkast - Southernplayalisticadillacmuzik

Solistas says

Ο διακεκριμένος δημοσιογράφος Darcy Frey πέρασε το 1991 9 μήνες στις συνοικίες του Coney Island κέρησε από κοντά τις ζωές 4 νεαρών μαθητών που χωρίς στο μπασκετικό τους ταλέντο ψάχναν διέξοδο από την σκληρή ζωή που τους περιμενε αν δεν κατάφερναν να βρουν υποτροφίες σε κάποιο πανεπιστήμιο. Το Last Shot δεν είναι φυσικά απλά ένα βιβλίο για το μπασκετ πώς σως θα περιμενε κάποιος. Οποτε καν μια ρομαντική εξίστρηση για τις θυσίες που πρέπει να κάνουν αυτά τα παιδιά για να καταφέρουν να γλιτώσουν από μια ζωή που ξέρουν πολύ καλά που καταλήγει. Ο Frey με πολύ προσεκτικό τρόπο καυτηριζει το οικονομικό παιχνίδι που παίζεται στις πλάτες αυτών των παιδιών, αναλαει πως αυτές οι γειτονίες βρήθηκαν να αντικατοπτρίζουν τα ήρια της ανθρωπίνης αξιοπρέπειας κ κατ'αυτ τον τρόπο φανερώνει την παρωδία του αμερικανικού ονεόρου στα πλαίσια του επαγγελματικού αθλητισμού.

Το Last Shot εκτός τι προσφέρει απλώς γρήγορη για το βήμα recruiting process των μεγάλων κολεγίων, καταφέρνει να δώσει αρκετό τροφή για σκέψη γύρω από τις υποχρεώσεις που έχουν αυτά τα παιδιά σε μια τόσο νεαρή ηλικία, δίνει μια σαφή εικόνα για την παιδεία τους που είναι by default λειψή αλλά πάλι δίνει μια προσωπική ματιά στο πώς όλα μοιζούν στην να ώστε αυτά τα παιδιά να αποτύχουν.

Η φρενιά του Frey σταματάει καθώς απότομα αφο σε κάποια στιγμή χάνει την πρόσβαση του στους παίκτες. Η μητέρα του εντός αρχίζει να τον βλέπει ως περισπασμό, ο πατέρας του Marbury ως πουλό τζιπ που θέλει να βγάλει λεφτό από το γιο του χωρίς να του δώσει μέτριο εν κ το ίδιο το NCAA (η αρχή του κολεγιακού πρωταθλήματος) του απαγορεύει την παρουσία του στις συναντήσεις του Tchaka με τους προπονητές των κολεγίων που τον θέλανε στις ομάδες τους. Συνολικά όμως, δεν μπορεί κανείς παρά να συνυπογράψει το μυθικό στήθος που έχει αυτό το βιβλίο στον κόσμο των sports books.

Ο συγγραφέας ήταν σίγουρα τυχερός που πέσε πάνω σε έναν παίκτη που κάναε σπουδαία καριέρα (ο Stephon Marbury δεν ήταν απλώς ένας από τους 15 καλύτερους παίκτες στον κόσμο στις αρχές των 00s αλλά καθόρισε το μπέσκετ στην Κόνα που αγωνίζεται από το 2011) και σίγουρα θα πρέπει κάποιος να αναφερθεί ότι ο συγγραφέας δεν σχολιάζει ποσο γλάζε την καθημερινότητα των πρωταγωνιστών με την παρουσία του. Νομίζω όμως ότι ποιος ενδιαφέρεται για τις κοινωνικές τρέξιες, τη φυλή και τη βία της αμερικανικής κοινωνίας εδώ θα βρει να πραγματικά εξαιρετικό βιβλίο.

Krishna says

This kinda walks the path established by Heaven is a Playground, but resonated a bit more with me. Partly because it's more recent and so I was more familiar with the characters on the periphery. It was interesting to read about coaches in their younger days who are still around and of course, Stephon Marbury as a kid. Partly because it goes a little harder at the system of "amateur" athletics, which at every level preaches lofty ideal but is often at cross purposes with those ideals, with the same issues all these years later. Partly because I just liked the kids. Looking up what happened next is depressing. But for some one who invests as much interest in college basketball as I do, it's important to remember the numerous and extremely serious flaws in the system, and this book is a great reminder.

Archie says

I was a huge fan of the documentary "Hoop Dreams" when I was younger (and still to this day), so it was only natural that I come across this book sometime in high school.

This was a pretty awesome book when I first read it a decade ago. But to pick it up nearly 10 years later, read it again, and then read the new afterword that closes the book, well, it blew my mind. It was downright devastating to read those final pages. Wow.

This book is raw and real. It really analyzes and dissects an American epidemic that goes untreated. Quit reading the crap Oprah recommends and check out this book.

This is a must read for those who love basketball, majored in Sociology, or just wish to at least appear as if they have good taste.

Kurt says

Book was pretty descent. Would probably recommend it to those that enjoy the sport of basketball. Stephon Marbury has been a star from the day he walked into high school. Another player similar to him is Lebron James having so much hype behind them at a young age, Kevin Garnett too.

Grady says

The African Americans of the Coney Island Projects are looking for basketball to be their way out of the Projects. The Coney Island projects in Brooklyn are where a lot of the African Americans live. Most of them attend Abraham Lincoln High when they are able to go into High school. Abraham Lincoln is known in the East coast for producing very talented basketball players and basketball teams. The players of Abraham Lincoln High are trying to make something of themselves so that they can find a way out of the Projects. Tchaka Shipp is one the of my favorite characters in this book by Darcy Frey.

The Last Shot is a really good book to read especially for students in high school that like to play basketball. This book by Darcy Frey has a pretty good story line and it also is easy to follow. This book also has some characters that are very likeable. The characters in this book seem nice and helpful to other characters. There doesn't seem to be much of a conflict in this book either. I would recommend this book to athletes in high school that like or play basketball and that love to play the sport. This book is good for most ages and isn't that hard to understand. I personally really like this book mainly because it's about basketball and that it is funny at times too. This book grasped my attention by the front cover and the summary on the back of the book. In conclusion, this book is one of my favorite books because it's easy to follow and comprehend.
