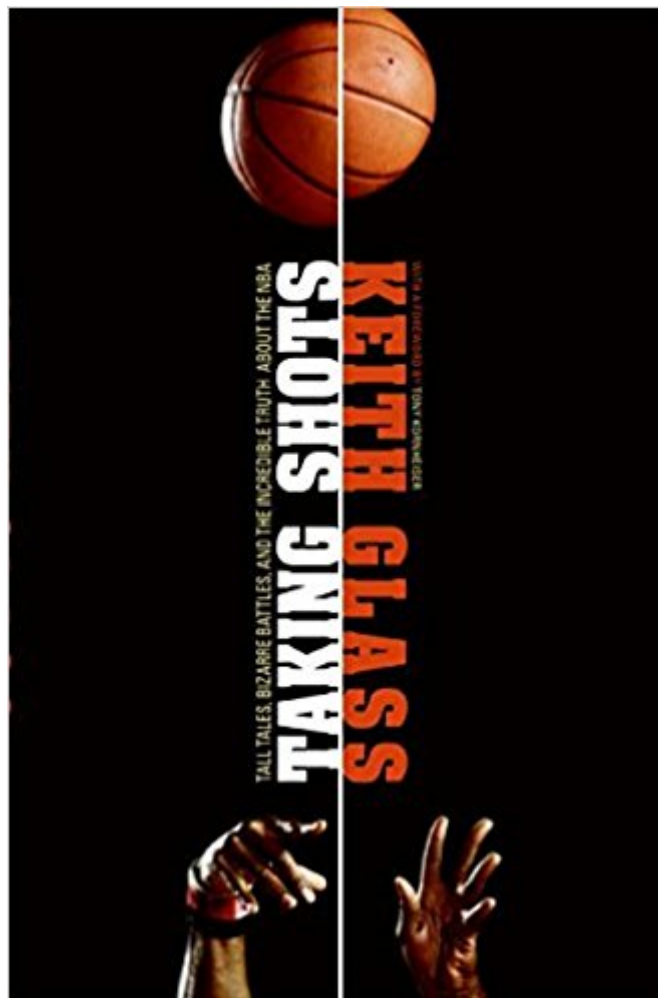




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Taking Shots: Tall Tales, Bizarre Battles, And The Incredible Truth About The NBA



Synopsis

Bring a family of four to an NBA game today, and it costs around \$500 to watch a bunch of seven-footers take bad shots. Perhaps the quote often attributed to P.T. Barnum is true—there really is a sucker born every minute. The NBA is in trouble. And as NBA agent Keith Glass describes it—he's part of the problem! If team owners are willing to throw millions of dollars his way for marginal players, why should he be the only one with the self-restraint to say "no"? In his insightful, funny, and often mind-numbingly bizarre tales of life in the NBA over the last twenty-five years, Keith Glass lets it fly from half-court. He'll tell you how we got to the present state—where an agent who makes millions off the game can't sit through one; why our NBA stars couldn't capture Olympic gold; and why the game he loves is in dire need of help. Glass has seen it all as the representative of players like Mark Eaton, the seven-foot-five center found working as a mechanic because he hated basketball; Mahmoud Abdul-Rauf, who converted to Islam and brought the wrath of the league upon him when he refused to stand for the National Anthem; and first-round draft pick Quincy Douby, who was forced to enter the draft before graduating from Rutgers because of the harsh NCAA rules regarding college eligibility. With informative chapters such as "How to Feed Your Family on Only \$14 Million a Year," "Eighty-one Feet of White Centers," and "From 6'11" to the 7-Eleven," Glass shatters the myth of NBA marketing: that everything about the game is great, and that as long as the fans in the luxury boxes are happy and weighed down with expensive merchandise, all is well. But have no fear! Keith Glass doesn't preach about the evils of highlight film slam-dunks—he'll just have you falling down laughing as he flagrantly fouls the league that was once the envy of the pro sports world.

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Customer Reviews

“Part memoir, part purist manifesto...a winding tour of everything right and wrong with the NBA.” (New York Times) “Entertaining and enlightening.” (Chicago Tribune) “Taking Shots should be required reading for anyone who cares about the game.” (Fran Fraschilla, ESPN college basketball analyst) “Interesting, insightful, humorous and factual.” •Taking Shots has it all! A must read for any and all basketball or sports fan.” (Jud Heathcote, former coach, Michigan State) “I thought Keith Glass’s book was terrific. Taking Shots will now be required reading at St. Anthony.” (Bob Hurley, St. Anthony High School) “Through humor, he expresses a fairly weighty opinion. Keith may have outsmarted us all with his covertly brilliant writing style.” (Paul Shirley, Phoenix Suns, author of Can I Keep My Jersey?) “...insightful and at times very funny.” (Sports Illustrated) “...a wild ride from start to finish.” (Asbury Park Press) “I found myself only reading 20-25 pages at a time, because I didn’t want it to end too soon.” (Phil Jasner, Philadelphia Daily News) “Glass displays a razor-sharp wit and an amazing capacity to tell a story. Fans will love this book.” (The Tennessean) “Glass is deliciously passionate about things. Strong opinions make for good reading.” (Orlando Sentinel) “It’s a good read, a rollicking ride, and bodes well for Glass’s retirement job as a stand-up comedian.” (Montreal Gazette) “Glass has had some intriguing experiences as an agent for NBA players. He has some stories to tell.” (Bill Littlefield, WBUR) “For an irreverent look at NBA life from an insider, consider the new book Taking Shots by Keith Glass.” (Good Times) “Arguably the best basketball book that came out in 2007. For those looking to get into the industry this book is basically a must-read. It’s all told in a pointy, cynical tone.” “Extremely informative and entertaining.” (draftexpress.com)

Keith Glass has coached basketball at the high school and college levels (he was an assistant coach at UCLA), and has been a longtime agent for NBA players. He lives in Rumson, New Jersey, with his wife, Aylin Guney Glass, who played professional basketball in Turkey. He is the father of

five children – Sami, Tyler, Alex, Maggie, and Lucas.

I am on the last chapter of this book and I find Keith Glass to be a witty, insightful and somewhat stereotypical individual. Since he's an agent and his client base happens to be predominantly African Americans he has insight on the business of being an agent to NBA players. The book is a fascinating read. The tales that he gives are interesting for the NBA fan, such as the Latrell Spreewell incident and aftermath, the recruiting of 7'4 Mark Eaton of the Utah Jazz, and the decision of Chris Jackson to sit during the singing of the national anthem. He also touches on the business side of basketball that makes the book more interesting. He also touches on how the great sums of money that today's athlete's are making puts a strain on the purity of the game. I enjoy this book and will most likely read it again. I definitely recommend this book.

This book isn't about glorification of NBA players in any way shape or form, it is however a true indication through the eyes and words of Keith Glass, on the journeys that some players take to reach the L. It's a very interesting book which touches on stories regarding some big names in the NBA, both past and present, but also touches on some great insights to guys who coulda, shoulda but didn't. If you love the game of basketball and loved the NBA - especially during the early 90's then you will find this book a blast. Well worth the read.

Here's the biggest surprise concerning Keith Glass' book, "Taking Shots": Glass might be the most likeable agent in the country. He's certainly one of the funniest, and he'd probably be great company for dinner. That's not to say he's the best writer among all agents, although I'm not sure who that might be. (Hint: It's sure not Drew Rosenhaus, whose book might be my least favorite publication of the last 20 years.) But he sure has a good way of expressing himself that will leave you laughing at times. Glass took a rather unconventional route into the business of being an agent. He had just finished law school on the West Coast when boyhood friend Larry Brown called from UCLA and asked if he wanted to join the staff and coach the junior varsity. Let's see, big-shot lawyer with lots of perks vs. low-paid coach/gopher in basketball. Where's the whistle? Glass didn't coach in college for long, but he stayed in basketball by working on contracts and endorsements for players while coaching a high school team on the side for much of the past several years. Glass didn't exactly work with the top stars of the NBA. At one point in the 1980's he seemed to have the market on backup centers such as Chuck Nevitt and Greg Kite. But he worked hard for the clients he did have, and seems to have some principles ... putting him a step ahead of some of the competition. As

books go, this one is pretty disorganized. Glass jumps from one subject to the next without looking back or checking out the chapter heading. There are parts that deal with his ideas about reforming the game, and parts that talk about recruiting a potential first-round draft choice in Greece or turning a backup center at UCLA into someone whose number was retired by the Utah Jazz (Mark Eaton). This would be a little maddening if it weren't so funny in spots. This is clearly someone with an excellent sense of humor who doesn't take himself too seriously. So Glass can be laugh-out-loud funny when telling stories. For example, this on NHL Commissioner Gary Bettman, who used to work in the NBA: "Let me just take this occasion to defend Gary Bettman. People have said that since he became commissioner, he has changed. He has become arrogant, pompous and condescending. I disagree with that. Being elevated to the position of commissioner didn't change him at all. He was always arrogant, pompous, and condescending." You may have seen that coming, but it's still funny. Potential readers have to be pretty good-sized basketball fans to read a book like this. If you want Michael Jordan stories go elsewhere. But for a light if jumbled read on an aspect of basketball that doesn't get much attention, this will work fine.

Keith Glass tells a great tale, and his many years of experience representing NBA players has given him many to tell. Glass' book is a great insight into the other side of the NBA that the general public would otherwise have no access to. But one of the greatest elements of this book is Glass' true passion for the sport, and for the part he has played in it. The book looks at Glass' upbringing, with basketball in his life from a very young age. Glass discusses how Larry Brown ended up living with his family, how Glass saw the evolution of basketball, and how he became a coach at UCLA. There's a very nostalgic and homely feel to these earlier chapters, and they definitely show a man who really loves the game and loves the relationships he has been able to establish through it. The book then looks at Glass' adventures in representing top level NBA stars and how he came into this career. The greatest stories in here are the tale of Mahamoud Abdul-Rauf, the making of Scott Skiles (current head coach of the Chicago Bulls) and the sad story of Thomas Hamilton. It really is the stories like Hamilton's, a seven-foot-four giant with exquisite skills who could never get his NBA career started due to personal problems, that make this book. The power this story has is it makes you look at how some people can throw their God-given talent away, which gives you perspective to appreciate what you have in your life. The latter chapters lack the same level of interest, as Glass discusses the various ways he NBA could improve the league and take it back to it's roots more, and further away from the greed-driven monster it has become. Glass makes some great points, but they could have been better illustrated through his stories, rather than telling the reader, point-blank.

His various tales deliver this message through subtlety and through reading between the lines of what's going on, so to have this opinion forced onto the reader in the end weakened the overall tone of the writing a bit. It also plays down some of Glass' other failings, in that he makes little to no mention of his previous marriages and doesn't discuss things he has done that he has regretted. It seems, at times, that Glass is a little too ethical in a world of no ethics, and to survive in this arena, Glass says himself, you can't always hold to your morals. There would appear to be a level of censorship and restraint at times. The book could have had more effect if there were no barriers, no holds barred. There are also two times that Glass refers to the story of Lloyd Daniels, and says that he would need an entire book of its own to tell Daniels' story. Lloyd Daniels was shot three times in the late eighties and still, to this day, has a bullet lodged in his right shoulder. He never played in college, yet went on to play for five NBA teams. Now that's a story I want to hear. Daniels' story should have made the book, even in brief form. At the end of the book you get the sense that this is the story Keith Glass wanted to tell in exactly the way he wanted to tell it, which is not so bad, but it felt like it could have explored so much more about the dark side of the glamorous life of pro-ballers. As it stands, it's an interesting read, great at times, but overall more focussed on presenting a portrait of a man who loves the game and who holds a special place in his heart for 'his' players. Again, this is not so bad, but a bit more controversy and a couple more first-hand accounts of back-room dealings would have made this a more important and compulsive book.

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