



THE MAN'S NAME HAS GRACED OVER 40 DUST JACKETS, BUT RARELY PROMINENTLY. NO ONE READS, SAY, SERENA'S BEST-SELLING MEMOIR BECAUSE DANIEL PAISNER CO-WROTE IT. AT LEAST, THEY DON'T THINK THEY DO. HIS NEXT IS *NOBODY'S PERFECT: TWO MEN, ONE CALL, AND A GAME FOR BASEBALL HISTORY*.

5 THINGS YOU SHOULD KNOW ABOUT GHOST-WRITING A SPORTS BOOK

BY DANIEL PAISNER
AS TOLD TO
MATT MCCUE

1. A GREAT STORY IS AS VALUABLE AS A GREAT ATHLETE. "I write two kinds of sports books. There are the ones with an athlete's name above the title, usually Hall of Fame-caliber players. Then there are those about athletes who lived an everyman moment. What ends up lifting them from the mundane are the elements of conflict and surprise. I look for stories that show grace, humanity and sportsmanship."

2. OFF-THE-RECORD MEANS OFF-THE-RECORD ... "I am not there in an adversarial capacity. It's not my job to get the 'real' story. I work at the subject's pleasure, writing whatever they are comfortable sharing with the public. I often sign a confidentiality agreement that covers the personal stuff that doesn't make it in the book."

3. ... BUT I STILL TRY TO KEEP IN THE GOOD STUFF. "When an athlete doesn't want to discuss something, I try to play the role of a strong devil's advocate. If I think someone is making a mistake by leaving out a story I think is necessary, I have to tell them. But ultimately, these are their books and it has to be their call."

4. ATHLETES REMEMBER EVERYTHING. "It's amazing to see how they have total recall, even of years-ago moments in inconsequential games. Ron Darling, the former pitcher, can tell you the weather and the count on a batter for games in 1986. Serena Williams can tell you what happened in a match she played on the junior circuit."

5. TODAY'S GAME IS TOMORROW'S GIG. "I saw Jim Joyce make the call that broke up Armando Galarraga's perfect game on TV, then watched how each conducted himself afterward. I came away thinking that there was a story there—not a baseball story, but a story about humanity. The next day, I called my literary agent and said, 'Find out if they'd be willing to throw in on a book.' Happily, they were."