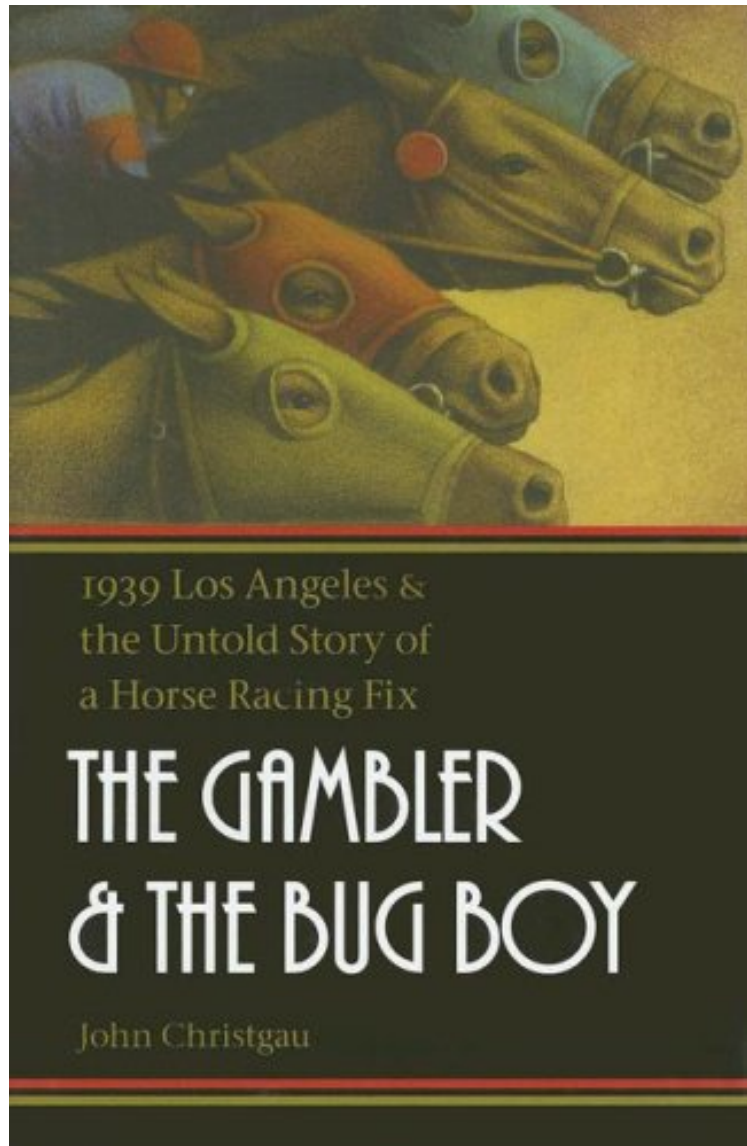


(Download) The Gambler and the Bug Boy: 1939 Los Angeles and the Untold Story of a Horse Racing Fix

The Gambler and the Bug Boy: 1939 Los Angeles and the Untold Story of a Horse Racing Fix

John Christgau

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John Christgau : The Gambler and the Bug Boy: 1939 Los Angeles and the Untold Story of a Horse Racing Fix before purchasing it in order to gage whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised The Gambler and the Bug Boy: 1939 Los Angeles and the Untold Story of a Horse Racing Fix:

3 of 3 people found the following review helpful. Six Men OutBy Best Of AllIn what could be described as

devastating a blow to the Thoroughbred industry as the Black Sox was to pro baseball, six jockeys admitted that races were being fixed in a West Coast scandal nearly 70 years ago which became a national sensation. And as with the Black Sox, the turf scheme features a flamboyant wise guy, naive athletes and a fumbling, bumbling judicial system that seemingly could not clearly remove fact from fiction. Author John Christgau delivers a solid stretch drive to blow the dust off a forgotten chapter in "The Sport of Kings," with the action focused on Los Angeles-based bookmaker Bernard "Big" Mooney and his reluctant partner, Albert Siler. Siler fits the profile Mooney is looking for in a patsy: a teen-age, apprentice jockey, who can be easily manipulated through threats of death. Mooney would demand that jockeys like Siler "pull" their horses during a fixed race; which is holding the runners back from doing their best, while making it appear the equine athlete and jockey are trying as hard as they can for the win. Siler tries to extricate from the web of deceit without destroying his professional career, which was the longest shot in this oftentimes complicated tote board of criminals, characters and creeps who all wanted a piece of the action, until the plot unravels to a shocking conclusion. This is a slice of American History during an era when Seabiscuit reigned supreme, while other talented racers were reined in from chasing turf immortality through immoral ways. 0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. A Tale of Racing and Corruption Well Told. By Patricia M. Duran This story has it all - racing, Hollywood, gangsters, gambling cheats and the hard, hard life of jockeys. The writing is solid and well-paced, with an occasional lovely passage. The author employs a kind of dramatic journalism that makes the tale flow like a novel, but astonishingly, it is all true. I don't now why this was not made into a film, the story is exciting and quite suspenseful and a real part of California and racing history.

Scandal on the Turf! the Los Angeles Times proclaimed. It was October 1940, a mere few months after Seabiscuit had won the Santa Anita Derby, and now this bombshell: Six Jockeys Admit Horse Races Fixed.

From Publishers Weekly Christgau unveils the dark underbelly of late 1930s horse racing in this melancholy, occasionally meandering history. Early on we meet Albert Siler, aka "Prince Albert," an 18-year-old with stars in his eyes and a stunning horse racing debut: the first day he rode a thoroughbred, he "won five races that afternoon." Professional horse racing takes him to a California racetrack where he runs into Barney "Big" Mooney, a flamboyant professional gambler in "fancy suits and a fedora," who combines the lure of easy money with strong-armed tactics to enlist Al and other young jockeys in a race-fixing scheme. The result was the "worst scandal in racing in 50 years," what one attorney called "the contamination of the sport of kings." Christgau is skilled at making memorable characters from his subjects, so much so that he wastes significant space developing characters with little bearing on the story, and an abrupt, pat ending will leave readers scratching their heads. Though inconsistent, history-minded handicappers will find much to appreciate. Copyright Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. In his customary fashion, John Christgau has spun an engrossing tale, rich in salient detail and peopled with memorable characters. From the starting gate to the finish line, The Gambler and the Bug Boy is a winner. Jay Feldman, author of When the Mississippi Ran Backwards