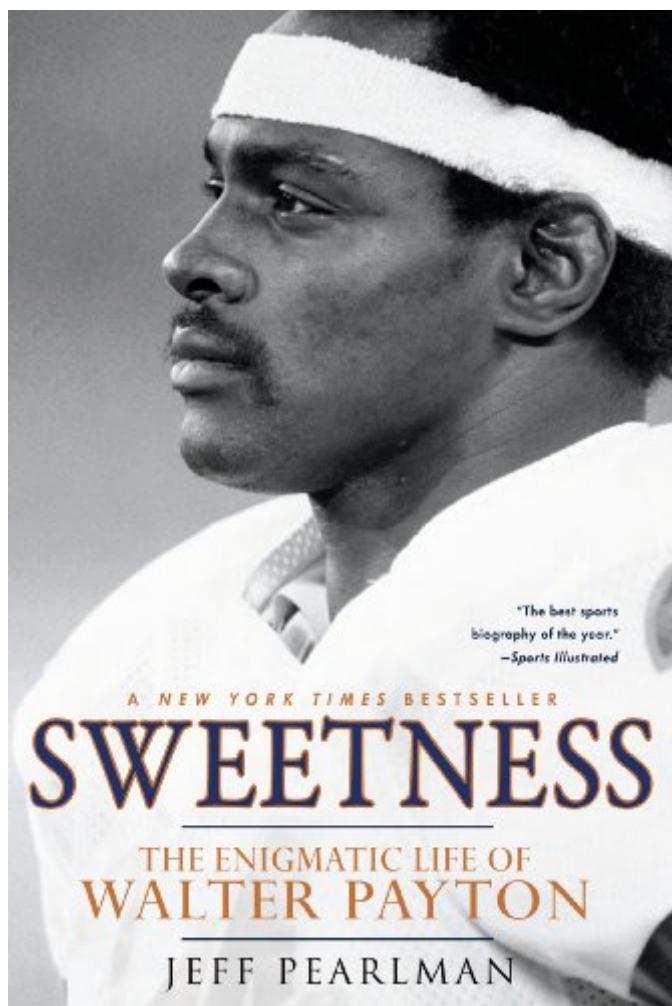


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Sweetness: The Enigmatic Life Of Walter Payton



Synopsis

The first definitive biography of Chicago Bears superstar Walter Payton. At five feet ten inches tall, running back Walter Payton was not the largest player in the NFL, but he developed a larger-than-life reputation for his strength, speed, and grit. Nicknamed "Sweetness" during his college football days, he became the NFL's all-time leader in rushing and all-purpose yards, capturing the hearts of fans in his adopted Chicago. Crafted from interviews with more than 700 sources, acclaimed sportswriter Jeff Pearlman has produced the first definitive biography of Payton. Sweetness at last brings fans a detailed, scrupulously researched, all-encompassing account of the legend's rise to greatness. From Payton's childhood in segregated Mississippi, where he ended a racial war by becoming the star of his integrated high school's football team, to his college years and his twelve-year NFL career, Sweetness brims with stories of all-American heroism, and covers Payton's life off the field as well. Set against the backdrop of the tragic illness that cut his life short at just forty-six years of age, this is a stirring tribute to a singular icon and the lasting legacy he made.

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Customer Reviews

Author Jeff Pearlman has written an all-encompassing biography of Chicago Bears' superstar Walter Payton. While I am not a big football fan I do enjoy reading biographies of sports' standouts, and Walter Payton certainly fits that category. The author includes both the good and the bad in his life which makes Walter Payton human like the rest of us. We may say that he lived a life of contradictions. He had time for kids with autograph requests and visitation, yet wanted nothing to do with his son born out of wedlock. He emphasized the team's interests, but felt he lacked the recognition of other running backs. To achieve the all-time rushing record became important to him, yet his wife was often neglected. Walter Payton suffered through that period that several others go through following retirement in regard to what to do with his life. It proved to be a drastic change to him, and he had difficulty finding happiness. We often think of celebrities having the best things that life has to offer, but in Walter Payton's case as in several others, they are beset with problems and difficulties that we know nothing about. Some reviewers have criticized this book because it appears to denigrate Walter Payton. While Walter had several faults that many of us are spared, it isn't our place to condemn him. I found the book to be an interesting read on a complex individual who brought joy to those who watched this gifted athlete in action. The subtitle "The Enigmatic Life of Walter Payton" is entirely appropriate. Although I'm not a particular fan of football I certainly was aware of Walter Payton, and found the book to be an enriching read.

Good insights into one of my favorite athletes.

Great book on a truly great man

I had heard some bad comments about this book then it was revealed that they hadn't read the book. This is a must read for sports fans, since not only does it reveal good and not so good about one of my heroes, it reveals a lot about the Bears, other teams and professional football players in general. I read biographies all the time - movie stars, presidents, business people and have not read a better written biography. It was very well researched and documented. Every bio I read has good and bad about the person. There is no perfect person - it's what that person did with his/her life that contributes. What Walter did in his personal life while he was playing did not affect his game - he always played full out and much of the time injured. In all his years of playing for the Bears he only missed one game. He was part of the 1960's southern school integration and played a role in whites accepting blacks in those early days of high school and college. Because he was black he

was not selected by a big college/university which was their loss. His personal training methods - running up muddy/sandy hills and valleys, and stadium steps was his unique way of keeping in shape. His biggest professional career disappointment was not scoring in the Super Bowl, and I can appreciate his disappointment. After football, he was used by others and used others himself. His name and outward personality opened hundreds of doors and attracted lots of chicks. Unfortunately he walked through most of the doors feeling he was immune and entitled. At that same time he never refused an autograph and would go out of his way to speak to a child in need. He left us too soon. I cried while reading the last chapter of the book. Walter Payton will always be number one.

Nice to read a true reflection on his "storied" life. I knew him for years... was his business partner and learned a great deal from this book. Apologizes to Bud Holmes for never understanding who Bud really was.

Here in Chicago this book has taken quite a beating over the years since its publication. How dare anyone question the divinity that was / is Walter Payton? I can only imagine the hostility that will greet the first in-depth biography of Mike Ditka... And Payton really was something of a deity on the field - no denying. As football heroes go, he was about as football-heroish as you can get around here (or much of anyplace else, I suppose). A lot of fans reverently mumble a "hallowed be thy name" and that's that. But that also does a disservice, in many ways, to the real man who lived inside that hero. And Payton was a real man. To present the man in his complexity, with his not-always admirable behavior, is a service to life in general. One doesn't want to make too much of a person who's claim to fame is the ability to play a sport very, very well, but if you DO want to look at a man or woman who excelled at such things, then really look at them. And this book does. The Payton who emerges here is no less remarkable as an athlete, and his shortcomings and foibles do not render him any less admirable in his strengths and positives. This is an absorbing read about an interesting, flawed man. For those interested in his life and career, it provides three dimensions, not just the two you saw on the field. And part of that third dimension was pretty admirable, too; just not all of it.

....about one of the kindest and as the book title says, enigmatic, Walter Payton. A true role model for people of all ages. He was my hero and will always be my hero, even in death. This book was written in a strange way but when it comes right down to it, there was no other way to write it....as it was finished just before he passed away. My hats off to a man with such grace, even in death. One

of the best reads I have ever done.

I'm a Bears fans & was lucky enough to see Payton play at Solder's Field in Chicago, so when I saw this book I had to research it against all the other Bio's out there on him & found this one to be as true to his life as it's gets. It is well written with all the good & bad he had to overcome in his short life, it's a must read for any sport fan. (Great fathers day gift)

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