Bouton, Jim (1939-) Encyclopedia Article

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Bouton, Jim (1939—)

Right-handed pitcher Jim Bouton concluded his unspectacular major league career in 1978 with a record of 62-63. But it was the impact he made off the field, with his bestselling clubhouse memoir *Ball Four,* that earned him a place in baseball history. As a New York Yankee between 1962 and 1968, the urbane Bouton was an uneasy presence on one of the hardest-living 25-man squads in the majors. Apparently he was taking notes. *Ball Four,* published in 1970, pulled no punches in describing the drinking and carousing of some of the game's most idealized figures, including Mickey Mantle. The tight-knit ballplayer's fraternity, enraged over Bouton's betrayal of confidence, ostracized the pitcher for decades. Scandalous at the time, *Ball Four* is considered tame in comparison to subsequent tell-all accounts. Nevertheless, the book was selected by the New York Public Library as one of the "Books of the Century."

Further Reading:

Bouton, Jim. *Ball Four (20th Anniversary Edition).* New York, Macmillan, 1990.