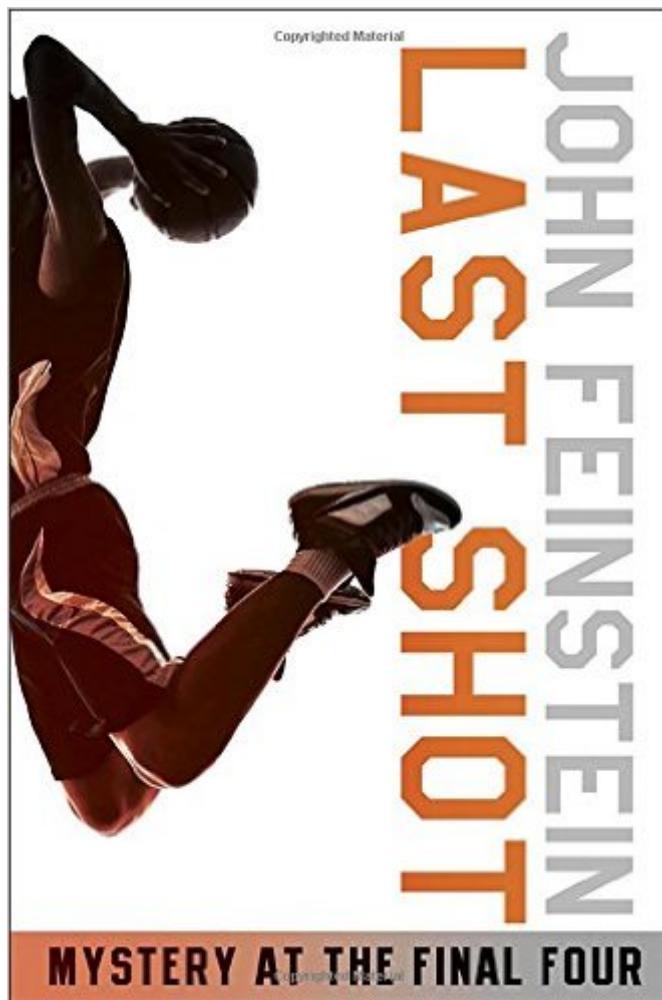


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# Last Shot: Mystery At The Final Four (The Sports Beat, 1)



## Synopsis

New York Times bestselling sportswriter John Feinstein exposes the real "March Madness" "behind the scenes at the Final Four basketball tournament. When Stevie wins a writing contest for aspiring sports journalists, his prize is a press pass to the Final Four in New Orleans. While exploring the Superdome, he overhears a plot to throw the championship game. With the help of fellow contest winner Susan Carol, Stevie has just 48 hours to figure out who is blackmailing one of the star players . . . and why. John Feinstein has been praised as "the best writer of sports books in America today" (The Boston Globe), and he proves it again in this fast-paced novel. "A page-turning thriller and a basketball junkie's bonanza." USA Today

From the Hardcover edition.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

I have listened to John Feinstein on NPR's Morning Edition for years. When a young basketball enthusiast said this was one of the best books he had ever read I was intrigued. Steven Thomas wins a writing contest sponsored by the U.S. Basketball Writer's Association. His prize is a basketball fan's dream: tickets and press privileges to the NCAA's Final Four at the Superdome in New Orleans. When Steven arrives in New Orleans he meets the other contest winner, another 8th grader named Susan Carol Anderson. She is very tall, very poised and a devout Duke fan. The two of them are reporting for their hometown papers and take their job as writers very seriously. They attend press conferences and look for stories while enjoying the excitement of the pre-game

activities. On their way to an interview they overhear a plot to blackmail the star of the Minnesota State team. Gamblers want star Chip Graber to lose the final game for his team. Steven and Susan Carol are determined to help Chip and investigate who is behind the threats. The mystery is convincing because of all the detail and background Feinstein includes. Well known personalities from the sports world make appearances in the story. Dick Vitale talks to the kids and "waves his arms." Susan Carol get an interview with Coach K from Duke. Sportswriter/commentator, Tony Kornheiser also has a cameo. There are in-the-know references to the real world of college basketball. Steven is bemused by the NCAA references to the players as "student athletes" as the low graduation rates of basketball players at some schools are well known. As a librarian I appreciated the fact that Steven and Susan Carol won this contest based on their research and writing skills. They are talented writers but they still have to revise and edit and do the hard research on their topics. This book has all the color and energy of the Final Four and will strike a chord with young basketball and sports fans. The setting of New Orleans and the Superdome was especially nostalgic and touching. This book is billed as a "Final Four Mystery" and the publisher informs me another one, *Vanishing Act*, is coming out in August. It will be set at the US Open. *Last Shot* is one of the books on the Texas LoneStar Reading list for 2006-2007. This list continues to be one of my favorites.

I love everything I've read by Mr Feinstein. While this is not in the class of "Season..." or "Good Walk...", it wasn't meant to be. It's a good book for a young adult audience that may not be interested in reading. If you have a son or daughter that likes sports but does not like to read this well written mystery about the Final Four may catch their interest.

As an adult drawn to this book by Fienstein's 'non-fiction' name, I was incredibly surprised how much of a page-turner this was. Mr. Feinstein has performed the difficult task of creating two highly likeable and lifelike characters, while at the same time building a suspenseful plot that contains numerous twists and turns the average reader won't be able to predict. Anyone with teens and pre-teens should be buying this great book as a favor to their young readers. And by the way, adults will enjoy it too! I certainly did.

When Stevie, a thirteen-year-old from Pennsylvania, wins a writing contest and gets to go to the Final Four, he discovers that a player is being blackmailed and must help him before it's too late. Once Stevie and Susan Carol, the other contest winner, find out that Chip Graber, the star player

from MSU, is being blackmailed, they decide they have to help. Chip and the kids go to the house of Dean Wojenski, the only person they think can help them. There, they are informed that a lawyer named Jurgensen is probably behind the plot. Later, when they try to meet with Mr. Jurgensen, they are shocked to find that everyone helping them, including Dean Wojenski, is behind the blackmailing. The kids are held hostage so Chip will throw the final game, but they are rescued when Mr. Jurgensen arrives. When Chip sees they're okay, he tries hard and his team ends up winning. Afterwards, all of the people involved in the crime were arrested by the F.B.I. Last Shot is a thrilling mystery that any reader would enjoy. The characters in this story are very unique. Stevie has a great passion for sports writing and is elated when he wins a writing contest and gets to go to the Final Four. Although he is young, he plucks up enough courage to help when he finds out a player is being blackmailed. Susan Carol shares Stevie's love for writing and also helps solve the case. She seems to always have a solution for everything and is able to talk herself out of the toughest situations. Chip Graber is the star player at MSU and is the player that is being blackmailed. At first he is desperate and almost gives up, but with the little hope that Stevie and Susan Carol give him he does everything he can to get to the bottom of the blackmailing. This story is very suspenseful. As they look around at the Final Four, Stevie and Susan Carol overhear a man blackmailing Chip Graber, MSU's star player. They have to stay completely still and silent so as not to be discovered and face the dangers that would befall them. While Chip, Stevie, and Susan Carol are driving back from Dean Wojenski's house, they find that they are being followed by Mr. Jurgensen, who they suspect to be behind the blackmailing. They barely lose him by going into the player's entrance at the semifinals. The climax of the story is when they try to meet with Mr. Jurgensen but end up being held hostage so that Chip would throw the final game. Like any good mystery, this story has many twists in it. Stevie and Susan Carol expect to have a wonderful time being sports journalists at the Final Four, but stumble upon a plot to blackmail a player. When Chip, Stevie, and Susan Carol go to Chip's former dean's house for help they are informed that the man behind the blackmailing is a lawyer who used to be a good friend to Chip's father, who also happened to be Chip's coach. When the kids try to meet with the lawyer, they are shocked to find everyone who they thought was on their side is actually behind the blackmailing. They are held hostage by the people they thought were their friends! They were even more surprised when they were rescued by Mr. Jurgensen, the lawyer they had suspected to be the one behind the blackmailing. Last Shot is a compelling mystery any reader would enjoy. The story is suspenseful and has many interesting twists. It has a well thought out plot that will hold a reader's attention throughout the story. It has a lot to do with basketball, but with its exciting storyline this book is great.

for any reader.P. Walsh

Have always been buying Mike Lupica books for my 13 year old sports fan and he loves them. Finally we ran out of books to buy and looked for a different author. We found the John Feinstein books, read the information, and gave it a try. He loves this book as much as Lupica. Liked them so much we ordered two more of the mystery books for Easter presents.

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