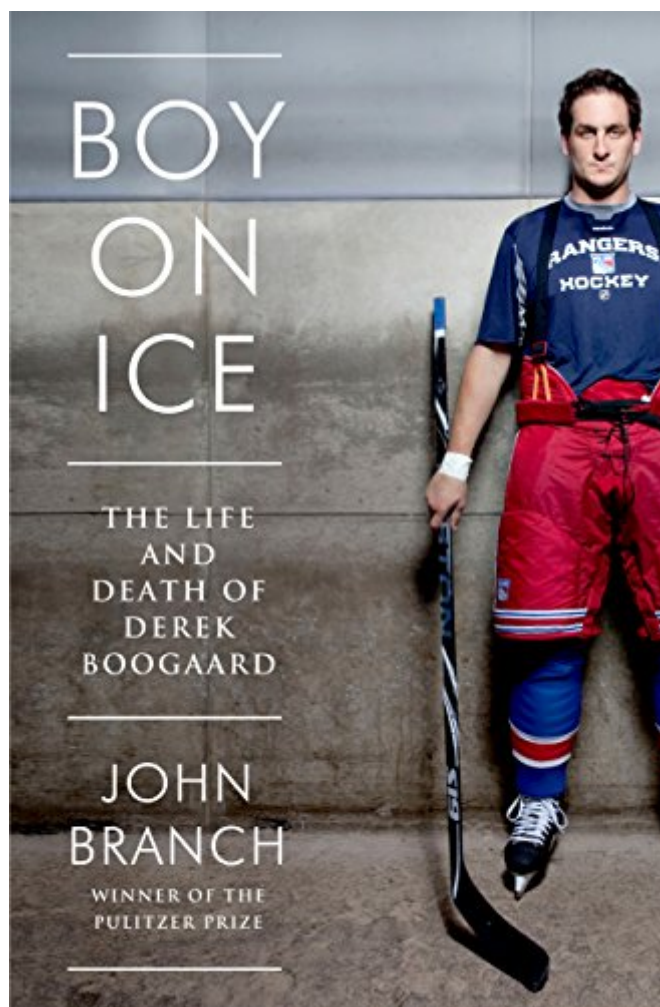


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# Boy On Ice: The Life And Death Of Derek Boogaard



## Synopsis

“Shows us, in tender detail, a life consumed by our unholy appetites.” —Steve Almond, New York Times Book Review

The tragic death of hockey star Derek Boogaard at twenty-eight was front-page news across the country in 2011 and helped shatter the silence about violence and concussions in professional sports. Now, in a gripping work of narrative nonfiction, acclaimed reporter John Branch tells the shocking story of Boogaard's life and heartbreaking death. *Boy on Ice* is the richly told story of a mountain of a man who made it to the absolute pinnacle of his sport. Widely regarded as the toughest man in the NHL, Boogaard was a gentle man off the ice but a merciless fighter on it. With great narrative drive, Branch recounts Boogaard's unlikely journey from lumbering kid playing pond-hockey on the prairies of Saskatchewan, so big his skates would routinely break beneath his feet; to his teenaged junior hockey days, when one brutal outburst of violence brought Boogaard to the attention of professional scouts; to his days and nights as a star enforcer with the Minnesota Wild and the storied New York Rangers, capable of delivering career-ending punches and intimidating entire teams. But, as Branch reveals, behind the scenes Boogaard's injuries and concussions were mounting and his mental state was deteriorating, culminating in his early death from an overdose of alcohol and painkillers. Based on months of investigation and hundreds of interviews with Boogaard's family, friends, teammates, and coaches, *Boy on Ice* is a brilliant work for fans of Michael Lewis's *The Blind Side* or Buzz Bissinger's *Friday Night Lights*. This is a book that raises deep and disturbing questions about the systemic brutality of contact sports “from peewees to professionals” and the damage that reaches far beyond the game.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

First off, I can't believe I'm the first person to review this book. Second, if you love fighting in hockey, please don't read this book. If you love fighting in hockey, please read this book. This book truly is a book of contradictions. I can guarantee that you'll never look at pugilists dropping the gloves and putting on the foil the same way again. I feel the book does a very effective job illustrating the positives and negatives of life as an enforcer. In Derek's case, he dies at 28, but the years he lives involve him experiencing a life that he never would have experienced as someone who had limited academic attitude even before the repeated head trauma. (It's similar to a hypothetical question my friends and I have bantered about at the bar. Wikipedia has told us that two celebrities have come from the school our houses are districted to: Patrick Swayze and The Undertaker from WWE. Would you rather have the more years of the undertaker or the higher quality years of Swayze?) As far as the book itself, it starts with a great premise, but it's a difficult read for two reasons. 1) The first is no fault of the author. The story that is being told is a real life Flowers for Algernon in that you become emotionally attached to the likeable character, and then watch the downward slide that you know won't be reversed. Each page comes with snowballing dread. 2) the part that was under the author's control is that this book is an extension of an excellent series of articles, and it reads like it too. I think Branch realized he didn't have the content for a full-length book, so he threw in a bunch of filler, like I used to do to stretch the word count for high school essays.

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