

Moneyball – college essay



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

For this Research Paper I read the book, Moneyball: The Art of Winning an Unfair Game. This book was written in 2003 by Michael Lewis. The book chronicles the Major League Baseball's Oakland Athletics 2002 season. Michael Lewis writes in a very different way than other books I have read, in which he goes straight into what matter and leaves out the unimportant details and doesn't drag it on for too long. In his story I noticed a lot of tension, flashback, and the elimination of unnecessary details to only give the reader information to help understand the story.

The book Moneyball has many different themes and topics, the first them I want to talk about is tension. Michael Lewis uses unique ways of using tension in the story very well. One way of using the tension was to spread it apart. Of the twelve chapters in Moneyball, eleven of them have the main character, Billy Beane, facing an obstacle and rising above it. This element of tension keeps the story interesting by continuously drawing the reader back in. It is similar to an action movie whereby the hero defeats one bad guy then a new villain presents itself, and this happens eleven times.

In the book, Michael Lewis has the main character, Athletics General Manager, Billy Beane, battle through tension and in the end he prevails. Beane took over as the general manager in 1998, with frugal ownership (in 2002, Oakland had the third lowest salary in Major League Baseball, ranking them twenty-seven out of thirty teams). Billy Beane starts using a new scientific system of "Sabermetrics" to assess affordable talent to replace the big name players that Oakland couldn't afford.

The way Michael Lewis writes this story is quite interesting as he admires Billy Beane and how he changed the whole game of baseball, from behind the scenes. In the story, General Manager Billy Beane, overcomes all the old scouts' dirty looks and laughs to become a good manager and scout because of his time spent and lessons learned as a player. Using the technique of flashback, Michael Lewis does a good job at transitioning the book from Billy's playing days (1984-1989) to his time spent as a general manager during the 2002 season.

Billy remembers when he was a player, how hard it was for some managers to trade or release some players because of the player-manager relationships. Michael Lewis seamlessly transitions to Billy's general manager days, when Billy wouldn't even watch the games in person, usually listening on a radio, or watching on a television in the team's weight-room. He did all this so he wouldn't get attached to the players. What a lot of people don't realize is that the methods used by Billy Beane were not something any manager had ever done.

There's traditions in baseball, traditions that did not follow the way that Billy Beane was managing. Billy Beane went against everything and used methods published by Billy James who was considered a weirdo for his publishing of books that went against tradition; this is what made Billy Beane so great, his courage to go against the grain. Michael Lewis left out many details that were unneeded in this book. Before reading this book I saw the movie, Moneyball, which inspired me to read this book and there were several characters that were not in the book, that were in the movie.

These characters would not have added anything to the book, but were needed in the movie to add depth. The movie had many other scouts helping to rate players before the 2002 baseball draft, while the book focused only on Billy and two other scouts. I don't feel that my mind wondered while reading this story because everything in the book was important information necessary to build a continued understanding of what was going on. The technique of limiting detail used by Michael Lewis is something that makes writing good because it was able to hold my attention without cluttering the story.

The Story is interesting because most reviews say that you need to know nothing about baseball and this is still a good read. I would summarize Michael Lewis' techniques as an excellent way to keep a story interesting and the reader pleased, while not having the story drag on. The three main techniques that I pulled from the story, tension, flashback, and the removal of unnecessary detail, are all reasonable things to work on and add to my own personal stories and papers. This assignment was enjoyable as I was able to read a story that I enjoyed very much and I learned new writing techniques that will definitely help me in the future.