



Junior Seau: The Life and Death of a Football Icon

By Jim Trotter

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A moving portrait of the life and legendary career of one of the NFL's most beloved players

Tiaina Baul “Junior” Seau is widely considered one of the best linebackers ever to play the game. A ten-time All-Pro and twelve-time Pro Bowl selection, Seau was picked for the NFL’s “All-Decade Team” in the 1990’s. His incredible career spanned two decades, during which time he played for the Chargers, Dolphins, and Patriots. A charismatic leader and competitor known for playing through injuries and leaving it all on the field, Seau started in almost 250 regular season games and electrified fans with his dynamic play.

In 2012, at the age of forty-three, Seau committed suicide with a gunshot wound to the chest. News of his death sent shockwaves through the NFL. Later, studies concluded that Seau had been suffering from chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a type of brain damage. His tragic death opened the door to hundreds of inquiries about the trauma from NFL players and their families.

Drawing on exclusive access to Seau’s family and Seau’s never-before-seen diaries and letters, veteran reporter Jim Trotter goes beyond the statistics to paint a moving portrait of a larger-than-life star whose towering achievements in the game came at a great cost.

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Junior Seau: The Life and Death of a Football Icon By Jim Trotter Bibliography

- Sales Rank: #464780 in Books
- Published on: 2015-10-27
- Released on: 2015-10-27
- Original language: English
- Number of items: 1
- Dimensions: 9.00" h x .93" w x 6.00" l, .0 pounds
- Binding: Hardcover
- 240 pages

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Editorial Review

Review

“Leave it to Jim Trotter, who knew Junior Seau better than anyone in our business, to capture his competitive essence and personal demons equally well. I had so many questions about why Seau's life ended the way it did. Jim answered them with depth and compassion in this thorough and important book.”

—Peter King, editor-in-chief, *The MMQB*

“Few people knew Junior Seau like Jim Trotter, who gracefully guides readers into the unique world of one of the NFL's most compelling figures of the last quarter-century. Trotter has achieved something rare here: he took a sports book and artistically crafted it into a lyrical narrative about dreams, love and, ultimately, heart-wrenching loss.”

—Lars Anderson, author of *The Storm and the Tide* and *The All Americans*

“Junior Seau shot himself in the heart, maybe to save his head for the pathologist. But Jim Trotter's book is about the heart, and of the heart.”

—Tom Callahan, author of *Johnny U* and *The G.M.*

“This book demonstrates why Trotter is one of the best talents in sports journalism. He didn't just write a great book about a football legend... he wrote one of the best sports biographies of all time.”

—Mike Freeman, author of *Bloody Sundays* and *Bowden*

“Junior Seau lived a remarkable, passion-filled and eventually tragic life. His death may make him one of the most important figures in football history. Jim Trotter masterfully tells it all here, in a powerful book that may change the way you look at the game.”

—Dan Wetzel, national columnist, *Yahoo Sports*

“Trotter, who covers the NFL for ESPN, tells a difficult story and tells it well...this is a powerful, thought-provoking account, handled with grace and sensitivity, of a superior football player's life and death.”

—*Booklist*

"No media member is better qualified to write this book than Trotter...it's a highly informative, easy read."

—Nick Canepa, *The San Diego Union-Tribune*

From the Inside Flap

A moving portrait of the life and legendary career of one of the NFL's most beloved players

Tiaina Baul Junior Seau is widely considered one of the best linebackers ever to play the game. And if the sport had a heart and soul, Junior Seau was it. A San Diego native of Samoan descent, he sprung from a tight-knit family and community to shatter records at nearby USC. After being chosen as the fifth overall NFL draft pick in 1990, he embarked upon a nearly two-decade professional career, including stints with his hometown San Diego Chargers, the Miami Dolphins, and the New England Patriots. Seau was a ten-time All-Pro, a twelve-time Pro Bowl selection, and was picked for the NFL's All-Decade Team in the 1990s. A charismatic leader and competitor known for playing through injuries and leaving it all on the field, Seau started in almost 250 regular season games and electrified fans with his dynamic play.

Yet in 2012, upon his retirement from football, Seau plunged deeper into a dark period marked by erratic behavior. A few months later, at age forty-three, Seau committed suicide with a gunshot wound to the chest. The news of his tragic death sent shockwaves through the NFL. Later, studies concluded that Seau had been suffering from chronic traumatic encephalopathy (CTE), a type of brain damage caused by repeated blows to the head. Junior Seau's suicide opened the door to hundreds of inquiries about the effects of brain trauma from NFL players and their families.

Veteran reporter Jim Trotter draws on exclusive access to Seau's family and friends and never-before-seen diaries and letters, which provide incredible emotional insight into a man struggling with frustrations on the football field and moral failings off of it. The writings, as well as interviews with those closest to Seau including the girlfriend who discovered his lifeless body paint a portrait of a larger-than-life star whose towering achievements in the game made him an icon, but at a great cost.

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From the Back Cover

Advance Praise for *Junior Seau*

"Leave it to Jim Trotter, who knew Junior Seau better than anyone in our business, to capture his competitive essence and personal demons equally well. I had so many questions about why Seau's life ended the way it did. Jim answered them with depth and compassion in this thorough and important book." Peter King, editor-in-chief, The MMQB

"Junior Seau shot himself in the heart, maybe to save his head for the pathologist. But Jim Trotter's book is about the heart, and of the heart." Tom Callahan, author of *Johnny U* and *The GM*

Few people knew Junior Seau like Jim Trotter, who gracefully guides readers into the unique world of one of the NFL's most compelling figures of the last quarter-century. Trotter has achieved something rare here: he took a sports book and artistically crafted it into a lyrical narrative about dreams, love, and, ultimately, heart-wrenching loss. Lars Anderson, author of *The Storm and the Tide* and *The All Americans*

"This book demonstrates why Trotter is one of the best talents in sports journalism. He didn't just write a great book about a football legend . . . he wrote one of the best sports biographies of all time. Mike Freeman, author of *Bloody Sundays* and *Bowden*

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Users Review

From reader reviews:

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