

NONFICTION

Betaball: How Silicon Valley and Science Built One of the Greatest Basketball Teams in History

Erik Malinowski (COM'02)

Atria Books

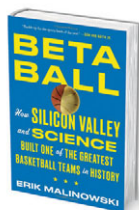
IN 2015, THE GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS won the NBA championship, ending a 40-year dry spell. Another finals run in 2016 and another championship in 2017 marked one of the greatest franchise turnarounds in modern sports history. In *Betaball*, Bay Area sports reporter Malinowski details the business, science, and technology at play behind the dramatic transformation.

In July 2010, an ownership group helmed by Silicon Valley venture capitalist Joe Lacob and Hollywood producer Peter Gruber purchased the Warriors for a record-setting

price of almost half a billion dollars. They led the franchise through a series of often experimental changes that aligned its operation with that of a tech company working in beta mode (the tech industry term for a development stage), “never fully baked, always in flux, focused yet open to change,” Malinowski writes.

The shift in management style wasn’t an overnight cure for the Warriors’ woes, and Malinowski pays as much attention to the team’s stumbles as to its big strides. It would take five years for the elements—including hiring first-time coach Steve Kerr and implementing new data-capturing technologies—to align and produce a championship-winning team.

Malinowski’s compelling and fast-paced narrative expertly weaves the franchise’s history with on-court action, like an artful depiction of Golden State guard Stephen Curry missing a pivotal shot in the 2016 finals. This information-packed chronicle of a team that made “so much history in such a compact time” is a captivating read for anyone interested in the action both on and off the court, regardless of their team allegiance. —MARA SASSOON

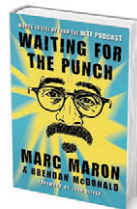


Waiting for the Punch: Words to Live By from the WTF Podcast

Marc Maron (CAS'86) and Brendan McDonald

Flatiron Books

MARON STARTED HIS POPULAR WTF podcast “out of complete desperation,” he writes in the book’s introduction. The episodes, he says, “can be heard as me having celebrities over to my house to help me with my problems. They did.” The book features highlights from his interviews with artists, musicians, comedians, writers, directors, and his most famous guest, Barack Obama. Maron is “smart, constantly curious, and has an almost pathological desire to connect to people,” John Oliver writes in his foreword for the book. “His ludicrous levels of honesty act as a kind of emotional wrecking ball to even the most guarded human being.”



Investigative journalist Neil Strauss talks about how an assignment led him to become the world’s top pickup artist and confront his complicated relationship with sex. Comedian and actor Molly Shannon shares how her father’s laid-back parenting style led her to jump on a flight from Cleveland to New York at age 12, accompanied only by her best friend. She later had to “learn the rules of how regular people live. From regular people. Like, professionals.” And Obama talks about how his mistakes made him a better president: “I’ve been in a barrel tumbling down Niagara Falls, and I emerged and I lived. That’s such a liberating feeling.”

The 11 chapters—organized by themes such as growing up, mental health, and failure—are by turn hilarious and heartbreaking, revealing and relatable; in these interviews, Maron draws intimate truths from even the best-known celebrities.

—LARA EHRLICH

From the Campaign Trail to the Kitchen: Five New Alumni Books

In **LOOKING FOR VOTES IN ALL THE WRONG PLACES: TALES AND RULES FROM THE CAMPAIGN TRAIL**

(Radius Book Group, 2016), political consultant Rick Ridder (COM'80) takes readers on a raucous tour through his four-decade career working on US and foreign political campaigns, including a stint as Howard Dean's campaign manager in the 2004 presidential race. He begins each chapter with a rule on campaign management. One example: "Personal integrity is not necessarily a qualification for office." Those nuggets provide springboards into tales of the situations and characters he's encountered along the trail.



It's 1947, and Charlotte "Charlie" St. Clair's parents ship her off to Europe to take care of an unwanted pregnancy in the detailed and deftly imagined historical mystery **THE ALICE NETWORK** (HarperCollins, 2017), by Kate Quinn (CFA'04/'06). In Europe, she encounters sharp-tongued Eve Gardiner, a former member of the Alice Network spy ring, a real-life World War I group, with a surprising connection to Charlie's cousin, who disappeared 30 years earlier.

In her debut poetry collection, **MY DARK HORSES** (Liverpool University Press, 2017), Jodie Hollander (GRS'02) explores her

complicated family dynamics, particularly her relationship with her mother, whose cancer diagnosis and abusive partners cause constant stress. The poems span years, but are not chronological, giving the collection a frenetic urgency.

Eggplant walnut dip. Cucumber noodles with creamy pesto. Hazelnut, goji, and coconut cookies.

Chef Rocco DiSpirito (SHA'90) features these recipes and more in his new cookbook, **ROCCO'S HEALTHY & DELICIOUS: MORE THAN 200 (MOSTLY) PLANT-BASED RECIPES FOR EVERYDAY LIFE** (Harper Wave, 2017). Beautifully photographed, it's a thorough guide to following an organic and mostly plant-based diet, all on an affordable budget.

Cadie is shocked to learn that she has a 15-year-old half sister, Elizabeth, only a few months older. Her complicated teenage existence is thrown into further tumult when Elizabeth moves in, straining Cadie's close relationship with their father. In her debut young adult novel, **INEVITABLE AND ONLY** (Boyd's Mills Press, 2017), Lisa Rosinsky (GRS'17) writes poignantly about how this twist of fate affects Cadie and her newly expanded family.—Mara Sassoon

LGBTQ Heroes, from Lincoln to Mr. Sulu

Alum's book Queer, There, and Everywhere looks at 23 cultural icons / BY RICH BARLOW

A chaste cross-dresser whom the Vatican made a saint. A pioneering gender-reassignment patient, guilt-stricken because she felt she had murdered the man she used to be. America's greatest president. In her book *Queer, There, and Everywhere: 23 People Who Changed the World*, Sarah Prager (CAS'08) profiles those and 20 other LGBTQ heroes—famous and obscure—from antiquity to today. Prager defines "queer" broadly, "to mean anyone not 100 percent straight or 100 percent cisgender according to the norms of their time and place or ours."

The founder and director of Quist, which produces an LGBTQ history mobile app, Prager lives in Connecticut with her wife and daughter. Here are six people she profiles:

LILI ELBE, 1882–1931 Famed Dutch painter Einar Wegener long felt he was actually a woman, and eventually underwent pioneering gender-reassignment surgery, becoming Lili. But Lili was haunted by the belief that she'd murdered Einar. She died of complications from surgery that attempted to give her a uterus.

ALAN TURING, 1912–1954 Turing was the famous inventor of a computer that enabled the British to crack the Nazis' secret codes. But his wartime contributions didn't seem to matter in 1952, when police charged him with gross indecency after it came to light that he was gay. Forced to choose between prison and chemi-

cal castration, he chose the latter, and committed suicide (some think his death accidental). Queen Elizabeth pardoned him in 2013.

RENEE RICHARDS, 1934–PRESENT After a marriage to a woman and a career as an eye surgeon, Richard Raskind became Renee Richards in 1975. She became a professional tennis player, but was banned by the US Tennis Association and required to take a sex chromosome test to qualify for the US Open. Richards refused, sued the US Tennis Association, and won, becoming the first openly trans person to play in the US Open.

ABRAHAM LINCOLN, 1809–1865 As a young man, Lincoln shared a double bed with Joshua Fry Speed, an Illinois shop owner, ostensibly because he couldn't afford a bed of his own. Such arrangements were common on the frontier, but Lincoln made a home with Speed for four years, even after both men were financially independent.

Though some historians doubt that Lincoln was gay, Prager writes, "There's no way to know if Abraham and Joshua's love was or wasn't sexual."

JEANNE [JOAN] OF ARC, 1412–1431 Joan heard voices telling her to expel the English from France—and, even though the Bible forbade it, to wear men's clothing. Successful on the battlefield until captured by French forces allied with England, she was tried for heresy and cross-dressing and was burned at the stake, while wearing a dress. In 1920, the pope canonized her.

GEORGE TAKEI, 1937–PRESENT Playing Mr. Sulu in the original *Star Trek* made the closeted Takei a cultural icon. He and boyfriend Brad Altman marched in AIDS rallies in the 1980s as putative straights, and finally married in 2008 when California briefly legalized gay marriage (the state permanently granted the right in 2013).