**Zach Rebb & Byron Laursen-UNMASKED Word Count-61,000**

SYNOPSIS

*Whenever somebody learns that I was a professional baseball umpire, the reaction every time is a huge smile and a flood of eager questions: “****REALLY? That's so cool! Did you ever throw anyone out?****” Ha. The players and managers? They know I did!"*

*My autobiography, UNMASKED, is for baseball enthusiasts and their insatiable desire to understand our national pastime; the highs, the lows, the trials and tribulations, politics, backstabbing, locker room events, and most especially what goes on inside those quirky minds right behind the mask, in particular my masks: the one I wore on the field, and the one I wore, and still wear, off the field and perhaps still do. In my experience, many baseball fans dream of professional umpiring, living the speed and challenge of the game, embedded, in real-time, with all of its attendant notoriety and cheers. They know umpiring is a lot more challenging than strapping on a set of Virtual Reality Goggles or playing RBI 20 Baseball on an XBOX*.

 — Zach Rebb

Bronx-born into an emigre Russian Jewish family on April 26, 1951, and author of TOUGH CALLS (Avon Books), I would be a baseball Maverick. And then an Uber Pirate! For example, there was the evening in the Dominican Republic when I called a forfeit against the home team in a major league game, putting myself under siege by 18,000 garbage-hurling fans. Or the day in 1980 when future Hall-of-Famer Wade Boggs hung blame on me for his losing the league batting title.

Out of all those who joined the pro umpires ranks, I may be the most uncontainable and improbable character ever, which accounts for the unpredictable nature of the stories that unfold inside UNMASKED. In a myriad of voices—earnest to zany—I capture’s baseball's culture from an angle that’s curious, to say the least. That, by the way, is an upward trend, baseball umpires. With the implementation of the replay and reversal system, the TV’s camera’s dissection of every inch, of every pitch, and the numerous blogs that focus solely on umpires statistics, ejections, tendencies, quotes, habits—the public’s peek into one of the most intricate jobs on the planet, has never been greater!

Besides being a professional baseball umpire, I've tripped, tap-danced, bull-rode and sailed my way through a career that has encompassed published author, TV talk show host, journalist, and entrepreneur. As a teenager sporting long hair and a beard that made me look almost like a Manson accomplice, I was an instinctive rebel. I didn't think I was operating outside the box–until it was too late to climb inside its confines. When the umpire supervisor who could make or break my career came through town to evaluate the crew, instead of bellying up to the bar for the ritualistic late-night back-slapping and that personal man-to-man connection, I would adjourn to my lady's pad or retire to my hotel and a rendezvous with a fat joint. No brownie points scored. But then, unfortunately, I had never loved umpires!

Still, I eventually found myself surrounded by, and usually in an animated debate with, baseball legends such as Don Mattingly, Cal Ripken, Wade Boggs, Mark "The Bird" Fidrych, Ron Darling, and Mookie Wilson. And after that, I learned what an atypical baseball umpire does when he reaches senior citizenship. He dons the disguise of a pirate, an Uber Pirate to be exact, sailing a sleek, black Hyundai Sonata, and then finally decides to pen his daring tell-all autobiography! For those who accepted the maverick in me, I offer praise. For those who attempted to sabotage my career, my words come down with the weight of a sledgehammer.

In it, I recount a 1950's Bronx childhood that gave way to a devastating life-altering football injury, which ended all my baseball-career dreams, leading to my relentless, against-the-odds rise to the professional baseball diamond (followed eventually by a crushing termination of my hard-won career). Inside my book's thought-provoking caravan of stories and characters, readers will discover an extraordinarily honest and colorful assessment of the life I created and steered onward, apparently with only one hand wrapped around the wheel.

Blessed with the drive and skills to succeed, I overcame my lack of formal education to earn baseball notoriety as the "Flying Birdman" (after my signature high-jumping, fist-pumping out-call). Still, I could not quiet the loud thumping of that unique drum to which I alone marched. My exploits on and off the baseball diamond are colorfully detailed inside UNMASKED, and anyone moved to question the integrity of any scene or anecdote is at this moment invited to strap me into a polygraph!

Never one to suppress, I've written this autobiography with honesty and humor, as when I'm running from fuming baseball fans or the airport police! With a rabbi's morality, I also school readers how my unassuming and therefore all-too-convincing manner allowed me to earn more per hour than any other Uber pirate on the planet!

How'd I do that? Or manifest any of these other improbable occurrences? Ahh, patience, my friend, patience. UNMASKED will fill in the blanks and questions. In the memorable words of Andrea, who endured 25 years as my wife, "Where there's a will, there's a Zach."