



Jackie Robinson was the right man who played with the right team to break major-league baseball's "Color Line." But as he makes clear in his autobiography, *I Never Had It Made*, the road for Jackie and his family was never easy.

Publishers Weekly ([via Amazon's website](#)) tells us more about the book:

This autobiography, which was originally published in 1972, the year Robinson died, is not about baseball: it's about the deep commitment that Robinson made to achieve justice for himself and all Americans.

He recalls his years at UCLA, where he became the school's first four-letter athlete and met his future wife, Rachel. With the advent of WWII he was drafted into the army, became a lieutenant and was court-martialed for refusing to move to the back of a bus. He was honorably discharged.

He played for the Kansas City Monarchs of the Negro Leagues until he was recruited by Branch Rickey of the Brooklyn Dodgers. In 1947 Robinson broke the color line in the major leagues and suffered terrible abuse for doing so.

He discusses his relationships with the sports figures he admired, like Rickey and teammate Pee Wee Reese, and also recalls his run-ins with those he did not like, such as Dodger owner Walter O'Malley, who was "viciously antagonistic," and sportswriter Dick Young, a "racial bigot."

Much of the book, written with freelancer Duckett, focuses on Robinson's political involvements after his career ended in 1956 and his friendships with such diverse characters as Martin Luther King, Malcolm X, William Buckley and Nelson Rockefeller.

The most wrenching episodes in the book deal with Jackie Jr., who overcame his heroin addiction only to be killed in an automobile accident at age 24 in 1971. A disturbing and enlightening self-portrait by one of America's genuine heroes.

When we think of Jackie Robinson, and the enormous contributions he made to American society, we think first about his breaking of "the color line." But Robinson was far more than a famous athlete who happened to excel at baseball. He was also a man of great courage who, even during his U.S. Army days, resisted the racial discrimination he faced on a daily basis.

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