



Out at Home: The True Story of Glenn Burke, Baseball's First Openly Gay Player

Glenn Burke, Erik Sherman

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Before Jason Collins, before Michael Sam, there was Glenn Burke. By becoming the first—and only—openly gay player in Major League Baseball, Glenn would become a pioneer in his own way, nearly thirty years after another black Dodger rookie, Jackie Robinson, broke the league’s color barrier. This is Glenn’s story, in his own words . . .

Touted by scouts and coaches alike as “the next Willie Mays,” Burke, a charismatic outfielder, kept his sexuality off the radar for a good two seasons, which included a World Series appearance. He was even credited with inventing the high five with teammate Dusty Baker.

But when the Dodgers’ front office got wind of Burke’s sexuality, the damage control started, including efforts by upper management to talk him into a sham marriage. When Burke refused, he was eventually traded to Oakland, where he received a less-than-warm welcome from incoming manager Billy Martin. The prejudice, coupled with an injured knee, forced Burke into retirement at only twenty-seven years old.

Now, two decades after his death from AIDS-related complications, the man who started the conversation is finally being included in it. Major League Baseball recognized him as a gay pioneer at the 2014 All-Star game. And Burke has become a source of inspiration for athletes who refuse to be defined by who they love, while doing what they love.

Includes a new afterword by coauthor Erik Sherman reflecting on the two decades that have passed since Burke’s death.

Foreword by Billy Bean

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