



Speed Trap

By Charlie Francis

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Speed Trap By Charlie Francis

In Speed Trap, His first Public Revelations to go beyond his dramatic testimony before the Dublin Inquiry, Charlie Francis presents an insiders account of the world of international track and field.

While telling a profoundly human story, Francis shatters the conspiracy of silence maintained by the international sports community surrounding drug use and addresses the central issues arising from the events at the Seoul Olympics. Was his star pupil, Ben Johnson, the exception – or are performance enhancing drugs commonplace among the world’s track stars? Is it possible to beat the world’s elite athletes without using anabolic steroids? And what – if anything – can be done to make the sports arena fair, safe and honest?

Speed Trap traces the history of performance-enhancing substances from ancient Greece to present, and explains how steroids came to be entrenched within modern track and field by 1972, when Charlie Francis himself competed in the Munich Olympics. Francis reveals the corruption within the drug control bureaucracy and the hypocrisy leading to the occasional hunt of scapegoats- like the one that shocked the world by striping Ben Johnson of his gold medal.

The book also provides a window onto the riotous international track circuit and illustrates the clash of egos that makes and sustains the great rivalries- first and foremost the series of high stake showdowns between Ben Johnson and Carl Lewis.

Charlie Francis has both the knowledge and the freedom to speak candidly about track and field. Speed Trap is the product of that candor, a book that will surprise Canadians.

Charlie Francis, three times a Canadian Sprint champion, served as a national sprint coach for 9 years. He developed athletes who won nine Olympic medals, and who set 23 world records, and more than 250 Canadian records. Four of his stars were ranked among the top ten in the world in their respective events.

Jeff Coplon’s writing has appeared in The New Yorker, New York magazine, The New York Times Magazine, and Rolling Stone, among other publications. He is the coauthor a dozen memoirs, notably with Tina Sinatra, Sarah Ferguson

(the Duchess of York), and Cher. He is the author of Gold Buckle, the definitive treatment of rodeo bull riding (HarperOne, 1995). He resides in Brooklyn.

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