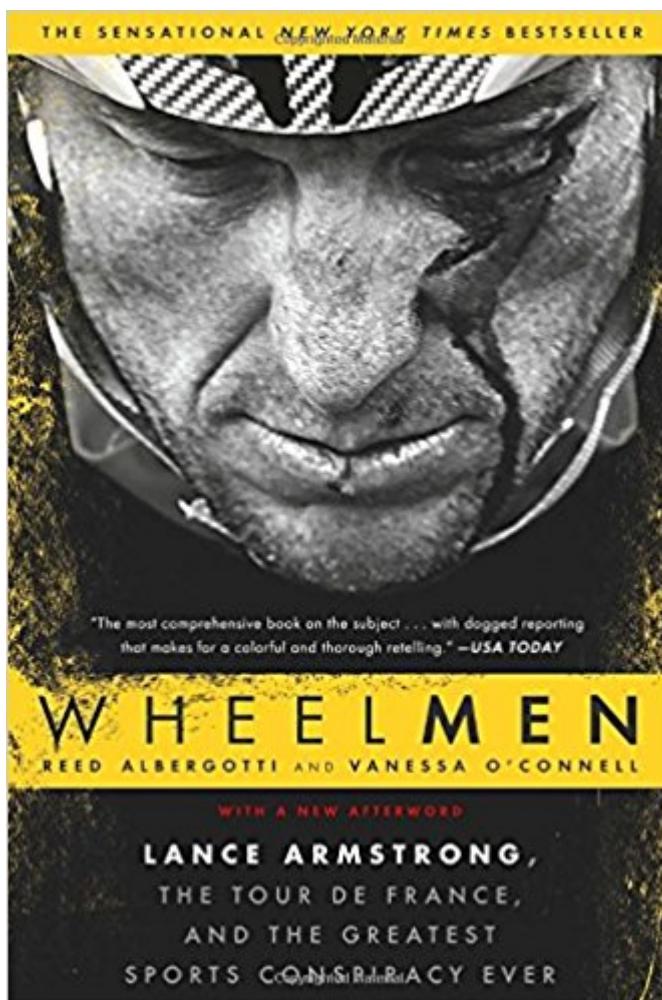


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Wheermen: Lance Armstrong, The Tour De France, And The Greatest Sports Conspiracy Ever



Synopsis

The sensational New York Times bestselling in-depth look at Lance Armstrong's doping scandal, the phenomenal business success built on the back of fraud, and the greatest conspiracy in the history of sports. Now with a new afterword. Lance Armstrong won a record-smashing seven Tours de France after staring down cancer, and in the process became an international symbol of resilience and courage. In a sport constantly dogged by blood-doping scandals, he seemed above the fray. Then, in January 2013, the legend imploded. He admitted doping during the Tours and, in an interview with Oprah, described his "mythic, perfect story" as "one big lie." But his admission raised more questions than it answered—because he didn't say who had helped him dope or how he skillfully avoided getting caught. The Wall Street Journal's reporters Reed Albergotti and Vanessa O'Connell broke the news at every turn. In *Wheelmen* they reveal the broader story of how Armstrong and his supporters used money, power, and cutting-edge science to conquer the world's most difficult race. *Wheelmen* introduces U.S. Postal Service Team owner Thom Weisel, who in a brazen power play ousted USA Cycling's top leadership and gained control of the sport in the United States, ensuring Armstrong's dominance. Meanwhile, sponsors fought over contracts with Armstrong as the entire sport of cycling began to benefit from the "Lance effect." What had been a quirky, working-class hobby became the pastime of the Masters of the Universe set. *Wheelmen* offers a riveting look at what happens when enigmatic genius breaks loose from the strictures of morality. It reveals the competitiveness and ingenuity that sparked blood-doping as an accepted practice, and shows how the Americans methodically constructed an international operation of spies and revolutionary technology to reach the top. It went on to become a New York Times Bestseller, a Wall Street Journal Business Bestseller, and win numerous awards, including a Gold Medal for the Axiom Business Book Awards. At last exposing the truth about Armstrong and American cycling, *Wheelmen* paints a living portrait of what is, without question, the greatest conspiracy in the history of sports.

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Customer Reviews

"Authoritative and overflows with forceful details." Reed Albergotti and O'Connell write like insiders looking out." •Los Angeles Times" A chilling tale, and many of the anecdotes Albergotti and O'Connell collected sound like they were actually crafted in a TV-drama writers' room." •The Atlantic" Reed Albergotti and Vanessa O'Connell uncovered plenty more shocking details about the full extent of Armstrong's drug use as well as the many people and institutions that helped him." •The Daily Beast" The most comprehensive book on the subject." •The Economist" The book is rich in details, facts, and figures." •Velo News" Wheelmen is all the truth-and-reconciliation the sport needs." •The Philadelphia Review of Books" "The only thing ever missing was the truth. In Wheelmen, we get it." •Pittsburgh Post-Gazette" A detailed account of Armstrong's eventual descent into disgrace." •The Guardian" (UK) "The definitive book on Armstrong." •The Montreal Gazette

Reed Albergotti is a reporter covering the technology industry in The Wall Street Journal's San Francisco bureau. He is also the son of a fanatic amateur cyclist who served as the director of cycling competition in the 1984 Olympics. An accomplished bike racer himself, Reed speaks the sport's odd language. Vanessa O'Connell, an award-winning reporter at The Wall Street Journal for eighteen years, has covered tobacco, alcohol, guns, insider trading, and the Deepwater Horizon oil spill. She has a knack for exposing the nature of corporate America and how it sometimes manipulates the score in making its money.

I have never been accused of being a Pollyanna, but like millions of others, I really wanted to believe Armstrong's amazing comeback story. I had my doubts; but as someone who was subject to

random drug tests at work, I just couldn't fathom how he or anyone else could possibly get away with doping for so many years. Maybe Armstrong WAS clean. Maybe he WAS being persecuted. Maybe other cyclists WERE just envious. Wrong, wrong and wrong. The authors explain how he and his supporters/enablers were able to get away with it: money, lots of money. As the authors point out in this well written book, Armstrong wasn't the only ambitious, greedy and ruthless person in this Greek tragedy. Sure, he made tons of money, but his supporters, sponsors, cycling related manufacturers and the sport of cycling itself all benefited, which gave all of them more than enough reason to look the other way. Perhaps the saddest part is the fact that Armstrong's early record in triathlons and cycling show that he was a gifted athlete. He may have been able to achieve greatness without the drugs, but we'll never know. Excellent book.

"Wheelmen" is not about bike races and doping scandal... it's about human tragedy in and around the rise and fall of a colossus. It's a fascinating well written story about what can happen when sport (which is supposed to be fun, recreational and health building) get's mingled with unhealthy ambition and big money. I had no idea about how life endangering doping practices can be; and surely I won't express any judgement over Lance Armstrong and his team buddies as this doesn't belong into a review. Only so much: the most unfortunate consequence of all is that Lance lost so much credibility. Back to the book itself: This is a page turner! I read through half a night and good part of the next day. It's like a suspense story, only it relates things that happened for real, and hopefully we learn from it and gain some insight about our own practices of goal setting and what we do to ourselves and others in order to achieve those goals. Besides, this book also talks about the history of professional cycling in America and the men who made it... a story which by itself is already worth to read. I bought the Kindle version despite a very negative review. To my immense relief my worries were unfounded. The Kindle version is well made and readable (you might want to change the font settings on your kindle) and the pictures are crisp and easy to see. Please note that I own a 'basic' Kindle. As a final note, some wonder about the term "Wheelmen"... "Wheel" is a colloquial abbreviate term for bicycle; and "wheelmen" are the ones who ride it; in the world of professional cycling even live on it :-) All in all I very recommend this book!

So here it is! After all of the accusations, law suits, finger pointing, smoke screens, confessions, denials and personal attacks, we finally get the complete unadulterated story of Team Lance - the money machine. The authors have done a great job outlining LA's competitive career and downfall in chronological order. Their story telling is easy to read, expressive, comprehensive and to the

point. They compile LA's cycling history with his friends, girlfriends, teammates, coaches, sponsors and enemies and his continual denial of doping while racing and winning the Tour de France seven years in a row. After reading other accounts about doping conspiracy theories from Paul Kimmage, David Walsh, Willy Voet, David Millar and Tyler Hamilton, I knew there was doping in cycling and that most were doing it but to the level and sophistication that LA had organized was mind boggling! Not only was he paying a hefty entry fee for his "special" training program to Ferrari but his "under the table" and "greasing the palm" of the UCI's - Hein "my buddy" Verbruggen was a tactic straight out of the peloton - "keep your enemies close and your blood testers even closer". Sure, everyone was doing PED's but LA was living the PED program in style: villas in Italy, Spain and France, helicopter rides off the mountains after races, jet rides to and from blood transfusions, a rotation of girlfriends and hanging out with giddy celebs. It is clear from his early childhood competitions that LA was not going to settle for 2nd place in any part of his life let alone a competition. It's a weird coincidence that LA, Weisel, Ochowicz, Stapleton, Bruyneel, the many doctors, Oakley, Trek, Nike and his many cancer supporters and followers would create an empire that was built on a belief that his comeback was from unlucky cancer, not from his early PED use and that LA's cure was to take more than ever so he could win, win, win, earn big \$\$\$\$\$\$ and never look back at his weak detractors. I applaud the authors and the many people who have never backed down against the LA machine and kept their composure through a long and arduous journey. I feel a sense of relief for everyone involved but I'm a little sad that the real story has been told and my anticipation for another chapter in the LA saga has come to a close.

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