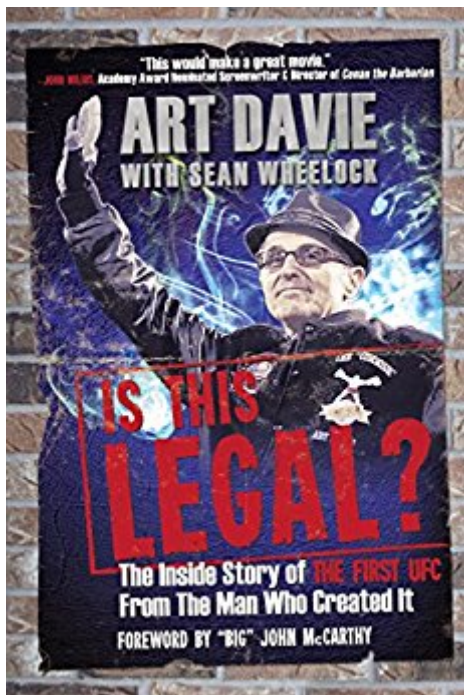


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Synopsis

On November 12, 1993, in Denver, Colorado, the Ultimate Fighting Championship was unleashed on an unsuspecting public, with an explosion-an explosion of blood-as 6-foot-5 Dutch savate champion Gerard Gordeau kicked 420 lb-sumo wrestler Teila Tuli flush in the face less than one minute into the night's opening fight. The creation of ad man and serial entrepreneur Art Davie, the UFC arrived with virtually no warning or fanfare. Yet it was watched live in nearly 90,000 U.S. households through Pay-Per-View television, and instantly redefined action sports for a new generation. The brutal kick delivered by Gordeau not only sent Tuli's tooth flying into the crowd, it knocked the martial arts and combat sports worlds on their asses. With the very first UFC, the new sport of mixed martial arts (MMA) was launched-although it wasn't even called that yet-and fighting would never again be the same. Now, for the first time, the true story of how the Ultimate Fighting Championship came into existence is told by the man who started it all. In this vivid and fast-moving, first-person account, Davie explains how his idea to crown the World's Best Fighter painstakingly evolved into the UFC, which now stands as a billion-dollar sports franchise. Art Davie is the Dr. James Naismith and Abner Doubleday of MMA (with a touch of PT Barnum), yet his name is largely unknown. That is, until now. Davie's tale is one of perseverance and against-all-odds determination, as he worked tirelessly for four years to see his dream come to brutal fruition, while meeting resistance at every single turn. It's also a mash-up of martial arts, celebrity, sports, and business, involving a highly improbable cast of characters that includes Academy Award nominee John Milius, NFL Hall of Fame running back Jim Brown, action film star Chuck Norris, Brazilian jiu-jitsu godfather Rorion Gracie and Pay-Per-View TV pioneer Bob Meyrowitz. This no-holds-barred account of how Davie started the Ultimate Fighting Championship, and launched mixed martial arts, is one for not just fight fans, but for fans of mavericks in business and life who stop at nothing to fulfill their dreams. Whether you're a hardcore supporter of MMA, or have never watched a single bout, you'll be enthralled by Davie's story of triumph, tempered by constantly lurking disaster. Art Davie created the sport of the 21st century, which arrived a decade early. He started a revolution, and his revolution was televised.

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Customer Reviews

I have been looking forward to this book for a very long time. The beginnings of the Ultimate Fighting Championship has always intrigued me. I knew it could not have been an easy road to get a mixed martial arts tournament off the ground. At the end of this book, I was exhausted. I felt like I was right there with Art Davie and feeling every stress and annoyance he would encounter leading up to that historic night on November 12th, 1993 in Denver, Colorado. At first I thought it would be a hit piece from how Art Davie opened up about "telling the truth" about how the UFC was created. It ended not being a hit piece at all, but a in detail look on how it all started. I loved every page of this book. Starting my own pro wrestling promotion Premier back in January of 2013, it was overwhelming task. So going on Art Davie's journey of making his vision of various disciplines of combat sports coming together to see who in fact was truly the best, was an inspiration and motivated me even more to continue my company forward to the success I envision it. My favorite chapters are the ones featuring the talent of the first ever tournament, from the chapter of trying to sign eight fighters to the chapter of going over the rules with the fighters the night before the event. Though Royce Gracie and Ken Shamrock became MMA legends, most of the fighters in the first ever tournament have long been forgotten today, well other then maybe Art Jimmerson, the boxer who wore one boxing glove on his left hand into the cage. These forgotten fighters are remembered here and you get to know them. A guy like the huge sumo wrestler from Hawaii, Telia Tuli might be looked at as the fat guy who was crushed in the first ever UFC fight, but after reading this book, I felt

myself wishing he had succeeded in this tournament, at least past the first round. You can tell Art Davie truly had an appreciation of the big Hawaiian, especially after the fighters rules meeting the night before the event. Art Davie's dealings with the Semaphore Entertainment Group (SEG) was laid out in great detail. I won't give anything away, but I nearly had an anxiety attack as dealings with Davie's W.O.W Promotions and SEG negotiations kept going back and forth, and timing of when everything was finalized would make your mouth drop as mine sure did. The book also details Art Davie and Rorion Gracie's relationship. It is a beautiful story of friendship and trust. What made what became the UFC was Rorion's trust in Art Davie. Rorion let Davie take control and rarely interfered in the negotiations. If Rorion Gracie wanted to be hands on everything when it came to the Ultimate Fighter, then the UFC probably would have never gotten off the ground. This book also took my down memory lane as well. I was a sophomore at Santa Teresa High School in San Jose, California. I was always hanging out at my friend Greg Martin's big two story house over by the hills in south San Jose. We would hang out and watch all kinds of Pay Per View events at his house since his Dad's cable box somehow got every PPV event for free. We kept seeing advertising for The Ultimate Fighter Championship and the tag about this being no rules and real. I was a huge pro wrestling fan, though I did not compare this event to that. It was more of the excitement of the movie Bloodsport featuring Jean Claude Van-Damme coming to life. The day of the event, Greg and I ordered two large pizzas and sat back to watch all the chaos. Greg cheered on his pick Gerard Gordeau as the European Kickboxer came off as a bad ass to him. I went with Ken Shamrock since I was a huge pro wrestling fan and Shamrock looked like a bad ass to me. Weird thing is this was not the first time I have seen Ken Shamrock. First time I saw Ken Shamrock was when he was wrestling for George Scott's South Atlantic Pro Wrestling company as Vince Torelli out of the Carolinas as their TV came on Sports Channel America here in San Jose. However, I did not put the two and two together until years later. We yelled and screamed the entire two hour event. Both of our guys lost to the "little guy in the gi", Royce Gracie. From this point on we both were hooked and hoped for the second event. After a few events, Greg moved on to other interests, but I continued to watch every event until I would lose interest when UFC was banned from PPV. This book not only brought back a great memory from my youth, but now I have a much more appreciation for that first event. For any true MMA fan, this is a must read book. It is a quick and easy read, but also very detailed. The UFC holds over 50 events a year now and holds events all over the world. But, without the vision and desire of Art Davie, we may never have the sport of Mixed Martial Arts. Do yourself a favor and pick up your copy today.

If you are looking for a long, drawn out recap of every fight at UFC 1, this is not the book for you. This book was much more than that. It was a rare business look behind the scenes of the UFC. I'd read a lot about the history of the UFC and I learned a ton more here. Art didn't try to make himself out to be a star or a genius, he told a candid, vivid account of the news. The only thing curious here that did not seem to belong, was Mr. Davie's account of the women he met along the way- was it really necessary to read how hot he considered his neighbor or secretary to be?

I started reading this book because my martial arts instructor Jason DeLucia is in it -- but I finished reading it because it's a great story. Art Davie has written an interesting, informative, entertaining account of the beginnings of the UFC, from a perspective only he can give since he was there from the very start. His writing captures personalities more than typical histories do, so you feel like you know the people he's writing about. Art Davie explains -- in vivid and sometimes laugh-out-loud funny detail -- what it took to bring UFC from an idea to a full-fledged business, with all the sales pitches and negotiations and compromises and deals and setbacks and triumphs and sleepless nights along the way. If you've ever had a dream and wanted to turn it into a business, this story will help you believe it can be done. If you're looking for a good read with colorful true-life characters (if you read it to any kids, you might want to skip a word or two since real-life characters use real-life language), you'll find that this is one of the most engaging histories around. And of course, if you're interested in the UFC, it's a must-read and a fun one.

If you are new to the MMA world, this book is a great description of the "wild west" atmosphere of the early days. If you are an "old-timer" like myself, you will enjoy the fact that this book is loaded with nostalgia, and the weirdest trivia (i.e., "one-glove" Jimmerson forgot to bring his glove, and they had to go to a local sporting goods store to buy a set off the shelf). Also, Davie names names of the well-known fighters of the day that refused to compete in the event, and the many, many rejections from traditional martial arts organizations (wonder if they knew something?). Although the sport has evolved by leaps and bounds, to the point that today's competitors are professional athletes, there was a rawness, a purity about those old days that I miss. Don't get me wrong; the sport had to evolve, and I'm not dissatisfied about the direction it went. But the old days were special. Not before or since have I ever been as excited about a sporting event as I was in those days, dialing the 900 numbers (remember them?) to get the latest updates, since the only news was the martial arts magazines that were published so infrequently. No matter what, the book is a great read.

As someone that started watching the UFC right as it started, it was great to learn the history behind it. The discussion about what type of ring to use was interesting. How Big John got involved is finally answered. Overall, a good look at the behind the scenes.

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