



"Bad News": The Turbulent Life of Marvin Barnes, Pro Basketball's Original Renegade

Mike Carey

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Marvin "Bad News" Barnes was considered a future Hall of Fame basketball player before he even graduated from college. A standout at Providence College, where he averaged 20.7 points and 17.9 rebounds per game, he was an All-American with the world at his fingertips.

Although Barnes enjoyed two highly successful years in the American Basketball Association with the Spirits of St. Louis (winning Rookie of the Year honors and twice being named an All-Star), his career fizzled in the NBA as he wore out his welcome with the Detroit Pistons, Buffalo Braves, Boston Celtics, and San Diego Clippers in four years. His immaturity, as well as a chronic losing battle with drugs and alcohol, turned a potential superstar into a has-been by 1979. By then, his swagger was gone. So too was his game.

Written by Mike Carey, who opened his house to Barnes later in his life, this is the story of a supremely gifted athlete whose self-destructive nature led to him living on the mean streets of East San Diego for three years as a panhandler and pimp. Eventually he would serve a total of five years in prison for various felony charges, including the sale of cocaine.

Throughout his life, every time it appeared that "Bad News" had turned the corner, his demons reappeared and succeeded in luring him back into becoming a conniving dope fiend.

On September 8, 2014, Barnes finally hit rock bottom, passing away due to acute cocaine and heroin intoxication. He was sixty-two years old.

With stories and quotes from Julius Erving, Bill Walton, Larry Brown, Mike D'Antoni, and many others who crossed paths with Barnes, as well as a foreword from former Spirits announcer Bob Costas, "*Bad News*" is the story of a squandered talent who could never defeat his inner demons.

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