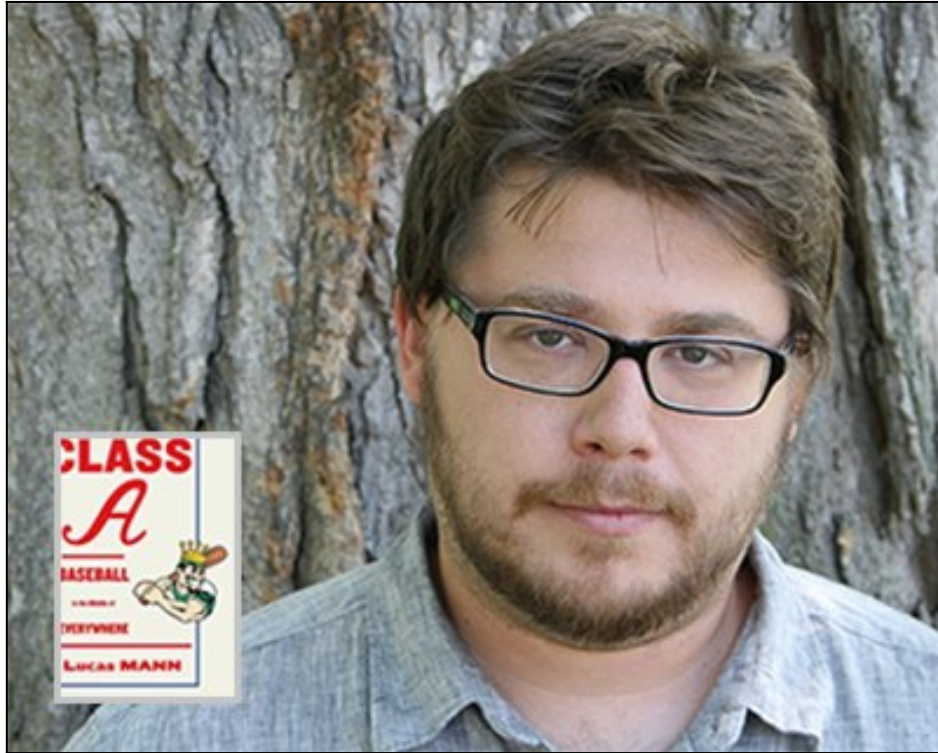


An Interview with UMass Dartmouth Professor and Author Lucas Mann



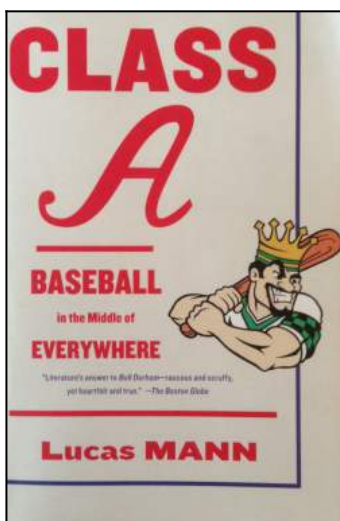
Professor Lucas Mann, author of Class A: Baseball in the Middle of Everywhere and an upcoming book called Lord Fear: A Memoir (Lucas Mann Facebook)

This past week I sat down with Professor Lucas Mann, author of Class A: Baseball in the Middle of Everywhere and an upcoming book that should be out around May 12th of next year called Lord Fear: A Memoir. Professor Mann went to Dasser College in New York, where he played baseball for a brief period before becoming an English major, eventually going on to earn his MFA at the University of Iowa which is where the work on Class A began.

“The research process was really exhausting,” Mann said upon being asked about writing Class A, “I would go to this little

town just an hour away from the university and I would just sort of drive and keep returning to this little town and keep showing up to these games, sitting in the bleachers and bugging people for interviews. And by the time I would be done, it would be so late at night that I had to ask people if I could crash on their couch, and it just felt like I was flying by the seat of my pants.”

When asked to summarize the book Mann said that, “I hope that it’s about people struggling to find meaning in their lives, which I think all books should be about, but also using baseball as a vehicle to talk about difficult economic conditions, difficult personal decisions, and how people can buy into an idea and try to find meaning through that.”



Lucas Mann's first book available online and in book stores. (Lucas Mann Facebook)

And this theme of people finding meaning through something as inconsequential as baseball is so important to the central point of his book that he reiterated it when talking about why this book would be appealing to an audience outside of baseball fans. It was surprising when he told me that ESPN and

several sports writers had panned his book giving responses that it failed to capture the joy of baseball, but as he explained, "It wasn't written purely for baseball people...the way people relate to baseball, and the way the characters in this book relate to baseball, you can substitute just about anything."

This book as with all good media is meant to present identifiable characters and through their struggles allow the audience to relate with their own struggles. It creates a sense of comradery and even hope, for example that if these people could get through this difficult thing then so can I.

"What I hope that people care about is that they like the writing," he said, "That they're moved by it, and that there's something resonant about finding your own humanity and emotions in someone else's life rather than your own."

Lord Fear however, is a much different book then Class A. In it Professor Mann explores the brief life of his troubled brother through the eyes and experiences of those who knew him.

"Originally the book looked really journalistic as more of a collection of interviews," Mann said speaking about Lord Fear, "With this book I let it get weird and more novelistic. I rewrote interviews as third person scenes, all the while weaving my own story into these scenes."

To aspiring writers he gives the following advice, "Embrace how difficult it is...whatever is, whether its nonfiction or fiction, you're throwing yourself out into the unknown with everything you write and there isn't a shortcut... the moment you are just like I want to know what happens and see where this will go. That is difficult, but it gives you the freedom that I think you need."

As a writer I can't agree more with these words. I know that whenever I write something for an article or a class, it is

hard and I do sometimes have to push myself in order to get it done, although this lesson I learned the hard way. After reading the free chapter on the Barnes and Noble site though, I'm intrigued and next time I'm down at my local library I'll probably be checking Class A out and I sincerely recommend you do the same both with Class A and Lord Fear.
