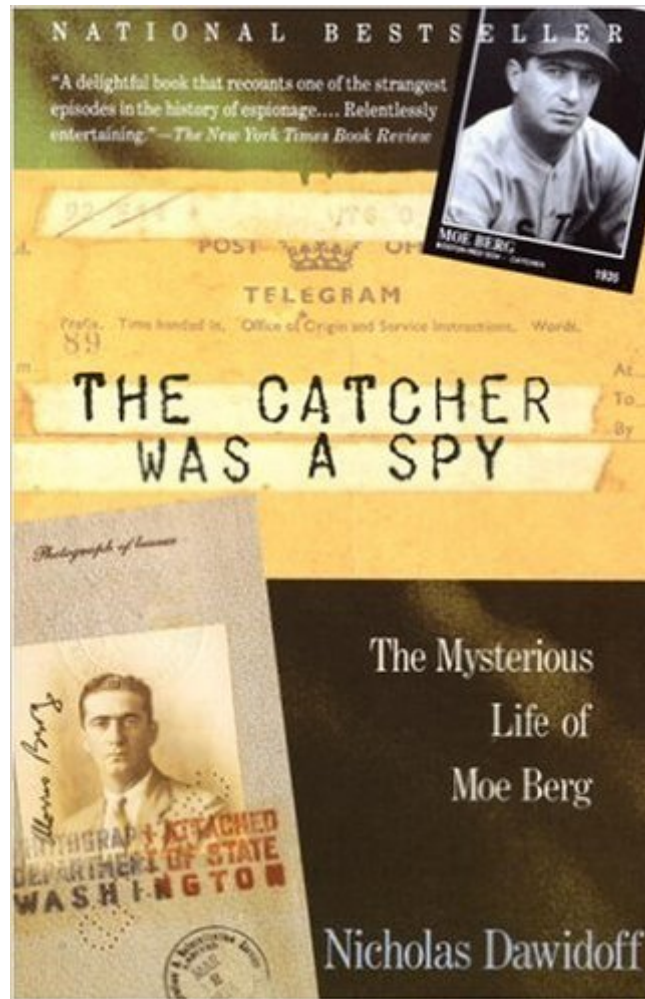


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The Catcher Was A Spy: The Mysterious Life Of Moe Berg



Synopsis

The only Major League ballplayer whose baseball card is on display at the headquarters of the CIA, Moe Berg has the singular distinction of having both a 15-year career as a catcher for such teams as the New York Robins and the Chicago White Sox and that of a spy for the OSS during World War II. Here, Dawidoff provides "a careful and sympathetic biography" (Chicago Sun-Times) of this enigmatic man. Photos.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Let's face it, most of us these days have never heard of Moe Berg, except in passing. Not a single one of the baseball games he played in still exists on videotape. He never saw action in a World Series game. By the end of his career as a ballplayer (variously for the Brooklyn Dodgers, Chicago White Sox, Cleveland Indians, Washington Senators, and Boston Red Sox), Berg played so infrequently, you might think him the Bartleby of baseball. When asked to play, the occasional second game of a doubleheader, he preferred not to. So he sat on the bench. As Nicholas Dawidoff portrays him, Berg was a bizarre man who spent the final 25 years of his life essentially homeless, living off the charity of friends and family, trading his stories of pre-war baseball and wartime espionage for the offer of clean clothes, hot meals, and warm water for a bath. Trained in the law, and a skilled linguist who spoke half a dozen languages, he refused all employment, apart from the rare consulting job or intelligence mission. While most print accounts of Berg make extravagant claims about his World War II espionage, Dawidoff boils everything down to what he can find on paper from the CIA (and its precursor agencies). The truth, as reported here, is that Berg's probing

of German atomic secrets in 1945 was vital to the war effort, but that he hardly ever worked as a spy again. He simply pretended to be one, while remaining cloaked in an increasingly insular lifestyle. The research for "The Catcher Was a Spy" is impeccable. Dawidoff interviewed hundreds of sources, and as a result the book's index is clogged with famous names -- athletes or otherwise (not too many other books quote both Ted Williams and Albert Einstein).

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