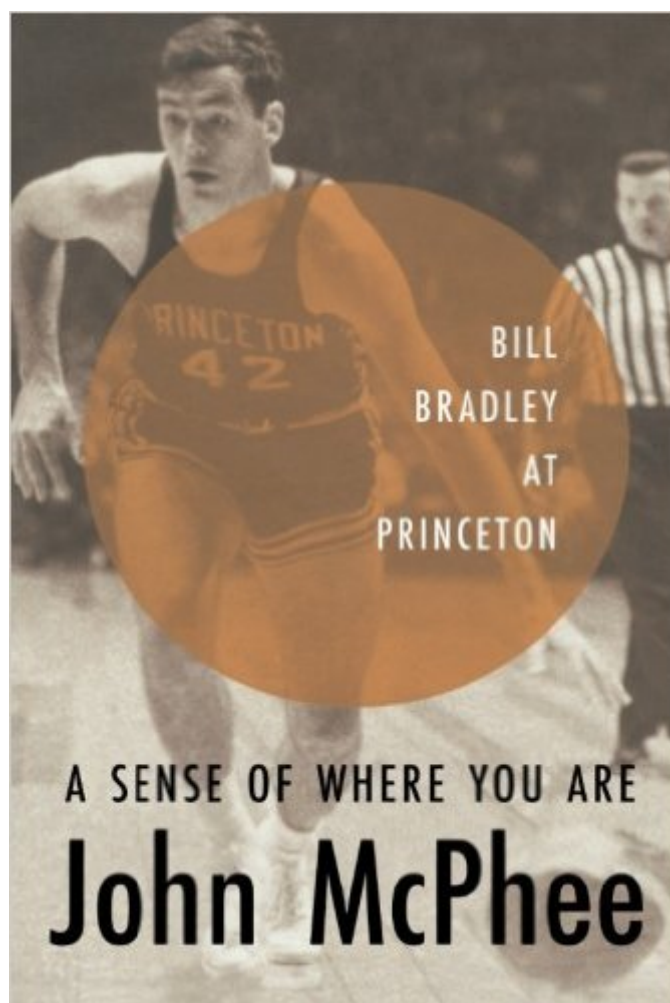


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A Sense Of Where You Are: Bill Bradley At Princeton



Synopsis

When John McPhee met Bill Bradley, both were at the beginning of their careers. *A Sense of Where You Are*, McPhee's first book, is about Bradley when he was the best basketball player Princeton had ever seen. McPhee delineates for the reader the training and techniques that made Bradley the extraordinary athlete he was, and this part of the book is a blueprint of superlative basketball. But athletic prowess alone would not explain Bradley's magnetism, which is in the quality of the man himself—his self-discipline, his rationality, and his sense of responsibility. Here is a portrait of Bradley as he was in college, before his time with the New York Knicks and his election to the U.S. Senate—a story that suggests the abundant beginnings of his professional careers in sport and politics.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

This was John McPhee's first book, so it obviously holds a lot of interest as a glimpse at the man's later style. I'm happy to say that while this is obviously McPhee -- you can tell it's him within a page or so -- it's one of the weaker McPhees. Which is praising by faint damns: McPhee's style seems to have emerged fully-formed from his forehead at *The New Yorker*, and moved continuously upward in small, methodical steps. By the time we get to *Uncommon Carriers*, which I'll review soon, the McPhee style has been honed to a keen edge. *A Sense Of Where You Are* is also notable as a first glimpse at Bill Bradley: future Rhodes Scholar, future New York Knicks basketball player, future senator, future presidential candidate. One wants to say "All of the future Bradleys were there when

McPhee wrote "A Sense of Where You Are," and that may be true: not only a great athlete, Bradley was the most admired man on the Princeton campus. And this isn't just retrospective I-knew-him-whenism: "A Sense of Where You Are" came out in 1965, before anyone could know what Bradley would become. If I tell you that this is a McPhee book, and if you've read McPhee, I can basically stop there. A McPhee book is characterized by a gentle forward motion propelled atop sentences that have no right to work as they do. The sentences are largely staccato, and in books other than this one they tend to feel like a sequence of random observations. In "The Curve of Binding Energy," for instance, you feel like you're reading a mere litany of facts about nuclear fusion which seemed interesting to John McPhee, yet by the end you really have learned a lot about the construction of a nuclear weapon, and the sentences more than merely hang together; they flow.

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