



The Short Long Book: A Portrait of Michael Long, the Man Who Changed the Australian Game

Martin Flanagan

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A portrait of Michael Long, the man who changed the Australian game.

In 1995, Aboriginal footballer Michael Long gave the AFL its 'Mandela moment'. He quietly revolutionised Australian sport by refusing to let a racial insult pass during the Anzac Day match between Essendon and Collingwood. When the overwhelmingly white football public backed a black man against a white institution (the AFL), the culture of the game flipped and the AFL became a leader in Australian race relations. A decade later, he again impacted on the nation when he set out to walk from Melbourne to Canberra to confront the Howard government over Aboriginal issues.

This is a portrait of a shy black kid from Darwin who became one of the most notable figures in the history of Australian sport, of a footballer who tore apart the 1993 grand final within seven minutes of the start, of a man known as a joker who is a serious social and political thinker. It is also the story of a white sportswriter who is taken to his limits, and a long way beyond, seeking to understand a man who can only be understood through his Aboriginality.

Funny, incisive and revealing, *The Short Long Book* is a compelling portrait of a man who could be described as the soul of the game, as seen by Australia's greatest sportswriter.

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