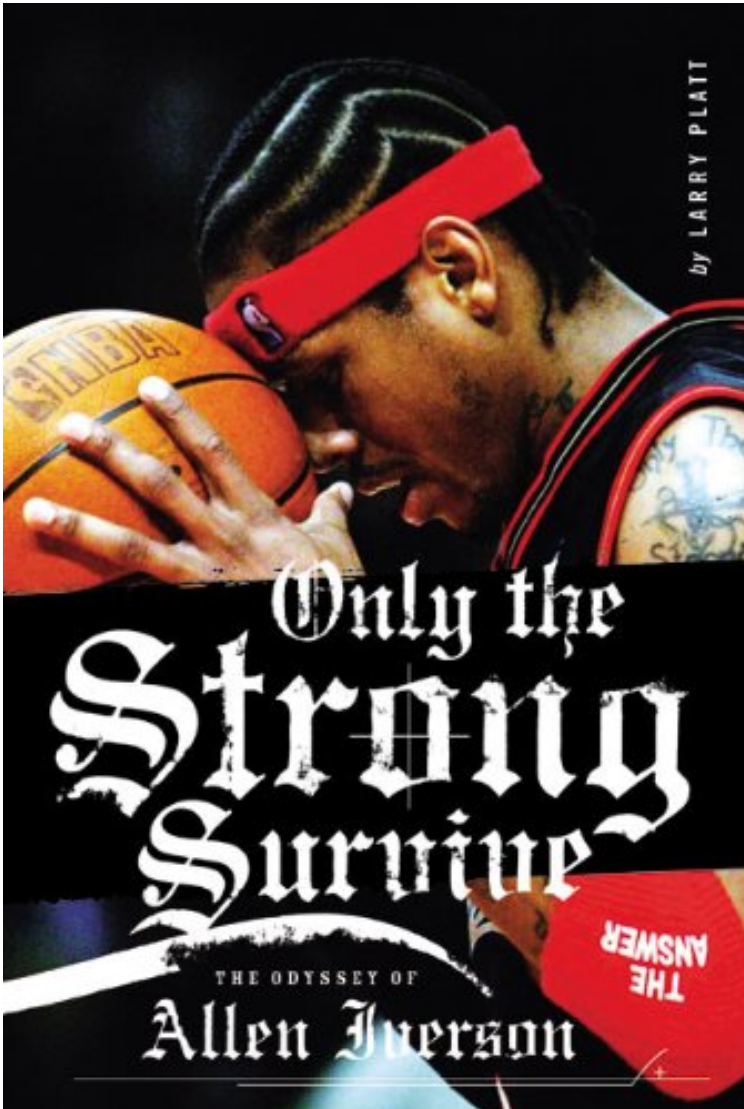


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# Only the Strong Survive: Allen Iverson Hip-Hop American Dream



*Par Larry Platt*  
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**Description :** Description du produitThere are few figures among America's media-saturated landscape that loom larger than the National Basketball Association's undeniable superstar Allen Iverson. He was the first overall pick of the 1996 NBA draft, and the spotlight has not left him since. Defiantly tattooed, with his hair in cornrows, the six-foot Philadelphia 76ers point guard has been vilified by a sports press still fawning over Michael Jordan's non-threatening, clean-cut visage. From Iverson's rap sheet to his rap album, from his on-court feats to his off-court antics, breathless fans and journalists alike seem determined to track his every move. Part sports star, part antihero, part hip-hop icon, Iverson has managed to cross over into the mainstream of American culture -- without compromise.It wasn't long before Iverson's prodigious athletic skills became apparent. Raised in poverty, with his father in prison, Iverson retreated to his local

playgrounds and found escape from the all-too-common woes of the inner-city dweller. In one summer alone, eight of his friends were killed in shootings. But Iverson's talent simply could not be denied, and basketball remained the one constant in his tumultuous existence. And so Iverson, despite all odds, rose. A now-infamous scuffle in a bowling alley led to near race riots in Iverson's hometown of Newport News, Virginia, resulting in his being sentenced to jail time during high school. Eventually, Governor Douglas Wilder granted him clemency, the conviction was overturned on appeal, and his ascent continued.

Georgetown coach John Thompson stepped in, giving Iverson a berth on his team at a time when other universities were too skittish to offer the same. It was their loss. After two tremendous years at Georgetown, Iverson declared himself eligible for the NBA draft. And the rest is history. In *Only the Strong Survive*, Larry Platt offers up the first full portrait of a complicated and intensely private star, a man whose loyalty to his family, the streets, and his friends (a group he calls Cru Thik) trumps any other concerns -- and that includes multimillion-dollar endorsement deals. Possessing an almost otherworldly talent, Allen Iverson is determined that everyone -- his mom, his homeboys, his cousins -- benefit from it. By embracing his roots and refusing to conform, Iverson has won fans and admirers far beyond the boundaries of the sports world. Filled with exclusive interview material and unprecedented access to many of Iverson's inner circle, *Only the Strong Survive* provides the first in-depth look at the truth behind this newly minted legend.

Part sports star, part antihero, part hip-hop icon, Allen Iverson has managed to cross over into the mainstream of American culture -- without compromise. Defiantly tattooed, with his hair in cornrows, the six-foot Philadelphia 76ers point guard is one of the most recognizable and controversial stars of the sports world. His meteoric rise from a troubled childhood in the ghetto to NBA superstardom has been marked by five straight playoff appearances, including a finals berth in 2001 and an MVP award. From his rap sheet to his rap album, fans and journalists alike hound his every move. But never before has a biographer presented a full portrait of this complicated and intensely private star -- a man whose loyalty to his family, the streets, and his friends trumps any other concern. Filled with exclusive interview material and unprecedented access to many of Iverson's inner circle, *Only the Strong Survive* is the first in-depth look at the truth behind this newly minted legend. Like his subject, Platt is at his best while running the court, his prose smooth and economical as he describes Iverson's explosive, creative playing style. A longtime journalist whose sports writings have been collected in *New Jack Jocks: Rebels, Race and the American Athlete*, Platt writes with an authority that Iverson fans will appreciate. But the compelling rags-to-riches biography of the controversial NBA superstar is bogged down by Platt's repetitive, heavy-handed critiques of the relationship between black athletes, their marketers and the media. Platt repeatedly outlines how white middle class America is not yet ready for Iverson's hip-hop persona, which is "too in-your-face, too black" -- a provocative yet unoriginal insight that quickly grows old. Intent on portraying Iverson as a misunderstood truant with a heart of gold, Platt misses the opportunity to create a thorough, insightful portrait. In doing so, he succumbs to the very weakness he criticizes in so many of his fellow journalists: losing the player to the hype. 16-page color insert with bw photos throughout. Copyright 2002 Reed Business Information, Inc. Booklist

Diminutive basketball superstar Iverson is known around the NBA as "the Answer," but throughout his career, there have always been more questions than answers. His impoverished childhood in Newport News, Virginia, seemed destined to lead him nowhere. His mother was 15 when he was born, his biological father was incarcerated for most of Allen's childhood, his de facto father was a small-time drug dealer, and many of Allen's peers succumbed to street violence -- eight were shot in one summer alone. But Iverson's incredible physical gifts and mental toughness pulled him through; he was named the NBA's most valuable player in 2000. Platt conducted dozens of interviews with Iverson and his family and friends to compile a portrait of a young man who celebrates his ghetto roots and refuses to eschew his childhood posse as he resists the NBA marketing machine's attempts to sanitize him for its primarily white fan base. This is a balanced, sympathetic portrait of a complex individual who has overcome a great deal but whose most significant struggles are yet to come. Wes Lukowsky Copyright American

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