



# Bill Hartack: The Bittersweet Life of a Hall of Fame Jockey

Bill Christine

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Bill Hartack won the Kentucky Derby five times, and seemed to hate every moment. "If only Bill could have gotten along with people the way he got along with horses," a trainer said. His impoverished upbringing didn't help: his mother was killed in an automobile accident; the family home burned down; his father was murdered by a girlfriend; and he was estranged from his sisters for most of his life. Larry King, his friend, said it was just as well Hartack never married, because it wouldn't have lasted. Hartack was one of racing's most accomplished jockeys. But he was an inveterate grouch and gave the press a hard time. At 26, he was inducted into the Hall of Fame. Whenever the media tried to bury him, he would win another Derby. At the end of his life, he was found alone in a cabin in the Texas hinterlands.

Drawn from dozens of interviews and conversations with family members, friends and enemies, this book provides a full account of Hartack's turbulent life.



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