

David Benjamin's Award-Winning The Last Kid Picked Series Proves Childhood Memories Never Really Grow Up

David Benjamin's award-winning Coming of Age Quartet still resonates with readers through its honest, humorous reflections on childhood

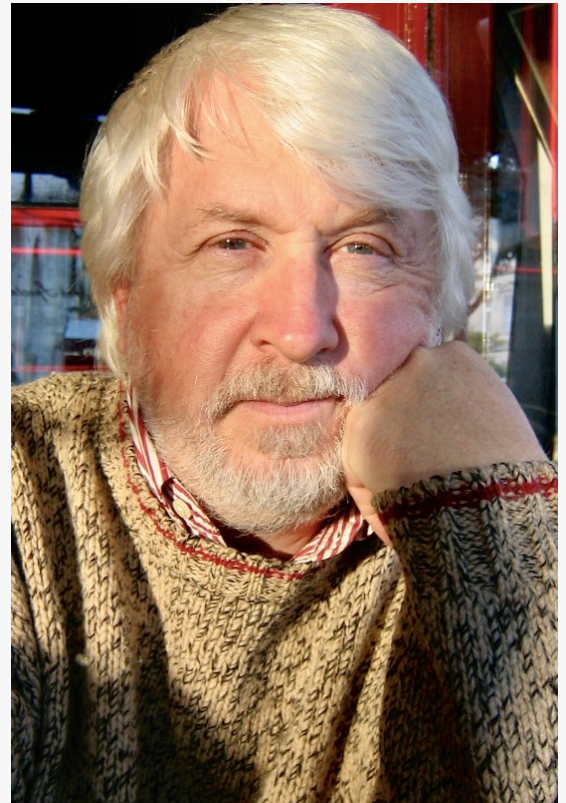
LOS ANGELES, CA, UNITED STATES, August 17, 2026 /EINPresswire.com/ -- For generations of children, boredom was an invitation to go outside, pick a team, make up the rules, get into a little trouble, and somehow make it home for dinner. [David Benjamin](#) captures that disappearing version of childhood in his award-winning The Last Kid Picked Series, where humor, mischief, and the awkward realities of growing up continue to resonate with readers years after the stories are first written.

"Kids were allowed to be kids," says Benjamin. "They had the freedom to explore, make mistakes, get into trouble, and figure things out on their own. That kind of childhood shaped who we became."

David Benjamin calls it "freelance childhood," and it is at the heart of his award-winning The Last Kid Picked Series, a collection of fictionalized coming-of-age stories that continues to resonate with readers years after the first book was published.

The series begins with [The Life and Times of the Last Kid Picked](#), originally published by Random House in 2002 and later released in a revised edition. Drawing from Benjamin's childhood in 1950s Wisconsin, the story captures a world of sandlots, backyards, friendships, rivalries, mischief, and the freedom to figure things out without an adult supervising every move.

"I realized that I had tapped into a coming-of-age culture that has disappeared from American life," says Benjamin. "I call it 'freelance childhood.' Kids picked their own teams and officiated their own games in sandlots, backyards and playgrounds where grownups were not only not present, they were no more welcome than strange men offering candy."



David Benjamin

But nostalgia is only part of the appeal.

Benjamin's stories explore the awkwardness, humor, embarrassment, loneliness, and triumph that come with growing up. The details may belong to another generation, but the emotions remain familiar.

"Everybody has a childhood, and everybody has memories that stay with them," says Benjamin. "You remember the kid you were, the people you knew, the things you did, and the things you wish you had done differently. Those memories become part of the story of your life."

That combination of humor and honesty helps the series continue finding readers long after its original publication.

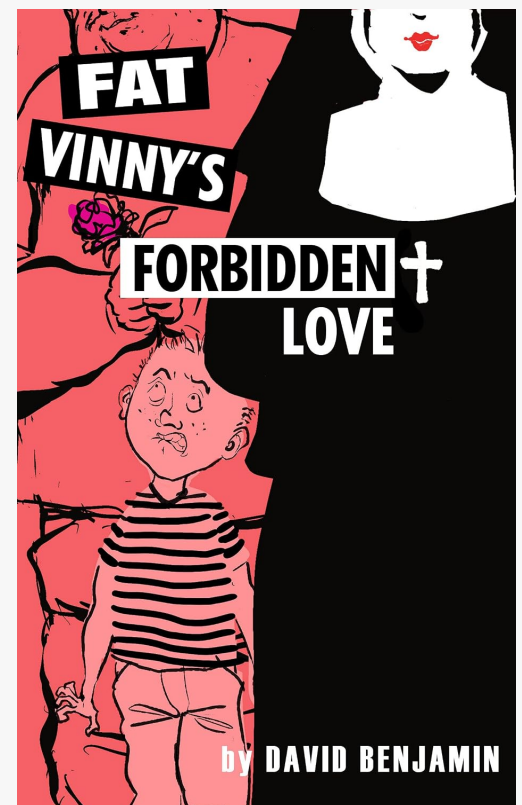
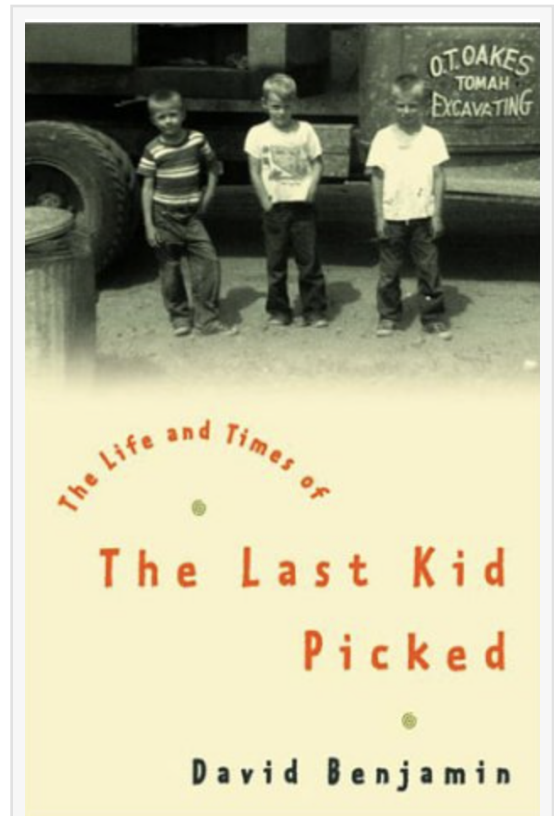
"A lot of what happens to us as children seems small at the time, but those moments can become enormous in our memories," says Benjamin. "I wanted to capture that honestly, without pretending childhood was always sweet or uncomplicated."

The series continues with *Fat Vinny's Forbidden Love*, *They Shot Kennedy* and *Summer of '68*, creating a fictionalized coming-of-age journey set against the changing social landscape of midcentury America.

"I wasn't trying to write a history lesson," states Benjamin. "I was trying to tell stories about kids being kids. But when you look back at those stories, you realize that they also tell you something about the time, the culture and the people who lived through it."

The series has earned critical recognition as well. *They Shot Kennedy* won the Midwest Book Awards' grand prize for Literary, Contemporary and Historical Fiction in 2021. Jessica Powers of *Maverick Reviews* calls the work "a wonderful, playful romp" with "unexpected twists and turns into the delightfully and hilariously macabre."

For Benjamin, however, the lasting appeal comes down to something much simpler: childhood



leaves a mark.

"Childhood may end, but the friendships, experiences, and moments that shape us often stay with us long into adulthood," says Benjamin. "That may be why The Last Kid Picked Series continues to connect with readers. The world I remember may have changed, but the experience of growing up — wanting to belong, getting embarrassed, making friends, making mistakes, and trying to figure out where you fit — remains remarkably universal."

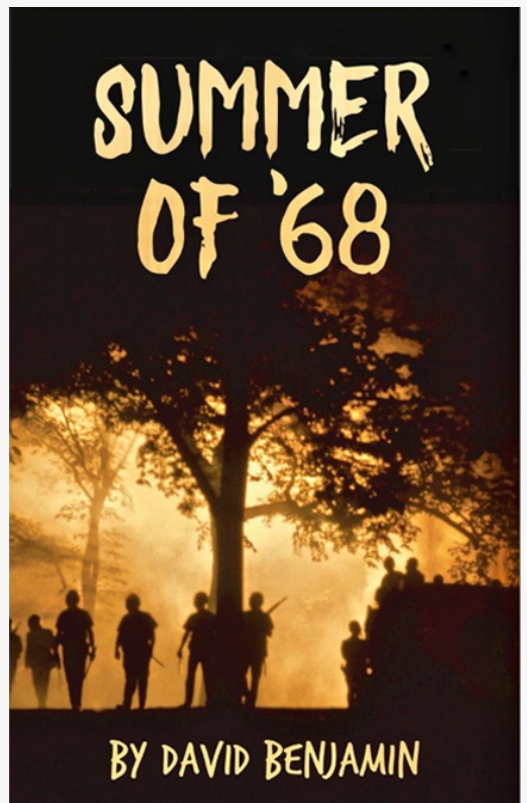
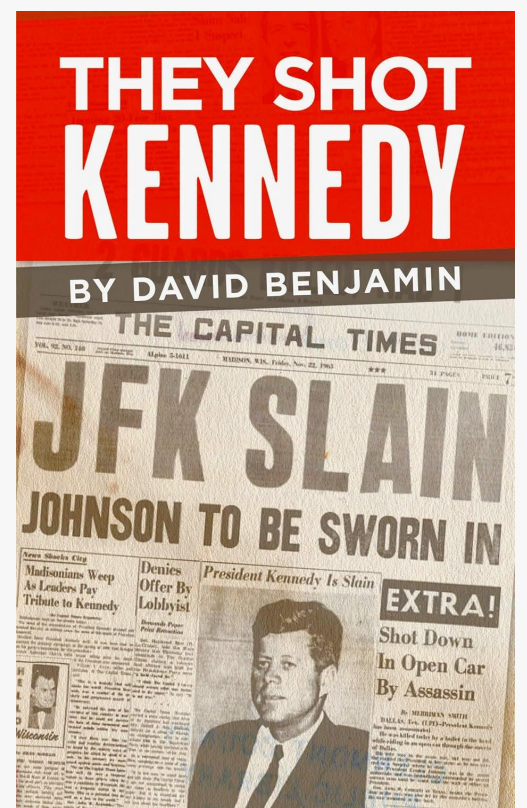
About the Author

David Benjamin is an award-winning author, journalist, and founder of Last Kid Books, an independent publishing imprint he launched in 2019. His diverse body of fiction and nonfiction has earned more than 60 literary awards, including the Silver Medal for Humor in the Independent Book Publishers Association's prestigious Ben Franklin Awards in 2022 for *Fat Vinny's Forbidden Love*. His journalism has appeared in publications including *The New York Times*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Chicago Tribune*, and *Japan Times Weekly*.

To learn more, visit: <https://lastkidbooks.com/>

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