

## Present at the Creation

*My Life in the NFL and the Rise of America's Game*

UPTON BELL WITH RON BORGES

### From the belly of the NFL beast

To understand how the NFL became the sports phenomenon it is today, you can study its history or you can live its history as an active participant. Upton Bell grew up at the knee of the NFL's first great commissioner, his father, the legendary Bert Bell, who not only saved the game from financial ruin after World War II but was one of its greatest innovators. Coining the phrase "On any given Sunday," Bert invented the pro football draft and proposed sudden death rules.

*Present at the Creation* details Bell's firsthand experiences, which started as he watched his father draw up the league schedule each year at the kitchen table using dominos. There he learned the importance of parity, which is a hallmark of the league's success, and also how to create it. Over the past fifty-three years, Bell has been an owner, a general manager, a personnel executive, a scouting director for two Super Bowl teams, a television commentator and analyst, and a talk-radio host. He has seen the NFL from the inside and has experienced many of the most important moments in NFL history.

Bell was player-personnel director for the Baltimore Colts when the team played in three championship games and appeared in two Super Bowls (1968 and 1970). At thirty-three, he became the youngest general manager in NFL history when he joined the Patriots in that role in 1971. He left the NFL in 1974 to compete against it, joining the upstart World Football League as owner of the Charlotte Hornets, which lasted just two years. In 1976 Bell began his thirty-nine-year career as a radio and TV talk-show host, yet he remains a football guy who was in the middle of the game's most significant moments and knows that half the story has never been told, until now.

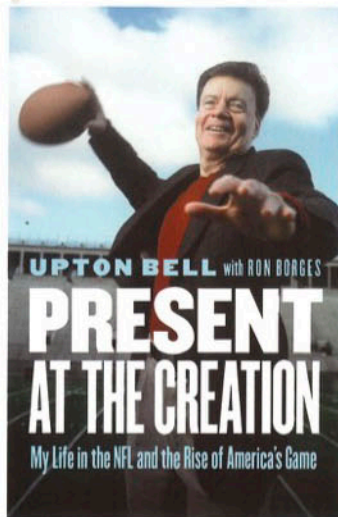
Upton Bell's first job in football was as a sixty-five-dollar-a-week training-camp attendant for the Baltimore Colts in 1960. Today he lives in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Ron Borges has covered the NFL since 1974. He is the lead sports columnist at the *Boston Herald*, as well as a member of the forty-eight-person Pro Football Hall of Fame selection committee and the nine-person senior selection committee.

Top left: WBZ Radio. *Calling All Sports*. Bell with Hall of Fame Cleveland Browns quarterback Otto Graham. Photo by and courtesy of Bob Arnold.

Bottom left: In 1959 (left to right): Bert Bell Jr.; John Unitas, first Bert Bell Award winner from Maxwell Club; Richie Lucas, Penn State quarterback and Maxwell Award College Player of the Year; and Upton Bell. Courtesy Upton Bell.

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"It didn't start with Joe Namath or Joe Montana or Tom Brady leading an impossible comeback in Super Bowl LI in Houston. *This* is the history of professional football in America. *This* is who ever played football, played fantasy football, or just tossed a few bucks in an office pool, this is the book for you. Upton Bell lived it and Ron Borges covered it. A stronger combo than Belichick and Brady."—Dan Shagheny, *Boston Globe* columnist and *New York Times* bestselling author

"This is a fascinating behind-the-scenes story. . . . A must-read for any fan of pro football."—Ernie Accorsi, former general manager of the New York Giants

"An extremely informative, definitive work by a dynamic personality who witnessed firsthand the development of the NFL, from his father's contributions to his own personal achievements that helped cement the foundation of what has today become the most popular sport in the United States."—Ron Wolf, former general manager of the Green Bay Packers and Pro Football Hall of Fame member

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