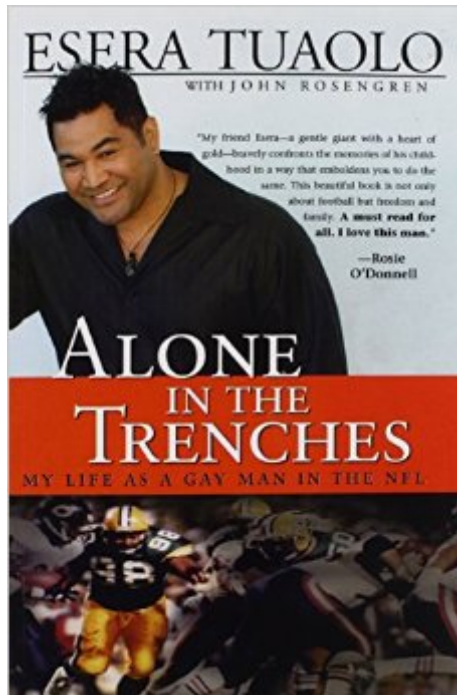


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# Alone In The Trenches: My Life As A Gay Man In The NFL



## Synopsis

This is Esera Tuaolo's own searing story of terror and hope. A Samoan raised on a Hawaiian banana plantation, he had a natural talent, football. He went on to play for five NFL teams: the Green Bay Packers, the Minnesota Vikings, the Jacksonville Jaguars, the Carolina Panthers, and the Atlanta Falcons in the 1999 Super Bowl. But for the nine years he played professional football he lived in terror that when his face flashed upon the TV screen, someone would divulge his darkest secret. Esera Tuaolo is gay. *Alone in the Trenches* takes you inside the homophobic world of professional football and describes fears that almost drove him to suicide. He evokes heartbreak--how his older brother, Tua, died of AIDS--and hope when, Esera, a deeply devout Christian fell in love and started a family. "Tuaolo emerges in these pages as a complex, intellectually curious and fascinating individual defined neither by his choice of career nor by his sexual orientation." --Booklist "Tough, tender and brutally honest." --Robert Lipsyte, former New York Times sports columnist "Even I was not prepared for his amazing life story." --Billy Bean, author of *Going the Other Way*

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

The intolerance of gays in high profile professional sports is brought to searing life by former NFL player Esera Tuaolo's revealing autobiography. On the field, he was the worst nightmare for opposing quarterbacks who had to face the six-foot-three, 260-pound defensive nose tackle. Tuaolo had nine successful years in the NFL, played for five different teams starting with the Green Bay

Packers and hit his peak as an Atlanta Falcon at the 1999 Super Bowl (even though his team lost to the Denver Broncos). Co-written with sportswriter John Rosengren, the book reflects the ease of an athlete when it comes to the details of training camps, game plays and the often wild carousing that comes with being a football player. Starting with his days as a defensive lineman at Oregon State, Tuaolo's professional accomplishments are all the more impressive in light of his needful beginnings. These sections would please anyone with a love of the game. However, what makes the book soar is the unblinking honesty of Tuaolo's personal agony in hiding his sexual orientation during the entirety of his football career. Having just read Kenji Yoshino's illuminating book, "Covering: The Hidden Assault on Our Civil Rights", I am even more convinced that Tuaolo's self-imposed stay in the closet was both necessary in an environment particularly hostile to gays and destructive for the torment it produced in his life. The painful covering manifested itself through the hard-drinking, pot-smoking phases in his life, all done to mask the fear and panic around living a lie. There was no unconditional success in his life, as each success produced a worry of equal stature in his mind.

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