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June 3

Watch Out, World

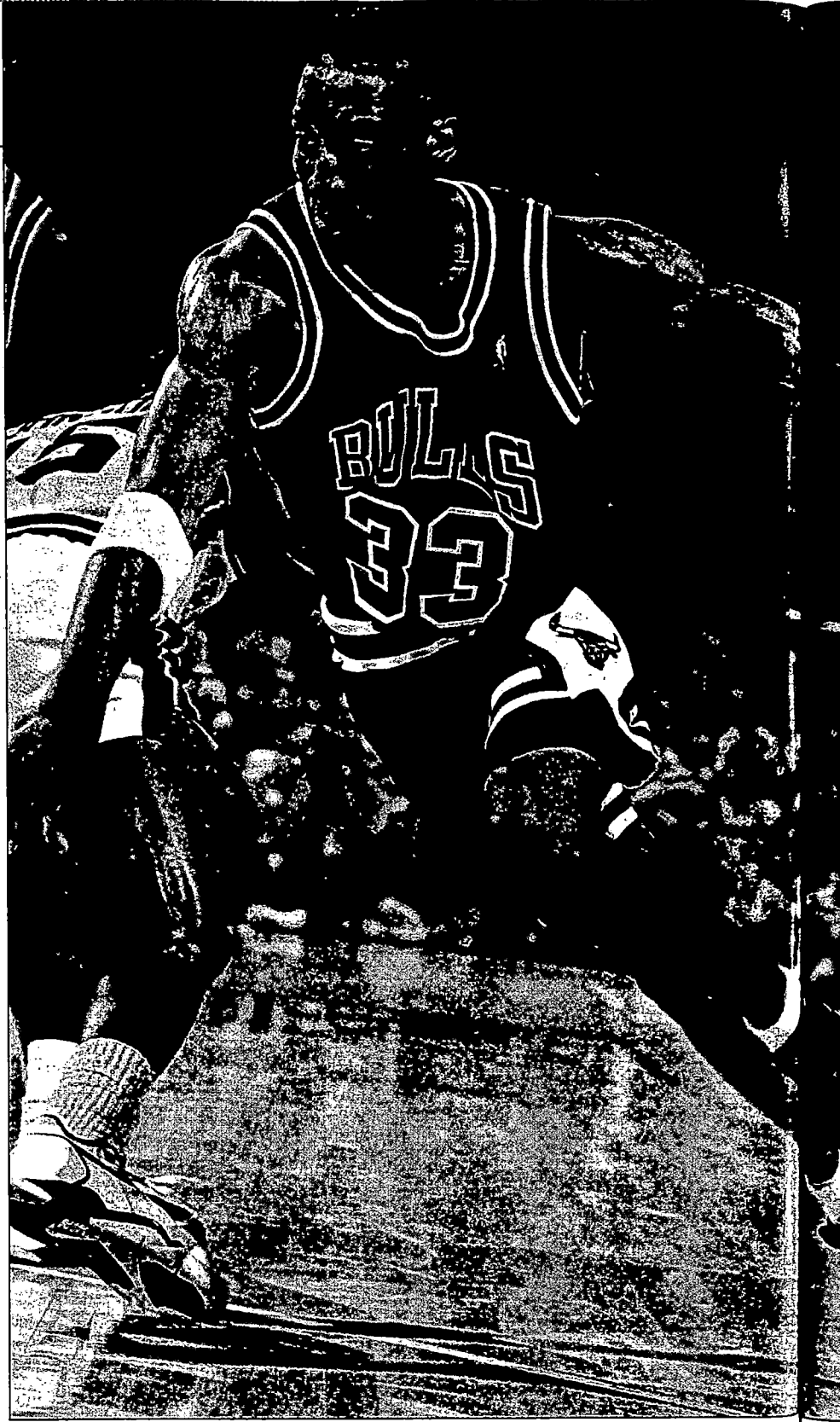
The newly assertive Bulls roared into the Finals by sweeping the Pistons

by JACK McCALLUM

MY, WHAT A THOROUGHLY enjoyable time the Chicago Bulls had in their Eastern Conference finals against the Detroit Pistons. By the time the Bulls wrapped up a four-game sweep with a 115-94 victory on Monday afternoon at The Palace of Auburn Hills, they had become the haughty hunters, forcing the Pistons into the unfamiliar, and singularly unappetizing, role of the humble hunted. Three straight years of postseason frustration were all but obliterated by Chicago's sweep, which almost no one had considered even a remote possibility.

Talk about reversals of fortune. The Bulls could only chuckle as the Pistons complained about prejudicial treatment by the referees. Detroit forward John Salley said the Bulls were guilty of "subliminal seduction" of the officials, while teammate Mark Aguirre reached for a barnyard metaphor, suggesting that the refs were watching the wolf "while the weasel got the eggs." Whew!

The Detroit players seemed bewildered by their failure to crack the energetic Bulls defense. "We're off-balance,"



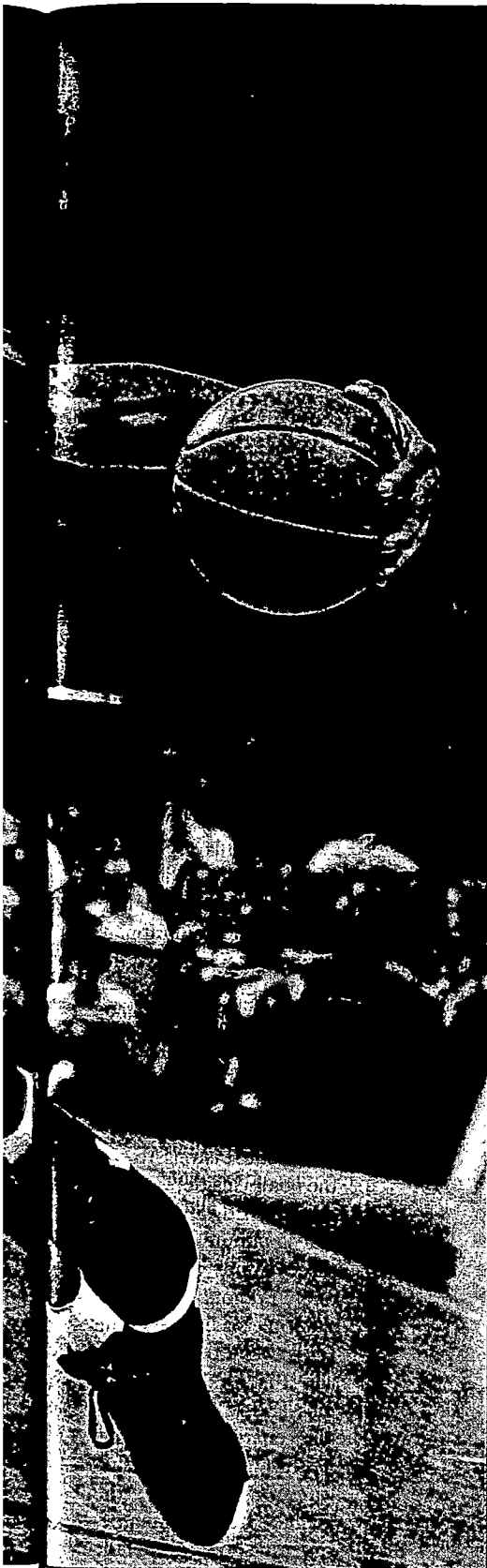
said guard Isiah Thomas. O.K. "They're taking away things that we're used to having work for us," said center Bill Laimbeer. Right. "There is something missing, but I don't know what it is," said forward Dennis Rodman. A lot of head-scratching in those statements.

And wasn't it a strange turnaround for the much-maligned Chicago reserves, usually so ineffectual against the Pistons,

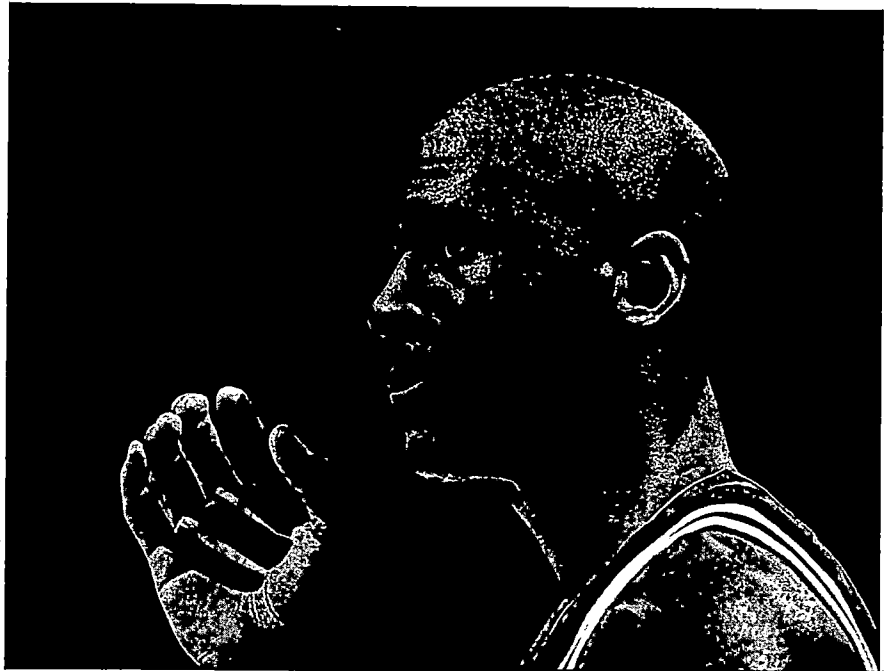
not only to make solid on-the-court contributions but also talk a little trash? Jeez, even center Will Perdue—Will Perdue!—was getting on Detroit's nerves, not to mention the offensive boards.

The Pistons didn't so much drop the ball as the Bulls knocked it out of their hands and ran with it. As ready as the aging Pistons might have been to surrender Eastern supremacy, Chicago was equally

Not much
here



NATHANIEL BUTLER/INBA PHOTOS



In Game 3, Pippen slashed through the Pistons for 26 points while Jordan was sweating out a routinely stellar 33-point contribution.

actly that. The Pistons were so shaken after their 113-107 loss in Game 3 last Saturday at The Palace that a couple of prominent Detroit players, Laimbeer and guard Vinnie Johnson, used a backdoor maneuver to skip out on postgame interviews. The Pistons had tried no such inventive strategy *during* the game, however, and only the individual brilliance of Thomas (29 points) and Johnson (25 points) kept it from being a rout.

"We're not used to this," said a dejected Joe Dumars after he scored just 11 points in 47 minutes in Game 3, "and it's a terrible feeling."

The Bulls came into the series with two game plans, one mental, one strategic. Ultimately, the latter plan, which involved using defensive principles that turned the Piston offense from patient to panicked, was the more significant. Still, the former was a little more interesting.

Chicago decided to be aggressive in dealing with the Pistons' intimidation. Throw some verbal garbage back at them once in a while, a little-known specialty of Michael Jordan's. Return the bumps and pushes. Don't back down. Yet at the same time, don't get drawn into an all-out physical confrontation, because that will favor Detroit. The Pistons thought the Bulls, particularly Jordan and coach Phil Jackson, went out of their way in their public

comments to plant in the officials' minds the idea that Detroit is a dirty team, thus causing some quick whistles. Chicago insisted it was only speaking the truth, and—let's face it—calling the Pistons dirty is not exactly a novel charge. At any rate, the Bulls were the benefactors of flagrant foul calls (each resulted in two free throws and possession) on three occasions during their 105-97 victory in Game 2 on May 21 at Chicago Stadium; the first two calls were plainly ridiculous.

Whether it was the referees, or Chicago's maturity, or a combination of the two, the extracurricular activity that the Pistons did engage in during the series had a curiously empty aspect to it. There, for example, was Rodman, in the fourth period of Game 2, giving Perdue one, two, three shots in the back before the mild-mannered Perdue finally retaliated, resulting in a double-technical foul. But what did the shoving really accomplish except to demean Rodman, the NBA's finest one-on-one defensive player? In the first period of Game 3, Aguirre, looking for a foul call that never came, punched the ball out of the grasp of the Bulls' Horace Grant in a dead-ball situation. Perhaps next time Mark should try hiding behind the scorer's table and lobbing spitballs. Having gotten away with that, Aguirre shoved Grant in the open floor in full view of the officials less than a minute later. This time he got the T. Later, when the Bulls were 50 seconds from victory, Rodman slammed the ball into Jordan's

ready to seize it. Some likened the situation to a once-timid schoolboy (Chicago) who finally summoned up his nerve to stand up to the bully (Detroit); once he did it, it got easier and easier. But that is too simplistic. The bully tag sells Detroit short as a basketball team. To handle the Pistons, a team has to outprepare, out-think, outhustle and outplay them. And through most of the series Chicago did ex-

stomach, drawing yet another technical. "When we keep our composure," said Grant, "I think it frustrates them."

The Pistons just couldn't win the psychological battle, no matter how hard they tried. Between Games 2 and 3, Salley went after Jordan with some pointed criticism, trying to puncture the Jordan image and, at the same time, restore some Piston pugnacity.

"Everybody's into this high-tech thing now," said Salley. "High-tech sneakers, high-tech players . . . that's Michael, and for some reason he thinks just because he's the greatest player in the world, we're supposed to come to the game and just watch him. Hey, we're not here to watch him. We're here to win a championship. We play an intense style and it's going to be even more intense on Saturday. Maybe

Salley mugged for the camera at Pippen's expense in the Bulls' 113-107 Game 3 victory.

one of the most intense games you've ever seen."

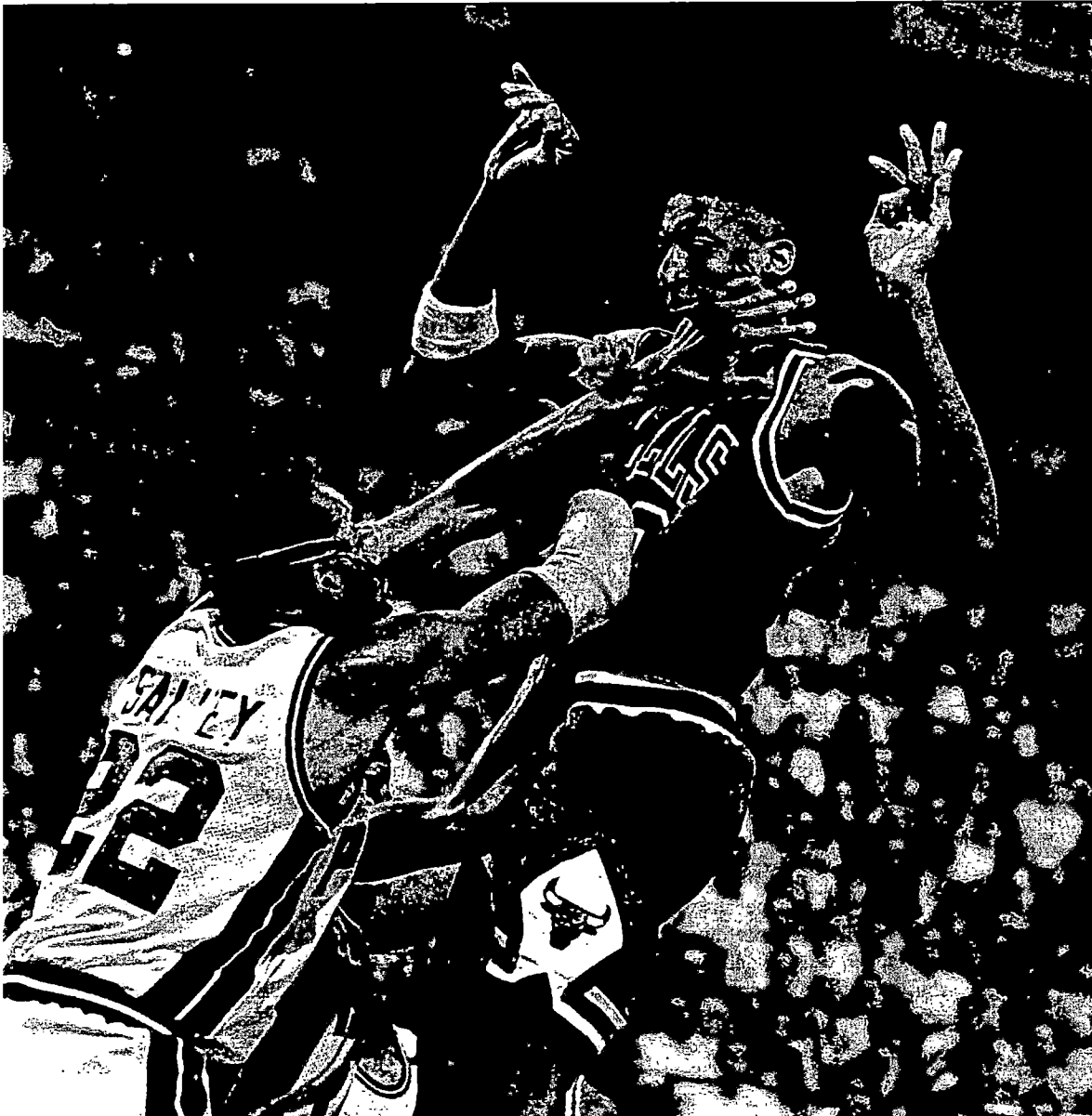
It was not, certainly not from the Pistons' perspective. It was the Bulls who came out aggressively and built a 24-8 lead. One play in particular epitomized their early intensity. The play spoke to the strategic aspect of Chicago's game plan, too. Five minutes into the game, Bulls forward Scottie Pippen and guard John Paxson trapped Thomas in the backcourt, forcing him to give the ball up to forward James Edwards in the open floor, where Edwards is least comfortable. Jordan ran at Edwards from the side, nearly jumped completely over him—must have been some kind of high-tech move—and swatted the ball away, a move that led to a transition jumper by Paxson.

That was Chicago's defense at its best—creating opportunities for the offense. The defensive principles that the Bulls brought into the Detroit series were

not nearly as structured as the famed "Jordan Rules" that Detroit had used to discombobulate Jordan in past years, but they were well executed and effective. Of primary importance was Grant's uncanny ability to "recover," i.e. to supply pressure at the point of the ball and also get back to defense an open man. The open-court defensive abilities of Jordan and Pippen—"our snapping, scratching and snarling Dobermans," as assistant coach Johnny Bach aptly calls them—were another factor. And then there were Paxson and center Bill Cartwright, playing what, in the Bulls' scheme, passes for conventional, non-gambling defense.

In general, the Bulls' goal was to increase the tempo of the game and get the Pistons scrambling on offense, rather than allow Detroit to set up in a halfcourt situation. Edwards, for example, is almost helpless as an offensive player unless he gets the ball in the low post where he can devastate his opponent with a fallaway jumper. The Bulls didn't let him do that. They ran Pippen, Jordan or Grant at the Piston point guards—Bach likened it to "getting to the quarterback"—and took away the normal halfcourt passing angles that enabled the Pistons to get the ball inside. Consequently, Edwards played just 45 minutes in the first three games and scored only 11 points.

More specifically, the Bulls wanted to squelch the Pistons' patented pick-and-roll, which usually enables either the Detroit guards to penetrate or Laimbeer, the league's best big-man perimeter shooter, to fade off the pick and spot up for a jumper. Chicago was determined to stop both moves, no matter what other offensive options opened up as a result. Maybe the situation called for a double-team on the guards and a third player to rotate up on Laimbeer. Maybe it



NATHANIEL BUTLER/NBA PHOTOS



Laimbeer (above right) did the Lambada with Perdue in Game 2, while Jordan and Cartwright put the squeeze on Thomas in Game 3.

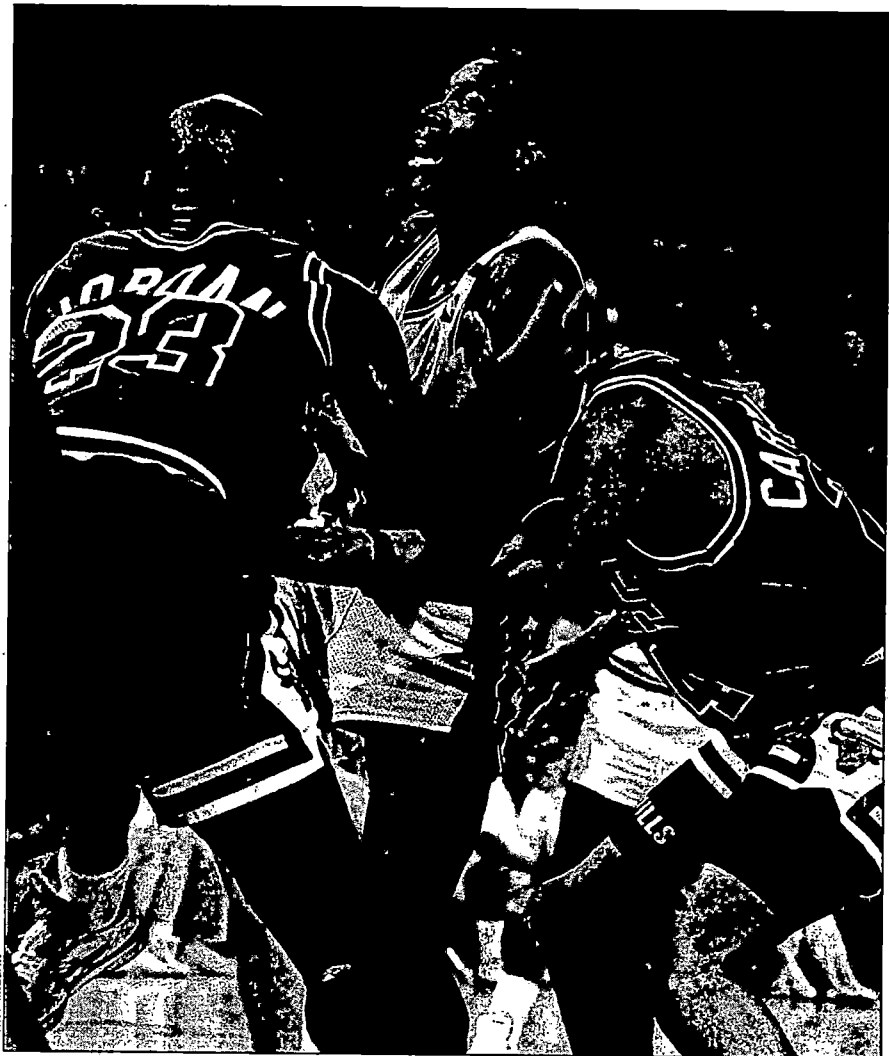
called for a quick defender, like Grant, to double-team the guard for a moment, then recover quickly and dash back to Laimbeer. Maybe it called for strange matchups, like, say, having Grant and Cartwright double-team the guard while Paxson checked Laimbeer, who is almost a foot taller. The Bulls didn't care because, in that case, the guards couldn't deliver the ball to Laimbeer in the spot where he is most comfortable. The constant and aggressive double-teaming and scramble-rotating threw Detroit off-balance. "We wanted to play this well defensively," said Paxson, "but I don't think anyone thought we would." And when the Pistons did make an adjustment that beat the Chicago defense, such as going with the three-guard lineup that gave them a marked edge in quickness in Game 3, they had to pull other personnel off the floor (sometimes Rodman, sometimes Laimbeer, quite often Edwards) and sacrifice some of the things that had made them champions—size, defensive presence, offensive rebounding.

"There was nothing magical about our defense," said Jordan, who scored 33 points, 14 of them in the final period, to lead the Bulls in Game 3. "It's just that we had never made the physical and mental

commitment to do those things before. We made them crumble, made them scramble, made them come apart. That's always what they've done to us in the past."

Now it remains to be seen if the Bulls can impose their defensive will on the Western winner, be it the Los Angeles Lakers or the Portland Trail Blazers. In either case, Chicago will come into the NBA Finals with plenty of momentum and confidence, having lost only one game (to the Philadelphia 76ers) in three Eastern series. The Bulls are a lot better than most observers had thought—including one Michael Jeffrey Jordan, whose constant complaint during this and recent seasons was that Chicago general manager Jerry Krause had not supplied him with enough help.

"I can reconsider my words," said Jordan, when asked after Game 3 about his criticism of Krause. "I can even eat them."





**Sports
Illustrated**

JUNE 17, 1991

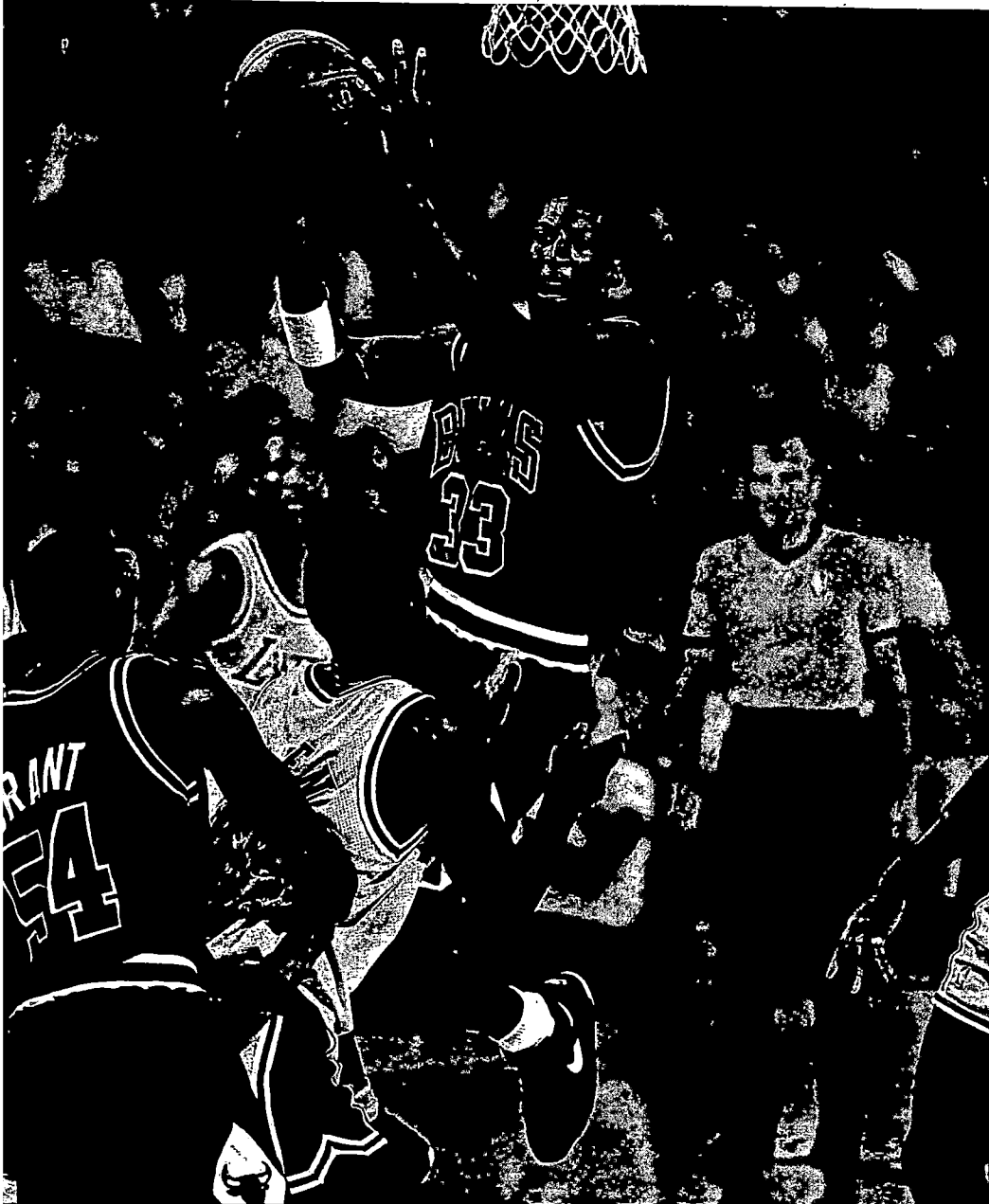
*Michael Jordan
and the Bulls
soared to a 3-1
lead over L.A. in
the NBA Finals*

by JACK McCALLUM

HIS BIGGEST



In Game 3, Jordan jump-shot his way to victory for the Bulls in Game 3, nailing LA with key layups.



With Pippen (33) catching the Lakers flat-footed en route to 19 points in Game 3 . . .

Los Angeles bench. It was Abdul-Jabbar's third trip to The Forum this season, but the first in which Laker coach Mike Dunleavy wished he could rush him into the game. Add Elgin Baylor and Jerry West, and maybe it would have been a contest.

For Magic, the first four games were the here-today-gone-tomorrow Finals, a series replete with mysterious disappearances. Johnson was for the most part remarkably (though not spectacularly) consistent, but part of his energy was expended—futilely, it seemed—making sure that his mates did not slip through the looking glass or tumble down some rabbit hole. Forward James Worthy, bothered by a badly sprained right ankle that as of late Sunday night had left him questionable for Game 5, wasn't the reliable performer of past playoff campaigns, particularly on the boards, where he had a total of nine rebounds in Games 2, 3 and 4. Magic's backcourt running mate, Byron Scott, made just five of 18 shots; the Lakers didn't know whether to scold him for not being offensive-minded or thank him for not shooting more. Nor were the Lakers getting much help from Scott's backup, Terry Teagle, who made just three of 13 shots. Magic, who gave back \$100,000 of his salary last year to enable L.A. to fit the newly obtained Teagle under its salary cap, just might ask for his money back.

Thank goodness for Sam Perkins. Right, Sam? SAM? SAM! Uh-oh. After playing so well in Games 1, 2 and 3, Perkins, the other starting forward, disappeared on Sunday, making just one of 15 shots, to go with zero assists, zero steals and zero blocked shots. (He did have 10 rebounds, though.)

How secretly gleeful Jordan's teammates must have been when they heard talk of a supporting cast failing to live up to expectations, and that that cast wasn't Chicago's. Since a shaky performance in a 93-91 Game 1 defeat at Chicago on June 2, the Jordanaries (specifically, forwards Pippen and Horace Grant, guard John Paxson, center Bill Cartwright and reserves Cliff Levingston, a forward, and Craig Hodges, a guard) had been anything but ordinary. And Jordan was, well, Jordan. Comparisons are usually odious but sometimes unavoidable: Through the first four games of the series, Jordan averaged 31.5 points, 7.3 rebounds, 11.8 as-

B EING ENTHUSIASTIC YOUNG men playing in their first NBA Finals, Michael Jordan and Scottie Pippen of the Chicago Bulls took care to visit with some of the Los Angeles celebrities who attended last week's championship series games at The Forum in Inglewood. In Friday night's Game 3, for example, Pippen, while making a miraculous save that led to a Jordan dunk, crashed into the courtside seat occupied by actor Nick Nolte. As the halftime buzzer was about to sound in Sunday's Game 4, Jordan released a sideline jumper, watched it swish, then turned and smiled at actor Danny Glover. And late in the game, Jordan, while in pursuit of a loose ball that he couldn't get, went airborne near Glover's seat, landed in the second row and was helped to his feet by Gene Siskel, the Chicago-based film critic who gave him a definite thumbs-up. "We

love you, Michael," said Siskel as he sent Jordan on his way.

At week's end in Tinseltown, Siskel's review of the proceedings might have described Chicago's performance as "a spectacle of grace and power!" In scene after scene during the Michael and Magic Finals, the Bulls were seen launching themselves all over The Forum, and the Lakers were left waiting, watching, wondering and worrying. Chicago's 97-82 win in Game 4 put the team just one victory from its first championship in the 25-year existence of the franchise and put L.A. in what the Lakers' Magic Johnson called "a state of disbelief." Jordan agreed. "We never thought we could dominate a team of the Lakers' stature and the legacy they carry," he said after the game. And the Bulls built their 3-1 series lead—Game 5 was Wednesday night, also at The Forum—with Kareem Abdul-Jabbar, Mr. Stature and Legacy, seated next to the

sists and 2.3 steals to Johnson's 19.3 points, 7.3 rebounds, 10.5 assists and 1.3 steals. Those numbers are not presented to belittle Magic's play, but, rather, to honor Jordan's, as Johnson did after Game 4. "I tip my hat to my competitor," said Magic. "He's doing a great job."

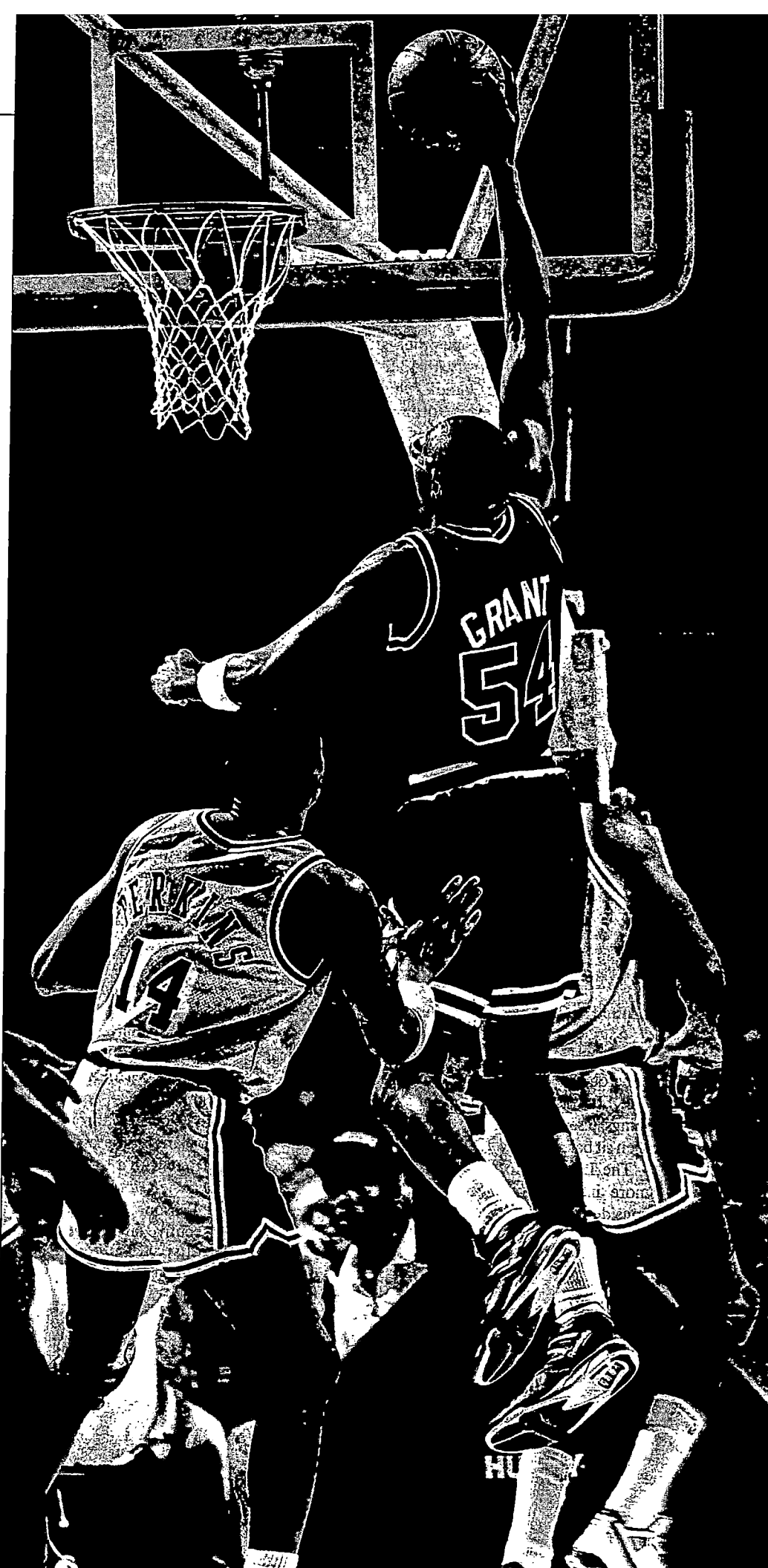
Ninety minutes before Game 4, however, it was uncertain exactly what Jordan would be able to accomplish with a right toe that had been bruised in Game 3, two nights earlier. "It's bearable when I walk, but I don't know about running," said Jordan. Jordan was wearing a pair of top-of-the-line running shoes from his favorite footwear company and pointed to the size-13 Air Jordans he would be lacing up shortly; there was a small hole cut in the area of the right toe to alleviate pressure. "As you can see," said Jordan, "I made an adjustment."

But the adventures of air-conditioned Jordan lasted only until the first timeout of the game, at 6:18 of the first quarter. He changed shoes because he felt they were too loose when he made a sudden cut. A minute later, he went left around Scott, dunked over Perkins and came down grimacing. But the more he ran, the better the toe felt. And the better he felt, the worse the Lakers felt. His jumper in front of Glover gave the Bulls a 52-44 halftime lead. And in the third period, Jordan either scored or assisted on seven of the Bulls' 10 field goals as they built a 16-point lead and never looked back. The Lakers' 82-point output was their lowest in 116 championship series games since the advent of the 24-second clock in 1954.

By this point in the series, though, it was really no surprise to watch the young and zealous Bulls turn the once-proud purple and gold inside out. What turned the Finals in the Bulls' direction was Game 2 at Chicago on June 5, when they buried Los Angeles with a 38-point third period en route to a 107-86 victory. The Bulls' starters shot an incredible 47 for 64 (.734), with Paxson's 8 for 8 being the most impressive.

Paxson had been singled out by Jordan for missing four open shots in Game 1—it's kind of frightening that Jordan's memory for his teammates' negative stats is that specific and accurate—but Paxson came back to drill all seven of his jumpers plus a layup for a final line that included

... and Grant busting loose for 22 of his own, Chicago proved it's no longer a one-man team.



JOHN W. MCDONOUGH

no turnovers and six assists. One continues to wonder if players like Pippen and Paxson, upon being subtly criticized by Jordan, go home and throw darts at an Air Jordan poster to take out their frustrations. If they do, they don't admit it. "Michael *has* to smack us in the head a few times," Paxson said when asked about the criticism.

Jordan, meanwhile, was an otherworldly 15 of 18 from the floor (with 13 assists and seven rebounds) in Game 2, which included a move that even Jordan later ranked in his alltime top 10. Early in the fourth period he drove the lane, raised the ball as if to dunk with his right hand and, upon seeing Perkins slide over, put the ball in his left hand for an underhand-

were at least considerate enough to be explicit about it. Jordan does make a lot of enthusiastic, hand-pumping gestures, and at one point, after hitting a jumper, he spread his palms upward toward the Laker bench as if to say, "What can you do? You can't stop me." But Jordan later denied the taunting charge. "I wasn't saying anything to any of their players. It was more or less my self-motivation and excitement at what I did." The flip side to Jordan's great gift of inspiring wonder is that he invariably inspires jealousy and resentment, too, and, champion or not, he cannot match the Pied Piper popularity of Magic. There is a bit of an anti-Jordan undertone to this—traceable to some Laker players and to some members of the media—almost as if Jordan must be torn down so that Magic can remain on top. It shouldn't be that way—there's room for both.

At any rate, Magic fans had a grand time last Friday night during the third period of Game 3 at The Forum. Los Angeles built a 67-54 lead, and Jordan just couldn't extricate himself from the tight web constructed by Scott's basic man-to-man and the help offered by Scott's teammates whenever Jordan moved toward the basket. Ah, but then it started to rain on the Lakers. Over the next eight minutes, eight different players scored for

Chicago—curtain call for the supporting cast, please, as Jordan had only two free throws during this stretch—and the Bulls tied the score at 74 midway through the final period. Jordan ultimately sent the game into overtime with a 14-foot jumper with 3.4 seconds left and then made a steal, assisted Paxson on a jumper and made two consecutive layups and two free throws to seal a 104-96 victory.

Going into Sunday's Game 4, the Lakers were concerned with two aspects of the Chicago defense. First, though the Bulls were using their full-court and half-court traps much more selectively than they did in their four-game Eastern Conference finals sweep of the Pistons, they were accomplishing two significant ends with those traps: They were wearing Mag-

In their eyeball-to-eyeball Finals showdown, Michael outshone Magic in most categories.

ic down, and they were draining precious seconds off the 24-second clock, so that many of the Laker shots were of the scrambling variety, particularly when the ball wasn't in Johnson's hands.

"If we were beating the trap once in a while with wide-open layups, it would be one thing," said L.A. assistant coach Randy Pfund, "but we're not even getting those." Of more dire consequence to the Lakers was the puzzle presented by Chicago's conventional half-court defense. The Bulls realized after Game 1 that the Los Angeles post-up players like Magic, Worthy and Perkins like to spin into the middle to do their damage. The Bulls' interior defenders countered that by positioning themselves inside the men they were guarding to prevent the move to the middle. And they created double-teams in the low post not by having a guard like Paxson doubling down from the outside but by bringing over a big player like Grant or Cartwright from the blind or baseline side. That also meant that Scott, who has made his living by stepping into the seams created by double-teams, always had a man, usually Paxson, on him. And his shooting reflected it.

The Lakers knew that Chicago's defensive strategy was working, but they could not counteract it on Sunday. The Bulls' defensive rotations were too quick and aggressive, and the L.A. offense was much too passive. Yes, the Bulls knew that their double-team strategy made them vulnerable on passes inside to center Vlade Divac, and, yes, Divac, the only other Laker besides Magic with a measurable pulse on Sunday, scored 27 points. But the Bulls were convinced that Magic and Divac alone could not beat them. And they were right.

There was not much for the Lakers to say after Game 4. They had lost at home and on the road, in overtime and in regulation, in a close game and in a rout. But Magic, trouper that he is, tried to put his feelings into words: "I'm so intense at night, can't sleep, just rustling around waiting for the game, and then . . . this. But you know what else I am? Realistic. I can see this is happening, and I just have to deal with it. They are beating us, and beating us bad. They're a great team doing what they're supposed to be doing. And right now, we're not." ■



ANDREW D. BENSTEIN/ANA PHOTOS

Bald truth: L.A. lacks the Sunday punch Sunday's guest once provided.

ed scoop shot, thereby running the gamut of acrobatic possibilities in the wink of an eye. "It was just one of those creative things," said Jordan, as if we could all then sit back and say, "Ah, one of those."

The Lakers, Scott in particular, were more inclined to remember what they considered to be Jordan's taunting during Chicago's 59-43 second-half roll. "That's something you just don't do this early in a series," said Scott. "But since he's Michael, I guess he feels he can get away with it. It angers us to see someone of his caliber act that way. But I've seen him do it before, so I'm not surprised."

Did he or didn't he? Well, the taunting tribunal is still out, and this thought comes to mind about the vacationing Detroit Pistons: When they taunted, they



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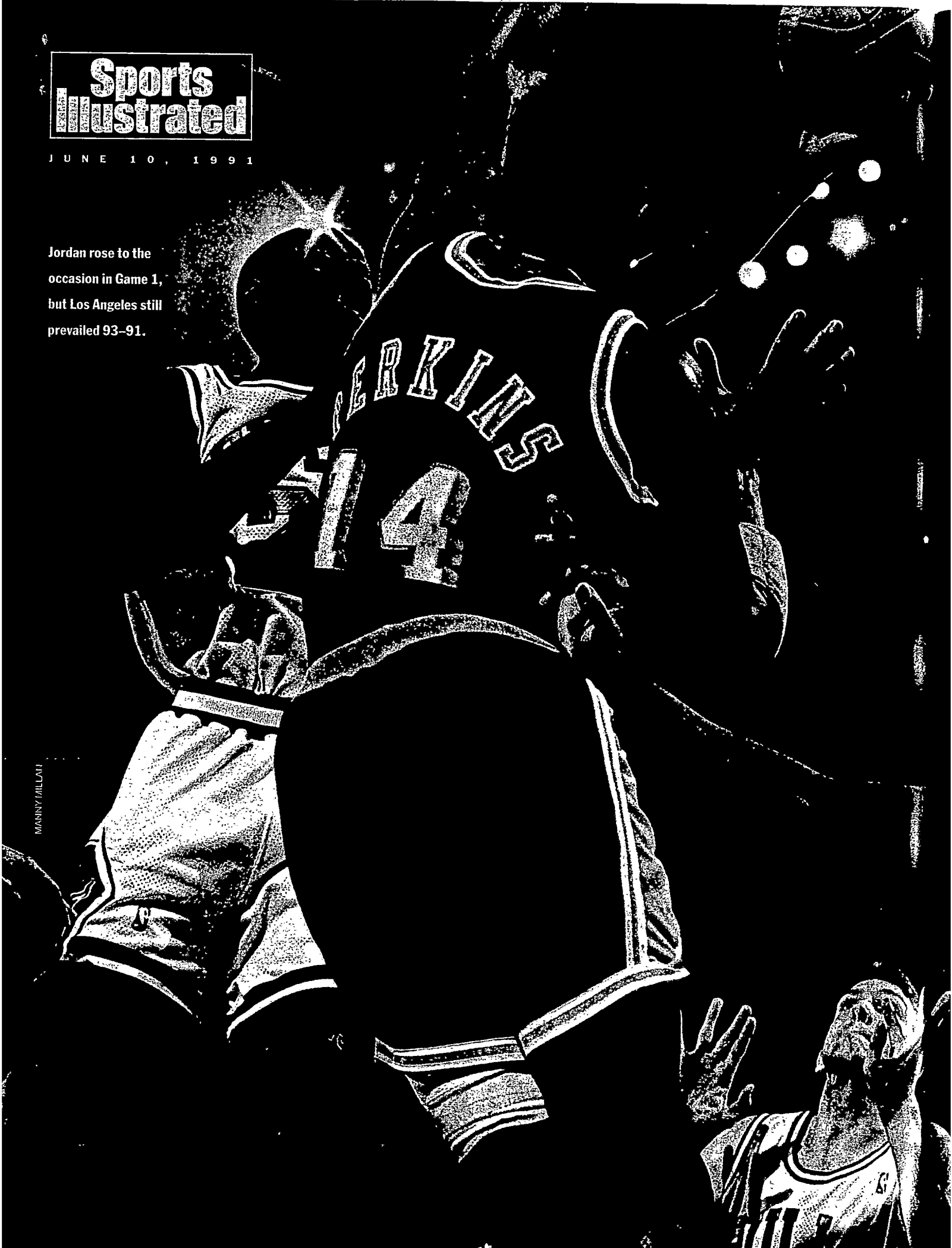
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Sports Illustrated

JUNE 10, 1991

Jordan rose to the occasion in Game 1, but Los Angeles still prevailed 93-91.

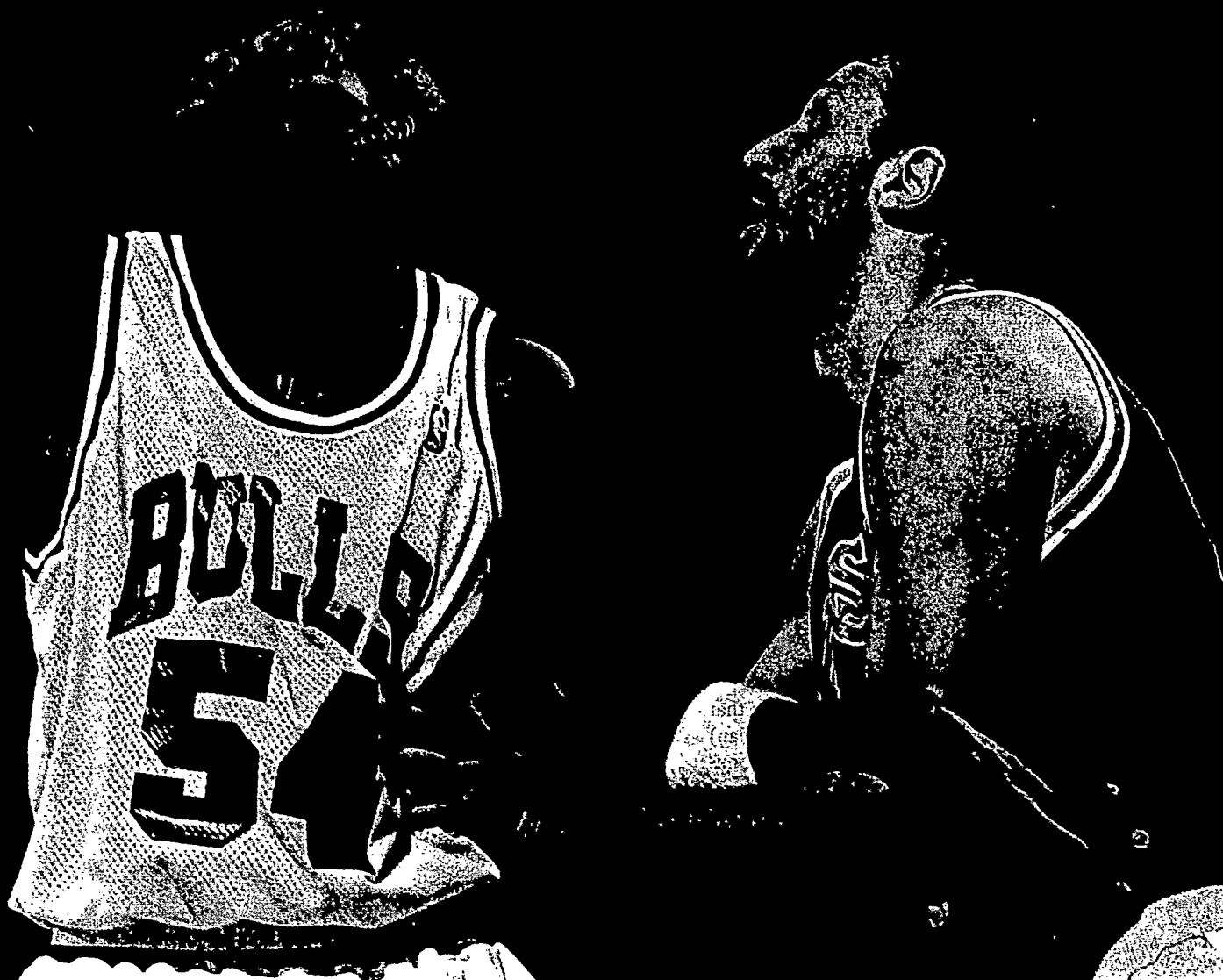
MANNY MILLAN

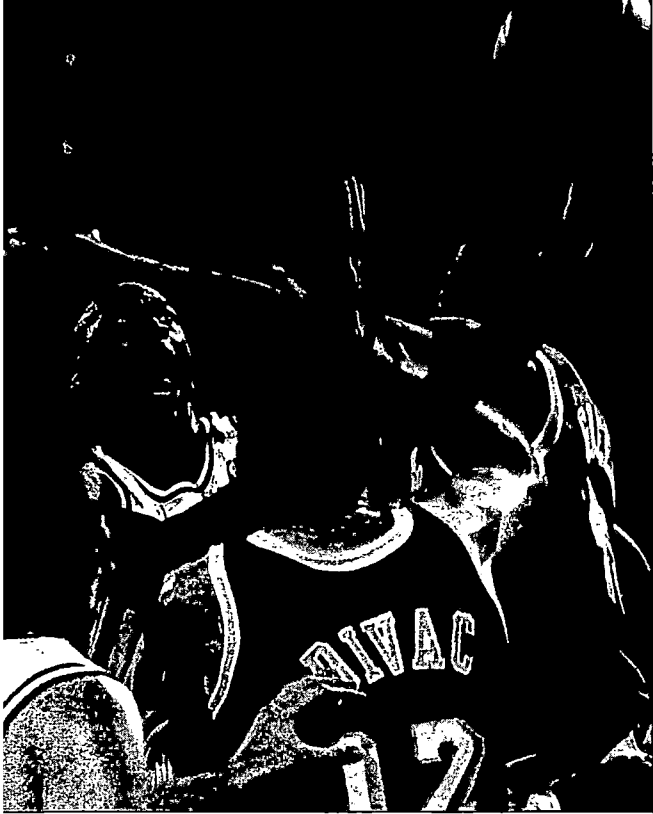


SHOW OF SHOWS

For star quality, the Magic and Michael made-for-TV miniseries tops all NBA Finals

by JACK McCALLUM





ANDREW D. BERNSTEIN/INMA PHOTOS

afternoon. He looked around at a huge throng of reporters. "Well, you'll try. But, nope, it can't be done. Talent, leadership, winning—Magic and Michael are the ultimate in all of those things. They're it." Because they're it, Sunday's game attained a hefty overnight rating of 16.4 for NBC, which has already moved Game 4 (in L.A.) and, should it be played, Game 7 (in Chicago) to prime time from their traditional Sunday afternoon slots.

The irony is that this season, for the first time since Jordan came into the league, in 1984, the Bulls had gotten away from the "one-man team" label. Similarly, Johnson is no longer the fast-breaking, Showtime quarterback, because the Lakers, under rookie

team, of course, but the freeze-out was, in Jordan's mind, the brainchild of Thomas. There has always been tension between Jordan and Thomas—it certainly was not alleviated by this year's bitterly contested Bulls-Pistons series—and Jordan automatically and not unreasonably put Magic in Isiah's camp. The Michael-Magic feud simmered until Johnson decided enough was enough during the 1987-88 season.

"It was up to me to take the initiative to end it, because Michael was the young guy and I was the veteran," said Magic, who is four years Jordan's senior. "I told him, 'We can't be separated like this. I respect you too much, and I'm sure you respect me.' When men come together and respect each other, you can straighten anything out."

Johnson is one of the few athletes in the world who can say something like that and

NO PROFESSIONAL SPORTS league is as dependent on the cult of personality as the NBA, and now it has, in one brightly wrapped grab bag, two of the world's most famous athletes going at each other smile for smile, quote for quote, spin move for spin move. Yes, the Magic and Michael made-for-TV miniseries, otherwise known as the NBA Finals, began at Chicago Stadium on Sunday. Game 1 ended, quite properly, with Magic Johnson throwing a pass and Michael Jordan taking a shot. Johnson connected, Jordan missed, and the Los Angeles Lakers crept away with a 93-91 victory over the Chicago Bulls in a game that, almost impossibly, was as good as advertised.

The NBA has never seen anything like this. Sure, for two years running, in 1988 and '89, the Finals brought together Magic and his close buddy, the Detroit Pistons' Isiah Thomas, to exchange pregame smooches at center court. Compared with Jordan, however, Thomas is hardly a blip on the personality radar screen. Before that, in '84, '85 and '87, Magic had the Boston Celtics' Larry Bird as a foil, but that was less a one-on-one personality battle than a confrontation between two storied teams.

What can you say about a matchup that offers a one-man conglomerate (Jordan) and the ultimate sunshine warrior (Johnson)? "You can't overhype Magic Johnson versus Michael Jordan," said Laker reserve Mychal Thompson last Saturday

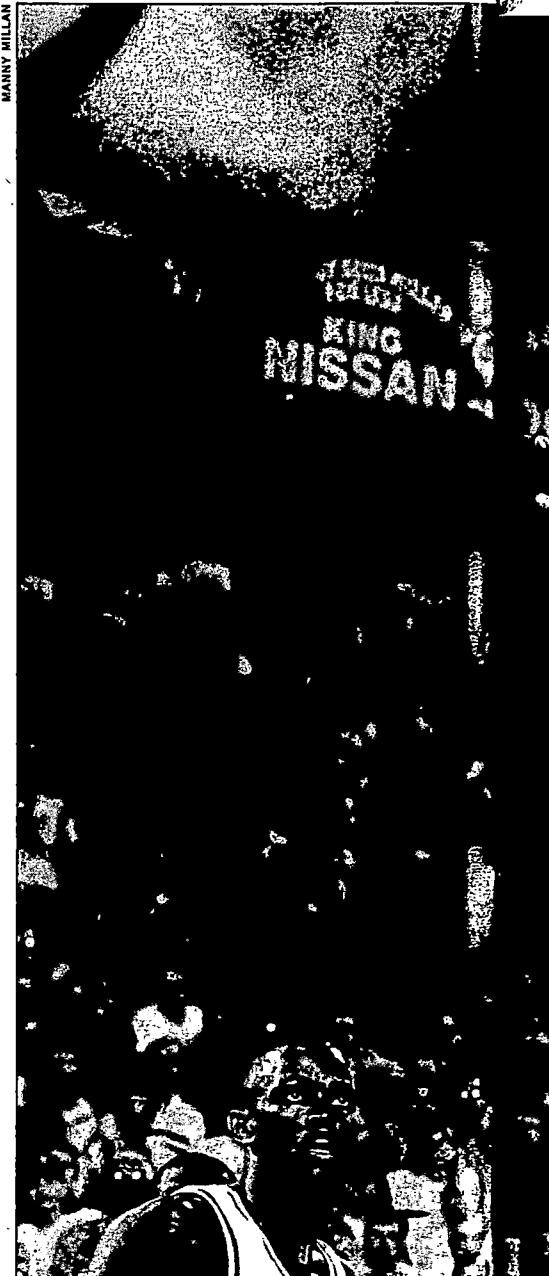
coach Mike Dunleavy, are now playing a down-tempo power game. Note that they took only 66 shots in Sunday's game, which tied a championship-series record—the Lakers set it against the New York Knicks in 1970—for fewest field goal attempts. Nonetheless, as soon as Los Angeles turned back the Portland Trail Blazers 91-90 in Game 6 of the Western Conference finals to earn the right to meet the Bulls, who had swept Detroit in the Eastern finals, it was Michael versus Magic, the Prince of Midair vs. the King of the Hill, Nike vs. Converse, Coca-Cola vs. Pepsi, McDonald's vs. Kentucky Fried Chicken. Though the principals tried mightily to deflect attention from themselves, even they couldn't pretend otherwise.

Said Jordan, "It's great for the league, having the two best players going against each other." Any arguments there?

Said Johnson, "Sure, it's a little personal. I mean, me going against Michael Jordan in the Finals. It's what you live for, right?" Would Magic be getting this worked up to play, say, Charles Barkley?

One of the intriguing aspects of the MJ-MJ relationship is how badly it started. Jordan felt, rightly or wrongly, that Johnson was partly responsible for, or at least tacitly endorsed, a plan to keep the ball away from Jordan in the 1985 All-Star Game. Johnson was on the other

Jordan (above), who got 36 points in Game 1, and Johnson, who had a triple double, both attracted a crowd whenever they took a shot.



MANNY MILLAN

sound believable. For his part, Jordan says of the old rivalry, "Magic and I are good friends now. We had a rocky start for no real reason [although Jordan didn't originally believe it was for no real reason]. Before, we hadn't known each other as people. Then we got to know each other, and that's when the friendship began."

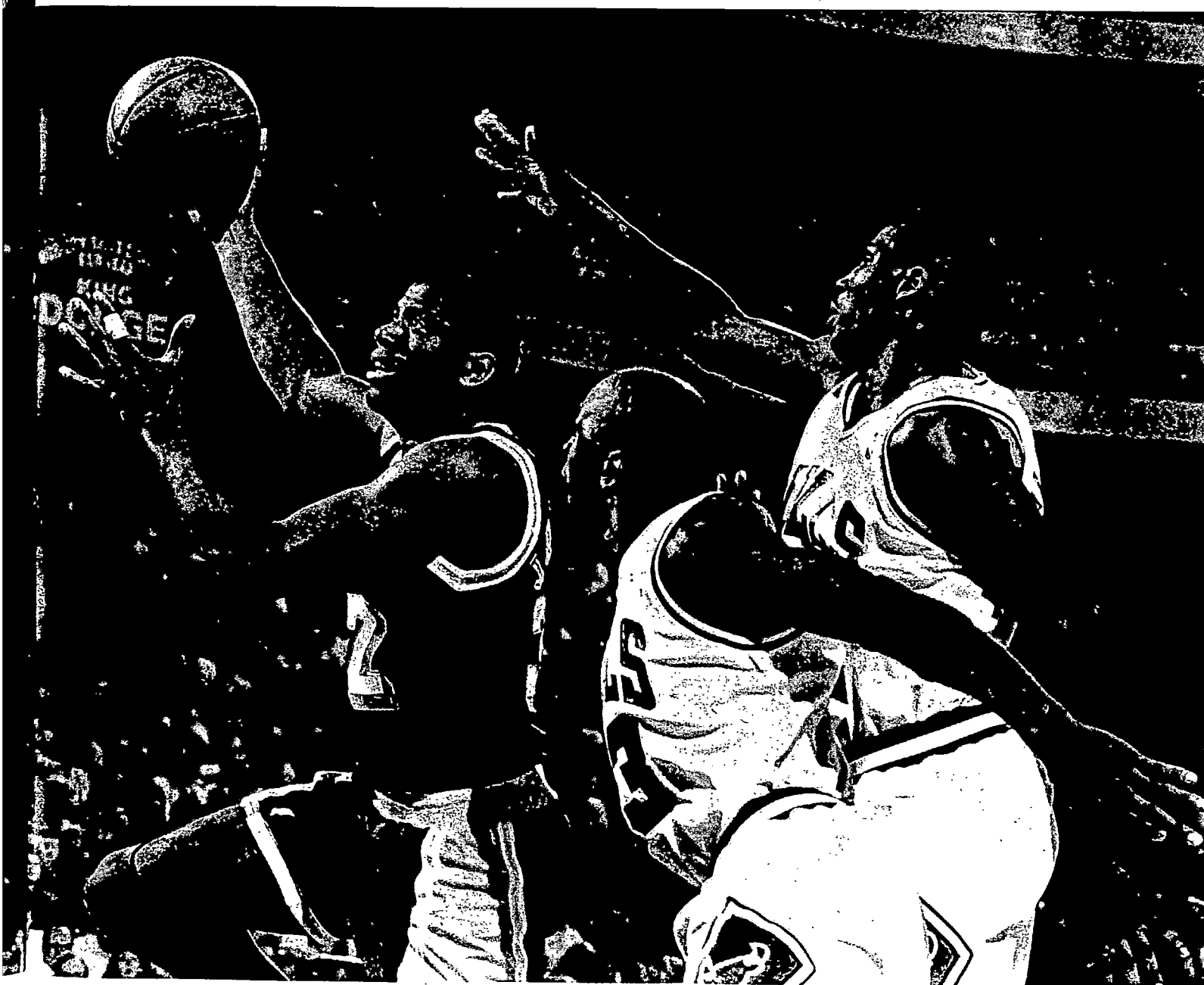
Moreover, only in the past few years has Johnson put together a business team, a package of endorsements and an investment portfolio that he perceives to be equal to his celebrity. Jordan, by dint of his spectacular play in college, the Olympics and his rookie NBA season and the sagacious management of ProServ, had all those things, and that grated on many in the NBA, including Magic. But Johnson now realizes that, as he said last week, "there's enough for everybody."

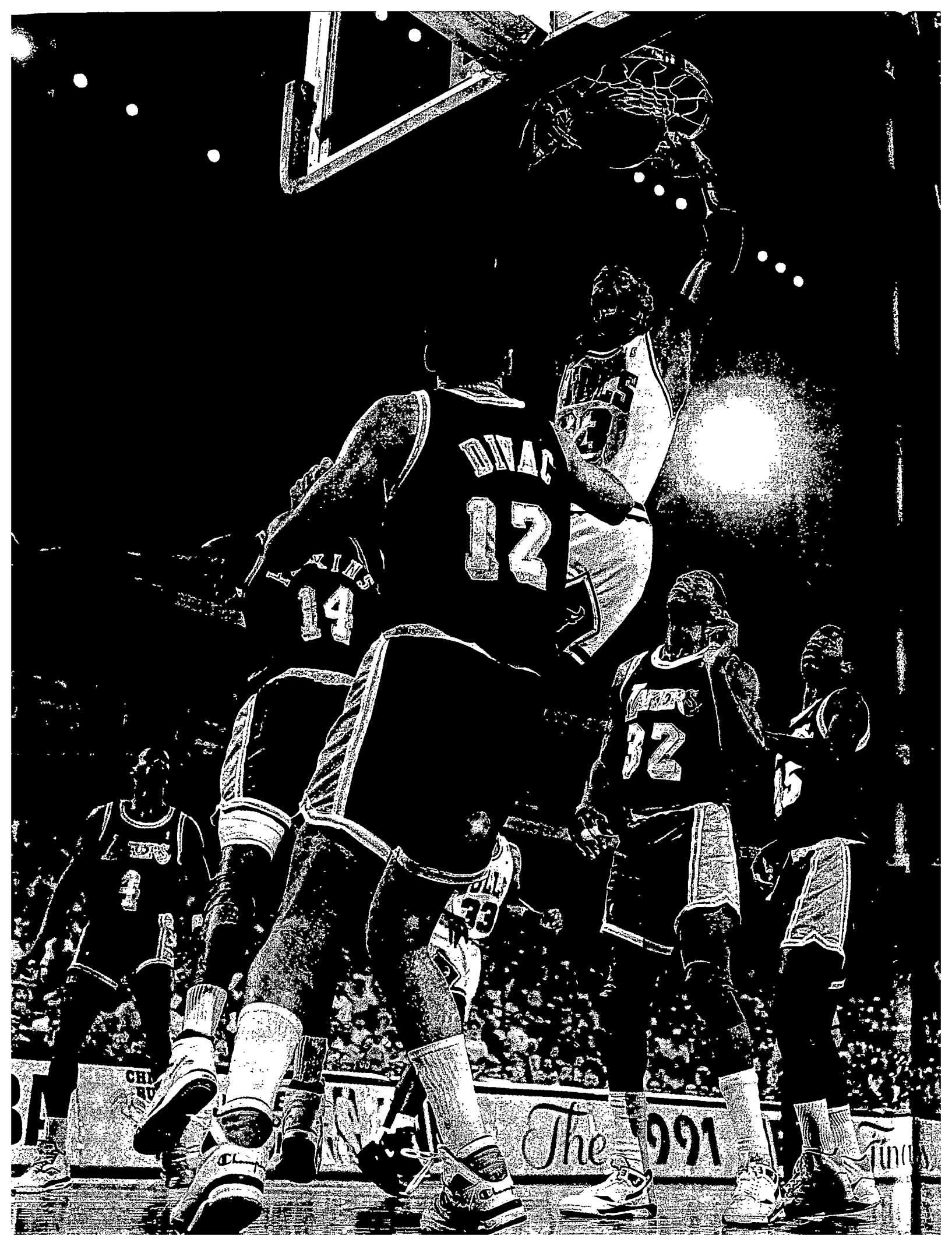
Certainly there's enough for MJ and

MJ, both of whom earn fortunes off the court. "The money I get from the Lakers is—how can I say it?—small," says Johnson. *Small* is the right word, relatively speaking. Both players are somewhat underpaid by NBA standards. This season Jordan's salary is about \$2.5 million and Johnson's about \$2.4 million. As for their moonlighting incomes, estimates vary widely, but Jordan is believed to earn at least \$10 million a year from endorsements and Johnson \$9 million.

In many popularity polls of sports figures, they rank one-two—with Jordan generally being the one on top—and both seem to appeal to black and white, male and female, young and old. They have a knack for signing autographs on the move, for smiling through chaos and disappointment and for leaving people happy. They are masters of the mob scene.

Among the players, Johnson is more popular and more respected—a small segment of the NBA considers Jordan too flashy, too cocky, too rich, too self-centered, too *something*. But those feelings are undetectable in Magic's case. Here is a player who has been at the top of his profession for 12 years, one who has sometimes been outspoken, has *always* been outgoing and has never hesitated to coach his teammates on the court. Yet, Johnson seems to have no enemies, nor does anyone seem to begrudge him his success. When he retires with all his championship rings (he's looking for his sixth in this series), his MVP trophies (he has three so far) and his trunkful of triple doubles (he had 137 going into Game 2, including Sunday's 19 points, 10 rebounds and 11 assists), universal respect might be his most Magical accomplishment.





The MJ's are quite different off the court. Magic, who is single and rarely lonely, is the more "charismatic showman," as Chicago reserve Cliff Levingston, a friend of both, puts it. Johnson sponsors his own star-studded summer All-Star Game, pals around with Hollywood heavyweights and once promoted a Janet Jackson concert at The Forum.

For all the hearts he stops when he walks down the street, Jordan is quiet, even close to hermitlike at times. He has a wife and two young sons and hangs around mostly with his "homeboys" from North Carolina, Adolph Shiver, Fred Whitfield and Fred Kearns, as well as Nike representative Howard White. They play a lot of card games, with bid whist being a particular favorite. Jordan mingles with rap stars from time to time, but his retinue has no celebrities. "Only Charles Oakley," says Shiver. Wow.

Although Magic and Michael are immensely popular, Jordan's appeal is more universal. Chicago claims him, but he is too big even for that city's big shoulders.

Johnson, by contrast, is more a product of a specific place, and it is from his Los Angeles-based empire that he derives considerable business clout. For example, superagent Michael Ovitz, who is part of Magic's management team, is quite possibly the most influential person in Hollywood. Johnson treasures the brief time he spent with Donald Trump a couple of years ago. Jordan, who, as you might've heard, plays golf, treasures 18 holes with Fuzzy Zoeller. Johnson plays now, so later in his life he can work. Jordan works now, so later in his life he can play.

What they bring to the game between the lines is rudimentary yet in its own way profound: In an era when fans are looking for highly paid athletes to play like dogs, the MJ's show the hearts of lions and the spirit of colts. "They look like they're having fun," says Chicago point guard John Paxson, "yet they play hard. The fan senses that and appreciates it."

That's why Chicago Stadium was filled with expectation when the teams took the court. Jordan and Johnson met during the captains' meeting at center court before tip-off and exchanged half-hugs but no smooches. "You know I don't go in for that," Jordan had said a day earlier.

Over the next 2½ hours they faced

each other only when Johnson had the ball. Jordan, Chicago's biggest and strongest guard, checked Magic, while Byron Scott, who is quicker than Johnson—and more expendable should fouling Jordan become necessary—tried to stay with Jordan. Even when the Lakers had the ball, no real one-on-one battle developed. Indeed, by the second half, Chicago was double-teaming Johnson on virtually every possession.

Still, the MJ-MJ miniseries remained in the back of everyone's mind. During a first-period timeout, the Bulls' dance team was booed when it began performing to one of its standard numbers, *Do You Believe in Magic?* The music stopped about halfway through the song, and another one was chosen. Later in the game, P.A. announcer Ray Clay credited a Los Angeles assist to "Magic Jordan."

But, really, there was no confusion. Jordan was the one jumping and dunking and darting his way to 36 points, eight rebounds and 12 assists. Johnson was the one directing traffic, backing his way down the court and, once in a while, shooting that awkward-looking one-hander. The Bulls looked like the Bulls of old: too much Jordan and too little of everyone else. Paxson, Bill Cartwright and Horace Grant had only six points apiece.

One was tempted to say that Johnson's six-point halftime total (all on free throws) was not enough, either, but that would be wrong. He calmly waited for the double team to arrive, and time after time threw passes over and around the defense to open jump shooters, usually James Worthy or Sam Perkins, both of whom finished with 22 points. It was Perkins's three-pointer with 14 seconds left, off a crosscourt bullet pass by a double-teamed Magic, that gave L.A. a 92-91 lead. Jordan then missed an 18-foot jumper despite being, as Johnson later said, "the Number One scariest person in the NBA at that time of the game." Scott made one of two free throws to end the scoring.

"I have to do what I do best, which is run the team," said Johnson afterward, "and Michael has to do what he does best—score." Both did their jobs extraordinarily well, and ultimately, the MJ's just might have canceled each other out. But, boy oh boy, it was fun watching.

"I'll say this about that game," said Johnson, smiling as he climbed into the shower. "It almost lived up to the hype. And that's saying something." ■

When Michael performed like, well, Michael, Magic & Co. could do nothing but watch in awe.



YMCA of the USA
101 North Wacker Drive
Chicago, Illinois
60606

*Christina
FAX
Helen*

FAX #: 1-312-977-9063

FAX COVER SHEET

Date: 9/26/91 Number of pages including this one: 2

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Department: _____

Message: I realized that I didn't include
with the information I faxed you
yesterday the letter from the president
congratulating the Y on the centennial.
A copy of this letter went in the
information package to help Ys celebrate
the anniversary. There are more than
2,000 Ys across the country.

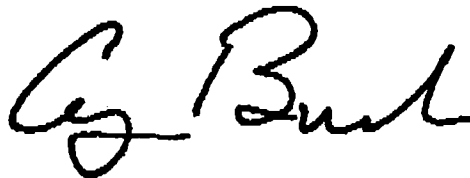
THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

June 11, 1991

I am delighted to join with the members of the YMCA in commemorating the 100th anniversary of the game of basketball.

The only major sport that is entirely American in origin, basketball has become one of the most popular team games in the world. Basketball is a fast-paced yet methodical and rhythmic game, and it is almost as much fun to watch as it is to play. James Naismith would be proud to know that the sport he created now entertains millions at the grade school, high school, college, professional, and international levels.

Members of the YMCA can take special pride in their contributions to the development of basketball over the past 100 years. Through countless league and pick-up games that are sponsored by the YMCA, Americans have increased their physical fitness while learning important lessons about teamwork and about good sportsmanship. On behalf of all basketball players and fans -- including the Bush family -- I commend your outstanding efforts to promote the best aspects of the game.



FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL FORM

WAF/ 1

Page 1 of ___

To: Jennifer Grossman

Room Number:

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From: David Aasen
United Nations Information Centre, Washington

Phone: (202) 289-8670
Transmittal Operator:

Messages: Re. Peru
The Sec. Gen. never speaks about Peru
(in the interest of preserving his diplomatic
impartiality).

I thought that you might find the
enclosed quotation appropriate; it is positive
and global in context.

It is from the Sec. Gen.'s Report on
the Work of the Organization, 1990.

call if you need more.

VI

RESOLUTION of conflicts, observance of human rights and the promotion of development together weave the fabric of peace; if one of these strands is removed, the tissue will unravel.

This has been a motif of the thought and work of the United Nations over the years. Current experience strongly confirms the truth that respect for the organs and institutions of the State, national cohesion, the viability of political systems or social ideologies, sustained economic development and the stability of the international order all greatly depend on the observance and promotion of human rights.

→ The past year has seen the conversion of human rights from a subsidiary theme of the international discourse to a dominant concern. All over the world, there is a resurgent awareness that no social or political dispensation can, or should, endure that does not respect the dignity and worth of the human person, the equal rights of men and women and of nations large and small.

→ From its very inception, the United Nations has engaged itself in elaborating human rights instruments and establishing bench-marks against which standards of behaviour can be measured. It has provided the world community with the International Bill of Human Rights, consisting of the Universal Declaration and the two International Covenants, under which the protection of fundamental rights is accepted as a permanent obligation. Under the Organization's auspices, many other legal instruments have been adopted to define these rights in various contexts. The 1986 Declaration on the Right to Development laid a basis for the integration of human rights concepts into the planning, execution and evaluation of development projects so that respect for human rights and the effectiveness of these projects are both strengthened and secured. The process of incorporating human rights in international conventions is a continuous one. This year, a proposal before the international community is the convention to protect the rights of migrant workers and their families—a group that is among the weakest and most vulnerable in society.

Legal instruments, however, provide but the foundation on which the structure of human rights can be based. It needs initiative, tact, opportunity and co-operation to secure their implementation. Very often, for instance, the Secretary-General has to exercise his good offices in this regard with the utmost confidentiality lest they prove counter-productive. There can be little doubt, however, of the faith and expectations that peoples all over the world place in the efforts of the United Nations to restore human rights where they are denied or violated.

The promising advances of the past year in democracy and human rights should not, however, let us forget the remorseless realities



THE PRESIDENT'S COUNCIL ON PHYSICAL FITNESS AND SPORTS
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20001

September 17, 1991

MEMORANDUM FOR: White House Speechwriting

SUBJECT: Background on PCPFS for insertion in
President's remarks congratulating Chicago Bulls
on NBA Championship

Faxed herewith is a backgrounder on the President's Council
on Physical Fitness and Sports (PCPFS).

Several points worth mentioning are listed below:

- #1. This year, the PCPFS is celebrating its 35th anniversary year. ConAgra, headquartered in Chicago, commissioned the painting of a new Presidential portrait depicting all the presidents who have played a role in the workings of the Council since it was established in 1956 during the Eisenhower Administration. The portrait reflects a presidential gallery surrounded by a selection of sports and fitness activities -- INCLUDING BASKETBALL -- that represent the age and diversity of Americans on the move.
- #2. The PCPFS carries out a Presidential Sports Award Program emphasizing regular exercise. Fifty-one sports/fitness activities make up the program for which individuals 15 years of age and older who qualify can earn an award. BASKETBALL is one of the categories in the program. Of the Presidential Sports Award Program, President Bush has said: "...the popularity of sports is most readily explained by the pride each of us can take in trying to be our best and the simple enjoyment of participation."
- #3. President Bush, in December 1990, appointed "Magic" Johnson, three-time NBA Most Valuable Player and 8-time first-team all pro with the Los Angeles Lakers, to serve on the President's Council. He joined 19 other members, including PCPFS Chairman Arnold Schwarzenegger.
- #4. The PCPFS mission is to serve as a catalyst to promote, encourage and motivate the development of physical fitness and sports programs for all Americans. PCPFS priorities have been identified by the Council for 1991 and beyond: (1) Youth fitness; (2) private sector involvement; (3) senior fitness; (4) adult fitness; (5) special advisors/consultants; (6) family fitness; and (7) Great American Workout activities.

*Yeah, right.
Jordan
would
love a
mention of
this.*



The President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports

HISTORY

Since its inception in 1956, the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports (PCPFS) has been given its direction by an Executive Order from the President of the United States. The general statement of responsibility says that the Council will serve as a catalyst to promote, encourage and motivate the development of physical fitness and sports programs for all Americans.

These programs help focus public awareness on the importance of staying physically active by encouraging schools, business and industry, government, recreation agencies, sports and youth-serving organizations to step up their emphasis on developing and maintaining physical fitness and sports programs.

The first Council was formed by President Dwight D. Eisenhower as part of a national campaign to help shape up America's younger generation. Throughout the succeeding decades the Council's name and its mission changed slightly, but its drive never diminished. Today, the President's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports encourages regular participation in sports and physical fitness activities for people of all ages.

ORGANIZATION

Twenty private citizens serve on the Council. They are appointed by the President and report to the President and the Secretary of Health and Human Services. The members advise the President and Secretary on ways and means to carry out the 10-point program outlined in Executive Order 12345, as amended. A full-time professional staff carries out Council programs and conducts day-to-day business.

January 1991

PRESIDENTIAL EXECUTIVE ORDER 12345, AS AMENDED

The Executive Order directs the Council to:

- * Enlist the active support and assistance of individual citizens, civic groups, private enterprise, voluntary organizations, and others in efforts to promote and improve the fitness of all Americans through regular participation in physical fitness and sports activities.
- * Initiate programs to inform the general public of the importance of exercise and the link which exists between regular physical activity and such qualities as good health and effective performance.
- * Strengthen coordination of Federal services and programs relating to physical fitness and sports participation and invite appropriate Federal agencies to participate in an interagency committee to coordinate physical fitness and sports activities of the Federal establishment.
- * Encourage State and local governments to emphasize the importance of regular physical fitness and sports participation.
- * Seek to advance the physical fitness of children, youth, adults, and senior citizens by systematically encouraging the development of community recreation, physical fitness, and sports participation programs.
- * Develop cooperative programs with medical, dental, and other similar professional societies to encourage the implementation of sound physical fitness practices and sports medicine services.
- * Stimulate and encourage research in the areas of sports medicine, physical fitness and sports performance.
- * Assist educational agencies at all levels in developing high quality, innovative health and physical education programs which emphasize the importance of exercise for good health.
- * Assist recreation agencies and national sports governing bodies at all levels in developing "sports for all" programs which emphasize the value of sports to physical, mental, and emotional fitness.
- * Assist business, industry, government, and labor organizations in establishing sound physical fitness programs to elevate employee fitness and to reduce the financial and human costs resulting from physical inactivity.

PCPFS PROGRAM AREAS

PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT

The Council staff cooperates with State and local governments, voluntary organizations, professional associations, sports governing bodies, private enterprise, the military and other Federal and public agencies to promote the development of physical fitness programs. Such activities include the establishment of nationwide Local Councils on Physical Fitness and Sports; a Federal Interagency Health/Fitness Council; Older Adult Seminars; Native American Conferences; projects with the National 4-H Council; a Presidential Sports Award Program; Healthy American Fitness Leader Awards Program; regional clinics on physical fitness and sports; national conferences; and the President's Challenge, a physical fitness awards program for youth.

The PCPFS is unique among Federal Government units in that the vast majority of Council programs are funded by the private sector or other public authorities.

PUBLIC INFORMATION

The Council conducts a continuous public service advertising program designed around several central fitness themes such as youth, employee, family and senior fitness. Radio listeners, television viewers, newspaper and magazine readers are brought such campaign messages as "Shape Up America," "Employee Health Is Good Business" and "Fitness Is Feeling Great!" The latter theme is currently in use in public service materials.

Campaigns are mailed or satellite-fed to television stations, the major networks, plus cable, radio stations and print outlets. Occasionally, special information projects are targeted to specific media to focus on one issue or goal. For example, each May a series of radio fitness tips in the form of live announcer copy is sent to radio stations to be used as daily tips during National Physical Fitness and Sports Month.

Public awareness is also promoted through articles for popular and professional publications, television and films, booklets and pamphlets and a bi-monthly Council newsletter.

SPECIAL PROJECTS AND TECHNICAL SERVICES

The Council staff oversees a variety of special projects that includes testing, awards recognition, fitness events and incentive programs. Since 1983, each May is proclaimed National Physical Fitness and Sports Month in a nationwide effort to call attention to physical fitness and local community programs. The Council spearheads this major event which is funded chiefly by the private sector. A promotional mailing is sent to recreation agencies encouraging them to conduct special events during the month.

Council staff members work with schools, colleges, clubs, and recreation agencies on program design and implementation. They also advise other Federal and public agencies on fitness-related programs.

MAJOR PROGRAMS AND PROJECTS

THE PRESIDENT'S CHALLENGE - This awards program recognizes and motivates students, ages 6-17, to meet challenging levels of fitness. Revised in 1986, the program measures cardiorespiratory and muscular endurance, muscular strength, flexibility and agility. To qualify for the Presidential Physical Fitness Award, students must score at or above the 85th percentile on all of the following test items: one-mile run, curl-ups, pull-ups, V-sit reach flexibility test and the shuttle run. Those students who reach the 50th percentile or above qualify for the National Physical Fitness Award. The National Award also is available for boys and girls with physical disabilities. The original program was established in 1966.

STATE CHAMPION PROGRAM - Each year the Council recognizes outstanding school achievement in physical fitness. The State Champion Award is presented annually to three schools in each state, representing three different enrollment categories, that qualify the highest percentage of eligible students for the Presidential Physical Fitness Award. Winning schools receive statewide and national recognition.

STATE DEMONSTRATION CENTER PROGRAM - Schools representing the highest quality physical education programs in the nation are selected under criteria developed by each State's Department of Education and approved by the Council. Selected schools serve as visitor referral sites for teacher education institutions, foreign visitors, the media and others wishing to observe outstanding school programs.

PRESIDENTIAL SPORTS AWARD - The Presidential Sports Award recognizes adult participation in a regular program of exercise. Men and women 15 years of age and older can qualify for the award in one or more of 49 different sports and fitness activities. Specific requirements for each activity have been established for a four-month period. Upon meeting the qualifying standards, participants receive a personalized Presidential certificate of achievement, a blazer emblem and a congratulatory letter.

REGIONAL PHYSICAL FITNESS AND SPORTS CLINICS - Approximately four regional instructor training clinics are held annually at various sites around the country. The two-day events are held in cooperation with the State Department of Education and the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness in that state and are hosted by a university or college. Hands-on workshops, held concurrently throughout the clinic, are presented by Council staff and national clinicians.

NATIONAL PHYSICAL FITNESS AND SPORTS MONTH - Each year May is designated as National Physical Fitness and Sports Month in a major promotional effort to help "Shape Up America." Schools, park and recreation departments, employee associations, YMCAs, government and other agencies are encouraged to conduct special events throughout the month to call attention to local fitness programs and services.

HEALTHY AMERICAN FITNESS LEADER AWARDS - In cooperation with The United States Jaycees and Allstate Life Insurance Company, the Council annually honors 10 individuals for their personal example and outstanding leadership in promoting physical fitness and health. The winners are selected by a prominent group of judges and honored at an annual awards banquet.

For information write: President's Council on Physical Fitness & Sports
450 5th Street, N.W., Suite 7103
Washington, DC 20001

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June 23-24

True Sideline Guys

Let's hear it—quietly, of course—for the refreshingly unassuming **Phil Jackson and Mike Dunleavy** | by RICK TELANDER



RONALD G. MODRA

WAS SITTING IN FRONT OF MY TV WATCHING GAME 3 OF THE NBA Championship Finals, enjoying it immensely, when a startling thought hit me. I like these guys! No, not the players—everybody likes Michael and Magic and their teammates. I liked the coaches.

The exact moment at which this struck me, I believe, was when yet another overhead camera shot of the Los Angeles Laker bench focused on the top of coach Mike Dunleavy's head. There, for all the world to see, was what we refer to these days as male pattern baldness, friar's-crown variation, in full retro-bloom. There was nothing unusual about that, really. Millions of male baby boomers are all too familiar with this hint of mortality and its variations: the receding hairline, the widow's-peak gallop, the full-scale multidirectional cranium exodus, etc.

But the beauty here was that Dunleavy had parted the remainder of his medium-length hair exactly as he always had, as though each and every follicle were flourishing. No hair plugs, no little rug, no weave, no shoe polish. Best of all, no typical NBA basketball coach grandstanding: no slick back, no perm, no sideburn part, no 20-foot single-hair swirl, no Versacian cotton candy froth-whip. In L.A., no less. On a televised event during which the halftime analysts spend their time tousling each other's locks as if they were wash boys at Mr. Eduardo's.

Dunleavy takes the same casual approach to his attire, which is smart but not flashy, what my mother would call "nice." His appearance is merely a reflection of his coaching philosophy—straight ahead, no frills, no *GQ* covers, let the players play. And I love it.

Same with the Chicago Bulls' coach, Phil Jackson. His hair is a graying, irreverent mass, seemingly an irritating distraction to the man. His attire is cautiously natty, except for the occasional flowered-drapery tie that harks back vaguely to his days as a medallion-wearing SoHo hippie who also played a mean defensive forward for the New York Knicks. During games these days Jackson stays so out of the way and under wraps that sometimes you wonder if he even joins the players during timeouts. His most familiar coaching gesture is to fold his arms on his chest, tilt his head to one side and squint at the court as though perusing a TV set that needs fine-tuning.

And yet we all know that these two men have done their coaching. Jackson has brought a team that seemed destined to play forever in the shadow of the Detroit Pistons into a nearly perfect state of selflessness and grace. And Dunleavy has merely replaced the wet-look genius Pat Riley and taken the Abdul-Jabbar-less Lakers to the Finals.

Dunleavy played his NBA ball with the Houston Rockets,

the San Antonio Spurs, the Philadelphia 76ers and the Milwaukee Bucks. He never stood on ceremony. While an assistant coach for the Bucks he occasionally ripped off his tie and suspenders and played guard, looking a little like a Wall Street investment banker hooping it up with the big boys. Which he was.

In their own unself-conscious ways, what Dunleavy and Jackson both are acknowledging is that basketball is truly a player's game. Of course, we've heard that refrain a thousand times, usually from coaches who then go out and call every play, every box-out, every footstep for every one of their players who enters the game. And the TV announcer and his sidekick (always a former coach) eat it up. This player's game, they inform us, thrives only because of the brilliant machinations of the Einstein-like hair piles in thousand-dollar suits raging on the sidelines.

Baloney. Basketball's a simple game. Kids understand it on second viewing. Here's how you coach the Bulls: "Michael, take the ball and dribble around. After you've drawn enough defenders, leap into the air for a few seconds and pass off. Or dunk. Scottie, bump the hell out of Magic." For the Lakers: "Magic, play every second and run the offense. Everybody else bump the hell out of Jordan."

Those are great strategies, and these have been great games, and I like these coaches for staying out of our way. I am sick to death of coaches kneeling on the sidelines screaming through rolled-up programs at point guards who have only played 100 games this season for those coaches. I can't take many more scowling, furious, stalking martinets like Bobby Knight or Billy Tubbs. Oops, that's college hoops. Well, tell me, is there some reason why college basketball can't be a player's game, too?

I remember, while spending the summer of 1974 in Brooklyn writing about playground basketball in Flatbush, seeing this freckle-faced white kid come to the park to play a serious yet joyful brand of pickup ball with the local black kids. That kid was Dunleavy, then a sophomore at South Carolina. He stayed out of the way and caused no ripples whatsoever, except when he played.

And I sometimes now see Jackson at the gym in suburban Chicago where I play buckets with fellow gym rats. It's the same gym the Bulls use for practice, and Jackson often will stop to look at us hackers as he leaves his office after a day of breaking down film or whatever he does in his windowless room long after his racehorses have left the premises.

He will tilt his head and squint at us and, often as not, will look bemused—just as he does when Jordan breaks the laws of gravity. It's a nice look, in my opinion, and good for the game.

Thanks, coaches. ■

THE WHITE HOUSE

Office of the Press Secretary

For Immediate Release

October 1, 1991

REMARKS BY THE PRESIDENT
AT CEREMONY FOR NBA CHAMPION CHICAGO BULLS

The Rose Garden

2:33 P.M. EDT

THE PRESIDENT: Thank you all for coming. I would like to welcome all of you. Sam Skinner, our Secretary of Transportation, came here to gloat. He bored us all to death about these guys for - - ever since last winter. And it's nice to see him here. Ed Derwinski, our Secretary of Veterans Affairs, come to cheer his home team.

I'd also like to express my condolences here today to Jim Edgar, the Governor of the state, whose mother died last week. Our thoughts go out to him. I know he'd be here if it weren't for that.

I also want to welcome so many members of the Illinois congressional delegation. Commissioner Stern is with us; Bulls owner, an old friend of mine, Jerry Reinsdorf -- it's great to have them all here.

We were out now just watching some awesome shooting on our basketball court down here that I wish we could have shared with everybody. But it was spectacular; really good.

We're also pleased to have with us -- and I want to get them to stand up, if we can -- representatives of the Anacostia Youth Basketball League, and then 24 players from a dozen Washington, D.C. high school teams with us. Will you guys all stand up so we can at least see where you are? Welcome. (Applause.)

Finally, we're delighted to have with us David Mercer, the National Executive Director of the YMCA; Barbara Roper, the Chairperson of the YMCA National Board. In the 100th anniversary of basketball, I think we all do owe a special vote of thanks to the Y and what they've meant to so many kids around this country.

I know I'm no Ray Clay, but I'll try to give the Bulls a hearty welcome as well. We're here because the Chicago Bulls answered all their critics last year, compiling the best regular-season record in their history and then crushing all the opposition on the way to their first-ever National Basketball Association Championship. (Applause.)

If some Hollywood scriptwriter had come up with a plan, tried to submit a script on this last year, movie producers would have tossed it away -- too improbable, too many pieces of history and fortune. Last year the franchise celebrated its 25th anniversary. The Bulls sold out every home game and ran their streak of sellouts at the stadium to 190 games.

Now we have our first Rose Garden sellout. (Laughter.) Suddenly, everyone in the entire administration claims to have come from Chicago. (Laughter.)

MORE

The team won its 1,000th game last season, played its 1,000th home game and welcomed its 10 millionth fan. The team enjoyed its first 60-plus win season, ran off the longest home winning streak in its history; set records for the best defensive quarter ever and the best offensive quarter. And on June 12th -- my birthday, I might add -- the Bulls won the world championship. Not bad for a team that the experts said would lose to the Pistons and then to the Lakers. Not bad at all. (Applause.)

Former Soviet Olympic coach Alexander Gomelsky, he once said, "It's an axiom that good players without a good coach make a mediocre team." Well, no one who has seen Phil Jackson prowl the sidelines, who has seen that going on, nobody can argue against his skills as a coach. And what's even more amazing is the fact that sportswriters actually call him a nice guy. I didn't think they liked anybody, at least before they retired. But that's the way it is.

At any rate, Phil, who, I must mention, as a New York Knick once roomed with Bill Bradley, Senator Bill Bradley. I want to congratulate him, his excellent staff, and everybody connected with his winning ball club.

One key: You made great use of the Bulls' talent. Just look down the roster, and everyone contributed to the success of the team. Let me just click them off: B.J. Armstrong, Bill Cartwright, Horace Grant, Craig Hodges, Dennis Hopson, Michael Jordan, Stacey King, Cliff Levingston, John Paxson, Will Perdue, Scottie Pippen and Scott Williams. And you'll find each name in the box scores and we'll see a lot of them in the Hall of Fame. (Applause.)

Now, everyone here certainly, and many around the country, know exactly what you all did on the court last year. But I want to just say that the Bulls also perform spectacular feats after the 24-second clock has expired and the crew has turned off the lights at the stadium.

John Paxson, whose long-range bombs destroyed the Lakers during the playoffs, couldn't be here today because he's committed himself to hosting a drug-free assembly as part of Hugs Not Drugs program that he's so interested in.

Horace Grant works with Youth for Christ, stressing the importance of positive lifestyle -- as well as getting good position on the offensive boards.

And Cliff Levingston hosts an annual Charity Basketball Classic for Multiple Sclerosis.

Bill Cartwright did that great ad for the National Committee for the Prevention of Child Abuse and helps out the Little City Foundation, a home for the retarded.

And B.J. Armstrong stresses recycling, not littering. And, of course, he likes to pick up stray basketballs, usually from Isaiah Thomas and Magic. (Laughter.)

Michael Jordan performs a host of good works, with a series of charities and through his foundation.

The CharitaBulls also do a great job of serving youth in Chicago's embattled neighborhoods. And in sum, the people on this team serve their communities.

And I spoke to students across the nation today from an 8th-grade class out here. And it's worth pointing out that the Bulls also contribute to this nation's educational efforts. Everyone on

the team participates in Stay-In-School assemblies. And you stress the importance of getting an education. And you also illustrate the joys of physical fitness -- something that this administration has encouraged under the kinder, gentler leadership of Arnold Schwarzenegger -- (laughter) -- who, incidentally, is doing a good job as head of our Fitness Council -- been to 27 states now, I think, and going to all of them.

You guys thought I'd talk just about basketball, but it is tough to limit yourself to sports when an entire team sets this kind of selfless example for the rest of our society.

I'm pleased to have you all here. We've waited months for this event, and I can tell you, as far as I'm concerned, all of you were worth the wait.

So, David Stern and Jerry Reinsdorf, and players and officials for the Bulls, thank you all for joining us. Thank all of you. And may I encourage every one of the kids from Anacostia and elsewhere with us out in this audience to get going in that school, do your best. And some day I expect, confidently, many of you will be standing right here.

Thanks for joining us and thanks to making fans out of the White House staff, who is always looking for a good excuse to get out of work -- (laughter) -- but nevertheless this one is one in which I'm very happy and proud to join them. And thanks for what you've done to stimulate the best in sports in the United States of America. God bless you all. Thank you.

END

2:40 P.M. EDT