

our debt \ your debt  
interlude





All civilizations have practiced sport. Why do we find pleasure in watching athletes play? Our interest comes because of a fascination with the virtuosic.

Every move Michael Jordan made on the basketball court is regarded as an act of brilliance. Every game winning shot, every dunk, or pass: revered. It is because of Len Bias's comparison to Michael Jordan that his mythology carries the same prestige.



Ronald Reagan was the first President of a truly postmodern era. However, his policies had modernist tendencies. As the story goes, Len Bias touched and used cocaine once. He died of a massive heart attack induced by the cocaine. Reagan and the 99th congress decided anyone who touched after Len, would be sentenced to mandatory jail time.



I want to emphasize this idea of touch. What the Anti Drug Abuse Act of 1986 did, for the first time, was convict everyone with the same intensity, for touching a drug, no matter the degree to which that person handled the drug.

Someone caught holding crack was sentenced the same as someone caught using crack, same as someone caught transporting crack. A drug dealer's girlfriend was just as guilty as the dealer. This, because the power of touch.



Sports memorabilia becomes less valuable when the object has been sterilized. Michael Jordan understood this, it's why he put a drop of his sweat in every bottle of his signature cologne.

Reagan understood the value of touch. He also found value in bodies.

Len Bias was forced into martyrdom. And like modernists before him, Reagan commodified touch, particularly the touch of a genius.