

FROM THE AUTHOR OF THE BESTSELLING KOBE BRYANT BIOGRAPHY THE RISE COMES THE LEGEND OF THE MOST POWERFUL SHOT IN BASKETBALL: THE SLAM DUNK.

The evolution of basketball, and much of the social and cultural change in America, can be traced through one powerful act on the court: the slam dunk. The dunk's history is the story of a sport and a country changed by the most dominant act in basketball, and it makes Magic in the Air a rollicking and insightful piece of narrative history and a surefire classic of sports literature.

When basketball was the province of white men, the dunk acted as a revolutionary agent, a tool for players like Wilt Chamberlain and Bill Russell to transform the sport into a Black man's game. The dunk has since been an expression of Black culture amid the righteous upheaval of the civil-rights movement, of the threat that Black people were considered to be to the establishment. It was banned from college basketball for nearly a decade—an attempt to squash the individual expression and athleticism that characterized the sport in America's cities and on its playgrounds. The dunk nevertheless bubbled up to basketball's highest levels. From Julius Erving to Michael Jordan to the high flyers of the 21st century, the dunk has been a key mechanism for growing the NBA into a global goliath.

Drawing on deep reporting and dozens of interviews with players, coaches, and other hoops experts, Magic in the Air brings to life the tale of the dunk while balancing sharp socio-racial history and commentary with a romp through American sports and culture. There's never been a basketball book quite like it.

MIKE SIELSKI is the author of four books, including *The Rise: Kobe Bryant and the Pursuit of Immortality*. A columnist for *The Philadelphia Inquirer*, he was formerly a reporter at *The Wall Street Journal*, and this work has been anthologized three times in *The Best American Sports Writing* and *The Year's Best Sports Writing*. He lives in Bucks County, Pennsylvania, with his wife and two sons.

READ BY LANDON WOODSON



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MAGIC IN THE AIR



MIKE SIELSKI

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