

Racial Bias: The Black Athlete, Reagan's War on Drugs, and Big-Time Sports Reform

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Len Bias was on the brink of unimagined worldly success—pro stardom and millions of dollars in salaries and product endorsements. And it was all blown away in moments by a mistaken fling with drugs. But if his death inspires a war on drug dealers and a reform of college athletics, it will not have been in vain.

John Jacob, "The Len Bias Tragedy," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 22 July 1986

Too many ivory tower types on faculties who choose to ignore sports scandals consider them unrelated to their teaching and research. And the factory system of education found at large universities has given administrators enormous power. Most faculty members are convinced they have little effect on athletic matters. Few faculties have attempted to speak out collectively on this issue.

"College Athletics' Smoking Gun," *Christian Science Monitor*, 21 July 1986



Figure 1: Photo of University of Maryland basketball star Len Bias. Photograph by The Washington Post, courtesy of Getty Images.

On the morning of June 19, 1986, the University of Maryland's (UMD) African American star basketball player Len Bias died of cocaine intoxication. Bias's death sent shockwaves across the United States, for less than two days before, the illustrious Boston Celtics of the National Basketball Association (NBA) had drafted him in the first round, offering him a lucrative contract. Young, gifted, black, and now on the cusp of being wealthy, he had everything to live for; he was the epitome of the American Dream, a story of racial uplift through intercollegiate athletics. Yet, his life was now over thanks to one night of celebration with an illicit drug in a college dorm room.

Even before the NBA draft, Bias was already nationally renowned. He was the UMD Terrapins' all-time leading scorer, a two-time Atlantic Coast Conference (ACC) player of the year, and named to the All-America Team. A dynamic player who moved with exuberance, one sports journalist described Bias as akin to Muhammad Ali on the court.¹ At 6'8", 210 pounds, he was a picture of health and vitality.²

In a matter of days, his death became the center of a national conversation about the dangers of cocaine, especially the new "demon drug" of crack cocaine, and the need for a more concerted war on drugs.³ Bias's tragic demise and its aftermath typically garner a line or two in most histories of President Ronald Reagan's war on drugs and the so-called crack epidemic as a catalyst for the increasingly punitive turn in drug policy and the concomitant criminalization of African Americans.⁴ However, no one has yet unpacked why this up-and-coming black athlete became one of the chief symbols driving the frenzied rush to national action and the resulting expansion of the neoliberal carceral state. By analyzing the racial and gendered formation of the black athlete as

criminal suspect, this article builds on work that explores the cultural construction of the war on drugs and the normalization of punitive logic in the United States.⁵

The fallen Bias proved to be a flexible figure that government and university officials from across the political spectrum used to support various types of policy reform. At the same time that Bias's death became a justification for the criminalization of black youth beyond the university, it also inspired calls for the more systematic disciplining of black athletes, along with the expansion of policing on college campuses. However, Bias's drug abuse at UMD was not the only cause for concern. In the weeks after his death, reports surfaced exposing Bias's and his teammates' academic failures.⁶ Although a senior, Bias was twenty-one credits short of graduation, and he had dropped two and failed three courses in his last term. Likewise, four of his teammates had flunked the previous semester. These revelations sparked debates about the proper management of "student athletes" in revenue-producing sports, particularly NCAA Division I men's basketball and football, which by the mid-1980s were dominated by black male athletes.⁷

In addition to exploring the national calls for a more sweeping war on drugs that followed Bias's passing, this article examines UMD's response through a critical analysis of two university task force reports: (1) *The Task Force on Academic Achievement of Student-Athletes: Final Report* (September 1986) and (2) *The Model University Program for Education & Prevention of Drug Abuse* (December 1986). Facing mounting public criticism and hoping to repair the university's damaged reputation, UMD officials had announced the appointment of the two task forces on June 30.⁸ In both cases, the resulting reports framed black athletes in revenue sports as a special, "at-risk" population that threatened to contaminate the supposed amateurism of college sports and the moral and academic standards of predominantly white institutions (PWIs).⁹ Cast as a "problem," black male athletes were not only denied the same constitutional rights as regular students, but they were also subject to surveillance and disciplinary action for failing in a system designed to exploit their athletic labor at the expense of their academics.

Thanks to Maryland's policy of self-support, by the time of Bias's death, UMD's athletic department was already a profit center that operated outside the constraints of the state budget for the university. According to Molly Dunham of the *Baltimore Evening Sun*, UMD's athletic department was effectively "a corporation within the university, a self-supporting business enterprise with a \$7.3 million budget."¹⁰ The policy of self-support diminished the authority of the university's academic officials over athletics, while empowering the Terrapin booster club, which largely financed athletic scholarships through contributions to the somewhat ironically named Maryland Educational Foundation. It also created perverse economic incentives to recruit the best and most pliant basketball players, regardless of their academic records. UMD needed a winning basketball team to market itself as a successful and racially inclusive institution

on the national stage, and the athletic department needed the basketball team's \$1.67 million dollar profit (thanks in large part to its lucrative television contract) to fund the rest of its sports, with the exception of football. The logic of self-support turned UMD's and other public universities' athletic departments into privately controlled businesses that embraced the logic of corporatization: As the number of highly paid coaches and administrators increased, athletic labor remained poorly paid and precarious.

Despite these resonances, the emerging literature on the rise of the neoliberal, multicultural university has been rather quiet on the role of intercollegiate sport, especially revenue-producing, majority-black sports such as basketball and football, in the shaping of institutional cultures and practices. In the wake of the 2008 economic collapse and the rise of the Occupy movement, American studies scholars have begun to analyze the increasing criminalization of students, disciplining of protest, and militarization of college campuses.¹¹ There is also a growing body of work that analyzes the neoliberal university's containment of minority difference and implementation of "official antiracisms."¹² Although sports scholars and economists have long pointed to the rampant commercialization of NCAA sports and its impact on U.S. colleges and "student athletes," their analyses have made only fleeting appearances in these recent critiques.¹³ This article attempts to bridge these conversations. After all, the relative silence in American studies about university athletics is puzzling, since in some respects, black athletes at PWIs in the 1970s and 1980s were the canaries in the coalmine, their circumstances foreshadowing larger trends in the punishment of student dissent, the policing of campus spaces, the casualization of labor, the privatization of higher education, and the deployment of the logic of diversity.

Moreover, critical histories of the status of "student athletes" in big-time NCAA sports have tended to overlook how racial frames helped to push the conversation toward minor reforms and the disciplining of individual players, rather than systemic changes. Much of the literature treats the race and class status of the young men in revenue sports as incidental rather than constitutive in shaping the policies aimed at managing "student athletes."¹⁴ However, it is not coincidental that in the late 1960s and early 1970s, the "revolt of the black athlete," which included boycotts and protests at hundreds of colleges across the nation, corresponded with the increasingly insecure status of "student athletes." The stripping of the last vestiges of labor protections accompanied the darkening of revenue-producing intercollegiate sports. Division I NCAA athletes (growing numbers of whom were African American) became amateur in name only, as their performance in sport became inextricably connected to their compensation. For instance, in 1967, the NCAA ruled that athlete scholarships could be taken away from players who voluntarily withdrew from sports; in 1972, they repealed the freshmen ineligibility rule; and in 1973 they replaced four-year scholarships with one-year renewable grants tied to athletic performance.¹⁵ NCAA and university officials were careful to cast athletic work as

a privilege, all the while portraying themselves as humanitarian purveyors of black opportunity at a moment of urban chaos, supposedly thanks to dysfunctional families and violent drug crime. As Bias's story suggests, the broader war on drugs and the exploitation of black "student athletes" are not two separate phenomena, but rather two sides of the same neoliberal, carceral coin. The two systems thrived on the precarity of black life in late twentieth-century America.

Bias, Black Athletes, and the National War on Drugs

Because Bias was a high-profile African American basketball player, his death hearkened back to the drug panics of the 1970s and early 1980s that led to more comprehensive antidrug measures in big-time professional sports. These measures included expanded surveillance and policing through private security forces who worked in tandem with law enforcement agencies; persistent calls for mandatory, random drug testing; and increasingly harsh punishments, from criminal penalties to league fines, suspensions, and even expulsions. Although the leagues' antidrug crusade started out as a war on performance enhancing drugs (PEDs), by the mid-1970s, the big-time sports leagues had deliberately shifted the conversation away from the systemic use of PEDs (and their part in it) to the individual misdeeds of players, particularly black players, using illegal street drugs.¹⁶

To their majority-white fans, the professional leagues touted themselves as the vanguard of the war on drugs, saving not only sport but also the nation from the supposed scourge of illicit narcotics. The racial dimensions of their crusade were clear. They were no longer looking for trainers who dispensed PEDs in the locker room, but rather for players with illegal drugs procured in the street. In the early 1980s, their framing of the purported "cocaine epidemic" in sports drew automatic associations with the drug trade in black inner cities, and not surprisingly, black athletes bore the brunt of this criminalization. Arguably, the racial and gendered construction of the black athlete as drug abuser/offender in this earlier moment provided ready justification for the criminal justice system's broader targeting of young black men in Reagan's stepped-up war on drugs.

Given this context, it is hardly surprising that Drug Enforcement Agency (DEA) Chief John C. Lawn automatically connected Bias's death to the supposed pathology of the black ghetto. "He grew up in an environment where drug use is pervasive," Lawn stated. "Peer pressure killed him."¹⁷ Yet, Bias did not grow up in the inner city; he was not the usual black suspect. Early reactions to his death in the press stressed that he came from a two-parent household in Landover, Maryland, a suburb of Washington, DC, just down the road from UMD's College Park campus. Landover was emblematic of the rising black middle class, for it was located in Prince George's County, an area that was over 40 percent African American by 1986. Bias's father, James, was an electrical repairman, while his mother, Lonise, worked at a nearby bank. Ven Chap-

man, the family's next-door neighbor described Bias as "an all-American kid," "mamma's and daddy's baby."¹⁸ Bias was known for having "a big smile and an affable disposition" and for generously mentoring children at Landover's Columbia Park recreation center, "telling them to mind their school books as much as their sports."¹⁹ Initially, the press also emphasized the fact that he was a "born-again Christian." Even NBA Commissioner David Stern described Bias as "a poised, good-natured and friendly young man with a wonderful future"²⁰

What made Bias's cocaine-related death so compelling for local, state, and national politicians was the fact that even though he evoked it, he did not necessarily fit the prevailing image of the unruly, drug-addled black athlete. As a native of Landover and a UMD athlete, Bias was a symbol that bridged the black-white, urban-suburban divide. His death became representative of the broadening reach of the "cocaine/crack epidemic" reportedly ravaging the nation on multiple fronts. If cocaine could kill Bias, a young, elite intercollegiate athlete, after just one night of celebration, then cocaine could kill anyone. Moreover, newspaper reports about Bias often conflated powder cocaine, freebasing, and crack cocaine, and some even mistakenly claimed that crack had killed him.

Still, Bias and other black "student athletes" represented a racialized threat of contamination. Because of their hypervisibility in the media and their access to formerly white spaces, from the suburb to the university, they were also seen as potential vectors of this drug epidemic. It did not help that right around the same time several former and current football players at the University of Virginia were charged with distributing cocaine on campus.²¹ Therefore, the circumstances surrounding Bias's death allowed government officials, social leaders, and journalists from across the political spectrum to call upon the U.S. public (black and white) to support a massive mobilization against both sides of the drug equation—the supply side and demand side.

His death became a rallying point for the militarization of the U.S. public in a national war on drugs, whether defined in terms of drug education/rehabilitation and/or the repression of drug pushers/users.²² Although they tended to disagree on which strategy should be at the forefront of the drug war, both Democrats and Republicans framed the "cocaine/crack epidemic" in neoliberal terms, casting it as a matter of behavior, rather than a structural problem, that could either be educated/treated or punished away.²³ Moreover, both cast it as a "crisis," calling for a "state of emergency" that suspended the civil rights of citizens who distributed and/or used drugs. Conceptualizing the drug problem in these terms opened the door to sweeping, martial solutions.

As the criminal investigation into Bias's death got underway, unsubstantiated rumors started circulating that Bias and his friends had traveled to a known drug trafficking area in northeast DC, near Montana and New York Avenues, in order to purchase cocaine, including crack cocaine.²⁴ For the previous couple of months, DC police had been monitoring the open-air "drug bazaar," located near the predominantly black public housing project of Montana Terrace. As Captain James Nestor, head of the police department's narcotics branch ex-

plained, “The business started there to serve that community, and now they have customers coming in from outside the area.”²⁵ Although these rumors reinforced the idea that drug crime happened in the poverty-stricken black urban ghettos, they also positioned the rising black middle class as possible vectors of vice in suburban neighborhoods and on college campuses.

Appropriating the hawkish language that white anti-marijuana advocates lobbed at federal officials in the early 1980s, black Democratic leaders were the most vocal in calling for a “war” on drugs in the immediate aftermath of Bias’s death.²⁶ Even before the state medical examiner confirmed that Bias had died of cocaine intoxication, Reverend Jesse Jackson framed the tragedy as an argument for greater federal action. On June 23, in front of 11,000 mourners and a row of television cameras at UMD’s Cole Fieldhouse, Jackson declared, “God’s called him [Bias] for a higher purpose . . . to get the attention of this generation and to save it.”²⁷ Jackson used hyperbolic imagery to underscore the severity of the mounting drug crisis in urban black areas. “The KKK and his rope, the shadow of death, have never killed so many people as the pusher of dope,” Jackson proclaimed; “Pushers are terrorists and death messengers.”²⁸ Jackson endeavored to use the respectable, even heroic, black collegiate figure of Bias against a threatening backdrop of murderous drug pushers to garner national sympathy and attention. As Mike Littwin of the *Baltimore Sun* explained, “He [Jackson] hopes the children learn that drugs can kill and that no one, not the strongest of us, not the most blessed of us, not the most gifted, not the richest, is immune or invulnerable.”²⁹ Jackson not only cast drugs as a universal threat to U.S. society but also drew a clear line separating law-abiding black Americans from black drug dealers.

Two days later, Representative Charles B. Rangel (D-NY) and Rev. Jackson called a Capitol Hill news conference, where UMD basketball coach Lefty Driesell and Boston Celtics President Red Auerbach joined them in a show of support. Rangel and Jackson again argued that Bias’s death “underscored the need for a national drive to combat drug abuse.”³⁰ As chairman of the House Select Committee on Narcotics Abuse and Control, Rangel blamed the Reagan administration for largely ignoring the growing drug crisis affecting black communities and for failing to come up with a coordinated antidrug campaign. “Even though the administration claims to have declared a ‘war on drugs,’ the only evidence we find of this war are the casualties,” Rangel argued. “If indeed a war has been declared, I asked the question when was the last time we heard a statement in support of this war from our Commander in Chief.” He noted that at the very same time that cocaine was flooding the United States, federal funds for drug education had been cut by 40 percent, and only \$3 million of the Department of Education’s \$18 million budget was allocated to antidrug education.

Mocking the Reagan administration’s overriding focus on combating “communism” and “terrorism” abroad, Jackson added, “We must see drug abuse as a threat to our culture greater than any ideology could ever be. We

must rally the government to the issue of drug abuse."³¹ Jackson also called for random, mandatory drug testing in sports and industry, stating, "One does not have the civil right to take drugs."³² Rangel and Jackson urged support for three House bills: The first would authorize \$100 million annually to establish a program of federal grants to states for drug abuse education; the second would set aside \$750 million over five years to assist state and local governments in drug enforcement and prevention activities; and the third was a House resolution that would require the president to convene a White House Conference on Drug Abuse in order to bring together experts to develop a national policy to combat drug abuse.³³

Not everyone agreed with this panicked response. At basketball courts in the black areas of Brooklyn and Manhattan, Samuel Freedman of the *New York Times* observed that "most players treated Mr. Bias's death more as a mistake, bad luck, even stupidity, than as a parable."³⁴ At the Col. C. Young Playground in Harlem, many were skeptical of the racialized hysteria surrounding Bias's death. "In a society with rampant cocaine use by all races, they wondered aloud why a black man had been made into the symbol," Freedman explained. "How many white youths stopped using drugs, one teenager asked angrily, when John Belushi died of an overdose of cocaine and heroin?" Special education teacher Kendall Cullins complained, "If it was Larry Bird who died, they'd say it was heart trouble. . . . If it was a white player, they'd cover it up." Black ballplayers at Foster Avenue Park in Flatbush were also wary of the moral panic surrounding Bias's death. Donald Graham speculated that Bias's inexperience with drugs was what actually killed him: "If he'd been doing coke, he should've done it years ago, so he was used to it, and he'd've known how to handle it." Meanwhile, transit worker Gerald Bunch pointed to the futility of calls for a war on street-level pushers. "You can get crack around here like going to the store," Bunch explained. "The police come every day and bust people. But they're little guys." Although they did not dispute that drugs were readily available in their neighborhoods, they challenged the sensationalized interpretations of the African American ballplayer's death.

Moreover, the reality on the ground defied the emerging narratives of national crisis and necessary war. As drug policy expert Arnold S. Trebach notes, the DEA's special report, *The Crack Situation in the United States* (September 1986), showed that media claims about the spread of crack across the country were wildly overblown. Crack use was still more or less contained to the black ghettos of a few major cities, and distribution remained decentralized, carried out, for the most part, by pushers who dealt in small quantities. Snorting powder also remained the primary means of cocaine use, and cocaine use overall had leveled off in recent years.³⁵ Still, the narrative of national crisis continued, as news stories quoted government drug experts who pointed to flawed statistics that showed "a steep increase in cocaine-related deaths and emergency-room treatment for effects of the drug."³⁶ Many articles spoke of cocaine's overwhelming "allure" that made normally rational people do irrational things.³⁷

It did not take long for Republicans to respond to Rangel and Jackson's calls for war. They encouraged a two-pronged drug war that would target and punish both pushers and users. Republican leaders' bellicose responses to Bias's death help to shed light on "how the state mobilized and appropriated a range of reactions—including fear, anger, and disorientation—in African American communities to justify repression and the increased militarization of law enforcement."³⁸ Just two weeks after Bias's death, Linda Chavez, former White House staffer turned GOP Senate contender in Maryland, weighed in with an antidrug platform of her own. Where she chose to unveil her plan spoke volumes about whom she imagined as the primary targets of the drug war. She spoke to the media from the "glass-strewn playground" of a West Baltimore public housing project—an area previously highlighted for its drug trafficking activity in the *Evening Sun*.³⁹ Chavez pledged to "seek legislation that would allow juries to impose the death penalty on adults convicted of knowingly selling drugs to children under age 12," to "increase funding to . . . agencies that investigate drug-related crimes," and to "seek 'stiff fines' for recreational drug users." She also called on professional sports league commissioners and college athletic directors "to require athletes disciplined for drug use to participate in educational programs aimed at children." After making her announcement, Chavez shot a few hoops, passed out antidrug literature to children, and greeted adults on their stoops. It did not seem to matter that Bias actually hailed from suburban Maryland; he had come to embody racialized fears about the democratization of cocaine thanks to the arrival of the more inexpensive crack.

Zero tolerance became the Republican rallying cry for mobilizing the U.S. public in a ramped up war on drugs. Although previously used to justify the harsh punishment of marijuana dealers (imagined as nonwhite) in the late 1970s, this discourse of no tolerance now rationalized the Republican administration's increasing focus on punishing users as a means to reduce the demand for drugs.⁴⁰ On July 7, First Lady Nancy Reagan declared that the problem facing America was not a lack of awareness about the dangers of drug abuse but rather a sense of complacency. "By accepting drug use, you are accepting a practice that is destroying life—lives like that of Len Bias and countless kids next door," the First Lady argued in a *Washington Post* editorial aptly titled, "The Need for Intolerance."⁴¹ "Most people don't feel that combating drugs has anything to do with them," she maintained. "It's for others to do—those who work in treatment centers or who have children on drugs or who live where drugs are openly traded on the street." However, each American had a "personal, moral responsibility to fight drug abuse." As the First Lady advised, "Each of us has an obligation to take an individual stand against drugs. Each of us has a responsibility to be intolerant of drug use anywhere, anytime, by anybody." Whether "at a chic party" or "in a back alley," drug use was both immoral and criminal.

Allowing the First Lady to pave the way, President Ronald Reagan did not publicly weigh in until July 10, when he announced the launch of his per-

sonal crusade against drugs. One senior White House official claimed that Bias's death had provided the catalyst for the president's new initiative. President Reagan vowed to be a "preacher against drug abuse" in order to "raise public consciousness" about the problem.⁴² Although he shied away from making any specific policy statements, the president rather skillfully shifted the national conversation away from top-level, supply-side enforcement, which, given the flood of drugs entering the United States in the mid-1980s, had proven largely ineffective. As David Hoffman of the *Washington Post* reported, "Reagan's campaign is to be aimed at slowing the demand for them—in particular, seeking to discourage potential drug users."⁴³ Yet, the expansion of drug testing, not drug education, was Reagan's proposed method of reducing demand.

Shortly after the president's announcement, the House Republicans also jumped into the fray, calling a press conference in which they publicly criticized the Democrats for being too passive on the drug issue. With a dramatic air, Rep. Duncan Hunter (R-CA) stood next to a coffin as he denounced his Democratic counterparts for failing to act on any of the 26 bills in the House Judiciary Committee aimed at combating the drug problem. In response, House Speaker Thomas P. "Tip" O'Neill (D-Mass) quickly announced the launch of a bipartisan antidrug crusade. Rep. O'Neill also pledged Democratic support for the creation of a White House-appointed "drug czar" to coordinate the crusade.⁴⁴ In the weeks ahead, they would work with Republicans to draft a comprehensive antidrug legislative package for a vote on September 10. "We are going to see if we can come out with some kind of drug program that would have some teeth in it," Rep. O'Neill maintained.

Although President Reagan initially shied away from talking policy, at the end of July he announced that he would unveil a legislative package "calling for stiffer penalties for drug dealers along with proposals to withhold federal funds from educational institutions and government contractors that fail to take positive steps to discourage drug use."⁴⁵ Appropriating almost word-for-word the language of Rangel and Jackson, President Reagan contended, "Those who smuggle and sell drugs are as dangerous to our national security as any terrorist or foreign dictatorship." On the demand side, the president again endorsed the principle of mandatory drug testing in the workplace, even though he acknowledged that it raised constitutional questions. "Drug users can no longer excuse themselves by blaming society," President Reagan stated. "The rest of us must be clear that while we're sympathetic, we will no longer tolerate the use of illegal drugs by anyone."⁴⁶ Thus, drug dealers would face punishment, while drug users would face intolerance and discipline. In some respects, the Anti-Drug Abuse Act of 1986 (enacted on October 27), with its mandatory minimums for drug possession and its crack cocaine disparity that targeted black street dealers, simply codified the public discussions surrounding Bias's tragic death in the summer of 1986.

Students or Athletes?

For John Jacob of the *Baltimore Afro-American*, Bias and other high-profile black athletes had a crucial role to play in this national war on drugs. “If star athletes and molders of opinion use drugs for ‘recreational’ purposes how will we ever contain the raging epidemic in the streets?” Jacob asked. “Hopefully, Len Bias’ tragic death may help change the climate that tolerates drugs.”⁴⁷ Indeed, Jacob believed that black athletes had a “special responsibility” that went above and beyond that of white athletes. “Their white peers may be able to get away with dabbling in drugs, but they can’t,” Jacob asserted. “Aside from the personal dangers, they are role models in the community, worshipped among young blacks as white athletes never are in their communities. So they have to stay clean and act clean, or they’ll be implicitly [*sic*] responsible for further tragedies.” Whether fair or not, Jacob maintained, black “student athletes” had to bear this racial burden at a moment when illicit drugs were flooding their communities.

Yet, as Jacob pointed out, this was not their only burden, for they also had to bear the weight of being black guests at PWIs. Admitted primarily for their athletic prowess, black basketball players at UMD remained on the margins of the academic institution, both literally and figuratively. Although they gained notoriety on campus for their performance on the court, the university did not see them or treat them like regular students. Even in the early 1980s, they lived in a separate athletic dormitory; they continued to be shunted into the general studies major, a flexible degree program used to help keep “student athletes” eligible for play; and their long season often kept them out of the classroom. As Jacob pointed out, Bias’s poor academic record was typical, rather than exceptional in the world of big-time NCAA basketball. What *was* unique was Bias’s success in the NBA draft. “Athletics as a vehicle to the pros works only for a small handful of the exceptionally talented players. The rest never make it,” Jacob noted. “Unless colleges get serious about helping those young people take the opportunity to earn degrees, they’ll move from the basketball court to the unemployment line.”⁴⁸ For Jacob, not only had the Len Bias story shone a spotlight on the dangers of drug abuse, but it had also “helped expose the exploitation of college athletes.”

On June 24, the same day that the state medical examiner had announced the cause of Bias’s death, Wendy Whittemore, the academic counselor to UMD’s basketball team, had announced her resignation, citing “philosophical differences” with Coach Driesell.⁴⁹ Whittemore told reporters that she felt education was not Driesell’s top priority; after all, 5 out of 12 Terrapin basketball players had flunked out the previous semester. Speaking of her experience with Bias, she recalled, “Lenny was very bright and intelligent, and I had no question whatsoever about his abilities under normal circumstances. But last season it seemed like every ACC game happened to fall on a Thursday, so all the guys missed a good number of classes.”⁵⁰ These revelations put UMD officials on

the defensive, for they laid bare the hypocrisy of the term “student athlete.” Ironically, in 1985, an internal review of UMD’s Department of Intercollegiate Athletics (DIA) had given them a relatively clean bill of health. The review had looked at statistics regarding “student athlete” admissions, support programs, and academic achievements by sport, finding some room for improvement, but nothing signaling an imminent crisis.⁵¹ It seemed that UMD officials had their heads in the sand. “Driesell and Whittemore surely knew that the celebrated Bias was flunking out of his courses, and was in reality not a student,” African American sportswriter Carl Rowan asserted. “Top officials of the university should have known. Len Bias was being exploited by the university people around him in ways almost as venal as any cocaine peddler could have exploited him.”⁵²

Not everyone agreed that “student athletes” were exploited. Some newspaper reports and alumni letters characterized black athletes as a polluting force on UMD’s campus, not only because of their propensity for drug crime, but also because of their failure to uphold the university’s academic standards. They expressed a sense of nostalgia for “simpler” times, usually in the decades before the 1960s, when college athletes were hardworking students first and when their hardest drug of choice was beer.⁵³ Sports studies scholars have shown that this idea of an untainted “amateur” past is more myth than reality.⁵⁴ However, the public commentary surrounding Bias’s death illustrates that this sense of white nostalgia for the “good old days” was in part a reaction to the darkening of the Division I athlete pool. Black athletes, especially those who did not appear to conform to the utmost discipline and restraint, became popular scapegoats for the very system of commercialized athletics that profited from their precarious status and poorly compensated labor. In effect, as the public face of big-time NCAA sports became black, the public became at best ambivalent about “student athletes” labor. Much like the professional leagues, the NCAA and its member institutions were able to sidestep systemic critiques by showing their majority-white fans that they were committed to protecting the supposed sanctity of amateur sport in the face of racial integration and rampant commercialization. In doing so, they shifted the onus and blame for any rules violations and academic failures back onto the individual athletes, particularly black athletes, while washing their hands of culpability in the matter.

Letters to Alumni Affairs in response to the revelations of Bias’s drug use and academic failure show that some UMD graduates viewed black athletes as a dangerous contagion on the university campus.⁵⁵ One alumna declared, “It is my opinion that there is absolutely no excuse for permitting mental degenerates such as those on the basketball team who manage to receive Fs and dropouts for their scholastic efforts. The Chancellor alone is responsible. I suggest you [UMD] consider dropping out of intercollegiate sports. The university system in the US can do without such ‘fine people’ like Len Bias, et al.”⁵⁶ Indeed, several alumni blamed UMD’s first African American chancellor, Dr. John Slaughter, for failing to adequately discipline and decline admittance to second-rate

black “student athletes.” “Did he [Slaughter] know about their lack of academic prowess? Or did he know that most couldn’t get to class after doing a few lines (snorting coke through a straw)?” one alumna questioned. “I am sure that he knew; they were admitted with substandard skills . . . , they continuously cut class, they were continuously ‘readmitted,’ and they used drugs. I am also sure that if other students complained about drug use by athletes or rape or anything else—NOTHING would be done to this most holy or should I say unholy group.”⁵⁷ Some UMD graduates saw black athletes’ alleged criminality and intellectual inferiority as reason enough to completely ban intercollegiate sports. Others argued that the manual labor of competitive sport (and the athletes who performed it) simply did not belong at an institution of higher learning. “Imagine paying a bunch of knott [*sic*] heads a million dollars to perform physically what my father’s tenant farmer did every day in the week,” one alumna scoffed; “Do you call that CULTURE? Sure—day laborer class of culture.”⁵⁸ It was clear that their imagined “student athlete” was black and that to them athletic scholarships represented the worst abuses of Affirmative Action.

Many fans contended that black basketball players should be grateful to the NCAA and their colleges for allowing them a chance to receive a “free” higher education. “The argument that the college athlete has been exploited unless he graduates or succeeds as a professional is valid only if one can prove that he would have otherwise done something else more constructive with his time,” UMD history professor and former small-time college football player Elbert Smith contended in a letter to the *Washington Post*. “The college athlete is offered an expensive free education. He has the thrills that go with playing a game he enjoys before great crowds of people,” Smith added.⁵⁹ Not only was the athlete getting paid to play, but as Smith argued, “If the college athlete passes enough courses to remain eligible for four seasons, he is very likely to learn far more than he would have at a mundane job or walking the streets.” College athletics taught “the meaning of hard work, endurance, unselfishness, self-sacrifice, and self-discipline.” In Smith’s eyes, the NCAA and its member institutions were the nation’s leading purveyors of black opportunity: “Who can question the role of collegiate athletics in helping us achieve the racial democracy called for by our basic ideology and religious values? Perhaps universities are not the proper instruments for this service, but no other organizations have come forward to do it better.” How could the NCAA and UMD be maligned and blamed for Bias’s death, when they had thrown open the door of opportunity to black “student athletes”?

Given their supposedly privileged status, black athletes were expected to uphold their end of the bargain. When the *USA Today* asked its readers, “Do universities have a special responsibility to help athletes academically?,” those who answered tended to argue that athletes simply needed to work harder.⁶⁰ “No, universities do not have a special responsibility to help athletes. Athletes should be treated the same as other students,” declared Melanie Abdow, a 29-year-old banquet manager from Washington, DC. Just because certain people were

“good in sports” did not mean “they should be carried through college by their professors or coaches,” Abdow contended. “Anybody who gets into college should be willing to struggle.” Likewise, Jim Martino, a 35-year-old business owner from Niagara Falls, New York, complained, “The story that sports are the only way out of the ghetto has been milked for so long that people are getting tired of hearing it. The primary emphasis in college should be on education.” Black “student athletes” should not have preferential treatment; they just needed to study harder in order to succeed at college-level academics and to create more career choices for themselves.

In answering its own question, the editorial board of the *USA Today* took a more middle-of-the-road position. Although they acknowledged that Division I sports were no longer merely extracurricular activities, but instead “money machines for their schools and farm systems for the pros,” they argued that universities merely had to reinforce the importance of academics over athletics.⁶¹ Rather than calling for systemic change, they contended that universities needed to find ways to better accommodate “student athletes” to the rigors of intercollegiate athletics. “Universities place special demands on student athletes—hours of practice, days of travel, and heavy media attention,” they noted. “That’s why players need help; they need counseling and special attention so they can learn to cope.” In turn, they proposed a collective moral shift, rather than an economic one, to reform a corrupted enterprise in which all parties were at fault: “Colleges must return to developing the total person. . . . Coaches must remember that student athletes are more than just last night’s statistics. . . . Athletes must take responsibility for their own futures. And fans who support the win-at-any-cost system should remember they bear part of the blame, too.” If all involved were willing to change their mindset, the abuses and scandals would disappear under the regulatory watch of the NCAA.

In response to the rising accusations of exploitation, corruption, and hypocrisy, UMD officials appointed a 24-member task force “charged with studying and making recommendations concerning the academic achievements of student-athletes.”⁶² Chaired by Dr. J. Robert Dorfman, Acting Dean for the College of Computer, Mathematical & Physical Sciences, the academic task force comprised UMD faculty and administrators, DIA personnel, students, alumni, and retired professional athletes. Even though the task force was charged with examining UMD athletics as a whole, it is clear from the final report that the imagined “student athlete” in crisis was black. In framing the problem as one of black athletes’ academic failure at UMD, the task force avoided larger systemic questions about the integral role of a flexible, low-paid black labor force in sustaining the profitability of big-time intercollegiate sports. Instead, echoing much of the discussion in the popular media, their report recommended higher admissions standards, greater discipline, and more specialized services for academically at-risk “student athletes.” It also called for the development of more standardized policies and procedures for the DIA and for the stricter enforcement of existing UMD and NCAA regulations. In doing so, it followed

what historian Taylor Branch identifies as the typical athletic reform trend of “making changes around the edges.”⁶³

The section of the task force report entitled “Recruiting, Admissions, and Orientation” embodied this reformist approach. In all aspects of recruiting the task force found that the men’s basketball program prioritized athletics over academics. In the case of admissions, the report revealed that DIA personnel wielded a lot of influence, leading UMD to admit increasing numbers of “student athletes” who were academically at risk. And, when they arrived on campus, freshman athletes received an inadequate orientation to UMD’s various academic programs and nonacademic support units. Furthermore, the task force discovered that even freshman basketball players with sufficient academic credentials had difficulty making the transition to college because of their sport’s intense demands on their time.⁶⁴ “The ACC schedule for basketball,” the report noted, “often results in a game at mid-week, followed by another on the weekend—scheduled at the convenience of television networks rather than the students’ academic schedule and life.”⁶⁵

Nevertheless, the task force’s recommendations in these three areas comprised incremental changes that systematized rather than disrupted UMD’s profit-driven athletic program. The focus was on raising admissions standards, communicating to all involved that academics was paramount, and providing recruits and freshmen athletes with more information about UMD academics and campus life. In particular, the report encouraged UMD to be more transparent about “the joint responsibilities of the recruit and the University.”⁶⁶ To that end, the task force drafted the Compact Letter of Agreement to be signed in tandem with a recruit’s National Letter of Intent.

The compact letter preserved the university’s paternalistic relationship with its “student athletes.” Couched in the language of privilege, duty, and discipline, it required that the recruit certify being made “aware of the personal and social opportunities for growth” that the university offered:

A. My participation in intercollegiate athletics provides me with the opportunity to pursue simultaneously a college degree and serve the university community as well as the community at large.

B. I understand that my position as a student athlete means that I have an obligation to the university and to myself which requires that I develop responsible attitudes in dealing with personal, academic, and social pressures that can sometimes result in drug use, improper sexual behavior, and disruptive interpersonal relationships.⁶⁷

“Being a student athlete is a privilege that should not be abused,” the letter continued. It prescribed that the athlete’s “main goal” was to graduate and that

academics must always take precedence over athletics. It even stipulated that the athlete “*not . . . exceed four absences in any one class during a given semester.*” Thus, it fell back on individual “student athletes” to behave according to these expectations, regardless of the very real structural impediments to their academic success. If they failed to live up to these standards, the blame was theirs to bear.

The task force’s review of UMD’s academic programs and policies for “student athletes” revealed that they were only nominally students. The academic support unit for athletes was not only understaffed, but it was also isolated from the rest of campus. The unit was part of the DIA and reported to the athletic director, and its offices were located inside the Cole Field House. The unit’s main function was to keep athletes, especially those in revenue sports, eligible to play. Its counselors routinely encouraged the majority-black basketball and football players to major in general studies.⁶⁸ Although this evidence raised real questions about the status of athletes as primarily laborers rather than students, the report once again encouraged the development of better procedures and better services. It recommended that the academic support unit be moved outside the DIA and be managed by the Office of the Dean of Undergraduate Studies. It called for more and better-qualified staff. The report also encouraged the Campus Senate to investigate the general studies major, and it recommended research into new sports-related undergraduate majors for athletes such as sports management and sports journalism.⁶⁹ The focus was on providing special services for “student athletes” to help better accommodate them to the rigors of big-time sports.

The search for ways to best acclimate “student athletes” to the existing system also permeated the report’s discussion of UMD’s nonacademic support services. For instance, the task force recommended that UMD work harder to ensure that more athletes used the campus Career Development Center. The report stated, “Student-athletes in the revenue sports are often unrealistic in their career goals. Despite the very low probability of success, many of them assume that they will have a professional career in sports.”⁷⁰ Moreover, the report noted that black “student athletes,” in particular, tended to have trouble adjusting to life at UMD. Instead of forthrightly acknowledging the role of race and class in the alienation of black athletes on campus, the report argued, “Often the fact that they are recognizable campus figures prevents them from feeling comfortable or part of the campus community. They tend to restrict their circle of friends to other team members.”⁷¹ The task force’s suggested solutions were to increase the diversity of DIA personnel and to provide specific programs to help black athletes adapt to their new environment.⁷²

However, much like “student athletes” separate academic support unit, their segregated housing exemplified their exceptional status at UMD. This was particularly the case for the majority-black teams in revenue-generating sports. The task force found that up until around 1983, “male football and basketball players were housed in one dorm and grouped by team.” This segregated setup

“allowed easy supervision of their adherence to curfews and the dormitory was near the practice facilities.” Yet, it also “drew attention to them and the behavior of one athlete was often attributed to every athlete, creating stereotyping of athletes.” In order to rectify this situation, the director of Resident Life had been “gradually persuading coaches to allow the athletes to be integrated into other dormitories.”⁷³ The report called for UMD to better incorporate and treat these athletes as “regular members of the student population living on campus,” not necessarily because this housing arrangement left them vulnerable to undue discipline and racist scrutiny, but because the task force believed “exposure to other students” would provide them with “role models who present a variety of options in handling college.”⁷⁴

Despite its many recommendations, the task force acknowledged that any improvements to the academic achievements of UMD’s “student athletes” would not materialize if the NCAA and ACC kept doing business as usual. “There are still other possible improvements in our programs, which if implemented unilaterally, would put our athletics programs at a considerable competitive disadvantage,” the report admitted.⁷⁵ The only recourse was to have UMD representatives urge the NCAA and ACC to implement certain changes across the board. For instance, the task force called on UMD reps to urge both governing bodies to limit the length of sports seasons to one semester and to ban freshmen eligibility in revenue sports.⁷⁶

In the end, the task force returned to the language of proper procedure and enforcement, and personal responsibility. “Instead of coming up with a set of sweeping reforms,” it sought to provide recommendations to “tighten and refine a system that would have functioned somewhat effectively had it been properly enforced and maintained by all relevant campus personnel.”⁷⁷ As long as UMD followed the rules and provided the necessary support services to help athletes succeed academically, it was not engaging in exploitation. Yet, all of this left the fundamental question of athletes’ labor and constitutional rights more or less unexamined. As Jeff Rigenbach of the *USA Today* reminded sports fans:

If colleges and universities are going to be in the entertainment business, earning big money by putting on nationally televised weekend spectacles for the enjoyment of the general public, they owe the students who provide the talent for those spectacles at least the same treatment they accord to other school employees—the coaches and stadium managers, for example—who are involved. They owe them a competitive wage and the freedom to conduct their private lives as they see fit.⁷⁸

UMD did not offer a competitive wage, and with fears of a campus drug epidemic mounting, neither did they offer “student athletes” the freedom to conduct their private lives on their own terms.

Drug Crackdown on Campus

In early July 1986, only a few weeks after Bias's death, Secretary of Education William Bennett called for zero tolerance of drugs on college campuses. In a speech before the Heritage Foundation, a conservative think tank in DC with close ties to the Reagan administration, Bennett proclaimed, "Every college president should write his students this summer and tell them this: 'Welcome back for your studies in September; but no drugs on campus. None. Period.'"⁷⁹ Although he acknowledged that he had no power to enforce such a ban, he stated, "I will be glad to act if Congress gives me the authority to withhold federal funds from schools that do not protect their students from drugs." Adding to the growing moral panic, he argued, "Parents should be able to expect colleges to do their best to keep pushers off campus and get drug users . . . off campus, if they are already there." Although Bennett did not invoke racial language in his call for zero tolerance, black "student athletes," with their imagined ties to cocaine from the urban ghetto, were automatically suspect.

Bennett encouraged "zero tolerance" in the midst of reports that university campuses had become spaces of widespread cocaine consumption. The University of Michigan's annual survey on drug use for the National Institute on Drug Abuse (NIDA) announced a "current epidemic of cocaine use among young adults." The survey found that 57 percent of college students said it was "fairly or very easy" to obtain cocaine and that 17 percent had used cocaine in the last year. Despite this alarmist framing, the study acknowledged that marijuana was still far and away the drug of choice on college campuses, with 42 percent using it within the last year. A survey of UMD students conducted by the campus Counseling Center seemed to further contradict the prevailing narrative of crisis. It found that the percentage of incoming freshmen that had used cocaine increased from 8 percent in 1973 to 14 percent in 1983, slightly below the national average of 17 percent.⁸⁰

Although Bias's death raised questions about the overall increase in illegal drug use at UMD, the majority-black basketball team became the target of media scrutiny and slander. Any discussion of the basketball team was necessarily a comment on the character of black "student athletes," since 11 of the 13 on the roster were African American. Newspaper reports tended to cast UMD basketball as a den of iniquity, in which coaches and officials allowed players to get away with illegal drug use and other NCAA violations. The *Washington Times* claimed that recent university graduates had disclosed "rampant and blatant drug use and sales in Ellicott Hall—the 'jock dorm' on campus."⁸¹ It did not help that Arthur Marshall, the state's attorney for Prince George's County in charge of the grand jury probing the circumstance of Bias's death, made several public statements about UMD basketball players' rumored drug use and gambling.⁸² When Bill Brubaker of the *Washington Post* asked if university officials had been aware of other Terrapins basketball players using illegal drugs, Athletic Director Dick Dull averred, "I have never heard any direct informa-

tion linking drugs to anybody in the basketball program.”⁸³ However, former player Steve Rivers told Brubaker a different story: “Both Dick Dull and Coach [Lefty] Driesell knew that at least one basketball player had experimented with marijuana. . . . That player was me.” When Brubaker subsequently confronted Dull with Rivers’ words, Dull reversed his statement.

Why did Brubaker seek out Rivers for his exposé? On January 28, 1984, the black guard from Long Island, New York, and his teammate Adrian Branch (also black) were arrested and charged with possession of \$10 of marijuana. At the time, the arrest, conviction, and suspension of both players had garnered extensive media attention. Reportedly, Rivers had asked Branch to drive him to an area near UMD that was “known for drug dealing.”⁸⁴ The dealer waved them down, and Rivers handed the dealer \$10 for two nickel (\$5) bags of marijuana. A Prince George’s County police officer witnessed the transaction, and Rivers, Branch, and their female companion were arrested and charged with possession. Two days later, the players received a suspension after meeting with Driesell and Dull. Rivers claimed, “I admitted it to Dick Dull and to Lefty that I had before experimented with marijuana.” Dull then asked them if they were involved with cocaine; they said no. Driesell reputedly stated, “Maybe we can let you guys back [on the team] sooner if you’re willing to take a urinalysis.” Branch consented because he had not used marijuana, but Rivers declined fearing that the drug was still in his system. After both players were found guilty of a misdemeanor, fined \$200, and ordered to perform community service, Driesell reinstated them on the team. Whereas Branch passed his urinalysis test and returned to play, Rivers resigned when Driesell told him he would not be permitted to play.

According to Rivers, although their foray into drug use was by no means an isolated event, it was hardly what one could call an epidemic. Dismayed about his lack of playing time, Rivers had used marijuana to calm his frustration. He claimed he was not aware of any players who used cocaine and that their marijuana use was limited. “It wasn’t something like we all were trying every week or after every game or before every party,” Rivers argued. “It was something that happened, I can honestly say, like once a month. We decided, hey, let’s go out and do it. My experience was mostly with outside friends.”⁸⁵ Yet, Rivers stated that he actually never saw Bias use any illegal drugs during the two years that they were teammates: “Lenny was the kind of guy who could walk in a room, sit down and have a conversation with me and not touch a thing . . . not even a beer.” A graduate of UMD and now a telephone sales agent for TWA, Rivers told Brubaker, “A lot of people, sad to say, are using drugs. A lot of people are just not getting caught. I got caught.” Given the high rate of marijuana use at U.S. colleges in the 1980s, Rivers paid an unusually high price for his occasional use.

Although some African American commentators also believed UMD had a drug problem, they did not necessarily place black athletes at the center of collegiate drug culture. “There obviously exists a drug problem on the Univer-

sity of Maryland campus,” Rita D. Chappelle of the *Baltimore Afro-American* stated, “one that is so rampant that it has infiltrated their athletic programs.”⁸⁶ Instead of demonizing them, Chappelle contended that black athletes’ drug use revealed both their commodification and disposability in the world of big-time basketball. Pointing to former Terrapin John Lucas, Chappelle argued that his drug use was “a well-kept secret at Maryland” that “got out of control” when he turned pro. Apparently no one from UMD or the NBA cared enough about his health and well-being to intervene and get Lucas help, so long as he kept producing on the court. Rather than a simple story of black pathology, black athletes’ drug use revealed a pattern of exploitation and negligence on the part of the leagues.

Regardless of whether they were sympathetic or not, these reports of Terrapin drug use pushed UMD to put on a public relations offensive. On June 29, UMD’s first African American chancellor, John Slaughter, appeared on a special episode of NBC News’ *Meet the Press* about “college and professional sports and the widespread use of drugs in American society.”⁸⁷ Sportswriter Carl Rowan asked Slaughter, “Are you now convinced that you have a serious drug abuse problem among athletes at the University of Maryland?” Slaughter replied, “I’m convinced that there is a serious drug abuse problem in society which impacts us, as it does every other educational institution, and it is a problem we’ve got to deal with.” Rowan pushed him, “Are you suggesting that we may be wrong in focusing just on athletes, that you may have a serious drug problem, say, in your medical school?” Slaughter asserted, “I think it is wrong to focus only on athletes. Certain athletes represent a very visible, very important segment, and obviously one that needs to be looked at.” However, Slaughter argued that illegal drug use was not simply an athletic scourge but “a societal problem.”⁸⁸

Unsatisfied with Slaughter’s response, later in the program Rowan probed Bob Lanier, the African American former head of the NBA Players’ Association and architect of the NBA’s antidrug program, about the racial dimensions of basketball’s supposed drug crisis. “Recent stories would make it appear that this is largely a black problem,” Rowan stated. “Why do you think so many black athletes are getting caught up in the drug abuse problem?” Lanier responded, “Carl, I don’t believe it’s a black problem. . . . I know white athletes that do drugs and I know black athletes—but right now there is so many more black athletes that are involved in major sports today.”⁸⁹ The hypervisibility of black athletes had skewed public perceptions of drug use in big-time sports.

In response to allegations of drug abuse and crime, UMD officials appointed a 22-member drug task force mostly composed of state law enforcement and political leaders. Chaired by former U.S. Attorney General, Benjamin L. Civiletti, the panel’s role was “to review the existing status of drug policies, enforcement practices and education and counseling programs on the College Park Campus and provide recommendations for creating a model program.”⁹⁰ They planned to investigate the extent of drug use at UMD, to look at the rela-

tionship between university police and outside law enforcement agencies, and to explore the possibility of mandatory drug testing, particularly for “student athletes.”⁹¹

It was clear from press interviews with several key task force members that they viewed the issue of drugs on campus as primarily a criminal justice matter. Howard B. Silverman, task force member and acting director of Maryland’s Drug Abuse Administration, announced, “Just because of what happened to Len Bias, you’re going to see some radical change on this campus Anybody that deals drugs on this campus . . . is going to be very leery about coming back.”⁹² Likewise, Solomon Liss, a retired Maryland Court of Special Appeals judge and chairman of a task force subcommittee, told the *Washington Times*, “I also want to find out what, if anything, is done at the university to keep it secure from criminal elements. If dope peddlers come on campus, are they given unlimited access or are some attempts made to keep them out?”⁹³ Evidently, both Silverman and Liss viewed UMD’s drug problem as originating largely off campus, as criminals came in and preyed on the university community. Meanwhile, another task force member, Baltimore County School Superintendent Robert Y. Dubel, already had a reputation for zero tolerance of drugs. Dubel believed that his strict drug enforcement program in the county school system was the reason for his appointment to UMD’s drug panel. “It’s one of the toughest such programs of any school system in the country,” Dubel boasted. Operating in cooperation with the Baltimore County Police Department, the program used “undercover police cadets” to “infiltrate the schools” and make arrests. Close collaboration with outside police departments to apprehend both drug users and dealers was the potential solution to UMD’s supposed drug crisis.

Many of the UMD graduates who wrote letters to the Alumni Association in the months after Bias’s death agreed with this “get tough” approach and decried what they saw as the moral decline of the university in recent years. Some supported mandatory drug testing for all students, while others advocated unannounced room inspections. One ex-military man even suggested the use of narcotics dogs to search student rooms and cars. In addition, several alumni saw a campus crackdown on drug users as a crucial part of the national war on drugs. “It appears that President Reagan will be launching a major offensive aimed at the drug user,” one alumnus noted. “The University should be no less forceful in its handling of drug use by its students.”⁹⁴ He also argued that “student athletes,” in particular, had absolutely no right to expect privacy in this time of crisis. “To the extent that a few athletes become heroes and unfortunately get more notariety [*sic*] than their contribution to society, it is fitting that their conduct be commensurately scrutinized,” he wrote. “Unless these people are given the harshest disciplinary action possible, they might survive to prove that our University and society has a tolerance for the drug user.” Given that the media tended to paint drug use at UMD as emanating from the majority-black basketball team, the racial implications of such comments were clear.

UMD was not the only college contemplating how to secure its campus community against the growing drug menace. On July 9, Boston University (BU) president John Silber announced that all students must sign a release form giving the university the right to inspect their rooms for illegal narcotics. Although this was still an uncommon practice for U.S. colleges, given concerns about students' right to privacy, President Silber's pronouncement drew praise from Education Secretary Bennett. Silber reportedly warned incoming freshmen that the university would "offer no sanctuary from the laws of the City of Boston, the State of Massachusetts or the United States."⁹⁵ He also noted that BU was working to control drug use among its athletes because of their very public role on campus. "They are heroes and mentors to other students," Silber declared. "We make them read and accept our drug policy, which includes examination, and if they won't accept this, they need not play at Boston." Thus, the campus had to be protected from drug users, especially those who were "student athletes."

Some university officials disagreed with intrusive and punitive approaches to drug enforcement. American University president Richard Berendzen maintained that "urine tests, lie detector tests, unannounced dorm checks and physical body checks" would only push students to use drugs off campus. Similarly, Robert Atwell of the American Council on Education, a lobbying group of 1,400 U.S. colleges, contended, "Students need to know that their responsibility to obey the laws of society don't [*sic*] end at the campus gates, nor are their rights as citizens curtailed by residing in a college community."

Yet, there were already signs that the constitutional right to privacy afforded to most students would not apply to "student athletes." At the end of July, the National Association of Intercollegiate Athletics (NAIA) announced that its member colleges must adopt a drug education and screening program for their athletes by the end of 1986. The association's chief administrator, Wally Schwartz, declared, "All students must participate in this [drug program] to participate in athletics. If they don't wish to, they don't play."⁹⁶ Likewise, UMD athletic department officials announced a proposal to institute mandatory, random drug tests for "student athletes."⁹⁷

Published in December 1986, the drug task force's formal report echoed many of the possible solutions discussed in the media. Although the task force operated under the assumption that the United States was in the midst of a drug epidemic, it acknowledged, "Nearly all persons, including students and University officials, who talked to the Task Force felt that the most serious substance abuse problem at College Park (and probably other universities) is with alcohol not other substances."⁹⁸ Those consulted pointed to "the number of students involved in alcohol-related incidents such as auto accidents, damage to the dorms, and fighting incidents," and UMD's own disciplinary records confirmed their suspicions. From 1983 to 1986, out of a total of seventy-seven alcohol/drug cases brought before UMD's Judicial Review Board, fifty were for

alcohol, twenty-three for marijuana, two for LSD, one for amphetamines, and one for cocaine.⁹⁹

Despite these statistics and the wide consensus about the pervasiveness of alcohol abuse at UMD, the task force stressed that illegal drug use should still “be regarded as a serious problem.”¹⁰⁰ Racially framing the problem of drugs in terms of its assumed associations with black inner-city spaces, the report suggested that UMD’s “urban” location in the metropolitan DC area made it susceptible to higher rates of drug use.¹⁰¹ According to the testimony of local police, most of the illegal drugs used at UMD were purchased off campus “in the adjoining District of Columbia and Prince George’s County areas.”¹⁰² The report also claimed that 75 to 90 percent of drug arrests made by campus police were of people with no affiliation to UMD.¹⁰³ Therefore, university and local police forces needed to secure the campus perimeter to protect students from external criminal threats.

Although the report cautioned that UMD should not be unduly oppressive in its campus-wide drug policy, it rationalized the targeting of “student athletes,” particularly those in the majority-black, revenue sports, for more intrusive forms of discipline. This strategy presumed the innocence of regular students and the potential guilt of “student athletes.”¹⁰⁴ Moreover, the report constructed the “student athlete” as an exception, justifying their drug testing under a paternalistic notion of protection. UMD’s selective approach to student drug testing was not unique. Sports scholar Kathryn Henne notes that regular drug testing of “student athletes,” endorsed by the NCAA, began in the 1980s.¹⁰⁵ Indeed, the majority of colleges polled in the task force’s national survey “indicated they had or were developing special efforts for student athletes. This ranged from drug testing (usually non-random urinalysis) to special provisions for withdrawal of support, scholarships, etc., for violation of codes of conduct.”¹⁰⁶ In turn, UMD had the support of its majority-white student body in the selective testing of “student athletes.” According to the task force’s student survey, 62 percent supported drug testing for athletes, while only 29 percent supported drug testing for all students.¹⁰⁷

Although the 1973 Rehabilitation Act prevented UMD from drug testing its employees and Fourth Amendment protections stood in the way of the blanket testing of all students, athletes were neither employees nor regular students and therefore could be subject to mandatory testing. The task force had consulted with the Office of the Attorney General of Maryland to ask for guidance on the legality of mandatory drug testing. Chief Council of the Educational Affairs Division James J. Mingle and Assistant Attorney General Andrea Hill provided the legal framework for the report’s eventual drug testing policy. In a letter to the task force in November 1986, Mingle and Hill cautioned, “Mandatory testing of employees in general would be legally permissible only if based on particularized probable cause.”¹⁰⁸ Moreover, terminating an employee based on a positive test would conflict with Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973, which outlawed “employment and other discrimination against an ‘oth-

erwise qualified handicapped individual,' including a person who is an alcohol or drug abuser." In turn, they advised the task force that "a mandatory testing requirement which would subject the entire student body to actual testing or to the possibility of random testing would violate the Fourth Amendment prohibition against 'unreasonable searches and seizures.'" However, the testing of students "on a categorical and individualized basis would be constitutionally permissible." For example, Mingle and Hill contended that the testing of athletes could be "justified on the grounds of health, performance and safety in an organized activity which is integral to the institution and its purposes."¹⁰⁹ They emphasized, "Student athletes should expect less privacy, given both the traditional emphasis on physical performance and the associated examinations and training regimen. By the same token, the University has a legitimate interest in the physical and competitive event, the integrity of athletic competition and the reputation of the institution." Not only was this intrusion into athletes' bodily privacy necessary to safeguard their health but also to safeguard the NCAA and the university from possible drug scandals in the future.

The task force report elaborated on this rationale for the mandatory drug testing of "student athletes," particularly black athletes. It warned, "The potential for drug abuse now threatens (1) the health of collegiate athletes, (2) the public's confidence in athletic departments and (3) the academic reputation of many colleges and universities."¹¹⁰ In doing so, it hinted at the anxiety surrounding having black athletes as the public face of UMD. Indeed, the report emphasized, "In some highly visible intercollegiate sports, the participants are subjected to special pressure from the external and internal community to use controlled dangerous substances." In other words, the black men who dominated UMD basketball and football were particularly susceptible to drug use, given both their connections to black communities outside the university and their vaunted status on campus. The report recommended that "student athletes" who fit these "dual criteria" should "be required to undergo random drug testing with prior consent required."¹¹¹ Thus, building on the advice of the Office of the Attorney General, the task force report argued for the stripping of athletes', and in particular black athletes', rights to bodily privacy. However, the report did not stop there, for it recast their athletic labor as a "privilege" that came with certain obligations. "For athletes to carry the name of an institution of higher learning into competition, for athletes to use the university as a stepping stone to professional sports, for athletes to gain an athletic scholarship," the report argued, "athletes should reasonably agree to advance the institution by supporting its goals and objectives and by refraining from health behavior that might affect athletic performance."¹¹² For the privilege to play, athletes had to give up their privacy.

In addition to targeted drug testing, the report advocated for more systematic policing and punishment. The task force noted that at UMD, much as it was at other universities across the nation, drug policy enforcement in residential areas was still largely the purview of university staff rather than campus police

or other law enforcement agencies. In the specific case of UMD dormitories, resident assistants tended to deal with student misconduct on an ad hoc basis. There was no systematic process for dealing with student drug violations, and campus police did not regularly patrol the residences.¹¹³

University drug education efforts were not any better. The task force's research revealed that most drug counseling and education services on college campuses, including UMD, were not only short-staffed and underfunded, but also underutilized by students. The report recommended that the university "provide a systematic drug education and prevention program, designed to reach all segments of the Campus community and well developed and staffed by professionals in the field."¹¹⁴ It also advocated for the establishment of a "Center for Drug Abuse Education, Abuse Prevention, and Research," which the task force hoped would become an important hub of drug research and education for both UMD and the nation.

Nevertheless, the task force seemed much more preoccupied with questions of drug enforcement. The report supported the establishment of more robust campus police forces and increased cooperation between university police and other law enforcement agencies—in effect criminalizing student behaviors that had previously been addressed by civilian staff members. The report recommended that UMD "enlarge the staff of its police department for more effectiveness throughout the Campus and particularly in residential areas of the Campus" and even supported the establishment of a "confidential drug tip hotline" and "the appropriate use of anonymous surveillance personnel."¹¹⁵ These proposals flew in the face of previous court decisions about student privacy rights in college dormitories.¹¹⁶

In addition to more intrusive policing, the task force recommended the expansion of UMD's student code of conduct to specify the penalties for the use, sale, and possession of illegal drugs. It encouraged harsher punishments, including expulsion for a first-time offence of selling and for a second offence of possession.¹¹⁷ The report maintained that severe penalties would "send a clear message to the community that drug use would not be tolerated on campus."¹¹⁸ It also acknowledged that the enforcement of more extensive disciplinary policies would require that UMD expand its campus police department. Recognizing that these strategies could be construed as punitive, the task force assured that their desire was "not to create an oppressive campus environment."¹¹⁹ However, in embracing the prevailing strategies of the national war on drugs—the expansion of policing, criminal punishment, and targeted drug testing—UMD's drug task force report revealed that the university was by no means immune to the neoliberal, carceral logic of society at large. This orientation would have implications not just for civil and labor rights of "student athletes" but for those of students and university workers more broadly.

Given these connections, how can we account for the relative silence and inaction of humanities scholars about the need for systemic change in big-time intercollegiate athletics? What explains our inability to see the relationship be-

tween the insecure status of black “student athletes,” our ongoing discussions of neoliberalism and the carceral state, and our critical analyses of the casualization of labor in the corporatized university? Since the 1970s, NCAA and university officials have proven largely successful at casting black athletic work as both privilege and play, while also representing themselves as altruistic providers of black opportunity. As the public face of big-time intercollegiate sports darkened, the NCAA and its member institutions capitalized on prevailing discourses of black pathology and criminality to push the conversation toward minor reforms and the disciplining of individual players, rather than systemic change. Today, black “student athletes” still occupy a liminal status on campus, somewhere between that of student and worker. University faculty and officials who care about the rights of all on campus can no longer remain ambivalent about their presence and the labor they perform in the name of higher educational institutions.

Notes

1. Michael Wilbon, “Bias’ Death Leaves Mourning and Questions,” *Washington Post*, June 20, 1986, C1.

2. “Celtics Draftee Len Bias Dies of Heart Attack,” *Los Angeles Times*, June 19, 1986, A1.

3. The only in-depth treatments of Bias’s story are journalistic accounts, mostly from the late 1980s and early 1990s, that focus more on dissecting what happened rather than analyzing its historical significance in the war on drugs and the rise of mass incarceration. See Lewis Cole, *Never Too Young to Die: The Death of Len Bias* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989); C. Fraser Smith, *Lenny, Lefty, and the Chancellor: The Len Bias Tragedy and the Search for Reform in Big-Time College Basketball* (Baltimore: Bancroft Press, 1992); Dave Ungrady, *Born Ready: The Mixed Legacy of Len Bias* (Self-Published, 2011).

4. See, for example, Arnold S. Trebach, *The Great Drug War: And Rational Proposals to Turn the Tide* (Bloomington, IN: Unlimited Publishing, 2005), 5–8; Michelle Alexander, *The New Jim Crow: Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness* (New York: New Press, 2010), 52. For additional scholarly treatments of the role of race in Reagan’s war on drugs and the “crack crisis” see Clarence Lusane, *Pipe Dream Blues: Racism and the War on Drugs* (Boston, MA: South End Press, 1991); Jimmie Lynn Reeves and Richard Campbell, *Cracked Coverage: Television News, the Anti-Cocaine Crusade, and the Reagan Legacy* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1994); Doris Marie Provine, *Unequal under Law: Race in the War on Drugs* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2007); Matthew D. Lassiter, “Impossible Criminals: The Suburban Imperatives of America’s War on Drugs,” *Journal of American History* 102, no. 1 (2015): 126–40; Donna Murch, “Crack in Los Angeles: Crisis, Militarization, and Black Response to the Late Twentieth-Century War on Drugs,” *Journal of American History* 102, no. 1 (2015).

5. For instance, Curtis Marez examines the late twentieth-century war on drugs as “a mass-media event, or rather a vast series of events” by analyzing popular novels and documentary accounts, along with drug-themed music and films. Curtis Marez, *Drug Wars: The Political Economy of Narcotics* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2004), 2. Also see Craig Reinerman and Harry Gene Levine, “Crack in Context: Politics and Media in the Making of a Drug Scare,” *Contemporary Drug Problems* 16, no. 4 (1989): 535–77; James D. Orcutt and J. Blake Turner, “Shocking Numbers and Graphic Accounts: Quantified Images of Drug Problems in the Print Media,” *Social Problems* 40, no. 2 (1993): 190–206; Katherine Beckett and Theodore Sasson, “The Media and the Construction of the Drug Crisis in America,” in *The New War on Drugs: Symbolic Politics and Criminal Justice Policy*, ed. Eric L. Jensen and Jurg Gerber (Cincinnati, OH: Anderson Publishing Co. and the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences, 1998), 25–43.

6. See, for example, “The Scandal Behind the Tragedy,” *New York Times*, June 28, 1986, 26; Amy Goldstein, “UM Athletes Have Range of Academic Problems,” *The Sun*, June 29, 1986, 1A; “Failing Rate Higher for UM Players,” *The Sun*, June 27, 1986, 1A.

7. I place the term “student athlete” in quotation marks to signal its strategic deployment by the NCAA and participating colleges. Coined by former Executive Director Walter Byers in 1953, the NCAA began using this term as a means to undermine athletes’ calls for labor rights and protections. See Allen L. Sack and Ellen J. Staurowsky, *College Athletes for Hire: The Evolution and Legacy of the NCAA’s Amateur Myth* (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1998), 48; Andrew Zimbalist,

Unpaid Professionals: Commercialism and Conflict in Big-Time College Sports (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999), 37; Ellen Staurowsky and Allen Sack, "Reconsidering the Use of the Term Student-Athlete in Academic Research," *Journal of Sport Management* 19, no. 2 (2005): 103-16; Allen L. Sack, *Counterfeit Amateurs: An Athlete's Journey through the Sixties to the Age of Academic Capitalism* (University Park, PA: Pennsylvania State University Press, 2008), 70.

8. Mark Asher and Barbara Vobejda, "U-Md. Panel to Study Illegal Drug Use," *Washington Post*, July 1, 1986, A1, A7.

9. The construction of black "student athletes" as potentially delinquent or likely to fail echoed the contemporary portrayals of poor black children in discussions of public education. See Sally Lubeck and Beth Blue Swadener, *Children and Families "at Promise": Deconstructing the Discourse of Risk* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995).

10. Molly Dunham, "Terp Athletic Budget Can Thank Basketball," *Evening Sun*, July 3, 1986, E1. As C. Fraser Smith explains, "athletics at College Park are required by state policy to be self-supporting." Smith, *Lenny, Lefty, and the Chancellor*, 155. For a recent exposé on the business of big-time college sports, see Taylor Branch, *The Cartel: Inside the Rise and Imminent Fall of the NCAA* (City: Byliner Inc., 2011).

11. See, for example, Piya Chatterjee and Sunaina Maira, eds., *The Imperial University: Academic Repression and Scholarly Dissent* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2014); Henry A. Giroux, *Neoliberalism's War on Higher Education* (Chicago: Haymarket, 2014). Giroux examines the sex scandal involving athletic department personnel at Pennsylvania State University in 2012 as a window onto the "larger war on youth in America and the continuing collapse of higher education as a democratic public sphere" (104).

12. See, for example, Jodi Melamed, *Represent and Destroy: Rationalizing Violence in the New Racial Capitalism* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Sara Ahmed, *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2012); Roderick Ferguson, *The Reorder of Things: The University and Its Pedagogies of Minority Difference* (Minnesota: University of Minnesota Press, 2012).

13. See Sack and Staurowsky, *College Athletes for Hire*; Zimbalist, *Unpaid Professionals*; Sack, *Counterfeit Amateurs*; Mark Yost, *Varsity Green: A Behind the Scenes Look at Culture and Corruption in College Athletics* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2010); Ronald A. Smith, *Pay for Play: A History of Big-Time College Athletic Reform* (Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 2011); Charles T. Clotfelter, *Big-Time Sports in American Universities* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2011).

14. Some notable exceptions include, Harry Edwards, *The Revolt of the Black Athlete* (New York: Free Press, 1969); C. Richard King and Charles Fruehling Springwood, *Beyond the Cheers: Race as Spectacle in College Sport* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 2001); Douglas Hartmann, *Race, Culture, and the Revolt of the Black Athlete: The 1968 Olympic Protests and Their Aftermath* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2003); Earl Smith, *Race, Sport and the American Dream* (Durham, NC: Carolina Academic Press, 2007); Billy C. Hawkins, *The New Plantation: Black Athletes, College Sports, and Predominantly White NCAA Institutions* (New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2010).

15. Sack, *Counterfeit Amateurs*, 70–71. Also see John Matthew Smith, *The Sons of Westwood: John Wooden, UCLA, and the Dynasty That Changed College Basketball* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 2013), 160–61, 252–53.

16. Although historian Matthew Mayerson-Schneider argues that there was "little public knowledge" of athlete drug use in the NBA during the 1970s, the numerous newspaper articles about athletes' drug-related arrests belie this assertion. Matthew Schneider-Mayerson, "'Too Black': Race in the 'Dark Ages' of the National Basketball Association," *International Journal of Sport and Society* 1, no. 1 (2010): 227. For more on drug panics in sports from the 1970s to the early 1980s, see Theresa Runstedtler, "Racial Bias: Black Athletes and the Early War on Drugs" (paper, ASALH Annual Meeting, Atlanta, GA, September 25, 2015).

17. "DEA Chief Says Bias' Death Will Aid War on Drugs," *Philadelphia Inquirer*, June 26, 1986, D4.

18. Ed Bruske and Patrice Gaines-Carter, "Landover Loses 'the Man'," *Washington Post*, June 20, 1986, A8.

19. *Ibid.*

20. Anthony Cotton, "NBA, Expecting Star, Shocked by Tragedy," *Washington Post*, June 20, 1986, C7.

21. Tom Sherwood, "U-Va. Athletes May Be Indicted in Drug Probe, Officials Say," *Washington Post*, June 27, 1986, A1, A16; D'Vera Cohn and Scott Fowler, "11 Indicted in Drug Probe," *Washington Post*, July 24, 1986, C1, C2.

22. I use the term "militarization" in the same vein as feminist scholar Cynthia Enloe. Cynthia Enloe, *Maneuvers: The International Politics of Militarizing Women's Lives* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2000). Enloe states, "Militarization is a step-by-step process by which a person or thing gradually becomes controlled by the military or comes to depend for its well-being on militaristic ideas. The more militarization transforms and individual or a society, the more that

individual or society comes to imagine military needs and militaristic presumptions to be not only valuable but also normal" (3).

23. Recent works uncover the bipartisan embrace of carceral logic, so the divide in antidrug strategy that I outline above was often more rhetorical than actual. See Naomi Murakawa, *The First Civil Right: How Liberals Built Prison America* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014); Elizabeth Kai Hinton, *From the War on Poverty to the War on Crime: The Making of Mass Incarceration in America* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2016). Also, I use the term "cocaine/crack epidemic" deliberately. At the time of Bias's death, there was slippage between journalists' usage of the terms "cocaine" versus "crack." However, over the course of the next few months, there was a shift away from discussions about cocaine's general impact on society toward much a more racialized hysteria about crack, crime, and violence.

24. Barbara Vobejda and Sally Jenkins, "Powder Found in Bias' Car," *Washington Post*, June 21, 1986, A1; "Reports Tie Bias to 'Crack' Buy before Death," *Richmond Times-Dispatch*, June 21, 1986, C1.

25. Linda Wheeler, "D.C. Drug Bazaar Eludes Police Reach," *Washington Post*, June 22, 1986, A8. Also see Sandy Grady, "The Message of the Streets: Coke Kills—before, Nobody Listened; Now, We're All Ears," *Seattle Times*, June 28, 1986, A13.

26. Matthew Lassiter writes, "During Reagan's first year in office, NFP [National Federation of Parents for Drug Free Youth] leaders repeatedly criticized federal inaction in the face of the pot-smoking 'epidemic' and implored the president to 'join the parents in declaring war' on marijuana traffickers." Lassiter, "Impossible Criminals," 137. Donna Murch notes that black elected officials were in near-unanimous support of more punitive drug policy. Murch, "Crack in Los Angeles, 163.

27. Dave Sell and Barbara Vobejda, "Bias' Life Honored at Services," *Washington Post*, June 24, 1986, A1.

28. Mike Littwin, "Len Bias Is Gone, but His Warning Shouldn't Be Forgotten," *Sun*, June 24, 1986, 1D, 6D.

29. *Ibid.*

30. Lena Williams, "U.S. Drive on Drugs Urged," *New York Times*, June 26, 1986, B9, B12.

31. "Bias' Death Prompts Calls to Step up Drug War," *Los Angeles Times*, June 26, 1986, C2.

32. *Ibid.*

33. Lena Williams, "U.S. Drive on Drugs Urged." On June 26, Representative Walter Fauntroy mentioned Bias during a House District subcommittee hearing on law enforcement and corrections problems in the city. Fauntroy declared that Bias's death "underscore[d] the depth of the drug crisis" in DC. See Mark Asher, "U-Md Moves to Restructure Control of Athletes' Studies," *Washington Post*, June 27, 1986, A1, A16.

34. Samuel G. Freedman, "From Playgrounds, Observations on Len Bias," *New York Times*, June 29, 1986, A1, A28.

35. Trebach, *The Great Drug War*, 14. Also see Harry Gene Levine and Craig Reinerman, *Crack in America: Demon Drugs and Social Justice* (Berkeley: University of California Press Berkeley, 1997).

36. William E. Clayton, Jr., "Cocaine Use Levels Off, but Medical Woes Rise," *Houston Chronicle*, July 11, 1986, 1. Also see Maura Dolan, "Use of Cocaine Levels Off but Fatalities Soar," *Los Angeles Times*, July 11, 1986, 1, 9. There were also reports raising the alarm about the negative impacts of cocaine on pregnancy. Larry Tye, "Alarm Raised on Cocaine, Pregnancy," *Boston Globe*, July 1, 1986, 21.

37. R. H. Melton, "Cocaine's Allure: A Strong but Sometimes Fatal Fascination," *Washington Post*, 7, July 1986, D1, D5.

38. Murch, "Crack in Los Angeles," 163.

39. "Chavez's Drug Platform," *Washington Post*, July 3, 1986, MDA2.

40. Lassiter, "Impossible Criminals," 136.

41. Nancy Reagan, "The Need for Intolerance," *Washington Post*, July 7, 1986, A11.

42. David Hoffman, "President to Campaign against Drug Abuse," July 10, 1986, A13.

43. *Ibid.*

44. Lea Donosky, "House Democrats Plan Bipartisan Crusade against Drugs," *Chicago Tribune*, July 24, 1986, C1.

45. Eleanor Clift, "Reagan Vows Own Crusade against Drugs," *Los Angeles Times*, July 31, 1986, C1.

46. Bernard Weinraub, "Reagan Considers Wider Drug Tests," *New York Times*, July 31, 1986, A4.

47. John Jacob, "The Len Bias Tragedy," *Baltimore Afro-American*, July 22, 1986, 5.

48. *Ibid.* Also see Sam Lacy, "Reprehensible Indifference," *Baltimore Afro-American*, July 1, 1986, 13. Lacy argued, "Except as a young man who could help carry the basketball team to the national playoffs, Lenny Bias apparently was of no great importance. The University of Maryland used him for four years, and was about to use him further (for recruitment purposes) as a symbol of Terrapin athletics."

49. Mark Asher and Sally Jenkins, "Players' Counselor Resigns," *Washington Post*, June 25, 1986, A1, A14.
50. Carl T. Rowan, "The Schooling of Len Bias," *Washington Post*, June 25, 1986, A25.
51. *Task Force on Academic Achievement of Student-Athletes: Final Report* (University of Maryland, College Park, 1986), 1.
52. Rowan, "The Schooling of Len Bias."
53. See, for example, Paul Hemphill, "Simpler Joys, Simpler Sorrows," *USA Today*, June 27, 1986, A22. "Letters to the Editor: The Death of Len Bias Cont'd," *Washington Post*, July 5, 1986. UMD alumnus Amiel Kirshbaum wrote to the *Washington Post*, "Something has happened in the years since the 1930s to place academic requirements for college athletics in a degenerate and deplorable state. It has made liars, cheats, fools and villains out of college athletic directors and coaches, as well as professors and presidents, and it is time this trend was reversed. Either go back to strict compliance with the academic requirements of the past or acknowledge that college athletics have become big business."
54. See, for example, Sack, *Counterfeit Amateurs*; Sack and Staurowsky, *College Athletes for Hire*; Zimbalist, *Unpaid Professionals*.
55. I found alumni letters in two places in the Hornbake Library at the University of Maryland, College Park: Folder: Responses to William Snyder letter, Papers of the Office of Institutional Advancement, Acc. 93-16, and Folder: Len Bias, Alumni Association Correspondence, 1986, Papers of the Vice President for Student Affairs, Acc. 2007-21.
56. Shirley C. Hosier, Folder: Len Bias, Alumni Association Correspondence, 1986, Papers of the Vice President for Student Affairs, Acc. 2007-21.
57. Linda Wall Holcomb, Folder: Len Bias, Alumni Association Correspondence, 1986, Papers of the Vice President for Student Affairs, Acc. 2007-21.
58. June Barnes, Folder: Responses to William Snyder letter, Papers of the Office of Institutional Advancement, Acc. 93-16.
59. Elbert B. Smith, "Is the College Athlete Exploited?," *Washington Post*, November 17, 1986, A12.
60. Quotations in this paragraph taken from "Voices from across the USA/Do Universities Have a Special Responsibility to Help Athletes Academically?," *USA Today*, June 27, 1986.
61. "The Debate: Student Athletes—Colleges Owe Players Education and Help," *USA Today*, June 27, 1986.
62. *Task Force on Academic Achievement of Student-Athletes*, 2.
63. Branch, *The Cartel*, Loc. 120. For instance, the task force discovered that the athletic department had no mission statement, and the athletic director and most coaches had outdated or nonexistent job descriptions. The report recommended that the DIA prepare written documents, including a mission statement, job descriptions, reporting and evaluation structures, and budgeting procedures and oversight. *Task Force on Academic Achievement of Student-Athletes*, 9–10.
64. *Task Force on Academic Achievement of Student-Athletes*, 14–18.
65. *Ibid.*, 18.
66. *Ibid.*, 19. In addition, the report encouraged recruiters to seek out athletes with solid academic records and recommended that no National Letter of Intent be extended to a recruit until the Office of Undergraduate Admissions deemed him/her academically sound. It also called for the development of a standard recruiting brochure and a mandatory two-day orientation session for all "student athletes," which would provide them with more detailed information about UMD's academic strengths and nonacademic support programs (18–19).
67. "Appendix F: Compact Between the University of Maryland, College Park, and the Student Athlete," in *Task Force on Academic Achievement of Student-Athletes*.
68. *Task Force on Academic Achievement of Student-Athletes*, 23–27. The task force found that 40 percent of "student athletes" in revenue sports majored in general studies versus four percent of the entire undergraduate population (27).
69. *Ibid.*, 30–31.
70. *Ibid.*, 35.
71. *Ibid.*
72. *Ibid.*, 37.
73. *Ibid.*, 33.
74. *Ibid.*, 33, 36.
75. *Ibid.*, 38.
76. *Ibid.*, 39.
77. *Ibid.*, 42.
78. Jeff Rigenbach, "The Debate: Student Athletes—Players Owed Nothing except a Living Wage," *USA Today*, June 27, 1986.
79. George E. Curry, "Education Chief Sics Colleges on Drugs," *Chicago Tribune*, July 9, 1986, 2. Also see Carol Innerst, "Bennett Tells the Colleges to Oust Drugs," *Washington Times*, July 9, 1986, 1A, 10A.

80. Both studies quoted in Anthony Pipitone, "Drugs' Deadly Lure Is Increasing," *Evening Sun*, July 7, 1986. Adding insult to injury, there were also reports that a "drug nightmare" had taken hold of the entire state of Maryland. A Maryland State Bar Association report concluded drug abuse was the "No. 1 health problem affecting the state's young people." Similarly, a State Health Department report claimed that drug abuse was "the No. 1 health problem we face, youth and adults alike." Howard B. Silverman of the state Drug Abuse Administration argued, "Because of drugs, our society is drowning in a nefarious sea of slow death." "Drug Nightmare," *The Sun*, July 10, 1986, 18A.

81. Joyce Price, "Drug Panel Begins Inquiry Today; Umd. Officials to Study Academics," *Washington Times*, July 3, 1986.

82. See, for example, Keith Harriston and Mark Asher, "Coaches Allegedly Knew of Drug Use," *Washington Post*, July 17, 1986, A1, A19; "Drug Use High on Bias" Team, Investigators Told," *Chicago Tribune*, July 20, 1986, C7; Dean Baquet, "Bias: Portrait of a Star Fallen into Bad Company," *Chicago Tribune*, July 20, 1986, 1, 14; Les Brindley, "Marshall's Innuendo Doesn't Further the Cause of Justice," *The Journal*, July 24, 1986, A10; Susan Schmidt, "Marshall Attracts Media, Criticism in Investigation," *Washington Post*, July 21, 1986, A1, A4.

83. Bill Brubaker, "Rivers: Dull, Driesell Knew He Used Marijuana," July 18, 1986, C1, C8.

84. All quotations in this paragraph are from.

85. *Ibid.*

86. Rita D. Chappelle, "Drugs at U. Of Md, Athletes Have a History, Spotlight Is on School," *Baltimore Afro-American*, June 28, 1986, 21.

87. Transcript of NBC News' *Meet the Press*, June 26, 1986, p. 1, Files of the Vice President for Academic Affairs, Acc. 99-55, Box 4, Students: Len Bias, Hornbake Library Special Collections, University of Maryland, College Park.

88. Transcript of NBC News' *Meet the Press*, June 29, 1986, 2-3.

89. *Ibid.*, 11.

90. Task Force on Drug Policies, Enforcement, and Education, *Model University Program for Education & Prevention of Drug Abuse: Recommendations of the Task Force on Drug Policies, Enforcement, and Education*, University of Maryland College Park," (University of Maryland, College Park, 1986).

91. Ellen Goodman, "Group Vows to Wage War on Drugs," *The Journal*, July 7, 1986, A9; Price, "Drug Panel Begins Inquiry Today; Umd. Officials to Study Academics." Plagued by their own drug scandal, the University of Virginia convened an internal panel in mid-July to examine the extent of campus drug and alcohol abuse. "UVA. Follows UMD's Lead, Names Task Force on Drugs," *The Journal*, July 15, 1986.

92. Goodman, "Group Vows to Wage War on Drugs."

93. All quotations in this paragraph are from Joyce Price, "Drug Task Force Wants to Know How Umd. Deals with Violators," *Washington Times*, July 21, 1986.

94. David E. Earle, Folder: Responses to William Snyder Letter, Papers of the Office of Institutional Advancement, Acc. 93-16.

95. Carol Innerst, "Colleges Taking Steps to Curb Drug Use," *Washington Times*, July 10, 1986, A4. Secretary Bennett also lauded the "zero tolerance" policy of The Citadel, a public, quasi-military college in South Carolina, and of the U.S. Naval Academy, which required that all freshmen undergo drug tests. Much like BU, the University of Notre Dame required incoming students to sign a waiver acknowledging the university's right to inspect their rooms, and the penalties for drug violations ranged from suspension to expulsion.

96. Debbie Becker, "NAIA Members Tailoring Drug Plans," *USA Today*, July 23, 1986, 8C.

97. Larry Perl, "UM Plan Seeks Surprise Drug Tests," *The Journal*, July 25, 1986, A5.

98. Task Force on Drug Policies, Enforcement, and Education, *Model University Program for Education & Prevention of Drug Abuse*, 57.

99. *Ibid.*, 21.

100. *Ibid.*, 61.

101. In analyzing the results of its student drug use survey, the report stated, "It is usually the case that usage is higher in urban areas than in rural areas and in the northeastern section of the country. We were not able to obtain a sample of data for large, urban universities that would be comparable to UMD." *Model University Program for Education & Prevention of Drug Abuse*, 38.

102. *Ibid.*, 67.

103. *Ibid.*, 68.

104. *Ibid.*, 8. The report warned, "If draconian penalties are proposed for offenses that are seen as relatively minor, i.e., unreasonably disproportionate, the integrity of the prohibitions and sanctions will be lost along with their effectiveness. If random drug testing is adopted for legitimate health protection reasons but then misused to intrude on the privacy of the innocent, little collective faith and cooperation in the system can be expected."

105. Kathryn E. Henne, *Testing for Athlete Citizenship: Regulating Doping and Sex in Sport* (New Brunswick, NJ: Rutgers University Press, 2015), x. Although Henne's monograph focuses on how "the global anti-doping regime" in elite athletics works to "maintain power relations that have

gendered, racialized, classed, and nationalistic dimensions,” one can see a similar dynamic at play in the targeted antidrug strategies of U.S. intercollegiate sport (6). Henne, likewise, finds that “elite athletes occupy a unique position as citizen subjects,” for “their bodies are . . . held accountable to a host of regulatory, normative, and ideological expectations that other subjects are not” (x).

106. *Ibid.*, 29.

107. *Ibid.*, 41.

108. James J. Mingle and Andrea Hill to Benjamin R. Civiletti, November 7, 1986, p. 3, Appendix F, Task Force on Drug Policies, Enforcement, and Education, *Model University Program for Education & Prevention of Drug Abuse: Recommendations of the Task Force on Drug Policies, Enforcement, and Education*, University of Maryland, College Park—Appendix (University of Maryland, College Park, 1986).

109. Mingle and Hill to Benjamin R. Civiletti, 4, 5.

110. Task Force on Drug Policies, Enforcement, and Education, *Model University Program for Education & Prevention of Drug Abuse*, 73–74.

111. *Ibid.*, 74–75.

112. *Ibid.*, 76.

113. *Ibid.*, 16–17.

114. *Ibid.*, 54.

115. *Ibid.*, 52, 79.

116. Included in the notes of the task force was *People v. Cohen* (1968), a case in which police, accompanied by school authorities, searched Kenneth Cohen’s Hofstra University dorm room after smelling marijuana smoke in the hallway. The police found marijuana and arrested Cohen. However, Judge Beatrice Burstein later threw out the evidence as the fruit of an illegal search. “University students are adults. The dorm is a home and it must be inviolate against unlawful search and seizure,” Burstein argued. “To suggest that a student who lives off campus in a boarding house is protected by that one who occupies a dormitory room waives his Constitutional liberties is at war with reason, logic and law.” *People v. Cohen*, New York, 1968, Folder: Len Bias, UM Task Force on Drug Policies, Enforcement, and Education, 1986, Papers of the Vice President for Student Affairs, Acc. 2007–21, Hornbake Library, University of Maryland, College Park.

117. Task Force on Drug Policies, Enforcement, and Education, *Model University Program for Education & Prevention of Drug Abuse*, 65.

118. *Ibid.*, 70.

119. *Ibid.*, 82–83.

