



SI FULL FRAME: THE STORY BEHIND THE PHOTO

# MASTERS' WORK

► PHOTOGRAPH BY WALTER LOOSS JR.

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**ICTURE THIS:** A future Hall of Fame photographer, suspended in a cherry picker in a red-and-blue parking lot. Beneath him, a future Hall of Fame basketball superstar dunking over and over again.

In 1987, SPORTS ILLUSTRATED sent Walter looss Jr. to Lisle, Ill., where Michael Jordan was hosting a basketball camp. looss had never met Jordan. But during the camp, he sold MJ on an idea for an intricate aerial shoot. looss painted half of the camp's massive parking lot red, and the other side blue. If Jordan arrived in his white Bulls jersey, looss would use the red section. But Jordan rolled up in red, so the "blue dunk" was born.

looss went on to photograph Jordan countless times. A friendly point of contention was always the number of times the six-time NBA champion would be required to dunk. "Each year, we did fewer dunks," looss says. "I'd go, 'Twelve.' He'd say, 'Walter, you're nuts. Four.'"

Then looss would chirp back. " 'No, c'mon. We can't do this job in four. How 'bout 10?' 'Six.' 'Eight.' 'Deal.' "

looss, who was recently inducted into the International Photography Hall of Fame, calls Jordan his "absolute favorite" subject to photograph.

The highest praise Jordan ever directed towards looss? "He's quick," Jordan wrote years later. "And he's good."

—Sam Brief

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