

**Working title: *Long Shot - risk, failure, and the desperate need for both***

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**Chapter 1: Three ball from the corner**

Research and interviews needed for this section:

Terry Rozier

Brad Stevens

Isaiah Thomas

Adam Himmelsbach (Boston Globe)

Tony Rahegan (Boston Magazine)

Gina Tucker (Terry's mother)

Aaron Turner (Terry's agent)

Brad Stevens' wife

Brad Stevens' boss at Eli Lilly

The NBA draft is a night when a select number of young men become instant millionaires. Resembling something out of a highfalutin Paris fashion show, one by one players' names are called out by the commissioner in five minute intervals, with each announcement met with jubilation, hugs, and in some cases, tears, by the player and the friends and family members that have joined him on this evening. Each young star approaches the podium often wearing an extravagant and flamboyant suit or tuxedo to receive a baseball cap with the name of the team that has just selected him, knowing that in a matter of hours he will be signing a contract that guarantees an income in just a few years that is more than most American households generate in a lifetime. Due to the NBA's collective bargaining agreement, the contracts and salaries of the thirty players

drafted in the first round are determined based on draft order. There is no negotiation. The first player selected could, based on the NBA's agreement, make close to \$6 million dollars in his first season and \$12 million over two years. The 30th pick, or the last pick in the first round, secures a not too paltry \$1.5 million dollars for year one. Not picked in the first round? All guarantees are lost and even making the team becomes a struggle, let alone earning what by all standards could be considered a fortune. It is painful to watch, knowing that the last pick in the first round is assured tremendous financial gain while the 31st pick, or the first pick in the second and last round, leaves that evening with more questions than answers. Being the 31st pick is like being waitlisted to college or coming in fourth in a race where the top three participants receive medals. Forever you are left to wonder 'what if.' That is not to say second round picks in the NBA do not succeed. They can and they have. The point is that there is no contract with seven figure dollar amounts waiting for a signature the next day nor may there be one ever.

The NBA invites a few, select players to attend the draft and be part of what is known as the NBA Green-Room, an area where the stars and celebrities of the draft congregate with friends and family members as they wait to hear their names called, fulfilling what has often been a lifelong dream and struggle to arrive at this celebratory moment in time. These players are essentially a lock to be picked in the first round and help provide for an entertaining evening in this made for TV event by providing interviews and, of course, showcasing the chic and stylish clothing that often becomes the topic of discussion instead of their jump shooting abilities or ball handling skills. On June 25, 2015 nineteen players had been invited to the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York, the location of that year's draft. Terry Rozier, a player from the University of Louisville, was not one of them.

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Terry Rozier was born on March 17, 1994 in Youngstown, Ohio. While the fact he was born on St. Patrick's Day may seem insignificant, it would serve as a prophetic symbol of the turn his life would take on June 25, 2015, or, as people in and around the NBA call it, draft night.

As Adam Himmelsbach of the Boston Globe shares in a 2015 article, "It is not that dreams die in Youngstown, Ohio, it is that they often never sprout to begin with. Once a bustling steel town, it has deteriorated like many others in the Rust Belt. One of the primary industries now is incarceration, as there are three correctional facilities within the city limits. The area long had one of the nation's highest murder rates." Terry's mother, Gina Tucker adds, "In Youngstown, it's like you're stuck there. You're stuck there because it's all you know." Terry, however, was able to leave Youngstown, first living with his grandmother in Shaker Heights, Ohio, then attending Hargrave Military Academy, and finally onto the University of Louisville. "Hargrave made me mature," Rozier said. "It made me grow up, and I needed that." Like so many other NBA players, Terry's childhood was far from what can be described as idyllic. A father in prison, a mother working for a low wage struggling to support her family, and violence and crime part of the everyday fabric of existence placed the odds squarely against Terry, and for almost any other person who found themselves in that position for that matter. But Terry, when arriving at Louisville in 2013, chose to wear uniform number zero, to, as writer Jon Mettus describes, "symbolize a fresh start from everything in his past." In 2015 he was about to get another fresh start. Literally.

On the evening of June 25th Terry Rozier was not at the Barclays Center in Brooklyn, New York. Projected by some analysts to be a late first round pick or maybe even a second round selection, Rozier was, instead, almost 500 miles

away in Ohio at the home of his agent, Aaron Turner. Gathered with friends and family Rozier waited and watched, told by his agents that he would most likely be drafted in the late first round and no later than 31. Thirty one. That was one pick later than the guaranteed picks of one through thirty. Thirty and he is guaranteed almost \$2 million dollars and two years of steady NBA employment. Thirty one and the picture becomes murky at best. Despite the uncertainty and the possible massive implications of where he would be chosen, writer Jeff Greer described Rozier as “the most collected person at the party.”

In what would be a surprising decision to Boston Celtics fans and even Terry himself, Rozier learned that he been selected with the 16th pick, well ahead of almost everyone’s expectations and predictions. Not thirty and definitely not 31, but 16. He was going to Boston and, because of the turn of events, he was receiving over \$1.2 million dollars more in guaranteed compensation than Kevin Looney, the player selected with the 30th pick. Interestingly, he shares the same birthday (St. Patrick’s day) as the President of the Celtics, Danny Ainge, and the team is rooted in Irish heritage with a shamrock as part of its logo and green as the team color. Based on Danny Ainge’s decision that evening he was guaranteed to be part of the Celtics organization for a minimum of two years. He could relax, breathe deeply, and confidently declare that he had overcome the odds and had succeeded. He went from being the most collected person at the party to jumping into a swimming pool in a brand new suit that his agents had purchased for him. Fully dressed he emerged from the pool beginning another fresh start, the pool symbolizing a baptism of sorts, washing him clean again of his past, his anxiety, and the stress of the evening. He could now be, with careful planning and wise choices, financially secure for his entire life. At the age of 21 he was, on paper, worth over \$3 million dollars and was in an enviable position. But, as we will see, it is not the money or the security that drives people like Terry Rozier and, more importantly, it is not what brings them even higher levels of

success in their careers or life in general. Terry's message to the fans and to the team that drafted him was clear. "I'll definitely come in to Boston and play. I'm a winner. I want to win. I will not let you down. I'm going to bring something to the table."

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After graduating from DePauw University in Greencastle, Indiana in 1999, current Boston Celtics head coach, Brad Stevens, accepted a position with the pharmaceutical firm Eli Lilly. Making \$44,000 per year with ample room for advancement, Stevens appeared to be on a path that would, at a minimum, drop him nicely into the middle to upper middle class of income earners in the United States. Combine his corporate position and salary with his soon to be wife's career aspirations to go to law school and become an attorney, Stevens would have what most Americans strive for in terms of income and career potential. However, if you were like Stevens, and you were, *at the age of 6*, taping college basketball games in the evening so you could watch them the next day before you go to afternoon *kindergarten*, you may not have been completely satisfied with climbing the corporate ladder. After playing basketball at DePauw and then working at Eli Lilly for a short time, Stevens made a dramatic personal and professional decision. Rather than take the perceived (and I stress the word perceived) safe route and stay with the corporate job, he instead decided he wanted to be a basketball coach. This was not surprising due to his love of the game. What was surprising was his decision to follow this path since, during his senior season, he and other veteran players on the Depauw team saw their playing time greatly diminished in favor of younger players since his coach made the strategic choice to begin focusing on the future versus simply trying to win that year. It was something that Stevens has admitted he struggled with and it almost caused him to quit the game.

First offering to be an unpaid graduate assistant for the Butler University men's basketball team (and deciding to work at an Applebee's to help make ends meet) he was ultimately offered \$18,000 per year to serve as Butler's director of basketball operations (he never had to do the Applebee's job). As Tony Rahegan wrote in Boston Magazine, "As a newcomer to the Butler machine, Stevens started as the smallest cog: He was the guy responsible for arranging travel, exchanging film with opposing teams. No task was beneath him. Meanwhile, he was impressing higher-ups with his IQ in the film room, compiling detailed scouting reports and spot-on analysis of Butler's own players. 'What stood out was his willingness to do whatever assignment and do it well,' says Todd Lickliter, a veteran assistant and eventual head coach who took Stevens under his wing. When Lickliter replaced Thad Matta as head coach the following year, he promoted Stevens to a full-time assistant, giving him the opportunity to scout, recruit, and even coach in-game." Finally, in 2007, Stevens was promoted to head coach of Butler University, taking the team to two consecutive NCAA championship games in 2010 and 2011. In 2013 Stevens was offered the head coaching job with the Celtics and he took it. While the paths the Brad Stevens and Terry Rozier traveled the NBA were in stark contrast to one another, what they each brought to the organization was very similar in so many ways.

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The Celtics entered the 2016-17 season with high expectations. Due to the recent signing of veteran Al Horford and the consistent improvement of players up and down the roster, Boston was predicted by many to advance as far as the NBA's Eastern Conference finals, with some going as far to submit that the team could be positioned to overtake the Cleveland Cavaliers and progress all the way to the NBA Finals. The Celtics won 53 regular season games which earned them

the number one seed in the Eastern Conference and home court advantage throughout the playoffs. While the expectations at the beginning of the season had been high, they had soared to a point where anything less than a trip to the Eastern Conference Finals would cause many to view the season as a failure.

After beating the Chicago Bulls four games to two in a first round best of seven series, the Celtics' next opponent was the Washington Wizards, a team which Boston had played four games against in the regular season, with each team winning two of the contests. Looking beyond the won and loss record, however, one could see that these two teams had a growing angst for each other as illustrated by regular season on-court scuffles and off court language and behaviors of various players that served as a means to taunt, infuriate, and provoke both players and fans in each respective city. It could be argued that these two teams sincerely had a sincere hatred and dislike for each other, something that would manifest itself in the form of technical fouls, bloody noses, knocked out teeth, and various hard fouls and collisions in the games ahead.

The series would follow a 2-2-1-1-1 format, meaning that the first two game would be in Boston, games three and four would be in Washington, and then games five, six, and seven, if necessary, would alternate between the two cities, with Boston having the opportunity to play four games at home. This was significant because during the regular season neither team had won a game on the other's home court, and, in the playoffs, home court advantage can be a significant factor.

Boston won game one but on May 2, 2017 in game two, was trailing 110 to 107 with one minute and thirty eight seconds left to play in the fourth quarter. Isaiah Thomas, the Celtics' leading scorer, had already amassed an amazing 42 points that evening, one in which he was playing through personal tragedy. May 2nd

was the birthday of his sister, Chyna, who had been tragically killed only two weeks earlier in a car accident in Washington state at the young age of 22. While Thomas would eventually tally 53 points for the game in a match-up that Boston would win in overtime and would receive - and rightfully so - an outpouring of accolades and support from fans, players, and the media, there was one play in game two that received some attention but not nearly the amount it deserved.

At the 1:38 mark in the fourth quarter Isaiah Thomas had the ball and it appeared that he was about to attempt a three point shot. However, as he jumped in the air he instead passed the ball to an open teammate in the corner. That player was Terry Rozier.

The fact that Terry Rozier was on the court at that moment is worth examining. This was Rozier's second year in the NBA, one in which he averaged only 17 minutes, 5.5 points, 3.1 rebounds, and 1.8 assists in the regular season. There were fifteen games in which he played less than ten minutes and another eight when he did not play at all. He averaged only a 31.8% field goal percentage when shooting from beyond the three point line and only a 36.7% shooting percentage overall. There were only fourteen games in which he scored more than ten points with the most points in a game during the season being 16 on December 2, 2016. There were fourteen games in which he played and did not score at all. Despite these statistics there he was, in Game 2, being passed the ball by the Celtics best scorer and arguably best player, Isaiah Thomas, who, on this night, was playing one of the best games of his life. And let's dig a little deeper. Chances are that Stevens can recite the statistics that I just presented to you. Remember, this is a person who analyzed basketball games at age 6 and is known throughout the NBA as a person who is very much a proponent of numbers and the use of big data to identify advantages and develop game

strategies. But there was Terry about to be given the biggest opportunity of his short, two year, NBA career.

The ball arrived in Terry's hands and, although there was a slight bobble, he squared up and without hesitation, launched a three point shot. Game tied 110 to 110.

While the play did garner some attention from the local Boston media, ESPN.com, in its recap of the game said only that, "Terry Rozier had a career playoff high of 12 points." In fact, those ten words were found at the *very end* of ESPN's article in the TIP-INS section, an area devoted to quick snip its and miscellaneous information. The majority of the article was focused on Isaiah Thomas and the 53 points he scored, the adversity he fought through, and the performance of other superstars, most notably Washington's John Wall who scored 40 points that evening. So if ESPN.com did not devote much ink to Rozier's shot and it was only the local hometown media that dedicated a portion of its reporting to the play, why am I making this into such a significant event? Because this moment embodies a key lesson that every coach, leader, team, player, employee, and manager need to learn from - *that people need to be able to take big risks and be supported if they fail.*

Here is what Steven's had to say about Rozier's shot after the game. "He's a young player, so he's going to have ups and downs. And sometimes we don't look at ups and downs as a good thing, but they are. It's good to have ups and downs; it's good to have to go through some tough times just as well as the good times."

If Rozier misses the shot there certainly will be some tough times and some 'downs.' The Celtics could have lost home court advantage and the momentum

would clearly have been with Washington. The series did go the full seven games, with the home team winning each time. Therefore, if Boston had lost this game they most likely would have, based on the way things transpired, lost the series and, as mentioned before, the season would have been seen as a failure. But from whose eyes? To answer that question let's unpackage this situation a little more.

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Imagine for a moment you are an attorney with considerable experience and expertise and that you work for a large and prestigious law firm. Also imagine that you are about to walk into a courtroom to present closing arguments for a multimillion dollar civil trial and that you have been chosen to do so based on your reputation to 'close the deal' and shine in some of the most pressure filled moments. You and a team of other attorneys have been preparing for months for this moment, pouring over endless mountains of documents, working late into the evening most nights, and planning and strategizing incessantly on how to best position your client and your firm to win the proceedings since a good portion of the outcome relies on these final few moments.

With you in the courtroom that day are are four other attorneys, one of which has considerable less experience than you, and who, to this point in his career, has never delivered closing arguments in a case as high profile or monetarily significant as this one. Despite these shortcomings, he, like the other attorneys with you, is well prepared and knowledgeable since he has worked with you with from the start of the case. The other three attorneys have years of experience and one in particular was recently hired by your firm and paid considerably more than anyone else on staff due because he is known to possess extensive

leadership abilities as well bring lessons to younger attorneys from his background working on high profile cases.

About an hour before you are to start your closing arguments you lose your voice. Also, the three other attorneys with the same level of experience as you were called out of the courtroom to go over some critical information with the client. It is now just you and the young, inexperienced lawyer. You confidently hand him your notes and, with a crackling voice, indicate that he now has to stand and deliver the closing remarks. There are three questions here. First, does this sound like an unrealistic scenario? Second, would you, if you were this attorney, confidently hand over your notes to the younger attorney? Third, and maybe most importantly, if you were the young lawyer what would your reaction be?

Starting with question one, 'does this sound like an unrealistic scenario,' it is not. In fact, this is exactly what played out in Game 2 between the Celtics and the Wizards. One of Isaiah Thomas' nickname is "King in the Fourth" because of his ability to, in effect, take over a game in the final frame of an NBA game. Thomas averages an amazing 9.8 points per game in the fourth quarter, only two tenths of a point lower than the Oklahoma City Thunder's Russell Westbrook (10 points per game in the fourth quarter) who leads the league in that category. It is safe to assume that everyone watching the game expected Thomas to shoot instead of pass. But he didn't. Due to an adjustment by the Washington defenders he found himself trying to take the shot but knew it would be for naught. Instead he needed to give up the ball, and, based on where people are on the floor and the defensive scheme, he confidently sent a pass to an open Terry Rozier. This is important because also on the floor at the time for the Celtics was Al Horford, a player who Boston signed in the offseason for to a well over \$100 million dollar contract. Horford earns almost 15 times that of Rozier and almost 5 times that of

Thomas. Yet the ball did not go to him at possibly the most critical moment of the entire season.

In terms of the second question, would you confidently hand over your notes to the younger attorney, this too is exactly what happened. Isaiah Thomas didn't pause at all when passing the ball to Rozier. To Thomas, any player in a green Celtics uniform was just as worthy of receiving that ball since they are a team, not simply a collection of individual players. When the defense collapsed on Thomas he willingly and confidently sought out help from a teammate, regardless of who that person was.

Finally, Terry Rozier accepted that pass and viewed this situation as an opportunity, not a threat. "I just enjoy being in this moment," Rozier would say after the game. Remember what he said on draft night. "I will not let you down." He was oozing confidence. Not arrogance, but confidence.

Not to be lost in all of this is the role of the coach, Brad Stevens. While there are many in the media that suggest an NBA coach does not play as significant role as, let's say, college basketball, I would like to offer a different perspective. While Stevens may get a lot of recognition for his ability to analyze data, scout teams, and design unique offensive and defensive strategies, I would posit that it is his ability to create a culture of bold risk taking and support that is the intangible factor that is helping propel the Celtics to better seasons year after year. The fact that he decided to have Rozier on the floor in a position to take a game altering shot makes no sense from a data perspective (31% from the three point arc, limited experience, 36% overall shooting) but makes complete sense from a team dynamics perspective. As Rehegan notes in his Boston Magazine article, "He understood the people behind the statistics. He would regularly visit with players and coaches, asking them about their individual goals, assessing

strengths and weaknesses and areas to work on. He also listened, welcoming their input. 'He is not a micromanager,' says Matthew Graves, a former assistant under Stevens. 'He gets the big picture. Expects guys to do their job. You felt like you were working with him, not for him.'" Also, Micah Shrewsberry, a former assistant coach with Steven at Butler and now with him in Boston adds, "He got out on the floor and worked with them, rebounded with them, sweated with them. He tried to show them that he wasn't just here to coach them, he was here to make them better. He really invested in them. He invited guys over to his house. Showed them that he is who he says he is." The decision to insert Rozier into the lineup that evening was not based simply on metrics in a spreadsheet. Stevens knows Rozier as a person and competitor and Rozier trusts in his coach.

As an avid fan of sports and basketball in particular, I now realize that I have been viewing many games completely incorrectly, focusing on the short term and immediate win or loss column while Stevens, on the other hand, is looking games and maybe even seasons ahead. If Rozier makes the shot, it boosts Rozier's confidence. If Rozier misses, he has created a supportive and safe environment where the team will pull Rozier up and encourage him to try again. This is, ironically, a no lose situation. We as fans are playing checkers and Stevens is playing chess. Game 2 wasn't simply about Game 2, it was about building for the future. Just like his experience at DePauw when as a senior he was forced to concede playing minutes to younger and less experienced players, he appreciates the value of building players' confidence, putting them in pressure situations, and enabling them to gel with their teammates.

Did Stevens want Rozier to miss? Absolutely not. Stevens is an intense competitor and has expressed on many occasions that the goal is not to just win games but, rather, to win the championship. However, make or miss, Stevens' perspective on the outcome of Rozier's shot seems counter to what most of us

have become conditioned to think. What we view as failure he views as a “ups and downs,” and, as he reminds us, “sometimes we don’t look at ups and downs as a good thing, but they are.” And that is the lesson here. It is not necessarily failing that is good, but learning from that failure that is important. While that may not sound like a novel concept, think about what I discussed earlier regarding various people’s view that the season would be a ‘failure’ if the Celtics didn’t make, at a minimum, the Eastern Conference finals. No, it would not be a failure, it would simply be a ‘down’ that Stevens and his team would use to learn from, increase motivation, and mark as point from which to build on.

Getting back to Rozier, the question becomes would you - *and every other member of your team* - take that shot? Or, would you make an additional pass or look for someone else to shoulder the pressure. Earlier we discussed the millions of dollars at stake on draft night and the lucrative contract that Rozier had been awarded as a result of being picked 16th in the first round. But, I would argue, that the value of the contract or the guaranteed money has little to nothing to do with Terry Rozier’s confidence at the moment in time. “I’m honestly a guy who doesn’t feel pressure in situations because of what my family has been through, and what I’ve been through and seen,” Rozer told Mark Murphy of the Boston Herald. “That’s just me. I’m not afraid to take on someone, or guard a certain person. Just the way I was brought up.” Am I suggesting the way to build such confidence is to survive such a difficult childhood? Absolutely not. However, as writer Malcolm Gladwell notes in his book, *David and Goliath*, sometimes what we perceive as disadvantages can often lead to advantages and what we perceive as advantages can become disadvantages. It is critical to note, however, that Terry’s contract was only guaranteed at that point through the end of that season, meaning that a three million dollar contract extension was at stake. The Celtics could, if they wanted to, simply renounce their rights to Rozier at the end of the season and his career with the Celtics would be over. Yes, in

theory he could then sign a contract with any other team, but there is not much demand for 36 percent shooters who averaged less than 17 minutes per game during the season. Terry might not only be with the Celtics, he might be out of the NBA entirely.

Having grown up in such a difficult environment Terry Rozier does not need people pointing out all of his flaws, challenges, or failures. He knows those well. Maybe too well. What he needs is to be part of a supportive environment where he can take bold risks, knowing he has the support of the people around him. What he needs transcends basketball and is applicable to almost every aspect of life. And that is not just what he needs, it is what we all need.

And let us not forget that his teammates and coach have confidence in him as well. The fact that he was on the floor during one of the most critical offensive possessions of the entire season speaks volumes about Stevens' philosophy and approach. Remember, it was the best player on the team, Isaiah Thomas, that passed him the ball. If you think that is the way all teams would respond, you would be mistaken.

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On April 15, 2017 the Cleveland Cavaliers began their NBA title defense against the Indiana Pacers. The Cavaliers, the number two seed in the Eastern Conference, were heavily favored versus the Pacers, the number seven seed. However, with 10.6 seconds left in the game, the Pacers found themselves down by only one point with possession of the ball and a chance to win the game. During a timeout the team designed a play to get the ball in the hands of their star player, Paul George, for the final shot. The Cavaliers were ready and instantly put pressure on George forcing him to pass the ball to teammate C.J.

Miles with about seven seconds to play. Miles, with time running down, took a jump shot - and missed.

In what can only be described as a situation 180 degrees different than everything previously written in this book to this point, Paul George had this to say to the media publicly following the loss. "I talked to C.J. about that," George said later, "In situations like that, I've got to get the last shot." Poof. In one simple statement we now have controversy, possible dissention, conflict, and distractions. When questioned about George's statement, Miles' comments were very telling. I've made that shot many times. If I get another chance in that situation, I'm gonna be aggressive and I'm gonna make that shot. I did what I was supposed to do. That's why I was on the floor." The contention between the two players became the primary focus of analysis following the game, with ESPN noting that George was 0 for 15 in seven seasons on shots taken with 20 seconds or less left in games that would have put the Pacers ahead. The disharmony reached such a crescendo that the President of the Pacers, NBA legend, hall-of-famer, and former Celtic Larry Bird was asked who should have taken the shot. His answer? C.J. Miles.

Bird's answer should come as no surprise since, in 1985, as a member of the Celtics and playing in the NBA Finals versus the Los Angeles Lakers, Bird had a chance to take the game winning shot as time was running out - and instead passed it to teammate Dennis Johnson who confidently made a 20 foot jump shot to win the game. And that is ultimately what this is all about - winning the game and winning *the right way*. It is not who took the last shot, who scored the most points, or was the Most Valuable Player. It is about the team. Michael Jordan, possibly the greatest basketball player of all time quoted as saying, "I've missed more than 9000 shots in my career. I've lost almost 300 games. 26 times, I've been trusted to take the game winning shot and missed. I've failed over and over

and over again in my life. And that is why I succeed.” And while most everyone knows of Michael Jordan and the fact that he is considered the greatest basketball player of all time, here is something you may not know. Did you know that of the six championships that he won with the Chicago Bulls, three were decided on the last made basket in the final game of the championship series. Of those three Jordan *twice passed* the ball to another player - John Paxson in 1993 and Steve Kerr in 1997 - each of which made clutch shots to win the game and the title. If you had to deliver a presentation today that would determine the fate of your work team, would you defer to someone less senior, less experienced, and less competent to make that pitch? Jordan did, and he did so without any reservation.

The example with the Pacers illustrates how not having a supportive culture can be so detrimental to a team, not just in sports but in any situation. Work. Family. School. Community groups. This type of behavior is observed every day and the effects are damaging. Can you imagine if at your place of work needing to waste the CEO's time with such nonsensical questions and distractions? Unfortunately it happens every day.

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Terry Rozier and Brad Stevens' worlds have been dramatically different, yet they are similar in so many ways. There is a lot to learn from them. Do you know your team and employees to the level that Brad Stevens does with his players? Do you “sweat with them” and have their trust? Do you create opportunities for all of your employees to take chances and, at the same time, view those truly as opportunities to learn? If you are a star on your team would you be willing to pass the ball as did Isaiah Thomas? But the biggest questions in all of this are:

1. Do you and everyone of your employees, classmates, or colleagues feel you work in a culture where, like Terry Rozier, you *all* would show no hesitation and be willing to take the big shot?
2. Do you want the ball in your hands as time ticks down with the game on the line? How much of your answer is dependent on your own confidence levels or personality and how much is determined by the culture in which you work?
3. Are your work, family, or community cultures where everyone you supports one another, win or lose, make or miss, and will be there to lift people up when they fail and encourage them to keep taking risks.

These are big questions so take your time.

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The goal of this book is to examine the relationship between risk and failure, the impact culture and leadership have on that relationship, and provide data and examples from ours and others' research to enable you, the reader, to be able to learn from our work and put our ideas into action with your company, team, school/classroom, or organization. In addition, we want to provide you with access to tools, apps, community discussions, and materials to assist you with those efforts.

For example, we will ask why a 23 year old basketball player from Youngstown, Ohio without a college degree shows no fear when presented the opportunity to shoot a three pointer in a high stakes basketball game with 18,640 spectators watching in person and millions more on TV, but a 23 individual with a Masters Degree in Biochemistry and almost perfect GPA from the University of Chicago is not willing to take big risks at his job at a multi-billion corporate, despite calls

from the CEO and other executives to challenge the status quo and take bold action.

Is risk taking in athletics the same at all levels, genders, locations, and type of sport and does this data translate to similar behavior by athletes in non sports related environments? Does the NBA have a higher appetite for risk than, let's say, high school or college basketball? How about if a person is fighting to make the team versus having a guaranteed contract?

Continuing with schools, we will investigate which factors - socioeconomic background, education, geography, etc. - most impact risk taking and acceptance of failure and try to understand how gender bias impacts risk taking in the classroom, especially when it comes to STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math) subjects.

We will explore why people in professions like medicine or law exhibit no fear when faced with complicated and life threatening situations and compare that to their reactions when offered the opportunity to participate in a stand-up comedy class. And how about other professions?

Along those lines, why are improvisation comedy auditions supportive and leadership development programs competitive. Is there a correlation between risk and failure in these two examples? How does leadership impact risk taking and what are some examples of cultures where failure is celebrated and viewed as an opportunity to learn and others where it is punished?

These are just some of the topics we will explore and I think the data will surprise you.

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