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By HUGH BRADLEY

The first time I saw Jerry Marcus on the basketball court was at the Brownsville Boys Club, where he competed against some of the very best players in the Public High School league. He was an intense player and a fierce competitor, always holding his own with basketball stars from Boys High, Jefferson, Tilden, Wingate, and others.

It was evident that this young player understood the fundamentals of the game. Like the great playmakers before him, Marcus was always looking to pass before he took his own shot. It came as no surprise to me that this dynamic young athlete was voted Most Valuable Player in a tournament for his age group.

Marcus made the R.J.J. High School basketball team as a 13-year-old freshman. After two years at R.J.J., he transferred to a high school in Cleveland, Ohio. After this "experiment didn't work out" (as Marcus put it), he returned to the East New York section of Brooklyn, and attended the Chaim Berlin High School. That's where I saw Marcus play a few times as a senior. Although he was named to the Brooklyn All-Star Team of the Metropolitan Jewish High School league, Marcus seemed to lack the competitive fire that impressed me when he played at the Brownsville Boys Club.

Several colleges were heavily recruiting this still very skilled athlete, including St. Johns University and North Carolina State. By June, Marcus still hadn't announced his decision. I arranged to interview him in the lobby of a downtown Manhattan Hotel. This was an assignment I was looking forward to.

Q—What are your plans for the coming year?

A—I plan on getting a job.

Q—What about playing college basketball?

A—That's not in my plans right now

Q—St. Johns is very interested in you. I've been told they're willing to go along with your not playing on the Sabbath.

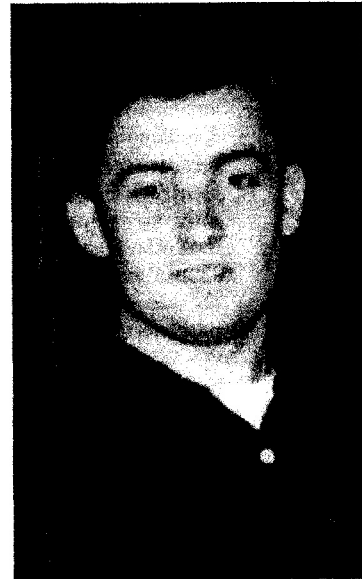
A—That's true.

Q—Former All City basketball player Allan Seiden plays for St. Johns. You would have the opportunity to learn from one of the greatest guards in the country

A—I've had the pleasure of meeting him. He was very kind to give me some basketball pointers.

Q—It seems like an ideal situation for you. A great basketball coach, and a terrific player to learn from. Aren't you tempted to go there?

A—Very much so, but now is not the time for me.



#### A TEAM GAME...

"I had some terrific coaches at the Jewish Center of Bensonhurst. They always reminded us that basketball is a team game," said Jerry Marcus. "We should not just settle for long outside shots, but try for high percentage shots."



#### I WANTED ANSWERS...

"I sensed there was something he was not telling me," Hugh Bradley says about Marcus. "He was being very careful with his words, not wanting to reveal himself totally" writes Bradley

Q—Where did you learn how to play so well? You seem to have a terrific knack for the game.

A—Thank you. I had some terrific coaches at the Jewish Center of Bensonhurst. They always reminded us that basketball is a team game. We should not just settle for long outside shots, but try for high percentage shots.

Q—Where did you learn to take hook shots with both hands?

A—When I hurt my right shoulder I began shooting and dribbling with my left hand.

Q—Some scouting services say you're one of the five best guards in the New York State 1957 class. A few even remarked you're like a coach on the floor. In fact, I like watching how you always work to set up your teammates.

A—Thanks. I've worked very hard on my basketball skills. When I lived in Bensonhurst, my friends and I used to shovel the snow to clear the basketball court so we could play.

Q—You never seem to get tired on the court.

A—I don't smoke. That really helps. And I guess I just love the game so much.

Q—Did you ever smoke?

A—When I was twelve years old, my father once offered me a cigarette. One puff did it for me.

Q—That was pretty smart of your father

A—It sure was. My father was trying to make a point, and he did.

Q—Who are your heroes?

A—My parents, and Rachel and Jackie Robinson.

Q—Did you ever think about attending Yeshiva University?

A—When I was much younger.

Q—Not now?

A—It's not a good match for me. Besides, I don't plan on going to college this year. I hope to get a job and to read as much as I can.

Q—Don't you think that going to school would help you, as well as the opportunity to play basketball on a well-known team?

A—I think not going to college for a year, or even two, would be more helpful. I need to slow down a little. I don't believe it's necessary to always rush from one thing to the next.

This was a very nice young man sitting across from me, with a winning smile that lit up his face. Jerry Marcus was shy humble and respectful. But I sensed there was something he was not telling me. He was being very careful with his words, not wanting to reveal himself totally

He seemed restless at this point, and it was apparent that the interview was over

I thanked Marcus for his time and wished him the best. He smiled warmly and shook my hand. As I watched him walk out of the hotel, it was obvious to me that Jerry Marcus was carrying some heavy burdens. I had more questions, but didn't want to cause this nice young man additional pain. I hoped to see him one day on a college basketball court. But somehow my gut told me that might not happen.