

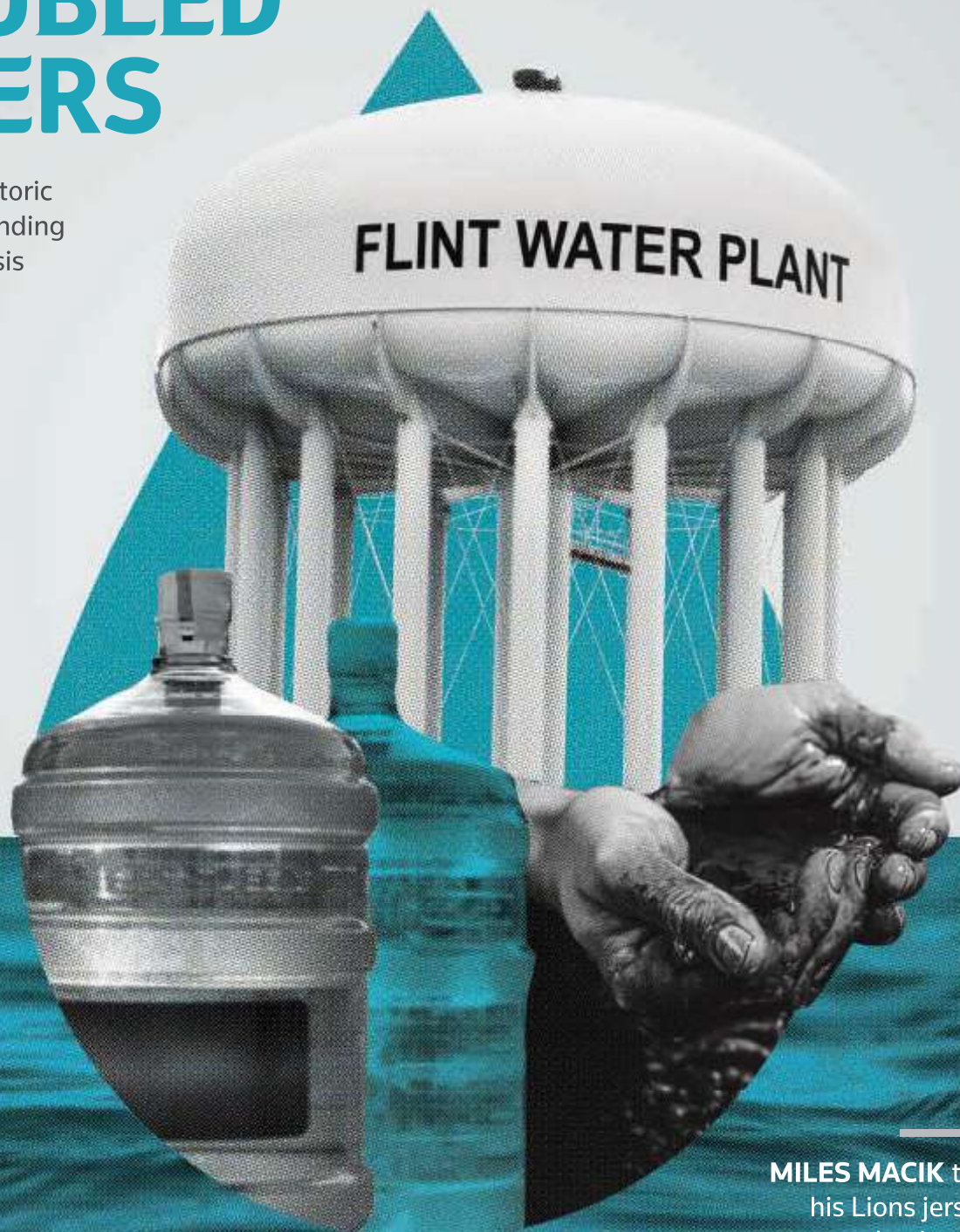
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MILES MACIK traded his Lions jersey for a business suit

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In Like a Lion, Out Like a Lawyer

Miles Macik traded in his NFL jersey for a business suit

BY BRENDAN MEYER

Miles Macik's career in the NFL may have been short, but it couldn't have started off better.

In his first professional game with the Detroit Lions, a 1996 preseason home game against the New Orleans Saints, his team was down by a touchdown, 40 yards from their end zone, with seconds left on the clock. Macik, a wide receiver, lined up in the bunch formation on the right side of the field. He was held off the line at the start of the play, but quickly caught up and sprinted ahead, weaving between defenders as his quarterback heaved a Hail Mary high toward the Silverdome lights.

"What happened next, I'm not going to say was 100% luck, because I tried to do what I did," says Macik, now a commercial litigator at Howard & Howard, "but I don't know if I could've repeated it."

No. 17 jumped as high as he could, stretching his right arm between two defenders, one of whom yanked his facemask. Somehow, out of the corner of his eye, Macik could still see the spiraling ball, grabbed it one-handed, and cradled it to his chest as he crashed and rolled into the end zone for a touchdown.

His teammates—Barry Sanders and Herman Moore among them—swarmed him and local reporters flocked his way for an interview. That night, he made ESPN SportsCenter's Top 10 plays.

Born and raised in New Jersey, Macik went undrafted after a record-setting career at the University of Pennsylvania. After the draft, he received a number of contract offers, but since his parents had recently moved to Rochester Hills, the 6-foot-4, 220-pounder decided to stay local and sign with the Lions.

The team was loaded at wide receiver, led by the All-Pro Moore, Brett Perriman and Johnnie Morton. At first, Macik was

in awe of sharing a training camp locker room with superstars like Sanders and Moore.

"But like everything else, you can't stand around and watch," the 47-year-old says. "It was a battle, it was stressful, it was fun. It was everything you could imagine it would be."

Macik impressed the coaches enough in the three preseason games that followed his dramatic catch that he made the final roster and was on the Lions for the entire '96 season. Sadly, he never got a chance to play—on offense or special teams. He was too far down the depth chart and stood on the sidelines on gameday, with one-of-a-kind views of Sanders and opponents like Brett Favre, Cris Carter and Marcus Allen.

The following season, Macik signed another contract and was invited to training camp, but he couldn't stay healthy, so the Lions released him. After herniating two discs during a one-year stint playing football in Scotland for NFL Europe, Macik called it a career.

"I'm proud of what I accomplished," he says. "I wish I would've accomplished more. I wish I wouldn't have gotten hurt and ended things on my terms. But you don't let it define you. You have to take it with you and use it to take the next step and do the next thing."

That turned out to be law. After graduating from University of Detroit



Miles T. Macik

Howard & Howard Attorneys; Business Litigation; Royal Oak

Mercy, he started at Butzel Long and has been a business attorney at Howard & Howard since 2011. The funny thing is, he sees a lot of similarities from his playing career.

"Football transitions to everything else. You've got to get out there and figure out if you can compete. It's no different when you're a lawyer," Macik says.

But memories from his playing days are never too far away. In 2019, Macik was inducted into the Penn Athletics Hall of Fame. There's a picture of his college football field in his work office, along with a paperweight of his NFL rookie card.

And in his basement at home, tucked away in a box, there's a large photo of No. 17 jumping as high as he can and stretching his right arm between two Saints defenders, eyes glued to a football—the same football that now rests right below his framed Lions jersey. 