CRIMINAL LAW IN THE NEWS

In late November 2004, Eagle County, Colorado, prosecutor Mark Hurlbert charged Los Angeles Lakers superstar basketball player Kobe Bryant with sexually assaulting a nineteen-year-old woman. Fifteen months later, the same prosecutor stood before the trial court and was granted a motion by the judge to dismiss the case. The prosecutor explained that the victim no longer desired to testify against Bryant.

The Eagle County prosecutor's office had spent $230,000 on this unsuccessful prosecution, 10 percent of its entire budget. Basketball fans of the Lakers expressed relief that the twenty-four-year-old Bryant, who if convicted faced a possible prison sentence of up to life, would be available to play for the Lakers.

Bryant entered the National Basketball Association right out of high school at age eighteen and had been selected to play in the NBA All-Star Game five times and already had played on three championship teams. Experts predicted that he would rank among the best players in league history by the time he retired.