

ENTERTAINMENT



BEHIND THE SCENES

Lisa Collins

Actress Sues Eddie Murphy For \$75 Million: 22 year old Michael Michele has filed a \$75 million lawsuit against Eddie Murphy, charging that she was fired from the lead role of his current film, "Harlem Nights", because she rebuffed his sexual advances. The lawsuit states that "Murphy made consistent, personal overtures...including attempts to fondle and otherwise caress her. However, Murphy's publicist Terrie Williams, recounts a different story. "She was terminated in a personality clash... He doesn't have to give jobs to female actors to get a date. She was paid in full for her services and that's it." But Bob Berman, Michele's attorney claims that while the actress was to have been paid \$27,500 for her role in the film, it was only if she promised not to sue. Response from Murphy came in a statement which read in part, "my professionalism and integrity are being attacked. I have worked incredibly hard to get where I am... it simply makes no sense that I would do anything to jeopardize that." Meanwhile Michele, who claims Murphy slandered her reputation and hurt her earning potential said: "this film could have opened up Hollywood for me."

Former Lead Singer For Klymaxx Makes Solo Debut: For most, the name Joyce Irby won't ring a bell, but her voice is one many will find to be quite familiar. Irby, dubbed "Fenderella" made a name for herself in the all-girl band Klymaxx playing bass and providing lead vocals on such hits as "The Men All Pause: and the group's smash, "I Miss You." Irby says she never intended to leave the band, but they voted her out. Said Irby: "at first, I thought it was a joke, but they were very serious. It was a complete shock, especially after all those years and all I put into it, but we must go on, and I am moving on." Today, the 32-year old singer accepts that the move could have been a blessing in disguise, and is happy to be at Motown, especially in light of the recent release of her debut LP, Maximum Thrust. But Motown execs are expecting far more from Irby than just another hit LP. In fact, her production company--Deva-1 Productions, has five acts signed to major labels, and under the tutelage of Jheryl Busby, she hopes to develop a Motown label by the end of the year.

PTA Honors "Amen's Clifton Davis: TV-actor Clifton Davis was recently appointed National Honorary Membership Chairman for the PTA. Said Davis: "it's a privilege. I think perhaps the greatest problem that our children have today is a sense of low self-esteem. If we can somehow raise their level of self esteem, I think we can do alot to curb the gang violence, increase their possibilities for education and help to make a better future." Davis knows first-hand the dangers of drugs, having overcome a drug problem some ten years ago.

Lovers Lane: One Hollywood couple you're not likely to read about in today's supermarket tabloids is super-singer Deneice Williams and producer-husband Brad Westering. The two met through Earth, Wind & Fire lead vocalist Phillip Bailey. Said already twice married Deneice: "By the time he came along, I'd kissed so many toads, I was shell-shocked, and not ready to kiss another. I said, Lord, if this is the guy, make it plain, because I'm not moving. I've just made too many mistakes." Today, nearing their third anniversary, Williams couldn't be happier with the choice she made. (Note: "lover's Lane" is the inspiration of Ronnesha Busby. "Thanks, Ronne--I love you"). Short Takes: The Coalition to Free James Brown is seeking 250,000 signatures in a petition it will present to South Carolina Governor Carroll A. Campbell, Jr. in the hopes of having R & B pioneer James Brown released from the current prison term he is serving for assault and failing to stop for police...Shari Belafonte will star as activist Sue Brown in "Under Fire," an upcoming ABC-TV mini-movie, which is a recreation of the famed civil rights murder case, that served as the basis of last year's controversial "Mississippi Burning." "Under Fire" is set to air on May 21...Next week: Richard Pryor beefs up his image.

ON THE MONEY

byline Serra Syndication

"Forget The Mule, Just Give Us \$40 Billion": 60 year old Detroit Raymond Jenkins, a real estate agency owner, has been pressing for years to see blacks compensated for their forced labor in this nation at the hands of white slave owners, and for years, people laughed at him. But not anymore. Just last month, Detroit's City Council passed a resolution urging Congress to establish a \$40 billion education fund for black American. This week, Rep. John Conyers will introduce a reparations bill on the behalf of black Americans. By all accounts, a groundswell movement is in fact developing across the nation in major US cities like New York, Los Angeles, Baltimore and Washington.

Gordy Keeps Pace: Last year's sale of Motown came amidst charges that trend-setting record pioneer Berry Gordy, Jr. was selling out a black American institution to corporate white America. But today, it appears the move has paid off for Gordy who heads the list of the highest grossing black-owned firms in California and the Gordy Company makes its debut as the nation's fifth-largest black-owned firm. (Ironically enough, Motown held the number five slot just last year, posting sales of \$100 million). Credit the bulk of its 1988 revenues to the sale of Motown (for \$61 million) and the success of its TV mini-series "Lonesome Dove"...Meanwhile, Black Enterprise Magazine's latest (annual) ranking of the nation's largest black-owned firms reveals that the majority of the country's most successful black entrepreneurs make California and New York their home.

Surveying The Nation's Richest Cities: The posh Connecticut suburbs of Bridgeport, Stamford, Norwalk and Danbury made up the nation's number one metropolitan area for 1987 per capita personal income boasting an average income of \$26,316, according to the US Commerce Department. Rounding out the list of the nation's top ten cities per capita personal income are San Francisco--\$24,593; Bergen-Passaic, N.J.--\$23,040; Middlesex, N.J.-- \$22,783; Nassau-Suffolk, New York--\$22,001; Washington D.C., Maryland--\$21,539; San Jose, Calif.--\$21,510; Anaheim/Santa Ana, Calif.--\$21,444; Lake County, La.--\$21,432; and West Palm Beach, Fla.--\$21,246. Among the nation's poorest cities (with the lowest per capital personal income) was El Paso, Texas at \$9,484.

Rounding out the nation's top-rated black-owned restaurants on the west coast are Harold & Bell's and Aunt Kizzy's, both located in Los Angeles. Aunt Kizzy's, which is owned and operated by husband and wife team, Adoph and Mary Dulan, does big business in LA's exclusive Marina Del Rey. The pair who parlayed their success from a hamburger stand they opened in South-Central Los Angeles, say that the two things that kill black restaurants are a lack of capital and "bad service. Said Dulan: "they really don't know how to have friendly, efficient service, and no bad attitudes. You've got to have service that is equivalent to the finest restaurants open, and that is my competition." In fact, he says he is not in competition with other black eateries, "There are eight million black people in Los Angeles county. Harold & Bell's can't feed them all and neither can I."

Executive Turntable: Ron Townsend, president and general manager of WUSA-TV in Washington, D.C., has been appointed president of Gannett Television. Gannett, which publishes USA Today, owns 10 TV stations. Townsend is a 30-year broadcast veteran. In Short: Los Angeles Mayor Tom Bradley admitted to "an error in judgment" in the wake of four independent investigations into his financial dealings. The probe centers on his acceptance of funds to serve on the advisory board of two banking institutions, that held city accounts...Next week: A look at the nation's fastest-rising black entrepreneurs.

BROADWAY BOUND REPORT

by Garland Lee Thompson

(FIRST YEAR ANNIVERSARY ISSUE) PULITZER PRIZE PLAY-WRIGHT TRYS OUT NEW PLAY

It has been nineteen years ago that Charles Gordone won the 1970 Pulitzer Prize and became the first Black playwright to do so. The playwright is now playwright-resident at Texas A & M University, where he has just tried out a new play, "Roan Browne & Cherry," (opening April 26, 1989). The playwright called me a few weeks ago, from the Speech Communication and Theatre Arts Department's 400 seat, Forum Theatre. He told me via telephone, about this new drama that deals with the life on a big western ranch, its' White owner, a mix-blood Black wrangler, his half-Indian daughter, "incest and race" in a two-act play (Deepl!). The conflict centers around the continued power of the big ranch, over those who are economically and physically dependent on it.

The new play, "Roan Browne & Cherry," is being considered for a further tryout by the Matrix Theatre of Los Angeles, which recently presented its production of Gordone's Pulitzer Prize play, "No Place To Be Somebody", directed by Bill Dukes (he also recently directed a new television production of Lorraine Hansberry's Classic, "A Raisin in the Sun," for PBS-TV.

"THE GREAT CHARLES GORDONE TRAVELING CIRCUS OF CLOWNS, FREAKS AND NIGRATYPES"

To qualify for the Pulitzer Prize in 1970, Charles Gordone's play, "No Place To Be Somebody," was booked for two weeks into the ANTA Theatre by producer, Joseph Papp, who turned to other things, after it did win the Prize. The playwright, his former wife, Jeanne Warner and friend, Ashton Springer, decided to tour the play, so they had to buy back the rights to chuck Gordone's "hot" piece, paying Joseph Papp \$30,000 for "his troubles" and efforts. Opening next in Hollywood, on Vine at the Huntington Hartford Theatre, they start the first National Tour. I met Gordone at the Actors' Studio West (L.A.), where a play of mine, "Sisyphus & Blue-Eyed Cyclops," starring Paul Winfield and D'Urville Martin was playing in a series of new plays that were performing in the garage of the old William Hart house in Hollywood. Actor, Ray Walston, hosted Friday-at-five- cocktail sets in the living room of the Hart House for us new talent and players.

The tour of "No Place," continued on to San Francisco with me joining the National Touring Company (August, 1970) at the On-Broadway Theatre, where we left a second company of young actors, starring Ben Vereen and Phillip Michael Thomas (now on Miami Vice TV). They were still fairly unknown (especially Phillip, who is a former child preacher from Riverside, California). Ben has attended Performing Arts High School in New York, the school of "Fame" TV fame, and he had closed in a production of "Hair" in San Francisco. Gordone instructed me, now the company's production stage manager, to hire them and start rehearsal with them and a cast of San Francisco actors, during the day at the On-Broadway Theatre until they were ready to open.

The National Company closed on a Sunday and the new Bay Area contract company opened on the following Tuesday. The public never

knew that the original company had quietly left town to rest and take a Christmas break. The new San Francisco company continued to run for months after we took the National company to Chicago's Studebaker Theatre (January, 1971), when it was finally available. The producers, Springer and Warner, moved the second company, starring, Thomas, to Detroit's Vestpocket Theatre (now gone) and send us, the National company on to Boston's Wilbur Theatre (8 weeks), the Shubert Theatre in Philadelphia (where it broke records; 11 consecutive weeks) and back to New York's Morosco Theatre on Broadway (it's also gone now). There the show received good reviews, but closed in 10 weeks.

As a bonus for running the National Tour's "return leg" back to Broadway, I was given the first national bus and truck company to start immediate after the show opened again on Broadway.

This was the first time in known theater history that a play opening on Broadway and five days later, it plays uptown at the Riverside Church Theatre (for two performances as a part of the deal to rehearse there) before we took this new company of "No Place" out on the road again for its second national tour, playing colleges and one-nighters in a bus and truck tour. Meanwhile, the Detroit company moved to Baltimore's Morris Mechanic Theatre.

During this time, I had been instructed by Gordone and the producers to rehearse Phillip Michael Thomas, into the National-back-to Broadway company. When we counted the companies that were out and another production at the Hartford Theatre (in Conn.), the total was four at one time during those runs. That may have been "a first" for a Black play, produced, in by Black and White producers.

It was history in the making and my debut on Broadway in 1971. I always find it hard to believe the fact that, I didn't originally go to New York to seek employment in the theatre, but instead "to hire actors," which I did for the Chicago and Detroit companies, to stage manager and direct "No Place," under the tutelage of the playwright-director.

EARL KLUGH AND PAQUITO D'RIVERA ADDED TO MT. HOOD FESTIVAL OF JAZZ LINEUP

GRESHAM, Ore. - Guitarist Earl Klugh and Saxophonist Paquito D'Rivera have been signed to the Eight Annual Mt. Hood Festival of Jazz, according to Paul Kreider, Festival of Jazz Foundation President.

Klugh and D'Rivera are the 11th and 12th jazz names booked into the Popular Aug 5-6 Festival held every summer on the Mt. Hood Community College campus.

Already signed are Diane Schuur, the Count Basic Orchestra, the Yellowjackets, saxophonist Branford Marsalis, guitarist Kevin Eubanks, singer Lou Rawls, Monty Alexander's Triple Treat featuring bassist Ray Brown and guitarist Herb Ellis, harmonica/guitarist Toots Thielemans, trumpeter Red Rodney and saxophonist Frank Morgan.

Klugh's guitar work has been a highlight in jazz recordings and concerts but he has also forged a reputation for melodic playing in a popular mood. He has released a number of LPs over the past 10-12 years, including a recent one combining him with the tasteful work of fellow guitarist George Benson.

D'Rivera first came to the U.S. in the '70s with the Cuban band Irakere. Alto saxophonist D'Rivera stayed in this country and since has become a highly respected jazz player. His Cuban roots are reflected in the rhythmic energy of his group. He combines the elements of strong modern jazz with Latin music.

Sponsors of the Festival of Jazz are the Gresham Area Chamber of Commerce and Mt. Hood Community College Foundation. Corporate sponsors are Maletis Beverage/Michell, Portland Bottling/7 Up, KINK-FM 102, KGW-TV 8, G.I. Joe's and Portland Area Volvo Dealers.

Additional information may be obtained from the Mt. Hood Festival of Jazz office by phoning 503-666-3810.

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Poets Wanted for
Peninsula park
Festival

The Cascade Poets and Oregon State Poetry association are inviting local poets to read from their work at the fifth annual Peninsula Park Spring Festival June 3.

Poets interested in taking part are asked to call Wilma Erwin at the Cascade Campus of Portland Community college, 244-6111, ext. 5222, or at 283-3682.

The festival will honor the Rose Festival junior court with a knighting ceremony at noon in the gazebo of the park, located at 6400 N. Albina Ave.

Festivities will continue until 5 pm and will include the PCC Jazz Band, a small show band, at 1:30 pm; a fashion show coordinated by Cora Smith, 2:30 pm; and magician Bob Eaton, 3 pm followed by storyteller Sarah Kirchfeld of North Portland Branch Library; Ed and Michell Mitchell, "The Modeliers," leading a sing-along, and the poetry reading.