

# Arts & ENTERTAINMENT

The Portland Observer

## Production Begins On Thriller: Deadly Voyage

◆ **Danny Glover is an executive producer of the film, based on the chilling true story of the life-and-death struggle of eight stowaways.**

Los Angeles, Nov. 6, 1995 -- Filming has begun on *Deadly Voyage*, an HBO Showcase/BBC thriller executive produced by Danny Glover, it was announced today by Bob Cooper, president, HBO Pictures and HBO Showcase. *Deadly Voyage* draws from real-life testimony and interviews given by Kingsley Ofose. Of eight African stowaways on a cargo ship, seven were murdered -- only Ofose survived the tragic shipboard ordeal. *Deadly Voyage*, which began production Nov. 4 in Ghana, stars Omar Epps ("Higher Learning"), David Suchet ("Poirot") and Joss Ackland ("Lethal Weapon 2"). "This is an amazing example of where true stories are more unbelievable than fiction," said Cooper. "Deadly Voyage is a gripping tale

that combines the excitement of a thriller with searing insights into human nature," noted Colin Callender, senior vice president, HBO Showcase.

"This is a story of people struggling to find their dreams," said Danny Glover. "It's a story of survival. As filmmakers, it is also our chance to forge an important alliance with the Ghanaian film community and to work on the African continent. I applaud HBO and the BBC for initiating this union"

*Deadly Voyage* is the second film (following October's "The Affair," executive produced by Harry Belafonte) of a major long-term production agreement between the BBC and HBO Showcase. Executive producers include Danny Glover and George Faber, head of single films for BBC Dramas. Producers are Bradley Adams ("An Ungentlemanly Act") and John Goldschmidt ("Uts," The BAFTA-winning "Spend,

Spend, Spend"). *Deadly Voyage* is directed and written by award-winning filmmaker Stuart Urban ("An Ungentlemanly Act").

Struggling to support his family in Ghana, 21-year-old Kingsley Ofose decided to travel overseas and learn a trade, returning home to build a better life. He knew it would be difficult to leave his family, but had no idea of the terror awaiting him when he and seven friends stowed away on a cargo ship. New, more stringent "carrier liability" laws, designed to punish ships carrying migrants without visas, imposed stiff penalties for harboring stowaways. The result in this case was a murderous rampage that Ofose barely managed to survive. The other seven men -- including Kingsley's brother Albert -- died at the hands of the crew.

Three of the real-life ship's crew members have pleaded guilty, and await sentencing in France later this year.

## Anna Deavere Smith Appears In Portland

Portland Arts & Lectures is pleased to present an evening with playwright, actress, and educator Anna Deavere Smith on Wednesday, December 13, 1995 at the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall. The program begins at 7:30 pm. For her presentation, titled, "Snapshots: Glimpses of America in Change," Smith will perform segments from her plays, and offer commentary about the work. Smith appears as part of the 1995/96 Portland Arts & Lectures Series, a six-part series sponsored by Oregon Council for the Humanities, Pacific University, Powell's Books, and BOORA Architects. Tickets for the presentation by Smith can be purchased in advance, or on the night of the event; Advance tickets are \$18, and available through the offices of Literary Arts (720 SW Washington, #745, Portland, OR 97205, ph. 227-2583). On the night of the event, tickets are \$19, and will be sold out of the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall box office beginning at 5:30 p.m.

Through her contributions to academia, her film roles, and her original approach to playwriting, Anna Deavere Smith has established herself as one of the most important figures in American theater today.

For the past twelve years, Smith has been exploring and inventing new theater forms with an award-winning series of one-woman plays, *On The Road: A Search for American Character*, a project that combines her interest in language, theater, and the diversity of American experience. With her nineteen on the Road productions, Smith has developed a unique documentary approach to drama; by recording interviews and reenacting them, verbatim, she "embodies" characters-playing as many as 46 roles in each production-and comments on actual events. The two most recent installments of *On The Road* grew out of interviews Smith conducted in the aftermath of two race-related tragedies: *Fires in the Mirror: Crown Heights, Brooklyn and Other Identities*, winner of the 1993 Kesselring Award for best new play and a Pulitzer Prize nominee, and *Twilight: Los Angeles 1992*, nominated for Tony Awards for best actress and best play.

A graduate of the American Conservatory Theater, Smith has taught drama at Carnegie-Mellon University, UCLA, and Yale, and since 1990 she has been a professor of drama at Stanford University. Her film roles include appearances in Philadelphia, Dave, and The American President. Smith's Portland Arts & Lectures presentation will be her first performance in Portland.

Other speakers in the 1995/96 Portland Arts & Lectures series are novelist and essayist Tim O'Brien (January 10, 1996), historian and



Anna Deavere Smith

Photo Credit: Janette Beckman

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all of these events, and five-part series tickets (for Smith, O'Brien, Goodwin, Fowles, and Wilson) are available for \$70.

Portland Arts & Lectures, a program of Literary Arts, Inc., is a non-profit arts organization located at 720 SW Washington, #745, Portland, OR 97205. For more information about the 1995/96 series, or any other Portland Arts & Lectures event, please contact Ken DuBois at (503) 227-2583.

## Dorothy Danbridge's History Goes To Film

◆ **Whitney Houston Acquires Film Rights To Dorothy Danbridge Biography**

Whitney Houston has acquired the motion picture rights to the forthcoming book, *Dorothy Danbridge: A Biography*, by Donald Bogle, to be published in the late Spring of 1996 by Amistad Press. Houston will produce the film with Debra Martin Chase and will star in the title role.

"I have always been intrigued by Dorothy Danbridge and the triumphs and tragedies of her life," said Houston from her Los Angeles office. "She was an enormously talented African American whose gifts, like those of Josephine Baker, Billy Holiday and Paul Robeson, were never fully appreciated because she was quite simply ahead of her time.

Donald Bogle's book will give me the opportunity to bring the elegance, dignity and richness of Dorothy to the Screen."

*Dorothy Danbridge: A Biography* traces the trailblazing career of the talented and sultry star who became the first African American to receive an Oscar nomination for Best Actress (for Carmen Jones), and who, like her contemporary Marilyn Monroe, achieved cult status that remains vibrantly alive today.

Bogle chronicles her life from her early years as a childhood performer to the hit films *Carmen Jones* and *Island in the Sun* in the 1950s; thought her troubled and debilitating love affairs and marriages; to her shocking and tragic decline and death in 1965 at the age of 42.

Donald Bogle has based his book on more than seven years of extensive research, including interviews with the late actress' family, friends, agents, associates, arrangers, directors, lovers, choreographers, costumers and co-stars.

The book includes frank discussions with the actress' sister, Vivian Danbridge, the late Otto Preminger and Laslo Benedek, director Herb Ross, Danbridge's first husband Harold Nicholas (of the Nicholas Brothers), her closest friend Geraldine Pate, musician Bobby Short, Maria Cole, Brock Peters, Ivan Dixon and scores of others. Also included are perceptive comments on Danbridge from Sidney Poitier, Diahann Carroll, and Sammy Davis, Jr.

## Jazz Pianist Williams Performs

The Jazz Society of Oregon presents noted New York Jazz Pianist James Williams on Friday, Dec. 8 at the Red Lion, downtown.

Williams will perform in a trio featuring internationally acclaimed drummer Alan Jones. Tickets are \$10 in advance at Fastix ticket outlets and \$12 at the door.

Originally from Memphis, Tenn. Williams started piano at age 13, playing gospel and rhythm and blues while studying classical music. At 21, he became an instructor at the Berklee College of Music in Boston.

He has worked with many of the jazz greats and recently performed in Oregon at the 1994 Mt. Hood Festival of Jazz.

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