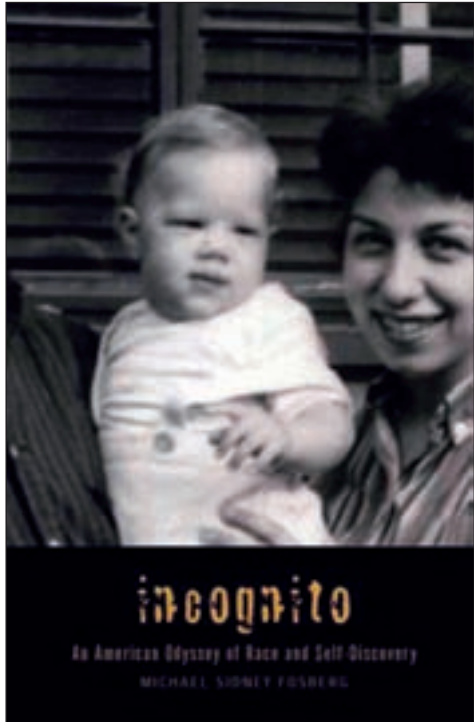


'Incognito': One Man Discovers His African American Father



Book Review by Kam Williams, Special to *The Skanner News*

"I grabbed the phone and punched in the number... my heart pounding... My dad... Thirty years later. 'My name is Michael Sidney Fosberg, and I'm your son!' I blurted out.

'Son? Well, first of all, I want you to know that no matter what you were told, or what you thought happened, I have always loved you... There's one other thing I'm sure your mother never told you.'

'What's that?'

'I'm African-American,' he said.

My body went numb. I felt light-headed and my legs began to give way. I braced myself against the bureau... I sat down slowly on the bed in stunned silence, trying to breathe without trembling. My throat was dry I struggled to respond, but all I could say was, 'Wow!'"

The author learning his father was black. (pgs. 71-74)

Michael Sidney Fosberg was raised in a lily-white, Chicago suburb at the height of the Civil Rights Movement by his Caucasian mother and stepdad. Consequently, he grew up blissfully unaware of the fact that the real father he'd been separated practically at birth from was black.

A Jew-fro and a slightly swarthy complexion were all that made Michael stand out in family photos taken with his parents and two younger siblings. His mom explained away the differences in their appearance by saying that he was part Cherokee, an excuse which her emotionally-conflicted son bought until he bottomed out in his Thirties while trying to make it as an actor in L.A.

It was then, after almost dying of a drug overdose, that he resolved to turn his life around, despite having thus far frittered away his adulthood in rudderless fashion, between substance-abusing and serial womanizing. With the help of Alcoholics Anonymous, Michael soon sobered up and came to understand the role that "the loss and absence of my biological father at such an early age" had played in his self-destructive patterns.

So, he pressured his mother for info about his paternal roots, and she provided him



with a name, John Woods, and a hometown, Detroit, without divulging anything about her ex's ethnicity. Therefore, it's easy to imagine Michael's utter shock upon learning that his long-lost father was African-American.

He soon shared the big development with his half-sister, Lora, who took the news in stride, matter-of-factly remarking, "Damn! My brother's a brother." And that was only the first of numerous jaw-dropping disclosures about to come out of the closet. As it turned out, Michael's dad had remarried after divorcing his mother but had then another mixed child with a Jewish mistress of many years.

Worse, Woods was unemployed, on the run from the law, and doing his best to avoid a stiff prison sentence for bribery. So much for Michael's dream of an idyllic father-son reunion and making up for lost time.

With his dad first evading authorities and then behind bars, Michael instead immersed himself in African-American culture, even becoming engaged briefly to a sister who unfortunately turned out to be a gold digger. Alternately hilarious and heartbreaking, *Incognito* is a riveting and revealing autobiography of self-discovery with a message most reminiscent of that age old maxim, "Be careful what you wish for!"

To order a copy of the book *Incognito*, visit: <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B004D5909U/ref=nosim/thslfofire-20>

To order a copy of the DVD *Incognito*, an award-winning, one-man play written and performed by Michael Sidney Fosberg, visit: <http://www.amazon.com/exec/obidos/ASIN/B004RCGFUGU/ref=nosim/thslfofire-20>

Incognito: An American Odyssey of Race and Self-Discovery
by Michael Sidney Fosberg
Incognito, Inc.
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330 pages, Illustrated
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PlayWrite's WORD.VOICE. Showcases Youth Theatre

On May 24, join PlayWrite's WORD.VOICE. spring showcase featuring plays acted and written by at-risk youth. The event takes place at 7:30 p.m. at the World Trade Center, 121 SW Salmon St. in Downtown Portland. Tickets are \$10.

PlayWrite provides workshops in which theatre professionals and other artists coach at-risk youth to create and direct their own plays. The results are twofold: The young writers discover their voices and learn that art is a form of truth that can help them figure out how to live. And audiences get to see visceral, powerful theatre that offers the satisfaction of transformative experience.

Twice a year recent plays and songs are chosen for performance at the winter or spring showcase. Professional actors,

singers and musicians perform the work under the direction of PlayWrite graduates, giving the young writers a second opportunity to work on their creations.

Victor Mack, who is starring in the Portland Playhouse's production of "Ma Rainey's Black Bottom" says it's very rewarding to be working with kids.

"I've been involved with helping at-risk kids create theatre since I lived in New York and worked with the 52nd Street Project," he said. "As an actor I enjoy getting direction from the kids and seeing their faces when their plays come to life on stage. You help them open up and see things from a new perspective."



Victor Mack

"TWO THUMBS UP."
EBERT PRESENTS AT THE MOVIES
Rolling Stone
"HILARIOUS AND HEARTFELT."
Kristen Wiig is an indisputable goddess of comedy."
Peter Travers

BRIDESMAIDS

UNIVERSAL PICTURES PRESENTS IN ASSOCIATION WITH RELATIVITY MEDIA AN APATOW PRODUCTION "BRIDESMAIDS" KRISTEN WIG MAYA RUDOLPH ROSE BYRNE WENDI McLENDON-COVEY ELLIE KEMPER MELISSA MCCARTHY CHRIS O'DOWD PRODUCED BY KRISTEN WIG ANNIE MUMOLO EXECUTIVE PRODUCER PAUL FEIG PRODUCED BY JUDY APATOW CLAYTON TOWNSEND BARRY MENDEL WRITTEN BY ANNIE MUMOLO & KRISTEN WIG DIRECTED BY PAUL FEIG

RELATIVITY APATOW PRODUCTIONS R RESTRICTED UNDER 17 REQUIRES ACCOMPANYING PARENT OR ADULT SUPERVISOR STRONG LANGUAGE AND SOME DRUG USE

CHECK LOCAL LISTINGS FOR THEATERS AND SHOWTIMES
MOBILE USERS: For Showtimes - Text BRIDESMAIDS with your ZIP CODE to 43KIX (435-491)

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