Entertainment

BILLIE ROWE'S NOTEBOOK

Whoopie Goldberg **Would Rather Be Colorless**

N'YORK CITY - Thanks a bunch boss for throwing me into the middle of a bevy of stars to do interviews. As I sat in NYC's Drake Hotel questioning the actors and actresses in "The Color Purple'' I felt like a rabbit that had just been dumped into a briarpatch. Hate to admit it but I'm still a little starstruck. You're gonna flip when you read what Whoopie "I see myself as. said. colorless and sexless, because to say I'm Black limits my work. To say I'm a woman limits what I can do.

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But to call me an actor means I can do anything. That's my art form." She also told me that Celie was not the role that she originally wanted. "I wanted to play Sofia, because I didn't want all that responsibility. You see, I'm lazy and I didn't want to do all the work that a star of a movie has to do, but he (Spielberg) said trust me and I'm glad I did.''...Oprah Winfery and Willard Pugh, "Purple's" Sofia and Harpo respectively, told unusual stories about how they got cast in the movie. Although Winfrey had told the producer of her talk show, a year before "Purple" started to shoot, that she was determined to be a part of it.

"I would have been happy to be the water girl," she exclaimed. What she didn't know was that losing a bet would help her fulfill that desire. "I had made a bet with Joan Rivers about losing weight. She was going to lose five lbs. and my goal was 15. Between screen tests I went to a health spa and was beating my thighs when I got a call from casting agent Reuben Cannon saying, 'what's this we hear about you losing weight. If you lose one lb. you'll lose the part'.'' Pugh got a copy "Purple" with an inscription saying "You are Harpo" from a lady back in his homestate of Tenn. So when he saw Quincy Jones, Michael Jackson and Paul McCartney on the Universal Studio tour he thought here's my break. "I ran up to Quincy and tried to talk, but

several

road

months

was a collaborative effort.

For instance, there would be

situations where right on the

set Steven would say this

scene needs something else

my Woody Woodpecker custom got in way and all that came out was a mumble," Pugh explained. After that he decided to let the chips fall where they may, after all he had worked with Reuben Cannon before on some other projects. But after three screen tests and five weeks of waiting he got fed up and wrote Spielberg a letter saying since I haven't heard from you I guess I didn't get the part. Then he told of a conversation he had with his mom. "We were talking and I asked her why is some white gut doing a Black film. Then she asked me if I liked E.T. and when I told her yes she said if he can make you love aliens maybe he can make people like us too." Shortly after that he got the call he was waiting for.

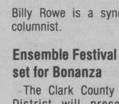
Margaret Avery, Shug, almost left show business a and because Alice (the author) was there and Menno (the screenwriter) and me were all there we were able to sit down and discuss it. That was the fun part," he said. By the way, Quincy also told me to give you a big hug.

WORLD CHATTER - Why didn't they give "Jack-The-Rapper" credit for raising his voice loud and long enough to bring attention to the heartaching situation in Tunica "Sugar Ditch, Miss. "60 Mins.," which spotlighted the problem, could have mentioned his name. Well boss you're used to that kind of treatment. Because in your drive to call attention to So. African golf and tennis players who come to the U.S. and make millions on our golf and tennis tours it has happened to you. When the Daily News picked it up that didn't mention your name either

are about to fund city-wide mental health facilities that will offer a wide range of community programs and supervised housing in eight of our largest cities. Twenty eight million dollars has been set aside for the project. Since 1972, the Princeton based foundation had given away over \$600 million in grants to improve U.S. Harlem's health care P.S. 125, headed by sis Kay Francis Richards, was the only school in the area not mentioned in NY state's bad school report . . . The MLK Center for Non Violent Social Change and a host of business leaders are planning a "Salute to Greatness Dinner'' observance of Dr. King's 57th B'day . Comm. Ben Ward, NYC's top cop, had joined Birch Bayh as a vice chair, on the Bd. of Dir. of the Nat'l Inst. Against Prejudice and Violence Too bad this year's "Marketing To blacks" is the last one that will be carried in "Advertising Age," bible of the adv. world So African censors cut Richard Attenborough's "A

Chorus Line'' in seven Come Jan. places places . . . Come Jan. "He's the Mayor," starring Kevin Hooks, and "The Redd Foxx'' show will air on Fri. and Sat. nites respectively over ABC-TV. "Benson" will be moved to Sat. nite as well Pretoria, So. Africa, will host more than 110 int'l singers and pianist who will vie for \$37,000 in cash, international scholarships and a piano. In fear of political pressure, organizers are keeping the names and countries of the competitors hush-hush This is Nancy it's been real .

Billy Rowe is a syndicated



The Clark County School District will present its annual District Solo and Ensemble Festival at Bonanza High School on February 22 from 8 a.m. to 5

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Whoopie Goldberg

yr.-and-a-half before "Purple" was made. One Sonny Carson sent a day she called her agent to scolding letter to Fred Pierce complain about not being of ABC-TV about the slavery sent out on any auditions and portrayal of "Cuffee" in its was informed that she had recently televised antebellum mini-series. His letter been dropped for the agency. Margaret explained it like pointed out the lack of "He awkwardly said research done by the show's that when a client is no writers, as Cuffee was no slave. In reality he was a longer bankable we vote to drop them and that he was shipbuilder and an sorry that nobody had called import/exporter among other me, because it had happened things Upper W'Harlem's Center For ago. Flabbergasted I sat down Problems of the Living was and thought about leaving the business." Instead she about to get its funds cut, but an SOS was sent to Cong'man Charlie Rangle decided to put together a niteclub act and take it on the and they'll be sitting down to This was your talk with the Dept. of Health buddy Quincy Jones' first and Human Services in early time as an exec. producer The Children's Art and he relished the job. "It Carnival is looking for a few was great being in the trenches. Making "Purple" good "men who cook" for next year's affair. Lana Turner, its director, and me want to know what are you gonna cook Mr. R.

END NOTES - HUD and the Robert Wood Foundation

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