

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 said. "I see myself as colorless and sexless, because to say I'm Black limits my work. To say I'm a woman limits what I can do.

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 Winfrey 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 of "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

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. health care... Harlem's 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" in 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 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 columnist.

Ensemble Festival set for Bonanza

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 p.m.

Approximately 1400 boys and girls from schools throughout Clark County will participate in the free musical program.

The public is cordially invited to attend all or part of the performances.

Whoopie Goldberg

yr.-and-a-half before "Purple" was made. One day she called her agent to complain about not being sent out on any auditions and was informed that she had been dropped for the agency. Margaret explained it like this, "He awkwardly said that when a client is no longer bankable we vote to drop them and that he was sorry that nobody had called me, because it had happened several months ago. Flabbergasted I sat down and thought about leaving the business." Instead she decided to put together a nightclub act and take it on the road... This was your buddy Quincy Jones' first time as an exec. producer and he relished the job. "It was great being in the trenches. Making "Purple" was a collaborative effort. For instance, there would be situations where right on the set Steven would say this scene needs something else

... Sonny Carson sent a scolding letter to Fred Pierce of ABC-TV about the slavery portrayal of "Cuffee" in its recently televised antebellum mini-series. His letter pointed out the lack of research done by the show's writers, as Cuffee was no slave. In reality he was a shipbuilder and an import/exporter among other things... Upper W'Harlem's Center For Problems of the Living was about to get its funds cut, but an SOS was sent to Cong'man Charlie Rangle and they'll be sitting down to talk with the Dept. of Health and Human Services in early '86... The Children's Art Carnival is looking for a few 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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