

**ENTERTAINMENT BRIEFS**

**RAPPER ODB A NO-SHOW AT HIS SHOPLIFTING TRIAL**

VIRGINIA BEACH, Va.— Rapper ODB was MIA on Tuesday. A judge issued a warrant for his arrest when the member of the popular group The Wu-Tang Clan failed to appear in court on a shoplifting charge. The rapper, whose real name is Russell Tyrone Jones, allegedly stole a \$50 pair of Nike shoes from a store in Virginia Beach on July 4, three days after walking out of a New York hospital with gunshot wounds he suffered during an apparent robbery. No lawyer appeared Tuesday in General District Court to represent ODB, 29. He had concerts scheduled for Tuesday and Wednesday nights at the Key Club in West Hollywood, Calif. Wu-Tang Clan's record label, Loud, referred calls about ODB to the Elektra Entertainment Group, which handles his solo recordings. Jana Fleishman, a publicist for Elektra in New York, said the company had no comment.

**MAGIC JOHNSON ADDS COMIC VETERAN TO SHOW**

NEW YORK — Struggling with the ratings and harsh critics, Magic Johnson brought in a new sidekick. Comedian Tommy Davidson, an original cast member for "In Living Color," has been added to "The Magic Hour." Johnson's original sidekick, comedian Craig Shoemaker, was fired after publicly complaining that the show was an embarrassment and "an absolute nightmare." Davidson also had roles in "Booby Call" and "Ace Ventura II: When Nature Calls."

**DELLA REESE TOUCHED BY A CONTRACT**

LOS ANGELES — Della Reese is touched by her new contract. The "Touched by an Angel" star settled a long-standing salary feud with CBS with a three-year contract that will boost her paycheck to about \$100,000 per episode, Daily Variety said Monday, citing industry sources it didn't identify. Reese will also star in at least two made-for-TV movies for the network as part of the deal. "I am very, very, very happy," said Ms. Reese, who complained during a news conference last season that co-star Roma Downey earned more per episode than she did. The deal "significantly" closes the salary gap between her and Downey, though Downey is still expected to earn a larger paycheck, Daily Variety said. Reese wouldn't rehash the feud, saying only that "The Man" had taken care of her needs. Presumably, she was referring to God.

**MICHAEL JACKSON ANNOUNCES PLANS FOR JAPAN THEME PARKS**

TOKYO — "Theme Park" might as well be Michael Jackson's middle name. Jackson told reporters Monday he'll team up with a Japanese company to build three sprawling theme parks, complete with golf courses and hotels, and create a new chain of toy stores in Japan and elsewhere. "This is going to be one of a kind," he said. The joint venture — Michael Jackson Japan Co. Ltd. — is still in the process of selecting locations for the parks, two of which will be built in Japan. Prosperity Enterprise Corp. is Jackson's Japanese partner. The company also plans to open "Wonder World of Toys" stores, with the first store expected to open in Japan, followed by a second one in Guam by March 1999. "Michael himself will choose the toys," said Kanji Ishizumi, legal adviser to the company. Jackson wants to build similar theme parks in Poland and Brazil.

**TV SHOW ON MOTOR CITY BEING SHOT IN STEEL CITY**

DETROIT — Motown isn't Motown enough for producers of a made-for-television miniseries about the Temptations. Instead of Detroit, the program is being filmed in Pittsburgh. "Detroit no longer looks like itself, unfortunately," Suzanne de Passe, the executive producer and a former top Motown official, said in Monday's *Detroit News*. "We would have loved to have shot in Detroit. (But) if you go to the city, you don't have the choices of the inner-city look where these guys started. "Pittsburgh looks like Detroit used to look," she said. The four-hour miniseries, "The Temptations," is scheduled to air on NBC in November. Shooting begins in one week.

**SEXUAL BATTERY CASE AGAINST BOBBY BROWN DROPPED**

BEVERLY HILLS, Calif. — Prosecutors have dropped their sexual battery case against singer Bobby Brown. Brown was arrested for investigation of sexual battery June 21 over an alleged incident at the pool at the Beverly Hills Hotel. Police did not release details, but Brown reportedly was accused of slapping a teen-ager on the behind. Charges were dropped July 17. Brown, the husband of singer Whitney Houston, denied touching anyone. Brown, who lives in Mendham, N.J., is best known for his 1988 album "Don't Be Cruel" and the hit single "My Prerogative."

**ENTERTAINMENT**

**Grier experiencing rebirth in acting career**

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

LOS ANGELES — Showtime is giving its viewers 13 episodes of "Linc's," which premieres Saturday, Aug. 1.

"Linc's" is the name of a Washington, D.C., tavern. Pam Grier appears as a children's rights advocate with a failing marriage. Others in the cast: Georg Stanford Brown, Tisha Campbell and Steven Williams.

The ultra-talented Debbie Allen directed the first episode. The show is filmed at Tim Reid's New Millennium studios in Petersburg, Va. Reid, of the acclaimed series "Frank's Place," created "Linc's" and is its executive producer.

Along with Gloria Stuart, Burt Reynolds and Robert Forster, Grier had one of the more heartwarming comebacks of 1997. She first achieved notoriety as the athletic star of 1970s



PAM GRIER

blaxploitation films with such titles as "Foxy Brown," "Sheba Baby" and "Scream Blacula Scream."

She continued working during the 1980s and '90s, mostly in low-budget movies, theater and television. Then a longtime fan, Quentin Tarantino, cast her in "Jackie Brown" as a flight attendant caught in an underworld plot.

Critics rediscovered her as a dramatic actress.

Grier recalled Tarantino telling her: "I've enjoyed what you've done, I like what you say, and one day I want to work with you."

Elmore Leonard's novel "Rum Punch" provided the opportunity to cast Grier. Tarantino named the film after her character, Jackie Brown.

Grier said her newfound success allows her to be selective in projects, including "Holy Smoke," a film by Jane Campion ("The Piano") in Australia, and "Linc's," which has brought a return to her Southern roots.

"The show is going so very, very well that I lose sleep because I'm so excited," she said in a recent interview from her carphone in Virginia. "The writing, the acting of an incredible ensemble of people who are hysterical. Lord have mercy!"

"It's about real issues. It's about what people don't say

and wish they could. Some people might think it's too much. But that's how real people think: 'Oh, I just don't want anyone to hear my innermost secrets.' We pull them out on the carpet. No one holds back."

Born in Winston-Salem, N.C., Miss Grier came to Hollywood at a propitious time, and not only because the studios recognized the vast black audience out there.

"The action pictures I did exemplified the women's movement," she said.

"That was the time when women felt we could be equals. We could protect ourselves, we could perform karate, we no longer wanted to be victims."

"That coincided with the movement in the African-American community, the Black Panthers, black political agenda, everyone trying to say, 'We want respect, because we

(See Grier, Page 16)

**Basketball great Julius Erving's sons arrested**

*Special to Sentinel-Voice*

ALTAMONTE SPRINGS, Fla. — Two of NBA great Julius Erving's sons were arrested last week and charged with possessing a crack pipe and burglarizing a car.

Cheo Erving, 25, was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and loitering and prowling, both misdemeanors. His 17-year-old brother, Cory, was charged with burglary of a motor vehicle, a felony, and loitering and prowling.

Police officers said they found Erving's sons about 3 a.m. last Wednesday walking away from a car parked at a pool-screen business in this affluent Orlando suburb, said officer Michael Nelson, a spokesman for the Altamonte Springs police department.

The car's driver-side door was open, as was the car's glove compartment, which looked like someone had rummaged through it, Nelson said. There was no forced entry to the car, and nothing appeared to have been taken. The car apparently belonged to an employee of the pool-screen business.

The Ervings told officers they found the car's door open. They said they were in the parking lot because they were locked out of friend's house and were waiting until dawn to get back to the house.

Officers found the crack pipe in Cheo Erving's pockets after they patted him down.

Julius Erving, a basketball Hall of Famer, was named executive vice president of the Orlando Magic last year, with his duties including strategic business plans and acting as a

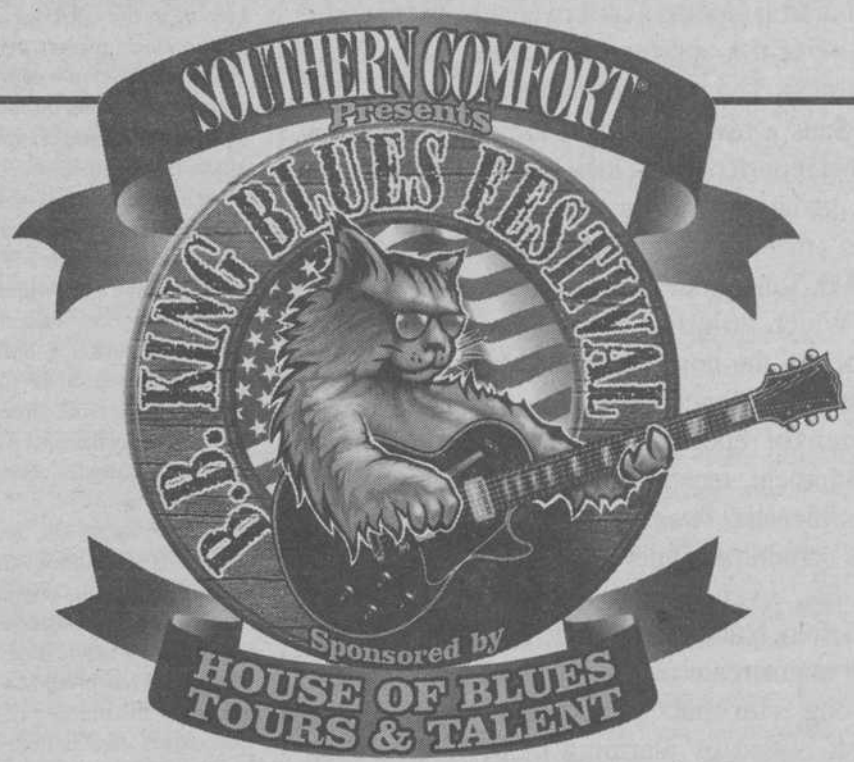
goodwill ambassador.

As a member of the Philadelphia 76ers in the late 1970s and early 1980s, he was named the NBA's Most Valuable Player and was a five-

time All-NBA First Team selection. Before that, he played for the New York Nets in the American Basketball Association and was named the league's all-time Most

Valuable Player.


He is one of three players who scored 30,000 points as a professional, joining Wilt Chamberlain and Kareem Abdul-Jabbar.




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