

'Hotel Rwanda' DVD recalls heroism during ethnic cleansing

By Kam Williams
Sentinel-Voice

Ten years ago, while the world watched, civil war erupted in Rwanda between the African nation's two dominant tribes, the Hutus and the Tutsis.

During the country's colonial period under Belgian rule (1919-1962), the minority Tutsis had long-enjoyed a favored status.

But independence meant that the Hutus would again become the dominant caste and, by April of 1994, the strained relations had deteriorated to the point where the government itself was openly calling for the slaughter of the Tutsis.

And when the dust settled, more than 900,000 Rwandans had perished in the three senseless months of ethnic cleansing.



Don Cheadle shines in "Hotel Rwanda," which recounts the 1994 Rwandan genocide.

Hotel Rwanda, based on a story reported in the New Yorker, recounts the brave exploits of a Hutu who miraculously saved the lives of 1268 Tutsis by giving them refuge inside the luxury hotel he managed in Kigali.

Don Cheadle finally landed that Academy Award nomination which had so long eluded him for his Schindler-channeled performance as hero, Paul Rusesabagina.

While desperately appealing to the U.N. for protection, Paul proceeds to keep the bloodthirsty hordes at bay with bribes and booze, generally relying on his wits to preserve a safe oasis in the midst of the utter insanity.

Shot in a lush region of Johannesburg, South Africa, the picture effectively conveys the absolute panic and

sense of dread which must accompany the degeneration of any civilization into chaos.

Also of note are Sophie Okonedo's Oscar-nominated performance as Paul's wife, Nick Nolte's as an emasculated U.N. colonel, Cara Seymour's as a compassionate Red Cross worker and Joaquin Phoenix's as a frustrated journalist left wondering why his reports from the region failed to elicit an international response till it was too late. Overall, Hotel Rwanda represents a noble effort which ought to embarrass the world into preventing another such scenario from ever unfolding anywhere on the planet again.

Excellent (4 stars). Rated R for unrelenting, graphic violence, brief profanity and disturbing images. DVD features — None.

Dawsey

(Continued from Page 7) that the move had anything to do with the station's plans to move to Wixom, Mich., which Dawsey said was the case.

"We are purchasing a building in Wixom and have started a capital campaign," Forester said.

"This has nothing to do with location. We do seven individual programs a week and this [ABJ] is just one of them."

ABJ has had a long history since it first started in 1968, when it was called "Colored People's Time," serving as a public forum for Blacks at a time of racial turmoil across the nation.

In 1970, the name changed to "Detroit Black Journal" and then to the "American Black Journal" in 1995. Some of the show's popular hosts have included, Ed Gordon, Ron Scott, Tony Brown, Juanita Anderson, Jim Ingram and Darrell Woods.

According to an insider at the station, who chose to remain anonymous, since taking over as host Dawsey has increased viewer response to

the show, and e-mails keep coming every week.

"He is the most popular host we had since Ed Gordon," the official said. Gordon, who now works for NPR, hosted the show from 1986 to 1988.

Would the departure of Dawsey affect the quality of the show especially in an election year?

"It probably will affect the political content of the show," said Ron Scott, who served as producer and host of the show from 1976-1980.

Scott said the show used to be known for its "cutting edge on politics, public affairs and journalistic endeavors that principally served the information needs of the Black community."

"That is why the incarnations of the show have taken different forms, because of the political perspectives of the hosts," he said. "One of the reasons I was fired was because they did not want to have anything Black on TV."

A replacement has not been named, Forester said. The host of 92.3 FM talk radio, Frankie Darcell, is considered a possible replacement.

Darcell said she has not received any call from WTVS.

"I am number one in the market and am exceptionally happy at Clear Channel Communications," Darcell said. "If I was approached, the first question I would ask is if they can afford me. I keep my options open."

Of Dawsey, she said: "He was successful. This is a tough time for people in the media. Getting fired is not a new thing. That's the way of this business."

Presently, the show is operating on a guest-host basis. Last week, WCHB's [1200 AM] Mildred Gaddis hosted the show.

Dawsey, a former staff writer for the Detroit News, Philadelphia Enquirer and Los Angeles Times, said it never occurred to him that he'd be gone so soon. He also co-authored popular comedian Bernie Mac's first book "I Ain't Scared of You" on topics ranging from life on the streets to being a parent.

"Even in my short time, Tony and I proved beyond doubts that viewers of all colors will support a program

that is smart, strong and unafraid to speak truth," Dawsey said.

"I hope that the renewed interest in the show will prove to other outlets that giving people strong, smart

issue-oriented programming can be successful."

Nicole Paige, the show's correspondent, said, "I'm really sad that Dawsey and I won't be working together anymore. He is very smart

and can relate to the demographic. I really can't imagine what happened. I don't care how bad it got unless it was a physical altercation."

Bankole Thompson writes for the Michigan Citizen.

Monk-Coltrane

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Mormon Tabernacle Choir and the Philadelphia Orchestra.

Inductees from the rock era include James Brown's 1965 "Live at the Apollo," the Beach Boys' 1966 "Pet Sounds," 1971's "The Allman Brothers Band at Fillmore East" and Public Enemy's 1989 "Fear of a Black Planet."

One of the odder selections is a collec-

tions of sounds made by Asian elephants. Some of the elephant sounds are infrasonic - inaudible to the human ear - but were nevertheless recorded by Katharine Payne of Cornell University in 1984.

Outer space buffs can listen to Armstrong's famous "one small step for man" speech from the moon in 1969 - and follow that up with John Williams' soundtrack to the 1977 movie "Star Wars."



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