

LISA COLLINS

**Behind the Scenes**



**C**oming soon: That's the moniker we see during intermissions at the movie theater to entice us with upcoming attraction.

I'm glad to say that for



Winfrey

African Americans, 1996 looks to be a very balanced year — both in film content and quantity. The overwhelmingly strong box office support for "Waiting To Exhale" has shown Hollywood brass that in catering to violent and crime-laden depictions of blacks in films thus far, they've been ignoring a very profitable segment — the black middle class. "Exhale" has shown that African Americans are eager to see more of themselves on screen in movies with broader story lines. And analysts say you're bound to see more of them. Fact is, leading off this year's lineup of films is one such film — Tim Reid's "When We Were Colored," which is set for release later this month. "A coming-of-age story in the segregated south," it is based on Clifton Taubert's book "Once Upon A Time...When We Were Colored" For his directorial effort, Reid (a regular on "Sister, Sister") assembled a star-studded cast including Al Freeman Jr., Bernie Casey, Phylicia Rashad, Polly Bergen, Anna Maria Horsford and Richard Roundtree.

Reid's not the only Hollywood filmmaker who has opted for higher ground. I'm anxious to see what John Singleton does with "Rosewood," which is based on the case of an affluent (or the very least self-sufficient) all-black town in Florida that was torched — and its people massacred by whites — and the coverup that followed. (Sad to say, it's a true story). Also coming this year is Paramount's "Kiss The Girls," a thriller featuring Morgan Freeman as a widowed detective with two children and MGM's "A Family Thing," starring Robert Duvall and James Earl Jones who — as adults — discover they are half brothers.

Samuel Jackson will play a Don King-like character in "The Great White Hype," a

boxing spoof from Fox. Eddie Murphy's "The Nutty Professor" hits theaters in June and Tri-Star is reported-

Burt Reynolds...Vanessa Williams will sing the national anthem at the Super Bowl XXX on Jan. 28 at Sun Devil Stadium in Tempe,

Our condolences to James Brown in the recent passing of his wife Adrienne Brown, who died just after undergoing cosmetic surgery. Preliminary autopsy findings showed early signs of heart disease. The official cause of death is not expected for at least two weeks.



Murphy

ly in development with "M'Lady," an African American version of "My Fair Lady." Only this time it's an Oakland schoolgirl that is taken under the wing of a Berkeley professor. In the meantime, bowing this week at the nation's box office is "Don't Be A Menace to South Central While Drinking Your Juice in the Hood," starring Shawn and Marlon Wayans.



Hines

Ariz....Oprah Winfrey will be the subject of J. Randy Tarborelli's next unauthorized biography...Bryant Gumbel has agreed to remain one more year with NBC's "Today Show," marking his 15th year. That makes him the longest-sitting anchor in the show's history. Gumbel is 47...



**It's never this clear.**

Instead, you'll hear things like: "Sorry, we just rented the last apartment." "There are several applications ahead of you." "We seem to have misplaced your application." Learn the signs of discrimination and fight back.



Jones

**On the home front:** Diahann Carroll, who has been playing Norma Desmond in the Toronto production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Sunset Boulevard" has put her Beverly Hills area home of nearly 20 years on the market at \$1.5 million. The 60-year-old actress-singer, who has been married nearly 10 years to singer Vic Damone, is reportedly leasing a condo in Canada. The balance of her time is spent between Palm Springs and Las Vegas. The 5,100-square foot, contemporary-style home features four bedrooms, offices and staff quarters with a separate entrance.

Hats off to Lou Rawls, who was able to coax millions of dollars in pledges for the United Negro College Fund during his recent "Parade of Stars" telethon from the famed Apollo Theatre in New York City. Unofficial reports reflect that the telethon raised somewhere in the neighborhood of a record \$12.6 million.

**By the way:** Gregory Hines has joined the cast of "Trigger Happy," a gangster comedy, with Richard Dreyfuss and



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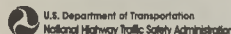
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Continued From 3B

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