

LISA COLLINS

Behind the Scenes



Stretching out: R&B teen sensation Brandy made her bow Jan. 23 on the UPN network as "Moesha." She plays a headstrong and fiercely independent 16-year-old from Los Angeles' Leimert Park who lives with her 9-

include "The Inkwell" and "Jason's Lyric." Her Broadway credits are just as impressive. Before landing the role on

public one. "When I married my husband eight years ago, I wasn't saved. So when he began to see me nightly on my knees praying, he asked was it

Me" on Death Row Records. Meanwhile, Shakur was recently arrested for not complying with a judge's orders to do community service...Louis Gossett's latest screen project is sure to win him another round of raves. The movie, titled "Inside," keys in on South Africa's highly charged politics and is expected to do quite well at the Cannes Film Festival.

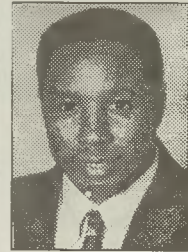
No word yet on who will distribute the film stateside and when or if it will bow at the box office.



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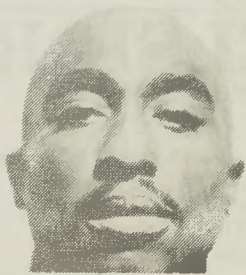
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Shakur

year-old brother (Marcus T. Paul), her dad (William Allen Young) and her favorite teacher, who has just become her new step mom, (Sheryl Lee Ralph). "Moesha" is Brandy's sophomore foray into a weekly sitcom series. In 1993, she was a regular on the short-lived ABC comedy "Thea," playing Thea Vidal's teenaged daughter, Danisha.

On the home front: The need for more space and plans to adopt more children are just two of the reasons why Magic and Cookie Johnson are putting their Beverly Hills home on the market. After all, it's 12,000 square feet (on two acres), that's including four bedrooms, a gym, pool, spa, gameroom, maid's quarters and tennis court. The couple now has three children, including an infant girl they adopted last year. Word is they are looking to adopt twins.

Family values: "People ask 'do you like your job?' and I say, I have the best job in Hollywood," says "The Parenthood" co-star Suzanne Douglass.

An accomplished actress, Douglass received an NAACP Image Award for best supporting actress for her role in the film "Tap" opposite Gregory Hines. Other film credits



Houston

"The Parenthood," she starred on the Broadway stage in the "Threepenny Opera" with Sting, "The Tap Dance Kid," "Little Shop of Horrors" and "Into the Woods." But Douglass' statement has little to do with acting. Instead, the joy is mostly derived from spiritual peace. On the set of "The Parenthood," she says, she is surrounded by Christians, and that is just how she likes it. In fact, these days Douglass is happy to report, "I am exactly where I am supposed to be."

Her biggest challenge these days is consistency. "It's a very hard walk," she confirms. "That's why a lot of people can't make a commitment to get with it. With me as a mother and wife and being bi-coastal, I'm constantly being pulled and I always have to find time to pray. I throw in my worship tapes and get on my treadmill. I have to constantly surround myself with the word in any way I can."

Fact is, she takes her mission — as the great commission — very seriously. "I don't care where I am, people are looking at me. Especially on the set. I've got four children who look to me for leadership and guidance. When we have people who come on that set, especially young comics who think they can cuss, I say 'no that's not an option here. And Robert (Townsend) backs me up."

Not surprisingly, the testimony of this Chicago native who began acting at the age of five is as much a personal as



Jackson

going to change our relationship. I turned and said, "Look brother, your name is in the book. What you need to do is get with the program."

Wheelin' & dealin': Superstar Whitney Houston has signed a two-year, non-exclusive, first-look development and production deal with Disney's Touchstone Pictures. Houston will produce both movies and TV programs for the Walt Disney Company under Touchstone Pictures' banner. Among the film projects Houston is currently prepping for development is a biography of Dorothy Dandridge. (Incidentally, Janet Jackson is also interested in putting Dandridge's life on film).

By the way: Rapper Tupac Shakur has another release coming out, titled "All Eyez On Me"



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