

LISA COLLINS

**Behind the Scenes**



**Anticipation:** The record industry is gearing up for the Grammy Awards later this month in Los Angeles. The awards are the highlight of what has come to be a week long celebration, which is this

Future, Book I," which also yielded R. Kelly a song of the year nomination for "You Are Not Alone." (He wrote the

doubt celebrating these days after having landed the female lead in Universal's forthcoming adaptation of John Grisham's best-selling novel, "The Chamber." She will play the love interest of Chris O'Donnell in a cast that also includes Faye Dunaway, Gene Hackman and Alec Baldwin...

Meanwhile, O.J. Simpson just can't seem to get a break with the mail-order video, giving his account of innocence in the murders of Nichole Simpson and Ronald Goldman. Even the National Enquirer has rejected an ad for Simpson's controversial 2 1/2-hour video. In fact, most TV stations are refusing the ads.

Ironically, while CBS refused the ad, on "Geraldo Rivera Live," Rivera offered to give Simpson three hours of free time to recount his version of what happened, but this time, Simpson declined, instead he went on the offensive with a media blitz over L.A.'s radio airwaves, calling a number of on-air djs to tell his side while of course, pumping his video, stating that he has the right to make a living. Word is Simpson received somewhere in the neighborhood of \$3 mil-

lion up front to do the video. **On the home front:** Richard Roundtree, who co-starred in "Seven" and is best remembered as "Shaft," recently purchased a gated, equestrian-zoned home in Agoura. The 53-year-old actor has a passion for horses and will now be able to house them at his new home, which sits on about an acre. Roundtree's two youngest daughters are accomplished riders.

The actor reportedly purchased the property - including a 1,700-square foot, three bedroom home for \$400,000. **By the way:** Sad to report the passing of Mercer Ellington, son of the late Duke Ellington. The only son of the legendary composer and band leader died of a heart attack in Copenhagen...Director John Singleton, who is presently filming "Rosewood" on location, recently acquired "New Jersey Turnpikes," a spoof documentary about basketball that evokes comparisons to



Jackson

tune, which was performed by Jackson). Not surprisingly, Jackson is not among those favored to win. Meanwhile, facing off in the category of best female r&b vocal performance are Anita Baker, Brandy, Toni Braxton, Mariah Carey and Vanessa Williams, while those vying for best male r&b performance D'Angelo, Montell Jordan, the artist formerly known as Prince, Barry White and Stevie Wonder.

Nominees for top r&b song include "Brown Sugar" (D'Angelo); "Creep" (Dallas Austin); "For Your Love" (Stevie Wonder); "Red Light Special" (Babyface); and "You Can't Run" (Babyface). Then there's the best r&b album candidates: Mary J. Blige ("My Life"); D'Angelo ("Brown Sugar"); the artist formerly known as Prince ("The Love Experience"); TLC ("CrazySexyCool"); and Barry White ("The Icon Is Love"). The awards will be broadcast on CBS live from the Shrine Auditorium in Los Angeles on Feb. 28.

**Big break:** Lela Rochon, who co-starred with Angela Bassett and Whitney Houston in "Waiting To Exhale," is no



Jones

year to include an all-star gala tribute dinner to musician-turned-music mogul Quincy Jones. Among those actually favored to win a coveted statuette are Coolio, the hard-core rapper and 32-year-old father of six, who's nominated in the best single category for "Gangsta's Paradise."

Also up for best single are Mariah Carey and Boyz II Men with "One Sweet Day" and TLC for "Waterfalls." It should be a big night for TLC, who landed four nominations including record of the year for "Waterfalls." Perhaps, even a bigger night for Babyface who pocketed five nominations - two of them in the same category (R&B song). Other multiple nominees included Brandy, who is among the best new artist nominees.

Michael Jackson didn't fare so badly either, with four including album of the year for "History - Past, Present &

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