## Being A 'Sweat Hog' Isn't Even Half Of The Real Story

He's a TV star, a motion picture star, and is about to become a recording star.

## By Vashti Mackenzie

Lawrence Hilton-Jacobs is a tall, lean multi-talented artist, actor, composer and musician who is doing it all, thank you, and doing it all very well.

Jacobs stars as Freddie (Boom Boom) Washington on the popular television series "Welcome Back Kotter." As one of the most popular street-wise characters in the show, he struts, ives, lays back and relates to the former Sweat Hog teacher played by Gabe Kaplan.

He elicits a chuckle every time his voice plummets from its falsetto jive tone to the resonant round tones of "proper English" .. "Hi there!"

If you think that is all there is to Jacobs, then shame on your stereotyped heart!

Jacobs departed from a "happy-go-lucky character" in the film about black street gangs, "Young blood." He stars as a troubled Vietnam veteran. He describes the character as unshaven and depressed looking.

In the television film "The Komedy Company," seen this past May he starred with Jack Albertson and George Burns. He portrayed a 30-year-old struggling comedian.

The character was a confused comedian who went to the Komedy Company to practice.

"The film shows it all," said Jacobs in an interview recently, "the humiliation, broken dreams and all the things that I relate to as a performer trying to make

He also appeared in a TV special "Komedy Tonight" as well as hosted a special, written and performed by high school students, dealing with teenage alcohol problems. It was called "Beating the Booze Blues."

Jacobs also received critical acclaim for his performance as a young runaway slave in "Roots."

Born in New York, Jacobs is one of nine children of a retired A newly released record

said coolly.

TV show

album, "Lawrence Hilton-

Jacobs," is a successful first solo

album. Produced by Lamont

Dozier, Jacobs wrote three of the

This summer, he plans to put

together a musical act before

taping the TV series in August.

He even hinted at possible direc-

ting, producing and script

"I'm doing my own thing and

people are getting off on it," he

songs. And there's more.

merchant marine and a

Studio pose is the way Lawrence Hilton-Jacobs displays his

lean good looks as he gets into character for his playing of

Boom Boom Washington on the "Welcome Back Kotter"

"We had a whole lot of love for each other," he recalled. "We fight. We argue. My family is the nuttiest family in the world. My mother is the guiding light for me."

It was never a question of 'if' for Jacobs, just a question of

"I was attending an arts and

design high school while working

He started to play the piano ten years ago at the age of 15. He soon began to sing and write.

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part time as a commercial artist," Jacobs said. "By trying to meet the deadline, by the time I was 16, I was killing myself."

He had won several art awards by this time and was accepted into the prestigious New York School of Art and Design.

"I won scholarships for art but didn't want to pursue that," he said. "At 17, when I graduated from high school in 1971, I took a year off to study acting."

Jobs were hard to come by and he worked a while at Alexander Department Stores. "I got fired," he laughed.

"The money I earned, I spent on acting school. The workshops were great. There were professionals there teaching classes that helped me a great deal. They gave me a lot of insight into acting and I began to get roles."

Jacobs studied with the Al Fann Theatrical Ensemble and The Negro Ensemble Company.

He appeared in productions such as "Cora's Second Kiss," "The Dean" and "What the Wine Sellers Buy." He also appeared in films including "Serpico," "Death Wish," "Super Cops" and "Gambler."

By the time he was 19, his first major film role came along, "Claudine." In preparing himself for the role with James Earl Jones and Diahann Carroll he went to a Black Panther party in Harlem, notebook and all, to absorb some "extreme type thinking."

"I really started to work a lot after 'Cooley High,' he said. "I went to L.A. to do some

"One thing was a screen test for the starring role in the film. "Sparkle:"

"I didn't get the part," he adds, "but I did get a part in a little TV show, 'Kotter.' "

As it happens "Cooley" and "Kotter" premiered about the same time and "Claudine" was in second run. Practically "overnight" in Hollywood terms, Jacobs was launched. He was a

## Africans Among Us



ning surveying at the Washington Technical Institute. And, at right, two Nigerian technical students are learning electronics at a technical school in Baltimore.



Every day Shehu Ahmed steals away to his own private prayer gradive in the Southeastern University administration building. A devout Moslem from Borno State in northeastern Nigeria, 25-year-old Ahmed, an accounting student at the Washington, D.C. school, has a daily ritual to follow, "The Five Pillars of Islam."

He must say prayers five times a day. When the time comes to pray he quietly goes to a secluded spot where he spreads his rug and prays to Allah.

The ritual is only a minor disruption of his school life, but one of the many adjustments he and 1,000 other Nigerians have had to make since they began arriving in the States last fall.

The students will be taking mid-level technical and business courses at some 100 institutions in 35 states over the next two years. This means about \$17 million for the schools.

The Nigeria government is paying for the program which is being coordinated by the Agency for International Development's Reimbursable Development Of-

The students, who have the equivalent of a high school education or better, were recruited to help meet Nigeria's serious shortage of technicians hey are being trained in construction, electro - technology, land surveying, agriculture, para-medical technology and

Some 12,000 students may arrive in the United States by this time next year. Nigeria is also sending vocational students to Britain, France and Yugoslavia.

There are about 1,000 Nigerian students studying in the United States. The Nigerian government pays for their expenses and the U.S. AID program helps them to function in this country. One of the biggest problems: They couldn't understand American black English. They thought the accent was funny.

## By Emmett George

One of the six participants attending Southeastern, Ahmed is the only Moslem.

"I am a strict Moslem. I came from a religious, learned family," Ahmed said. "My grandfather was an Imam, the one who leads the prayers in the village. You start the religion as soon as you are born.'



Shehu Ahmed (center) from Boro State in Nigeria in a hot discussion with fellow students at Southeastern University in Washington, D.C. All of them are studying accounting.

But Ahmed had other adjustments to make including the return to school after five years.

"I felt strange being back in school. There was much reading and the teaching techniques were new to me. In Nigeria, we had to sit for three years before you could take the final examination. But here one finishes a course each term."

Before signing up for the program, he worked in the auditing department of the Borno State government in his hometown, Maiduguri. His duties were to inspect and help maintain government training records and other statistics.

Maiduguri, a growing town of 200,000 people, needs more trained clerks and accountants to keep health care records, births and traffic statistics. Ahmed expects that his training eventually will lead to an associate degree and a better life for him and his

"You know, I am not doing badly here," proclaimed Columba E. Nwaji from Imo State. At 33, Nwaji is excited by school. "For five courses, I had three As and two Bs. If they will allow me, I will add two more courses next term."

Formerly a clerical assistant with the Imo government, Nwaji has set his sights on an advanced accounting degree which he hopes to earn upon his return to

He hails from the small town of Onitsha in the eastern part of the country. The 30,000 residents of the town live primarily by farming and fishing. "There isn't much chance for work in Onit-

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