CELEBRITY LOOKOUT

All letters should be addressed to Jason, DAWN Magazine, 628 N. Eutaw St., Baltimore, Md. 21201. All questions are welcome, but while Jason cannot provide individual answers, questions of general interest will be used in this column.

Q. I love Philip Michael Thomas of "Miami Vice". How old is he, what is his background and where may I write to him?

OLGA THOMPSON
Richmond, Va.

A. Thomas was born May 26, 1949 in Columbus, Ohio. He's 36. He's a product of Oakwood College and University of California. His movies have included "Sparkle" with Irene Cara, 1976; "Come Back Charleston Blue", "Book of Numbers" and "Coonskin".

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Q. People are telling me that the actor, Matthew Beard, who played the derby-wearing child in the 1930's "Our Gang" comedies and later on TV as "The Little Rascals", was in and out of jails for years and served six years in federal prison for sale and possession of heroin. What finally happened to him?

PHYLLIS LERNER
Chicago, Ill.

A. In an interview Beard said that in 1966 he took a "look at my condition and it was zero." He joined the Synanon Drug Rehabilitation Center in Los Angeles planning to stay one year and stayed seven. He was famous for his movie roles in "Way Down South", 1939; "Stormy Weather", 1943. He made a comeback in 1974 in "Truck Turner". From 1972 to 1974 he appeared on TV in "Good Times" and "Sanford and Son". His first movie role was at age 2½ and he started drugs at 16 and was first jailed at 18. He died at the age of 56 in Los Angeles in January, 1981 from head injuries following an apparent stroke. His last role was as downstairs butler in the Emmy-winning "Backstairs at the White House".

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Q. What are the roots of the wealthy Motown head Barry Gordy, Jr.? Where did they originate and how many brothers and sisters did Gordy Jr. have?

KEN RHODES
Baltimore, Md.

A. Barry Gordy Sr., in his book "Movin' Up" published by Harper & Row after his death at age 91 in 1979, recalls that he was born in Oconee, Ga. His great-grandfather on his mother's side was an Indian and his great-grandmother was a slave. His father's mother, Esther Johnson, was a slave and his grandfather, Jim Gordy didn't marry her but was a white man, a plantation and slave owner.

His mother, Lucy Hellum, married Barry Gordy and they had 23 children. Barry Sr. was born July 10, 1888. He married a local school teacher, Bertha Fuller, after serving in World War I,. They moved to Detroit in 1922. He did odd jobs and started the Booker T. Washington Grocery Store over which the family lived. They had eight children; Barry, Jr., Loucye, Gwendolyn, Anna, Fuller, George and Robert.

Pop Gordy established a series of businesses including a prosperous construction business. In the mid-1960s his son bought the business, fired his father and immediately hired him to an executive position at Motown Record Corp.

Q. Please tell me more about Hal Williams, starring with Marla Gibbs on the new comedy series "227". I know I have seen him somewhere before but I can't place him.

SHARI WILLIAMS
Winston Salem, N.C.

A. Hal Williams' claim to fame has been the role of the hip cop, Smitty, on the "Sanford and Son" series with Redd Foxx. He has also appeared on TV in "Police Woman" and "The Jeffersons".

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Q. We have a bet on with a loudmouth in our office. I say that David Lynch formed The Platters and he did the tenor solo on their hit "Only You". Is he still alive? What year was their first hit?

KAROLE HARRIS
Baltimore, Md.

A. You are right. Lynch a tenor, formed the group The Platters in 1953 with Tony Williams, Herbert Reed, Paul Robi and Zola Taylor. Their first hit for Mercury Records, "Only You", came out in November, 1955. Lynch left the group in 1970 and was treated for cancer starting in 1978. He died in Long Beach, Calif. in 1981.

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Q. Has Lena Horne had a nose job? I saw her on the recent "Bill Cosby Show" where she performed for Dr. Huxtables surprise birthday party.

ANN SMITH
Washington, D.C.

A. Only her doctor would know for sure. Here's an early photo of Lena and you can judge for yourself.

Phillip Michael Thomas

Berry Gordy, Sr.

Hal Williams

Lena Horne

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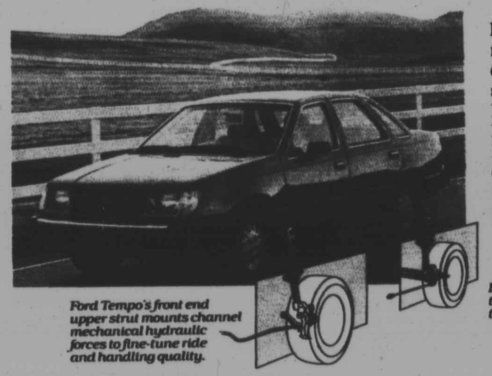

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