'Mighty Pawns' teaches valuable lesson

By Deborah Quinerly

Any chess player will tell you that a pawn, one of many chess pieces, is the one piece with the lowest value. And, sometimes, groups of people are thought to have the same value because of their race, financial status or background. So it is with the major characters in "Mighty Pawns," the title of the program, which can be seen on the "Wonderworks" series on Sunday, February 21st at 7:00 p.m. on Channels 22 and 67.

This story is based on the true-life exploits of the Roberts Vaux Junior High School chess team of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. The "Bad Bishops," the team's name, won the National Junior High School Chess Championship for seven consecutive years from 1977 to 1983.

"Mighty Pawns" depicts the slow, tedious and, sometimes, disappointing task of building the characters of black inner-city high school kids and stars Paul Winfield, as the school's iron-fisted principal, Alfonso Ribeiro, as one of the school's habitual troublemakers, and Rosalind Cash, as Ribeiro's mother.

The story revolves around a white teacher, who believes he can build the students' poor self-image through the game of chess. But this is no easy task. To get the kids to come to a newly-initiated chess club, he must trick them by beating them at a three-card monte game.

Though initially reluctant, the kids are soon turned on to the game and Ribeiro's character, "Frank," captures the coveted position of "first board," the person who moves first on the chess board in team play. And, eventually, the team's victories lead them to the national championship.

This is an excellent story about a group of black kids who are consistent discipline problems, low achievers and lack positive self-esteem. Through hard work and determination, the children learn that obstacles to growth in character can be overcome.

Some of the obstacles are a black principal who has labeled the kids as troublemakers and losers, which makes me question how he received and keeps his job, and a teenage friend of "Frank's," who constantly badgers "Frank" to give up the chess team and join him in a life of crime and con games. The friend is successful to a point but loses in the end, when "Frank" sees the errors in his life-style and begins to follow the "rules."

This is a very good example of how a group of black children, who seem to have the odds of achieving anything going against them, achieve and win in the end. But what bothered me was that even though the school was run by a black principal, who let it be known that he knew about kids of "this kind" because he had grown up in a neighborhood like theirs, he tried to stop the teacher from starting a chess team. It would seem to me that because of his background, the principal would have appreciated anyone who offered to take time to work with the kids, if only to keep them out of his hair.

Also, I could not help questioning Hollywood's perception of this story. In actuality, the principal may have been black, and the teacher, who assisted the children, may have been white. But was this the case? Or are we seeing, once again, subtle stereotypes of how Hollywood views whites as blacks' only "saviors" in our hour of need? Which also makes me question the actual character and personality of the principal. Yes, his character did come around, in the end. But, I find it hard to believe a principal of any school would be, initially, so adamantly opposed to helping children make something of themselves.

Watch "Mighty Pawns" on the "Wonderworks" series this Sunday. The lessons taught can be valuable for everyone.

TWO SPECIAL REPORTS THIS WEEK

Why is this one test you don't want to fail?

Jack Bowden examines the controversy surrounding drug testing in A TEST OF PRIVACY.

5:00 PM

GM

Is GM still the heartbeat of America?

Has GM been coasting too long? Is it ready to accelerate into the future? Andy Barth reports in CHANGING GEARS.

6:00 PM

CHANNEL 2 NEWS TUESDAY, WEDNESDAY & THURSDAY AT 5 PM.
WMAR-TV BALTIMORE

— About TV

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they "multiply like bunnies." At another point in the story, when "Farewell" returns to his superiors, accompanied by two of "Shaka's warriors" to ask for a treaty between "Shaka" and the white settlers, the warriors are treated like monkeys, are placed on display for the townspeople, and have bananas tossed at them, as if they are an attraction at the zoo.

This story does nothing but let me know how far Hollywood will go to be derogatory. They say they spent 24 million dollars to produce this trash.

To honor Black History Month, why could they not have spent 24 million to present something that would give a positive message about blacks. Instead, we are put in the same position our ancestors were two hundred years ago.

Are they trying to tell us we were easier to deal with, then, when we had no voice or right to oppose whites? Maybe this is just the "fuel" we need to motivate black viewers to be more selective in their viewing habits and stop watching just anything because a black face is in it.

"Shaka Zulu" has to be the most racist programming I have ever seen and should be boycotted by black viewers everywhere.

This brings me to last Sunday's "City Line" program on Channel 13, when "Up On Pennsylvania Avenue" was rebroadcast, and the live discussion, which followed.

The discussion panel consisted of Camay Murphy, daughter of Cab Calloway; Ruby Glover, a jazz singer and J. Hiram Butler, a retired police officer, who patrolled Pennsylvania Avenue in its heyday. I guess to give the panel more authenticity, the panel members were dressed in clothing of that period.

What the show was, was a waste of time. Yes, it is nice to be nostalgic, at times. But lately, there has been a lot of talk about how Pennsylvania Avenue used to be. What needs to be talked about is what Pennsylvania Avenue should be and needs to become to our black community in 1987 and beyond.

What Pennsylvania Avenue needs are discussions about revitalization, improvements and upgrading. If we continue to talk about how things "used to be," the ideas will begin to stagnate.

"City Line" has one of the best opportunities to have a positive effect on our community. But what it seems to have become is a showcase for Jaki Hall's clothing, the show's co-host.

What this show needs to start doing is stressing the positive aspects of the black community or be removed and give me a nice Sunday afternoon movie.

Well, Black History month is winding down, and, in some respects, not a moment too soon. Some of the programs seen have been gratifying and well worth your time. But, as mentioned before, some do not even rate their own promotional advertisements.

But, programs of the latter type can be stopped. Just don't watch them. They will lose valuable advertising dollars for these networks and send a very expensive and powerful message. Blacks, as well as any other groups, deserve and demand quality programming.

The Tube

TV program guide

Friday, February 20, 1987 to Thursday, February 26, 1987

FRIDAY FEBRUARY 20, 1987

	WMAR 2	WRC 4	WTTG 5	WJLA 7	WUSA 9	WBAL 11	WJZ 13	WDCA 20	WETA 26	WHMM 32	WBFF 45	WMPB 67	HBO
7:00	Today	Today	Insp. Gadget	Good Morning	Morning News	Morning News	Good Morning	GoBots	MacNeil-		Ghostbusters	New Literacy	Platypus Cove
7:30	"	"	SilverHawks	America	Morning Pro-	Morning Pro-	America	Heathcliff	Lehrer		Thundercats	Cpt. Kangaroo	Fraggle Rock
8:00	"	"	Defenders	"	gram	gram	"	The Jetsons	Mr. Rogers		Transformers	Sesame	Movie: "The
8:30	"	"	My Little Pony	"	"	"	"	Rangers	Sesame		Scooby Doo	Street	Best of
9:00	Oprah Winfrey	Hart to Hart	I Love Lucy	Lifetime	Donahue	Divorce Court	People Are	Wow	Street	Business Rpt.	Falcon Crest	Mr. Rogers	Times"
9:30	"	"	Andy Griffith	Hollywood Sq.	"	Court	Talking	Kids Break	Cpt. Kangaroo	Anasa Briggs	"	Instructional	"
10:00	Donahue	Sale	Bewitched	Sup. Court	Oprah Winfrey	$25K Pyramid	Hour Maga-	Washingtn	Sesame	Universe	700 Club	Programs	Movie: "A
10:30	"	Blockbusters	Jeannie	Court	"	Dating Game	zine	Confessions	Street	Computer	"	"	Flash of
11:00	Wheel-Fortune	Wheel-Fortune	Rhoda	Judge	Price Is Right	Price Is Right	Love Boat	Falcon Crest	Mr. Rogers	Shakespeare	McMillan and	"	Green"
11:30	Scrabble	Scrabble	Alice	Ryan's Hope	"	"	"	"	3-2-1, Contact	"	Wife	Instructional	"
12:00	News	Password	Panorama	News	News	News	News	Ask Dr. Ruth	Focus-Society	MacNeil-	"	Programs	Movie: "Night
12:30	Wordplay	Wordplay	"	Loving	Young and	Young and	Loving	Movie: "The	Making/Count	Lehrer	All in Family	"	of the Comet"
1:00	Days of Our	Days of Our	Valuetelevi-	All My Child-	the Restless	the Restless	All My Child-	Steagle"	Eyes on Prize/	Evening Ex-	Movie:	Instructional	"
1:30	Lives	Lives	sion	ren	As the World	As the World	ren	"	Civil Rights	change	"Knock on	Programs	"
2:00	Another World	Another World	Addams F.	One Life to	Turns	Turns	One Life to	"	End of Empire	In the Face of	Wood"	"	
2:30	"	"	Beaver	Live	Capitol	Capitol	Live	Centurions	"	Terrorism	"	Cooking	Movie: "Funny
3:00	Santa Barbara	Santa Barbara	She Ra	General Hos-	Guiding Light	Guiding Light	General Hos-	Rambo	Open Mind	Mod. Maturity	Capt. Ches	Microwaves	Lady"
3:30	"	"	He-Man	pital	"	"	pital	Ghostbusters	Sesame	Painting	Smurfs	Mr. Rogers	"
4:00	Magnum, P.I.	Dating Game	G.I. Joe	ABC After-	Hour Maga-	Jeffersons	3's Company	Smurfs	Street	Cooking	SilverHawks	Sesame	
4:30	"	Love Connec.	Thundercats	school Special	zine	Sanford	Diff. Strokes	Transformers	Sesame	Modern TV	She Ra	Street	Movie: "Pla-
5:00	News	News	Good Times	News	News	Barney Miller	Gimme Br.	Laverne	Street	One TV	G.I. Joe	One TV	typus Cove"
5:30	"	"	Silver Spoons	"	"	News	Taxi	Laverne	One TV	3-2-1, Contact	Brady Bunch	Animals	"
6:00	News	News	3's Company	News	News	News	News	Facts of Life	3-2-1, Contact	MacNeil-	Star Trek	MacNeil-	Movie: "Des-
6:30	NBC News	"	Too Close	ABC News	"	CBS News	"	W. Happening	Business Rpt	Lehrer	"	Lehrer	perately Seek-
7:00	Wheel-Fortune	NBC News	Taxi	Jeopardy	CBS News	Newlywed Ga.	ABC News	Jeffersons	MacNeil-	Evening Ex-	Fall Guy	State Circle	ing Susan"
7:30	Jeopardy	Newlywed Ga.	Movie: "The	Ent. Tonight	Wheel-Fortune	Hollywood Sq.	Evening Mag.	Benson	Lehrer	change	"	Maryland	"
8:00	Stingray	Stingray	Blues Broth-	Webster	Scarecrow	Scarecrow	Webster	Movie: "Inva-	Washington	African World	Movie:	Washington	Movie: "The
8:30	"	"	ers"	Mr. Belvedere	and Mrs. King	and Mrs. King	Mr. Belvedere	sion of the	Wall St.	Payne/Jones	"Breathless"	Wall St.	Best of
9:00	Miami Vice	Miami Vice	"	Amerika	Dallas	Dallas	Amerika	Body Snatch-	Great Perf.	Great Per-	"	Great Perf.	Times"
9:30	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	ers"	"	formances	"	"	"
10:00	Miami Vice	Miami Vice	News	"	Falcon Crest	Falcon Crest	"	"	Lois Maillou	TBA	CNN News	Rosemary	On Location:
10:30	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	Barney Miller	Jones	Comedy	All in Family	Clooney	Robin Wi-
11:00	News	News	Joan Rivers	News	News	News	News	Jeffersons	Metro-Review	Business Rpt	Joan Rivers	SCTV	Movie: "Wild-
11:30	Be nostalgic	Tonight Show	"	Nightline	Music Video	M*A*S*H	Ent. Tonight	Benny Hill	Tony Brown	I Spy	"	Avengers	cats"
12:00	WKRP	"	Odd Couple	Nightlife	Connection	Keep On	Nightline	"Permission	Sign-Off	"	Wackiest Ship	"	"
12:30	Fri. Videos	Fri. Videos	Star Search	Siskel & Ebert	Dance Fever	Cruisin'	Hawaii Five-0	to Kill"		Sign-Off	in Army	Sign-Off	"

SATURDAY FEBRUARY 21, 1987

	WMAR 2	WRC 4	WTTG 5	WJLA 7	WUSA 9	WBAL 11	WJZ 13	WDCA 20	WETA 26	WHMM 32	WBFF 45	WMPB 67	HBO
7:00	Woody	Studio 4	Insight		Hulk Hogan's	Garden Living	Today's Busi-	Dukes of Haz-	Sesame		Fat Albert	New Literacy	"Maxie"
7:30	Young Univ.	3 Stories Tall	Veg. Soup	Weekend Spcl	Rock 'n' Wres-	This Way	ness	zard	Street		Robotech	Focus on So-	Cont'd
8:00	Kissyfur	Kissyfur	News		The Wuzzles	Berenstain	Urban Scene	At the Movies	Sesame		Rainbow Brite	ciety	Movie: "Van-
8:30	Tom & Jerry	Gummi Bears	Inhumanoids		Care Bears	Wildfire	Heads Up	Dream Girl	Street		Popples	Business of	ishing Wilder-
9:00	Smurfs	Smurfs	Batman	Flintstone	Muppet Ba-	Muppet Ba-	Flintstone	What's Hap-	Mod. Maturity	GED-TV	Get Along	Management	ness"
9:30	"	"	Addams F.	Kids	bies	bies	Kids	New Gidget	Interests	GED-TV	Voltron	Human Behav-	Movie: "White
10:00	"		Soul Train	Ghostbusters	Pee Wee	Pee Wee	Ghostbusters	Battlestar Gal-	Wall St. Week	Computer	He-Man	ior	Nights"
10:30	Chipmunks	Chipmunks	"	Puppies	in Our Lives	Teen Wolf	Puppies	actica	Washington	Motorweek	He-Man	Business File	"
11:00	Foofur	Foofur	Valuetelevi-	Bugs	Galaxy High	Galaxy High	Bugs	WWF Wres-	Metro-Review	Rod and Reel	Wrestling As-	"	"
11:30	Punky Brews-	Punky Brews-	sion	Ewoks	CBS Storybr.	It's Academic	Kids Baffle	tling	Japan	Cooking	sociation	Adult Years	"
12:00	Lazer Tag	Lazer Tag	WWF Wres-	Pick Up Beat	Music City		Hulk Hogan's	Weekend Spcl	Money World	Cookery	Movie: "Le-	Soldiers	Talk Show
12:30	Inhumanoids	Kidd Video	tling	World Cup	Fast Break		Rock 'n' Wres-	Write Songs	Previews	Microwaves	gend of Cus-	Managing	Movie: "Thres-
1:00	Good Times	College Bas-	Movie: "The	Skiing	College Bas-	College Bas-	Movie:	"	Around Town	Frgl Gourmet	ter"	Management	hold"
1:30	College Bas-	ketball: Ken-	Castaway	College Bas-	ketball: Kan-	ketball: Kan-	"House Calls"	"	V. Garden	Old House	"	Oil Painting	"
2:00	ketball: Geor-	tucky at LSU	Cowboy"	ketball: Geor-	sas at St.	sas at St.	"	Movie: "Mas-	Hometime	Hometime	Natl. Geo-	Cats/Dogs	"
2:30	gia Tech at	"	"	gia Tech at	John's	John's	"	ter of the	French Chef	Bodywatch	graphic Spcl.	Houseworks	Survival Ser-
3:00	Duke	College Bas-	Movie: "Sa-	Duke	CBS Sports	CBS Sports	Pro Bowlers	World"	Cooking	Oil Painting	Kojak	Old House	ies
3:30	"	ketball: Iowa	turn 3"	"	Saturday	Saturday	Tour: Bowlers	"	Bodywatch	Painting	"	V. Garden	Movie: "Out
4:00	Coll. Basket-	at Indiana	"	Coll. Basket-	Golf: Nissan	Golf: Nissan	Journal Open	What's Hap-	Old House	Painting	WWF Wres-	Woodwright's	Of Africa"
4:30	ball: Clemson	"	"	ball: Clemson	Los Angeles	Los Angeles	Wide World of	Small Wonder	Frgl Gourmet	Matinee at the	tling	Woodcarvers	"
5:00	at N. Carolina-	Black History	Fame	at N. Carolina-	Open	Open	Sports	New Gidget	Newton's	Bijou	Fame	Motorweek	"
5:30	Chapel Hill	Month Special	"	Chapel Hill	"	"	"	Throb	Wild America	"	"	Previews	"
6:00	News	News	Silver Spoons	News	News	News	ABC News	Greatest Hero	Creatures	Jones/Watson	Solid Gold	Nature	Movie:
6:30	Next Question	NBC News	Ted Knight	ABC News	CBS News	Urban Scene	News	"	Great & Small	Perkins Family	"	"	"Maxie"
7:00	Wheel-Fortune	Headlines	3's Company	Jeopardy	Agronsky	What's Hap-	Great Black	Solid Gold	Nature	Dance Con-	Dance Fever	Wonderworks:	
7:30	Jeopardy	McLaughlin	9 to 5	Ma's Fam.	Wheel-Fortune	Small Wonder	Women	"	"	nection	It's a Living	Mighty Pawns	"
8:00	Facts of Life	Facts of Life	Movie:	Sidekicks	Twilight Zone	Twilight Zone	Sidekicks	"Adventures	Wonderworks:	Wonderworks:	Hee Haw	High Alaska	Movie: "White
8:30	227	227	"Swamp	Sledge H.	"	"	Sledge H.	of the Wilder-	Little Princess	Little Princess	"	"	Nights"
9:00	Golden Girls	Golden Girls	Thing"	Ohara	Movie: "Ko-	Movie: "Ko-	Ohara	ness Family	Smithsonian	America's Mu-	Movie: "Hello,	Natl. Geo-	"
9:30	Amen	Amen	"	"	jak: The Price	jak: The Price	"	II"	World	sic	Dolly!"	graphic Spcl.	"
10:00	Hunter	Hunter	News	Spenser: For	of Justice"	of Justice"	Spenser: For	WWF Wres-	End of Empire	Beats of the	"	Neighbors	
10:30	"	"	"	Hire	"	"	Hire	tling Spotlight	"	Heart	"	Fine Romance	The Hitchhiker
11:00	News	News	Odd Couple	News	News	News	News	Darkside	Movie: "Of Hu-	Saturday Nite	"	"Dr. Who: The	Bob Goldth-
11:30	Saturday	Saturday	Movie: "Slap	ABC News	Keep On	WWF Wres-	Dancin'	A. Hitchcock	man Bon-	Sing	Movie: "King-	Talons of	wait
12:00	Night Live	Night Live	Shot"	Story of a Peo-	Cruisin'	tling	Movie: "A Fist-	Movie: "The	dage"	Ad Lib	dom of the	Weng-Chiang"	MIA II Begin-
12:30	"	"	"	ple	McGarrett	"St. Ives"	ful of Dollars"	Giant Claw"	Sign-Off	Sign-Off	Spiders"	Sign-Off	ning

SUNDAY FEBRUARY 22, 1987

	WMAR 2	WRC 4	WTTG 5	WJLA 7	WUSA 9	WBAL 11	WJZ 13	WDCA 20	WETA 26	WHMM 32	WBFF 45	WMPB 67	HBO
7:00	Jimmy Swag-	3 Stories Tall	Jimmy Swag-	Living	God Love You	Later Years	Real to Reel		Sesame		Kenneth	America	Movie: "Just
7:30	gart	First Light	gart	Discovery	Sunday Mass	Urban Scene	Workshop	Washingtn	Street		Copeland	America	the Way You
8:00	Every Voice	Voyagers	Frederick K.	Bauman Bible	Oral Roberts	Gospel Var.	Black Sheep	Funtastic	Sesame		Fat Albert	Marketing	Are"
8:30	Oral Roberts		Price	Telecast	R. Schuller	Essence Mag.	Squadron	World of	Street		Jem	Marketing	"