Uniforms for prisoners under discussion

By Tony Wilbert
Capital News Service

ANNAPOLIS — Some area legislators support a proposal requiring the state to spend $500,000 a year to put prisoners in uniforms by 1991.

"I don't see anything wrong with spending state money on prison clothes," said Delegate Tony Fulton (D-Baltimore City). "We need to distinguish among visitors, guards and prisoners."

Del. Mary Conroy (D-Prince George's) agreed, saying that taxpayers would see the benefits.

"It's a matter of safety, of being able to spot those who escaped," she said. "I think that the taxpayers wouldn't mind paying."

The clothing proposal is currently under study by the Department of Public Safety and Corrections.

Del. Richard Dixon, D-Carroll, withdrew a bill requiring prison uniforms after conversations with Corrections Secretary Bishop Robinson left him confident that the secretary would make the proposal a mandate.

"I have the word from the Secretary that all state prisoners will wear uniforms by 1991," Dixon said. "The state started the process; I wanted it speeded up."

But other corrections officials have been less optimistic, and some other legislators have criticized the proposal as a waste of money.

Corrections department spokesman Leonard Sipes said that, because of budgetary concerns, Robinson could not guarantee Dixon that prisoners would wear uniforms.

"There's currently no money in the budget for clothing," he said. "The program would have a fiscal impact.

"Nothing has been promised."

Delegate Peter Callas (D-Washington) objects to using money for the clothing material, citing a need for better fire services in the Hagerstown three - prison complex, which houses one-third of the state's prisoners.

"If the state has the money to clothe prisoners, that's fine," he said. "But it's got to get its priorities straight."

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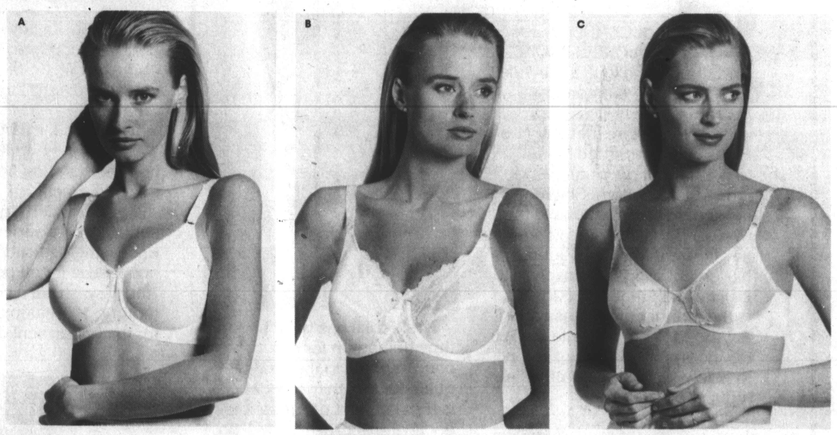

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The Afro-American Section B

METRO PROFILE

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Saturday, February 10, 1990

Part two of two

Black Entertainment 80's, 90's and Beyond

By Delfield S. Yoes, III
AFRO Staff Writer

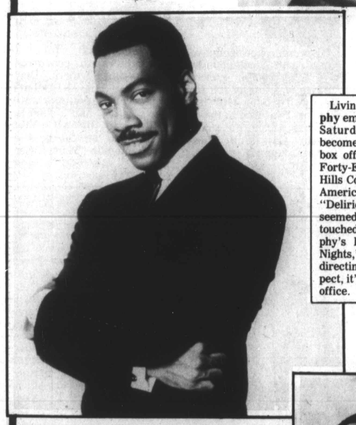
There was a time in this country, not so long ago, when people of African ancestry had very few options for making better lives for themselves. Most of the time the best chances we had of reaching higher ground were on ball fields, basketball courts, or on stage, and when we got those chances, we almost always stole the show.

In the 90's things have changed a little. Today, there are other doors opening up for Black folks besides the back door; opportunities we would never have dreamed of 20 years ago are now becoming reality for African-Americans. But one thing hasn't changed; we still keep stealing the show. This two-part series celebrates the glorious legacy of Black entertainment from the 1940's to today and beyond.

The 80's

Million Dollar Mike. During the 80's, several musical superstars shared the spotlight. Prince's "shock rock" reached its pinnacle in 1984 with the movie and soundtrack, "Purple Rain," Tina Turner made one of the greatest comebacks in music history Lionel Richie and Whitney Houston had major crossover success. But, everyone took a back seat to **Michael Jackson** in the 80's. Jackson rewrote the music industry record books with his album "Thriller" and rewrote them again in 1987 with the "Bad" LP, which sold 17 million copies and had an unprecedented five #1 singles. The subsequent "Bad" tour drew 3,579,000 fans in Japan, Australia, the U.S. and Europe. Jackson borrowed from entertainment legends such as James Brown, Sammy Davis, Jr. and Gene Kelly to create an eclectic style of dance and singing that is totally original. Few can dispute that Jackson is the greatest and most prolific entertainer in history.

Dollars Bill. **Bill Cosby**, who portrays Dr. Heathcliff Huxtable, (seen here with **Keshia-Knight Pulliam**, who portrays his television daughter, Rudee) has become America's favorite father and The Cosby Show has become America's all-time favorite television sitcom. Since the show's debut in 1984, to today, The Cosby Show has received television's highest ratings with no significant competition. Cosby has parlayed his immense popularity into becoming one of the highest paid entertainers in the world.

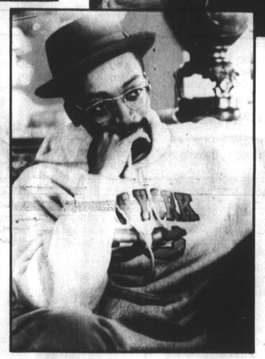


Livin' Large. **Eddie Murphy** emerged from the cast of Saturday Night Live to become Hollywood's biggest box office draw of the 80's. Forty-Eight hours, Beverly Hills Cop I and II, Coming to America, his concert films, "Delirious" and "Raw;" it seemed everything Murphy touched turned to gold. Murphy's latest film, "Harlem Nights," is his first attempt at directing and as you might expect, it's a monster at the box office.

Style and Substance. There are very few artists who truly deserve to be referred to as "once in a lifetime" performers. Josephine Baker, Billie Holiday and Katherine Dunham all come to mind, but before she is through, Helen Folasade Adu, or **Sade** could become one of those performers. Sade and her band of the same name, have released three vastly successful albums; Diamond Life (1984), Promise (1986) and Stronger Than Pride (1988). However, the story is not the platinum albums, the story is Adu. Sade is possibly the most romantic and intelligent female lyricist in the music industry. Her soul baring lyrics reveal her honesty, vulnerability and power. And that voice, elegantly flawed, curvy and textured, has drawn comparisons to Billie Holiday and Nina Simone. Beyond her musical talent, Sade has been called one of the most beautiful and photographable women in the world. With each new album, every interview and every photograph, the elusive star builds upon her unparalleled mystique.

The 90's

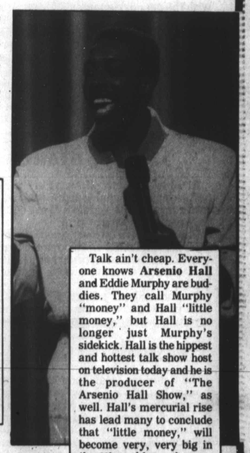
Rap's Up. Will someone please tell the person who created the local radio station slogan, "all the best songs... and no rap," to wake up? These days rap songs are the best songs. Most rap artists deliver positive messages about education, Black history, Black pride and Black power, as opposed to the "let's do it" songs that proliferate the airwaves. Rap's rapid rise is being lead in part by a growing legion of dynamic young women like 18-year-old hip-hop chanteuse Lana Moorer, a.k.a., **MC Lyte**. Rap music isn't perfect, but many rappers are saying the right things and they will be heard.



Virtuoso. In 1980, film maker Shelton Jackson Lee, b.k.a., **Spike Lee** produced, directed, wrote and made a cameo appearance in his first film, a 20-minute short called, "The Answer." In 1986, Lee produced, "She's Gotta Have It," a movie about a young woman's sexual zeal. In 1987, Lee produced, "School Daze," a musical about intraracial conflicts on a Black college campus. "She's Gotta Have It" and "School Daze" showed glimpses of Lee's raw genius as a celluloid storyteller. But, in 1989, the wide range of hues and colors on Lee's cinematic palette fell in place expertly in, "Do The Right Thing," a movie about the racially diverse and volatile Bedford-Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, New York. "Do The Right Thing" was made with a ferocity, humor, pathos and beauty that have many predicting it will become one of the great films of all-time. Lee's next film, "A Mo'Better Blues," starring Denzel Washington, is due to be released around July or August.

Mastering The Rhythm Method. 23-year-old, "Jammin" **Janet Jackson**, followed her hugely successful "Control" album, which sold five million copies in 1986, with her latest effort, "Rhythm Nation 1814," which in less than five weeks went double platinum selling two million copies. Not only a commercial hit, Rhythm Nation has received much critical acclaim for its socially conscious lyrics, which are masterfully blended with "Nation's" booming beat. Her super-sexy looks and smashing dance choreography have won Jackson a loyal phalanx of followers and at her current pace, the world of pop music is quickly becoming "Janet's Nation."

Power and Glory; these are the names of two films actor **Denzel Washington** has starred in and they are adjectives indicative of Washington's screen presence. "Power" was a bomb, but "Glory," playing currently, has established Washington as probably the best young actor in America. He's already won a Golden Globe award for his work in Glory and he's a favorite for the best supporting actor Oscar for Glory, as well. As brilliant as Washington is in Glory, he still hasn't received the "role of a lifetime" and many movie industry insiders feel Washington is far from his peak as an actor.



Talk ain't cheap. Everyone knows **Arsenio Hall** and Eddie Murphy are buddies. They call Murphy "money" and Hall "little money," but Hall is no longer just Murphy's sidekick. Hall is the hippest and hottest talk show host on television today and he is the producer of "The Arsenio Hall Show," as well. Hall's mercurial rise has lead many to conclude that "little money," will become very, very big in the 90's and beyond.