CELEBRITY LOOKOUT

By JASON:

Justice
Thurgood Marshall

Q: — I just finished reading The Brethren, a book about the Supreme Court by Bob Woodward and Scott Armstrong. They make Justice Thurgood Marshall look pretty bad, questioning his intelligence and his competence. What's the deal?

C. Weaver, Cleveland, OH

A: — Choose from racism, bitchery, honest - tho - misguided - opinionating or a combination thereof. Woodward and Armstrong's book, though it purports to be an even - handed "scrutiny" of the Court, is frequently mean - spirited in its handling of the justices, particularly Chief Justice Warren Burger, who comes off like a klutz here. However, their portrait of Justice Marshall as a buffoon, a dullard and an incompetent is the height of injustice.

It is without question that Justice Marshall's legal career has been one of the most illustrious since in the history of the judicial system in this country: while with the NAACP in the '30s and '40s, Marshall won 29 of 32 cases argued, 16 of them before the Supreme Court. He has served illustriously, and sometimes brilliantly on the U.S. Court of Appeals from 1961 - '65, as Solicitor General of the U.S. from '65 - '67 and on the Supreme Court since '67. He is responsible more than any single person, dead or alive, for defeat of the "separate but equal" Plessy Doctrine, the cornerstone of segregation in this country.

Witness a 1935 case in which Marshall argued successfully for a black student to be admitted to the University of Maryland for graduate study after he himself had been denied entrance because of his race five years before. And in 1954, the Supreme Court agreed with Marshall that "separate is inherently unequal" in the U.S. public school system, handing down an order for desegregation of public schools.

In any case, we have seen that Woodward, an editor of the Washington Post, is attracted to the low - downest picture of blacks to be found in the white American imagination. Janet Cooke had no trouble convincing him that a black mother would permit her boyfriend to "fire up" her child with heroin and let a news reporter watch.

Q: — When Hazel Scott died recently, a friend of mine who claimed to know said that an affair between Scott and Billie Holiday was responsible for the break - up of Scott's marriage to Adam C. Powell. Is this true?

D. Randall, New York, NY

A: — Is any one thing ever responsible for the break - up of a marriage? We cannot address the specifics of your question because none of the principles is in a position to speak about it, and probably wouldn't anyway.

It has been pretty well documented that Congressman Powell was a bit of "womanizer." Whether or not his wife was too is grist for the rumor mill, and thoroughly distateful for that reason. We prefer to remember pianist Scott and Holiday for what they brought to music, and Powell for the mark he made on civil rights legislation in this country.

Hazel Scott

Q: — My mother and I were big fans of Al Green in the days before he turned to gospel music. What prompted the change? My mother swears she heard that he made a "deal" with the devil. Also, is Little Richard a preacher?

S. Jones, Baltimore, MD.

A: — At this writing, Richard Penniman, alias Little Richard lives in Riverside, CA and is still preaching. He claims to have given up jumpsuits, conkadours, homosexuality, and $10,000 a nite paydays as a rock performer for the "Rock of Ages." Reportedly, Paul McCartney's version of "Lucille" prompted the real "king of rock 'n' roll" to sigh, "I'd like to do a religious album with Paul." This is the second time Penniman has "retired" from showbiz for the ministry.

Although he could not be reached for comment, Al Green's most recent statements indicate that though he was "having fun" in his old "evil ways," certain incidents led to his change of style, in life and musically. One of them was probably the suicide of a friend of his who allegedly threw hot grits on him before killing herself. Green was quoted in an article in Sepia magazine (November, '74) saying that he had "made a deal with Satan," in exchange for fame and material success.

Q: — What's the deal with Prince? His music sounds real sensitive, but he always looks sensationalist. Is he for real?

M. Jameson, Maywood, IL

A: — Apparently. Prince (his real name) is a 20 - year - old multi - talented performer who claims to take himself quite seriously. He produces all his albums, plays 26 instruments and says he doesn't make records to "get over." Of the desire to get hit records, he says, "It starts to jurisdict (your) music; your - feeling and you start putting things in you wouldn't ordinarily . . . It's better to listen to a poor, broke musician on obscure records that never makes the radio . . . " Midway his hit "Controversy," Prince recites the Lord's Prayer. Whither goest thou O' Prince of piece?

Rev. Al Green

Q: — Is that Rufus playing behind Rene and Angela on their latest album?

J. Kelley, St. Louis, MO

A: — Sort of. Bobby Watson, brother of Rene Moore, is co - producer of the LP and is bass player with Rufus. He is joined on this set by keyboard player David Wolinski and guitar player Tony Maiden, also of Rufus, and about "Thunder Thumbs" Louis Johnson, bass of the Brothers Johnson?

Expect to hear more from this talented duo, who say they have written over 200 songs since they met in 1977. She has done session work with such as Dolly Parton and Lenny Williams; he, as a composer for the Los Angeles Philharmonic, has performed with such as Ella Fitzegerald, Sarah Vaughn and Billy Eckstine.

Q: — I've been hanging' in there with Freddie Hubbard since "Red Clay." But I have mixed feelings about "Splash," his new album. Is he going commercial or is this a little detour?

C. Potter, Toledo, OH

A: — "Red Clay" was a good place to start with Freddie. He won a grammy for "First Light," which followed "Red Clay." He claims "Red Clay" as his first "crossover" venture, and does not apologize for the commercialism of "Splash," his latest LP on Fantasy. Said he, "I'm articulate on this record, and the music feels good to me. Just because I'm playing funk doesn't mean I'm jivin', because I don't jive when I play my trumpet."

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.

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