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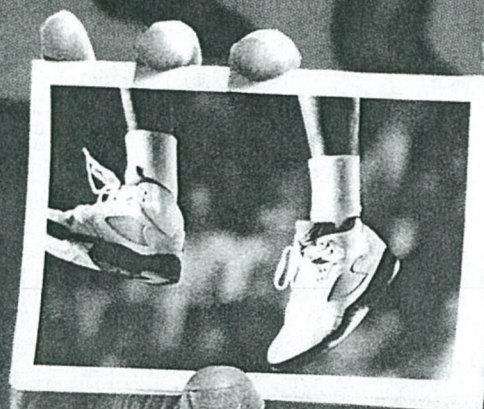
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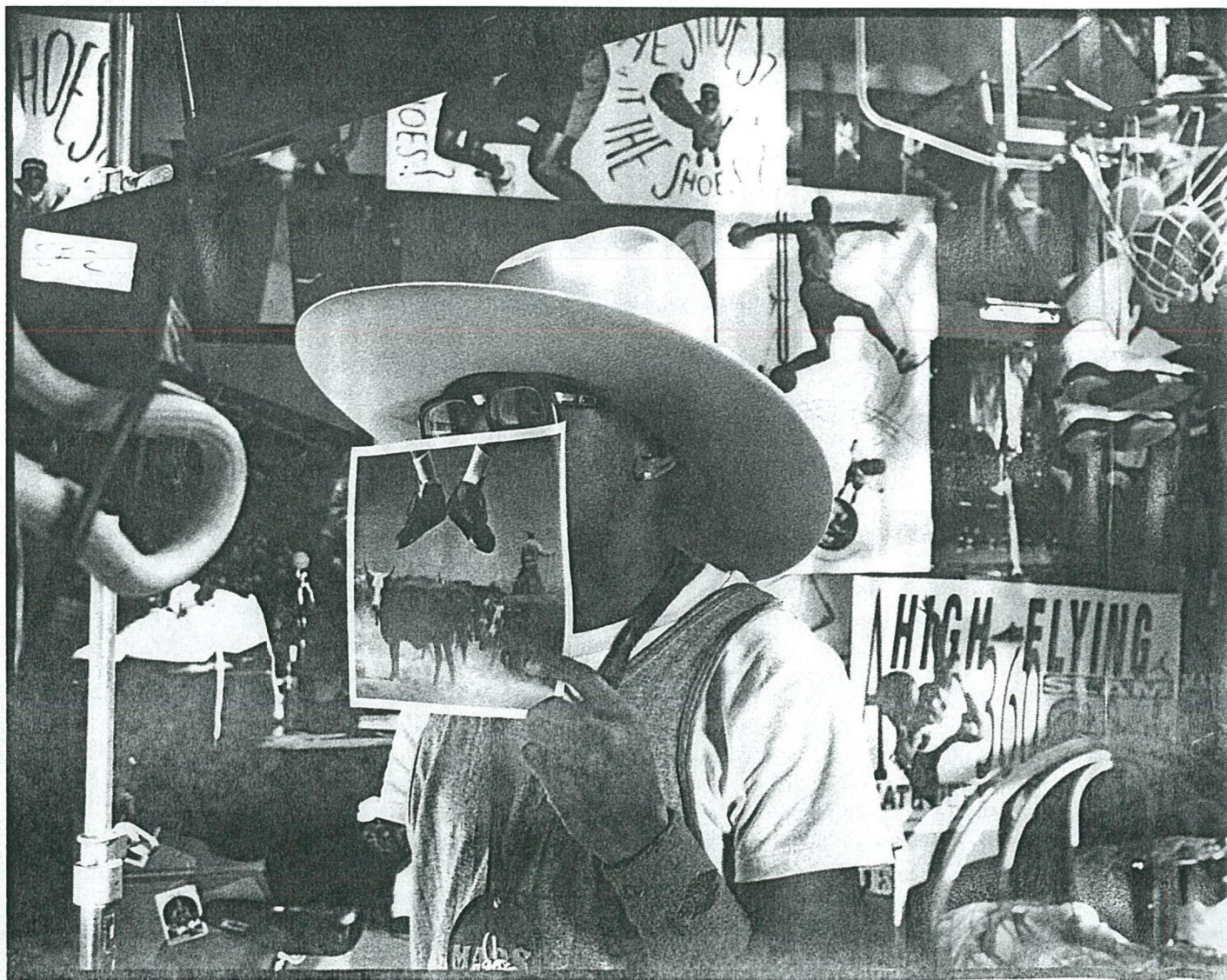
SPIKE & NIKE

HOW SPIKE
LEE MAKES
A SLY NEW
COMMERCIAL

SPIKE AND NIKE

*The
Making
of a
Sneaky
Sneaker
Commercial*

BY GENE SEYMOUR



FOR SEVEN MEMORABLE NIKE COMMERCIALS, it has been what the shoe people call the Spike (as in Lee) and Mike (as in Jordan) Show. Now it's Installment Eight of Spike and Mike. Only there's a tall asterisk. Mike's not here for this one. The challenge on this first Saturday in March is this: How do you make a Spike and Mike commercial without actually using Mike?

The flip answer: very cleverly. The complete answer is a little more detailed than that.

SCENE 1: Spike Lee—culture hero, New York Knicks fan, and filmmaker (*Do the Right Thing*)—is sitting on a New York City soundstage. To be precise, he is sitting on the bed in Mars Blackmon's room, the set for the 30-second commercial for Nike's Air Jordan basketball shoes making its debut during the NCAA Men's Basketball Championship Tournament, which is now playing on a television screen near you.

It's 8 a.m. In roughly two hours, Lee, the commercial's director, also will assume the identity of Mars Blackmon himself, complete with full Mars regalia (shorts, T-shirt, and a bicyclist's cap bearing the legend "Brooklyn"). Ten hours of painstaking drudgery later, there will be a new installment in the Mars Blackmon legend, which already has made him both a cult movie fave and a hip icon in the world of television advertising.

For the uninitiated, Mars Blackmon is the hyperbolic Brooklyn character Lee first portrayed in his 1986 breakthrough film, *She's Gotta Have It*, in which he displayed a jazzy patter and a hilarious, hard-edged way with words. (In the film, Mars insults a romantic rival by calling him "a 16-piece Chicken McNugget head.")

In the four years since that film, Mars has been one of the main attractions of the witty, black-and-white Air Jordan commercials in which he costars with Michael Jordan, the shoes' namesake and the stellar, gravity-defying guard for the Chicago Bulls.

The series has provided some of the funniest moments in Nike advertising this side of Bo Diddley telling Bo Jackson, "You don't know Diddley."

Those words form the tag line for the most popular Nike commercial of all: the "Bo Knows..." ad, which was introduced in July 1989. In that commercial, baseball-football superstar Bo Jackson is shown to be proficient in basketball, tennis, run-



ning, weights—in fact, everything but hockey and rhythm-and-blues guitar.

Nike ads are pretty good at creating catchphrases such as "Just Do It" or "Bo Knows [pick a sport, any sport]." *Sports Illustrated* borrowed the latter for a cover headline on quarterback Joe Montana's fourth Super Bowl victory: "Joe Knows Super Bowls."

Nike, to be sure, knows sports and shoes. And Wieden & Kennedy, the Portland, Ore.-based ad agency that has handled the company's account since 1982, knows Nike. But these ads also display an impressive knowledge of What's Hip and New in music and film technique. This knowledge gives these commercials an up-to-the-minute texture. They also cultivate and encourage an attitude toward sports that is both inspiring and irreverent.

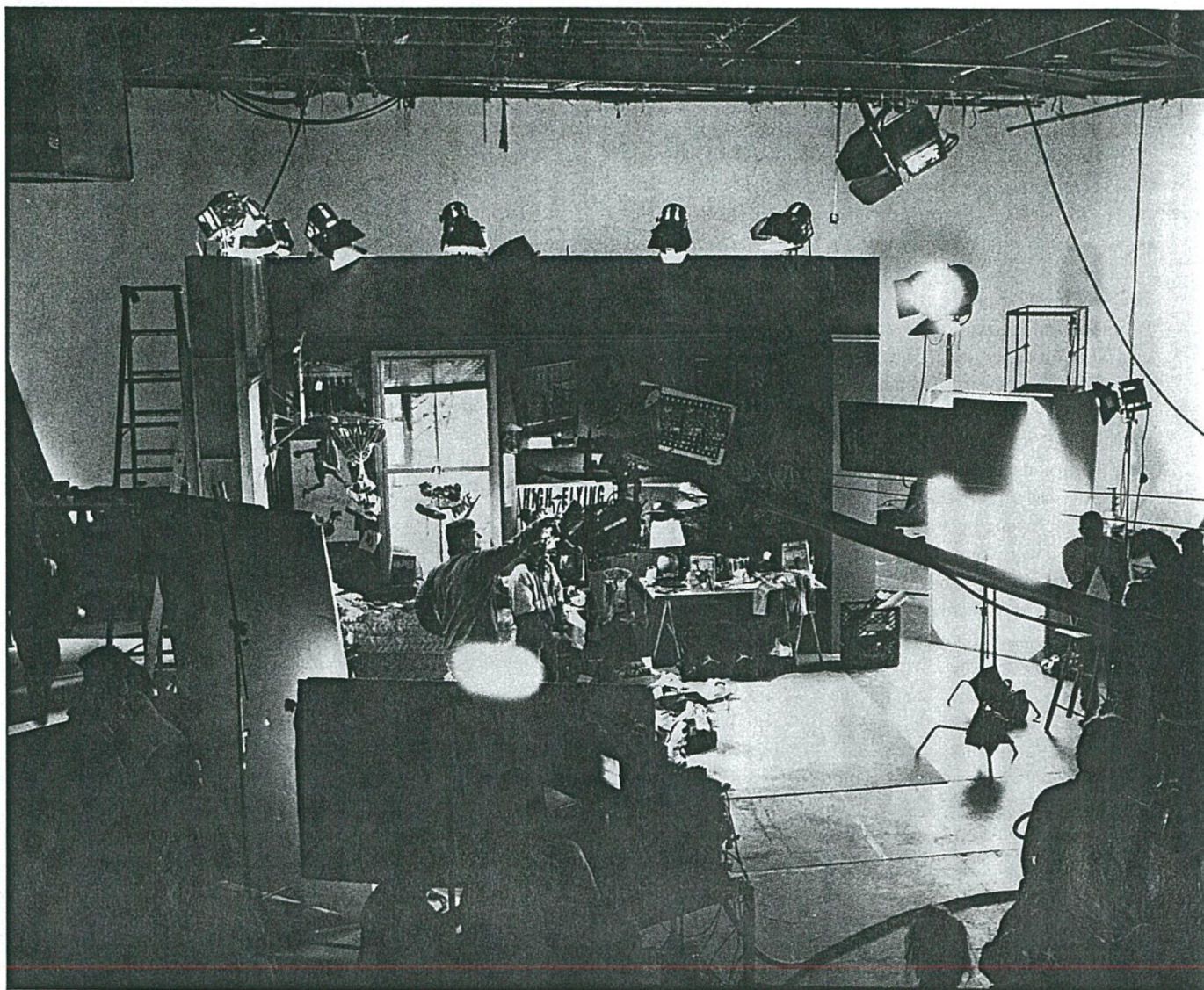
In a 1988 ad, triathlete Joanne Ernst lays down a heavy-duty pep talk on getting in shape that makes you feel as if you're in the Marines. She caps her harangue by saying, "It wouldn't hurt to stop eating like a pig either."

Elizabeth Dolan, a Nike spokeswoman, says: "We want to show something that conveys the excitement of sports but still brings our athletes across as human beings. The Spike and Mike commercials convey what we're trying to establish with our audience. You have Michael the performer interacting with Mars, the ultimate fan, in his awe and excitement for what Michael's doing. That's kind of how we imagine people responding to all our ads."

In a recent installment of Spike and Mike (a commercial that had its premiere during February's NBA All-Star Game), Mars puts his face close to the camera and asks Douglas Kirkpatrick, an Air Force lieutenant colonel and member of the American Institute of Aeronautics and As-

Spike Lee (left) as Mars Blackmon, partly hidden by a 10-gallon hat and a photo of Michael Jordan's feet in Nikes. Mars' shrine to Jordan (above)





**Lee's crew
prepares for
Scene 1 in the
latest installment
of Spike and Mike
on a soundstage
in New York**

tronautics, "Yo, professor! Do you know how Michael Jordan defies gravity? Do you know? Do you know? Do you know?"

Kirkpatrick (his face impassive, his voice a drone) replies: "Michael Jordan has overcome the acceleration of gravity by the application of his muscle power in the vertical plane, thus producing a low-altitude earth orbit."

Jordan looks at the camera with the barest display of skepticism.

"A *what?*?" Mars asks.

"Do you know what I mean?" Kirkpatrick asks in the same monotone as his face nears the camera, Mars-style. "Do you know? Do you know? Do you know?"

SCENE 2: For the forthcoming commercial—the one being shot on this Saturday in March—we shift to Blackmon's room, which could well be called the Mars Blackmon Shrine to Michael Jordan and All He Represents.

Posters of Jordan in various stages of flight smother the walls. Air Jordans litter the floor or hang from the window in clusters. Three or four empty Wheaties boxes

with Jordan's face on the front lie amid the clutter.

Do we know what's happening here?

Thirty-two-year-old Jim Riswold thinks so. He's the associate creative director for Wieden & Kennedy—and, since 1986, the writer of many of Nike's highly acclaimed print and television ads. These ads not only have made Riswold a star in the advertising industry but have helped Nike end 1989 with a 26 percent share of the \$5 billion athletic shoe market. Reebok, the company's closest rival, came in at about 23 percent.

Riswold is in New York for the shooting of the commercial. As he watches more shoes being added to the clutter in Mars' room, he is asked what the deal is here.

"Well," Riswold says, "what it is, is that all along Mars has been trying to figure out whether it's Jordan or the [Air] Jordans that make Michael Jordan get up so high. And in this one, the shoes win."

Lee not only directs and acts but adjusts Riswold's script a little to fit Mars' hip-hopping patter. (Lee, for instance, inserts the nickname "Money" for Jordan's name in takes.) "There's a mutual understanding [between me

and Lee] of what's needed," Riswold says.

He and Lee have been working together on the series since it began in 1987. "We don't have a long-term contract [with Nike] or anything like that," Lee says. "Every year, we just get together and decide we're going to do it and we do. I was wearing Nike sneakers before this thing started, and Michael, he's the one that makes this thing go."

But remember: Jordan isn't here. The reason he can't come to the party this time around is that the ad will make its debut during CBS' coverage of the NCAA Men's Basketball Championship Tournament, when the NCAA prohibits commercials that feature athletes who are paid for playing the sport being televised. A Nike ad with Bo Jackson? That's no problem. Bo may know basketball, but he doesn't play it for money. Jordan does. So Spike will be carrying on the show without Mike.

SCENE 3: The cutting edge of advertising can have its dull moments. Most of these moments—a lot of the half-hours, too—come during the hurry-up-and-wait process of a commercial film shoot. The setups, the seemingly endless

procession of takes...it's a wonder that anything moderately interesting survives such a brain-deadening process.

The 32 crew members have assembled at the studio by 8:30 a.m. It takes almost two hours to prepare to shoot the first sequence. Lee's technicians have placed a camera atop a crane that will swing the camera very quickly to a tight close-up of Mars' face. A stand-in, wearing Mars' glasses, is positioned where Lee will stand when filming begins: amid a pile of Air Jordans.

By about 10 a.m., the camera is in place, and Lee-as-Mars assumes his position.

"Let's settle down!" Ernest Dickerson calls out to the 50 or so assembled on the set, including people from the ad agency and from Nike, and various assistants from Lee's production company, Forty Acres and a Mule. Dickerson has been the director of photography on all of Lee's films and all the Spike and Mike ads. At his command, everybody on the set freezes.

"Action!" Dickerson shouts.

"Yo!" Lee-as-Mars shouts as the camera begins its carefully timed descent. "Mars Blackmon in the house with action photos of my main man, Michael Jordan, dis-

playing his high-flyin', death-defyin' ways!"

"Cut!" Dickerson calls. "That was good. Let's print that one."

More takes of this scene follow, each "Yo!" more thunderous than the one before it.

"I like that 'in the house' part," Riswold whispers to Michael Prieve, the 27-year-old art director from Wieden & Kennedy who helped design the ad. "It really fixes it in a contemporary mode."

Of the 30 or so takes for this scene, there are four that Dickerson is satisfied with. The others suffer from either a shaky camera alignment or a bad line reading by Lee. (He doesn't flub it too often, however—maybe three, four times.) By about noon, they have as much out of that scene as they wanted.

The next set of takes will be more complicated to film because they will be done from a variety of angles. These scenes will constitute the part of the commercial that will make you laugh when you see it.

To wit: No, you won't see Michael. But you will see his feet—in Air Jordans, natch—soaring high over various and sundry locales, all captured in scenic snapshots that Mars shows to the camera. So you don't get Michael, but you do get Michael's feet—the parts that count.

SCENE 4: For the first set of these takes, the camera is fixed in a tight close-up of Mars' face, which will allow him to hold the "action photos" in front of him—the better to see the shoes and where they travel.

A couple of rehearsals pass quickly. It's now about 12:30 p.m. Dickerson and Lee ask for quiet.

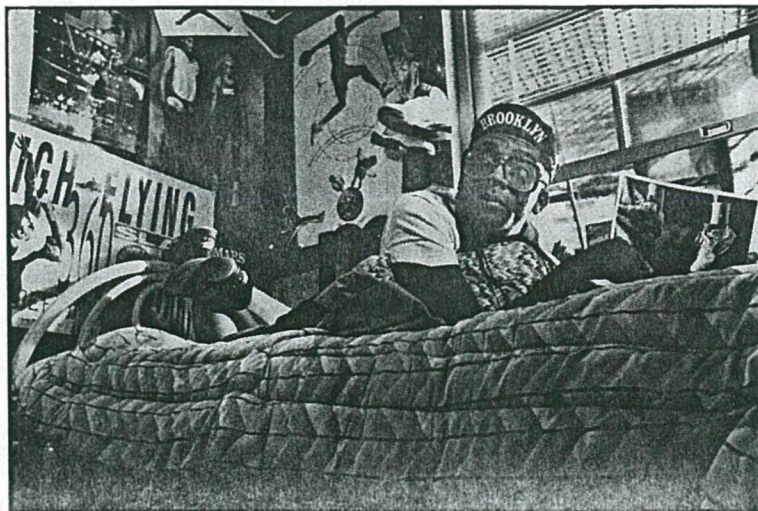
"Action!" Dickerson shouts.

Mars: "Here's Mike slammin' in Detroit!" (The feet are seen soaring over the Silverdome court.) "...Slammin' in Philly!" (The feet in Jordans soar over the Spectrum.)

"And now, my most favorite city in the world," Mars says, rolling his eyes sarcastically, "Boston." As we see Jordan's feet soar over the familiar parquet floor of Boston Garden, Mars murmurs, "Must be a Bird's eye view."

Then we see Jordan's feet soaring over the New York skyline, over the U.S. Capitol dome, over a pair of cattle

Lee says what he likes best about the ads is that "they treat Mars with respect—they don't make him out to be a clown"





"I don't do commercials except these," Lee says

("Texas!" Mars explains), over the snowcapped Rockies. ("That's some serious hang time!" Mars observes. "Must be the mountain air.") Why, they're even sighted over Moscow and Paris, two cities conspicuously absent from the Bulls' schedule.

About 20 takes are shot from this angle before everyone takes a lunch break at 2 p.m. Little more than an hour later, the shooting resumes. For the rest of the afternoon, the crew shoots countless takes of Mars holding up the photos from different points in his room—slouching on the floor, or on his bed. They move the camera to another position. And once again: "Here's Mike slammin' in Detroit...."

At one point, a 10-gallon hat is brought in to replace Mars' "Brooklyn" cap when he shows the cow picture.

There's a reason for all these takes. "We need as many

camera angles as we can get," Prieve explains, "so when we take all this to Los Angeles for editing, we'll have enough of a mix to choose from for the final print."

The minutes crawl by. Lee's team of assistants, bodyguards, and gofers struggles to keep alert. About 6 p.m., the filming is completed. The day's activity will produce 30 seconds of paid TV time in the middle of March Madness. Michael or no Michael, it should be a howl.

SCENE 5: So why are these Nike ads such a phenomenon? Part of it comes from Riswold's keen sense of cultural pitch and tone, which has helped give the ads their hip, glamorous aura. He first achieved renown in the ad world in 1984 for his stylish, evocative Honda scooter ads featuring such outlaw-hipster icons as Lou Reed, Sandra Bernhard, and Jim McMahon.

One Fan's Faves

WE MAY NOT KNOW DIDDLEY, but we know what we like. Here, in order of preference, are our favorite Nike ads.

1) "BO KNOWS" (1989) The most famous—and it deserves to be. Bo Jackson the baseball player smashes a pitch. "Bo knows baseball," L.A. Dodger Kirk Gibson says. Jackson the football player breaks several tackles. "Bo knows football," L.A. Ram Jim Everett says. So it goes, with Bo running, cycling, pumping iron, hitting a tennis ball—"Bo knows tennis?" John McEnroe asks—and playing hockey—all L.A. King Wayne Gretzky will say is "No."



All this to a driving Bo Diddley beat, which crashes to a halt when Jackson tries to play the guitar. "Bo," Diddley declares, "you don't know..." You know the rest.

All the best elements of the campaign are here: a pulse-pounding score, inspirational expenditures of energy, and self-mocking humor. (But did they *really* need to tack on that "six months later" bit in the version showing Jackson playing sizzling guitar licks?)

2) "NOOO-BOD-EEEE..." (1987) An early installment of "The Spike and Mike Show." Mars Blackmon goes into a motor-mouth mantra about Michael Jordan's power. ("Nobody can cover my main man, Michael Jordan...Nobody...Nooo-Bod-Eeee...") He goes on until you wonder when somebody will shut him up. Jordan does (gently but firmly) by putting a large hand over Mars' mouth and saying, "But it's easy to cover Mars Blackmon."

3) "CROSS-TRAINING WITH BO" (1988) Mondays, Mr. Jackson goes biking. ("Now when is that Tour de France thing?") Wednesdays, he plays basketball. ("Air Bo! I like the sound of that!") Fridays, he goes running. ("Another day. Another hobby.") In each, Bo's swagger galvanizes. But the last one is the best because he makes himself part of the joke.

4) "WALT STACK" (1988) Stack, 80, says he runs 17 miles every morning (in the hilly San Francisco area, no less). "People ask me how I keep my teeth from chattering in the wintertime," Stack says as he trots over the Golden Gate Bridge. Pause. "I leave 'em in my locker."

5) "WALKING THE DOG" (1988) Ads done from an animal's perspective aren't new. But this is the funniest: A dog is yanked from every hydrant he passes by his hard-walking owner. The best moment is when the dog hurdles a woman bent over her garden. ("Whew!" he says between huffs and puffs. "Gotta lose some weight!")

—Gene Seymour

The Spike and Mike ads also show Riswold as something of a pop-culture seismograph. He and Bill Davenport, an executive producer at Wieden & Kennedy, approached Lee about doing a commercial immediately after seeing a trailer for *She's Gotta Have It*, in which Lee wore his Air Jordans. Lee's movie was just beginning to make ripples in the film world. By the time the first Spike and Mike ad aired in February 1988, Mars Blackmon already was recognized by aficionados of funky, off-the-beaten-track filmmaking—which, in turn, made Mars the perfect performer in an off-the-beaten-track ad campaign.

Hipness aside, however, the agency's Nike ads get their juice from sheer audacious cleverness, the kind that juxtaposes Bo Diddley's hard-driving sound with Bo Jackson's hard-driving athleticism, the kind that puts an ad in the middle of the first issue of *The National* sports daily and calls it "Halftime."

"Look at how they're doing this ad without Michael, how they get around him not being here," Lee says. "It's really turning a negative into a positive. They're smart enough to know how to pull that off."

Riswold, a shy, diffident fellow with prematurely graying hair, is self-effacing when talking about his own work: "There are too many people involved in these ads for me to take all the credit." But the holder of three college degrees (in communications, history, and philosophy) contends that it's the intelligence of the Nike campaign that communicates so strongly with its audience.

"Too much advertising," he says, "is by the numbers, with research telling us to do this and research telling us to do that. It makes for formula advertising, and when you do that it leaves out any emotional ties with the consumer. [The Nike ads] don't talk down to the viewer. It's sharing a joke, sharing something inside with them. I'm not saying you have to be different for different's sake. But you don't have to go by the numbers all the time either. Because [if you do], you're just like everybody else."

"And then," he says, "no one notices you."

Do you know what he means? Do you know? Do you know? ♦

Jim Riswold, who wrote this and many other Nike ads, with his director. Riswold says he and Lee have "a mutual understanding of what's needed."



JUST DOIN' IT.

BROOKLYN

SPIKE

Spike Lee's controversial TV commercials for Nike (p. 16) have spawned the inevitable T-shirt ranging from Spike or Michael Jordan, they're £20 from Bond, 10 Newburgh St. London W1. Meanwhile, Nike continues its reign. New York's B-boy winner of the moment is the vintage 1986 Nike Cortez, retailing at \$39. The old school is back to stay.

A Long Way From 'Aunt Jemima'

As black consumers' spending grows, marketers target them with hipper and more 'authentic' ads

Yo homes! Yo homes! Yo homes!" The black man in the oversize glasses and flipped-back bicycle cap presses his face up to the TV camera. "This is Mars Blackmon chillin' for Air Jordan." The hip-hop music picks up in the background, and basketball star Michael Jordan starts skyin'. "These sneakers be housin' across the country and every homeboy be bum-rushin' to get some," says Spike Lee, playing the character he created in his film "She's Gotta Have It." The bass kicks in as the shots of Jordan slammin' and jammin' come quicker, interspersed with frames of Mars showing the Air Jordans. "And I ain't frontin'," he says. (Read: "No joke.")

The scene has the look and feel of a rap video. In fact, it's a Nike ad. The athletic-wear giant is one of a growing number of companies that have begun to use ads made not only with, but by, blacks. The reason isn't hard to figure out: blacks have become a powerful consumer force. They spent more than \$200 billion last year on goods and services and will probably spend twice that much by the year 2000, according to estimates based on Census Bureau data. Surveys show that blacks buy 16 percent of the orange juice, 32 percent of the malt liquor and 36 percent of the hair-conditioning products sold in America. To reach them—particularly affluent young "Buppies" (black urban professionals)—marketers are striving for ads with an "authentic" feel for black music, language and lifestyles. But the trend has also heightened competition for the new ad business, with

black-owned agencies insisting they are better equipped than white-run firms to reach the black market.

At the very least, companies have moved to rid their ads of obvious stereotypes. Quaker Oats, which had already softened the original mammylike "Aunt Jemima" logo it used on the famous pancake mix, recently changed the image again to look like a modern homemaker. Under threat of a consumer boycott, Colgate-Palmolive dropped the name and black-face logo of a toothpaste called "Darkie" that it sold in Asia. Other companies are just using more blacks in their ads, even if the situations often seem indistinguishable from ones in which whites might appear.



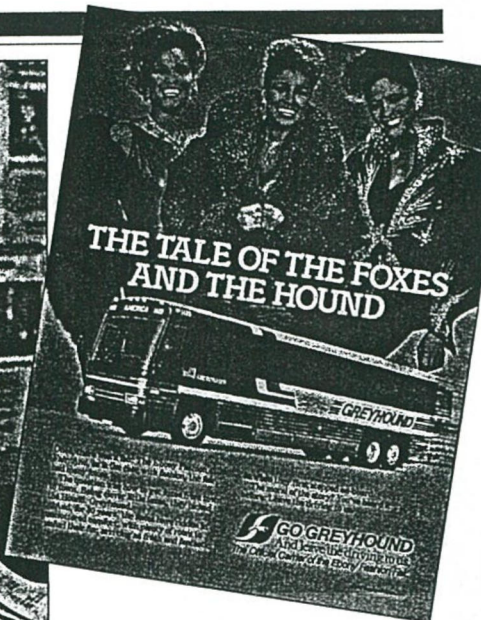
A feel for black lifestyles:
Lee in the Nike ad (top),
McDonald's 'breakfast club'



Still other firms are going further and running ads that might be called distinctively "black." One is McDonald's, a company with a long record of trying to reach the black market with both advertising and community spending. It hired a black-owned firm, Burrell Advertising, to create its current "breakfast club" campaign—a series of ads that show Buppies talking in a way that captures the pace of black conversation without resorting to "jive talk." The strategy has apparently paid off. "McDonald's is the leader in the black community according to market share by a lot," says Emil Teri, vice president for special marketing. (Teri declines to cite specific numbers.) "Of course telling any consumer that we welcome them and they're invited, we'll get a better response."

Advertisers are also finding that using elements of black pop culture can help reach a wider audience as well. Nike spokeswoman Liz Dolan insists that Spike Lee's Air Jordan ads are not aimed exclusively at blacks. In giving Lee creative control over the "Mike and Spike" series, Nike was betting the young black director's sensibility would strike a chord with blacks and whites alike. As Frank Mingo, CEO of The Mingo Group, a black ad firm, puts it: "What appeals to young blacks often appeals to young whites. [Blacks] set the trends in the market of the '80s."

As the targeting of black consumers intensifies, publishers are looking to get in on the action. This fall two new magazines that promise to help advertisers reach the black market will debut, funded by two of



Growing competition: Jones (center), her ads for the Bahamas (left), Greyhound

the nation's largest publishing companies. Time Warner has invested \$1.5 million in "Emerge," a general-interest magazine aimed at upscale blacks. (Minority-owned companies will pay for the rest of the \$6 million startup.) Fairchild Publications is sinking \$1.8 million into Sazz, a fashion magazine for black women that founders Mary Anne and Edgar Holley say has already attracted national advertisers like Animale and bijan fragrances. In both cases, the publishing giants have left editorial control to black editors. But they are watching the experiments closely: in lieu of equity, Fairchild has negotiated for first rights to buy Sazz if it takes off.

Collecting data: Until recently, companies that wanted ads aimed directly at blacks usually turned to a handful of black-run ad agencies. But as the "niche marketing" has increased, white-run agencies are bidding for more of the work. BBDO New York has established a research group to collect data about special markets and has made ads featuring blacks for Polaroid and Apple Computer. The Earle Palmer Brown Companies produced a controversial ad for Roy Rogers that shows a sassy black restaurant manager scolding the TV viewer ("I can't stand you eatin' as much as a leg anywhere but Roy's...").

The heads of several black-owned agencies cite that ad in

particular as evidence that white-run firms can still be clumsy at portraying blacks. Mingo complains about the depiction of black women "bobbin' and diddlin' and shakin' their heads." (Roy Rogers says the woman in the ad is simply supposed to be a manager who's proud of her product.) Mingo cites an ad that one agency proposed but later killed that would have had a black sports star saying, "Feets don't fail me now." Caroline Jones, head of Caroline Jones Advertising, recalls a rice company that naively used the image of an 1880s riverboat in a campaign aimed at black and Hispanic customers. The black execs stress the importance of distinguishing between black consumers and of recognizing "nuances" and "subtleties."

White advertisers are increasingly quick

to dispute charges of insensitivity. Though they may have felt uncomfortable pitching to blacks in an era of Afros and dashikis captured in the movie "Putney Swope," improved research and heightened contact with blacks and black culture now make them confident they can do the job as well as anyone. Doug Alligood, head of BBDO's special-markets department, says white-run firms aren't at a disadvantage in appealing to blacks. "Anybody with a closed mind or mindset is at a disadvantage, whether black or white," he says. "You [have to] take into account attitudes and values of the audience."

Black and white marketing experts do agree on one thing: the trend toward "segmentation" is here to stay. Ken Smikle, publisher of Target Market News, a trade magazine, estimates that as much as \$700 million a year is already being spent on ads aimed at black consumers, and he predicts those numbers will keep growing. "We're changing from the melting-pot theory to a kind of salad bowl," says Gary Berman, president of Market Segment Research, a firm that specializes in niche advertising. As that happens, advertisers will grow even more sophisticated in their use of black influences, making images like the old Aunt Jemima ads just an embarrassing memory.

Startup: Mary Anne and Edgar Holley with the Sazz logo

JOHN S. ABBOTT



MARCUS MABRY with
RHONDA ADAMS in New York

Sports Illustrated

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Who Is That Mask Man?

You don't have to be any more than knee-high to a grasshopper to know, even without seeing his face, that this is a picture of Bill Laimbeer, the Piston with the plastic puss and the concrete body, whose team last week began its NBA playoff battle with the Bulls (page 34).

MANNY MILLAN

SPORTS ILLUSTRATED (ISSN 0038-822X) is published weekly, with two issues combined at year-end, by The Time Inc. Magazine Company. Principal Office: Time & Life Building, Rockefeller Center, New York, NY 10020-1353. Reginald K. Brack Jr., President; Joseph A. Ripp, Treasurer; Harry M. Johnston, Secretary. Second-class postage paid at New York, NY, and additional mailing offices. Authorized as second-class mail by Canada Post Corp., Ottawa, Canada, and for payment of postage in cash at Toronto. The Time Inc. Magazine Company GST #R122781974. U.S. subscription: \$69.66 for 54 issues. POSTMASTER: Send address changes to SPORTS ILLUSTRATED, Post Office Box 30602, Tampa, FL 33630-0602.

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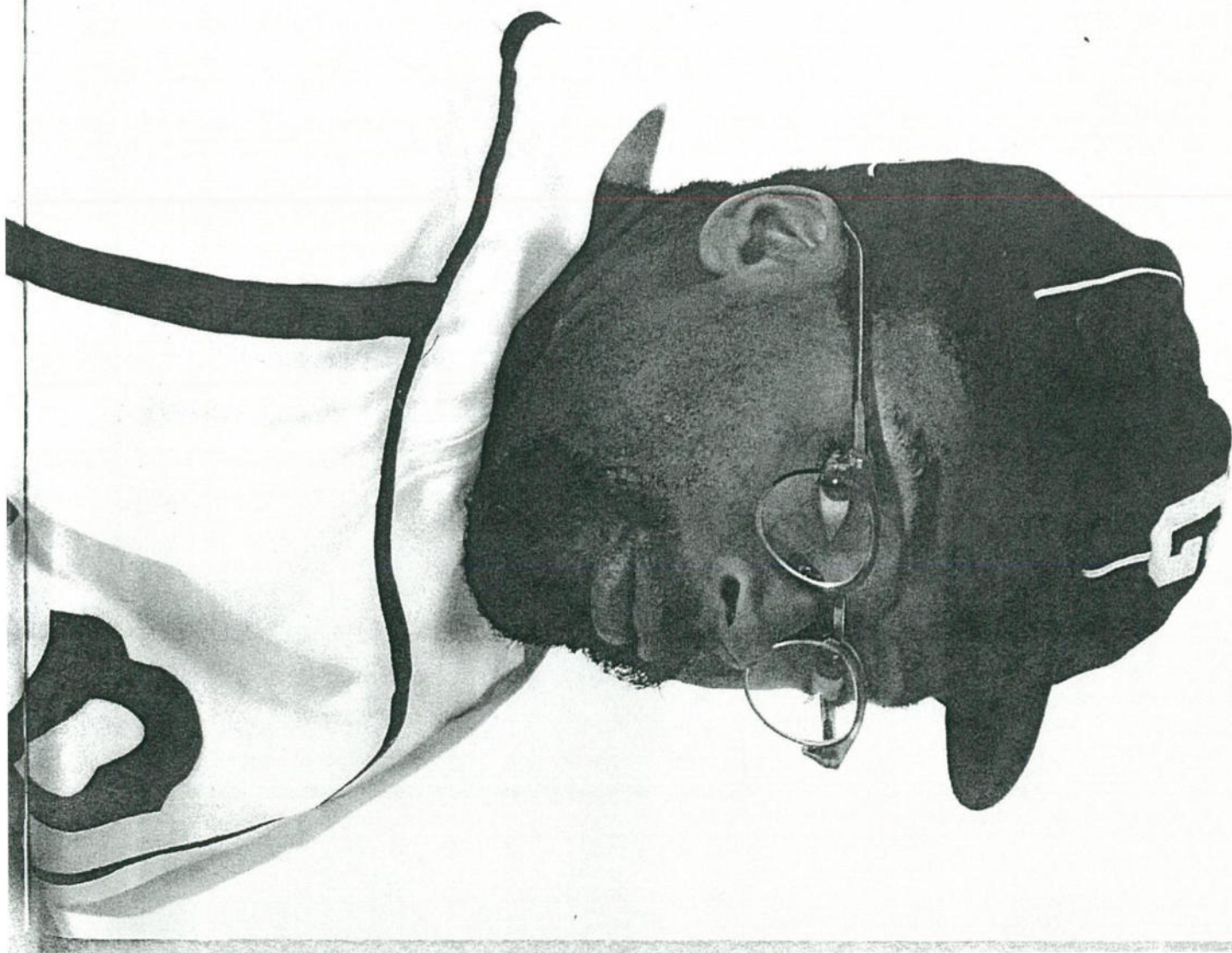
He's



Gotta Pitch

FILMMAKER AND SUPERFAN
SPIKE LEE HAS THROWN SOME
NEW CURVES INTO SPORTS
ADVERTISING BY RICK REILLY

It



THURSDAY

S

DO YOU SET OFF IN February to do a story on the new black sports guru, Spike Lee, and you get the brilliant idea to have his alter ego, Mars Blackmon, the original Look, Mom, I Can Fly guy, do the interview for him. Can't you see it? Mars Blackmon, star of Nike's Mike and

Spike ads, Mr. Street Chic, doing his first recorded interview! It would go like. . .

Q: So, Mars, what are your thoughts on Milwaukee Bucks forward Fred Roberts?

A: Yo, that haircut is radioactive!

Q: Are you saying his haircut is odd?

A: Are 7-Eleven smocks dorky?

Stuff like that. So you try it on him, and what do you get? Glacier floes. Turns out Spike Lee doesn't appreciate being thought of as Mars Blackmon or the guy who *plays* Mars Blackmon or even the guy who *invented* Mars Blackmon. In fact, Spike Lee will sign anything, anytime, except when somebody asks him to sign as Mars. Then he gives the Anthony Perkins stare, straight ahead, with those big, sleepy eyes. Guess you can't blame him.

People think of him

ducing the film, directing it, stealing every scene and driving Hollywood crazy with his insistence on having the final cut. So when you ask him to talk like Mars, he gets offended. Sort of like Van Gogh might have been if you had hollered, "Yo, Vinnie! Do *Sunflowers!*"

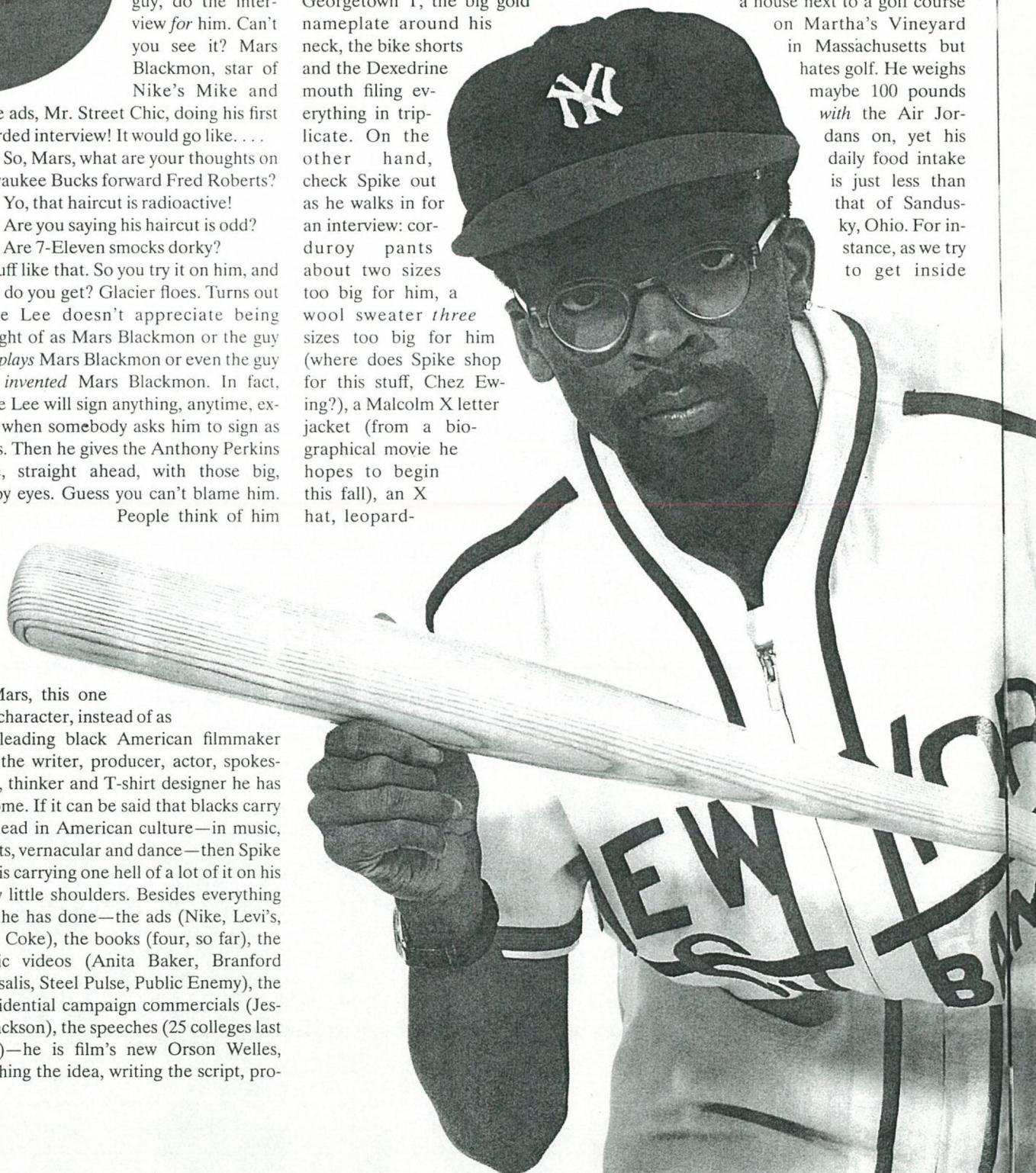
Still, for a guy who plays him so well, Spike is about as far from Mars as he is from . . . Mars. Check Mars out: the big black Cazals, the Brooklyn bike hat, the Georgetown T, the big gold nameplate around his neck, the bike shorts and the Dexedrine mouth filing everything in triplicate. On the other hand, check Spike out as he walks in for an interview: corduroy pants about two sizes too big for him, a wool sweater *three* sizes too big for him (where does Spike shop for this stuff, Chez Ewing?), a Malcolm X letter jacket (from a biographical movie he hopes to begin this fall), an X hat, leopard-

rimmed specs and, of course, new Air Jordans, which Nike must fly in fresh daily.

As for his mouth, Spike is about as talkative as tile grout. He speaks only if he has something important to say, and, even then, you could get sciatica leaning over to hear it. How can Spike and Mars be the same person? Who knows? Nobody said Spike Lee makes sense. He has a gorgeous '60 T-Bird but can't drive. He loves basketball but stands 5' 5". He is building

a house next to a golf course on Martha's Vineyard in Massachusetts but hates golf. He weighs maybe 100 pounds with the Air Jordans on, yet his daily food intake is just less than that of Sandusky, Ohio. For instance, as we try to get inside

as Mars, this one tiny character, instead of as the leading black American filmmaker and the writer, producer, actor, spokesman, thinker and T-shirt designer he has become. If it can be said that blacks carry the lead in American culture—in music, sports, vernacular and dance—then Spike Lee is carrying one hell of a lot of it on his bony little shoulders. Besides everything else he has done—the ads (Nike, Levi's, Diet Coke), the books (four, so far), the music videos (Anita Baker, Branford Marsalis, Steel Pulse, Public Enemy), the presidential campaign commercials (Jesse Jackson), the speeches (25 colleges last year)—he is film's new Orson Welles, hatching the idea, writing the script, pro-

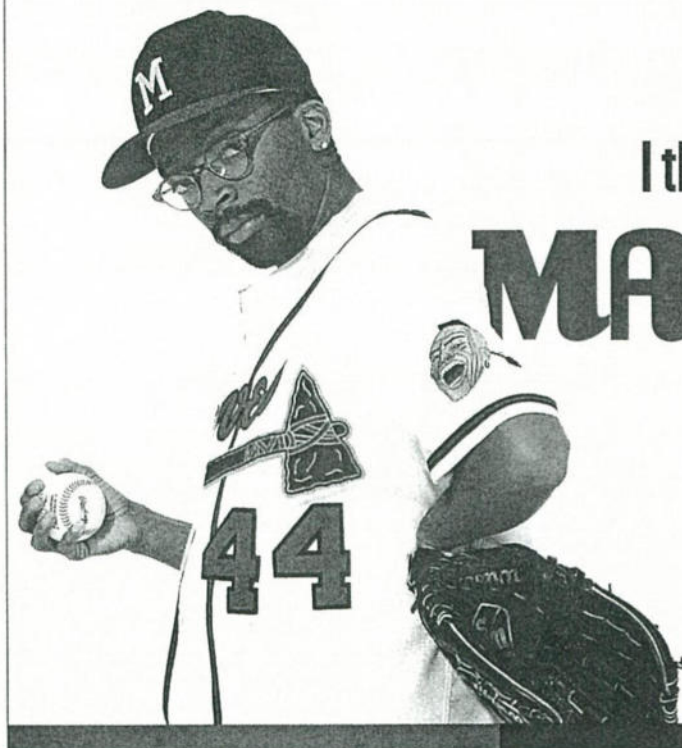


him, we have to dodge some serious chicken fingers, fries and a cherry Coke, which he puts down in the corner booth at Junior's, a favorite restaurant of Spike's, in downtown Brooklyn.

Yeah, Spike still lives in Brooklyn. Leave Brooklyn? Are you mental? Spike may never leave the *block*. As a teenager, he lived on Washington Park (his dad still lives there). Now Spike lives in a nice brownstone around the corner and works around yet another corner. Your serious homeboy.

Spike dreamed up Mars Blackmon for his first commercial film, *She's Gotta Have It*, and then unearthed him for Nike's Air Jordan ads. Actually, Nike ad writer Jim Riswold and producer Bill Davenport unearthed Mars. They were watching *She's Gotta Have It* when they noticed that Mars didn't take off his Jordans even to do the nasty. Light bulbs went off in their heads. Was it tough to sell Spike on doing an ad with Jordan? "I think he would've done the commercial free, just to meet Michael," says Riswold.

The first Nike ad was "Hang Time," in which Mars ends up hanging on the basket rim while Jordan dunks on him. Very cold. Directed by Spike in his beloved black-and-white, the ad was filmed in one murderous day. "I remember Michael saying over and over, 'How many



I think we'll let
MARS
die

more dunks do I have to do?" says Riswold.

Riswold writes the ads, but they're occasionally Spiked. For instance, it was Spike's idea to call Jordan "Money," as in, "Money, why you wanna leave me hangin'?" He also put the "Shuddup down there! We're trying to make a commercial!" into the ad shot in Mars's bedroom. As for the famous line "Do you know? Do you know? Do you know?" it came from Spike screwing up in *She's Gotta Have It*. "When I couldn't remember what line came next, I'd just say the line I knew a few times," Spike remembers. "The first time I did it, we realized it worked, so we kept it." The rest is street-hip history.

From Jordan's point of view, Spike can cop an attitude anytime he wants. "Spike's fun to be around, and he knows basketball," says Jordan. Besides, in Spike's ads, Jordan doesn't have 29 takes' worth of Wheaties dripping from his chin.

As for Spike, you can bring up Mars only a few times before he starts dropping the Cone of Silence over your head. "I never wanted to play Mars for a clown," he says. Spike wants to be serious, wants to be angry, wants to be an artist, and Mars keeps tweaking his nose.

Mars was even offered his own movie for polymillions, but Spike turned it down. Now Spike wouldn't mind letting Mars fade out for good. "I think we'll let Mars die a natural death," he says. And you think he means soon.

Spike and Mars have one other thing in

common: the sports page. Spike is Jack Nicholson East. He is seen at more Knick games than Marv Albert. He goes to Mets games and to Giants football games and to whatever game is being played tonight. This man is so afflicted that he reads *The National*. He weaves sports motifs throughout his films. Nola, the sexually hyperactive protagonist of *She's Gotta Have It*, wears the jersey of former Knick (now Washington Bullet) Bernard King, the ultimate scoring machine. Mookie, the loafing pizza delivery man who starts Brooklyn burning in *Do the Right Thing*, wears the jersey of Jackie Robinson, the Dodgers' pioneering black baseball hero. Pete Rose, Darryl Dawkins and Mike Tyson have all popped up in Spike Lee "joints." Truth is, Spike is no different from you or me in his rage for sports, except that when he yells at a Chicago Bulls game, "Yo, way to house him, Michael," Jordan looks at him and says, "Thanks," and then they have dinner together after the game.

Speaking of which, since the Mars interview has gone zilcho, you beg an invitation to go with Spike to the Knicks-Bulls game at Madison Square Garden tonight, where Jordan himself will appear. This is such a required event for Spike (two courtside seats) that he will miss the Broadway debut of his sister, actress Joie Lee, in the Lincoln Center performance of the Langston Hughes and Zora Neale Hurston play *Mule Bone*. "She understands," he says. After the game, Spike and Jordan chat about a possible project

PHOTOGRAPHS BY ANTHONY BARBOZA



by any MEANS necessary

for Fox. Then Jordan is off to the Black Girls' Coalition party at Reins, Lee is off to Joie's cast party . . . and you are off on a story that could go nowhere.

FRIDAY

What makes this guy so color conscious? He signs letters and screenplays with the Malcolm X marching slogan "By any means necessary." In his journal, he'll write "Black to work" or "Black to the future." His production company is called 40 Acres and a Mule, after the grants that American slaves mistakenly believed they would receive after emancipation. Last year Spike pulled 40 tons of money out of Citibank because it did business with South Africa. He refuses to allow his films to be released in South Africa while apartheid laws exist. He made a deal last year to take over *Spin* magazine for one issue, telling the editor, Bob Guccione Jr., that it would be *Spin*'s "blackest" issue ever. It was. (It was also the Spikiest issue; Spike put himself on the cover, conducted two interviews, featured his sister in an article and mentioned himself 27 times.)

It is a very big job, Chief Racism Expunger, and it means commenting on all walks of life, especially sports. Luckily, you mention race and sports in the same day and those sleepy eyes wake right up and you get plenty of Mo' Better Views. "Dwight [Gooden] and [Darryl] Strawberry would never go public with this," Spike says, "but I know there's an unwritten policy on the Mets that only a certain number of blacks can be on the team. I wish the Mets would just come out and say, 'Look, most of the fans who come to our games are white. It's just business.' It

would still be racism, but at least it wouldn't be veiled racism."

On college basketball: "Who do you think gets worse press, [Indiana coach] Bobby Knight or [Georgetown coach] John Thompson? Bobby Knight is a maniac, throwing this and that, stomping everywhere, but let John Thompson touch a player? Forget about it. He'd be lynched. On national TV no less."

On the NBA: "Why is the 12th guy on every team always white, 6' 11" and dorky? Why do you think the Knicks got Kiki [Vandeweghe, a white forward]? Everybody knows Kiki started the demise of the Knicks."

On Knick center Patrick Ewing and New York fans: "New York loves him now. But I can remember when these same people were calling him an ape and a baboon and a thug at Georgetown."

On this year's Super Bowl: "All that patriotism! It was scary. It was like people were waiting for the lynching to start."

And Spike doesn't confine his comments to interviews. There's this scene in *She's Gotta Have It* in which Mars is complaining to an acquaintance about having missed a Knick game when Bernard King scored 35 points in the first half.

MARS

'Nard was serving the whole Celtic squad. Even jammed in [Larry] Bird's ugly mug. A vicious death-defying high-flying Brooklyn Bridge 360 slam dunk.

JAMIE

Hold up. That white boy is bad. Best player in the NBA.

MARS

He's the ugliest mother— in the NBA.

Obviously, Bird's hero status in a black man's game rankles Spike. Referring to the uproar Isiah Thomas caused in 1987 when he said, "If [Bird] was black, he'd be just another good [player]," Spike says: "Look, I know what Isiah was talking about. Larry Bird has been positioned as the great white hope. Larry Bird can play, but the way the media has souped him up is unbelievable. The announcer is always going, 'Larry Bird can't jump the highest, but he makes up for it with his blue-collar work ethic.' And blacks are always described as 'gifted' and 'natural.' I think that's unfair to both parties."

There may be only one black athlete Spike doesn't like: "Neon" Deion Sanders. "Here's another young brother who got some money and will have it spent before he knows he had it," Spike says. Of course, Sanders once said that if he ever saw Spike, he would punch him "inside out." Spike smiles. "All he's got to do is spray me with some of that Jheri-curl juice and I'm done for." Jheri-curls, blue and green contact lenses, hair straightening, lip and nose thinning, these are things Spike does not approve of for blacks. That means Sanders is not nearly black enough. Nor schooled enough. "A lot of these athletes today, they might not even be able to tell you who Jackie Robinson or Curt Flood was," Spike says. "If it weren't for Jackie Robinson, these guys wouldn't have made much money. If it weren't for Curt Flood, sacrificing his career for free agency, these .250 hitters wouldn't be making \$1.5 million. These guys are lumps. They don't think anybody ever came before them."

Of course, when it comes to black owners in mainstream sports, almost nobody has come before them. The way Spike sees it, blacks dominate sports now the way blacks dominated the cotton industry in the South. "Until there are black owners, nothing will change," he says. "Black athletes will have no say."

If that sounds controversial, wait until you get a load of *Jungle Fever*, an interracial love story that was inspired by New York's 1989 Bensonhurst racial killing and which will be released in June. The film promises to be a shocker. But that raises the question, How much of Spike's work is done for art's sake and how much for shock's sake? Spike once said that if he ever made a film that wasn't controversial, he would freak. "I'm an instigator," he says. But what burns him up so?

SATURDAY

Another day, another ticket stub. This time it's Georgetown-Seton Hall at New Jersey's Meadowlands Arena. Georgetown coach Thompson, Spike's main man, hooked him up with seats, maybe because he and Spike have so much in common. They've been labeled reverse racists, accused of working with blacks almost exclusively. When gang members were blowing each other away over pairs of Air Jordans, Spike's and Thompson's Nike ads were accused of creating a need strong enough to cause murder. Jesse Jackson's Operation P.U.S.H. even started a boycott of Nike, ostensibly over the company's dearth of minority employees and the absence of blacks on its board of directors.

It didn't help that Spike had written a scene in *Do the Right Thing* in which Buggin' Out, a black radical, is walking down the block when Clifton, a white yuppie in a Celtics T-shirt, accidentally bumps into him and steps on his foot, leaving a big black smudge on one of Buggin' Out's new, unlaced white Air Jordans. Buggin' Out runs after Clifton.

BUGGIN' OUT

Yo!

CLIFTON

Yes?

BUGGIN' OUT

You almost knocked me down. The word is "Excuse me."

CLIFTON

Excuse me. I'm very sorry.

BUGGIN' OUT

Not only did you knock me down, you stepped on my new white Air Jordans that I just bought and that's all you can say, "Excuse me?"

(The commotion has attracted a crowd.)

BUGGIN' OUT

I'll — you up quick two times. Who told you to step on my sneakers? ... Damn, my brand new Jordans. You should buy me another pair.

CLIFTON

I'm gonna leave now.

BUGGIN' OUT

If I wasn't a righteous black man you'd be in serious trouble. SERIOUS.

"I never felt like there was any blood on our hands," Spike says. "I'm upset by anybody being killed. But you have to look at

why it is that way. What is it about these kids' lives that is so bleak that they need a pair of sneakers or a Georgetown jacket to give them self-worth?"

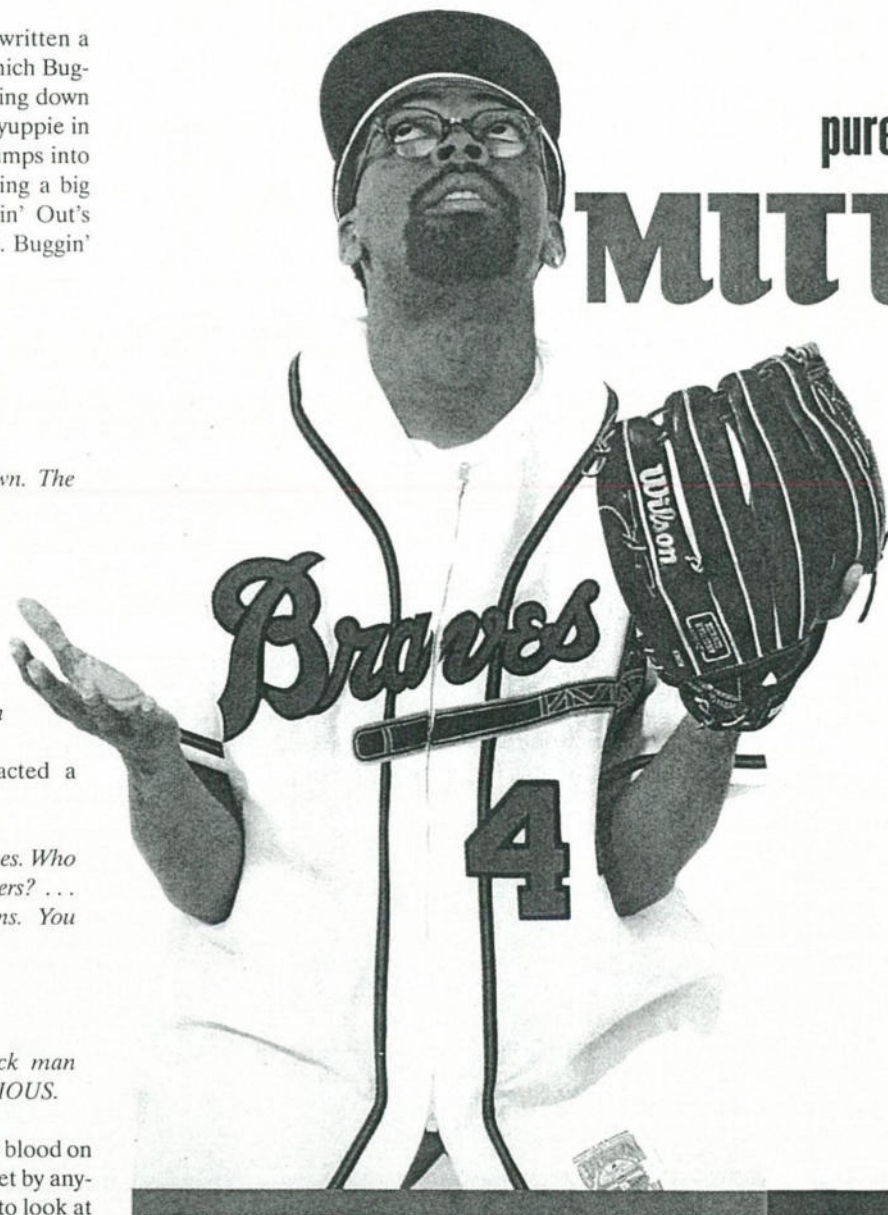
Spike appreciates that both Jordan and Thompson have stuck with him, even in his militant's clothing. "I think if Michael Jordan had a weak spine, if he were scared, if he were one of these handkerchief-wearing, chicken-and-biscuit-eating Negroes, he wouldn't have stayed with it," Spike says. "I know people have come up to Mike and said, 'I don't think you should be associated with Spike.' I know that there have been plenty of black athletes who have told me, 'Look, man, I'd really like to do it, but my agents say if I even get in a picture with you it will hurt

my image. They think you're too black.'"

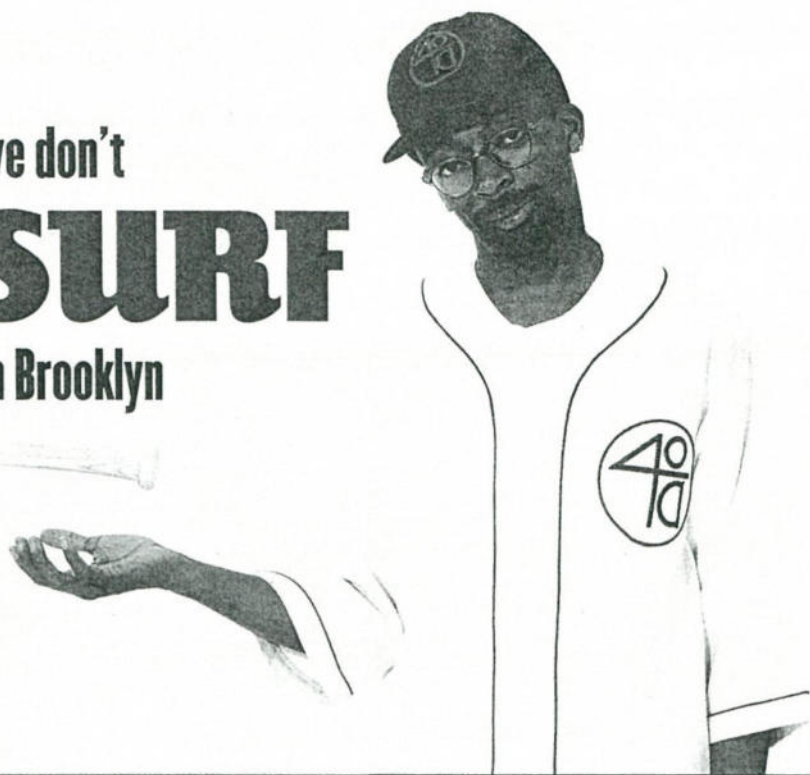
In fact, you've got to hunt to find an ethnic group Spike Lee hasn't offended. His two Jewish jazz-club owners in *Mo' Better Blues* (released in 1990) so offended Jews that Spike had to write an op-ed piece in *The New York Times* insisting he wasn't an anti-Semite. He infuriated blacks by focusing in *School Daze* (1988) on the mutual prejudice between light-skinned blacks and dark-skinned blacks. In *Do the Right Thing* (1989), Koreans flung racial insults at Jews, blacks at Italians, Italians at blacks, whites at Puerto Ricans and Puerto Ricans at Koreans in a Rainbow Demolition of racism.

So how come Spike remains one of the

pure Walter
MITTY



we don't SURF in Brooklyn



hottest rides on Madison Avenue? How come Spike's Jordan ads helped propel Nike miles past Reebok and Converse? How come Levi's went to him for its button-fly minidocumentaries on kids? In those, Spike covered everyone from the kids who chase home run balls on Waverly Avenue outside Chicago's Wrigley Field (his idea) to surfers in Huntington Beach, Calif. ("We don't surf in Brooklyn," he tells them), to a guy who spins 11 basketballs at once.

"There were people, going into this project, who were afraid of him," says Steve Neely, Levi's ad man at Foote, Cone & Belding in San Francisco. "He'd just done *Do the Right Thing*. *Mo' Better Blues* was just coming out, and people were wondering if it was going to be weird."

Levi's had Spike shoot a trial ad—he used two kids who speak fluently backwards—and the company was hooked. Notably, though, neither Spike's name nor his face was used in the televised ad, only his voice.

"Nike took a risk, I suppose," says Riswold, "but that risk probably appealed to some people, especially [Nike president] Phil Knight. He likes to keep people on their toes."

What both Levi's and Nike found out is that Spike sells. "Part of what makes him work in the core market we're going after [14 to 24 years old] is his rebelliousness and candor," says Levi's Dan Chew. "If anything, it's helped."

What makes the Nike ads work is pure Walter Mitty. Here is the world's biggest sports fan getting in some serious hang time with the world's biggest sports star. It's midget observing miracle, and every short guy who could never jump—white or black—relates. We all know that there isn't a shoe made that's going to help us dunk (who has less of a chance of dunking than Mars?), so we're in it for the laughs. In this way, neither Spike nor Mike is stained as a geeky shoe salesman. Hey, they were probably wearing the shoes in the first place.

Riswold: "I think every ad leaves this ultimate fan trying to decide which he likes more, Jordan or the Jordans, the player or the shoes." Even better, Nike lets Spike poke fun at not only Jordan but Nike itself. Whether it's Mars asking, "Yo, Money, what makes you the best player in the universe? Is it the shoes?" or Jordan trying to understand a "limited earth orbit" or Jordan dressing up as Spike in the wish-from-a-genie spot, each ad is designed to show Jordan to be as human as Mars. Hey, these pro guys are tall enough without standing on a pedestal.

The Spike and Mike Show has left Nike's competitors in the \$5.5 billion sneaker industry with their leather tongues hanging out. Now, instead of just hawking their own shoes, the other companies are chasing the leader. "Air out" is the new catchphrase with which Reebok assaults Jordans. "Hot air" is Converse's. Even Magic is trying to go street chic, though in

his L.A. Gear advertisement he comes off as Millionaire Taking Drive to Ghetto. "I like Magic," says Spike. "But those ads suck."

And, yo, even 6' 10" basketball coaches like to hang with Spike. Here come Mutt and Jeff now, Thompson and Spike chatting in the innards of the Meadowlands, Thompson's huge arm resting on Spike's shoulder yards below. And you can hear Spike saying, "Coach, two? On the 24th? O.K. coach? Two?"

Georgetown will be at St. John's next Saturday.

SUNDAY

If it's Sunday, these must be the Detroit Pistons. Spike has two on celebrity row at the Garden (one for his date, actress Veronica Webb, who appears in *Jungle Fever*). This makes three games in four days. You should have to pay this guy's popcorn bill. The only thing better than being a child all your life is being a child with money.

Shelton Jackson Lee—"I don't know why they call him Spike," says his maternal grandmother, Zimmie Shelton. "I never liked it"—was born into the middle class in Atlanta, Ga., in 1957, one of five children of a bass player, Bill Lee, and a teacher, Jacqueline Lee, both college graduates, both children of college graduates. This was, suffice it to say, a very tasseled household. The Lees moved to New York when Spike was two. By the age of five, he was being dragged by his mother to movies and Broadway shows. Loved the shows, but ate up the movies like the economy-size Ju-Ju-Bees.

The Lees spent several summers with relatives in Alabama, and in those years, 1963–65, Spike came nose-to-kneecap with bigotry. He can remember separate bathrooms for blacks and whites. He can remember moving into Cobble Hill, a white Brooklyn neighborhood, and being called nigger. "People always think discrimination is just in the South," he says. "But it's like Malcolm X said: 'The South begins at the Canadian border.'"

It didn't help that Spike was the littlest kid around. Once, two boys, both bigger, wanted to beat him up. They made an appointment with him to do so after school. Spike, ever organized, talked the teacher into letting him go home early.

When you are small and black and you are growing up in a white neighborhood and you have a slight speech impediment,



mo' better VIEWS

you learn to be suspicious of everybody. "He is very distrustful of people," jazz trumpeter Branford Marsalis, a friend of Lee's, told the cable TV show *Bravo*. "He was probably never the most popular guy in class." Spike's father, who, like Spike's four brothers and one sister, chose not to be interviewed for this story ("We're kind of on gag orders," said one brother), once said, "I think Spike's size has had a lot to do with his determination to do something big."

Big to Spike was becoming a professional athlete, but the closest he ever got to the arena floor was about 100 rows back. He has always gone to games, only now he sits farther down. At the Garden, he's at courtside opposite the Knick bench. A very good high-five spot. That's a long way from some of his no-meat-but-potatoes days as a kid. Spike's father, as stubborn as 41 mules, refused to play the electric Fender bass to make ends meet. He insisted on the purity of the stand-up bass, which meant he didn't work much. Spike's mother put in stiff hours as a teacher to make ends meet but never complained. The purity of the artist must have been in her, too. "We weren't starving," Spike remembers. "But sometimes it was hand-to-mouth."

It was never easy for Spike to love his mother full-out. Jacqueline was the bad cop. Bill was the good cop. She was the disciplinarian, and he was the lenient one. "All of us liked our father better because there was never any static coming from him," Spike says. "It would be like, 'Daddy, can we jump off the building?' 'Yeah, go ahead.'"

Spike didn't have much time to straighten out his feelings before his mother died suddenly of liver cancer, in

1976. Spike, 19, hurried home from Morehouse College in Atlanta to see her. When he left a few days later, how could he have known she would go in another two days? "I think about her a lot," he says. "She inspired me to write. I got my drive from her. I think she'd like the movies I'm doing now."

But if losing his mother is what burns inside Lee, he doesn't show it. Confronting racism so young is rotten, but nearly every black American has had to do it. There is something else about him, something deeper, something hidden. But where? And what?

MONDAY

Get lost twice on the subway, only to get to Brooklyn and find Spike has zero time. Swamped with Diet Coke people. But he hands over his "Jointography," the video collection of his work, and points the way to the video room. It'll do.

Spike once described himself as "a black nationalist with a movie camera—and that's a dangerous thing." The first film he ever shot was dangerous—looters robbing Harlem shops the day after the July 1977 New York City blackout. "It looked like Christmas," he once said. "Everybody was leaving stores with a color TV under their arm." Fresh out of Morehouse in 1979, Spike enrolled at New York University's film school and made tuition by cleaning film at First Run Features. He nearly flunked out. "I knew going in that because I was black, I had to be 10 times better than anybody else," he says. He wasn't.

By 1982 he had one last NYU film to do, his senior thesis, and if it wasn't terrific, he could kiss Tinseltown goodbye. He made a short film called *Joe's Bed-Stuy*

Barbershop: We Cut Heads, and all it did was win a national student Academy Award. And still it took Spike four years to find enough financing to make his first independent film, *She's Gotta Have It*, and even then he was up against preposterous odds. Shot in 12 days on the streets of Brooklyn and one indoor location and featuring fewer than 10 actors, the movie was paid for nickel by nickel. "I can remember Monty [Ross, the co-producer] would run home and check the mailbox, hoping there'd be checks in there," Spike says. At one point, Spike's phone and power were turned off and his rent was overdue. Things got so tight that crew members used the deposits from their empty pop bottles to buy film.

"I'm flat broke," Spike wrote in his diary then. "STARVIN' like MARVIN. I hope I never have to go through this again, it's been killing me. . . . That last screening, I made a joke about selling tube socks on 14th Street. Well, it's no joke. . . . When I get some money I'm gonna purchase a typewriter so I can start sending out letters, and so I can type my own goddamn script. . . . I will, however, never quit. I was born to be a filmmaker."

You may know the rest. *She's Gotta Have It*, made for \$175,000, grossed \$8 million at the box office and became one of the alltime independent smashes. It was so good that it gave Spike room to make a critical bomb, *School Daze*, before he hit it big with the shining *Do the Right Thing*, a movie the *Christian Science Monitor* called the most important American film of the 1980s. Like any great artist, Spike took us places we (at least we white viewers) had never been before, like inside a ghetto that wasn't the least bit frightening and into the lives of blacks who were neither jocks nor junkies, crackheads nor killers, pimps nor prostitutes, just people who explode when it gets too damn hot to be pressed any further. Spike told reporters that he hoped the film would wreck the 1989 reelection campaign of Mayor Ed Koch, whose confrontational style had contributed to the city's racial tensions. And it certainly didn't help Koch, who lost the Democratic primary to a black candidate, David Dinkins, now mayor. *By any means necessary.*

"What I like about [Spike's] movies," says Steven Soderbergh, the white director who made *Sex, Lies and Videotape*, "is that they're made from a totally black point of view. There's no attempt to make

things clearer for whites. Which is fine. He's imploring you to learn."

Spike wants to make a sports movie—probably about college basketball—and five will get you 10 it's not going to be *The Larry Bird Story*. "I saw Rocky with a white audience, and it got scary," he says. "They weren't cheering for an underdog to win, they were cheering for him to beat the — out of this uppity nigger, Apollo Creed. Rocky hit a nerve. The white public was fed up with blacks dominating boxing. In Rocky, white America finally had a heavyweight champion. Which is sad, because that's the only way they're ever going to get one."

Which probably explains what happened when HBO asked Spike to produce a boxing feature on Mike Tyson. Spike focused on Tyson and his agent, Don King, and their tirades against prejudice and the white world. Boxing writers had heard King give these speeches 4,000 times before, but Spike ran them like they were war news. The film was broadcast just before Tyson gave Alex Stewart a leather facial in Atlantic City in December, and not only was the documentary longer than the fight, but it also was far more interesting.

Mike Francesa, the CBS commentator, hated the film. "Here were three black men, King, Tyson and Lee, who have risen above any disadvantages they have had," says Francesa. "But instead of telling kids, 'Hey, we did it, you can too,' they were essentially saying, 'Forget it. The system won't let it happen.'" Francesa writes Spike off as a fan—not a journalist but a "big-time sports groupie. He's always high-fiving Patrick [Ewing] at Knick games. That's what he's into."

But HBO vice-president Ross Greenburg, who gave Spike a free hand, says the film "changed the face of sports television. It has changed the way producers think about their presentation. Usually, they just let the gun go off and start the race. We've never taken it to the lengths Spike took it." The film won two Emmys.

Spike lost \$7,000 making the film, but he didn't care. He believes that King and Tyson had never *really* been heard, thanks to a white-dominated press. "The problem with Don King is that he's too powerful for people," Spike says. "People don't like his relationship with Mike Tyson because he's keeping Tyson's money away from the whites. The world is not set up that way. If you have talent, you're supposed to have a white agent, a white ac-

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countant and a white lawyer. King doesn't pay by their rules."

Look who's talking.

TUESDAY

Stuffed again. "No time," Spike says in the morning, rubbing his eyes. Your plane home goes wheels-up tomorrow. Six days into the story and you still don't really know what drives Spike Lee. There is only one thing left to do. The first day here, Spike reached into his desk drawer and gave you a book. He handled it as if it were the Hope diamond, but you'd never heard of it: *Fallen Prince*, by Donald P. Stone. "I have to have this back," Spike said.

You have a choice? You read.

You read about two lovers, Mike and Phoebe. Owned by different men in South Carolina, they were slaves who risked whippings to cross plantation lines and be together. They were married on Christmas Day, 1811, and eventually had seven children. As Phoebe was carrying their eighth, her owner yanked up stakes and moved to Alabama. Mike asked to be sold to Phoebe's owner but was denied. Mike and Phoebe were separated. And for slaves, separated usually meant forever.

After years of loneliness, Mike requested to buy his own freedom. The owner agreed, but for \$1,900, a fortune for a slave who could make only cents a week working extra on his off-hours. Still, blister by blister, night by night, year by year, Mike worked until he became free. He set out searching for Phoebe in the Black Belt of Alabama, careful to avoid whites who might ignore his papers and return him to slavery. Finally, in May 1825, he arrived at a lightless slave quarters in Snow Hill, Ala., where he met Phoebe's eyes and opened his arms.

Mike and Phoebe stayed together another 40 years, he free, she enslaved. They had another three children. Sadly, Phoebe died a year before the South surrendered to the North and Alabama's slaves were freed, but she begot a huge and free family. Her fourth child, James Carmichael, fathered a fervently religious daughter, Martha Carmichael Edwards, who was known around western Alabama

for her elegiac prayers. But she didn't change life for blacks in the South the way her crippled son did.

Nobody expected William James (Willie) Edwards to live, much less walk, but walk he did, despite an osteopathic infection and despite never having a pair of shoes as a child. And nobody expected him to bust his tail hard enough and long enough to come up with the \$8 a month he needed to attend Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee Institute in Tuskegee, Ala., but he did, beginning in 1889. And nobody believed he could overcome his own sickness and a stutter to become the class salutatorian in 1893, but he did. And nobody expected him to become a protégé of Washington's and to found one of the finest black schools of its time, the Snow Hill Institute in Snow Hill, but he

did, in 1893. And when he did, even history wrote it down.

As he got older, Edwards had many grandchildren, but Bill Lee was perhaps most in awe of the great man. Driven, like Edwards, Bill became a great stand-up bass musician, eventually sitting in with stars like Billie Holliday, Sarah Vaughan and Duke Ellington. But Bill was as stubborn as any of his ancestors, and he refused to play the electric Fender bass. He would sooner starve. And he nearly did. Eventually, he found new fame as a composer and performer for films, thanks to a young director who believed in Bill as much as he believed in himself. Little guy in leopard-rimmed glasses. His son.

WEDNESDAY

Now you can see him. Now you can see where he gets his drive. And all that anger, too. And brilliance and doggedness and burden. A legacy of will began with Mike and Phoebe, ran through Willie Edwards (the fallen prince himself) and Bill Lee and now courses through Spike Lee. He springs from American black royalty.

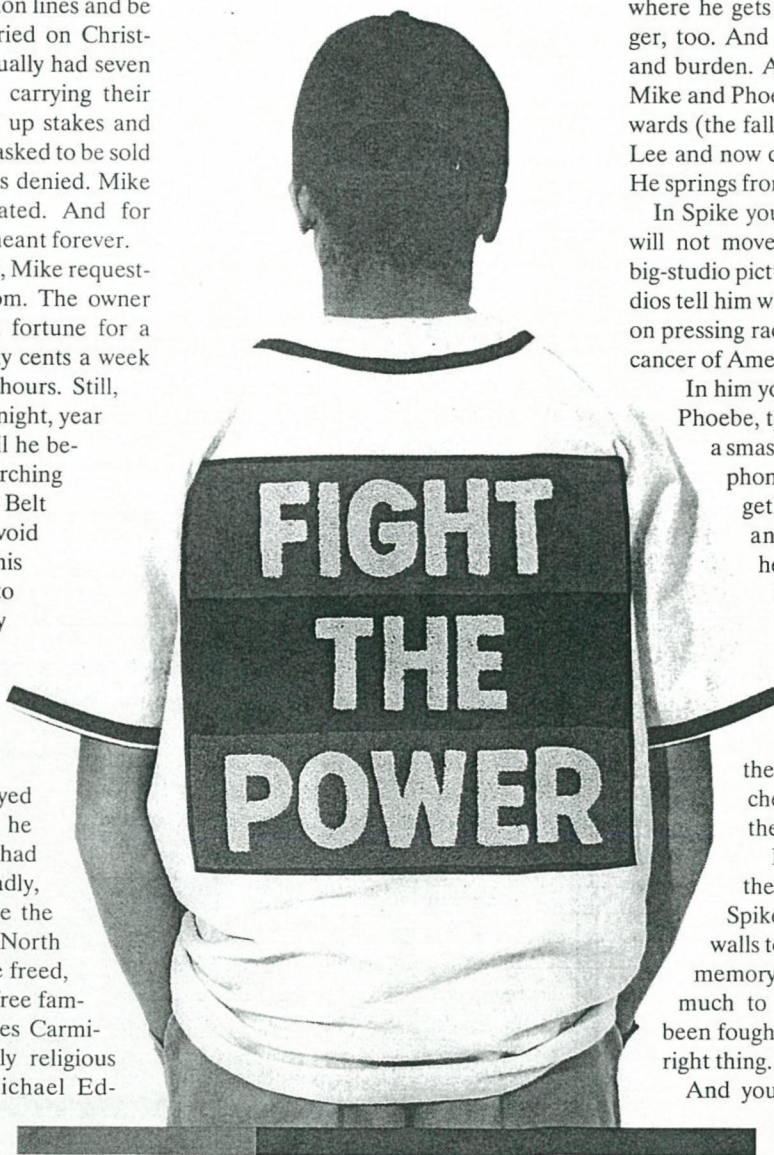
In Spike you see Bill, the purist. Spike will not move to Hollywood and make big-studio pictures. He will not let the studios tell him what to write. He is hell-bent on pressing racial issues. "[Racism] is the cancer of America," he says.

In him you see Willie and Mike and Phoebe, too, unwilling to quit. Make a smash hit without a typewriter, a phone and two nickels to rub together? No problem. "He has an unshakable will to be heard," says filmmaker John Sayles.

In him you see his mother, the survivor. He controls his company like a warden. If the electrician comes to fix the light, Spike writes the check. "I want to be here for the long run," he says.

It has to be this way. Like the ones who came before, Spike chiseled through great walls to get to where he is. In their memory, he is serious. There's too much to lose now. Too much has been fought for already. Got to do the right thing.

And you wanted him to do Mars Blackmon? Yo, scribe, blow.



Why cola shares are falling

Changing consumer soft-drink tastes prompt growth in non-colas

By Allison Fahey

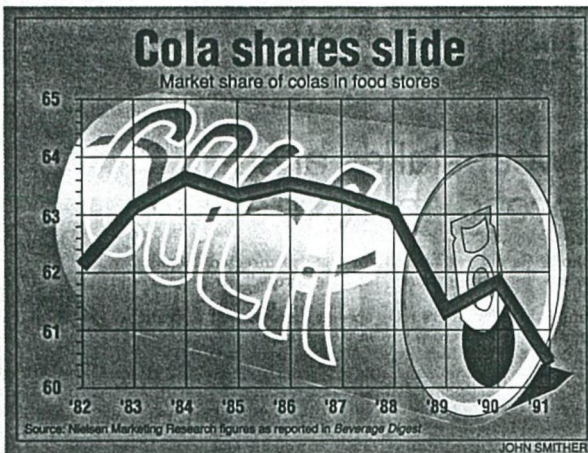
Cola's share of the soft-drink industry has lost its fizz as non-cola drinks increasingly catch the fancy of consumers.

For the past eight years, cola's share of food-store soft-drink sales has been trending downward. But the cola share last year fell 1.4 percentage points from 1990 to 60.4%, according to Nielsen Marketing Research figures published by *Beverage Digest*. That's the lowest share in the 15-year period for which figures are available.

To make matters worse, diet colas, which grew at a steady clip for more than a decade, suffered a share decline, falling 0.4 percentage points to 20.9%.

Many industry observers say changing consumer tastes will continue to nibble away at cola's share.

So far this year, cola's share has continued to decline in food stores, where about 40% of soft-drink sales occur. Share declined



1.8 percentage points to 60.5% compared with a year ago.

However, cola volume sales in food stores were up 1.9% during

February and March, compared with a 4.9% increase for all soft drinks. The declining share stems from the higher gains made by

non-cola brands.

"I believe that cola has reached a peak, and it will decline through the 1990s, and perhaps beyond, in terms of percentage of share," said Hellen Berry, senior VP-marketing of Beverage Marketing Corp.

"There is a softness of cola as a flavor," said Tom Pirko, president of Bevmark, an industry consultancy.

"No product escapes the maturity curve," he said. "Sometimes you reach a plateau and it's difficult to get off it. That's where colas are right now."

Mr. Pirko said the trend could accelerate, at least temporarily, causing as much as another 5 percentage-point drop in the next decade.

But he believes cola will remain the primary beverage segment, saying fountain sales are less vulnerable than food stores because consumers have fewer choices.

For their part, Coca-Cola Co. (Continued on Page 50)



Spike Lee

Spike Lee gets in front of camera for Nike

By Marcy Magiera

Spike Lee has all the right marketing moves for Nike.

For the first time, the high-profile filmmaker is appearing as himself in two spots for Nike, including a paid public service announcement breaking later this week that strongly addresses race relations.

It's a topic especially suited to the director, whose films "Do the Right Thing" and "Jungle Fever" have generated significant controversy on that subject.

In another spot that broke Saturday, Mr. Lee plays the role of playground coach to promote Nike basketball shoes.

Mr. Lee directs himself in both commercials, representing his first personal endorsements of Nike. Since 1987, he's directed Nike's Air Jordan basketball shoe campaign and appeared in spots as the character Mars Blackmon, the ultimate Michael Jordan fan.

Mr. Lee's roles in the new commercials are undoubtedly enough to guarantee Nike press coverage amounting to millions of dollars (Continued on Page 50)

L'Oreal plans new-products push

By Pat Sloan

L'Oreal is making a major commitment to new products in cosmetics and skincare this year, and next year plans its first new mass-market fragrances in 10 years.

In a bid to increase its share of the mass-market cosmetics and fragrance business, L'Oreal will boost ad spending behind its Plenitude skincare line by 50%, to \$25 million, while increasing cosmetics ad spending about 20%, to \$16 million.

Parent Cosmar expects to spend more than \$80 million behind the L'Oreal name, which also appears on a variety of haircare products marketed by other divisions.

The spending hikes behind cosmetics and skincare come as L'Oreal sees an uptick in its cosmetics business and continued strength in skincare.

"We are beginning to see the results of some of the decisions and directions we've taken in the last few years," said John Wendt, senior

VP-general manager of L'Oreal Cosmetic & Fragrance Division.

"For the first four months of 1992, our business was up 19%, with cosmetics up 15% and Plenitude up 46%," Mr. Wendt said.

"Fragrances were flat," he added, noting

Ad spending for the Plenitude skincare line will climb 50%; cosmetics spending will rise 60%.

that its brands, Vanderbilt and Chaps by Ralph Lauren, are 10 or more years old.

Salomon Bros. analyst Diana Temple backed up that assessment in a recent report on the beauty industry, where she noted that L'Oreal ranks along with Revlon's Almay as one of the "best performers across all product lines."

The critics haven't always been so kind. L'Oreal cosmetics were considered a rising star in the early '80s, but by mid-decade they began to lose ground to larger cosmetics competitors such as Noxell Corp.'s Cover Girl, now owned by Procter & Gamble Co., and Maybelline.

But in recent years, L'Oreal has succeeded in turning around its mascara and foundation businesses on the strength of technologically advanced products. And though it hasn't overtaken larger rivals like P&G, it's moving up.

In drugstores, where L'Oreal is strongest, total brand share for 1991 is estimated at just 10% of the overall \$1.4 billion in cosmetics sales through those retail outlets.

But L'Oreal's share in the January/February period for some product categories rose, with L'Oreal mascara at roughly 16% and foundation at 13.5%, up an average of 22% from the same period last year, the company said.

This year, L'Oreal will continue its (Continued on Page 52)



Internal strife over the corporate sales group restructuring prompted Time Inc.'s S. Christopher Melgher (L) and Don Elliman to hire a management consultant.

Infighting impedes Time's revised ad sales structure

Customers give corporate sales setup mixed reviews

By Scott Donaton

NEW YORK—Nearly a year after Time Inc. set about changing the way magazine ad space is bought and sold, the progress of the publisher's corporate sales restructuring has been impeded by internal strife.

The restructuring has been plagued by infighting between the corporate sales group and individual magazines' executives. And the role of ad directors is unresolved, as are issues including pricing authority and accountability.

Even more important, perhaps, customer reviews are mixed, indicating Time Inc.'s internal problems have had some impact externally.

Officials of Time Inc., a division of Time Warner and the nation's largest magazine publisher, readily concede there are significant kinks in the structure. But they say their original strategy remains unchanged and the issues that have been raised involve day-to-day operating details.

"Change like this is incredibly hard," said Don Elliman, who oversees the corporate sales group as president of sales and marketing. "Organizational change in an older, established company is really tough to do, and we are living, breathing proof of that reality."

Still, he said, "We are on the right road and making progress. We've had, in my mind, some clear gains in the way we do business, and, equally, we've had some roadblocks or problems we've had to address."

Company executives assess the new structure's impact a little more bluntly.

"Externally, I think it's been a success. Internally, it's been a disaster," said an executive with one magazine. "There's a big turf war going on right now between the corporate group and the publishers. It raises serious questions about what price do you pay to serve the customer."

Countered Reginald K. Brack Jr., chairman, (Continued on Page 54)

Media mavens already crowning CBS

Network builds on momentum with fall prime-time schedule

By Joe Mandese

NEW YORK—CBS is the odds on favorite of media executives for the 1992-93 network TV prime-time season.

Coming out of the 1991-92 season, CBS had the greatest momentum due to its continued ratings growth, racking up a 1.5-point gain for a 13.8 Nielsen rating, while the other networks both declined.

And going into the new season, the consensus among agency executives is that CBS holds the largest hand of winning shows.

"Just from a process of elimination of what I've seen on ABC and NBC so far, if I were CBS, I'd be popping the champagne already for next season," said Steve Auerbach, exec VP-national broadcast at DeWitt Media, a major independent media company.

"From what we've seen of ABC, it is pretty safe stuff that won't really change their positioning. And from what we've seen of NBC, honestly, it is the worst schedule I've ever seen NBC come out with," Mr. Auerbach said.

Though TV buyers so far have seen relatively little of the Big 3's new programming, most agreed with Mr. Auerbach's assessment.

"More likely than not, CBS will win the household race," said Joel Segal, exec VP-national broadcast at McCann-Erickson Worldwide.

However, Mr. Segal cautioned, "Advertisers buy viewers, not households."

Mr. Segal was alluding to a dramatic overhaul by NBC to recast its prime-time schedule to woo the younger and more demographically appealing audience most network advertisers favor.

As part of that makeover, NBC

will add eight series, representing 5½ new hours of programming, to its schedule. These replace several successful, but older skewing, shows including "Matlock," "In the Heat of the Night" and "Golden Girls," which were picked up by the other networks.

Among the new contenders on

"If I were CBS, I'd be popping the champagne already for next season."

NBC's roster, agency executives said, the two with the greatest promise are "Rhythm & Blues," a half-hour comedy about a white disc jockey at a black radio station in Detroit; and "Loved by You," a half-hour comedy about a young married couple that's a vehicle for comedian Paul Reiser.

ABC will introduce seven new

series, representing five new hours of programming. Most agency executives termed ABC's schedule "safe" and said it would have little impact on its competitive standing vs. CBS and NBC.

ABC's "Hangin' With Mr. Cooper," a half-hour comedy about an ex-basketball star who's a teacher and lives with two female roommates, was judged to be the most promising of the network's newcomers by agency executives.

Although CBS will add nine new series, or 6½ hours of new programming, agency executives said its schedule remained the most stable. It's leaving three strong nights—Sunday, Tuesday and Thursday—untouched and is making only minor adjustments to its hot Monday night lineup.

Moreover, they believe several of CBS' new shows hold strong promise because they come from hot producers.

On Monday, CBS is adding two highly touted new half-hour sitcoms: "Hearts Afire," starring John Ritter and produced by "De-

signing Women" and "Evening Shade" producer Linda Bloodworth-Thomason, and "Love & War," from "Murphy Brown" producer Diane English.

CBS also scheduled two other highly touted series on Fridays, a night in which it's trying to build a second comedy block similar to its coveted Monday schedule.

The new Friday night series include "Bob," a half-hour comedy from Bob Newhart; and "Picket Fences," a 1-hour drama from former "L.A. Law" executive producer David Kelley. To round out the Friday night block, CBS also moved in "Major Dad" and "Designing Women" and picked up "The Golden Palace" (a revamped version of NBC's "Golden Girls").

"What we have here is a situation where three networks [ABC, NBC and Fox] are competing on one battlefield and one network is off on its own," said Paul Schulman, president of the Paul Schulman Co., a subsidiary of Advanters, a division of Wells Rich Greene BDDP. □

Lee

(Continued from Page 3)
in free advertising. But company executives say Mr. Lee's value to Nike goes far beyond that of a traditional celebrity spokesman.

"Our relationship transcends

advertising," said Scott Bedbury, director of advertising.

More important, Mr. Bedbury said, is the link Mr. Lee provides Nike with the urban culture in areas where the marketer does much of its business. Nike's ear to the asphalt, if you will.

"He keeps us here in Beaverton, Ore., [aware of] what's happening in major markets like New York—specifically, Brooklyn," he said.

For instance, Mr. Lee is said to have been intimately involved in developing the paid public service spot addressing racism.

The spot relates Mr. Lee's point of view and is said to be quite strong in tone.

Nike spent several weeks deciding whether to run the spot in the aftermath of the violence that broke out in Los Angeles and other cities several weeks ago. The commercial was shot before the riots began.

Wieden & Kennedy, Portland, Ore., created Nike's ads.

The desire to capture what people on the street are saying is what led Levi Strauss & Co. and its agency, Foote, Cone & Belding, San Francisco, to hire Mr. Lee to direct the two-year "Butt your fly" campaign for 501 jeans.

Research for the campaign showed "it was important for kids to look up to people who do it their own way and are successful," said Peter Angelos, senior VP-group creative head at FCB.

"Spike's the perfect example of that dichotomy," he said. "He had

"We respect the passion that [Mr. Lee] has in communicating what he believes in."

an unbelievable rapport with the kids."

Most of Mr. Lee's time is currently occupied with post-production on "Malcolm X," his film about the life of the black activist. Warner Bros. is scheduled to release the film late this year.

Mr. Lee has stirred up the film industry on numerous occasions with his vocal complaints that Hollywood is more willing to back big-budget projects by white filmmakers.

Being a company with a somewhat in-your-face style, Nike isn't dismayed by the controversy that surrounds Mr. Lee.

"There's a natural association between Nike and people who take risks," Mr. Bedbury said. "With Spike Lee comes a certain amount of risk, but we respect the passion that he has in communicating what he believes in."

In the future, it's possible at least one of Mr. Lee's film projects will be financed by Nike.

The director wants to make a documentary following one National Collegiate Athletic Association basketball team for a season.

"We're looking for an opportunity to help him in that endeavor," Mr. Bedbury said. □

Cola

(Continued from Page 3)
and Pepsi-Cola Co., which virtually control the cola industry, say they're more concerned with sales volume than market share, because higher volume translates into greater profits.

But permanent share reductions can have a wider effect, because many retailers allocate shelf space according to market share.

Industry observers believe consumers are looking for lighter, healthier and "more gulpable" beverages like those with natural flavors and fruit juices.

"I think the 60% factor in food stores is a bottoming out," said Jesse Meyers, publisher of *Beverage Digest*, noting that volume in the overall soft-drink business grew 4.9% during February and March.

That growth, he said, can be traced mainly to orange-flavor brands like Cadbury Beverages' Sunkist and lemon-lime drinks such as Coca-Cola USA's Sprite.

In addition, he singled out Dr Pepper and Pepsi-Cola's Mountain Dew as two of the strongest performers recently.

Anticipating a slowdown in cola growth, both Pepsi-Cola and Coca-Cola this year are stepping up marketing support for non-cola brands.

Pepsi-Cola, for example, will back the citrus-flavor Mountain Dew line with a record ad budget, estimated at \$20 million. BBDO Worldwide, New York, handles.

And Coca-Cola is believed to be increasing advertising for Sprite this year, after restaging Fresca as

an alternative to sparkling waters. Lowe & Partners handles both brands.

Furthermore, both Pepsi-Cola and Coca-Cola are forging joint ventures to compete in categories like ready-to-drink iced teas.

"Pepsi and Coke are not just cola companies anymore," said Gary Gerdemann, Pepsi-Cola's public relations manager. "Cola is still our largest product, but it's not the only trick in our bag. We are moving ahead so as not to be blindsided by any company or [beverage] category."

But while Pepsi-Cola and Coca-Cola look to other beverage categories, they're increasingly protecting their core cola brands.

"Recent moves such as Crystal [Pepsi] show that we intend to energize that segment. We have no intention of letting it decline," Mr. Gerdemann said.

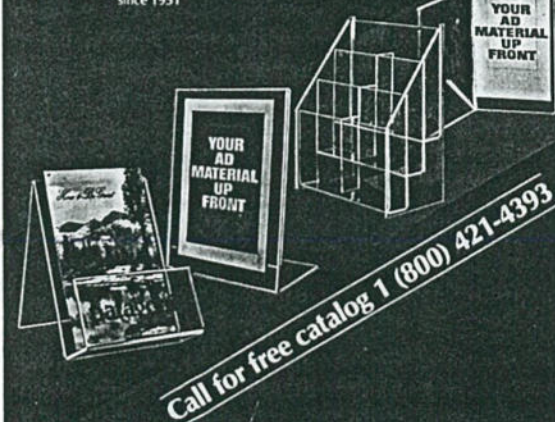
"They're fighting back," Mr. Pirko agreed. "They will never abandon their core rationale for being. They have a mandate to protect and grow the mother lode. The two products in response to that are Crystal Pepsi and Coke II." □

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Washington Post 5/29/92 D1

Ad Agencies, Doing the Right Thing

After L.A. Riots, New Wave of Commercials Promotes Racial Tolerance

By Paula Span
Washington Post Staff Writer

NEW YORK—"Let's play some ball," says Spike Lee in a Nike commercial that premieres tonight during the NBA Eastern Conference final.

"I ain't playin' ball with no ball-hoggin', trash-talkin', show-boatin', hip-hoppin' homeboy from Harlem," comes the response, approximately, from a series of derisive white faces. As epithets go, these are far milder than the ones leveled in the scene from "Do the Right Thing" that inspired the ad, but network TV has its limits.

Blacks fire back. "And I ain't playin' ball with no left-footed . . . no-dribblin', golden-haired, hockey-playin' farmboy from South Dakota."

Lee, who also directed the 30-second spot, intercedes. "If we're gonna live together, we gotta play



Filmmaker Spike Lee flashes the peace sign in a Nike commercial.

together," he says, flashing a two-fingered peace sign.

"Black and White" is part of a wavelet of new advertising that promotes racial tolerance. Though sev-

eral campaigns were under discussion or in production before the violence that followed the Rodney King verdict, news coverage from Los

See ADVERTISING, D5, Col.

Commercials for Racial Tolerance

ADVERTISING, From D1

Angeles has certainly helped speed them onto the airwaves. In its first post-L.A. issue, Advertising Age ran a front-page editorial headlined "A call to admen: Help stop riots." A trickle of ad executives are beginning to tackle the long-untouched issue.

Whether such efforts can have much effect on social attitudes and behavior is always a point of debate; it's unpredictable whether a given piece of advertising can sell deodorant, let alone stem bigotry. "Racism has been with this country for 400 years," Lee acknowledges. "You're not going to get rid of it with a 30-second commercial."

But he and others who are doing the right ads think they can at least spark thought and discussion. "It's phase one, just a starting point, to maintain awareness and reinforce people's perceptions that it's up to all of us," says Allan Corwin of the Mingo Group, a black-owned New York agency. Mingo developed the "Stop the Hate" campaign, which the Ad Council and the sponsoring Leadership Conference Education Fund will unveil next week.

The first of this current batch of ads came from Nynex Corp., one of the seven regional phone companies, and was seen April 25 on an ABC children's special about prejudice, hosted by Peter Jennings. In the spot, called "Marbles" and created by Ogilvy & Mather, "a little blue marble is minding its own business and a little yellow marble comes and bumps it," says Laurie Pollock, an O&M senior vice president. "You'd think, at the beginning, it was a game."

The marbles express anger in chirps and squeaks and—through stop-action photography—recruit reinforcements. Pretty soon, whole armies of marbles are facing off. But two bold individuals roll forward to discuss their differences, causing their comrades to cheer and intermingle, until the camera pulls back to show a globe formed by variously colored marbles. "Nynex believes communication can help bring everyone together," says a female voice-over.

Nynex had no plans to re-air the spot until Los Angeles erupted. The corporation hurriedly bought time on local newscasts in Boston and New York that weekend. A week later Sony donated time on its Jumbotron, the giant video monitor overlooking Times Square, and showed "Marbles" four times an hour, around the clock, for seven days.



Spike Lee doesn't directly tout shoes in his million-dollar s

The week after the L.A. unrest, New Yorkers also a striking series of posters blossom on 250 telephone osks, a pro bono effort from a small agency called Sn Greenland. The decision to address tolerance was reac earlier this spring after conflicts between blacks and sidic Jews in Brooklyn's Crown Heights and reports : two black children in the Bronx had had their faces w ened with shoe polish by white teenagers. "It seemed city was ready to explode, there was so much racial t sion," says Creative Director Doug Raboy. Producing : placing the ads cost Smith/Greenland an estima \$150,000.

The posters went up as scheduled May 4, by which ti they'd acquired significance beyond New York. "The : thing is, it's a message that's always timely," Raboy sa In stark black-and-white, the posters posit life-threaten situations—emergency surgery, near-drowning—in wh the rescuer is of another race. "Is that a problem?" t posters ask. So many people, churches and schools call the agency to ask for extras that the several hundred le overs are all gone.

Much higher profile is Nike's \$4 million campaign (in : time, plus close to \$1 million in production costs), whi



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Lee shot on the roof of a Los Angeles parking garage two weeks before the King verdict. "Black and White" is one of three spots hawking Nike's new basketball shoe. The other two feature Golden State Warriors star Tim Hardaway and a Spikelike sense of urban liveliness but also push the \$85 Air Raid model. "Black and White," though it shows the footwear maker's logo and mentions its name (and deftly touts one of Lee's movies with the slogan "The Mo' Colors, the Better"), isn't overtly a product plug.

After the disturbances in L.A.—which Lee pointedly calls "the uprising" because "it wasn't just bedlam; it was a calculated response to the acquittal of four police officers and the miscarriage of justice"—Nike wondered whether it wanted to proceed with a commercial that took on race. It decided it did, and "Black and White" will constitute 20 percent to 25 percent of Air Raid TV advertising through August, first on the NBA playoffs, then on MTV and ESPN and prime-time network programming.

"This is something we have to deal with if we're going to move forward in this country," Lee says. "Everybody joining hands and saying, 'We are the world' ain't gonna make it."

The longest-term commitment to anti-bigotry advertising, however, will be the "Stop the Hate" public service announcements by the Ad Council, the folks who brought you Smokey Bear, "A Mind Is a Terrible Thing to Waste" and the Peace Corps' "The Toughest Job You'll Ever Love." The first two 30-second TV spots, in English and Spanish, will be shown at a press conference in Washington next week.

The press conference was to be held this week; its last-minute postponement is testament to the haste with which a multimedia campaign that had been talked about for a year, and was planned for late summer or fall, is now being rushed to completion. In the wake of urban violence, "it was speeded up tenfold," says Ad Council spokesman Brad Lynch. Sponsored by the nonprofit Leadership Conference Education Fund, it will diversify into print ads and billboards and will address many varieties of prejudice, including those against ethnicity, religion, disability and sexual orientation.

The Ad Council typically rounds up \$24 million or so in donated media time and space annually for each of its campaigns, which run for years (Smokey's been around since 1945). That makes "Stop the Hate" smaller-scale than the anti-drug crusade of the Partnership for a Drug-Free America (to which it has been compared), but more intensive than any of the other new anti-bigotry entries. "TV has the unique capacity to change how people think about society and about each other," says Ralph Neas of the Leadership Conference on Civil Rights, the lobbying group related to but legally distinct from the sponsoring Education Fund. "I

do believe a long-term campaign could have a positive and dramatic impact."

But there is likely to be continued debate about advertising's role in this minefield. The industry is already drawing flak—not for the first time—for helping to shape a materialistic culture that contributes to frustration and anger among those unable to buy into it. Nike, whose shoes have become staples of urban wardrobes, will launch a clothing line this summer called "Spike's Urban Jungle Gym." Retail prices will range from about \$17 for a T-shirt to \$250 to \$300 for a wool and leather stadium jacket embroidered with some of the same phrases Lee uses in his anti-prejudice ad.

The advertising industry has also been criticized for its own racial record, both in creative output and in hiring. Only 4.7 percent of the industry's 255,000 employees in 1991 were black, according to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, and 4.1 percent were Hispanic. (Nike itself was the target, two years ago, of a boycott by the Chicago-based civil rights group PUSH, which decried its employment practices. The company, which says the boycott had no measurable effect, says its U.S. work force is now more than 18 percent minority.)

"You'd find that African Americans are embarrassingly nonexistent in the advertising business," says Fred Danzig, editor of Advertising Age and coauthor of its front-page editorial. "It's certainly not what it could be."

Last summer, New York's Department of Consumer Affairs surveyed 11,000 ads from 27 magazines and found that while blacks make up 11 percent of magazine readers, only 3 percent of the models in the publications' ads were black, a proportion that had barely budged since the 1960s. (By comparison, 7.5 percent of models in television advertising are African American, probably as a result of union contracts with affirmative action provisions.) Consumer Affairs Commissioner Mark Green asked nearly 50 ad agencies and publications to sign a "visual integration pledge," which carried no legal force but committed them to work to redress the imbalance. "They ignored us as efficiently as they ignore minorities in their advertising," Green says.

Still, the argument persists that a business whose 30-second spots are frequently more provocative and arresting than the programming that surrounds them must have a contribution to make. "Advertising usually lags behind public moods," says Danzig of Ad Age. "It waits to see what's happening and then seizes upon it. . . . Social upheaval is something advertising sees now and recognizes that it has to get involved in. We're really talking about the future of the country."