

A&M

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BIOGRAPHY

When Franklyn's scholarship money ran out he returned to Los Angeles where he took a regular 9-5 job, making frequent appearances at the "Comedy Store," a club designed to give old and new comedians a chance to work on routines in front of audiences. Eventually, he was spotted by Wally Amos who was the talent co-ordinator for the syndicated show "Black Omnibus." Wally put Franklyn on the show and soon afterwards became Franklyn's personal manager.

After an appearance at "Hoot" night at the Troubadour in Los Angeles, Franklyn was asked to appear as the opening act for Jerry Butler. One night during this engagement, A&M's President, Jerry Moss happened to be in the audience, and was so impressed by Franklyn's humor that he asked him to make an album for A&M.

The only way to describe the contents of the album is to ask Franklyn; he says:

"Side one deals with experiences and observations about the predominantly black high school that I attended. I talk about the hoods or so-called 'bad-niggers' that made life miserable for teachers and skinny dudes like me. All in all, I'm trying to hip people to the other side of Room 222, if you dig what I mean. On side two I rap about my college days at U.C.L.A., my experiences in New York City, and make what I consider to be some humorous observations about television shows and commercials." He continues:

"In summing up I would just like to say that I find a lot of things, events, attitudes etc. . . in our society absurd, and this album is my attempt to illustrate why. I hope you dig it."

DAILY **VARIETY** DAILY

Sammy Shore's Comedy Store

(\$1 Admission)

Franklin Ajaye performed his second show Tuesday night without the earlier throngs of record company personnel on hand, but response couldn't have been better from handpicked house than it was for second-show "regulars." Whether talking about Harlem, Jamaica, tv or sports, Ajaye had pulse of house with every word. Young black comic is glib, gifted, at ease with his material and makes audience feel he's enjoying himself as much as it is. Personable, without hesitation, Ajaye was solidly professional and spontaneously funny, with timing and inflections right on mark. Signed to record label and then showcased, Ajaye has a future as a comic.

Thursday, August 30, 1973

THE *Hollywood* REPORTER
Friday, August 31, 1973

NIGHTCLUB REVIEW

Franklyn Ajaye

Comedy Store—through Saturday

The record company, as Van Morrison puts it, had paid out for the wine, and generally made a big thing of Franklyn Ajaye's opening night this week at the Comedy Store. As it turned out, Franklyn did not sink under the weight of the drama, even with the added weight of Sammy Shore's multiple "young Franklyn let me give you some advice on the business" routines.

Ajaye, who can't be much more than 24, is genuinely gifted, with a comic persona of charming innocence from which humor springs without apparent effort. The innocence, blessedly, almost always carries a shining, witty afterbite; it ain't just cute.

Ajaye's basic stance is that of a skinny, bright weakling type in the midst of the "bad nigger" characters of Watts' Dorsey High, and then of Harlem and the world at large. The stance is a step beyond Bill Cosby's original remembrance-of-childhood act; Ajaye is remembering childhood specifically as a black.

He has a terrific way with names — he recalls "Mr. Chris," the gym teacher, and the dumb shop class types, Otto and Harvey, and a party date, Spongetta, "my main squeeze." He also recalls the wimpy ones who ran for school office with campaign pitches like "I wear glasses, I have nothing to live for, please vote for me," and a Japanese kid so brilliant he could type 95 words a minute, no hands, just by thinking in the direction of the typewriter.

Ajaye has some good lines about black films, about a New York City nightclub so dirty that its bathroom door "is opened by a large germ," and about Harlem being too rough for such as he. His takeoff on black blues guitarist-singers may be the best thing in his repertoire, maybe even funnier than Martin Mull's rich-real-estate-man's blues.

His diction is slurred sometimes, but that's okay cause Franklyn himself is okay and then some. — Annette Duffy

REVIEWS