

# AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES

Thirteen/WNET New York  
450 West 33rd Street  
New York NY 10001-2605  
thirteen.org



press information

## AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES

### *Quincy Jones biography*

Composer, entrepreneur and all around musician-extraordinaire, Quincy Jones has been interested for decades in mapping his family's genealogy - one whose branches grow through Mississippi and Louisiana, Chicago and the Pacific Northwest. Through *AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES*, Quincy discovers new truths about his multiracial ancestry reaching back decades before the Civil War.

The older of two boys, Quincy was born in 1933 to Sarah and Quincy Sr. amid the exploding African American community of Chicago's South Side. The boys moved with their father and his new wife to Bremerton, Washington, across the Puget Sound from Seattle, where Quincy discovered his love of music and his prodigious talent first began to unfold.

In 1950, Quincy won a scholarship to the esteemed Schillinger House of Music, now the Berklee College of Music, in Boston, but dropped out after one year in order to join the trumpet section of Lionel Hampton's jazz band. He moved to New York in 1951, where he began to arrange for such luminaries as Sarah Vaughan and Count Basie, among many others.

In 1961, at the age of 28, Quincy became the first high-level black executive at a major record company when he was promoted to vice-president of Mercury Records. Two years later, he won his first Grammy Award and scored his first film. After recovering from a near-fatal brain aneurysm in the mid-1970s, Quincy went on to score Alex Haley's *Roots* miniseries, and in 1979 began collaborating with Michael Jackson, a relationship that yielded the best-selling album of all time, 1982's *Thriller*, as well as the hit albums *Off the Wall* and *Bad*.



During the 1980s, Quincy produced the landmark album *USA for Africa* and its hit single, "We Are the World," which garnered him three Grammy Awards. He has scored more than 35 films, garnering three Academy Award nominations. In 1985, he co-produced and scored Steven Spielberg's film adaptation of *The Color Purple*, which introduced Whoopi Goldberg and Oprah Winfrey to movie audiences, and received three Academy Award nominations for Best Picture, Best Song and Best Score.

In 1989, Quincy produced the critically acclaimed Grammy Award-winning Album of the Year *Back on the Block*, which featured jazz legends alongside R&B and rap stars. In 1991, he created the hit NBC comedy *The Fresh Prince of Bel Air*, launching Will Smith's career. Quincy formed Qwest Broadcasting in 1994, one of the largest minority-owned broadcasting companies in America, which he sold in 1999.

Quincy has won 27 Grammy Awards and received 79 Grammy nominations, more than any artist in history. In 1995, he received the Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award from the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Science, and in 2001 received a prestigious Kennedy Center Honor, which recognizes lifetime contributions to American culture through the performing arts.



Co-Produced By  
Thirteen/WNET New York  
and Kunhardt Productions

Major funding for *AFRICAN AMERICAN LIVES* is provided by  and the following  brands: Pringles®, Folgers®, Bounty®, Charmin®, Tide®, Downy®, Pampers®, Crest®