

THE
BEST
& WORST
OF 2006

Top Stories of the Year

Breakups, makeups and babies on the way: West Coast Editor REGINA R. ROBERTSON looks back on a year we'll never forget

Divorces and Separations

This year Black Hollywood served up enough drama to keep the blogosphere abuzz with salacious scoops and scandals every hour, on the hour. When news of the demise of **Bobby** and **Whitney's** 14-year lovefest flooded international newswires, attention turned to **Bobbi Kristina**, who is entering adolescence in the midst of her parents' very public meltdown. Keep your head up, baby girl.

After 12 years of red-carpet arrivals and five kids, the ink on **Eddie** and **Nicole Murphy's** divorce papers finally dried. Not long after, the comic found his way into the arms of Scary Spice, **Melanie Brown**. Meanwhile, Grammy winner **Babyface** and wife **Tracey Edmonds** also called it quits. Married 13 years, the Edmondses vowed

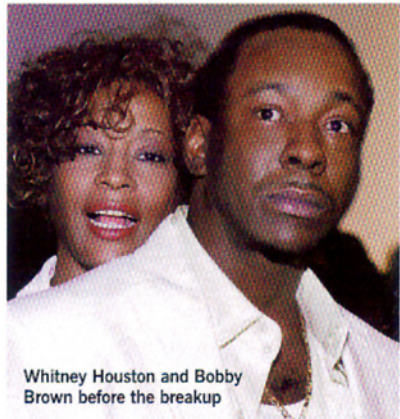


Shaquille and Shaunie O'Neal

to remain "best friends." After all, there's the family's booming entertainment empire to consider. Sound familiar? Wed for seven years, **Russell** and **Kimora Lee Simmons**, the proud parents of two little girls and multiple phat dynasties, announced their impending divorce, then seemed to get back together, sort of.

Births

While a handful of folks did some downsizing, others added new branches to their family trees. Just months after Oscar nominee **Angela Bassett** readied the nursery for her newborn twins, the ever-competitive sports duo **Kobe** and **Shaq** both became fathers to baby girls on the same spring day.



Whitney Houston and Bobby Brown before the breakup

Farewells

Continued prayers are in order for Rev. Run and family of MTV's reality hit *Run's House*, who had to say good-bye to newborn daughter Victoria Anne far too soon. And as time ticked by, a number of our greats passed on, beginning with baritone balladeer **Lou Rawls**. Civil rights crusader **Coretta Scott King** died in late January, nearly 38 years after her husband's assassination. Having left their mark on the music world, **June Pointer**, **Wilson Pickett**, **Billy Preston** and hip-hop's überproducer **James "J Dilla" Yancey** also departed this life, as did modern-dance icon **Katherine Dunham**, Tony Award-winning hooper **Fayard Nicholas** and statuesque beauty **Tamara Dobson** of *Cleopatra Jones* fame. And although our first lady of science fiction, **Octavia Butler**, and photographer-filmmaker-author extraordinaire **Gordon Parks** have gone on, their legacies will surely nourish a future crop of creative visionaries.

With a new year just around the corner, strap in and brace yourself for another tabloid-driven celebrity ride.



Proud parents Angela Bassett and Courtney B. Vance