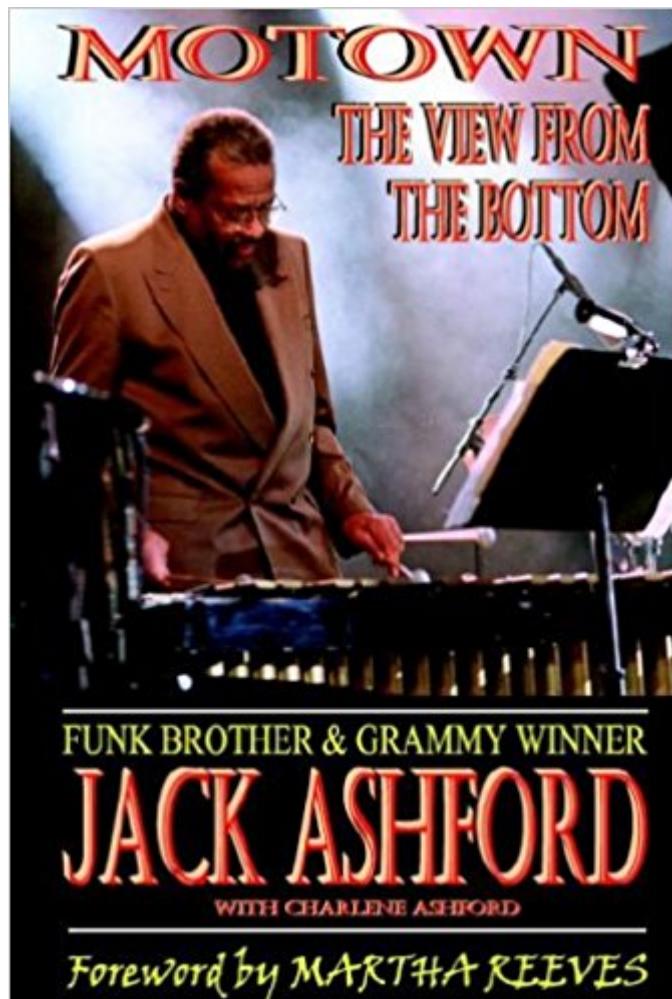


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Motown: The View From The Bottom



Synopsis

Jack Ashford is the man whose percussion playing provided the relentless pulse that drove the classic Motown beat. The Supremes, The Temptations, Four Tops, Smokey and The Miracles danced and sang to Jack's time. His tambourine hissed and spat the bad news on Marvin Gaye's Grapevine and his vibes rang out joyously behind Mary Wells, Jimmy Ruffin, Martha and The Vandellas and Gladys Knight. Throughout Motown's glory years, as stars came and went, Jack was there with the other Funk Brothers, in the background, never missing a beat, laying the foundation - the 'bottom' - that their success was built on. At long last, with the reformation of the Funk Brothers and the making of their movie, Standing In The Shadows of Motown, Jack is no longer in the background. It's his turn to come up front and tell what he knows. And what he knows is worth knowing. He tells untold stories from the Snakepit (Hitsville's legendary Studio A), gives us new perspectives on the producers, musicians and artists of classic Motown and takes us with him through his extraordinary life. It's all there - his charmed military career, his business ventures, his early days as a jazzman, the meeting with Marvin Gaye that changed his life, touring with Motown acts at home and in Europe, freezing and starving in English hotels, memories of friends and colleagues at Hitsville, the tragic dismantling of the Detroit operation and life after Motown.

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Customer Reviews

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Marvin Gaye's Grapevine and his vibes rang out joyously behind Mary Wells, Jimmy Ruffin, Martha and The Vandellas and Gladys Knight. Throughout Motown's glory years, as stars came and went, Jack was there with the other Funk Brothers, in the background, never missing a beat, laying the foundation of the *Bottom* that their success was built on. At long last, with the reformation of the Funk Brothers and the making of their movie, *Standing In The Shadows of Motown*, Jack is no longer in the background. It's his turn to come up front and tell what he knows. And what he knows is worth knowing. He tells untold stories from the Snakepit (Hitsville's legendary Studio A), gives us new perspectives on the producers, musicians and artists of classic Motown and takes us with him through his extraordinary life. It's all there of his charmed military career, his business ventures, his early days as a jazzman, the meeting with Marvin Gaye that changed his life, touring with Motown acts at home and in Europe, freezing and starving in English hotels, memories of friends and colleagues at Hitsville, the tragic dismantling of the Detroit operation and life after Motown.

Jack and I were Army buddies at Fort Eustis, Va. In all the years since then I thought I had lost contact with him. A mutual friend called me and asked when was the last time I had spoken to Jack since he knew Jack and I were pretty tight and we clubbed together in D.C. I was stunned to the core when he informed me about Jack's notoriety and he could not believe that in all the passing years I did not have any contact with him. I suffered a debilitating accident in 1964 and lost many memories from that time period through drug use. Amazingly enough I was a DJ during the Funk brothers rise to fame but never tied Jack to them. It is quite possible the word Funky may have been coined when Jack noted my attire on an occasion we went out and he exclaimed "Morris, man you look funky!! This was the first time I had ever heard this word and did not understand the connotation but since Jack used it to describe me I knew it was "all good"!! Thanks for the memories Jack.

A fascinating account of what really happened amid so much controversy and so much "He said..She said" from one who was there. As one of the newly discovered FUNK BROTHERS, Jack Ashford deserves our thanks for a razor-sharp memory and loads of photographs from the Hitsville, USA days on Detroit's Grand Boulevard through the nation-wide and overseas tours and on into the days of desertion. Ashford is as skilled with words as on the tambourine, an instrument

considered by those not in the know to be a child's toy. The literal unearthing of the FUNK BROTHERS was poetic justice for a national treasure relegated to the trash heap once MOTOWN left town and left cream-of-the-crop studio musicians to fend for themselves. This covered the gamut of disappointments, from low-paying to no-paying jobs, poor survival skills never before needed or required, and personal and financial bankruptcy. This book is entertaining as well as being factual about lives on the line. Ashford, to his credit, doesn't stoop to bitterness or casting blame, just the facts. Do yourself a favor and get the DVD-STANDING IN THE SHADOWS OF MOTOWN to accompany this view of MOTOWN:THE VIEW FROM THE BOTTOM.

Inside Motown from a different perspective. Life looks different depending where you stand. Mr. Ashford seems like a very decent straight-up guy. He gives an inside view that's not simply nostalgic myth-making. I have the feeling that he has more to say about the way the musicians were treated by the company but is too much of a gentleman to reveal it all. Good book and a worthwhile part of the literature about the creation of the Motown music of the 1960's.

Someone wrote that Mr. Ashford is not a writer. No, but, he is a musician extraordinaire who has contributed to the composition and creation of the soundtrack of what it takes to make REAL music. Mr. Ashford shares with us in a laid-back, down-home kind of way. This account is not loaded with technical jargon and accounts of record industry deals, but one man's life and the role that he played in making the Motown Sound unforgettable.

I loved this book!! jack Ashford is a consummate musician--as the other Funk Brothers and is greatly admired by me!! I love listening to all of the Funks on various Motown recordings. Jack took us from his humble beginnings in Philadelphia to Studio A and the Snake Pit at Hitsville to across the globe in just a few pages. He often told humourous stories about the people he worked with like Marvin Gaye, etc. At the end of the book are some very deep and touching poetry that Jack has beautifully written!! If you are just starting to read this book, you are in for quite a treat!!!Patricia A. Washington (Sweet Pea)Author of Bedford Street Memoirs (Living On My Block in the 60's)Bronx, New York

I loved this read - Jack Ashford has given a fantastic insight into how life through all the ups and downs of being part of such a legendary time in the history of music

Excellent!

This book by Jack Ashford was very limited in its inside peek behind the scenes at Motown. I was more interested in the actual recording sessions themselves and what took place. What I got were constant, annoying comparisons between Motown and basketball teams. I wish there would have been more meat to this book. I did enjoy reading about the musicians themselves. Need more.

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