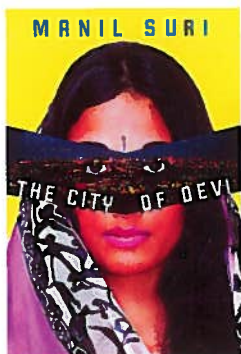


Reviews: Books

BY JOHN LEWIS



The City of Devi

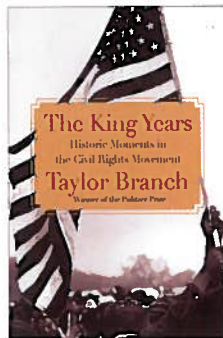
Manil Suri
(W.W. Norton & Company)
In his third book, Suri twists the apocalyptic, on-the-road novel into a peculiar love story that's both tawdry and hopeful. The acclaimed novelist and UMBC math professor creates a surreal Mumbai blasted by terrorist bombings, beset by lawlessness and misinformation, and spooked by rumors of a Pakistani nuclear attack. Sarita navigates this landscape looking for her missing husband, Karun, a bookish and, seemingly, inhibited physicist. As it turns out, someone from Karun's past is also searching for him. Jaz, a gay Muslim, met Karun while cruising for sex, and their relationship, which wasn't so inhibited, predates the marriage. It's a bizarre love triangle super-charged by religion, sexuality, and the overarching political conflict. Don't expect a Bollywood adaptation anytime soon.

Manil Suri reads from his new book at UMBC's Albin O. Kuhn Library on February 6.

The King Years: Historic Moments in the Civil Rights Movement

Taylor Branch
(Simon & Schuster)
Taylor Branch's acclaimed, 2,000-page *America in the King Years* trilogy—*Parting the Waters* (1988), *Pillar of Fire* (1998), and *At Canaan's Edge* (2006)—gave a sweepingly detailed account of the civil rights movement. In this comparatively slim volume (less than 200 pages), the Baltimore-based historian offers a streamlined narrative, identifying 18 essential moments from the movement and focusing on the central players. Drawing from his trilogy, Branch provides succinct summaries of the pivotal events and introduces each chapter for much-needed context and connectivity.

Taylor Branch will discuss *The King Years at the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture* on February 27.



Young Thurgood: The Making of a Supreme Court Justice

Larry S. Gibson
(Prometheus Books)
Most Baltimoreans know Larry Gibson as an attorney, longtime law professor, and campaign manager/political adviser to Kurt Schmoke. He's also a historian and damn good writer, as this book about Thurgood Marshall's formative years makes clear. The by-now mythic Marshall story usually begins in New York in the mid-1930s when he was working for the NAACP, and zooms to *Brown v. Board of Education*, then on to the Supreme Court. But Gibson delves into Marshall's local roots and methodically presents a trove of material about his family, education, mentors, and early career. Gibson's vigorous account makes Marshall all the more human by recounting the myriad small victories and setbacks that prepared him for groundbreaking work on the national stage.



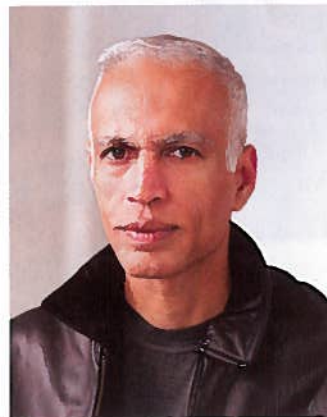
MANIL SURI FEELS LIKE HOME?

BY JOHN LEWIS

Does Baltimore ever remind you of Mumbai, or other cities in India?

It doesn't, but we can work on it. First, fill the streets with people until every inch is occupied. Ask every car-owner in the entire state to drive into the downtown area. Stuff the light-rail with commuters so that they are hanging out of the doors (have some perch on the roof, as well). Unleash street vendors to sell snacks at every corner, cover every wall with Bollywood film posters—you get the idea. Perhaps Christo might consider it for his next project?

For the full interview with Suri, visit baltimoremagazine.net.



Author Manil Suri.

B To read more of arts and culture editor John Lewis's musings on Baltimore's arts scene, check out his blog, *All the Pieces Matter*, at baltimoremagazine.net/allthepiecesmatter.