

Ishmael Reed Interviews Quincy Troupe
About the 2022-2023 NBA Season

Ishmael Reed: Denver had a better team?

Quincy Troupe: They had a much better team than the Miami Heat. The Miami Heat was running on guts. Jimmy Butler had a bad game. He had an off night.

Ishmael Reed: His turnover in the last few minutes of the game probably lost the game.

Quincy Troupe: Denver had too many stars. They had too many really, really good players. I didn't think Miami could win that game. I never did think so. 'Cause the only one they had was basically Jimmy Butler and he had a subpar series.

Ishmael Reed: You think the Boston Celtics would've won? Could have beaten Denver?

Quincy Troupe: I think Boston had a better chance than Miami. Boston had a really good team, but they didn't perform. I know Jason Tatum's family from St. Louis. And I watched him grow up since Tatum was a little boy. I watched him grow up and play basketball. I don't know him, but I know his family. Tatum has been a great player for a long time. The problem with Boston was Jaylen Brown. Nobody talks about it, but Jaylen Brown wants to be the star of the team. He wants to be a star. And he wants to make the money. And he's a problem on that team at this point because he hasn't, he has not accepted his secondary role. He's a really a good player, but he's not on the same level as Tatum. And then I think he has a little jealousy 'cause he wants to be a star badly, and I can understand that. I don't have anything against it. But if you're playing for the championship, you gotta play together and you gotta go to your strength. Jason Tatum is a great player. He's just a great player. And so you gotta accept that secondary role. That's what that's about. You gotta accept the secondary role that you're dealt. He couldn't do it. He seemed like he was always pouting about something. Because of his attitude, he brought that team down.

Ishmael Reed: What, what about Nikola Jović?

Quincy Troupe: You know the problem with sports writers, most of them are, are, are white. And they always want a white hero. So, Jović is a really good player. I ain't taking nothing from him. Cause I think he's a great player. But I think that Jamal Murray is too. If you look at who's the leading scorer in that series, it was Murray. He's the dagger in everybody's heart.

Ishmael Reed: I noticed that.

Quincy Troupe: He stuck the dagger in everybody's heart.

Ishmael Reed: Who did you favor?

Quincy Troupe: I didn't pick anybody. I don't like Boston because of their past, but because Tatum is my homeboy from St. Louis, and I knew his parents and all that; I wanted him to play well. But because I have a real dislike for Boston, I was a little ambivalent about them.

Ishmael Reed: Why do you dislike Boston?

Quincy Troupe: Because Boston has been so racist over time. Now they've gotten better so I accept that. But I guess I'm a human being.

Ishmael Reed: What do you think about their coach? They got a Black coach, Joe Mazzulla.

Quincy Troupe: But I have disliked Boston for so long, I couldn't get past my dislike for them, even though they had a Black coach. I was neutral in the whole thing. Yeah. But I did want the Black coach, Mazzulla, to win. And I did want Tatum to win.

Ishmael Reed: Why do you think that Murray doesn't get as much credit as Jović?

Quincy Troupe: He does not. He don't say anything, but he does not. If you look at those box scores, and you look at who stuck the D in everybody's hearts all the time, constantly, it was Murray. You think that, I think he really did.

Ishmael Reed: Do you think that Black broadcasters like Reggie Miller have to praise white players in order to keep their jobs?

Quincy Troupe: I don't know. I, I would hope not. I can't answer that, cause they seem to go overboard in praising the white players. I mean, with a guy like Jović, he's just a fucking great

player. You gotta give it up to him. Like Bird was a great player, man. You might not like him, but he could put the ball in the basket, man.

Ishmael Reed: What about the other White Hope, Luka Dončić?

Quincy Troupe: You have very few Black sports writers and the white sports writers are always looking for the White Hope. That's my problem with them. I knew a lot of them because I used to write about sports, and they were always rooting for the white guy all the time.

Ishmael Reed: That happens in boxing. Floyd Mayweather says white sports broadcasters insult Black boxers. Larry Merchant was constantly on his case. George Foreman said he quit as a broadcaster because Merchant and others didn't know what they were talking about.

Quincy Troupe: It happens in everything. I can understand that. Everybody roots for their people.

Ishmael Reed: So, so what's, what's happening with that kid in the Memphis Grizzlies? Ja Morant. What's the matter with him? That guy's with the gun and all that.

Quincy Troupe: He's just stupid. He is just silly. All of a sudden he came from the ghetto, came up from Memphis. He grew up in a bad neighborhood.

Ishmael Reed: So he has proven to the posse that he hasn't changed. Is that it?

Quincy Troupe: Something like that. He runs with that posse. You better cut 'em loose. I told somebody about him the other day. Somebody asked me. I said, 'He better cut them guys loose, man. Shit. He about to blow a lot of money and fame.' Cause he's really a good player now. Don't get me wrong. He's a really a dazzling player, you know? Okay. But he got that ghetto attitude. And he carries it off the court. That one: I just gotta carry this gun. Cause he's running with the posse, you know, running with his boys. Better cut this guy loose.

Ishmael Reed: Let's talk about the Knicks.

Quincy Troupe: The Knicks are pitiful. Their management is bad, they're just ridiculous, man.

Ishmael Reed: What about Julius Randle?

Quincy Troupe: Randle is pretty good. Another thing is the thing between Randle and Jalen Brunson. Brunson can be a great player, but Randle demands that he has a ball in his hand.

Ishmael Reed: Ball Hog.

Quincy Troupe: Yeah. He's a ball hog. And he ain't that good. He's, he's pretty good, but he ain't great. Brunson could be great, man. There's a lot of jealousy in sports, man.

Ishmael Reed: Man, it broke my heart to see Doc Rivers go down.

Quincy Troupe: That's another instance. You gotta win all the time. If you are Black, you gotta win all the time. They are looking for an excuse to get rid of you.

Ishmael Reed: Isn't that what happened with Phoenix and Monty Williams?

Quincy Troupe: See, the thing is, they don't like them guys making all that money first.

Ishmael Reed: Well, he's making more money now.

Quincy Troupe: Yeah, I know he is. One thing you can't get rid of is jealousy.

Ishmael Reed: You know, they don't want Black coaches.

Quincy Troupe: No. They don't want a Black coach. They don't want them making all that money. And most of the time, that is when they accept it, it's okay. If the guy's good.

Ishmael Reed: Jeff Van Gundy, who broadcasts the NBA games alongside Mark Jackson, is one of these White Hope boosters.

Quincy Troupe: Oh, always, man.

Ishmael Reed: Even when they are losing, and when they lose a game, white chauvinists broadcasters like Van Gundy praise them over the winners. They dispute every foul given to their white hopes.

Quincy Troupe: Yeah. Well, that's par for the course. But they can't help it.

Ishmael Reed: What about Joel Embiid from Philadelphia?

Quincy Troupe: The big center? He needs a really great point guard. But Embiid is a great player. He's just a great player, man.

Ishmael Reed: What happened to the Lakers?

Quincy Troupe: The Lakers fell apart. They didn't have enough stuff. They had LeBron, LeBron has gotten old. He can't do certain things. And the other guy, Anthony Davis, I don't know his problem. He was a great player. They gotta rebuild that team. San Francisco's the same thing. Golden State, they gotta rebuild. Cause you know, Curry's getting old. Wiggins can be a great player. But Draymond Green, he's too hot-tempered.

Ishmael Reed: The referees hate him too.

Quincy Troupe: Yeah. They hate him. And so he should just be cool.

Ishmael Reed: He might be leaving.

Quincy Troupe: Well, he gonna have to go.

Ishmael Reed: Yeah. Yeah. What about Jordan Poole?

Quincy Troupe: Jordan Poole is a good shooter, but he shoots too much sometimes. I watched him take bad shots. His shot selection is not good. He should learn something from Stephen Curry.

Ishmael Reed: He's competing with Curry.

Quincy Troupe: That's right. But he takes bad shots. He takes bad shots. You know, I was screaming at the television set, man, watching him take bad shots, 'Don't, don't let him shoot. No, man, don't shoot.'

Ishmael Reed: And he makes a lot of turnovers, man. He's awkward. He slips and falls and all this sort kind of stuff.

Quincy Troupe: Well, he's trying to be a star before his time.

Ishmael Reed: I think Klay Thompson might be leaving too.

Quincy Troupe: Yeah. He's gonna leave. But Klay Thompson is a great player. But then Poole got in his way. See? And then you got Draymond Green. A great basketball team is a delicate balance of egos.

Ishmael Reed: What is a great basketball team to you?

Quincy Troupe: Golden State had a great basketball team a couple of years ago. They were almost unbeatable. They had everything. Everybody played together. But then success brings jealousy. More money. You gotta make more money. That guy makes more money than me. That brings all that kind of stuff into the sports, especially basketball, where you gotta play with somebody. It's a five-man game. To be champions, you gotta play together, you know?

Ishmael Reed: Well, Sacramento, was that a surprise to you they came up?

Quincy Troupe: I didn't know that much about them, but they've got some good young players on that team. And they've got a chance to gel.

Ishmael Reed: Well they've got one of the Warriors' former assistant coaches, Mike Brown, who is a really smart guy.

Quincy Troupe: Sacramento, they're in a situation where there are not many people. It's not a lot of media there. So they can kind of grow. But San Francisco and Golden State, they're in a big media market. New York is a big media arena. In big media markets, people wanna be stars. Cause if you're a star, you make more money. That's all in it. Kyrie Irving has to be the star. He came to the Nets to play. He was playing with Kevin Durant, but he's got to be the star in his own head.

Ishmael Reed: That's a problem.

Quincy Troupe: It's a problem, man. He's second. Durant's one of the greatest players of all time. Durant is one of the great players of all time. And so you've got another guy who's a scorer, and that's Kyrie Irving. He wants all the accolades.

Ishmael Reed: So personality really enters into the sports.

Quincy Troupe: Oh, yeah. Personality does.

Ishmael Reed: What about this guy Zion Williamson?

Quincy Troupe: He had a problem. He got too big anyway, now.

Ishmael Reed: Well, he was capable of playing. Why didn't he play?

Quincy Troupe: He could. He could. He was partying—and then there's a girlfriend and eating and drinking and shit.

Ishmael Reed: So do you think these guys ought to go to college instead of playing right outta high school or what?

Quincy Troupe: In general, most of 'em don't make it big. I mean, some of 'em do, but some don't. Most of 'em don't. They just don't make it. And Zion Williamson, where he came from--someplace in North Carolina--and then into the big time. And women,--they're throwing themselves all over you. He couldn't take it, man. He couldn't take it. I told somebody a long time ago--I was a basketball player, man, ladies, and all that. Yeah. But if you ain't used to women--

Ishmael Reed: All that money.

Quincy Troupe: All that money. And, and them beautiful women that'd be trying to get up under your stuff.

Ishmael Reed: So, what happened to Milwaukee? Milwaukee collapsed.

Quincy Troupe: Some people got hurt. Giannis Antetokounmpo got hurt.

Ishmael Reed: Is he recognized as a great player?

Quincy Troupe: Oh, yeah. All the players recognize that. He's just an incredible player.

Ishmael Reed: Russell Westbrook. Talk about Westbrook.

Quincy Troupe: Westbrook's day is done. Westbrook was never a technically genius offensive player. He was a great defensive player who wanted to be an offensive player but couldn't shoot. He shoots bricks.

Ishmael Reed: What do you mean?

Quincy Troupe: He shoots bricks? Them clangers. As a player, he's a great driver. Takes it to the basket. But he wanted to be a jump shooter. He can't keep it in his head that he's not a great jump shooter. He's not even a good jump shooter. And he takes bad shots. But he's a great driver. He can jump and everything. He got everything instead. But I don't think too smart.

Ishmael Reed: What about Bam Adebayo?

Quincy Troupe: I haven't watched him that much to comment.

Ishmael Reed: I think he kept Miami in the game.

Quincy Troupe: Oh yeah. The epitome of a really smart player is Chris Paul. He's a very heady player. And he ain't but six feet tall. Six one at the most. But if you watch, he knows he won't take long jump shots. He takes medium-range jump shots. And he got so much, he got so much skill with the ball. He can handle the ball so well, he's gonna get open. He gonna get himself open. Cause you can't do anything with him. And then he gonna get his shot. He gonna get it. There's nothing you can do about it. He can shoot it from anywhere on the floor. 15 to 18 feet. Plus he can take you to the hole. He can drive you.

Ishmael Reed: So what team has the best defense?

Quincy Troupe: That's a hard one. I have to think about it.

Ishmael Reed: What about Denver?

Quincy Troupe: Denver had a good defense. Their offense is a great defense. It becomes a great defense because they can score with Murray. And Jović is a great player, and so is Murray. They're on the same level. Murray is the assassin on that team.

Ishmael Reed: What's happening with Charlotte?

Quincy Troupe: Charlotte is okay. I haven't watched them enough to give you a definitive answer.

Ishmael Reed: What'd you think of the season?

Quincy Troupe: I thought it was okay. It was a good season. Denver won the championship, right?

Ishmael Reed: Yeah.

Quincy Troupe: They should have won because they had the best team. They had the best team from day one. The problem is most people don't know about them because they play in Denver. They're not in a big media market. Nobody sees them on the West Coast. Nobody sees them in the East. They didn't see them until the championship. Then when you see them in the championship, oh God damn, them guys can play. You got Jović the big guy, then you got Murray, and then you got the role players who know their roles. They can play. They can be around for a while.

Ishmael Reed: Zach Levine, Chicago Bulls.

Quincy Troupe: Chicago Bulls. Nah. Levine's not on that level; what I'm talking about. One of the great players is Kyrie Irving, he's a great offensive player, but he's a head case. As far as I'm concerned, he might be a nice guy. I'm not saying he's not a nice guy or anything like that. I think that Jason Tatum is really great. Not 'cause he's from St. Louis, but he's a great player. But he's playing with Jaylen Brown, who is head case.

Ishmael Reed: Thanks. Very enlightening.

You know your stuff.

Quincy Troupe: All right man. Talk to you. Bye.