

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Richard Wesley

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Wesley, Richard, 1945-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Richard Wesley,
Dates:	March 30, 2017 and May 5, 2017
Bulk Dates:	2017
Physical Description:	13 uncompressed MOV digital video files (6:19:52).
Abstract:	Playwright and screenwriter Richard Wesley (1945 -) was an award-winning writer for stage and screen and served as an associate professor and department chair at New York University. Wesley was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 30, 2017 and May 5, 2017, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2017_080
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Playwright and screenwriter Richard Wesley was born on July 11, 1945 in Newark, New Jersey to George Wesley and Gertrude Wesley. He graduated from East Side High School in 1963 and went on to attend Howard University. He earned his B.F.A. degree in playwriting, dramatic literature, and theatre arts in 1967.

After graduation, Wesley moved to New York City. His connection to actors Ossie Davis and Ruby Dee, whom he had met at Howard University, led him to the New Lafayette Theatre in Harlem. In 1971, Wesley's first play, *The Black Terror*, was presented at the New York Shakespeare Festival's Public Theatre. *The Mighty Gents*, another play by Wesley, premiered on Broadway in 1978. In the mid-1970s, began writing screenplays. Many of Wesley's screenplays enjoyed success at the box office. Wesley produced screenplays for *Uptown Saturday Night* in 1974, *Let's Do It Again* in 1975, *Fast Forward*, and *Native Son* in 1986. He also wrote a screenplay for a children's film that premiered on PBS, called *The House of Dies Drear*. Wesley also wrote teleplays, which include *Murder Without Motive* in 1991, *Mandela and De Klerk* in 1997, and *Bojangles* in 2000. Wesley was involved with the musical *The Dream Team* at the Goodspeed Opera House, and *The Talented Tenth* at the Manhattan Theatre Club. In 2013, Wesley was chosen by the Trilogy Opera Company to write the libretto for the opera, *Papa Doc*. Two years later, *Autumn*, which was written by Wesley, premiered at the Crossroads Theater Company in New Brunswick, New Jersey. In 2016, the Trilogy Opera Company's *Five*, which contained a libretto written by Wesley and was composed about the Central Park Five controversy, opened at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center.

Wesley has served in teaching roles at multiple academic institutions. He has served as an adjunct professor at the Manhattanville College, Wesleyan University, Borough of Manhattan Community College, and Rutgers University. Wesley has also been an associate professor in playwriting and screenwriting, as well as the chair of the Rita and Burton Goldberg Department of Dramatic Writing, at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts.

In addition to commercial success, Wesley's works have received awards. *The Black Terror*, Wesley's first play, won a Drama Desk Award. *The Mighty Gents*, which premiered in 1978, received an AUDELCO Award.

Wesley and his wife, Valerie Wilson Wesley, have two daughters, Nandi and Thembi.

Richard Wesley was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 30, 2017.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Richard Wesley was conducted by Larry Crowe on March 30, 2017 and May 5, 2017, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 13 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Playwright and screenwriter Richard Wesley (1945 -) was an award-winning writer for stage and screen and served as an associate professor and department chair at New York University.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

Wesley, Richard, 1945-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Wesley, Richard, 1945---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Playwright

Screenwriter

HistoryMakers® Category:

ArtMakers

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Richard Wesley, March 30, 2017 and May 5, 2017. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

- Video Oral History Interview with Richard Wesley, Section A2017_080_001_001, TRT: 1:28:42 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Richard Wesley, Section A2017_080_001_002, TRT: 2:29:08 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Richard Wesley, Section A2017_080_001_003, TRT: 3:28:02 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Richard Wesley, Section A2017_080_001_004, TRT: 4:31:19 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Richard Wesley, Section A2017_080_001_005, TRT: 5:29:23 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Richard Wesley, Section A2017_080_002_006, TRT: 6:29:30 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Richard Wesley, Section A2017_080_002_007, TRT: 7:29:06 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Richard Wesley, Section A2017_080_002_008, TRT: 8:30:18 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Richard Wesley, Section A2017_080_002_009, TRT: 9:33:01 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Richard Wesley, Section A2017_080_002_010, TRT: 10:32:23 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Richard Wesley, Section A2017_080_002_011, TRT: 11:29:08 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Richard Wesley, Section A2017_080_002_012, TRT: 12:30:19 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Richard Wesley, Section A2017_080_002_013, TRT: 13:19:33 ?