



# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Malcolm-Jamal Warner

## Overview of the Collection

<b>Repository:</b>	The HistoryMakers® 1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
<b>Creator:</b>	Malcolm-Jamal Warner
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Malcolm-Jamal Warner,
<b>Dates:</b>	April 2, 2008
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2008
<b>Physical Description:</b>	5 Betacam SP videocassettes (2:08:14).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Television actor and television director Malcolm-Jamal Warner (1970 - ) is best known for his role as Theodore Huxtable on "The Cosby Show," which earned him a nomination for a Primetime Emmy Award. His other television and film credits include "The Father Clements Story," "The Tuskegee Airmen," "Drop Zone" and "Malcolm & Eddie." Warner is also a spoken word artist and musician with his group Miles Long. Warner was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on April 2, 2008, in Sherman Oaks, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2008_070
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Television actor and television director Malcolm-Jamal Warner was born on August 18, 1970 in Jersey City, New Jersey. Warner was raised by his mother, Pamela Warner, in California where he became interested in acting at the age of nine. He attended Angelus Mesa Elementary School in Los Angeles, California and he graduated from the Professional Children's School in New York City in 1988.

In 1982, Warner was cast as Johnny Randolph on an episode of "Matt Houston," and in 1983 he was cast as Lucas Boyd on an episode of "Fame" entitled "Ending on a High Note". In 1984, Warner was cast as Theodore Huxtable on "The Cosby Show". In addition to being nominated for a prime-time Emmy Award for best supporting actor in a comedy series, Warner also won two Young Actor Awards for his role as Theodore Huxtable. He also provided the soundtrack for the 1986 season and directed five episodes of "The Cosby Show," including the reunion show. Throughout the 1980s, Warner appeared in several television series and television specials including an ABC afterschool special entitled "A Desperate Exit" and "The Father Clements Story" In 1989, he authored "Theo and Me Get into The Groove". Warner continued to work in television and film during the 1990s as a producer and director. He directed music videos for the R&B group, New Edition. During 1992, he directed a documentary entitled "The Truth About You and Me and AIDS". The same year, Warner starred in his own sitcom entitled "Here and Now". He appeared in the HBO films "The Tuskegee Airmen" as well as "Tyson," and the feature film "Drop Zone" with Wesley Snipes. Warner also produced an animated educational series entitled "The Magic School Bus". From 1996 through 2000, Warner co-starred as Malcolm McGhee on the sitcom, "Malcolm & Eddie". He directed over a dozen episodes and served as show supervisor in 1997.

From 2002-2006 Warner was cast in various television productions including "Lyric Café," HBO's "Def Poetry Jam," "Jeremiah" and "Dexter." In 2007, Warner showcased his musical and spoken word talents by releasing his debut EP "The Miles Long Mixtape."

Malcolm-Jamal Warner was interviewed by "The HistoryMakers" on April 2, 2008.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Malcolm-Jamal Warner was conducted by Jacques Lesure on April 2, 2008, in Sherman Oaks, California, and was recorded on 5 Betacam SP videocassettes. Television actor and television director Malcolm-Jamal Warner (1970 - ) is best known for his role as Theodore Huxtable on "The Cosby Show," which earned him a nomination for a Primetime Emmy Award. His other television and film credits include "The Father Clements Story," "The Tuskegee Airmen," "Drop Zone" and "Malcolm & Eddie." Warner is also a spoken word artist and musician with his group Miles Long.

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## 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®.

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## 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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

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

### Persons:

Warner, Malcolm-Jamal

Lesure, Jacques (Interviewer)

Burghelea, Neculai (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews  
Warner, Malcolm-Jamal--Interviews

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African American television personalities--Interviews

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African American motion picture actors and actresses--Interviews

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African American television producers and directors--Interviews

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## **Organizations:**

HistoryMakers (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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## **HistoryMakers® Category:**

EntertainmentMakers

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## **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 Malcolm-Jamal Warner, April 2, 2008. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

### **Processing Information**

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 8/9/2011 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

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## **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.

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## Detailed Description of the Collection

### Series I: Original Interview Footage, April 2, 2008

Video Oral History Interview with Malcolm-Jamal Warner, Section A2008\_070\_001\_001, TRT: 0:29:34 2008/04/02

Malcolm Jamal-Warner begins by discussing his family history. His mother, Pamela Warner, was born in Los Angeles, California. Warner describes her as being a very warm and compassionate woman. His father, Robert Warner Jr., was born in Chicago, Illinois and was involved in the civil rights movement, and named Warner after Malcolm X. His parents divorced when Warner was a child, and he recalls being shuttled between their separate houses in New Jersey. In December of 1975, Warner and his mother moved to Leimert Park in Los Angeles, California to live with her father James McGee. While attending Angeles Mesa Elementary in California, Warner moved with his mother to a region nicknamed The Jungle; it was located between Rodeo Drive, Santa Barbara Boulevard and San Josalea Drive. Warner completed the rest of his elementary school career at Coliseum Street School in Los Angeles, California.

African American families--New Jersey.

African American parents--New Jersey.

Civil rights workers--United States.

Leimert Park (Los Angeles, Calif.)

African American Elementary School Students--California

Single parents--California.

Divorce

Video Oral History Interview with Malcolm-Jamal Warner, Section A2008\_070\_001\_002, TRT: 0:29:05 2008/04/02

Malcolm Jamal-Warner discusses a student exchange program between Marquez Street School and Coliseum Street School. He interacted with Caucasian students, some of which held racist attitudes. Warner's first exposure to acting was at a workshop in Inglewood, California at Centinela Park at the Inglewood Playhouse. Warner's first role at the playhouse was as the Tin Man in the play "Alice is that You?" Miriam Balm, an agent, approached Warner after his first performance. Balm went to cast Warner in two television shows, "Fame" and "Matt Houston." After these shows, Warner was cast as Theo in "The Cosby Show." He recalls the casting process for "The Cosby Show" and interacting with Bill Cosby.

Student exchange programs--United States--California.

Racism in education--California.

Drama--Study and teaching--California--Inglewood.

African American--television personalities--United States.

Cosby show (Television program : 1984-1992)

Television programs--Casting

Video Oral History Interview with Malcolm-Jamal Warner, Section A2008\_070\_001\_003, TRT: 0:29:32 2008/04/02

Malcolm Jamal-Warner remembers Jay Sandrich, the director of "The Cosby Show," informing him that he was cast as Theo. While shooting "The Cosby Show" in Brooklyn, New York Warner was forced to pull out of Paul Revere High School in California to attend the Professional Children's School in New York City. Bill Cosby was determined to only have positive images of African

Americans on his show. “The Cosby Show” was produced to display a different facet of the African American community, middle class African Americans. Warner describes the dynamic between the young actors on set while filming “The Cosby Show.” He describes Sabrina Le Beauf being added as the fifth child, Sondra, on “The Cosby Show.” As a teenager, Warner constantly tested the boundaries set by his mother.

Sandrich, Jay.

African American teenagers

African Americans on television

Professional Children's School (New York, N.Y.)

Cosby show (Television program : 1984-1992)

Video Oral History Interview with Malcolm-Jamal Warner, Section A2008\_070\_001\_004, TRT: 0:29:05 2008/04/02

Malcolm Jamal-Warner describes the inherent star quality that Raven Symone had when she worked on “The Cosby Show.” Some of the guest stars Warner remembers from “The Cosby Show” are; Dizzy Gillespie, Lena Horne and Stevie Wonder. At fifteen, Warner’s mother, Pamela Warner, became his manager; she had avoided this role previously. Warner was surprised when he was brought back to shoot the final seasons of “The Cosby Show,” Cosby only wanted five seasons. After “The Cosby Show,” Warner starred in the Cosby produced television show “Here and Now.” This was a disheartening experience because NBC and Bill Cosby could not agree on content. In 1996, Warner co-starred in the UPN sitcom “Malcolm & Eddie.” Warner remembers working to prevent the show's writers from using stereotypical images of African Americans. Warner then reflects on the murder of Ennis Cosby, Bill Cosby’s son, in 1997.

Raven, 1985-

Cosby show (Television program : 1984-1992)

Gillespie, Dizzy, 1917-1993

Cosby, Bill, 1937-

African American television personalities--Interviews

Stereotypes (Social psychology) on television.

National Broadcasting Company.

Cosby, Ennis William

Video Oral History Interview with Malcolm-Jamal Warner, Section A2008\_070\_001\_005, TRT: 0:10:58 2008/04/02

Malcolm Jamal-Warner discusses playing the bass. While studying at the Musicians Institute in Los Angeles, California Warner founded a jazz band, Miles Long. He describes himself as an artist because he is also a poet and jazz musician. Warner would like his legacy to be known as a man that always had integrity. His advice to young actors is to pursue acting for the sake of the art, not the fame and riches. When the focus of success is to become a famous actor, people begin to compromise their soul. He hopes that in the future the African American community will begin to recognize their collective greatness. In closing, Warner shares the importance of keeping one's soul intact.

Musicians Institute

African American jazz musicians--California

African American communities.