

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Troy Carter

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## 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>	Carter, Troy, 1972-
<b>Title:</b>	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Troy Carter,
<b>Dates:</b>	August 9, 2014
<b>Bulk Dates:</b>	2014
<b>Physical Description:</b>	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:59:26).
<b>Abstract:</b>	Music manager Troy Carter (1972 - ) was the founder, chairman and chief executive officer of Atom Factory, Inc. He managed the careers of numerous recording artists including Lady Gaga, John Legend and John Mayer. Carter was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on August 9, 2014, in Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
<b>Identification:</b>	A2014_244
<b>Language:</b>	The interview and records are in English.

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Music manager Troy Carter was born on November 14, 1972 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was raised in West Philadelphia, where he attended Huey Elementary and Sayre Middle School. In 1990, at the age of seventeen, Carter dropped out of West Philadelphia High School in pursuit of a career in the music industry.

Carter first worked for Will Smith and James Lassiter's Overbrook Entertainment. He then joined Bad Boy Entertainment in 1995, where he worked with musical artists such as Notorious B.I.G. In 1999, Carter met and began to manage rapper Eve Jeffers. He subsequently co-founded his own management company called Erving Wonder, where he managed rap acts like Floetry and Nelly. In 2004, Erving Wonder was acquired by the Sanctuary Group.

In 2007, Carter was asked to manage Lady Gaga. That same year, he founded Coalition Media Group. In 2010, he established Coalition Media Group's management division Atom Factory, where he serves as chairman and chief executive officer. Since then, Carter has managed the careers of numerous recording artists such as John Legend, Greyson Chance, Mindless Behavior, Priyanka Chopra, Lindsey Stirling, the Ceremonies, and John Mayer.

In 2011, he co-founded The Backplane, a Silicon Valley-based startup branding company. In 2012, he created A \ IDEA, a product development and branding agency, as well as AF Square, an angel fund and technology consultancy with investments in over sixty startup companies including Spotify, Warby Parker, Songza, Dropbox, Fab, and Uber. In addition, Carter has established a beverage company called POPwater.

Carter has served as an Aspen Institute Henry Crown Fellow and sits on the boards of The Grammy Foundation, the T.J. Martell Foundation, the United Nations Foundation Global Entrepreneurs Council and The Buckley School.

Troy Carter was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on August 9, 2014.

## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Troy Carter was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on August 9, 2014, in Oak Bluffs, Massachusetts, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Music manager Troy Carter (1972 - ) was the founder, chairman and chief executive officer of Atom Factory, Inc. He managed the careers of numerous recording artists including Lady Gaga, John Legend and John Mayer.

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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:

Carter, Troy, 1972-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Carter, Troy, 1972---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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### Occupations:

Music Manager

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### HistoryMakers® Category:

MusicMakers

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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 Troy Carter, August 9, 2014. 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).

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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

Video Oral History Interview with Troy Carter, Section A2014\_244\_001\_001, TRT: 1:31:16 ?

Troy Carter was born on November 14, 1972 in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania to Gilda Crawford Carter and Charles Carter, Sr. His mother was one of seven children born to Dolores Crawford and James Crawford, who were originally from Sixty Six, South Carolina. Carter's father was a distant cousin of Morehouse College President Benjamin Mays. He grew up with his seven siblings in Philadelphia's Strawberry Mansion neighborhood. Carter's parents met as teenagers, and married upon his father's return from the Vietnam War.

They divorced soon afterwards, and Carter and his two brothers were raised by their mother, who struggled to provide for them. Carter's father was an active part of his life until he was seven years old, when his father was sentenced to almost thirteen years in prison. Carter grew up in West Philadelphia, where he attended Samuel B. Huey Elementary School. He enjoyed reading the Philadelphia Daily News and visiting Lucien E. Blackwell West Philadelphia Regional Library.

Video Oral History Interview with Troy Carter, Section A2014\_244\_001\_002, TRT: 2:31:30 ?

Troy Carter's father, Charles Carter, Sr., served almost thirteen years in prison, and returned to his career as a social worker upon release. During his father's incarceration, Carter began selling drugs in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. He was soon dissuaded by his older relatives, but continued to get into trouble, and was expelled from West Philadelphia High School. Around this time, Carter developed an interest in music, and formed the hip hop group 2 Too Many with his friends, Armique Wyche and Anthony Fontenot. He also admired music producers Lawrence Goodman and Russell Simmons. After Carter dropped out of Delaware Valley High School, his mother, Gilda Crawford Carter, enrolled him into a Job Corps program in Port Deposit, Maryland. Later, Carter's hip hop group signed a contract with DJ Jazzy Jeff and the Fresh Prince's music label, Willjam Productions, but disbanded shortly afterwards. Then, Carter went to work for film producer James Lassiter at Overbrook Entertainment in Beverly Hills, California.

Video Oral History Interview with Troy Carter, Section A2014\_244\_001\_003, TRT: 3:30:21 ?

Troy Carter worked as an assistant to James Lassiter and Will Smith at Overbrook Entertainment in Beverly Hills, California. During this time, he lived in the Koreatown section of Los Angeles, California. Under the mentorship of Lassiter, Smith and Charlie Mack, Carter learned the skills required to manage musical acts. After being dismissed by Lassiter and Smith for misconduct, Carter returned to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, where he began promoting and organizing concerts for acts like The Notorious B.I.G., Wu-Tang Clan, Jay Z, Lil' Kim and Foxy Brown. After meeting hip hop mogul P. Diddy at a concert, Carter was granted an internship at Bad Boy Records in New York City. There, he met music managers Manny Halley and Mark Pitts. At this point, Carter remembers the death of The Notorious B.I.G. in 1997. In 1999, Carter began managing his first client, rapper Eve. In this capacity, he fostered her career as an actress on the television show 'Eve,' and in films like 'Barbershop' and 'The Woodsman.'

Video Oral History Interview with Troy Carter, Section A2014\_244\_001\_004, TRT: 4:29:58 ?

Troy Carter was the founder of Boy Wonder Management, where Eve was his first client. He then partnered with Julius Erving III to form Erving Wonder Entertainment. Through his connection with Destiny's Child manager Mathew Knowles, Carter sold the company to Sanctuary Records Group Ltd. He was hired as an executive, but struggled to adapt to the corporate setting, and sought to reclaim the company. After being dismissed from Sanctuary Records Group Ltd., Carter attained the rights to his company, which he renamed Coalition Media Group after Erving's departure. Eventually, the company was rebranded as Atom Factory, Inc. In 2007, Carter experienced financial setbacks, and lost Eve as a client. That same year, he was introduced to the emerging pop artist Lady Gaga through music producer Vince Herbert. As Lady Gaga's manager, Carter promoted her on social media websites like Twitter and YouTube. Soon, Carter secured Lady Gaga's position as an opening act for New Kids on the Block and The Pussycat Dolls.

Video Oral History Interview with Troy Carter, Section A2014\_244\_001\_005, TRT: 5:28:48 ?

Troy Carter served as the president and CEO of Atom Factory, Inc., where he managed Lady Gaga during her early career. He arranged for her appearance at the Rainforest Foundation Fund concert, where she performed alongside Sting, Bono and Elton John. Working with set designers Arthur Fogel and Mark Fisher, Carter also oversaw Lady Gaga's worldwide tours, including The Fame Ball Tour, The Monster Tour and The Born This Way Ball. His management company offered branding and digital content production services for its international clientele, which included actress Priyanka Chopra and violinist Lindsey Stirling, as well as singers Nico and Vinz, Meghan Trainor and John Legend. Carter also talks about his artists' humanitarian work with the Harlem Children's Zone, Teach for America, the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation and The California Endowment. During this time, Carter invested in startup technology companies through the AF Square division of Atom Factory, Inc.

Video Oral History Interview with Troy Carter, Section A2014\_244\_001\_006, TRT: 6:27:33 ?

Troy Carter began investing in technology companies like Uber Technologies Inc., Dropbox, Inc., Lyft Inc. and Spotify Ltd. at the suggestion of Madonna's manager, Guy Oseary. He also developed the social media platform Backplane with Lady Gaga. In 2013, Carter and Lady Gaga ended their professional relationship. At this point in the interview, he talks about joining the board of the Reginald F. Lewis Foundation in New York City, where he worked Lewis's daughter, Christina Lewis Halpern, and widow, Loida Nicolas Lewis. Prior to this role, Carter was heavily influenced by Lewis' book, 'Why Should White Guys Have All the Fun?: How Reginald Lewis Created a Billion-Dollar Business Empire.' Carter was introduced to Lewis' coauthor, Blair S. Walker, with whom he started writing his own autobiography. Carter reflects upon his hopes and concerns for the African American community, and the legacy of his generation. He had five children with his wife, Rebecca Carter, who served as the CEO of Atom Factory, Inc.