

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

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Roundtree, Richard, 1942-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Richard Roundtree,
Dates:	March 1, 2018
Bulk Dates:	2018
Physical Description:	9 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:01:18).
Abstract:	Actor Richard Roundtree (1942 -) was best known for his role as John Shaft in the 1971 action film <i>Shaft</i> . His 152 television and film credits also include roles in <i>Being Mary Jane</i> and <i>Roots</i> . Roundtree was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 1, 2018, in Toluca Lake, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2018_040
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Actor Richard Roundtree was born on July 9, 1942 in New Rochelle, New York to John and Kathryn Roundtree. Roundtree attended New Rochelle High School, where he played on the school's nationally ranked football team. In 1961, Roundtree earned an athletic scholarship to attend Southern Illinois University in Carbondale, Illinois, but he left school in 1963 to pursue a career as an actor and a model.

In 1963, Roundtree was hired by Eunice Johnson of *Ebony* magazine to model in the Ebony Fashion Fair. Roundtree went on to join the Negro Ensemble Company in 1967, where he played the role of boxing legend Jack Johnson in the company's production of *The Great White Hope*. In 1971, Roundtree was cast in his most notable role as John Shaft in the 1971 action film, *Shaft*, directed by Gordon Parks. The popularity of the film turned Roundtree into a star with two subsequent sequels: *Shaft's Big Score* (1972) and *Shaft in Africa* (1973). Following the success of the *Shaft* trilogy, Roundtree was awarded the Golden Globe Most Promising Newcomer Award in 1972. Roundtree went on to appear in several films throughout the 1970s and 1980s, including *Earthquake* (1974), *Escape to Athena* (1979), *A Game for Vultures* (1979), and *Day of The Assassin* (1979). In 1977, Roundtree appeared in the ABC television miniseries *Roots*, based on Alex Haley's book *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*. Roundtree reprised the role of John Shaft in the 2000 film *Shaft*, starring Samuel L. Jackson as his character's nephew, and directed by John Singleton. Roundtree has also appeared in several television series including *Soul Food*, *Desperate Housewives*, *Heroes*, and *Grey's Anatomy*. In 2013, he became a series regular on the television show *Being Mary Jane*, appearing alongside actresses Gabrielle Union and Margaret Avery. Roundtree also appeared in multiple episodes of FOX's television series *Star* in 2017 and 2018.

In 1993, Roundtree was diagnosed with a rare form of male breast cancer, and underwent chemotherapy and a double mastectomy. Since then, Roundtree has served as a breast cancer awareness advocate for the Susan G. Komen Foundation and the Know Your Score Men's Health Initiative. Roundtree has received the MTV Lifetime Achievement Award for his role as *Shaft*, as well as an Image Award nomination in 1998, a Peabody Award in

2002 and a Black Theater Alliance Award Lifetime Achievement Award in 2010.

Richard Roundtree was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on March 1, 2018.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Richard Roundtree was conducted by Harriette Cole on March 1, 2018, in Toluca Lake, California, and was recorded on 9 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Actor Richard Roundtree (1942 -) was best known for his role as John Shaft in the 1971 action film Shaft. His 152 television and film credits also include roles in Being Mary Jane and Roots.

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:

Roundtree, Richard, 1942-

Cole, Harriette (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Roundtree, Richard, 1942- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Film Actor

HistoryMakers® Category:

EntertainmentMakers

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 Roundtree, March 1, 2018. 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 Roundtree, Section A2018_040_001_001, TRT: 1:27:25
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Video Oral History Interview with Richard Roundtree, Section A2018_040_001_002, TRT: 2:30:38
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- Video Oral History Interview with Richard Roundtree, Section A2018_040_001_003, TRT: 3:28:14
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- Video Oral History Interview with Richard Roundtree, Section A2018_040_001_004, TRT: 4:34:03
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- Video Oral History Interview with Richard Roundtree, Section A2018_040_001_005, TRT: 5:28:01
?
- Video Oral History Interview with Richard Roundtree, Section A2018_040_001_006, TRT: 6:29:42
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- Video Oral History Interview with Richard Roundtree, Section A2018_040_001_007, TRT: 7:29:01
?
- Video Oral History Interview with Richard Roundtree, Section A2018_040_001_008, TRT: 8:24:40
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- Video Oral History Interview with Richard Roundtree, Section A2018_040_001_009, TRT: 9:09:34
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