



The New York Public Library
Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture,
Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division

Guide to the

***James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket* documentary film collection**

ca. 1989

Sc MG 851

Summary

Film director: Thorsen, Karen

Title: *James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket* documentary film collection

Date: ca. 1989

Size: 2.5 linear feet (6 boxes)

Source: This collection was acquired by the Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division in 1998. The paper documentation was separated in 2011-2012 from the audio-visual collection housed in MIRS.

Abstract: The feature-length 16mm documentary *James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket*, directed by Karen Thorsen in 1989, is an autobiographical portrait of writer and activist James Baldwin. Without using narration, the film allows Baldwin to tell his own story. It premiered on *American Masters*, a PBS show, in 1989. Since then, repeated PBS broadcasts have reached millions of people. The film received numerous awards and was honored at festivals in over two-dozen countries, including Sundance, London, Berlin, and Tokyo. Co-written and produced by Karen Thorsen and Douglas K. Dempsey, the film uses archival and original footage, including scenes from Baldwin's funeral service; explorations of his homes in France, Switzerland, Turkey, and Harlem; and on-camera interviews with close friends, colleagues, and critics including his brother David; biographer David Leeming; writers Maya Angelou, Amiri Baraka, William Styron, Ishmael Reed, and Yashar Kemal; painter Lucien Happersberger, and entertainer Bobby Short. This collection consists of material used to make the film including notebooks and binders prepared by the production crew documenting the resources acquired during film research; transcripts of interviews; research forms; stock footage research; book tour itineraries and promotional items; articles about Baldwin; FBI files on Baldwin; eulogies and memorials; and reviews.

Preferred citation: [Item], *James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket* documentary film collection, Sc MG 851, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

Language of the Material: English

Separated Materials:

Transferred to the Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division: audio and moving image materials. For more information, please contact the division at schomburgaudiovisual@nypl.org or 212-491-2270.

Related Materials:

Also found in the Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture:

James Baldwin papers, Sc MG 936

James Baldwin's "Five Years" poetry manuscript, Sc MG 934

Ten Screenplays for Malcolm X Film collection, Sc MG 969

Creator History

The feature-length 16mm documentary *James Baldwin: The Price of the Ticket*, directed by Karen Thorsen in 1989, is an autobiographical portrait of writer and activist James Baldwin. Without using narration, the film allows Baldwin to tell his own story. It premiered on *American Masters*, a PBS show, in 1989. Since then, repeated PBS broadcasts have reached millions of people. The film received numerous awards and was honored at festivals in over two-dozen countries, including Sundance, London, Berlin, and Tokyo. Co-written and produced by Karen Thorsen and Douglas K. Dempsey, the film uses archival and original footage, including scenes from Baldwin's funeral service; explorations of his homes in France, Switzerland, Turkey, and Harlem; and on-camera interviews with close friends, colleagues, and critics including his brother David; biographer David Leeming; writers Maya Angelou, Amiri Baraka, William Styron, Ishmael Reed, and Yashar Kemal; painter Lucien Happersberger, and entertainer Bobby Short.

Scope and Content Note

This collection consists of material used to make the film including notebooks and binders prepared by the production crew documenting the resources acquired during film research; transcripts of interviews; research forms; stock footage research; book tour itineraries and promotional items; articles about Baldwin; FBI files on Baldwin; eulogies and memorials; and reviews.

Key Terms

Subjects

African American authors -- Interviews
African American gay men
American literature -- African American authors
Authors, Black
Autobiography -- African American authors
Documentary films

Names

Angelou, Maya
Baldwin, James, 1924-1987
Baraka, Amiri, 1934-2014

Dempsey, Douglas K.
Reed, Ishmael, 1938-
Thorsen, Karen

Container List

- Interview transcripts
 - b. 1 f. 1 Angelou, Maya
 - b. 1 f. 2 Baldwin, David
 - b. 1 f. 3 Baraka, Amiri
 - b. 1 f. 4 Birdsong, Alexa
 - b. 1 f. 5 Capouya, Emile
 - b. 1 f. 6 Cezzar, Egin
 - b. 1 f. 7 Clark, Kenneth
 - b. 1 f. 8 Cole, Bill
 - b. 1 f. 9 Dallas, Walter and Francis Foster
 - b. 1 f. 10 Happersberger, Lucien
 - b. 1 f. 11 Hassel, Bernard
 - b. 1 f. 12 Kemal, Yashar
 - b. 1 f. 13 Lemming, David
 - b. 1 f. 14 Murray, James B
 - b. 1 f. 15 Packard, Cynthia
 - b. 1 f. 16 Reed, Ishmael
 - b. 1 f. 17 Short, Bobby
 - b. 1 f. 18 Styron, William
- b. 2 f. 1-2 Film/video research
- b. 2 f. 3-4 Film/video research forms
 - Includes archived forms.
- b. 2 f. 5 List of film/video databases
- b. 2 f. 6 Stock footage research
- b. 2 f. 7 Transcripts of interviews with Baldwin
- b. 2 f. 8-9 Transcripts from archival footage of Baldwin interviews
- b. 3 f. 1-2 Audio recording research and archive forms
- Printed matter by and about Baldwin
 - Articles about Baldwin
 - b. 3 f. 3 undated
 - b. 3 f. 4 1965-1973
 - b. 3 f. 5 1974-1985
 - b. 3 f. 6 1986-1988
 - b. 4 f. 1 Articles by Baldwin
 - b. 4 f. 2 Bibliography, biography, and articles by and about Baldwin
 - b. 4 f. 3 Criticism and reviews
 - b. 4 f. 4 Book tour itineraries and promotional items
 - b. 4 f. 5 *Baldwin letters to Van Vechten and Richard Wright and review of Notes of a Native Son*
 - b. 4 f. 6 Appearances, plays, articles by Baldwin

- b. 5 f. 1 Article originals
Includes *Time* and *Esquire* covers and *New Leader* and *Commentary* articles.
- b. 5 f. 2 Baldwin eulogies and memorials
- b. 5 f. 3-6 FBI FOIA files
- b. 6 f. 1
- b. 6 f. 2 Film and still research and reproduction notes
- b. 6 f. 3-4 Film and video research (duplicates)
- b. 6 f. 5 DeWitt Clinton High School yearbook and alumni book