



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

Guide to the

***Sweet Love, Bitter* film collection**

1962-1972 [bulk 1967]

Sc MG 710

Processed by Janice Quinter, September 2002.

## Summary

**Title:** *Sweet Love, Bitter* film collection

**Date:** 1962-1972 [bulk 1967]

**Size:** 0.03 linear feet (3 folders)

**Source:** Purchase from McBlain Books, 2002.

**Abstract:** *Sweet Love, Bitter* is an independent movie, written, produced, and directed, in 1967, by Herbert Danska and Lewis Jacobs. The story is based on the novel *Night Song*, written by John Williams and inspired by the life of jazz saxophonist Charlie "Bird" Parker. The black and white film starred Dick Gregory as the musician, along with Don Murray, Robert Hooks, and Diana Varsi. This interracial drama dealt with two contemporary American themes, the African American as the creative genius and the African American in American society. In addition, heroin addiction and an interracial love affair were themes addressed in this film. The *Sweet Love, Bitter* film collection consists of the screenplay entitled *Night Song* by Herbert Danska and Lewis Jacob (1963); a film proposal by Nat Hentoff, which was distributed to potential investors; Danska's and Jacobs's outline of the movie; and a budget estimate. Additionally, there is an outline of the third and final cut, a location list, five cue cards used by Dick Gregory during filming, and news clippings of advertisements and reviews. Documents relating to the controversy over control and cutting of the film complete this collection.

**Preferred citation:** [Item], *Sweet Love, Bitter* film collection, Sc MG 710, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Manuscripts, Archives and Rare Books Division, The New York Public Library

**Language of the Material:** English

**Processing note:** Processed by Janice Quinter, September 2002.

**Separated Materials:**

Transferred to the Moving Image and Recorded Sound Division: audio material. For more information, please contact the division at [schomburgaudiovisual@nypl.org](mailto:schomburgaudiovisual@nypl.org) or 212-491-2270.

Transferred to the Photographs and Prints Division: photographs

## Creator History

*Sweet Love, Bitter* is an independent movie, written, produced, and directed, in 1967, by Herbert Danska and Lewis Jacobs. The story is based on the novel *Night Song*, written by John Williams and inspired by the life of jazz saxophonist Charlie "Bird" Parker. The black and white film starred Dick Gregory as the musician, along with Don Murray, Robert Hooks, and Diana Varsi. This interracial drama dealt with two contemporary American themes, the African American as the creative genius and the African American in American society. In addition, heroin addiction and an interracial love affair were themes addressed in this film.

## Scope and Content Note

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## Key Terms

### Subjects

African Americans in motion pictures  
Experimental films -- United States  
Independent filmmakers -- United States  
Motion picture plays -- United States

### Genre/Physical Characteristic

Motion picture plays

### Names

Danska, Herbert -- Sweet love, bitter  
Jacobs, Lewis -- Sweet love, bitter  
Parker, Charlie, 1920-1955  
Williams, John A., 1925-2015 -- Night song