

T.S. (Thomas S.) Cook Collection

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Writers Guild Foundation Archive

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<https://www.wgfoundation.org/wgf-library-archive/about-the-film-and-tv-archive/>

2017

Descriptive Summary

Title: T.S. (Thomas S.) Cook Collection

Dates: 1967-2008

Collection Number: WGF-MS-021

Creator/Collector: Cook, T. S. (Thomas S.), 1947-2013

Extent: 9.2 linear feet

Repository: Writers Guild Foundation Archive

Los Angeles, California 90048

Abstract: The T.S. (Thomas S.) Cook Collection, 1967-2008, consists primarily of Cook's scripts, produced and unproduced, written for film, episodic television and television movies, including his Academy Award nominated *The China Syndrome* (1979). Materials include outlines, research notes, correspondence and clippings related to his writing projects, as well as Cook's Olivetti typewriter and picket signs from Writers Guild of America strikes.

Language of Material: English

Access

Available by appointment only.

Publication Rights

The responsibility to secure copyright and publication permission rests with the researcher.

Preferred Citation

T.S. (Thomas S.) Cook Collection. Writers Guild Foundation Archive

Acquisition Information

Donated in two parts by Cook's wife, Monique de Varenness, on February 9, 2015 and September 10, 2015.

Biography/Administrative History

Born on August 25, 1947 in Cleveland, Ohio, Thomas Stephen Cook was the son of Horace, a business executive, and Betty Cook, a homemaker. He earned a bachelor's degree from Denison University in Ohio in 1969 and a master of fine arts from the University of Iowa Writer's Workshop in 1973. There he met Monique de Varennes, also a writer, whom he married in 1975. The couple had two children, Katherine and Christopher. Cook began his career in 1974 as a technical editor for engineering firm ITT. He earned his first screen credits on episodes of *Baretta*, *The Paper Chase* and *Project U.F.O.* in the 1970s. Cook also wrote a number of episodes of the CBS series *Airwolf* in 1984-85 and served as supervising producer on 15 episodes. T. S. Cook was best known for co-writing the screenplay for 1979's nuclear power thriller *The China Syndrome* with Mike Gray and James Bridges. They shared Academy Award, Golden Globe, and BAFTA screenplay nominations, as well as received a Writers Guild Award for Original Drama - Screen. A Writers Guild, West member since 1975, prolific writer Cook penned numerous Made-for-TV movies and television series over four decades. His TV movie writing or co-writing credits include *Red Flag: The Ultimate Game* (1981), for which he received a 1982 WGA nomination, *Attack on Fear* (1982), *Out of the Darkness* (1985), *Nightbreaker* (1989), for which Cook received a Writers Guild Award, *High Desert Kill* (1989), *In the Line of Duty: Street War* (1992), *The Switch* (1992), *Texas Justice* (1994), *The Tuskegee Airmen* (1995), for which he shared an Emmy nomination, *Forgotten Sins* (1995), a small-screen remake of Western classic *High Noon* (2000), the Lucille Ball biopic *Lucy* (2003), *The Hive* (2007), and *NYC: Tornado Warning* (2008). Cook's TV series writing or co-writing credits include *Airwolf*, *The Paper Chase*, and *Baretta*. An active Guild member and tenacious advocate for writers over the course of his career, Cook served on the WGAW's Board of Directors (1995-97), and was a strike captain during the WGA's 1988 and 2007-08 strikes. He also served on several WGAW committees, including Board Nominating (1991, 2008), Officers Nominating (1989, 2007), Election Review (2011-13), Committee on Professional Status of Writers [CPSW - Television, 1997-2002], Publications (1981-86), Television Writers Council (1999-2002), Strike Fund (1988), Strike Planning and Service (1989), Waiver (1995-2002), and Writers Image Campaign (1996-97). From 2006 through 2013, Cook served as a Pension & Health Trustee, first as an alternate trustee from 2006-11, then as a principal P&H trustee until his death. Cook also served on the Writers Guild Foundation's Board of Directors for several terms (1998-2007), as well as acted as Treasurer (2002-06) and chair of the WGF's Oral History Committee. In recent years, Cook turned his energies to play writing. He was a member of Ensemble Studio Theatre, a co-founder of Fierce Backbone Theatre Company, and a board member of the latter from 2007 until the onset of his illness. Among a number of productions, his play "Ravensridge" had its world premiere at the Fremont Centre Theatre in 2007. Cook passed away at age 65 on January 5, 2013 at his home in Hollywood after a battle with cancer. He is survived by his wife, Monique de Varennes, his children, Kate and Chris; his mother, Betty; and his brothers, Jim and Bill. He was posthumously named the 2014 WGA Morgan Cox Award honoree in recognition of his Guild service. Adapted from a December 11, 2013 WGAW press release at <http://www.wga.org/content/default.aspx?id=5365>

Scope and Content of Collection

Series I: Film, 1976-1980 contains material related to Cook's screenplay *The China Syndrome* (1979), including notes, outlines, script drafts, and correspondence regarding the development of the film. Also included are press clippings and ephemera related to *The China Syndrome* such as programs and tickets stubs from the 1980 Academy Awards, in which Cook was a nominee, and the 1980 WGA Awards, in which Cook was a winner. Series II: Television, 1975-2007 contains scripts, notes and correspondence for a variety of Cook's television projects. Subseries A: Made-for-Television Movies, 1979-2007 contains material related to the development and production of over a dozen TV movies that Cook wrote or co-wrote. Items include notes, outlines, script drafts, correspondence, photos and press clippings. Films represented include *Red Flag: The Ultimate Game* (1981), for which he received a 1982 WGA nomination, and *Nightbreaker* (1985), for which he won a WGA Award. Also in this series are the Emmy-nominated *The Tuskegee Airmen* (1995), the Lucille Ball biopic *Lucy* (2003), and an unproduced teleplay based on the memoir *Blown Away* by Herb Payson. Subseries B: Television Series, 1975-1985 contains material created during Cook's time on the television series' *Baretta*, *Project U.F.O.*, *Paper Chase* and *Airwolf*. Items include script drafts, outlines, notes, and photos. Series III: Unproduced Works, 1976-2008 contains research notes, outlines, treatments, correspondence and drafts of unproduced screenplays, TV movies and TV pilots. Some material is based on factual events or books and others are fictional. More high profile projects include teleplays for miniseries' about Bob Hope and Hugh Hefner, a teleplay about Russian spy Alexander Litvinenko and several projects based around the work of real life criminal sociologist Richard Ofshe. Series IV: Artifacts, 1967-2008, consist of several pins, WGA hats and picket signs from the 1988 and 2007-2008 WGA labor strikes as well as personal photos and a framed caricature portrait. The highlight is an Olivetti Underwood Linea88 typewriter that Cook used for many years, including while writing *The China Syndrome*.

Indexing Terms

Academy Awards (Motion pictures)

Writers Guild of America--Awards

Made-for-TV movies

China syndrome (Motion picture)

Screenwriters

Television writers
