
Michael Barrie Collection

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Writers Guild Foundation Archive

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2020

Descriptive Summary

Title: Michael Barrie Collection

Dates: 1960-2015

Collection Number: WGF-MS-105

Creator/Collector: Barrie, Michael, 1946-

Extent: 11 linear feet, 8.5 boxes

Repository: Writers Guild Foundation Archive
Los Angeles, California 90048

Abstract: The Michael Barrie Collection, 1960-2015, consists of monologue jokes, scripts, screenplays, and production material for late night and variety television shows, awards shows, and movies. Most of the material was written by Michael Barrie with his writing partner, Jim Mulholland. The bulk of the collection consists of opening monologue jokes for two television shows: Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson and Late Show with David Letterman.

Language of Material: English

Access

Available by appointment only. Please contact the Writers Guild Foundation Archive, www.wgfoundation.org.

Publication Rights

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Preferred Citation

Michael Barrie Collection. Writers Guild Foundation Archive

Acquisition Information

Donated by Michael Barrie on April 30, 2019.

Biography/Administrative History

Writer Michael Barrie was born on January 15, 1946 in the Bronx, New York, and is a graduate of New York University. He began his career in comedy in 1968, selling jokes to Joan Rivers for 7 dollars apiece. That year, he also began writing on the Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson. In 1970, he teamed up with another Tonight Show writer, Jim Mulholland, and the two worked together for the next 45 years. Barrie worked on the Tonight Show from 1968 to 1972 and again from 1978 until its end in 1992. Barrie and Mulholland went on to write for the Late Show with David Letterman from 1994 until its end in 2015. Between 1972 and 1978, Barrie and Mulholland worked on a number of other TV and film projects and Barrie relocated to Los Angeles in 1977. In 1973-74 they wrote for a season on the Dean Martin Comedy Hour, featuring the comedy roasts of celebrities. In 1976 they wrote for a season on the Cher Show, a weekly variety show. In 1977 they were story editors for a season on Welcome Back, Kotter. They also wrote an episode of All in the Family and an episode of The Mary Tyler Moore Show. The pair wrote the feature films Bad Boys (1995), Oscar (1991) and Amazon Women on the Moon (1987). Their 1986 Showtime movie, The Ratings Game, directed by and starring Danny Devito, received a Writers Guild Award. His credits also include Academy and Emmy Awards telecasts. Michael Barrie's work on the Late Show with David Letterman and the Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson earned him 20 Emmy nominations and 6 WGA Award nominations. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife Frederica Duke and is the father of Max and Emma Barrie and stepfather to Oliver, Augustine (actress Augie Duke) and Barnaby Kupper.

Scope and Content of Collection

Writer Michael Barrie was born on January 15, 1946 in the Bronx, New York, and is a graduate of New York University. He began his career in comedy in 1968, selling jokes to Joan Rivers for 7 dollars apiece. That year, he also began writing on the Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson. In 1970, he teamed up with another Tonight Show writer, Jim Mulholland, and the two worked together for the next 45 years. Barrie worked on the Tonight Show from 1968 to 1972 and again from 1978 until its end in 1992. Barrie and Mulholland went on to write for the Late Show with David Letterman from 1994 until its end in 2015. Between 1972 and 1978, Barrie and Mulholland worked on a number of other TV and film projects and Barrie relocated to Los Angeles in 1977. In 1973-74 they wrote for a season on the Dean Martin Comedy Hour, featuring the comedy roasts of celebrities. In 1976 they wrote for a season on the Cher Show, a weekly variety show. In 1977 they were story editors for a season on Welcome Back, Kotter. They also wrote an episode of All in the Family and an episode of The Mary Tyler Moore Show. The pair wrote the feature films Bad Boys (1995), Oscar (1991) and Amazon Women on the Moon (1987). Their 1986 Showtime movie, The Ratings Game, directed by and starring Danny Devito, received a Writers Guild Award. His credits also include Academy and Emmy Awards telecasts. Michael Barrie's work on the Late Show with David Letterman and the Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson earned him 20 Emmy nominations and 6 WGA Award nominations. He lives in Los Angeles with his wife Frederica Duke and is the father of Max and Emma Barrie and stepfather to Oliver,

Augustine (actress Augie Duke) and Barnaby Kupper. SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE: The Michael Barrie Collection, 1960-2015, consists of opening monologue jokes, television scripts and production material, awards show scripts, film screenplays, and ephemera written by Barrie and Mulholland. The collection contains a combination of physical items and digital files. Most monologue and show documents are arranged chronologically. Series I: Late Night Television, 1964-2015 is comprised primarily of opening monologue jokes, and makes up the bulk of the collection. Series I contains physical and digital items. Subseries A contains opening monologue jokes for the Tonight Show Starring Johnny Carson and spans 1964-1984. Most of the material was written by Michael Barrie and Jim Mulholland, with some material attributed to Dick Cavett and possibly David Lloyd and Ed Weinberger. In addition to opening monologue jokes, there are documents related to the show including meeting notes, sketch scripts, interview notes, and comedy roast and joke materials. Most materials in Subseries A are available in physical format, with some available in digital format. Subseries B contains opening monologue jokes for the Late Show with David Letterman and spans 1994-2015. Celebrity guest host monologues are included, as well as additional themed jokes and Top Ten lists. The materials in Subseries B were written by Barrie and Mulholland and are available in digital format, with some available as physical copies. Series II: Other Television Contributions and Films, 1972-1995 is comprised of scripts for comedy and variety shows, awards show scripts, film scripts, and miscellaneous scripts for television shows and anthologies. Subseries A contains awards show scripts and production material and spans 1972-1995. Barrie and Mulholland wrote monologue jokes and scripts for both Johnny Carson and David Letterman when they hosted the Academy Awards (Oscars) and the Emmy Awards. Subseries B contains scripts and production material for the variety show The Dean Martin Comedy Hour (formerly known as The Dean Martin Show) and for the comedy show Dean Martin Celebrity Roasts and spans 1973-1974. Celebrities featured in the roasts include politicians, actors, and comedians such as Ronald Reagan, Bette Davis, and Don Rickles. Subseries C contains scripts for other television shows and comedy anthology series and spans 1972-1995. Barrie and Mulholland's work includes an episode of The Mary Tyler Moore Show, segments of the HBO/Cinemax comedy anthology series Likely Stories, and television films. Subseries D is comprised of multiple drafts of scripts for the cult classic film Amazon Women on the Moon (1987), contains scripts for Amazon Women on the Moon and spans 1984-1985. Series III: Unproduced Work and Professional Papers, 1960-2005 is comprised of scripts of unproduced television shows and film ideas and ephemera created by Barrie and Mulholland. It contains scripts and outlines for unproduced television shows and films, including two outlines which were a collaboration between Barrie and Joan Rivers. Also included in this series is an outline for the film It's a Mad, Mad, Mad, Mad World. Finally, the series contains themed collections of monologue jokes (such as ones about the holiday season or the NYC Marathon), email correspondence, and news stories.

Indexing Terms

Teleplays

Television scripts

Television talk shows

Dean Martin Comedy Hour Late Show with David Letterman Tonight show starring Johnny Carson

Television comedy writers

Television writers
