
Stirling Silliphant Collection

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Writers Guild Foundation Archive

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Descriptive Summary

Title: Stirling Silliphant Collection

Dates: 1962-1995

Collection Number: WGF-MS-108

Creator/Collector: Silliphant, Stirling, 1918-1996

Extent: 9.5 linear feet or 8 boxes

Repository: Writers Guild Foundation Archive

Los Angeles, California 90048

Abstract: The Stirling Silliphant Collection is comprised of scripts, outlines, notes and correspondence for film and television projects that screenwriter Silliphant wrote throughout his career. The majority of the projects included are unproduced or unaired.

Language of Material: English

Access

Open for research. Available by appointment only.

Publication Rights

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

Preferred Citation

Stirling Silliphant Collection. Writers Guild Foundation Archive

Acquisition Information

Donated by Tiana Silliphant via Nat Segaloff on November 1, 2019

Biography/Administrative History

Academy-Award winning Screenwriter Stirling Silliphant was born in Detroit on January 16, 1918 and grew up in Glendale, CA. After graduating from the University of Southern California and serving in World War II, he worked in promotions and advertising at Disney and 20th Century Fox. He then pursued screenwriting and his first credit came in 1955, as co-writer of the film *5 Against the House*. He worked steadily for forty years as a film and television writer and producer. Silliphant wrote episodes for numerous television series' and co-created the popular anthology TV series' *Route 66* and *The Naked City*. Later he wrote miniseries and movies for television such as *Pearl* (1978), *Fly Away Home* (1981), *Space* (1985) and *Mussolini* (1985). Silliphant found fame in writing for film when, in 1967, he won the Academy Award for Best Adapted Screenplay for the film *In the Heat of the Night*. His other feature work includes writing disaster movies for producer Irwin Allen, *The Poseidon Adventure* (1972) and *The Towering Inferno* (1974). In the late 1960s, he studied martial arts under Bruce Lee. Silliphant and Lee, along with James Coburn, collaborated on a film project *The Silent Flute*. Lee died before filming could begin and the film was later released as *Circle of Iron* in 1978. Lee introduced Silliphant to one of his students, Tiana Alexandra, and the two were married in 1974. This was Silliphant's fourth and final marriage. Silliphant became disillusioned with Hollywood and moved to Bangkok, Thailand in 1988. He continued to work until his death on April 26, 1996 from pancreatic cancer. He is survived by his wife Tiana and children Stirling and Dayle.

Scope and Content of Collection

The Stirling Silliphant Collection is arranged into two series. Series I: Unproduced Film and TV Projects, 1965-1995 contains scripts and treatments for numerous feature films, television pilots, television movies, and miniseries that Silliphant wrote but were never made. Projects span multiple genres and styles and represent the breadth of Silliphant's career. Notable projects include an adaptation of *Atlas, Shrugged*, with notes from Ayn Rand and producer Michael Jaffe; an Osmond Brothers film set at a wilderness survival camp; a pilot for the Marvel character *Daredevil*; several projects about Vietnam and/or the Vietnam war; an adaptation of the Arthur Herzog eco-fiction novel *Heat*; a version of Douglas Trumbull's *Hiero's Journey* adapted from the Sterling Lanier novel; ideas for a potential sequel to *In The Heat of the Night*; an adaptation of the novel *The Khaki Mafia*; an adaptation of the Irving Wallace novel *The Seventh Secret*; an adaptation of the novel *The Menorah Men* (titled *Sojourners*). There are also a few outlines and scripts for Silliphant's original pilot, miniseries and feature ideas that he developed over the years. Series II: Produced Film and TV Projects, 1962-1995 consists of scripts for some films and TV series that were released during Silliphant's career. These include the miniseries' *Mussolini* and *Pearl* and the features *The Grass Harp*, *Catch the Heat* and *Over the Top*. This series also includes press clippings and publicity interviews for a variety of films, TV series and books that Silliphant wrote.

Indexing Terms

Film adaptations.

Television adaptations.

Screenplays.
Teleplays.
Television writers.
Screenwriters.
