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## Del Reisman Papers

Finding aid created by Writers Guild Foundation Archive staff using RecordEXPRESS

Writers Guild Foundation Archive

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

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## **Descriptive Summary**

**Title:** Del Reisman Papers

**Dates:** 1936-2011 (bulk 1989-2011)

**Collection Number:** WGF-MS-018

**Creator/Collector:** Reisman, Del, 1924-2011

**Extent:** 15.65 linear feet

**Repository:** Writers Guild Foundation Archive  
Los Angeles, California 90048

**Abstract:** The Del Reisman Papers, 1936-2011, documents Reisman's career and life as a writer and as a board member for the Writers Guild of America West (WGAW). The collection includes Reisman's television scripts spanning 1958 to 1987 and correspondence pertaining to his produced and unproduced television and film projects. It also contains documents created during his work with the WGA and its board from 1989-2005, including his term as President from 1991-1993.

**Language of Material:** English

### **Access**

Majority of materials stored off site. One week advance notice required for retrieval.

### **Publication Rights**

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

### **Preferred Citation**

Del Reisman Papers. Writers Guild Foundation Archive

### **Acquisition Information**

The first four series were donated by Del Reisman on October 6, 2010; the remaining materials were acquired after Reisman's death in 2011.

### **Biography/Administrative History**

Born on April 13, 1924, Del Reisman grew up in Los Angeles. After attending Hollywood High, Reisman graduated from the University of California, Berkeley with a degree in English/Journalism. During World War II, Reisman served with the U.S. Army Air Forces from 1942-45 and was trained as a bombardier on the B-17 Flying Fortress. He was eventually stationed in East Anglia, England, with the 555th Bomb Squadron, 381st Bomb Group (Heavy), 8th Air Force, flying 35 combat missions, mostly over Northern Europe, and achieved the rank of First Lieutenant. After returning to the States, Reisman, whose mother Rose Judell worked for years in the studio system as executive assistant and script typist, launched his writing career during the "Golden Days" of live television in the 1950s, working on such shows as NBC Matinee Theater, and then as Story Editor for the acclaimed Playhouse 90, on which he worked with producer Martin Manulis, writers Rod Serling, David Shaw, and Robert Alan Arthur, as well as directors such as John Frankenheimer, George Roy Hill, Arthur Penn, and Arthur Hiller. Later, he served as Story Editor for the original acclaimed The Twilight Zone TV series. [He also served as Story Editor and Associate Producer on The Untouchables, and Associate Producer on Rawhide]. Reisman's prolific string of TV writing includes writing or co-writing episodes of Peyton Place, Cagney & Lacey, Charlie's Angels, Magnum P.I., Scarecrow & Mrs. King, The Streets of San Francisco, Cannon, Little House on the Prairie, Lou Grant, The Six Million Dollar Man, Flamingo Road, The Blue Knight, Banacek, Harry O, Kung Fu, Ghost Story, Airwolf, and The Yellow Rose (TV's Alice spin-off), among many hit TV shows. His screen credits include 1973's The Take (co-written with Franklin Coen, based on a novel by G.F. Newman). A WGAW member since 1965, Del Reisman served as WGAW president from 1991-93, as well as the Guild's vice president from 1987-91, and a member of the WGAW Board of Directors from 1979-87. He also chaired three consecutive WGA Negotiating Committees during the Guild's rounds of contract negotiations over the years. Over the years, Reisman also served as chairman or member of over 20 WGAW Committees, including participating on TV Credits, Basic Cable, Strike Study, Outreach, Professional Status of Writers, Blacklist Credits, and President's Task Force on Communication. He was also a longtime member of the Board of Trustees of the Writers Guild Foundation from 1994-2005 and 2007 to the present. For his longtime Guild service, Reisman was awarded the WGAW's Morgan Cox Award in 1999, given to those Guild members "whose vital ideas, continuing efforts, and personal sacrifice best exemplify the ideal of service to the Guild." Reisman continued to impact Hollywood's next generation of writers serving as a faculty member at the American Film Institute, teaching screenwriting in AFI's Feature Film and Television Development Program for the past 15 years. He was also a longtime, active member of the Library of Congress' National Film Preservation Board, playing a key role over the years to help preserve and restore some of our nation's most important film treasures. [In 2010], Reisman volunteered to participate in the Writers Guild Foundation's inaugural Veteran Writers Workshop ... personally instructing and mentoring Army, Air Force, and Navy war veterans and service personnel in the craft of writing." Reisman died in 2011

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at the age of 86. — Adapted from WGAW press release.

### **Scope and Content of Collection**

This collection was donated and processed in multiple stages. Produced scripts from the collection have been cataloged and placed in the WGF Library's core collection. Check the catalog for further details. The materials are arranged in nine series with items dating from 1936 to 2001. Series I: Works, 1958-1987 is comprised of works written by Del Reisman. The series is divided into Subseries A, Television scripts, 1958-1987, and Subseries B, Film scripts, 1973-1984. Series I includes produced scripts as well as unproduced episodes, features, treatments and outlines. Highlights include two Playhouse 90 episodes from 1958, several Blue Knight episodes, and Reisman's only produced feature film, THE TAKE aka THE DEAL. Reisman's copy of his 1982 Cagney & Lacey script for the episode, "Burn Out," contains a typed note about actress Tyne Daly winning an Emmy for the episode. Series II: Correspondence, 1953-1987 encompasses Reisman's correspondence and papers, dated 1953 to 1987. The series is organized into two subseries, Subseries A, Project Correspondence, 1969-1987, and Subseries B, General Correspondence, 1953-1971. The correspondence includes a series of letters chronicling Reisman's attempt to get the feature LEW'S GIRL made between 1969 and 1971. Series II also contains a small selection of personal notes, including a signed typed joke by Reisman on television writing. Series III: Writers Associations Papers, 1941-2001 covers a period when Reisman served on the board of the Writers Guild of America West, and was involved in conferences and meetings held by other writers associations. The highlight of Series III includes a telegram of support sent to President Roosevelt by the Screen Writers Guild just days after Pearl Harbor on December 9, 1941. Subseries A, WGA Papers includes scripts and behind-the-scenes materials for the 1999, 2000 and 2001 WGA Awards shows. Subseries B, Other Writers Associations consists of reports from various international guilds such as the Australian Writers' Guild, Writers' Guild of Britain and Writers Guild of Canada. Series IV: Miscellaneous Papers, 1936-1991 holds miscellaneous papers, including scripts that were not written by Reisman but were part of his collection, and some saved periodicals. Subseries A contains Robert Butler's proposal for the acclaimed television series, Remington Steele, and a feature script, Silver Screen by Sonya Roberts, a head writer for Peyton Place. Subseries B consists of a screening guide and menu from the 1991 Cannes Film Festival. Subseries C contains a Daily Variety from 1936, and a copy of The New York Times Magazine from 1973. Series V: Photos, undated, consists of a variety of photos of Del alone and with personal and professional acquaintances and friends. This series also contains a CD-R from Reisman's memorial held in February 2011. These are unprocessed, but available to researchers. Series VI: WGA Board Service, 1989-1995 contains correspondence, notes, press clippings and other documents related to Reisman's work during the time of his Vice-Presidency and Presidency of the Guild. Drafts of numerous speeches are included as well as Reisman's extensive research and writings on the problem of violence in the media. Materials also relate to the WGA's Committee on the Professional Status of Writers and to Reisman's contribution to the office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Somalia and Kenya. Series VII: WGA History Project, 1997-2005 contains notes and draft manuscripts of a timeline and history of the Guild compiled by Del and others. Documents include "Writers and Hollywood," a WGA 50th Anniversary Essay from 1998, text from a 2005 "Welcome to the Guild" video and an "Earthquakes in Hollywood" exhibit. Series VIII: Post-Board WGA and Personal Documents, 1994-2010 documents Reisman's service to the Guild after his presidency, his teaching career at AFI and his involvement in a variety of causes and foundations. Subseries A, Personal and Professional Correspondence, 1993-2010 contains personal and professional items such as biographies, interview transcripts, correspondence, cards and programs and other ephemera not related to WGA service. Subseries B, Blacklist Credits Committee, 1996-2004 documents Reisman's work as part of the WGA's Blacklist Credits Committee, which restored writing credits to blacklisted writers who were denied credit during the McCarthy era. Series IX: National Film Preservation Board, 1993-2010 documents Reisman's work to preserve film history in this program sponsored by the Library of Congress. Included are correspondence, ballots, film notes, Library of Congress packets, leaflets and promotional materials, event information, board information.

### **Indexing Terms**

National Film Preservation Board (U.S.)

Hollywood blacklist

Writers Guild of America, West

Television scripts

Television producers and directors

Television writers

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