

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Richard Prince

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Prince, Richard, 1947-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Richard Prince,
Dates:	October 22, 2013
Bulk Dates:	2013
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:50:48).
Abstract:	Newspaper columnist Richard Prince (1947 -) was a member of the 1972 “Metro Seven” group that fought for equal employment rights at the Washington Post. He is also the author of the column Richard Prince’s Journal-isms. Prince was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on October 22, 2013, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2013_253
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Journalist Richard Prince was born on July 26, 1947 in New York, New York, to Jonathan and Audrey Prince. Prince was raised in Roosevelt, Long Island, where he graduated from high school in 1964. Then, while a student at New York University, where he graduated in 1969 with his B.S. degree in journalism, he worked as a newspaper reporter for Newark, New Jersey’s *Star-Ledger*.

Upon graduation, Prince was hired as a reporter for the *Washington Post*. In 1972, he and six other African American reporters filed a complaint against the *Washington Post* with the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. Their case for equal opportunity in the workplace triggered other similar events at news agencies across the country. In 1979, Prince accepted a new position as assistant metro editor of the *Democrat and Chronicle* in Rochester, New York. Two years later, he was promoted to assistant news editor. Then, in 1985, Prince was promoted again to editorial writer and columnist. From 1988 to 1993, his columns at the *Democrat and Chronicle* were syndicated by the Gannett News Service for publication in other newspapers across the country, giving Prince nationwide attention. Finally, in 1993, he was promoted once more to editor of the “Speaking Out” page.

In 1992, Prince became a founding member of the William Monroe Trotter Group, an association of African American newspaper columnists. Then, in 1994, he was hired as the publications editor of the organization Communities In Schools. Prince would stay in that position until 1998, when he became the interim director of communications at the National Association of Black Journalists. After shortly serving in that role, Prince returned to the *Washington Post* in 1999 as a part-time copy editor on the foreign desk, while working in investigative journalism for two years as editor of The Public i, an online news report of the Center for Public Integrity. In 2002, he became founding editor of the news service Black College Wire and also began writing his own column entitled *Richard Prince’s Journal-isms* through the Robert C. Maynard Institute for Journalism Education.

In 2010, Kent State University awarded Prince the Robert G. McGruder Award for his accomplishments in encouraging journalism diversity. In 2013, he was awarded the Ida B. Wells Award, presented by the Medill School at Northwestern University and the National Association of Black Journalists. Prince has also chaired the Diversity Committee of the Association of Opinion Journalists.

Richard Prince was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on October 22, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Richard Prince was conducted by Larry Crowe on October 22, 2013, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Newspaper columnist Richard Prince (1947 -) was a member of the 1972 “Metro Seven” group that fought for equal employment rights at the Washington Post. He is also the author of the column Richard Prince’s Journal-isms.

Restrictions

Restrictions on Access

Restrictions may be applied on a case-by-case basis at the discretion of The HistoryMakers®.

Restrictions on Use

All use of materials and use credits must be pre-approved by The HistoryMakers®. Appropriate credit must be given. Copyright is held by The HistoryMakers®.

Related Material

Information about the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview, as well as correspondence with the interview subject is stored electronically both on The HistoryMakers® server and in two databases maintained by The HistoryMakers®, though this information is not included in this finding aid.

Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

Persons:

Prince, Richard, 1947-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Prince, Richard, 1947- --Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Newspaper Columnist

HistoryMakers® Category:

MediaMakers

Administrative Information

Custodial History

Interview footage was recorded by The HistoryMakers®. All rights to the interview have been transferred to The HistoryMakers® by the interview subject through a signed interview release form. Signed interview release forms have been deposited with Jenner & Block, LLP, Chicago.

Preferred Citation

The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Richard Prince, October 22, 2013. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

Other Finding Aid

A Microsoft Access contact database and a FileMaker Pro tracking database, both maintained by The HistoryMakers®, keep track of the administrative functions involved in scheduling, researching, and producing the interview.

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Richard Prince, Section A2013_253_001_001, TRT: 1:06:23 ?

Richard Prince narrates his photographs.

Video Oral History Interview with Richard Prince, Section A2013_253_001_002, TRT: 2:28:47 ?

Richard Prince was born on July 26, 1947 in New York City, New York. His mother, Audrey Elaine Prince, was born on December 29, 1924 in New York City. She worked several years in the U.S. Post Office. Her mother, Florette McGee, lived and worked many years in New York City as a buyer for Macy's. Prince's father, Jonathan Joseph Prince, was born July 2, 1924 in New York City to John and Caroline Prince, who were Caribbean-American immigrants from Saint Kitts in the West Indies. Jonathan Joseph Prince attended DeWitt Clinton High School in the Bronx, New York and Queens College in Queens, New York. He served as a U.S. Army soldier in World War II, and worked as an elevator operator. Prince grew up with two younger brothers: Ugima Jamie and Richard Coleridge. The family settled in Roosevelt, Long Island, which Prince describes as a very small, church-oriented, and segregated community. He describes the changes in the community at the onset of integration and white flight.

Video Oral History Interview with Richard Prince, Section A2013_253_001_003, TRT: 3:29:49 ?

Richard Prince recalls his early interest in journalism, and talks about delivering the paper 'Newsday' to neighboring communities on Long Island. Prince describes the various ethnic groups along his paper route, and the developing racial diversity on Long Island. In 1963, he attended the March on Washington, but missed Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s 'I Have a Dream' speech. He lists several other organizers integral to the Civil Rights Movement. Prince remembers an influential sixth-grade teacher at Long Island Grade School named Mr. Mosley, and talks about working on the student newspaper at Roosevelt Junior-Senior High. Prince graduated in 1964 and earned a scholarship to attend New York University. He describes the creative and political climate in 1964 New York City. Prince also recalls running for student government and working on the collegiate newspaper.

Video Oral History Interview with Richard Prince, Section A2013_253_001_004, TRT: 4:28:31 ?

Richard Prince joined the Society of Professional Journalists at New York University in New York City, New York. He met the managing editor of the Star-Ledger, who was looking for young black journalists to join his staff. He also describes reporting for the Star-Ledger in Newark, New Jersey during the 1967 Newark riots. In the spring of 1968, Prince was hired by the Washington Post; however, he was three credits short of graduating. He took a course at Howard University in Washington, D.C. to complete his requirements, and was summoned for duty in the U.S. National Guard afterward. Prince returned to the Washington Post in the early 1970s. In 1972, Prince and six black colleagues, including HistoryMaker Leon DeCosta Dash, filed a discrimination complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission against the Washington Post. Prince and the reporters are collectively called the Metro Seven.

Video Oral History Interview with Richard Prince, Section A2013_253_001_005, TRT: 5:29:09 ?

Richard Prince talks about the influence of the Metro Seven's discrimination complaint against the Washington Post. The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission decided in favor of the Metro Seven, but the reporters could not afford to present their case in federal court. There were some immediate promotions at the Washington Post following the discrimination complaint, and a national diversity effort in 1976 by the American Society of Newspaper Editors resulted. Prince describes the other black professional organizations that were formed in the 1970s. In the 1970s, Prince also transitioned to covering Washington D.C. public schools and communities, and covered the Hanafi Siege

of the District Building in Washington, D.C. in 1977. He recalls some of the problems at the Washington Post, including the Janet Cooke scandal. In 1979, he accepted a position at the Democrat and Chronicle in Rochester, New York. Prince recalls USA Today founder Al Neuharth and describes learning about Rochester's culture and history.

Video Oral History Interview with Richard Prince, Section A2013_253_001_006, TRT: 6:29:32 ?

Richard Prince talks about working at the Democrat and Chronicle in Rochester, New York in the 1980s and his involvement in the Rochester Association of Black Communicators. Prince became editor of the op-ed page at the Democrat and Chronicle, and returned to Washington D.C. in 1994 to work with the Washington D.C. Communities in Schools organization. He also worked briefly as the interim communications director for the National Association of Black Journalists. Prince describes transitioning into investigative journalism at the Center for Public Integrity, and working for the Washington Post part-time. In 2002, Prince and former editor of the Oakland Tribune, Pearl Stewart, created a publication for black college journalists at historically black colleges and universities called The Black College Wire. He also joined The Maynard Institute for Journalism Education in 2002, and talks about diversity issues in the media in the early 2000s.

Video Oral History Interview with Richard Prince, Section A2013_253_001_007, TRT: 7:18:37 ?

Richard Prince talks about his reporting style and the state of contemporary journalism. Prince describes his approach as dogged, relentless, and thorough. Prince shares his advice to young journalists, talks about having to adjust to social media, and talks about the kinds of opportunities that are available to young reporters. In 2010, he won the Robert G. McGruder award for diversity leadership from Kent State University in Kent, Ohio. Prince also won the Ida B. Wells award for diversity leadership in journalism from the National Association of Black Journalists and the Northwestern University Medill School of Journalism in 2013. He talks about the sometimes unpleasant consequences of journalism and the importance of being a resilient journalist. Prince considers his past, his legacy, and how he would like to be remembered.