

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Cedric The Entertainer

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Cedric, the Entertainer, 1965-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Cedric The Entertainer,
Dates:	July 31, 2014
Bulk Dates:	2014
Physical Description:	6 uncompressed MOV digital video files (2:35:33).
Abstract:	Film actor and comedian Cedric The Entertainer (1964 -) was one of the original Kings of Comedy. He starred in the television sitcom 'The Steve Harvey Show' and the 'Barbershop' film franchise. Kyles was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on July 31, 2014, in Studio City, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2014_192
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Actor and comedian Cedric “The Entertainer” Kyles was born on April 24, 1964 in Jefferson City, Missouri to Kittrell Kyles and Rosetta Boyce Kyles. After junior high school, Kyles and his family moved to Berkeley, Missouri, where he graduated from Berkeley High School in 1982. Kyles received his B.A. degree in mass communication from Southeast Missouri State University in 1987, and was hired at State Farm Insurance. He began performing stand-up comedy around the same time, and was a winner of the Miller Lite Comedy Search in 1990.

Kyles first appeared on television in 1992, on the variety show, *It's Showtime at the Apollo*. The following year, he served as host of BET's *ComicView*, and in 1995, he hosted HBO's *Def Comedy Jam*. Kyles started the Cedric the Entertainer Charitable Foundation, Inc. in 1995 with his sister in St. Louis, Missouri. He got his big break on television as Cedric “Jackie” Robinson, a supporting role on *The Steve Harvey Show*, in 1996. Kyles then toured for two years with his co-star Steve Harvey, and comedians Bernie Mac and D.L. Hughley on the highest selling and most popular comedy tour of all time, The Kings of Comedy tour. The tour was filmed by Spike Lee and later made into a film, *The Original Kings of Comedy*, which grossed \$40 million, and catapulted the careers of Kyles and his tour mates.

Kyles made his film debut in 1998 in the movie *Ride*. He went on to appear in over thirty films, including *Big Momma's House*, *Ice Age*, the *Barbershop* franchise, the *Madagascar* franchise, *Johnson Family Vacation*, *The Honeymooners*, *Code Name: The Cleaner*, and the *Planes* franchise. Kyles also narrated the animated series *The Proud Family*, starting in 2001. In 2002, he co-founded his own production company, A Bird and A Bear Entertainment. He made his directorial debut in 2010 with the film, *Dance Fu*. Kyles also hosted the game shows *It's Worth What?* and *Who Wants to be a Millionaire*, and received the lead role in a new sitcom in 2012, *The Soul Man*.

Kyles was recognized by BET in 1994 for his work as host of *ComicView* with the Richard Pryor Comic of the Year Award. He received four NAACP Image Awards for Outstanding Supporting Actor in a Comedy for his work on *The Steve Harvey Show*, and another for his voice-acting in *The Proud Family*. Comedy Central placed Kyles on its “100 Greatest Stand-Ups of All Time” in 2004, and he was selected as lead comedian for the White House Correspondents’ Dinner in 2005. He was inducted into the St. Louis Walk of Fame in 2008.

Cedric “The Entertainer” Kyles was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on July 31, 2014.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Cedric The Entertainer was conducted by Larry Crowe on July 31, 2014, in Studio City, California, and was recorded on 6 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Film actor and comedian Cedric The Entertainer (1964 -) was one of the original Kings of Comedy. He starred in the television sitcom ‘The Steve Harvey Show’ and the ‘Barbershop’ film franchise.

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:

Cedric, the Entertainer, 1965-

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Cedric, the Entertainer, 1965---Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Film Actor

Comedian

HistoryMakers® Category:

EntertainmentMakers

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 Cedric The Entertainer, July 31, 2014. 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 Cedric The Entertainer, Section A2014_192_001_001, TRT: 1:30:01 ?

Cedric The Entertainer was born Cedric Antonio Kyles on April 24, 1964 in Jefferson City, Missouri to Rosetta Boyce Kyles and Kittrell Kyles, Jr. His maternal family originated in Gold dust, Tennessee, and later settled in Caruthersville, Missouri. There, his maternal grandfather, Floyd Boyce, owned several entertainment venues, and his grandmother, Rosie Driver Boyce, worked in domestic service. Kyles' mother was the youngest of their six children. Although her parents wanted her to become a nurse, she received a scholarship from the president of the First State Bank of Caruthersville to study education at Lincoln University in Jefferson City, Missouri. She went on to work as a teacher and reading specialist. Kyles' paternal grandparents were farmers in Hayti, Missouri, where his father was born in 1942. He attended Lincoln University on a basketball scholarship, and left school to work at the Western Union Company when Kyles' mother became pregnant. Kyles had one younger sister, Sharita Kyles Wilson.

Video Oral History Interview with Cedric The Entertainer, Section A2014_192_001_002, TRT: 2:27:40 ?

Cedric The Entertainer, who was born Cedric Antonio Kyles, spent his early childhood in Caruthersville, Missouri, where his mother, Rosetta Boyce Kyles, was an elementary school teacher. During the seventh grade, he briefly lived with his mother and sister, Sharita Kyles Wilson, in Chicago, Illinois, before joining their relatives in St. Louis, Missouri. Then, they relocated to a black neighborhood in Berkeley, Missouri. Around this time, Kyles began going by his first name, Cedric, instead of his middle name. He enjoyed watching television with his maternal grandmother, Rosie Driver Boyce, including programs like 'The Jackie Gleason Show,' 'All My Children,' 'The Rockford Files,' and 'Hawaii Five-0.' He grew up in a playful household, and often did impressions of his family members. His mother also instilled in him the importance of money management and good character. In St. Louis, Kyles' family attended the Berkeley Heights Church of Christ. At this point, he talks about the crack cocaine epidemic.

Video Oral History Interview with Cedric The Entertainer, Section A2014_192_001_003, TRT: 3:28:43 ?

Cedric The Entertainer, who was born Cedric Antonio Kyles, attended Berkeley High School in Berkeley, Missouri. There, he had a tightly knit friend group who enjoyed watching music videos and playing video games. They socialized at football games, the local barbershop and the lunchroom, where Kyles was known for his skill in the dozens. He was mentored by his social studies teacher, who encouraged his creativity; as well as David L. Lane, who was his minister at the Berkeley Heights Church of Christ in St. Louis, Missouri. Kyles also belonged to a Boy Scout troop. He went on to attend Southeast Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, Missouri, where he met his friend and future business partner, Eric Rhone. During his freshman year, the students in the mass communications department successfully advocated for the creation of the college's radio station, KRCU Radio. Impressed by their determination, Kyles changed his major from pre-law studies to communications.

Video Oral History Interview with Cedric The Entertainer, Section A2014_192_001_004, TRT: 4:29:19 ?

Cedric The Entertainer, who was born Cedric Antonio Kyles, attended Southeast

Missouri State University in Cape Girardeau, Missouri. He majored in communications, and hosted an entertainment news and comedy show called 'The Cape Garage Door.' He also pledged to the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity, whose membership included Black Student Union leaders like John Hibbler and Press McDowell. Upon graduating in 1987, Kyles was hired at KFVS-TV, the CBS affiliate in Cape Girardeau. After Dan Rather became the anchor of the 'CBS Evening News,' the network reduced its budget, and Kyles was dismissed. He found work as an insurance claims adjuster at State Farm in St. Louis, Missouri. While working there, he befriended a local comedian and helped develop material for his standup routine. Encouraged by his friend's success, Kyles decided to enter the Johnnie Walker National Comedy Search. At this point in the interview, Kyles talks about his writing process and his experiences of heckling.

Video Oral History Interview with Cedric The Entertainer, Section A2014_192_001_005, TRT: 5:29:03 ?

Cedric The Entertainer, who was born Cedric Antonio Kyles, entered the comedy scene in St. Louis, Missouri during the late 1980s. He hosted his own comedy nights, including 'Ced's Backyard,' at nightclubs in St. Louis like Hunter's Lounge. Then, he began touring on the nationwide Funny Bone club circuit. In Dallas, Texas, he was introduced to Steve Harvey, who went on to promote Kyles at his club. In 1990, Kyles won the Miller Lite Comedy Search competition in Chicago, Illinois. Two years later, he made his television debut at the Apollo Theater in New York City. Kyles went on to host Black Entertainment Television's 'ComicView,' where Cedric The Entertainer became a household name. He also hosted a season of 'Def Comedy Jam' on the Home Box Office channel in 1995. Around this time, Kyles founded the Cedric The Entertainer Charitable Foundation, Inc. to support inner city youth. In 1996, he was cast as Cedric Jackie Robinson on the television sitcom 'The Steve Harvey Show.'

Video Oral History Interview with Cedric The Entertainer, Section A2014_192_001_006, TRT: 6:10:47 ?

Cedric The Entertainer, who was born Cedric Antonio Kyles, joined the cast of 'The Steve Harvey Show' in 1996. On the sitcom, Kyles played the roles of gym teacher Cedric Jackie Robinson and Grandma Puddin'. During this period, he began touring with comedians D.L. Hughley, Bernie Mac and Steve Harvey as the Kings of Comedy. They went on to star in the film 'The Original Kings of Comedy,' which was produced by Walter Latham in 2000. In 2002, Kyles published a book of essays called 'Grown A\$\$ Man.' At the time of the interview, he starred as Reverend Boyce "The Voice" Ballentine on the TV Land series 'The Soul Man.' At this point, Kyles remembers comedian Robin Harris, who passed away in 1990. He also talks about his transition from standup comedy to acting.