

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Michel du Cille

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	du Cille, Michel, 1956-2014
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Michel du Cille,
Dates:	January 27, 2014
Bulk Dates:	2014
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:13:47).
Abstract:	Photojournalist Michel du Cille (1956 - 2014) was the director of photography at The Washington Post and a three-time Pulitzer Prize winner. duCille was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on January 27, 2014, in Washington, District of Columbia. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2014_006
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Photojournalist Michel du Cille was born in 1956 in Kingston, Jamaica. His initial interest in photography is credited to his father, a pastor-minister, who worked as a newspaper reporter both in Jamaica and in the United States. Du Cille began his career in photojournalism while in high school working at *The Gainesville (GA) Times*. In 1985, he received his B.S. degree in journalism from Indiana University. Du Cille also received his M.S. degree in journalism from Ohio University in 1994.

While studying at Indiana University, du Cille was a photographer and picture editor at the *Indiana Daily Student*. He then worked as an intern at *The Louisville Courier Journal/Times* in 1979 and at *The Miami Herald* in 1980. Du Cille joined *The Miami Herald's* photography staff in 1981. In 1988, he was hired as a picture editor for *The Washington Post*. In 2005, du Cille became associate editor, and was named assistant managing editor of photography in 2007. Then, in 2009, when *The Washington Post* newsroom was re-organized and combined with washingtonpost.com, du Cille's title went from assistant managing editor of photography to director of photography. In 2012, he again became an associate editor for photography.

Du Cille has won three Pulitzer Prizes. He shared the 1986 Pulitzer Prize for Spot News Photography with fellow *Miami Herald* staff photographer, Carol Guzy, for their coverage of the November 1985 eruption of Colombia's Nevado del Ruiz volcano. Du Cille won the 1988 Feature Photography Pulitzer for a photo essay on crack cocaine addicts in a Miami housing project. In 2008, he shared the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service with *Washington Post* reporters, Dana Priest and Anne Hull, for exposing mistreatment of wounded veterans at Walter Reed Army Medical Center. In addition, du Cille led a team of editors that assembled the photographs shot by Nikki Kahn, Carol Guzy, and Ricky Carioti into the essay that won the 2011 Pulitzer Prize for Breaking News photography for their coverage of the Haitian earthquake and its aftermath.

Du Cille has been active in the National Press Photographers Association (NPPF) in various committee and leadership roles, including serving as the executive committee board representative in 2000, as well as on the

organization's finance committee in the early 2000s. Du Cille served on the Pulitzer Prize jury in the photography categories, and as a University of Missouri School of Journalism Pictures of the Year International judge.

Du Cille passed away on December 11, 2014 at the age of 58. He was married to *Washington Post* photojournalist Nikki Khan, also a Pulitzer Prize winner.

Michel du Cille was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on January 27, 2014.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Michel du Cille was conducted by Larry Crowe on January 27, 2014, in Washington, District of Columbia, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Photojournalist Michel du Cille (1956 - 2014) was the director of photography at The Washington Post and a three-time Pulitzer Prize winner.

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:

du Cille, Michel, 1956-2014

Crowe, Larry (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

du Cille, Michel, 1956-2014--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Photojournalist

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 Michel du Cille, January 27, 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 Michel du Cille, Section A2014_006_001_001, TRT: 1:28:48 ?

Michel du Cille was born on January 24, 1956 in Kingston, Jamaica to Lolita DeMont du Cille and Frank du Cille, Sr. His mother was born in Kingston to an indentured servant from India named Iris Gopal. She was raised by her paternal aunts, who were Syrian Jamaican and shunned du Cille's grandmother because of her low social status. Du Cille's paternal grandfather, Daniel du Cille, was a railway engineer, and had families in both Kingston and Montego Bay. In Kingston, du Cille's father worked as a reporter at The Gleaner, and pastored the New Testament Church of God for over thirty years. He also married du Cille's mother, with whom he raised five sons. After their sixth child died in infancy, du Cille's mother developed a chronic illness, which was diagnosed as lupus near the end of her life. Du Cille's family immigrated to Gainesville, Georgia in 1970. They experienced southern racism for the first time when they were turned away from the local New Testament Church of God, which was all-white.

Video Oral History Interview with Michel du Cille, Section A2014_006_001_002, TRT: 2:29:13 ?

Michel du Cille's parents, Lolita DeMont du Cille and Frank du Cille, Sr., met in Kingston, Jamaica. During their courtship, they faced the disapproval of his mother's aunts because of his father's lower social class. Nevertheless, du Cille's parents married and went on to have five sons, of whom du Cille was the third born. His brothers were Frank du Cille, Jr., Donovan du Cille, Oliver du Cille and Houston du Cille. In Jamaica, du Cille began his education at a public school in Saint James Parish. He also attended the school associated with the New Testament Church of God, where his father was the pastor. In 1970, du Cille's family immigrated to the United States. They were accompanied by two adopted daughters, who were responsible for the care of du Cille's ill mother. His family settled in Gainesville, Georgia, where his father joined the staff of the Gainesville Times. At this point in the interview, du Cille talks about Jamaican popular culture and his interest in Rastafarianism.

Video Oral History Interview with Michel du Cille, Section A2014_006_001_003, TRT: 3:30:51 ?

Michel du Cille was introduced to photography by his cousin's husband, who was a photographer in Jamaica. He became interested in photojournalism after moving to Gainesville, Georgia, where his father worked at the Gainesville Times newspaper. He studied photography at a local recreation center, and excelled in his literature classes at Gainesville High School. There, du Cille struggled to fit into the student body, which had recently integrated. During high school, Du Cille began working as a staff photographer at the Gainesville Times. At this point, du Cille remembers photographing James Earl "Jimmy" Carter, Jr. during his presidential campaign in 1976. He also talks about his admiration of photographers like Gordon Parks and Larry Burrows. After graduating from high school, du Cille applied to the photography program at the University of Georgia, but was rejected because of his race. Instead, he studied for one year at Valdosta State University, and then transferred to Indiana University.

Video Oral History Interview with Michel du Cille, Section A2014_006_001_004, TRT: 4:29:40 ?

Michel du Cille enrolled at Indiana University in Bloomington in 1977, and began building his photography portfolio at sports games and other campus events. He secured a summer internship with the Louisville Courier-Journal in 1979, and interned at the Miami Herald in 1980. During his second day on the job, the Miami community rioted in response to the acquittal of the four white police officers who killed Arthur McDuffie. Du Cille was hit by a rock while attempting to photograph the unrest. That summer, he also covered the Mariel boatlift. In 1981, du Cille accepted a full time position at the Miami Herald. He went on to win a Pulitzer Prize for his photographs of the Nevado del Ruiz

volcano eruption in 1986. At this point in the interview, du Cille describes the cameras that he used during his early career. Additionally, he talks about meeting Pulitzer Prize winning black photographers like John G. White, Moneta Sleet, Ovie Carter and Ozier Muhammad.

Video Oral History Interview with Michel du Cille, Section A2014_006_001_005, TRT: 5:28:03 ?

Michel du Cille and Carol Guzy received the Pulitzer Prize in Spot News Photography for their coverage of the Nevado del Ruiz disaster in Colombia in 1986. Two years later, du Cille won the Pulitzer Prize in Feature Photography for a story about the crack cocaine epidemic in Miami, Florida. Later that year, du Cille joined The Washington Post as a photography editor. He also began a master's degree program at the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism. In 1989, du Cille was named journalist of the year by the National Association of Black Journalists (NABJ). In 1990, he led a news team to South Africa to document the conflict between the African National Congress and the Inkatha Freedom Party. While there, du Cille and his partner, photojournalist Lynne Duke, integrated an all-white restaurant. Du Cille received his master's degree in 1994. At this point, he talks about the risks of photojournalism.

Video Oral History Interview with Michel du Cille, Section A2014_006_001_006, TRT: 6:30:28 ?

Michel du Cille joined the staff of The Washington Post as a photography editor in 1988. That year, he began a master's degree in journalism at the E.W. Scripps School of Journalism, where he was mentored by photojournalist Chuck Scott of the Milwaukee Journal. Du Cille completed his degree in 1994. He continued to serve as a photography editor until 2007, when he was encouraged to apply for the role of assistant managing editor for photography. In 2008, du Cille received the Pulitzer Prize for Public Service for his coverage of the mistreatment of veterans at the Walter Reed Army Medical Center. At the time of the interview in 2014, du Cille was the director of photography at The Washington Post. At this point, he talks about the use of photography on the newspaper's front page, and the importance of specialized photojournalism divisions. Du Cille also describes his plans for the future, and talks about the opportunities for aspiring photojournalists.

Video Oral History Interview with Michel du Cille, Section A2014_006_001_007, TRT: 7:16:44 ?

Michel du Cille talks about his philosophy of photography, and names his favorite photographers. He also talks about his children, and describes his hopes and concerns for the African American community. Du Cille concludes the interview by reflecting upon his life, legacy and how he would like to be remembered.