

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Kasi Lemmons

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Lemmons, Kasi
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Kasi Lemmons,
Dates:	February 6, 2022
Bulk Dates:	2022
Physical Description:	9 uncompressed MOV digital video files (4:46:41).
Abstract:	Film director, screenwriter, and actress Kasi Lemmons (1959 -) made her writing and directorial debut in 1997 with <i>Eve's Bayou</i> , followed by <i>The Caveman's Valentine</i> (2001), <i>Talk to Me</i> (2007), <i>Black Nativity</i> (2013), and <i>Harriet</i> (2019). Lemmons has served as an associate arts professor at the New York University Tisch School of the Arts and has starred in several films and TV shows, including <i>School Daze</i> and <i>Silence of the Lambs</i> . Lemmons was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 6, 2022, in Harlem, New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2022_012
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Film director, screenwriter, and actress Kasi Lemmons was born on February 15, 1959, in St. Louis, Missouri, to Dorothy and Milton Lemmons. She attended the New York University Tisch School of the Arts, the University of California, Los Angeles, and The New School for Social Research, in New York City.

Lemmons's first TV role was on the soap opera *You Got a Right*. As a youth, she also performed at the Boston Children's Theater. She has since starred in several films and TV shows, including *As the World Turns*, *The Cosby Show*, *School Daze*, *Vampire's Kiss*, *Silence of the Lambs*, *The Five Heartbeats*, *Candyman*, *Fear of a Black Hat*, *Hard Target*, *Drop Squad*, *ER*, and *Disconnect*. Lemmons made the short film *Dr. Hugo* in the mid-1990s, followed by her writing and directorial debut, *Eve's Bayou* (1997), which won Outstanding Directorial Debut from the National Board of Review of Motion Pictures, Best Director from the American Black Film Festival, and Best First Feature from the Independent Spirit Awards, among other awards.

Lemmons' second film, *The Caveman's Valentine* (2001), opened the 2002 Sundance Film Festival. That year she also led a tribute to Sidney Poitier at the 74th Academy Awards. Lemmons' third film, *Talk to Me* (2007), won several awards, including Best Director from the African-American Film Critics Association, Best Movie by a Woman from the Women Film Critics Circle, and Outstanding Directing in a Motion Picture (Theatrical or Television) from the NAACP Image Awards. In 2013, Lemmons adapted for the screen Langston Hughes's musical *Black Nativity*. Lemmons' 2019 film *Harriet* won Best Director from the Black Film Critics Circle, among other awards. Later that year, Lemmons adapted the novel *Fire Shut Up in My Bones* by Charles Blow into an opera libretto for Terence Blanchard. Her latest project has been a musical biopic of Whitney Houston called *I Wanna Dance with Somebody*.

Lemmons has served as an associate arts professor at the New York University Tisch School of the Arts. She has contributed to Film Independent's Filmmaker Labs as a speaker and moderator, served as an advisor to the Sundance Screenwriter and Filmmaker Labs, and taught at AFI, Yale University, Columbia Film School, MIT, UCLA, USC, The Los Angeles Film School, and the University of Pristina Film School, in Kosovo. She also has served on the board of Film Independent. Lemmons received an honorary doctorate of humane letters in 1998 from Salem State College and served as an artist in residence in 2008 at Vassar College.

Lemmons and her husband, Vondie Curtis Hall, live in New York City. They have three children: Che, Hunter, and Zora.

Kasi Lemmons was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on February 6, 2022.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Kasi Lemmons was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on February 6, 2022, in Harlem, New York, New York, and was recorded on 9 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Film director, screenwriter, and actress Kasi Lemmons (1959 -) made her writing and directorial debut in 1997 with *Eve's Bayou*, followed by *The Caveman's Valentine* (2001), *Talk to Me* (2007), *Black Nativity* (2013), and *Harriet* (2019). Lemmons has served as an associate arts professor at the New York University Tisch School of the Arts and has starred in several films and TV shows, including *School Daze* and *Silence of the Lambs*.

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:

Lemmons, Kasi

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews
Lemmons, Kasi--Interviews

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Filmmaker

HistoryMakers® Category:

ArtMakers

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 Kasi Lemmons, February 6, 2022. 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 Kasi Lemmons, Section A2022_012_001_001, TRT: 1:30:47 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Kasi Lemmons, Section A2022_012_001_002, TRT: 2:30:50 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Kasi Lemmons, Section A2022_012_001_003, TRT: 3:30:25 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Kasi Lemmons, Section A2022_012_001_004, TRT: 4:28:32 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Kasi Lemmons, Section A2022_012_001_005, TRT: 5:31:02 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Kasi Lemmons, Section A2022_012_001_006, TRT: 6:33:12 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Kasi Lemmons, Section A2022_012_001_007, TRT: 7:33:44 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Kasi Lemmons, Section A2022_012_001_008, TRT: 8:31:37 ?
- Video Oral History Interview with Kasi Lemmons, Section A2022_012_001_009, TRT: 9:36:32 ?