

John McCarty:

An Inventory of His Papers at the Harry Ransom Center

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	McCarty, John, 1944-
Title:	John McCarty Papers
Dates:	1912-2010
Extent:	15 document boxes (6.30 linear feet), 1 oversize box (osb), and 318 electronic files (324 MB)
Abstract:	The John McCarty Papers contain film stills, clippings, film and fan magazines, pressbooks, and McCarthy's writings which document the evolution of the horror and thriller film genres.
Call Number:	Film Collection FI-055
Language:	English and Spanish
Access:	Open for research. To request access to electronic files, please email Reference .
Restrictions on Use:	Certain restrictions apply to the use of electronic files. Researchers must agree to the Materials Use Policy for Electronic Files before accessing them. Original computer disks and forensic disk images are restricted. Copying electronic files, including screenshots and printouts, is not permitted.

Administrative Information

Acquisition:	Gifts, 2011-2012 (10-12-012-G, 11-03-008G)
Processed by:	Michael Rodney and Amy Armstrong, 2012 Born digital materials processed, arranged, and described by Chance Adams and Brenna Edwards, 2015-2022.
Repository:	Harry Ransom Center, The University of Texas at Austin

Biographical Sketch

John McCarty was born in Albany, New York, in 1944. He graduated with a communications degree in broadcasting and film from Boston University in 1966. After serving as a Peace Corps volunteer in Bogotá, Columbia, McCarty lived in Hollywood from 1968 to 1970, and wrote several unproduced scripts for the television series *Family Affair* and *Death Valley Days*. After working in broadcasting and as a copywriter for General Electric Company, McCarty published his first book, *You're on Open Line: Inside the Wacky World of Late-Night Talk Radio*, in 1978. He became a full time author in 1983, and has written over twenty non-fiction books on business, film, and the entertainment industry. He is often credited with coining the phrase "splatter film" to describe the subgenre of bloody horror film that graphically portrays violence and gore, when his book *Splatter Movies: Breaking the Last Taboo of the Screen* (1981) was published. Other publications include: *Alfred Hitchcock Presents: An Illustrated Guide to the Ten-Year Television Career of the Master of Suspense* (1985), *The Films of John Huston* (1987), *The Little Shop of Horrors Book* (1988), *The Official Splatter Movie Guide* (1989), *Hollywood Gangland: The Movies' Love Affair with the Mob* (1991), *Thrillers: Seven Decades of Classic Film Suspense* (1992), *The Fearmakers: The Screen's Directorial Masters of Suspense and Terror* (1994), *The Sleaze Merchants: Adventures in Exploitation Filmmaking* (1995), *The Films of Mel Gibson* (2001), and *Hammer Films* (2002). In addition, McCarty has contributed film articles to such film and fan magazines as *Fangoria*, *Filmfax*, *Little Shoppe of Horrors*, *Mystery Scene*, and *Starlog*.

His 2004 book, *Bullets Over Hollywood: The American Gangster Picture from the Silents to "The Sopranos,"* was produced as a major documentary by Hugh Hefner's Alta Loma Entertainment company and aired in 2005 and 2006 on the Starz/Encore cable network. He is also the co-producer-director-writer and narrator of *The Fearmakers: Masters of Screen Suspense and Terror*, a 10-part documentary series based on his book about some of the most influential makers of classic suspense and terror films. Additionally, McCarty has worked on other film projects including *Dead Horse Trail*, which earned an Honorable Mention citation at the 2008 Electric City Film Festival; *The Metamorphoses*, inspired by the Franz Kafka novel; and *The Confinement* (2009), inspired by the story "The Yellow Wallpaper" by Charlotte Perkins Gilman.

McCarty has also taught courses about cinema in the Department of Theatre at the University of Albany.

Sources:

In addition to material found within the McCarty Papers, the following source was used:

McCarty, John. *The Fearmakers: The Screen's Directorial Masters of Suspense and Terror*. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1994.

Scope and Contents

The John McCarty Papers consist primarily of materials collected and used by McCarty in the writing of his books and articles about film, particularly the suspense and horror film genres. Included are film publications, film stills, clippings, pressbooks, publicity materials, and a small amount of material associated with McCarty's writing and film projects including drafts, dust jacket designs, reviews of McCarty's books, and books written by McCarty. The collection is organized into three series: I. Reference Materials, 1920-2010; II. Memorabilia, 1912-1995; and III. Writings and Film Projects, 1966-circa 2008.

Series I. Reference materials make up the bulk of the material and is organized into four subseries: A. Publications, 1970-2010; B. Publicity Materials, 1972-1989; C. Film Stills, 1920-1993, undated; and D. Articles and Research, 1982-1985, undated. Subseries A. Publications is arranged alphabetically according to magazine title and is a mixture of horror and science fiction genre newsletters and magazines. Publications include *Afraid Newsletter*, *Cinefantastique*, *Fangoria*, *FilmFax*, *Little Shoppe of Horrors*, *Twilight Zone Magazine*, *Starlog*, and others. Several issues of *Fangoria*, *Filmfax*, *Little Shoppe of Horrors*, *Mystery Scene*, and *Starlog* contain articles written by McCarty.

Subseries B. Publicity Materials includes pressbooks, press releases, and press kits collected by McCarty. The material is arranged in alphabetical order by film title and the films represented date between 1972 and 1989. Among the films included are *Andy Warhol's Frankenstein*, *The Brood*, *Creepshow*, *Dressed to Kill*, *Equus*, *Herbie Goes Bananas*, *Lady in White*, *Sphinx*, and *Sullivan's Pavilion*.

Subseries C. Film Stills contains numerous production and publicity photographs collected by McCarty. The film stills represent movies from a variety of film genres, but the majority of photographs are of action, suspense, science fiction, and horror films. McCarty used many of these film stills to illustrate his books. Most of the photos are organized alphabetically by film title, but several folders of stills from unlabeled notebooks are filed at the end of the subseries. An index at the end of the finding aid lists film stills found in this series.

Subseries D. Articles and Research contains clippings, articles, and film reference material collected by McCarty, presumably used in his writings.

Series II. Memorabilia includes film stills, articles, publicity kits, and other material about directors and film genres. This material was organized by McCarty into numbered binders focused on a particular subject. Subjects include directors Roman Polanski, Alfred Hitchcock, Sam Peckinpah, and John Huston; American and British Cinema and Television and American Cinema (major and Indie studios) from the 1970s to the 1990s; the American gangster film; and the British horror production company, Hammer Films Ltd. McCarty's original binder titles appear in single quotes in the container list. In addition to the collected material, McCarty also inserted material related to his books on the subject. For example, the Alfred Hitchcock binders contain an assortment of Spanish serialized excerpts from his book, *Alfred Hitchcock Presents*. One of the John Huston

binders contains the dust jacket for his book, *The Films of John Huston*. For preservation purposes, the materials were removed from the binders, but their original order was maintained. An index at the end of the finding aid lists film stills found in this series.

Series III. Writings and Film Projects is the smallest series by volume and contains documents that relate to McCarty's published works and film projects. It is arranged alphabetically by book or project title. Material includes research, interview notes, reviews, dust jackets and cover art, correspondence, publisher's catalogs, and film still order forms. Of particular interest are a draft of *The Films of John Huston* (1987) and McCarty's proposals for the books *Thrillers: Seven Decades of Classic Film Suspense* (1992) and *The Stuff that Dreams are Made of: John Huston and the Golden Age of Hollywood* (unpublished). Also present are dust jackets for some of McCarty's books.

Separated Material

A collection of books, including eighteen volumes--many signed--of McCarty's published books, a special edition documentary about Sam Peckinpah, and the *Wild Bunch* audio soundtrack were transferred to the Ransom Center Library. Three recordable compact discs, labeled as digital photographs, were transferred to the Ransom Center Electronic Records Collection.

Index Terms

People

- Cushing, Peter, 1913-1994.
- Hitchcock, Alfred, 1899-1980.
- Huston, John, 1906-1987.
- McCarty, John, 1944-
- Polanski, Roman.
- Peckinpah, Sam, 1925-1984.

Subjects

- Horror films.
- Monster films.
- Motion Pictures, American.
- Producers and Directors.
- Splatter films.

Document Types

Articles.

Books.

Clippings.

Electronic documents.

Film Stills.

Periodicals.

Pressbooks.

Writings.

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No. 6, July 1981; contains James Bernard co-written by McCarty

No. 7, December 1982; contains Nigel Kneale's Quartermass Phenomenon co-written by McCarty

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No. 10/11, July 1990

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No. 23, October 2009

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No. 50, November/December 1995; contains Diabolique: The Thriller That Wouldn't Die by McCarty **Container 4.2**

No. 53, May/June 1996; contains Female Psychos by McCarty

Starlog

November 1987; contains Taking a Trip One Step Beyond by McCarty **Container 4.3**

May 1991; contains John Newland's "Errand of Mercy" by McCarty

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T.V. Guide, 11-17 May 1985; contains Presenting Alfred Hitchcock...in a Wine Vat...Beside a Torture Rack...Twitting the Sponsors co-written by McCarty **Container 4.4**

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