

Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Ron Allen

Overview of the Collection

Repository:	The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616 info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com
Creator:	Allen, Ron, 1957-
Title:	The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Ron Allen,
Dates:	February 18, 2014
Bulk Dates:	2014
Physical Description:	7 uncompressed MOV digital video files (3:06:58).
Abstract:	Journalist Ron Allen (1957 -) was a national and international correspondent for over twenty-five years at CBS, ABC and NBC News, and was responsible for the initial coverage of the Rwandan genocide. Allen was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on February 18, 2014, in New York, New York. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview.
Identification:	A2014_033
Language:	The interview and records are in English.

Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Journalist Ron Allen was born in 1957. His mother, Shirley Allen, was a school secretary; his father, Lindsay L. Allen Jr., was a cargo sales manager at Newark International Airport. Allen received both his B.A. degree and M.A. degree in political science from the University of Pennsylvania.

In 1980, Allen was hired as a desk assistant for a CBS news station in New York City. From 1988 until 1992, he worked as a national correspondent for CBS News based in Washington, D.C. and Los Angeles, California. In 1992, Allen was

appointed as a foreign correspondent for ABC News, and served in London until 1996. He was then hired by NBC News in 1996 as a national and international correspondent, where he covered stories of interest across the United States and around the world. Allen was based in London until 2003, when he moved to New York.

As a national and international correspondent, Allen covered the O.J. Simpson trials, the Trayvon Martin shooting, the abuse scandal at Pennsylvania State University, the historic Arab Spring from Cairo, Egypt, and the devastating earthquake in Haiti. He has traveled to South Africa several times to cover the life and legacy of Nelson Mandela. Allen also covered the historic 2008 Presidential election campaign, where he reported from Chicago's Grant Park the night of President Barack Obama's victory. In all, he has traveled to more than seventy-five countries, including Iraq, Afghanistan, Pakistan, the Balkans, Israel and the Palestinian territories, and across Africa, in countries such as Rwanda, South Africa and Somalia, among others. Allen's reports have appeared on all of NBC's news platforms including "NBC Nightly News with Brian Williams," "Today," and MSNBC.

Allen's work has earned him many of journalism's highest honors, including six Overseas Press Club Awards, five Emmys, two Robert F. Kennedy Awards, two George Foster Peabody Awards, and two Alfred I. duPont-Columbia Awards. In 1996, the National Association of Black Journalists named him journalist of the year. Allen has also served on the University of Pennsylvania's Board of Overseers, the Board of the Overseas Press Club, and the Leadership Council of the Committee to Protect Journalists.

Allen lives in the New York/New Jersey metropolitan area with his wife, Adaora Udoji, and daughter.

Ron Allen was interviewed by *The HistoryMakers* on December 9, 2013.

Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Ron Allen was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on February 18, 2014, in New York, New York, and was recorded on 7 uncompressed MOV digital video files. Journalist Ron Allen (1957 -) was a national and international correspondent for over twenty-five years at CBS, ABC and NBC News, and was responsible for the initial coverage of the Rwandan genocide.

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:

Allen, Ron, 1957-

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Hickey, Matthew (Videographer)

Subjects:

Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

Occupations:

Journalist

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 Ron Allen, February 18, 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 2/5/2020 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following

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 Ron Allen, Section
A2014_033_001_001, TRT: 1:29:08 2014/02/18

Ron Allen was born on July 22, 1957 in Jersey City, New Jersey to Shirley Slade Allen and Lindsay Allen, Jr. His mother was one of three children born to Eugenia Hensley Slade and Fletcher Slade in the Bronx, New York. Her father died of surgical complications at forty years old; and, from that time, Allen's maternal grandmother was a single parent. Allen's paternal grandparents, Tempie Jackson Allen and Lindsay Allen, Sr., raised eight children in Jersey City, including Allen's father. He graduated from Lincoln High School, and earned a degree from Rutgers University later in life. Allen's father worked as a cargo sales manager for United Airlines. As a result, Allen often traveled for free, which inspired his interest in world affairs. He grew up in Jersey City, and began his education at P.S. 38, James F. Murray School, where his mother worked as a lunchroom monitor. At this point, Allen talks about his marriage to Adaora Udoji, and remembers adopting their daughter, Siobhan Allen, from Ethiopia in 2009.

Video Oral History Interview with Ron Allen, Section
A2014_033_001_002, TRT: 2:29:59 2014/02/18

Ron Allen grew up in Jersey City, New Jersey, where his family attended the Zion Baptist Church. He began his education at the majority-white P.S. 38, James F. Murray

School, where he played on the basketball and football teams. At the time, he aspired to become a professional athlete. During the seventh grade, Allen enrolled in the Higher Achievement summer program at St. Peter's Preparatory School, an all-boys Catholic school in Jersey City. He later received a scholarship to attend the school from the ninth grade. Allen was one of a few African American students at St. Peter's Preparatory School, and founded the Ebony Club, which raised money to fund scholarships for African American students. Upon graduating, Allen enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia, where he successfully tried out for the basketball team. During his senior year, the team reached the Final Four of the NCAA Division I Men's Basketball Tournament.

Video Oral History Interview with Ron Allen, Section
A2014_033_001_003, TRT: 3:28:53 2014/02/18

Ron Allen enrolled at the University of Pennsylvania in Philadelphia in 1975. He resided in the W.E.B. Du Bois College House, and joined the basketball team and the Alpha Phi Alpha Fraternity. During his junior year, Allen began a master's degree in political science. For his thesis, he interviewed the first African American mayor of New Orleans, Louisiana, Ernest Morial, who was the father of his classmate, Marc H. Morial. During the summers, Allen worked as a tutor at St. Peter's Preparatory School, and also as a camp counselor. He graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1979, but was not awarded his master's degree because of a low grade. He turned down several Ph.D. fellowship offers, and obtained a position as a desk assistant at CBS News in New York City, where he worked under Walter Cronkite. In 1981, Allen was accepted into the minority reporter training program at the CBS affiliated WBTV-TV in Charlotte, North Carolina, where Bill Whitaker was also a trainee.

Video Oral History Interview with Ron Allen, Section
A2014_033_001_004, TRT: 4:28:10 2014/02/18

Ron Allen became a reporter at the CBS News affiliated station in Hartford, Connecticut in 1982. Two years later, he transitioned to WCVB-TV in Boston, Massachusetts. There, he was a part of the investigative team responsible

for 'Inside Bridgewater,' a five-part series that exposed the inhumane conditions at the Bridgewater State Hospital in 1988. Later that year, Allen joined CBS News in Washington, D.C. as a network correspondent. He covered national stories, and reported for the news magazine program '48 Hours.' Then, Allen joined the CBS News bureau in Los Angeles, California, where he covered the Rodney King trial and riots in South Los Angeles in 1992. He aspired to become a foreign correspondent, and volunteered to cover the civil war in El Salvador. Years later, in 2014, Allen reported on the dilapidated facilities at Trenton Central High School in Trenton, New Jersey, which led to the construction of a new school building.

Video Oral History Interview with Ron Allen, Section
A2014_033_001_005, TRT: 5:28:40 2014/02/18

Ron Allen served as a CBS News correspondent in Los Angeles, California, where he covered the Rodney King trial for programs like 'Good Morning America' in 1992. Then, he was recruited to join Peter Jennings' 'ABC World News Tonight,' where he corresponded from the bureau in London, England. In 1994, Allen was sent to KwaZulu-Natal, South Africa to cover the election of President Nelson Mandela. While there, he followed a lead to Rwanda, where he exposed the genocide of nearly a million members of the Tutsi ethnic group by the Hutu majority. During that time, Allen was often in danger of being mistaken for Tutsi because of his lighter complexion. In 1995, he returned to Los Angeles, California to cover the O.J. Simpson trial. While there, he met his wife, ABC News correspondent Adaora Udoji. Allen became a foreign correspondent for NBC News in 1996. He reflects upon his relationship with his father, Lindsay Allen, Jr., who passed away that year.

Video Oral History Interview with Ron Allen, Section
A2014_033_001_006, TRT: 6:31:55 2014/02/18

Ron Allen joined NBC News as a foreign correspondent in 1996. In that role, he traveled to Baghdad, Iraq to cover the start of the Iraq War in the early 2000s. While leaving Iraq, Allen was arrested near the border and detained on charges of smuggling money. After thirty-six hours, he and his team were bailed out of jail by NBC News. Allen

then returned to the United States, where he became a national correspondent and contributed to the NBC News magazine program 'Rock Center with Brian Williams.' In 2008, Allen covered Senator Hillary Rodham Clinton's presidential campaign, and President Barack Obama's election. He reflects upon his career, and talks about the need for diversity in the field of broadcast journalism. He also shares his plans for the future. Allen concludes this part of the interview by reflecting upon his legacy, as well as the legacies of his generation and the African American community.

Video Oral History Interview with Ron Allen, Section
A2014_033_001_007, TRT: 7:10:13 2014/02/18

Ron Allen narrates his photographs.