



The Wittliff Collections

Guide to the Robert Benton Papers 1969-1994

Collection SWWC-096

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Benton, Robert
Title:	Guide to the Robert Benton Papers
Dates:	1969-1994
Abstract:	The Robert Benton Papers document the filmmaking career of the Oscar-winning writer and director. Works represented include Kramer vs. Kramer, Still of the Night, Nadine, Places in the Heart, Billy Bathgate, and Nobody's Fool. Materials include scripts, notes, production and publicity materials, photographs, and set designs for films Benton wrote and/or directed.
Identification:	SWWC-096
Extent:	24 Linear Feet, 45 boxes (Plus items in map case, framed art case, and oversized.)
Language:	English
Repository:	The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University

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Biographical Note

Writer and director Robert Douglass Benton was born on September 29, 1932, in Waxahachie, Texas. He is the son of Ellery Douglass and Dorothy (Spaulding) Benton. Benton attended The University of Texas at Austin and received a BFA in 1953. His classmates included Jayne Mansfield and Rip Torn, an actor he would direct in the 1987 film *Nadine*. While serving in the U.S. Army from 1954-1956, Benton painted dioramas at Fort Bliss. He was discharged with the rank of corporal. He enrolled at Columbia University to study Art History but dropped out after one semester. Benton would then begin his professional career as a freelance writer and artistic associate at *Esquire*.

Benton remained with *Esquire* for several years where he worked in various editorial capacities. Here he would meet future collaborator David Newman. The pair published *Extremism: A Non-Book* (1959) and wrote the libretto for the Broadway musical *It's a Bird...It's a Plane...It's Superman* (1966). Benton's first film industry success was with *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967), a screenplay he co-wrote with Newman. Starring Faye Dunaway and Warren Beatty, the film was critically acclaimed and Benton and Newman received an Oscar nomination for best story and screenplay. His other early writing credits include *There Was a Crooked Man* (1970), *What's Up Doc* (1972), and *Oh! Calcutta!* (1972).

Paramount president Stanley Jaffe encouraged Benton to move into directing. He made his directorial debut in 1972 with *Bad Company*, a wild west adaptation of Dickens' *Oliver Twist* starring Jeff Bridges, Barry Brown, and David Huddleston. Benton directed *The Late Show* in 1977 and wrote the screenplay for *Superman* (with Mario Puzo and David and Leslie Newman) in 1978. His next directorial role was with the 1979 film *Kramer vs. Kramer*. A box office hit and critical success, the film won the Oscar for Best Picture while Dustin Hoffman and Meryl Streep also won Oscars for their performances. Benton won Oscars for Best Director and Best Screenplay.

1982's *Still of the Night* saw Benton direct Meryl Streep again in a starring role. Benton directed and wrote the screenplay for *Places in the Heart* (1984), a semi-autobiographical film starring Sally Field. The film was honored with two Oscars; Benton won Best Screenplay while Field won Best Actress. He wrote and directed *Nadine* in 1987 and directed *Billy Bathgate*, an

adaptation of an E.L. Doctorow novel, in 1991. It was the first film that Benton directed but did not write. Benton directed Paul Newman in the 1994 adaptation of Richard Russo's *Nobody's Fool*. A friendship was forged and Benton and Newman worked together again on *Twilight* (1998). Benton directed the 2003 adaptation of Phillip Roth's *The Human Stain*. His most recent work as a director is the 2007 film *Feast of Love*. Benton is currently working on the screenplay for *North of Cheyenne*, slated for a 2011 release.

Scope and Contents

The Robert Benton Papers document the filmmaking career of the Oscar-winning writer and director from 1969-1994. The collection is arranged in six series: personal papers (1940s, 1987 and 1984); produced works (1972-1994); unproduced works (1969-1988); works by others (including works from Walter Bernstein and Naomi Foner); photographs; artwork (storyboards, posters, and set designs); and framed photoprints. The bulk of the collection represents some of Benton's most seminal works including screenplays, notes, publicity, and other production material from his produced films, *Bad Company*, *Kramer vs. Kramer*, *Still of the Night*, *Nadine*, *Places in the Heart*, *Billy Bathgate*, and *Nobody's Fool*. The papers also include the screenplays, scripts, and notes from some of Benton's unproduced works including "Hubba-Hubba or Will the Big Bands Ever Come Back?," "The Coast," "Stardust," "Magic Hour," and the manuscript for Benton's unpublished novel, "Lover – A Novel of Suspense." Photographs, contact sheets, publicity stills, and color slides from Benton's produced films provide visual documentation of the filmmaking process, as do numerous story boards from *Nadine* and *Places in the Heart*, movie posters from nine of Benton's projects, set designs from *Billy Bathgate*, and framed photoprints of Benton on set with actors such as Dustin Hoffman and Bruce Willis.

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

Collection is open for research.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Robert Benton, 2001

Preferred Citation

Robert Benton Papers, The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University

Physical Location

Materials may be stored off-site. Advance notice is required for use:

<https://www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu/research/makearesearchappointment.html>.

Conditions Governing Use

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<https://www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu/research/visit/policies/publication.html>

Controlled Access Headings

- Authors, American -- Texas
- Feature films
- Screenwriters -- United States

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Personal Papers, 1940s, 1984, 1987

Box	Folder	
1	1-2	Papers regarding Italy, 1940s (2 folders)
1	3	Subject file – Computer
1	4	Subject file – Jim, Tammy, Jessica (clippings of Bakker scandal), 1987
1	5	Playbill, <i>Death of a Salesman</i> , April 1984

Series II: Produced Work, 1972-1994

Bad Company, 1972

1	6	Screenplay “release dialogue script” , October 2, 1972
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Kramer vs. Kramer, 1977, undated

1	7	First draft , October 1977
1	8	Revised first draft, working copy with Tom Marks’ cut, October 27, 1977
2	1	Second draft, working copy, October 27, 1977
2	2	First draft pages, undated
2	3	First draft revision pages, undated
2	4	Screenplay, pages 21-147, heavily annotated, undated
2	5	Screenplay, undated
2	6	Screenplay draft, undated
3	1	Screenplay with Renata’s script notes and packing inventory, July 1978
3	2	Publicity clippings, 1979 - 1980

Still of the Night (Working title "Stab"), 1976-1982, undated

3	3	Notes on characters Sam and Brooke
3	4-5	Outlines, annotated
4	1	“Stab” screenplay, revised, January 7, 1981
4	2	“Stab” screenplay, revised, 1981
4	3	Screenplay, undated
4	4	Screenplay, undated
4	5	Screenplay master
4	6	Draft screenplay (out of order)
4	7-8	First draft screenplay (3 folders), January 1976

5	1	irst draft screenplay, January 1976
5	2-3	Second draft screenplay, undated
5	4	"Stab" second draft typescript, undated
5	5-6	"Stab" third draft screenplay (2 folders), July 1980
5	7	Third draft screenplay, unrevised, July 24, 1980
6	1	Master third draft, July 1980
6	2	Revised screenplay, January 16, 1981
6	3	Screenplay, Benton work copy, January 19, 1981
6	4	Revised screenplay, February 6, 1981
6	5	Revised screenplay, master copy, February 6, 1981
6	6	Revised screenplay, February 27, 1981
6	7	Continuity notes, June 1982
6	8	Post production material
7	1-2	English language reviews
7	2-4	Foreign press reviews
7	5	Script with outline notes
7	6	Script pages
8	1	Looping notes
8	2	Script notes
8	3	Screenplay pages

Nadine, 1985 - 1986

8	4	First draft, October 1985
8	5	Screenplay, November 1985
8	6	First draft, February 1986
8	7	Screenplay, Wolfgang numbered copy, April 3, 1986
9	1	First draft (W.G.), April 29, 1986
9	2	Draft, April 29, 1986
9	3	Draft, May 15, 1986
9	4	Annotated draft, May 15, 1986
9	5	Draft, July 9, 1986
9	6-7	First draft (2 folders)s), August 12, 1986
9	8	First draft, revised, August 25, 1986
10	1	First draft, revised, August 25, 1986
10	2	First draft fragment, April 29, 1986
10	3	Partial draft, March 15, 1986
10	4	Screenplay, fragment, April 22, 1986
10	5	First draft, second revision, undated
10	6-8	Production Schedule (3 folders), 1986

Places in the Heart (Originally "Texas Picture"), 1982, undated

11	1	Treatment, "Praise, Blame, Love...", September 1982
11	2	Treatment, "Praise, Blame, Love...", October 1982
11	3-4	Working copy, "Praise, Blame, Love..." (2 folders), November 24, 1982
11	5	Working copy, "Praise, Blame, Love...", December 20, 1982
12	1	Working copy, "Praise, Blame, Love...", undated
12	2	First draft, January 20, 1983
12	3	First draft, January 24, 1982
12	4-5	First draft (2 folders), January 31, 1983
12	6	Second draft, March 1983
13	1-2	Second draft, revised (2 folders), March 1983
13	3	Second draft, notes and revisions, March 1983
13	4	Second draft, revisions and miscellaneous pages, March 1983
13	5	Second draft, revised, East Texas, May 1983
14	1-3	Second draft, revised (3 folders), July 25, 1983
14	4-5	Second draft (2 folders), undated
14	6	Second draft, first 88 pages, undated
15	1	Second draft, annotated, undated
15	2	Extra continuity
15	3	Main title sequence, miscellaneous brothers material
15	4	Opening title sequence
15	5	Production notes
15	6-8	Production schedule (3 folders)
16	1	Production schedule, continued
16	2	Sound cue list
16	3	Studio publicity pack
16	4	Broadcast excerpts
16	5	Correspondence
16	6	Foreign publicity
17	1-2	Foreign publicity, continued (2 folders)
17	3-8	Newspaper clippings (6 folders)
18	1-4	Newspaper clippings, continued (4 folders)
18	5-7	Periodicals (2 folders), Screening lists and information
19	1	Academy Awards publicity
19	2	Bootleg information
19	3	Casting notes
19	4	Script fragments

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| 19 | 5 | Script fragments and yellow pages |
| 19 | 6 | Yellow pages |

Series III: *Billy Bathgate*, 1990, undated

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| 19 | 7 | Screenplay, March 1990 |
| 19 | 8-9 | First draft, revised (2 folders), March 1990 |
| 20 | 1-3 | First draft, revised (3 folders), March 1990 |
| 20 | 4 | Second draft, May 1990 |
| 20 | 5-8 | Second draft, revised (4 folders), May 25, 1990 |
| 21 | 1-4 | Third draft (4 folders), June 15, 1990 |
| 21 | 5 | Screenplay, Doctorow's notes, pages 54-113, July 20, 1990 |
| 21 | 6-7 | Screenplay, Doctorow's notes (2 folders), July 20, 1990 |
| 21 | 8-9 | Screenplay, Doctorow's notes, pages 1-55, 54-113 (2 folders), July 20, 1990 |
| 22 | 1-2 | Third draft, revised (2 folders), August 6, 1990 |
| 22 | 3 | Third draft, revised, editorial equipment rentals, August 6, 1990 |
| 22 | 4 | Third draft, revised, August 6, 1990 |
| 22 | 5 | Third draft, second revision, August 6, 1990 |
| 22 | 6-7 | Third draft, second revision (2 folders), September 6, 1990 |
| 23 | 1 | Third draft, second revision, September 6, 1990 |
| 23 | 2 | Fourth draft, annotated notes, September 12, 1990 |
| 23 | 3 | Fourth draft, September 12, 1990 |
| 23 | 4-5 | Fourth draft, revised (2 folders), September 14, 1990 |
| 23 | 6-8 | Fourth draft, September 14, 1990. Revisions: first blue (September 20, 1990), second pink (September 25, 1990) |
| 24 | 1 | Annotated draft, pages 1-57,, undated |
| 24 | 2 | Annotated draft with handwritten notes, pages 1-53 |
| 24 | 3 | Annotated draft, pages 102-137, 15-58 |
| 24 | 4 | Screenplay, pages 108-164 from Doctorow, undated |
| 24 | 5-9 | Screenplay (5 folders), undated |
| 24 | 10 | Screenplay, annotated, labeled "Anne Rapp", undated |
| 24 | 11 | Draft fragment, undated |
| 25 | 1-2 | Screenplay, various portions and notes, undated (2 folders) |
| 25 | 3-4 | Production schedule (December-January) (2 folders) |
| 25 | 5-6 | Production schedule; Revised Screenplay (2 folders), September 1991 |

Nobody's Fool, 1993 - 1994

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| 26 | 1 | Clean screenplay, March 15, 1993 |
| 26 | 2 | Annotated script, June 24, 1993 |

26	3-4	Clean screenplay (2 folders), August 13, 1993
26	5	Clean screenplay, September 15, 1993
26	6	Clean Part II, pages 253-414
26	7	Clean Volume III, pages 502-707
27	1	Clean Volume IV, pages 708-937
27	2	Annotated Part I, pages 1-252
27	3	Annotated Part II, pages 253-501
27	4	Annotated Part III, pages 502-707
28	1	Annotated Part IV, pages 708-937
28	2	Annotated Part II, pages 253-501
28	3	Outlines and notes
28	4	Extra pages
28	5	Combined continuity and spotting list, October 12, 1994

Series IV: Unproduced Works, 1969 - 1989

Hubba-Hubba or Will the Big Bands Ever Come Back?, 1969

29	1	Screenplay, annotated, September 2, 1969
29	2	Screenplay, clean, undated

The Coast, 1975

29	3	Screenplay, first draft, April 1975
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Stardust, 1988, undated

29	4	Script, first draft, March 8, 1988
29	5	Screenplay, draft, March 28, 1988
29	6	Screenplay, draft with notes, April 4, 1988
29	7	Screenplay, first draft, undated
29	8	Notes and outline, undated

Magic Hour, undated

30	1-2	Screenplay, first draft (2 folders), undated
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Lover - A Novel of Suspense, undated

30	3	Manuscript, annotated by Benton, undated
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Series V: Works by Others, 1986 - 1990

Sullivan Street (by Watler Bernstein), 1986

30	4	Correspondence, undated
30	5-10	Drafts (7 versions), January 22 through February 25, 1986
31	1-9	Drafts (9 versions), February 25 through June 9, 1986
32	1-2	Script and loose pages (2 folders), undated
32	3	Notes: "Peter's file", undated

Hoffa, 1990

32	4	Screenplay, June 1990
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The Homesman or Seeing the Elephant (by Naomi Foner), 1990

32	5	Screenplay, second draft, November 1990
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Series VI: Photographs, 1981 - 1996

Still of the Night

33	1-2	Contact Sheets (2 folders)
33	3	Publicity Stills
33	4	Meryl Streep
34	1	Roy Scheider
34	2	Meryl Streep and Roy Scheider
34	3	Group photos and other cast
34	4	Production photos
34	5	Various 4 x 5 photographs
35	1-2	Various 4 x 5 photographs (2 folders)
35	3	Negatives

Places in the Heart (originally Texas Project)

35	4	Contact sheets of Danny Glover
35	5-7	Contact sheets of photographs by Zade Rosenthal (3 folders)
35	8	Color slides
35	9	Sally Field (alone)
35	10	Danny Glover (alone)
36	1	John Malkovich (alone)
36	2	Individual shots of other cast members
36	3	Groups shots of cast members
36	4	Sally Field and children (not part of production)
37		Snapshots (5 boxes)

- 38 Snapshots (5 boxes)
- 39 Snapshots (5 boxes)
- 40 Snapshots (5 boxes)
- 41 Snapshots (5 boxes)

Billy Bathgate

Map-case Dr. 9 11x14 color photograph from set

Nobody's Fool

- 42 1-4 Contact sheets NF5000-NF5149 (missing NF5018 – NF5037) (4 folders)
- 43 1-2 Contact sheets NF5150-NF5215 (2 folders)

Magic Hour

- 43 3-5 Contact sheets (3 folders)
- 44 1-2 Contact sheets (2 folders)
- 44 3 Publicity stills

Series VII: Artwork/Oversized Materials

Story Boards

- 45 1 *Nadine*, Frame 42, #23-29, and 3 unnumbered storyboards
- 45 2 *Places in the Heart*, Frame 41, 4 unnumbered storyboards

Posters

Map-case Dr. 9 *Still of the Night, Billy Bathgate, Places in the Heart, Nadine* (French version),
Twilight

Frame Upper A *Bad Company, The Late Show, Kramer vs. Kramer, Nobody's Fool*
Bin 16

Set Designs/Set Drawings/Set Plans

Map-case Dr. 9 Billy Bathgate set designs, set drawings, and set plans

Framed Photo Prints

Frame Upper A Benton on set with Dustin Hoffman and Bruce Willis; Benton on set with Bruce
Bin 16 Willis; Johnson's New Map of Texas