



The Wittliff Collections

Southwestern Writers Collection
Southwestern & Mexican Photography Collection

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A Guide to the Robert Benton Papers

1969 – 1994

Collection 096

Descriptive Summary

- Creator:** Robert Douglass Benton
- Title:** 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:** Collection 096
- Extent:** 45 boxes plus items in map case, framed art case, and oversized (24 linear feet)
- Language:** English
- Repository:** Southwestern Writers Collection, The Wittliff Collections, Alkek Library, Texas State University-San Marcos

Biographical Sketch

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.

Series Descriptions

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

Box 1

The smallest of the series, it consists of papers regarding Italy (1940s), information on a computer, clippings from the Bakker scandal (1987), and a playbill from *Death of a Salesman*.

Series II: Produced Works, 1972–1994

Boxes 1 - 28

Produced works comprise the bulk of the collection. It consists of screenplays, notes, publicity, and other production material for the films *Bad Company*, *Kramer vs. Kramer*, *Still of the Night*, *Nadine*, *Places in the Heart*, *Billy Bathgate*, and *Nobody's Fool*.

Series III: Unproduced Works, 1969–1988

Boxes 29 - 30

This series consists of scripts/screenplays and notes from projects that have not been produced, and a manuscript for the unpublished novel "Lover – A Novel of Suspense." The unproduced works are "Hubba-Hubba or Will the Big Bands Ever Come Back?," "The Coast," "Stardust," and "Magic Hour."

Series IV: Works by Others, 1986–1990

Boxes 30 - 32

The works by others in this series are from *Sullivan Street* (by Walter Bernstein), *Hoffa* (by David Mamet), and *The Homesman* or *Seeing the Elephant* (by Naomi Foner).

Series V: Photographs, 1981–1996

Boxes 33 – 44, plus map case

This series is the second largest and includes photographs from *Still of the Night*, *Places in the Heart*, *Billy Bathgate*, *Nobody's Fool*, and *Magic Hour*.

Series VI: Artwork/Oversized Materials

Boxes 45, plus map case and framed art storage

This series consists of story boards, posters, set designs, set drawings, set plans, and framed photoprints that are oversized and do not fit into standard size archival boxes. It includes story boards from *Nadine* and *Places in the Heart*; posters from *Still of the Night*, *Billy Bathgate*, *Bad Company*, *The Late Show*, *Places in the Heart*, *Kramer vs. Kramer*, *Nobody's Fool*, *Nadine* (French version), and *Twilight*; set designs/drawings from *Billy Bathgate*; framed two photographs of Benton with Dustin Hoffman and Bruce Willis, and Benton with Bruce Willis; and Johnson's New Map of Texas.

Administrative Information

Access Restrictions

Open for research.

Preferred Citation

Robert Benton Papers, Southwestern Writers Collection, Texas State University-San Marcos

Acquisition Information

Gift of Robert Benton, 2001-104 & 2001-135

Processing Information

Processed by Amy Esdorn, Devlin Flanary, Lara Hall, and Marilyn Wade, 2009.

Container List

Box Folder

Series I: Personal Papers

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 Works

Bad Company

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

Scripts/Screenplays

1	7	First draft October, 1977
1	8	Revised first draft, working copy with Tom Marks’ cuts, 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

Notes

3	1	Screenplay with Renata’s script notes and packing inventory, July, 1978
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Publicity

3	2	Publicity clippings, 1979-1980.
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Scripts/Screenplays

3	3	Notes on characters Sam and Brooke
3	4-5	Outlines, annotated, no date

Box Folder

Series II: Produced Works, *continued*

***Still of the Night* (working title "Stab")**

4	1	"Stab" screenplay, revised, January 7, 1981
4	2	"Stab" screenplay, revised, undated [1981]
4	3	Screenplay, undated
4	4	Screenplay, undated
4	5	Screenplay master, undated
4	6	Draft screenplay, undated (out of order)
4	7-8	First draft screenplay, undated, January 1976 (3 folders)
5	1	First draft screenplay, undated, January 1976
5	2-3	Second draft screenplay, undated
5	4	"Stab" second draft typescript, undated
5	5	"Stab" third draft screenplay, July 1980
5	6	"Stab" third draft screenplay, 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

Production Materials

6	7	Continuity notes, June 1982
6	8	Post production material

Publicity

7	1-2	English language reviews
7	3-4	Foreign press reviews

Notes

7	5	Script with outline notes
7	6	Script pages
8	1	Looping notes

Box Folder

Series II: Produced Works

Still of the Night, Notes, *continued*

8	2	Script notes
8	3	Screenplay pages, undated

Nadine

Scripts/Screenplays

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	First draft, August 12, 1986
9	7	First draft, 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

Production Materials

10	6-8	Production Schedule, 1986 (3 folders)
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Places in the Heart (originally *Texas Picture*)

Scripts/Screenplays

11	1	Treatment, "Praise, Blame, Love..." September 1982
11	2	Treatment, "Praise, Blame, Love..." October 1982
11	3	Working copy, "Praise, Blame, Love..." November 24, 1982
11	4	Working copy, "Praise, Blame, Love..." November 24, 1982
11	5	Working copy, "Praise, Blame, Love..." December 20, 1982

Box Folder

Series II: Produced Works

Places in the Heart, Scripts/Screenplays, *continued*

12	1	Working copy, "Praise, Blame, Love..." undated
12	2	First draft, January 20, 1983
12	3	First draft, January 24, 1982
12	4	First draft, January 31, 1983
12	5	First draft, January 31, 1983
12	6	Second draft, March 1983
13	1	Second draft, revised, March 1983
13	2	Second draft, revised, 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	Second draft, revised, July 25, 1983
14	2	Second draft, revised, July 25, 1983
14	3	Second draft, revised, July 25, 1983
14	4	Second draft, undated
14	5	Second draft, undated
14	6	Second draft, first 88 pages, undated
15	1	Second draft, annotated, undated

Production Materials

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
16	1	Production schedule, continued
16	2	Sound cue list

Publicity

16	3	Studio publicity pack
16	4	Broadcast excerpts
16	5	Correspondence
16	6	Foreign publicity

Box	Folder	
Series II: Produced Works		
<i>Places in the Heart</i> , Publicity, <i>continued</i>		
17	1-2	Foreign publicity, continued
17	3-8	Newspaper clippings
18	1-4	Newspaper clippings, continued
18	5-7	Periodicals (2 folders), Screening lists and information
Awards		
19	1	Academy Awards publicity
Notes		
19	2	Bootleg information
19	3	Casting notes
19	4	Script fragments
19	5	Script fragments and yellow pages
19	6	Yellow pages
<i>Billy Bathgate</i>		
Scripts/Screenplays		
19	7	Screenplay, March 1990
19	8-9	First draft, revised, March 1990
20	1-3	First draft, revised, March 1990
20	4	Second draft, May 1990
20	5-8	Second draft, revised, May 25, 1990
21	1-4	Third draft, June 15, 1990
21	5	Screenplay, Doctorow's notes, pages 54-113, July 20, 1990
21	6-7	Screenplay, Doctorow's notes, July 20, 1990 (2 folders)
21	8-9	Screenplay, Doctorow's notes, pages 1-55, 54-113, July 20, 1990 (2 folders)
22	1-2	Third draft, revised, Aug 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	Third draft, second revision, September 6, 1990

Box Folder

Series II: Produced Works

Billy Bathgate, Scripts/Screenplays, *continued*

22	7	Third draft, second revision, 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	Fourth draft, revised, September 14, 1990
23	5	Fourth draft, revised, 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	Screenplay, undated
24	6	Screenplay, undated (no cover)
24	7	Screenplay, undated (no cover)
24	8	Screenplay, undated (with cover)
24	9	Screenplay, undated (no cover)
24	10	Screenplay, annotated, labeled "Anne Rapp," undated
24	11	Draft fragment, undated

Production Materials

25	1-2	Screenplay, various portions & notes, undated (2 folders)
25	3-4	Production schedule (December-January) (2 folders)
25	5-6	Production schedule September 1991, Revised Screenplay (2 folders)

Nobody's Fool

Scripts/Screenplays

26	1	Clean screenplay, March 15, 1993
26	2	Annotated script, June 24th
26	3	Clean screenplay, August 13, 1993
26	4	Clean screenplay, 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

Box Folder

Series II: Produced Works

Nobody's Fool, Scripts/Screenplays, *continued*

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
		Notes
28	3	Outline and notes
		Production Materials
28	4	Extra pages
28	5	Combined continuity and spotting list, October 12, 1994

Series III: Unproduced Works

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

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

The Coast

29	3	Screenplay, first draft, April 1975
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Stardust

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

30	1-2	Screenplay, first draft (2 folders)
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Box Folder

Series III: Unproduced Works, *continued*

Lover – A Novel of Suspense

30 3 Manuscript, annotated by Benton

Series IV: Works by Others

Sullivan Street (by Walter Bernstein)

Correspondence

30 4 Correspondence (1986)

Scripts/Screenplays

30 5 Draft, January 22, 1986
30 6 Second draft, February 10, 1986
30 7 Draft, February 10, 1986
30 8 Draft, revised, February 10, 1986
30 9 Draft, February 20, 1986
30 10 Draft, revised, February 24, 1986
30 11 Draft, labeled Benton Copy, February 25, 1986

31 1 Original, February 25, 1986 draft, heavily annotated
31 2 Screenplay, February 25, 1986 (2)
31 3 Draft, revised, March 21, 1986
31 4 Script revisions, March 21, 1986, pages 1-19
31 5 Script revisions, March 26, 1986, pages 19-76
31 6 Script revisions, April 1, 1986, pages 77-86
31 7 Benton/Donovan rewrite, June 9, 1986
31 8 First draft, undated
31 9 Draft, May 21, 1986

32 1 Script, undated
32 2 Script pages 42-62, undated

Notes

32 3 Peter's file

Box Folder

Series IV: Works by Others, *continued*

Hoffa

32 4 Screenplay, June 1990

The Homesman or Seeing the Elephant (by Naomi Foner)

32 5 Screenplay, second draft, November 1990

Series V: Photographs

Still of the Night

Contact Sheets

33 1-2 Contact sheets (2 folders)

Publicity Stills

33 3 Publicity stills

Photographs

33 4 Photographs, Meryl Streep

34 1 Photographs, Roy Scheider

34 2 Photographs, Meryl Streep and Roy Scheider

34 3 Photographs, group photos and other cast

34 4 Photographs, production photos

34 5 Photographs, misc. 4x5s

35 1-2 Photographs, misc. 4x5s, continued

35 3 Negatives

Places in the Heart (originally Texas Project)

Contact Sheets

35 4 Contact sheets of Danny Glover

35 5-7 Contact sheets of photographs by Zade Rosenthal (3 folders)

Box	Folder	
		Series V: Photographs <i>Places in the Heart, continued</i>
		Slides
35	8	Color slides
		Photographs
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)
37-41		Snapshots
		<i>Billy Bathgate</i>
		Photographs
Map Case Dr 9		11x14 color photograph from set
		<i>Nobody's Fool</i>
42	1-4	Contact sheets NF5000-NF5149 (missing NF5018 – NF5037)
43	1-2	Contact sheets NF5150-NF5215
		<i>Magic Hour</i>
43	3-5	Contact sheets
44	1-2	Contact sheets, <i>continued</i>
44	3	Publicity stills
		Series VI: Artwork/Oversized Materials
		Story Boards
45	1	<i>Nadine</i> , Frame 42, #23-29, and 3 unnumbered storyboards
45	2	<i>Places in the Heart</i> , Frame 41, 4 unnumbered storyboards

Box Folder

Series VI: Artwork/Oversized Materials, *continued*

Posters

Map Case Dr 9	<i>Still of the Night</i>
Map Case Dr 9	<i>Billy Bathgate</i>
Framed Art Row 16	<i>Bad Company</i>
Framed Art Row 16	<i>The Late Show</i>
Map Case Dr 9	<i>Places in the Heart</i>
Framed Art Row 16	<i>Kramer vs. Kramer</i>
Framed Art Row 16	<i>Nobody's Fool</i>
Map Case Dr 9	<i>Nadine</i> (French version)
Map Case Dr 9	<i>Twilight</i>

Set Designs/Set Drawings/Set Plans

Billy Bathgate

Map Case Dr 9	Sets 11-15a
Map Case Dr 9	Sets 27-33
Map Case Dr 9	Sets 34-38
Map Case Dr 9	Sets 40-53
Map Case Dr 9	Sets 54-65

Framed Photo prints

Framed Art Row 16	Benton on set with Dustin Hoffman and Bruce Willis
Framed Art Row 16	Benton on set with Bruce Willis
Framed Art Row 16	Johnson's New Map of Texas

