

Guide to the Jeffrey Lewis Papers

YCAL MSS 1623



Daniel Duncan

August 2026

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Collection Overview

REPOSITORY: Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library
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New Haven, CT 06520-8330
(203) 432-2977
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CALL NUMBER: YCAL MSS 1623

CREATOR: Lewis, Jeffrey, 1944-

TITLE: Jeffrey Lewis Papers

DATES: 1983–2009

PHYSICAL DESCRIPTION: 27.66 linear feet (61 boxes)

LANGUAGE: English

SUMMARY: The Jeffrey Lewis papers contain his screenwriter and producer work for the television series *Hill Street Blues*, and as a novelist on his first book series the Meritocracy Quartet which consists of *Meritocracy: A Love Story*, *Conference of the Birds*, *Theme Song for an Old Show*, and *Adam the King*.

ONLINE FINDING AID: To cite or bookmark this finding aid, please use the following link: <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.jeffreylewis>

Requesting Instructions

To request items from this collection for use in the Beinecke Library reading room, please use the request links in the HTML version of this finding aid, available at <https://hdl.handle.net/10079/fa/beinecke.jeffreylewis>.

To order reproductions from this collection, please send an email with the call number, box number(s), and folder number(s) to beinecke.images@yale.edu.

Key to the container abbreviations used in the PDF finding aid:

b. box
f. folder

Administrative Information

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Jeffrey Lewis, 2025.

Conditions Governing Access

The materials are open for research. Box 48 (born digital) is restricted fragile.

Conditions Governing Use

The Jeffrey Lewis papers is the physical property of the Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University. Literary rights, including copyright, belong to the authors or their legal heirs and assigns. For further information, consult the appropriate curator.

Preferred Citation

Jeffrey Lewis Papers. Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University.

Processing Information

These materials have been arranged and described according to national and local standards. For more information, please refer to the Yale Archival Processing Manual.

Biographical / Historical

Jeffrey Lewis born in New York City on July 4, 1944, to Richard Lewis and Alice Lisson. He attended Yale University receiving a Bachelor of Arts in 1966, and a Doctor of Law (JD) from Harvard University in 1970. Early in his career he was an assistant district attorney and criminal defense lawyer in Manhattan and worked for a short time with Stan Lee at Marvel. His father, Richard Lewis, was an executive producer of classic American TV and radio of the golden age.

An American novelist, television screenwriter and producer, Lewis has published eight novels to date. The Meritocracy Quartet, *Meritocracy: A Love Story*, *Conference of the Birds*, *Song for an Old Show*, and *Adam the King*; his other novels are *Berlin Cantata*, *The Inquisitor's Diary*, *Bealport: A Novel of a Town. Land of Cockaigne*, and *Leonard Cohen*.

Lewis was a producer and screen writer for the 1980s seven-season television series *Hill Street Blues*, winning two Emmys with twelve nominations, and a Writers Guild of America Award. For the final season of *Hill Street Blues* Lewis brought on David Milch, his former Yale roommate, as co-show runner. Some individual episodes of this season had writing contributions by prominent guest writers such as David Mamet and Bob Woodward.

Scope and Contents

The Jeffrey Lewis papers contain his screenwriting and producing work for the television series, *Hill Street Blues*, and as a novelist on his first series the Meritocracy Quartet which consists of *Meritocracy: A Love Story*, *Conference of the Birds*, *Theme Song for an Old Show*, and *Adam the King*. The collection contains notes, ideas, and scripts for, *Hill Street Blues* and notes, ideas, drafts, and promotional material for his four novels with a small amount of correspondences correlated to the end of his second novel in the series, *Conference of the Birds*, which includes a correspondence with the author giving context about his papers and writing overall for both the television and book series.

Arrangement

The Jeffrey Lewis papers consists of two series. The first series is for the television series *Hill Street Blues* divided into two sub-series by season and episodes. The first sub-series is chronological with story ideas, notes, newspaper clippings, and partial script runs. The second sub-series is chronological with finished scripts organized by season and episode.

The second series is divided into four sub-series for each book in the Meritocracy Quartet novels. Each sub-series is organized chronologically by notes and ideas, drafts, correspondence and promotional material for

each novel, *Meritocracy: A Love Story*, *Conference of the Birds*, *Theme Song for an Old Show* and *Adam the King*.

Collection Contents

Series I: *Hill Street Blues* television series, 1983–1987

This series contains material related to the television series *Hill Street Blues* divided into two sub-series. The first is story ideas, notes, and partial drafts, the second is finished scripts.

This series is arranged chronologically by season and episodes into two sub-series. The first subseries contains ideas, notes, rough drafts of parts of scripts. The second subseries is finished scripts.

Episode story ideas, notes, and drafts		
b. 1, f. 1	Season 3, episodes 14, 15, 16	1983
b. 1, f. 2	Season 3, episodes 20, 21, 22	1983
b. 1, f. 3	Season 4, episodes 4, 5, 6 Peter Silverman, screenwriter season 4 episode 5, and season 7 episode 13	1983
b. 1, f. 4	Season 4, episodes 8, 9	1983
b. 1, f. 5	Season 4, episodes 11, 12, 13	1984
b. 1, f. 6	Season 4, episode 11	1984
b. 1, f. 7	Season 4, episode 12	1984
b. 1, f. 8	Season 4, episode 13	1984
b. 2, f. 1	Season 4, episode 14	1984
b. 2, f. 2	Season 4, episodes 17, 18, 19	1984
b. 2, f. 3	Season 4, episode 20	1984
b. 2, f. 4	Season 5, episode 1	1984
b. 2, f. 5	Season 5, episode 3	1984
b. 3	Season 5, 4 X 9 note cards	undated
b. 4, f. 1	Season 5, episodes 5, 6	1984
b. 4, f. 2	Season 5, episode 7	1984
b. 4, f. 3	Season 5, episode 12	1985
b. 4, f. 4-5	Season 5, episodes 13, 14	1985
b. 4, f. 6	Season 5, episodes 15, 16	1985
b. 4, f. 7	Season 5, episode 17	1985
b. 5, f. 1-2	Season 5, episode 18	1985
b. 5, f. 3	Season 5, episode 19	1985
b. 5, f. 4	Season 5, episode 20	1985

Episode story ideas, notes, and drafts (continued)

b. 5, f. 5	Season 5, episode 22	1985
b. 5, f. 6	Season 5, episode 23, 1st draft script	1985
b. 5, f. 7-9	Season 5, unknown episodes	undated
b. 6, f. 1	Season 6, season layout	1985-1986
b. 6, f. 2-3	Season 6, episode 1	1985
b. 6, f. 4-5	Season 6, episode 2	1985
b. 6, f. 6	Season 6, episode 3	1985
b. 7, f. 1	Season 6, episode 4	1985
b. 7, f. 2-4	Season 6, episode 5	1985
b. 7, f. 5	Season 6, episode 6	1985
b. 8, f. 1	Season 6, episodes 7, 8, 9, 10	1985
b. 8, f. 2	Season 6, episode 7	1985
b. 8, f. 3-4	Season 6, episode 8	1985
b. 8, f. 5-6	Season 6, episode 9	1985
b. 8, f. 7	Season 6, episode 10	1985
b. 9, f. 1-2	Season 6, episode 11	1986
b. 9, f. 3-4	Season 6, episode 12	1986
b. 9, f. 5	Season 6, episode 13	1986
b. 10, f. 1-2	Season 6, episode 14	1986
b. 10, f. 3	Season 6, episode 15	1986
b. 10, f. 4-5	Season 6, episode 17	1986
b. 10, f. 6	Season 6, episode 18	1986
b. 11, f. 1-2	Season 6, episode 20	1986
b. 11, f. 3	Season 6, episode 21	1986
b. 11, f. 4-5	Season 6, episode 22	1986
b. 11, f. 6-7	Season 6, episode 23	1986
b. 12, f. 1-3	Season 7, episode 3	1986
b. 12, f. 4	Season 7, episode 4	1986
b. 12, f. 5	Season 7, episodes 8, 9, 10 David Black, screenwriter and journalist, Season 7 episodes 10 and 19	1986

Episode story ideas, notes, and drafts (continued)

b. 13, f. 1-4	Season 7, episode 10 David Black, screenwriter and journalist, Season 7 episodes 10 and 19	1986
b. 14, f. 1-3	Season 7, episode 12 David Mamet, playwright and author, screenwriter Season 7 Episode 12	1986
b. 14, f. 4-5	Season 7, episode 13 Peter Silverman, screenwriter season 4 episode 5, and season 7 episode 13	1986
b. 15, f. 1-3	Season 7, episode 14 Bob Woodward and Christian Williams, screenwriters Season 7 Episode 14	1986
b. 15, f. 4	Season 7, episode 22	1987
b. 15, f. 5	Season 7, story ideas	1986-1987
b. 16, f. 1-6	Unknown seasons stories, clippings, and ideas	1982-1986
b. 17, f. 1-4	Unknown seasons clippings, story possibilities	1982-1986
Episode scripts		
b. 18, f. 1	Season 2, episodes 5, 6	1981 October 8- 1981 October 28
b. 18, f. 2	Season 2, episodes 7, 8	1981 October 28-1981 November 25
b. 18, f. 3	Season 2, episodes 9, 10	1981 November 18-1981 December 8
b. 18, f. 4	Season 2, episodes 11, 12	1981 December 18-1982 January 18
b. 18, f. 5	Season 2, episodes 13, 14	1982 January 14- 1982 January 25
b. 18, f. 6	Season 2, episodes 15, 16	1982 February 3- 1982 March 3
b. 19, f. 1	Season 2, episodes 17, 18	1982 March 1- 1982 March 23
b. 19, f. 2	Season 3, episodes 1, 2	1982 June 28- 1982 July 21
b. 19, f. 3	Season 3, episodes 3, 4	1982 July 26- 1982 August 12
b. 19, f. 4	Season 3, episodes 5, 6	1982 August 16- 1982 August 30
b. 19, f. 5	Season 3, episodes 7, 8	1982 September 9-1982 September 28

Episode scripts (continued)

b. 19, f. 6	Season 3, episodes 9, 10	1982 October 5– 1982 October 20
b. 20, f. 1	Season 3, episodes 11, 12	1982 October 25–1982 November 12
b. 20, f. 2	Season 3, episodes 13, 14	1982 November 12–1982 December 16
b. 20, f. 3	Season 3, episodes 15, 16	1982 December 13–1983 January 5
b. 20, f. 4	Season 3, episodes 17, 18	1983 January 7– 1983 January 25
b. 20, f. 5	Season 3, episodes 19, 20	1983 January 28–1983 March 4
b. 20, f. 6	Season 3, episodes 21, 22	1983 February 25–1983 March 17
b. 21, f. 1	Season 4, episodes 1, 2	1983 June 30– 1983 September 6
b. 21, f. 2	Season 4, episodes 3, 4	1983 July 20– 1983 August 16
b. 21, f. 3	Season 4, episodes 5, 6 Peter Silverman, screenwriter season 4 episode 5, and season 7 episode 13	1983 August 11– 1983 September 6
b. 21, f. 4	Season 4, episodes 7, 8	1983 September 7–1983 September 29
b. 21, f. 5	Season 4, episodes 9, 10	1983 September 29–1983 October 24
b. 21, f. 6	Season 4, episodes 11, 12	1983 November 3–1983 December 5
b. 22, f. 1	Season 4, episodes 13, 14	1983 December 1–1983 December 29
b. 22, f. 2	Season 4, episodes 15, 16	1983 December 28–1984 January 16
b. 22, f. 3	Season 4, episodes 17, 18	1984 January 17– 1984 February 14

Episode scripts (continued)

b. 22, f. 4	Season 4, episodes 19, 20	1984 February 10–1984 March 23
b. 22, f. 5	Season 4, episodes 21, 22	1984 March 9– 1984 March 29
b. 23, f. 1	Season 5, episodes 1, 2	1984 June 14– 1984 July 16
b. 23, f. 2	Season 5, episodes 3, 4	1984 July 11– 1984 August 8
b. 23, f. 3	Season 5, episodes 5, 6	1984 August 6– 1984 September 10
b. 23, f. 4	Season 5, episodes 7, 8	1984 September 4–1984 September 24
b. 23, f. 5	Season 5, episodes 9, 10	1984 September 27–1984 October 17
b. 24, f. 1	Season 5, episodes 11, 12	1984 October 23–1984 November 15
b. 24, f. 2	Season 5, episodes 13, 14	1984 November 9–1984 December 12
b. 24, f. 3	Season 5, episodes 15, 16	1984 December 11–1985 January 2
b. 24, f. 4	Season 5, episodes 17, 18	1985 January 7– 1985 January 23
b. 24, f. 5	Season 5, episodes 19, 20	1985 February 5– 1985 March 1
b. 25, f. 1	Season 5, episodes 21, 22	1985 February 21–1985 April 8
b. 25, f. 2	Season 5, episode 23	1985 April 3– 1985 April 18
b. 26, f. 1	Season 6, episodes 1, 2	1985 June 26– 1985 July 18
b. 26, f. 2	Season 6, episodes 3, 4	1985 July 26– 1985 August 16
b. 26, f. 3	Season 6, episodes 5, 6	1985 August 19– 1985 September 6

Episode scripts (continued)

b. 26, f. 4	Season 6, episodes 7, 8	1985 September 13–1985 October 25
b. 26, f. 5	Season 6, episodes 9, 10	1985 October 8–1985 November 4
b. 27, f. 1	Season 6, episodes 11, 12	1985 November 4–1985 November 20
b. 27, f. 2	Season 6, episodes 13, 14	1985 November 25–1986 January 2
b. 27, f. 3	Season 6, episodes 15, 16	1985 December 22–1986 January 22
b. 27, f. 4	Season 6, episodes 17, 18	1986 January 14–1986 February 3
b. 27, f. 5	Season 6, episodes 19, 20	1986 February 5–1986 February 24
b. 27, f. 6	Season 6, episodes 21, 22	1986 February 24–1986 March 21
b. 28, f. 1	Season 7, episodes 1, 2	1986 June 25–1986 October 1
b. 28, f. 2	Season 7, episodes 3, 4	1986 July 11–1986 September 2
b. 28, f. 3	Season 7, episodes 5, 6	1986 August 8–1986 November 6
b. 28, f. 4	Season 7, episodes 7, 8	1986 September 5–1986 November 18
b. 28, f. 5	Season 7, episodes 9, 10 David Black, screenwriter and journalist, Season 7 episodes 10 and 19	1986 September 18–1986 October 7
b. 28, f. 6	Season 7, episodes 11, 12 David Mamet, playwright and author, screenwriter Season 7 Episode 12	1986 October 13–1986 October 30
b. 29, f. 1	Season 7, episodes 13, 14 Peter Silverman, screenwriter season 4 episode 5, and season 7 episode 13	1986 October 29–1986 November 19

Episode scripts (continued)

b. 29, f. 2	Season 7, episodes 15, 16	1986 November 20–1987 February 3
b. 29, f. 3	Season 7, episodes 17, 18	1986 December 19–1987 January 17
b. 29, f. 4	Season 7, episodes 19, 20 David Black, screenwriter and journalist, Season 7 episodes 10 and 19	1987 January 14– 1987 March 9
b. 29, f. 5	Season 7, episodes 21, 22	1987 February 4– 1987 March 2

Series II: Meritocracy Quartet book series, 1999–2009

This series is the Meritocracy Quartet. Four separate novels set in the author's experiences in the decades of the 1960s, 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s.

This series is arranged in chronological order of the four books in the Meritocracy Quartet each as subseries. Each subseries begins with conception ideas, notes, and drafts followed by completed drafts of each novel. There are some correspondence following the final draft of *The Conference of the Birds*.

Meritocracy: A Love Story

b. 30, f. 1	Meritocracy Quartet overall general outlines and notes	1999
b. 30, f. 2	Notes and clippings	1999–2004
b. 30, f. 3	Outlines and chapters	1999 July 23– 2000 June 27
b. 30, f. 4	Outlines and chapters	1999 October 28–2000 July 20
b. 30, f. 5	Outlines and chapters	2000 February 12–2000 September 16
b. 31, f. 1-5	Outlines and chapters	2000 September 11–2000 December 29
b. 32, f. 1-5	Outlines and chapters	2000 December 13–2001 January 31
b. 33, f. 1	Chapters	2000 December 28–2001 January 31
b. 33, f. 2-4	Chapters	2001 May 8– 2001 November 24
b. 33, f. 5-6	Chapters	2001 November 19–2001 December 13
b. 34, f. 1	Draft/galley proof Original title <i>Harry Nolan: A Novel</i>	2001 January 29
b. 34, f. 2-3	Draft/galley proof Original title <i>Harry Nolan: A Novel</i>	2001 January
b. 34, f. 4	Draft/galley proof Original title <i>Harry Nolan: A Novel</i>	2001 January 30–2001 January 31
b. 35, f. 1	Draft/galley proof Original title <i>Harry Nolan: A Novel</i>	2001 February– 2001

Meritocracy: A Love Story (continued)

b. 35, f. 2-3	Draft/galley proof Original title <i>Harry Nolan: A Novel</i>	2001 February– 2001 March
b. 35, f. 4-5	Draft/galley proof Original title <i>Harry Nolan: A Novel</i>	2001 March– 2001 April
b. 36, f. 1-2	Draft/galley proof Original title <i>Harry Nolan: A Novel</i>	2001 April–2001 May
b. 36, f. 3-4	Draft/galley proof New title adopted	2001 November 16–2001 December 20
b. 36, f. 5-6	Draft/galley proof	2002 January– 2002 February
b. 37, f. 1-2	Draft/galley proof	2003 May
b. 37, f. 3-4	Draft/galley proof	2003 October 31
b. 37, f. 5-6	Copy edited	2004 February
b. 38, f. 1	Uncorrected proof	2004 January– 2004 March
<i>The Conference of the Birds</i>		
b. 39, f. 1-2	Preliminary notes	2002 February– 2002 September
b. 39, f. 3-5	Chapters and notes	2002 October 25–2002 December 20
b. 40, f. 1-3	Chapters and notes	2002 December 9–2003 February 20
b. 40, f. 4-6	Chapters and notes	2002 November 14–2003 January 27
b. 41, f. 1-3	Chapters and notes	2003 January 28–2003 April 14
b. 41, f. 4-6	Chapters and notes	2003 April 14– 2003 May 16
b. 42, f. 1-2	Chapters and notes	2003 May 16– 2003 May 29
b. 42, f. 3-4	Early draft	2003 January 28–2003 May 29
b. 43, f. 1-3	Draft	2003 June 9– 2003 June 10

The Conference of the Birds (continued)

b. 43, f. 4-6	Draft	2003 June 10– 2003 July 11
b. 44, f. 1-2	Drafts revised	2003 July 26– 2003 July 27
b. 44, f. 3-4	Draft	2003 August
b. 45, f. 1-2	Draft corrections	2003 October 2– 2003 October 15
b. 45, f. 3-4	Draft/galley proof	2003 October 4–2003 October 16
b. 46, f. 1-2	Draft	2003 October 27–2005 March 3
b. 46, f. 3-4	Draft	2004 October
b. 47, f. 1-2	Proofs	2005 February
b. 47, f. 3	Editorial notes	undated
b. 47, f. 4	Promotion contacts	2005 July 6– 2005 December 13
b. 47, f. 5	Cartoonist cover art	undated
b. 47, f. 6	Press kit	2005 September
b. 47, f. 7	New York Times excerpt	2005 November 20
b. 47, f. 8	Publicity notes	2003 November 7–2005 June 24
b. 47, f. 9	Author's questionnaire	2005 March 11
b. 47, f. 10	Promotion materials	2005 June–2005 November
b. 47, f. 11	Personal and promotional correspondence Small amount of correspondence with Lee Smith, Janwillem Van de Wetering, Andrei Codrescu, and others.	2003 November 3–2006 March 11
b. 47, f. 12	Collection correspondence with author Correspondence with the author giving background information on both the television series and his first four novels.	2026 May 8
b. 48, f. 1	Connections with Duncan Campbell CD-R Box 48 (computer files): are restricted fragile and may not be accessed due to their fragility. Researchers must consult access copies, when available, instead of the originals.	2006 January 6

Theme Song for an Old Show

Theme Song for an Old Show (continued)

b. 49, f. 1	Notes for draft Original title <i>Oh My Darling Clementine</i>	2002 March 14– 2005 March
b. 49, f. 2	Outline Original title <i>Oh My Darling Clementine</i>	undated
b. 49, f. 3-4	Notes and outlines Original title <i>Oh My Darling Clementine</i>	2004 January 23–2005 January 6
b. 49, f. 5-7	Chapters and notes Original title <i>Oh My Darling Clementine</i>	2004 August 10–2004 December 22
b. 50, f. 1-2	Chapters and notes Original title <i>Oh My Darling Clementine</i>	2005 January 4– 2005 January 25
b. 50, f. 3-4	Chapters and notes Original title <i>Oh My Darling Clementine</i>	2005 January 10–2005 January 31
b. 51, f. 1-3	Chapters and notes Original title <i>Oh My Darling Clementine</i>	2005 January 31–2005 February 17
b. 51, f. 4-5	Draft Original title <i>Oh My Darling Clementine</i>	2005 February 13
b. 52, f. 1-2	Draft Original title <i>Oh My Darling Clementine</i>	2005 February 15
b. 52, f. 3-4	Draft Original title <i>Oh My Darling Clementine</i>	2005 February 16–2005 March 1
b. 52, f. 5-6	Draft and notes New title adopted	2005 March
b. 53, f. 1-2	Draft revised	2005 October
b. 53, f. 3	Copy edit	2005 December
b. 53, f. 4-6	Draft revised	2006 February
b. 54, f. 1-2	Notes and uncorrected proofs	2006 February
b. 54, f. 3-4	Draft	2006 March
b. 54, f. 5-6	Draft	2006 September
b. 55, f. 1-3	Publicity	2006 December 14–2007 August 14
b. 56, f. 1	Publicity	2007 January 11–2007 July 23

Adam the King

b. 57, f. 1-2	Notes and outlines	2005 April 19– 2005 June 26
b. 57, f. 3	Notes and outlines	2005 August 31– 2005 November 22
b. 57, f. 4	Notes and outlines	2006 March 14– 2006 April 19
b. 57, f. 5	Notes and outlines	2003 September 11–2005 December 29
b. 57, f. 6-7	Notes and outlines	undated
b. 57, f. 8	Chapter draft	2005 December
b. 58, f. 1-3	Early sketches	1999 October 3– 1999 November 1
b. 58, f. 4-5	Draft	2005 October 4–2005 November 21
b. 59, f. 1-3	Draft	2005 December 22–2006 January 30
b. 59, f. 4-5	Draft	2005 December 29–2006 February 17
b. 60, f. 1-2	Draft	2006 January 28–2006 March 3
b. 60, f. 3-4	Draft	2006 March 3– 2006 March 14
b. 60, f. 5-6	Draft	2006 March 14– 2006 April 20
b. 61, f. 1	Draft	2009 March 12

Selected Search Terms

The following terms have been used to index the description of this collection in the Library's online catalog. They are grouped by name of person or organization, by subject or location, and by occupation and listed alphabetically therein.

Occupations

Authors, American -- United States -- 20th Century
Authors, American -- United States -- 21st century
Screenwriters -- United States -- 20th Century
Television producers and directors -- United States -- 20th Century

Genres / Formats

Born digital -- United States -- 21st century
Television scripts -- United States -- 20th Century

Subjects

American literature -- 21st century
Fiction
Fiction -- Authorship
Television cop shows -- United States
Television crime shows -- United States
Violence on television

Names

Codrescu, Andrei, 1946-
Mamet, David