

# Finding Aid to The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History with Dr. Price Cobbs

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## Overview of the Collection

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| <b>Repository:</b>           | The HistoryMakers®1900 S. Michigan Avenue Chicago, Illinois 60616<br>info@thehistorymakers.com www.thehistorymakers.com  |
| <b>Creator:</b>              | Cobbs, Price M.  |
| <b>Title:</b>                | The HistoryMakers® Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Price Cobbs,  |
| <b>Dates:</b>                | March 26, 2002   |
| <b>Bulk Dates:</b>           | 2002   |
| <b>Physical Description:</b> | 5 Betacame SP videocassettes (2:27:34).  |
| <b>Abstract:</b>             | Psychiatrist Dr. Price Cobbs (1928 - 2018 ) is an insightful African American psychiatrist and the author of, "Black Rage," "The Jesus Bag," and, "Cracking the Corporate Code: From Survival to Mastery." Cobbs was interviewed by The HistoryMakers® on March 26, 2002, in San Francisco, California. This collection is comprised of the original video footage of the interview. |
| <b>Identification:</b>       | A2002_194  |
| <b>Language:</b>             | The interview and records are in English.  |

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## Biographical Note by The HistoryMakers®

Price Mashaw Cobbs, black psychiatrist, author, and management consultant, was born November 2, 1928, in Los Angeles, California, the youngest of three children. Cobbs's parents were politically left, sophisticated migrants from the American South, who called it the "old country." Cobbs's family invested in their son the analytical tools to answer his endless questions; as a youth, he read Richard Wright, Ernest Hemingway, Langston Hughes, Sigmund Freud, W.E.B. DuBois, and Booker T. Washington. Cobbs also eagerly followed *Time Magazine*, the *Pittsburgh Courier* and the *Chicago Defender*; his interests ranged from religion and lynching, to what it was like to live in other cities. Cobbs graduated from Jefferson High School in 1946 and started that same year at U.C.L.A. After transferring to the University of California at Berkeley, Cobbs dropped out to join the Army; he served in Germany before returning to Berkeley, where he graduated in 1954.

Cobbs graduated from Meharry Medical School with his M. D. in Psychiatric Medicine in 1958, and was board certified in 1966; he built his private practice with patients referred by local hospitals and doctors. The Civil Rights Movement exacerbated the problems experienced by Cobbs's black patients through the discomfort brought on by intense social change. In 1968, Cobbs co-wrote the classic work, *Black Rage*, with William Grier; this timely book contended that at the death of Dr. King, not some, but all blacks were angry. *Black Rage*'s analysis of seething black anger and real white racism startled the country and challenged black people to reject practices based in the continuum of a slave culture. *Black Rage* became standard reading in college classrooms and community study groups across the nation. Cobbs was a popular lecturer and talk show guest. His next book, *The Jesus Bag*, further challenged the comfort zone of the establishment; his most recent work, *Cracking the Corporate Code: From Survival to Mastery*, co-authored with Judith L. Turnock, was about power.

Cobbs served as the president and CEO of Pacific Management Systems of San Francisco where he applied the principles of enthnotherapy to his work as a management consultant.

Cobbs passed away on June 25, 2018.

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## Scope and Content

This life oral history interview with Dr. Price Cobbs was conducted by Julieanna L. Richardson on March 26, 2002, in San Francisco, California, and was recorded on 5 Betacame SP videocassettes. Psychiatrist Dr. Price Cobbs (1928 - 2018 ) is an insightful African American psychiatrist and the author of, "Black Rage," "The Jesus Bag," and, "Cracking the Corporate Code: From Survival to Mastery."

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## 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®.

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## 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.

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## Controlled Access Terms

This interview collection is indexed under the following controlled access subject terms.

### Persons:

Cobbs, Price M.

Richardson, Julieanna L. (Interviewer)

Stearns, Scott (Videographer)

### Subjects:

African Americans--Interviews

Cobbs, Price M.--Interviews

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African American psychiatrists--Interviews.

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African American scholars--Interviews.

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African American authors--Interviews.

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African Americans--Psychology.

---

Race relations.

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Ethnopsychology.

---

United States--Race relations.

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Ethnicity--United States

---

African Americans--Social life and customs.

---

Southern States--Social life and customs.

---

Southern States--Race relations--History.

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Los Angeles (Calif.)--Race relations.

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Racism--California--Los Angeles.

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Popular music--Social aspects--United States.

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Jazz.

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United States. Army--African American troops.

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Historically Black Colleges and Universities

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Mental Health Services--United States

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Cultural psychiatry--United States

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African Americans--Mental health

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Civil rights movements--United States

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King, Martin Luther,--Jr.,--1929-1968--Assassination

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Corporations--Sociological aspects

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# Organizations:

HistoryMakers® (Video oral history collection)

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The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection

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# Occupations:

Psychiatrist

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# HistoryMakers® Category:

MedicalMakers

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# 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 Dr. Price Cobbs, March 26, 2002. The HistoryMakers® African American Video Oral History Collection, 1900 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, Illinois.

## Processing Information

This interview collection was processed and encoded on 5/30/2023 by The HistoryMakers® staff. The finding aid was created adhering to the following standards: DACS, AACR2, and the Oral History Cataloging Manual (Matters 1995).

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# 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.

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# Detailed Description of the Collection

## Series I: Original Interview Footage

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Price Cobbs, Section A2002\_194\_001\_001, TRT: 0:28:35 ?  
Price M. Cobbs discusses his mother's and father's backgrounds and goes in depth about their affects on his life. He explains why his parents relocated from

Birmingham, Alabama, to Los Angeles, California, and then recalls his earliest memory from age three. Cobbs reminisces about a road trip his family took during his youth where he cites examples of how racism and segregation played into the journey. He gives the names of his brother and sister and briefly discusses them. Cobbs thinks back to his childhood in Los Angeles, remembering his neighborhood and thoughts about his upbringing. Next, Cobbs talks about the similarities in racism in the South and in Los Angeles during the 1920s and 1930s. Price M. Cobbs remembers the sights, smells and sounds of his childhood and then describes his educational background.

African American psychiatrists--Interviews.

African American scholars--Interviews.

African American authors--Interviews.

African Americans--Psychology.

Race relations.

Ethnopsychology.

United States--Race relations.

Ethnicity--United States.

African Americans--Social life and customs.

Southern States--Social life and customs.

Southern States--Race relations--History.

Los Angeles (Calif.)--Race relations.

Social conditions--California--Los Angeles.

Popular music--Social aspects--United States.

Jazz.

United States. Army--African American troops.

African American universities and colleges.

Mental health services--United States.

Cultural psychiatry--United States.

African Americans--Mental health.

Civil rights movements--United States.

King, Martin Luther, Jr., 1929-1968--Assassination.

Corporations--Sociological aspects.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Price Cobbs, Section A2002\_194\_001\_002, TRT: 0:28:13 ?

Price M. Cobbs talks about some of the reasons he considered himself a curious child. He talks about the influence jazz music had on him as a youth. Then, Cobbs recalls teachers he had throughout his educational career. He goes in depth in explaining his relationships with his mother and father. Cobbs talks about choices he made in deciding which colleges to attend. Price M. Cobbs discusses his stint in the U.S. Army and then explains how he ended up in medical school.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Price Cobbs, Section A2002\_194\_001\_003, TRT: 0:30:14 ?

Price M. Cobbs starts the segment by commenting on his protected childhood environment. He then talks about his experience at medical school and goes into why he decided to pursue a career in psychiatry. He then explains his decision to work in San Francisco and his efforts to help the black community through his practice. Cobbs remembers influential medical school teachers and names medical schools he attended. Next, he recalls various forms of scrutiny he's faced throughout his life because of being black. Cobbs recounts professional

choices he's made and talks about how he ended up deciding on having a private practice. He talks about the death of his first wife, and the hurdles he overcame as a widowed man with children. Cobbs talks about how he built his private practice's reputation and clientele from the ground up and then goes into detail about how patients' problems have changed over time. Price M. Cobbs then discusses management consulting, a new facet of his career.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Price Cobbs, Section A2002\_194\_001\_004, TRT: 0:30:32 ?

Price M. Cobbs discusses the inspiration for his book, 'Black Rage' and details the critical response to it. He then talks about his second book 'The Jesus Bag.' Cobbs explains how he became involved in corporate consulting and cites examples of situations he's faced when dealing the corporate clients. He reflects on behavioral trends in corporate America and then reveals his findings on successful corporate players.

Video Oral History Interview with Dr. Price Cobbs, Section A2002\_194\_001\_005, TRT: 0:30:00 ?

Price M. Cobbs discusses his consulting stint with the television comedy 'In Living Color.' He discusses blacks' advancements in corporate America and then calls for a critical discussion on race. Cobbs talks about his hopes and concerns for the black community and then outlines a plan for its advancement. Next, Cobb briefly discusses the megachurch trend. He then gives his opinion on prescription psychiatric drugs. Cobbs discusses his professional history and future plans, including his current book project. He then recalls his father's personality. Price M. Cobbs gives more details about his own personality and then considers his legacy.