

Author Carroll speaks on writing

DEREK WILSON
September 26, 1995

Author Jim Carroll spoke in Dale Hall Monday night for the OU Speakers' Bureau.

Carroll is a rock singer, poet and author who is most noted for writing *The Basketball Diaries*, a book documenting his life in the early '60s from ages 13 to 15 when he was in a Catholic school in New York.

It was at this private school that Carroll, having been pushed into being sports editor for the school paper, took up writing.

His writing was considered genius. He was considered a natural writer, which led him, after graduating high school and attending Columbia University for a year, to begin writing full time.

Carroll has written five books, including *The Basketball Diaries*.

The Basketball Diaries initially appeared in several writing magazines before the film adaptation.

Carroll said he was somewhat disappointed with the director's interpretation of *The Basketball Diaries*.

However, he said the actors made the film worthwhile.

The Jim Carroll Band recorded three albums in the early '80s, plus a greatest hits album.

His band's music was in the movie *Tuff Turf*, in which Carroll starred, and *E.T.*

He also recorded *Praying Mantis*, a spoken-word album released in 1991. In addition, he has helped write lyrics for such bands as *The Blue Oyster Cult* and *Boz Scaggs*.

Carroll arrived a bit late due to the late arrival of his plane, but he showed up virtually unscathed and ready to roll.

He started out by reading a short story which was recently made into a movie in Canada.

Carroll read five poems, including a new one. "I always make a point to read any new poem I write," he said.

He spoke the lyrics from two of his songs.

Carroll's ideology on writing was cut and dried: "I was always worried about getting vaporized. You know, with the Cuban crisis and everything. So I just said, F**k it. I'll just get high and write.' But then we didn't get vaporized, so I was kind of left hanging."

He concluded by answering questions from the audience.

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Famous author to speak at OU Monday

RYUN PATTERSON
September 20, 1995

Jim Carroll will speak Monday in 211 Dale Hall to kick off Campus Activities Council week with a screening of *The Basketball Diaries*, the film based on Carroll's life, to follow.

Carroll will speak at 6 p.m., and the movie will start at 7 p.m.

Carroll is an acclaimed poet, musician and author who made a splash in the literary world with *The Basketball Diaries*, an autobiographical account of a teenage life gone down a path of sex, drugs and crime.

Since then, he has written numerous collections of poetry and recorded several albums.

"His name was brought up in a past meeting when the movie came out last year," said Dewey Mitchell, executive member of the OU Speakers' Bureau. "We contacted some agencies; he was free, so we got him."

"I'm really excited," he said. "The movie was huge and he sounded like he had a lot of Jack Kerouac in him, with the movie out and the cult fans he had."

"He's a very talented person and poet," Mitchell said.

Carroll is known in literary and intellectual circles, but until the film version of *The Basketball Diaries* came out, he wasn't as well-known.

Leonardo DiCaprio, who was nominated for an Oscar for *What's Eating Gilbert Grape*, portrayed Carroll in the film.

"He's just one of those big names that people can say, 'eah, I've heard of that person,'" Mitchell said.

The Basketball Diaries gets its title from Carroll's obsession and skill playing basketball, which got him a free ride at a private New York high school.

Since *Diaries*, Carroll has published the poetry collections *Forced Entries: the Downtown Diaries* and *The Book of Nods*.

In 1980, the Jim Carroll Band's debut LP *Catholic Boy* was released with Carroll's lyrics and vocals, and two more albums, *Day Dreams* and *I Write Your Name*, are the extent of Carroll's musical career.

Some students said although they'd heard of Carroll, they weren't too familiar with some of his work.

"I never heard of the man until *The Basketball Diaries* came out," said Jeff Wheeler, international business senior.

"I've heard of the movie, but as far as his name, I don't know it," said Sean McGrane, mechanical engineering senior.

"He's supposed to be a Jack Kerouac-type poet. Yeah, I've heard of him," said architectural engineering senior Kristopher J. Jennings.

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