

**The New York Public Library  
Humanities and Social Sciences Library  
Manuscripts and Archives Division**

**Karla Jay  
Papers, 1961-1992**

**Compiled by Laura K. O'Keefe  
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## Summary

**Title:** Karla Jay Papers, 1961-1992 (bulk: 1975-1987)

**Size:** 3 linear ft. (26 AB, 6 1/2AB, 3 FB, 1 RC)

**Source:** Git of Karla Jay, 1995

**Access:** Some correspondence and other files closed until 2070

**Description:** Correspondence, typescripts, and other items, chiefly documenting Jay's work as a professor of English and as the author and co-editor of books on the experiences of lesbians and gay men.

## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Karla Jay was born Karla Jayne Berlin in Brooklyn, New York, on February 22, 1947, the second of two children of Abraham Berlin, who worked for a dunnage company on the Red Hook (Brooklyn) docks, and Rhoda Berlin. She attended the Berkeley Institute, a private girls' school in Brooklyn, and Barnard College, where she majored in French, graduating in 1968 after having taken part in the student demonstrations at Columbia University that spring.

While she shared many of the goals of the radical left of the late 1960s, Jay was uncomfortable with the male-supremacist behavior of many of the movement's leaders. In 1969, she became a member of Redstockings, a newly-founded leftist-feminist group started by Shulamith Firestone and Ellen Willis. At around the same time, she began using the name Karla Jay professionally.

Jay, who had been aware of her feelings for women since high school, came out to her consciousness-raising group in Redstockings. When activists founded the Gay Liberation Front in the wake of the Stonewall riots of June 1969, Jay was an early member, and became an active participant, balancing attendance at meetings with working and attending graduate school at New York University, majoring in comparative literature.

Interested since childhood in writing, Jay, with the gay activist Allen Young, edited *Out of the Closets: Voices of Gay Liberation*, which appeared in print in 1972 and met with a wide and appreciative audience. Jay and Young followed it with *After You're Out; Personal Experiences of Gay Men and Lesbian Women* (1975), *Lavender Culture* (1978), and *The Gay Report: Lesbians and Gay Men Speak Out About Sexual Experiences and Lifestyles* (1979). It was also during the 1970s that Jay first learned of the writers Natalie Clifford Barney and Renée Vivien, members of the expatriate community in Paris in the 1920s and 1930s. Her interest in their lives and work led her to write her doctoral dissertation about them, which Indiana University Press published in 1988 as *The Amazon and the Page*.

Jay received her Ph.D. degree in 1984, and is a member of the faculty of the English department of Pace University in New York. Her recent publications include *Lesbian Texts and Contexts: Radical Revisions* (1990), co-edited with Joanne Glasgow; *Lesbian Erotics* (1995), and *Dyke Life: A Celebration of the Lesbian Experience* (1995). She lives in New York City.

## SCOPE AND CONTENT NOTE

The Karla Jay Papers consist of personal correspondence, business and professional correspondence, typescripts, audio tapes, and other materials. There is little documentation of her involvement with Redstockings and Gay Liberation Front; the bulk of the collection pertains to her work as a writer and an academic. Series 1, Personal Correspondence (Boxes 1-10), includes letters from many prominent writers and gay and lesbian rights activists. Series 2, Business and Professional Correspondence (Boxes 11-16) contains Jay's correspondence with her literary agent, publishers, and alternative presses, as well as with academic and professional organizations. Series 3, Typescripts (Boxes 17-29), consists of drafts of Jay's dissertation and her books; Series 4, Other Materials (Boxes 30-31), includes printed matter and Jay's note cards for her dissertation. Series 5, Audio tapes, is comprised mostly of interviews with Jay or conducted by her in the 1970s and 1980s.

## SERIES DESCRIPTIONS

### Series 1. Personal correspondence, 1961-1989, and undated. Boxes 1-10

Arrangement: boxes 1-8: alphabetical; boxes 9-10: chronological.

This series consists of outgoing and incoming correspondence (chiefly the latter) with relatives, friends, acquaintances, and colleagues of Jay, mostly from the 1970s and 1980s. The contents of the alphabetical files are more substantive than those in the chronological files, which consist mostly of scattered letters and notes from acquaintances. Among the notable correspondents represented in Boxes 1-8 are Rita Mae Brown, Barbara Deming, Jeanette Foster, Barbara Grier, Anais Nin, Felice Picano, Adrienne Rich, and Gloria Steinem. Of note in the file for "Parents" in Box 6 are letters from Jay to her father and an aunt, 1976, in which she discusses her sexual identity.

### Series 2. Business and Professional Correspondence, 1973-1989. Boxes 11-16

Series 2 includes Jay's correspondence with publishers, periodicals in which she published articles, files documenting her student years at N.Y.U. and her early years teaching at Pace University, her involvement with the establishment of the Center for Gay and Lesbian Studies at the City University of New York, and her work with a grant agency, the Money for Women Fund.

### Series 3. Typescripts, ca. 1972-1990. Boxes 17-29.

Arrangement: chronological.

The materials in Series 3 are typescripts and computer printouts of drafts of Jay's works. Box 22 also includes readers' completed copies of the surveys that were the basis for *The Gay Report*. Of additional interest are the two drafts of *Dyke Life* (Box 28), which differ somewhat from the published version.

### Series 4. Other materials, ca. 1980-1991. Boxes 30-31.

This series includes a typescript, "Making the World Safe for the Missionary Position," by Kay Adams, for *Lesbian Texts and Contexts*; two photographs of Jay, ca. 1995; a French lesbians' magazine, *La Grimoire* ("The Book of Spells"), a spiral-bound, photocopied journal of politics and the arts, produced in limited quantities (Box 30); and Jay's note cards for *The Amazon and the Page* (Box 31).

### Series 5. Audio tapes, ca. 1974-1992. Boxes 32-33.

The audio tapes include interviews with Jay and others, recordings of radio programs, and academic panels.

## CONTAINER LIST

### BOX            CONTENTS

#### Series 1. Personal Correspondence

- 1        Margie Adam, 1975-1979  
          Don Barrett, 1980-1982  
          Kathleen Barry, 1984-1988  
          Jessica Biondi, ca. 1964-1968  
          Sandy Blixton, 1976-1988]  
          Mary Lynn Broe, 1984-1989  
          Rita Mae Brown, 1974-1989
  
- 2        B. Meredith Burke, 1969-1988 (2 folders)  
          California trip correspondence, 1980  
          Jeanie Chin, ca. 1965-1966  
          Berthe Cleyrergue, 1985-1989  
          Tee Corinne, ca. 1978-1979  
          Louie Crew, 1975-1980  
          Barbara Deming, 1975-1983
  
- 3        Jeanette Foster, 1975-1979  
          Barbara Grier, 1975-1980 (2 folders)  
          Monique Raphel High. *See* Monique Raphel (Box 7)  
          High school friends, ca. 1961-1966  
          Shere Hite (n.d.)  
          Beth Hodges, 1975-1976
  
- 4        Christopher Isherwood, 1978  
          Polly Kellogg, 1980  
          Mimi Keiffer, 1976-1977  
          Riki Klein, ca. 1982-1983
  
- 5        Julie Lee, 1975-1978  
          Phyllis Lyon, 1980-1981

**BOX                    CONTENTS**

- 6**      Anais Nin, ca. 1982-1983  
         Welma Odendaal, 1979-1980  
         Parents and other relatives, 1968-1985 (2 folders)  
         Julia Penelope, 1975-1988  
         Penpals, 1959-1962  
         Felice Picano, 1983-1984
- 7**      Monique Raphel, 1966  
         Betty Renshaw, 1975-1986  
         Adrienne Rich, 1978-1980  
         Linda Rosen, 1974-1978  
         Susan Saxe, 1982
- 8**      Ann Allen Shockley, 1975-1988  
         Mark Silber, 1974-1983  
         Gloria Steinem, 1980  
         John Stoltenberg, 1976-1977  
         Martha Thomas, ca. 1975-1976  
         Shoko Tsukamoto, ca. 1976-1978  
         Walter Williams, 1980-1981
- 9**      Miscellaneous correspondence, 1960s-1979
- 10**     Miscellaneous correspondence, 1980-1989

**Series 2. Business and Professional Correspondence**

- 11**     Berenice Hoffman (literary agent), 1975-1982  
         Indiana University Press, 1988  
         *Lavender Culture*, 1977-1978  
         *Lesbian Tide*, 1974-1976  
         Lesbian-Feminist Study Clearinghouse, 1980  
         Links Books, 1974-1980 (two folders)  
         *Philadelphia Gay News*, 1982-1983 (two folders)  
         Public Relations, 1983  
         Women's Paper (*The Feminist*), ca. 1982
- 12**     Publishing correspondence, 1975-1982 (five folders)
- 13**     Publishing correspondence, 1983-1986 (three folders)  
         Pyramid/Jove Press, 1977-1978  
         Jove Press, 1982  
         Stories (for gay fiction anthology)

- 14 New York University, 1973-1982 (two folders)
- 15 Center for Gay and Lesbian Studies, CUNY, 1987-1989  
Conferences, 1984-1987 (two folders)  
Congress on Women, 1988-1990  
Modern Language Association, 1982-1984 (three folders)
- 16 Money for Women Fund, 1981-1985 (five folders)

### **Series 3. Typescripts**

- 17 *After You're Out*
- 18 *Lavender Culture*
- 19-21 *The Gay Report*
- 22 *The Gay Report*: readers' responses to surveys
- 23-24 *Lesbian Texts and Contexts*
- 25-26 Doctoral dissertation: *The Disciples of the Tenth Muse: Natalie Clifford Barney and Renée Vivien*
- 27 *The Amazon and the Page*
- 28 *Dyke Life* (two versions)
- 29 *Lesbian Erotics* (six folders)  
*We Are Everywhere* (later *Lavender Culture*; three folders)

### **Series 4. Other Materials**

- 30 Typescript: "Making the World Safe for the Missionary Position"  
*La Grimoire* (French women's magazine, 1991)  
Photographs of Karla Jay, ca. 1995
- 31 Notecards for *The Amazon and the Page*

**Series 5. Audio Tapes (Boxes 32-33)**

*Tapes must be requested by tape number.*

<b>Tape #</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Contents</b>	<b>Timing</b>	<b>Date</b>
03026 03027 03028	Karla Jay interviewed by Toby Marotta	Karla Jay interviewed by Toby Marotta	01:03:00 01:31:00 00:24:00	
03279	Audre Lorde	Interview with Audre Lorde	00:40:00	10/05/83
03280	Michael Cacoyannis (side A) Anais Nin (side B)	Film director Michael Cacoyannis is interviewed. Karla Jay interviews writer and diarist Anais Nin	01:00:00	
03281	Djuna Barnes	Documentary on the life and work of Djuna Barnes. From Radio France. In French.	00:40:00	11/2/83
03282	Toni Morrison -	Toni Morrison reading from the manuscript of her novel, <i>Beloved</i> . Modern Language Association annual meeting, 1984	00:40:00	12/29/84
03283	Rita Mae Brown	Interview with Rita Mae Brown.		03/31/82
03284	Jeanette Foster	Karla Jay interviews Jeannette Foster, author of <i>Sex Variant Women in Literature</i>	01:20:00	6/5/75
03351	Karla Jay and Allen Young	Karla Jay and Allen Young are interviewed about their anthology, <i>Out of the Closets: Voices of Gay Liberation</i> , on the Gay Break radio show.	01:00:00	3/20/73 (?)
03352	Andrea Dworkin 1983	Karla Jay interviews Andrea Dworkin..	00:32:00	1/21/83
03353	Lesbian Movement in France	Karla Jay interviews a group of French women about the lesbian movement in France.	01:02:00	
03354	Andrea Dworkin 1982	Karla Jay interviews Andrea Dworkin	00:45:00	02/21/82
03355	The Return of Queer Hour	Gay radio comedy show on WMUA-FM, the student radio station of the University of Massachusetts at Amherst. Karla Jay makes three very brief appearances.	00:20:10	1977
03356	Dystopias	College English Association panel on dystopias. Papers presented by Jean Moore, Daniel Jones, and Emerson Little.	1:25:00	
03357	Lesbian Pride Week concert	Lesbian Pride Week concert. Calvary St. Church, Park Avenue and 21st St Casse Culver, Alix Dobkin, Barbara Cobb, Kay Gardner.		06/27/75

03358	Margie Adam (side A) Flying Lesbians (musical group, side B)	Side A.: Margie Adam. Commercial record album "Here is a Love Song"  1983 Flying Lesbians. Commercial record album "Alle stuecke sind gemeinsames." In German and English.	01:23:26	1983.
03383	Margie Adam	Performance. KPFK Studio, Los Angeles; n.d. Concert at the University of Connecticut, Storrs, Fall 1974	01:30:00	1974
03384	Virginia Apuzzo	Virginia Apuzzo, Executive Director of the National Gay Task Force, is interviewed by Karla Jay.	00:27:05	12/21/82
03385	Karla Jay and Allen Young	Margot Adler interviews Karla Jay and Allen Young on radio station WBAI about their book, <i>The Gay Report</i> .	00:28:00	05/25/79
03386	Amelia Earhart	Karla Jay is questioned about the life of Amelia Earhart on the radio program <i>Aviation Today</i> .	00:43:00	1992
03387	Berthe Cleyrergue	Berthe Cleyrergue, housekeeper to American expatriate poet and salon hostess Natalie Barney, is interviewed by Karla Jay. In French.	00:16:00	
03388	Barbara Grier	Writer and publisher Barbara Grier (pen name Gene Damon) is interviewed by Karla Jay.	00:59:23	06/07/75
03389	Hawaii -- Maui	Informal group interview/discussion with women from the small lesbian community living on Maui.	00:39:00	
03390	Modern Language Association conference panel, December 1990	"Mapping the Frontier of the Black Hole: Toward a Black Feminist Theory. Sue E. Houchins, Scripps College  "The Lesbian Phallus - Or Does Sexuality Exist?" Judith Butler, Johns Hopkins Univ.  "Perverse Desire, the Lure of the Mannish Lesbian" Teresa DeLauretis, University of California, Santa Cruz.	01:21:00	1990
03391	<i>The Amazon and the Page</i>	Jennifer Abbott interviews Karla Jay about her book on Natalie Barney and Renée Vivien, <i>The Amazon and the Page</i> . Radio show <i>Say it Sister</i> . [Cambridge, Mass. or Boston?]	01:03:00	3/23/88

03392	<i>Woman of the Wolf</i>	Karla Jay is interviewed by Roberta Louise about the publication of her translation of Renée Vivien's stories, <i>Woman of the Wolf</i> , on the radio program, <i>Amazon Country</i> on station WXPN, Philadelphia.	1:00:00	2/19/84
03393	Images of Lesbians in Fiction	Presentation at the annual meeting of the Gay Academic Union in New York City, Nov. 29, 1975. Barbara Grier, Karla Jay, and Pat Statton, panelists. Grier presents general and personal remarks on lesbian literature; Jay speaks about her research on Jeannette Foster and the problems Foster encountered while researching and writing her book, <i>Sex Variant Women in Literature</i> . Statton, winner of the National Playwrights Competition of the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, discusses the difficulties she faced having a lesbian play performed at the Center.	00:59:00	11/29/75
03394	<i>Woman of the Wolf</i>	Karla Jay interviewed by Rose Jordan on <i>The Lesbian Radio Show</i> discussing her translation of the short stories of Renée Vivien entitled <i>Woman of the Wolf, and Other Stories</i> . Jay discusses the life and work of Vivien and reads the story "Vashti." Feb. 19, 1983.	00:54:45	2/19/83
03395	"Should Men And Women Work Together?"	A discussion on whether women should work with men in the gay liberation movement or have their own separatist political organizations. Karla Jay, Rose Jordan, Allen Young, and Morty Manford. Winter, 1974.	01:10:00	1974
03396	<i>Lavender Culture</i>	Rose Jordan interviews Karla Jay about her book, <i>Lavender Culture</i> on <i>The Lesbian Radio Show</i> on radio station WBAI.	00:58:00	3/79
03397	<i>The Gay Report</i>	Rose Jordan interviews Karla Jay about her book (co-authored with Allen Young), <i>The Gay Report</i> on <i>The Lesbian Radio Show</i> on radio station WBAI. Aug. 27, 1979	00:52:00	8/27/79
03398	Jill Johnston	Karla Jay interviews Jill Johnston about her decision to "come out" and its repercussions. Note: Difficult to understand due to very loud background noise.	00:55:00	1970s
03399	Lavender Jane	Karla Jay interviews members of the lesbian musical group, Lavender Jane. Alix Dobkin, Kay	01:15:00	1970s

		Gardner, and Patty _____		
03400A	Lesbian Herstory Archives	Presentations at the Lesbian Herstory Archives. Susan and Lisa, teachers at the Women's School in Park Slope, Brooklyn, present an overview of lesbian history. Archive staff discuss the founding of the archive, the reasons they became involved in the preservation of lesbian history, and the activities and future plans of the LHA. They read from the collections and solicit donations. Tape continues on 03400B.	01:00:00	6/25/75
03400B	Lesbian Herstory Archives / Lesbians in Prison	Side B of this cassette is a continuation of 03400A. Side A of this cassette is a continuation of 03401.	01:00:00	
03401	"Lesbians in Prison"	Panel of female ex-convicts speak about their backgrounds and experiences in prison.. Continues on 03400B.	01:01:10	
03402	Lesbian Therapists	Psychologists Jean Mundy and Barbara [Trecker?] answer questions from an audience on a variety of topics related to psychotherapy.	00:53:00	
03403	Women in Literature	Readings from the work of lesbian writers, including Gertrude Stein and Alice B. Toklas; May Swenson; Djuna Barnes; Ann Bannon. Very poor audio quality.	01:02:40	
03404	Paris from Oscar Wilde to Jim Morrison	Comic spoof on the English-speaking community in Paris. Performed by David Countereise, Jesse Collins and Hugh Graham	00:55:51	
03405	Jean-Pierre Meyer-Genton, and Jean-Marie Combettes	Karla Jay interviews Jean-Pierre Meyer-Genton (founder of the Parisian gay bookstore Les Mots à la Bouche), and Jean-Marie Combettes (founder of the publishing house Editions Personna).	00:37:44	07/21/82
03406	Francoise Pasquier	Francoise Pasquier, founder of the French women's publishing house, Tierce, in 1977. Bertrand Mosca and Didier Varrod of Frequence Gaie are also on the tape. 8/7/82	00:55:51	08/10/82
03407A	Rowe Conference Center -	Lesbian Roles - Couples	01:30:00	4/18/82
03407B	Rowe Conference Center -	Lesbian Roles - Couples	01:30:00	4/18/82
03408	Rowe Conference Center	Lesbian Families	01:25:00	4/17/82
03409	Karla Jay interview	Karla Jay is interviewed by Tony Russo. CCN	00:33:00	01/24/76
03410	Michele-Sylvie Santallier		00:43:00	
03411	Sarah Schulman and Karla Jay	Sarah Schulman talks about her book <i>After Delores</i> and lesbian	00:24:00	n.d

		violence in fiction.		
03412	Djuna Barnes	Documentary on the life and work of Djuna Barnes. Radio France. In French.	00:43:25	11/2/83