

# CARIBBEAN STUDIES IN VIDEO:

## The Banyan Archive



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## Explore the oral and visual history of the culture, society, and identity of the Caribbean people, by the Caribbean people, with *Caribbean Studies in Video: The Banyan Archive*.

Founded in 1974 in Trinidad & Tobago, Banyan Productions was the first television producer of innovative and entertaining programs for, about, and by the Caribbean people and culture. Banyan's mission was to provide the Caribbean people with the means to tell their stories to one another without influence from the outside world. Now, for the first time, those stories are available on the Alexander Street video platform.

With a mixture of history, entertainment, and social commentary, Banyan has produced a film library covering documentary, drama, music, dance, and much more, spanning decades.

Previously inaccessible in streaming format, this collection features more than 2,200 videos of edited programs along with unedited footage, to enable study across a host of subjects, including:

- Caribbean Studies
- Black Studies
- History
- Anthropology
- Sociology
- Religion
- Visual Arts
- Dance
- Music
- Literature
- Theater
- Media Studies

**"At long last, the voices of a post-independence Caribbean can be heard among the video records of the world, demanding attention in their own right, and inviting appreciation for the region's richness and stunning complexity."**

—Christopher Laird, *The Banyan Archive*

### Featured Content

The content is filled with interviews and programs supporting learning and research across many disciplines including:

- Extensive interviews with cultural personalities and indigenous peoples, including edited and raw footage of interviews with important Caribbean artists, musicians, and writers such as Derek Walcott, C.L.R. James, Errol Jones, Pat Castagne, Slade Hopkinson, and many others.
- Representation of festivals and rituals, theatre, cultural practices, dance performances, political events, and more.
- Groundbreaking productions such as: ***The Rig***—The first Anglophone Caribbean's made-for-TV movie, written and directed by Derek Walcott, *The Rig* explores the impact of the oil discoveries off the East Coast of Trinidad on the village life of the area and the society of Trinidad & Tobago in general, through a story of international intrigue and local fantasy.

***Gayelle*** (1985–1992 episodes)—The most innovative and exciting cultural television in the Caribbean, *Gayelle* has been acclaimed at many international festivals and showings. It has served as a model for the creation of similar productions in the Caribbean, Central America, and Canada, and is used in television training institutes in the U.S. as an example of how exciting television can be made with simple resources. Without a doubt, it is the most exciting series to come out of the Anglophone Caribbean.

***Caribbean Eye*** (1992)—Presented by veteran Caribbean broadcaster, Ken Corsbie, *Caribbean Eye* represents a pioneering effort in regional television. It was the first documentary series about Caribbean culture that was made by Caribbean people.

This series won the award for Best Series from the Caribbean Publishers and Broadcasting Association and the Caribbean Broadcasting Union. It was awarded a special prize by the Caribbean Community for its role in the Caribbean Integration Movement.

### ***Kali Worship in Trinidad***

(1991)—Trinidad & Tobago is one of the few places in the New World where worship of the Hindu Goddess, Kali, is so accessible. Involving the legendary Firepass ceremony (walking over a pit of glowing coals), possession rituals, and healing ceremonies, the presenter and the camera become players and participants, as this dramatic and fascinating devotion to the ancient deity plays out in the context of one of the most multicultural societies in the world. Students and scholars can study how Hinduism is integrated with the Caribbean scenery through immigration.

***Sargasso***—This program features dramatized highlights of Jean Rhys's classic novel *Wide Sargasso Sea*, with a preface about the writer's life and work. Literature students who are reading the novel can connect visual drama, featuring Caribbean actors, with this important literary work.

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