

# Mike Wiley Productions: Artist Bio/Mike Wiley

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*a presenter's point of view... an artist's standard of performance*

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*"A marvel to watch..."* Robert McDowell, Triangle Theatre Reviews

*"More than mere versatility... It's virtuosity."* American Theatre Magazine

Mike Wiley is the NC-based playwright and actor whose distinctive original works in documentary theatre, film, educational residencies and performances for student audiences has been acclaimed across America and abroad.

His dramas relay the stories of fugitive slaves, civil rights game-changers, sports heroes and freedom fighters. Dynamic multi-character portrayals offer penetrating views into parallel lives whose roles within African American history have shaped a richer total American experience. Wiley's remarkable one-man "cast" sometimes introduces dozens of characters during the course of a single play. Morphing from young to old, man to woman, African American to white, his gripping stories enlighten and inspire audiences of every age to apply history's lessons to events and situations of the present.

An MFA Graduate of UNC-Chapel Hill, Wiley's original theatrical repertoire includes ***DownRange: Stories from the Homefront***, drawn from experiences of military spouses and families left at home when their family member is deployed, commissioned by Cape Fear Regional Theatre in Fayetteville. ***The Parchman Hour, Songs and Stories of the 1961 Freedom Riders***, was premiered by Playmakers Repertory Company in Chapel Hill in 2011 and subsequently produced by other US regional theatres. ***One Noble Journey: A Box Marked Freedom*** relays the true story of Henry "Box" Brown, a slave who crated and mailed himself to freedom. ***Dar He: The Story of Emmett Till*** chronicles the murder, trial and confession of the men accused of the Chicago youth's lynching in Mississippi in 1955. ***Blood Done Sign My Name*** is Wiley's riveting dramatization of Tim Tyson's best-selling memoir of race and religion. Additional plays include ***Jackie Robinson: A Game Apart***, about African American athletes who pushed the color barrier to its breaking point; ***Tired Souls: The Montgomery Bus Boycott***, documenting men and women who stood up to Jim Crow segregation; ***Life Is So Good***, about the amazing life of George Dawson who learned to read at the age of 98, and ***Brown v. Board of Education: Over Sixty Years Later*** on the high-impact ruling that desegregated schools. During the 2016 touring season, Wiley adds yet two additional compelling productions to his impressive repertoire. ***Breach of Peace*** shares the story of some of the brave visionaries involved in the Freedom Rides of the early 1960s, and playwright Howard Craft's adaptation of ***The Fire of Freedom*** allows Wiley to recount the remarkable life of Abraham Galloway, the slave who rose out of bondage to become one of the most significant and stirring black leaders in the South during the Civil War.

Mike Wiley has been featured as News and Observer's "Tar Heel of the Week," profiled in Our State magazine, spotlighted on UNC-TV's "North Carolina Now" and North Carolina Public Radio's "The State of Things" and was named the 2012 Indie Artist of the Year by the Independent Weekly.

In the gripping independent film adaptation of his play *DAR HE* about Emmett Till, Wiley himself portrays more than 30 characters in a tour-de-force performance that garnered major film and acting awards at numerous film festivals across North America, Europe and Australia, including "Best Actor" at the Harlem International Film Festival.

His extended educational residencies have been funded through grant programs of the North Carolina Arts Council, and his plays have been selected for spotlight showcases at major industry conferences including Arts Northwest, Performing Arts Exchange, Arts Midwest and ArtsMarket. During 2014, Wiley completed a 20+-performance tour of *One Noble Journey* in Ontario, Canada.

Mike Wiley is a former 2014 Lehman Brady Visiting Joint Chair Professor in Documentary Studies and American Studies at Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies and the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

Artist site: [www.mikewileyproductions.com](http://www.mikewileyproductions.com)

Artist booking: [www.goingbarefoot.com](http://www.goingbarefoot.com)

Video compilation reel: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Op0\\_rWON4k](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Op0_rWON4k)

#### **Abbreviated bio:**

Mike Wiley is a North Carolina-based actor, playwright and director of multiple works in documentary theatre, including THE PARCHMAN HOUR, DOWNRANGE: STORIES FROM THE HOMEFRONT, DAR HE: THE STORY OF EMMETT TILL, the theatrical adaptation of BLOOD DONE SIGN MY NAME and more. The film adaptation of Wiley's DAR HE, in which he portrayed 30+ roles, received more than 40 major film festival awards around the globe. THE PARCHMAN HOUR was selected as the closing event of the official 50<sup>th</sup> year anniversary commemoration of the Freedom Riders in Jackson, MS. Wiley has fifteen years credits in documentary theatre for young audiences plus film, television and regional theatre. An Upward Bound alum and Trio Achiever Award recipient, he is an M.F.A. graduate of the University of North Carolina in Chapel Hill and is a former Lehman-Brady Visiting Joint Chair Professor at Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies. He has conducted numerous educational residencies funded through grant programs of the North Carolina Arts Council and his plays have been selected for spotlight showcases by arts industry conferences including Arts Northwest, Performing Arts Exchange, Arts Midwest, Ohio Arts Presenters Network and ArtsMarket. During 2014, he completed a 20+ performance tour in Ontario, Canada. A gifted and visionary artist and communicator, Wiley's overriding goal is expanding cultural awareness for audiences of all ages through dynamic portrayals based on pivotal moments in African-American history and, in doing so, helping to unveil a richer picture of the total American experience.