

## <u>BETTY</u> THEY SAY I'M DIFFERENT

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A Native Voice Films / Taxi Brousse Production

Fine Cut 6<sup>th</sup> Nov Duration 53 mins.

01:00:00	ASTON	Betty Davis, the pioneering and controversial first funk Queen, mysteriously disappeared from the
01:00:09		music scene some 35 years ago.
		After years of trying to meet her, Betty finally allowed filmmakers to tell her story based on their conversations.
01:00:42	ASTON 01:00:48 Mike Canton Soul Show WYEP	Good morning America. Here is a crazy new piece of breaking music news. You won't believe what just came accross my desk! A new album of material about to be released between jazz legend Miles Davis and his one time wife Betty Davis. Yes, the Betty Davis, extreme funkress and the queen of jazz



TIMO		fusion. If this isn't musical history, I don't know what it is!
01:01:09	Press Quotes	MYSTERIOUS FUNK QUEEN REDISCOVERED / The
01:01:15		Guardian
01:01:22		FILTHY BY FUNKY / Slate Magazine
01:01:31		MADONNA BEFORE MADONNA, PRINCE BEFORE PRINCE / Miles Davis
		HER DISAPPEARENCE REMAINS A PUZZLE / National Public Radio
01:01:48 01:01:54	TITLE	BETTY THEY SAY I'M DIFFERENT
01:02:01	ASTON 01:02:21 Oliver Wang Author / DJ	For a long time, Betty was just an enigma for many people.
01:02:06		
01:02:16		Betty was very much immersed in the explosive creative cultural world of Andy Warhol and obviously Miles Davis
		When she left the music



01:02:38

01:02:55

industry she just vanished. Some artists, they come back and they do reunion tours, concerts and things like that. Or they'll do interviews.

But Betty, her reputation for being reclusive was almost mythological in the way that people would talk about it.

An army reserve DJ who put out a series of interviews with different stars in the R&B and soul music world and one of the people that he interviewed was Betty Davis. Air date, July 21<sup>st</sup> 1974

Betty's reputation in more recent years, and by more recent years I mean decades is that she is very reclusive and doesn't like to give interviews. There are written interviews that have been done with her back in the 1970s but really outside of hearing her on her own records. this interview with Al Gee is one of the few examples I can think of, of any kind of footage you can find of Betty in her own voice at this



FIIIIS		1
		moment in her career when she was still on the upswing.
	ASTON 01:03:30 'Rap 'N' Rhythm with Al Gee' 1974	
01:03:28	Al Gee	That's Betty Davis. Betty writes, produces and directs and I guess you do a little bit of
	Betty Davis Al Gee	everything in terms of your music eh?
		Yeah
	Betty Davis	Betty, how comeehwe have not really had an opportunity to see you perform. Now you been recording for quite a while.
	Al Gee	People they only see the surface part of the music business – they don't
	Betty Davis	know what is going on. It is not all glamour, you know, and it is not all starlights. I have known a lot of musicans and I have known a lot of pain.
		If you had to categorize your music in a word, what would you say?
		I would just say it was raw



FILMS		
01:04:32	ASTON 01:04:42 Vernon Gibbs Music Critic	Penthouse 1976wow
01:04:41	Wusic Critic	"Seeing Betty Davis for
		the first time is like
		seeing your first X-rated
		movie when you were expecting Walt Disney.
		The audience at New
		York's Bottom Line are
		staring straight ahead in mute shock. The
04.05.00		inuendo of illusion that
01:05:26		has come to represent the rock concert stage is
	ASTON 01:05:29	here deluded to a hot
	'Walkin Up The Road' Betty Davis 1973	night in the bordello, where a long legged,
	,	deliciously devourable female sings lusty
		songs".
01:05:44		She was just something
04.00.45		that people had never
01:06:15		seen before.
		SONG
01:06:29		
		The audience was really
01:06:40		apalled at her performance because it
		was very sexual.
		We were really just
01:06:55		coming out of the Civil Rights era, so Black
		noonle wanted to still



01:07:02

## **ASTON 01:07:15**

'Shoo-B-Doop And Cop Him' They Say I'm Different 1974 people wanted to still present a certain image of themselves.

The Supremes, the Temptations, all these groups wanted to present a very polished image.

We are civilized. We are just like you. See, we dress nicely, we wear tuxedos, we wear nice dresses, we wear high heels, our hair is done. Just like you.

That was the image they wanted to present to the world.

So for Betty Davis to turn the tables, to sing such suggestive songs and dress the way she dressed was something that really hard to accept.

## **SONG**

I thought that the time had come when we were really all liberated but she showed that really we weren't.

So she basically sacrificed herself to pave

01:07:41

01:07:51



F11ms	<u> </u>	th aa
		the way.
01:08:25	ASTON 01:08:27 Greg Errico Sly & The Family Stone  ASTON 01:08:33 Betty's first producer	Audio on cassette: And then you keep going downlike duna! You know, like that, like chop it, you know. Whatever you do just chop it you know. It will be better if you can get that guitar thing as the guitar will help you
		Play it through onceI don't want to overplay
		You can never overplay!
01:08:56		1 2 3 dum doom dum
01:09:01		doom
01:00:25		This is not a rehersal. That is a track.
01:09:25		This is the first song we did by the way. "Walking up the road" is the first song, very first song, we did.
01:09:45		On the one makes to be d
01:09:52		So we are going to look forerrmif there are any rehersal tapes. Which would be cassetteback in those days, talking like early 70s, from the sessions
01:10:04		with Betty.



LITIMS	I	
01:10:14		And errsee if I can find it.
		You know after we did the first record, her life seemed like it was changing and things were getting intense. And then years went on, and then she disappeared.
		I mean, really disappeared.
		Then after decades go by, I did talk to her but she was very quiet, very withdrawn at that time, so whatever did happen over the years, it stillbut at least I knew she is alive, she is there, and you know, it has been heavy, it has been deep.
	ASTON 01:10:43 Pittsburgh	
01:11:39	Betty VO	One, two, three, recording.
01:11:51		How do I begin with so long without talking about it.
		Let me begin with crow
01:12:04		I first met crow on the mountain
		The mountain that



Films		
		changed everything
		But there has always been a bird inside me
		It used to sit outside my window when I was a girl.
		Me, feeding the hogs across the cornfields.
01:12:29		Then that little bird was orange and bright. But it grew into crow. Crow. Black Crow.
01:12:41		Crow who has always been with me. Even now.
		Crow brought me Howlin Wolf, Jimmy Reed, Chuck Berry, Bessie Smith, Crow brought me Jimi and Miles and the whirlwind.
		There is all began.
		There beginning of being different. Like a piece of sugarcane, sweet to the core
	ASTON 01:12:59 North Carolina	
	ASTON 01:13:08	



FIIMS	Betty's Aunt Elnora &	
	Cousin Nickey Neal	
01:13:21	Phil Cox	Why do you think Betty cut herself off and
01:13:24	Elnora	disappeared?
01:13:25	Phil Cox	Pardon me?
01:13:29	Elnora	Why do you think Betty wanted to be alone and cut herself off?
01:13:55		She was always a lonely person. She loved to be alone. She read a lot. She loved to be alone. But she was extremely close to her father. Extremely. Her father died firstand I don't think Betty ever got over her father's death. She never got over it.
		This is Betty here. She was an unusual person back in those days.
01:14:21	Betty VO	Recording.
01:14:25		When I think about it now,
		I know many people tried to find me.
		Wanted to ask me questions.



Films	
01:14:52	But for a time in my life, crow and I, we really didn't know how
01:15:02	to speak.
01:15:13	Now – I am old, but I feel I reached the top of the mountain and from there
	I can see clearly the path I have taken.
01:15:52	I still remember the record player in daddy's cupboard. Him lifting me upwards and me singing on our kitchen table.
01.13.32	Then the southern
01:16:02	breeze would come in my window. Outside black hands sweating in the corn fields.
01:16:12	Lemonade on the side walk. Segregation black and white. The policeman always white.
01:16:28	Daddy, my daddy, leaving to work the furnaces, steel sparks flying and his strong back bent.
	All the voices falling over each other in the evenings with grandma taping time, spinning



FIIMS		her snuff and booging to Elmore James.  And me?  Me just wanting to write, that first little burning in my heart.  And at 12 years old I wrote my first song, Bake a Cake of Love.  The neighbours complained, came a shouting, asking me to be quiet, but I didn't care, I lifted my voice and sung.
	ASTON 01:16:55 Pittsburgh	
	ASTON 01:17:02 Connie Portis	
01:17:04	Phil Cox	How long have you known Betty?
01:17:12	Connie Portis	Errr, let's just say about
01:17:30		50 years. Seeing as I am 55. But it's been a long time.
		I think what she wanted to do was already in her head. That women have feelings too. That
01:17:59		women can stand up



01:18:11

01:18:55

01:19:20

and be equal to men in expressing themselves and that was something that women didn't have. Women didn't voice.

I can't remember exactly how we met, but I do know we became fast friends. Betty attended Church with me.

After Church I always went to Betty's house and spent Sunday's afternoon there. She wrote songs ALL the time. I remember one time in particular she called me, and she said 'Connie I just wrote this song and want to sing it to you'. So I knew what to expect by then, and she started singing, I put the phone down, and 5 minutes later I came back and Betty was still singing. They were the longest songs. And she was in talent shows here, in our home town.

So I think that this whole notion that she could get up on stage and not be inhibited was a manifestation of the kind of love and care and adoration from her grandmother and her



Films	1			
				father.
				She chose
				independence and that
				was something women
				didn't have.
01:19:34	Betty VO		My bag in hand songs. Daddie's	Pittsburgh. I was 17. I. The little notebook of s crushing hugs. Crow the journey. Crow was
	ASTON 01:2	0.02	the heartbeat. E	Beating a rythm into s. New York.
	'Uptown To The Chambe	Harlem'	SONG	
01:20:38	Brothers Written by B Davis 1967	etty	Technology. By model - clothe who we were -	e Fashion Institute of y day I found work as a es were an expression of but the nights, the ere I came alive.
			was writing – a Chambers Brot of them and su	others. All the time I nd when I met the hers I just stood in front ng my song Uptown to ook it then and there. I er at last.
01:21:35			I met Jimi in the	e village.
			Jimi Hendrix, h Saw Crow right	e understood Crow. away.
01:21:47			a friend. There stage with a str much for his Ja	I was in Blue Note with was this trumpeter on raight suit, I didn't care azz mind but then I saw g those shoes. I told him and then.



F11ms		
01:22:31		Me and Miles were married in 68.
01:22:39		He got me a limo and I filled the trash with his suits.
01:23:02	ASTON 01:23:05 Greg Tate Author & Musician	We are here today to look at this connection between Betty Davis as muse and Miles's turn to the electric era.
01:23:23	ASTON 01:23:13 Burnt Sugar The Arkestra Chamber	Everybody was really trying to create a soundscape to match the intensity of the cultural political moment. That would parrallel what was going on politically. Black panthers civil rights movements, the assassinations that were going on, the Vietnam War.
01:23:49		At the point at which they met, he was about 40, Miles was really obsessed with not growing old, not growing stale artistically.  Jazz had really become this music that had lost ground in the black community. Among younger heads, Motown, Stax, psychadelic generation, didn't know anything about it.
	ASTON 01:24:36 'Git In There' 1973	SONG
01:24:55		I just imagine, Miles comes home from a gig and Betty is blasting 'Voodoo Chile' on the stereo set and dancing around the house.
01:25:27		Betty had a huge influence in a very short period of time, on not only the way Miles played and what he was listening to but



LITHIO		
		even the way he was dressed. You know Carlos Santana talks about how – you know, seeing the transition, Miles kinda retiring the Italian suits and here comes the fringe and the leather and the big shades and leather pants and plateforms shoes and all of that.
01:26:00		What Betty allowed Miles to be was just bolder in his conception of his own music. When he makes this leap to bringing in loud electric guitars and electric bases and drummers playing back beats, it is really a testiment to a sense of freedom and just ballsiness that Betty brought into his life and into his music.
01:26:37		Betty, Jimi into Miles
01:26:44	Betty VO	Miles was pure energy. Sometimes light, but also dark. He was driven, inspiring and also angry.
01:26:58		Every day married to him was a day I earnt the name Davis.
01:27:16		Miles introduced me to Rachmananov and Stravinsky and told me to perform.
		He wanted crow and me to fly. 'Don't just write Betty, don't hide no more, go sing!'
	ASTON 01:27:39 'If I'm In Luck I Might Get Picked Up' Betty Davis 1973	SONG
01:28:37	ASTON 01:28:36 Winona Williams Betty's friend from the 70's	Hi Damon! How are you? So good to see you. Come in!



	Betty was always this lady, with flare and class. Just ever so fashionable. And I think it was at the Bottom Line she invited me to come down for her show. I guess one of the first shows that she did.
	When I walked in, and she walked out on stage, my mouth dropped.
ASTON 01:29:35 'Nasty Gal' Nasty Gal 1975	SONG
Winona Williams	And then when she started singing, the raunchiness of these songs that she was belting out, and this deep gravelly voice I was just taken aback. This is not Betty. This is not Betty! So her alter ego was on that stage.
	I am sure that what Betty did as a performer, every woman would love to do. What she wanted to say in her performance, there were no other women doing it. When you are ahead of your times, it can also mean that you are ahead of your country, and they are just not ready or willing to accept who you are.  And let's not forget, she is a black woman, so she started off the race from behind
ASTON 01:31:17 '70's Blues' 1973	song
Betty VO	Since I was a girl I always had something inside of me that had to come out. A kinda restless feelin.
	'Nasty Gal' Nasty Gal 1975  Winona Williams  ASTON 01:31:17 '70's Blues' 1973



		I asked my grandmother if I had to just fit in and be like I was told. Be sweet and pretty for the boys. Grandma she didn't say nothing, she sat down and played me the women of the blues.
01:32:13	ASTON 01:32:13 MA RAINEY	WRITTEN Text on Screen:
		I want all you women to listen to me
		Don't trust your man no further than your eyes can see
		I trusted my man with my best friend
		But that was a bad bargain in the end
01:32:38	Betty VO	Women who sang about how they felt inside, of struggling to make ends meet and their lives with men.
		Women who sang about things that were not right. Work, relationships and race.
01:32:56		Bold women who sang it real.
	ASTON 01:33:02 Big Mama Thornton 'Hound Dog'	SONG
01:33:22		I have never let my being black interfere with what I wanted to do.
01:33:29		You should always know who you are - and just do what you have to do.
01:33:47	ASTON 01:33:48 Militia Vox Music Artist	I first discovered Betty when I was desperately looking for some kind of blue



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		print for what I was doing and what I knew I wanted to do.
01:34:04		So when I was skimming around looking for, you know, a goddess to pray to! On the internet, I found this picture of her, she was wearing like a zebra detailed body suit with like the feathers and the soldiers and she had her hair big and she just looked so powerful.
		She was like straddling this bike and I was like, 'whatever she is selling I am buying!'
01:34:37		Women's place in music, which still seems like a struggle now, especially if you are doing rock and roll there is this saying in music so funny, 'men get on stage and sing about what they want to do to you' and 'women get on stage and sing about what's been done to them'. And it is so true!
		I feel like for a long time, women have felt like it is safe to be victims on stage, messages of victimhood and that is just not what Betty is about.
01:35:23		Betty, by no intention of her own, just by being herself, has been really a becon of hope to a lot of people.
	ASTON 01:35:43 'He Was a Big Freak' 1973	SONG
01:35:58	ASTON 01:36:06 Tamar-kali Composer & Musician	Betty Davis was pushing against the grain. Because the objectification of women – via men and their fantasies was very real. Whereas Betty owned hers, in a way that was atypical. I mean songs like Big Freak - that was like so powerful and



Fllms	5	
		challenging to the system of thinking, where women's place should be.
01:36:51	Tamar-kali	Betty, didn't speak from a space of oppression. She expressed herself based on knowing who she was and what she deserved.
01:37:08	Betty VO	I left Miles.
		His genius gave and took from me. But my smile had become false.
01:37:21		I told no one of how Miles was violent.
01:37:29		Crow hid my pain.
		So I wrote and sung my hear out. Three albums of hard funk. I put everything there.
01:37:45		But doors in the industry kept closing. Always white men behind desks telling me to change.
		Change my look, change my sound, 'change your music Betty!'.
01:38:00		I needed to 'fit in' or else no contract, no silver dollar.
		I learnt that Stars starve in silence.
		Crow and I, we found ourselves alone.
01:38:24	ASTON 01:38:19 Fred Mills Betty's Band FUNK HOUSE	I got some pictures here from the early days. As you see – of course you know Betty. And you have myself. For three months, from 78, we stayed in the Collingwood hotel and rehearsed – and rehearsed.



LITIUS	T	T
	ASTON 01:38:50 'Anti Love Song' Betty Davis 1973	SONG
01:38:55		See at the time we didn't have a manager and she was doing most of the stuff on her own.
01:39:12		When things were not happening right – she always had the mantra somewhere in the back of her head, the phrase: if I was a man – if I was a man.
01:39:23		I think she was fed up. I really do. I think she was fed up.
01:39:31		If you're somebody like Betty, it is all Betty or it is no Betty. It got to the point when there was no Betty.
01:39:48	Phil Cox phone call to Desmond Nakano	Is that Desmond?
01:39:51	Desmond Nakano	Yeah
01:39:52	Phil Cox	I am a filmmaker trying to find out about Betty Davisthe funk singer, sorry to call, I heard you used to know her?
01:40:00	Desmond Nakano	This has been a long long long time. What is this for?
01:40:04	Phil Cox	We are trying to find out what happened to Betty and piece her story together, you used to hang together? What was your relation?
01:40:15	Desmond Nakano	Yeah yeah – I mean, we met, go out and



		hang out for a while, and it was right before she kind of disappeared.
01:40:30	ASTON 01:40:32 Desmond Nakano Film Director	When she was getting a little morewhen her issues were piling up, I didn't see her as much because she was retreating.
01:40:44		So I remember she had moved from one place to another place, and when she had moved to her last place, it seemed like she was trying to hide away.
01:41:00		But as I saw her, I could see there was a lot of issues that werestarting to weigh on her, between Miles Davis. I mean that is a heavy thing to be Mrs Miles Davis. And also her own musical contribution she felt was not appreciated.
		I thought, now in retrospect, I didn't know her Nasty Gal persona, so when later I really found out what her whole performance thing was it really struck me, because she said to me something like, "I am very sensitive girl' so that was her real, that was her. But her persona as Nasty Gal you cannot get further away from that. The split.
01:42:32	Betty VO	London. Trying to survive. Playing where I could with no record deal.
		And then, Mummy called.
01:42:57		That phone call. Spinning. Pain. Those strong arms lifting me upwards.
		He was dead.
01:43:10		I returned to Pittsburgh but all color had gone.



LTTIIIS	1		1	
01:43:15			Now the voices	inside me. topping in my head.
01:43:28			Strange faces I	
01:43:33			They put a lock	on my door.
01:43:39			There I lost mu Shame.	sic. Gone. A void.
01:43:50			My heartbeat cl	hanged.
			I could no long	er hear Crow.
01:44:08	Connie Po	rtis	that really had, of impact on anyor greater on Betty effected some s	father, and so I think that, of course it would have an ne, but the impact was because it kind of tability, some mental in that time forward there
01:44:53		Betty VC		I cannot remember how long I was in the void.
01:45:05				But in Japan I found the mountain.  The men who said nothing.
01:45:15				The bells. The wind
04.45.05				Two monkeys, one with a dead baby.
01:45:25				My baby.
				Wind.



LIIMO	T	
01:45:33	Winona Williams	I think that I think she sort of lost herself. I know she didn't write for a long time and I'm sure that she was in a deep sense of depression. I don't know who was
01:46:03		around her at that time but I know that she was basically on her own.
		She is a very strong woman.  Might have been a sad woman for a moment, but I am hoping that that sadness is slowly disappainting but am looking forward to seeing her in the very near future.
	ASTON 01:46:19 Betty's band 'Funk House' 1975	
01:46:48	Fred Mills Larry Johnson	That was a homecoming!
	Fred Mills	The last time I saw Betty I guess it was 17 years ago.



Nickey Neal

I never heard from her.

Larry Johnson
19 years....

Fred Mills

Larry Johnson

Really?

Nickey Neal

It's been a long time.

Carlos Morales

Please answer the

Fred Mills phone.

Larry Johnson It's Carlos

Nickey Neal Fred

ASTON 01:47:07 and

from right to left: Carlos

Morales

Larry Johnson Nickey Neal

Fred Mills

and your cousin Larry

and Nick! Pick up the

phone!

Hello?

**Betty** 

**Fred Mills** 

**Nickey Neal** 

**Betty** 

Betty – when is the next

Fred Mills gig baby?!

Betty Hello Betty

Nickey Neal Is this Fred?!

Betty Of course! You know it

is!



Films		<u>,                                      </u>
	Fred Mills	Happy New Year!
	Betty	This is Nick
	Carlos Morales	How you've been?
	Nickey Neal Betty	I can't complain, sitting here with the rest of the guys in the band.
	Carlos Morales	Who is there?
	Nickey Neal	The band!
	Betty	The whole band!
	Carlos Morales	The whole band?
	Larry Johnson	Carlos is here!
	Betty	Nick!
	Nickey Neal + Larry Johnson	Is Carlos there too?
	Fred Mills	Sure is!
	Carlos Morales	And your cousin Larry! I'm here too!
	Larry Johnson	Larry and Nickey too!
	Betty	Yes, yes, yes
	Fred Mills	You sound exactly the same
	Betty	Exactly!
	Fred Mills	You sure do Betty, I miss
	Carlos Morales	youI'm telling you the



Films		
		truth, Betty: I miss you
	Fred Mills	I miss you too!
		So you doing alright baby?
	Larry Johnson	Yeah I am doing ok
	Carlos Morales	Everybody wanna know
	Larry Johnson	where Betty is!
		We wanna do one more thing with you at least
	Fred Mills	We come to your house and record! With all
	Larry Johnson	these new recording things they have now,
	Frad Mills	you don't have to leave the kitchen!
	Fred Mills	That's right!
	Betty	Just cook some
	Fred Mills	spaghetti
	Betty	Betty, you don't have to go to what you have to
		go through record
	Fred Mills	companies no more, 'cause they ain't real
	Betty	important no more. You know what I'm saying?
	Nickey Neal	We sell at the trunk of the car!
	Carlos Morales	You understand what I'm
		saying? Social media
	Betty	and now, you can do a lot of things with music.



	Look Betty
	Yeah?
	When we left Bogaloosa, what happened baby?
	Wellit was nice talking to everybody!
	Look, it is about time you came home for a minute isn't it?
	Well, what can I say? I am too old to travel
	We come pick you up!
	Yes that's right!
	Okay!
Betty VO	People tell me I have paved the way
	That I was part of a struggle
	Well I am happy about that.
	I am happy my music is still alive.
	For a while in my life I flew high and strong
	But the struggle to break through hurt me.
	Betty VO



Films		
01:50:43	ASTON 01:50:08 'You & I' Nasty Gal 1975	Everyone wanted me to be something I wasn't.
		SONG
01:51:10		in the end, I found I could only be myself.
		But if I want to leave one thing behind, I wanna say that being different is everything.
		It is the way forward.
	SONG Shut off the light	END CREDIT CARDS
	SONG They Say I'm Different	ROLLER
	END	