Extent

3 folders, approximately 179 pages

Summary

This collection consists of records concerning three convicted teenagers that became widely known as the “West Memphis Three.” The three teenagers - Jessie Misskelley, Jr., Damien Echols, and Jason Baldwin - were convicted in 1994 for the 1993 murders of three eight year old boys in West Memphis, Arkansas. This collection contains letters of letters of sympathy from President Clinton to the families of the children who were murdered in the West Memphis area. This collection also includes email containing public opinion concerning the West Memphis Three.

Scope and Content Note

The materials in FOIA 2016-0244-F are a selective body of documents responsive to the topic of the FOIA. Researchers should consult the archivist about related material. Teenagers Jessie Misskelley, Jr., Damien Echols, and Jason Baldwin were convicted in 1994 for the 1993 murders of three eight year old boys in West Memphis, Arkansas. The three murdered children were Christopher Byers, Stevie Branch, and Michael Moore. The convicted teenagers became widely known as the “West Memphis Three.” Misskelley and Baldwin received life sentences, and Echols was sentenced to death for the murders. Misskelley confessed to the murders and implicated Echols and Baldwin, however he immediately recanted his confession. Because Misskelley had confessed to the murders, he was tried separately from Baldwin and Echols. During their trial, the prosecution accused Baldwin and Echols of committing the murders as part of a satanic ritual. Many people were critical of the convictions immediately following the case, however public opinion grew more critical of the convictions after the airing of Paradise Lost: The Child Murders at Robin Hood Hills and Paradise Lost 2: Revelations, HBO documentary films

concerning the West Memphis Three. Celebrities, such as Eddie Vedder of the Band Perl Jam, and Natalie Maines of the group the Dixie Chicks were among those that contested the West Memphis Three's conviction. After serving 17 years in prison, Echols' defense team negotiated an Alford plea agreement with prosecutors. On August 19, 2011, Misskelley, Echols, and Baldwin were released from prison as a result of this plea agreement. The three men maintain their innocence. The White House Office of Records Management General File contains letters of sympathy from President Clinton to the families of the children who were murdered in the West Memphis area. Automated Records Management System email in this collection consists primarily of correspondence from the public sent to president@whitehouse.gov email address. Email sent to the President from the public were consolidated into one daily email and given the subject "Yesterday's mail to POTUS." This one email holds hundreds of emails from the public concerning a variety of different subjects. However, email concerning the West Memphis Three have been isolated from the consolidated emails and printed in response to this Freedom of Information Act request. Most email consists of public opinion concerning the West Memphis Three case. One email from Renee Sagiv (Writer, White house Office of Correspondence) to Paul Oetkin (Associate Counsel to the President) concerns questions about the President's response to a letter from Joe Berlinger, director of the Paradise Lost HBO documentary films about the West Memphis Three.

Record Type

Textual

System of Arrangement

Records that are responsive to this FOIA request were found in these collection areas— Clinton Presidential Records: White House Office of Records Management (WHORM) Subject Files and the Clinton Presidential Records: Automated Records Management System [Email]. The White House Office of Records Management (WHORM) contains a variety of series created to organize and track documents and correspondence. The WHORM Subject file was compiled by the White House Office of Records Management and is a series of categories designated by a letter/number

combination. WHORM files are processed at the document level. The Automated Records Management System (ARMS) is a database that contains email records of the Executive Office of the President. This system maintained unclassified Presidential email. The ARMS database is comprised of six sub-series of email records called "buckets." The buckets generally represent a specific White House office. The buckets are titled: NPR for National Performance Review, OPD for Office of Policy Development, POTUS for President of the United States, WHO for White House Office, CEA for Council of Economic Advisers, and Default for emails not associated with an office. The WHO bucket contains email created or received by individual with an Executive Office of the President White House user account not identified as CEA, NPR, or OPD. ARMS email are arranged by topic, there-under by bucket, and there-under chronologically by creation date. FOIA 2016-0244-F includes WHORM records from these subject codes: ME001-03 Condolence / Death (Includes Name of Deceased)

Access

Collection is open to all researchers. Access to Clinton Presidential Records is governed by the Presidential Records Act (PRA) (44 U.S.C. Chapter 22, as amended) and the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) (5 U.S.C. 552, as amended) and therefore records may be restricted in whole or in part in accordance with legal exemptions.

Copyright

Documents in this collection that were prepared by officials of the United States government as part of their official duties are in the public domain. Researchers are advised to consult the copyright law of the United States (17 U.S.C. Chapter 1) which governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material.

Provenance

Official records of William Jefferson Clinton’s presidency are housed at the Clinton Presidential Library and administered by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) under the provisions of the Presidential Records Act (PRA).

Processed by

Staff Archivist, 2016. Previously restricted materials are added as they are released.

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