Extent

33 audio cassette tapes totaling approximately 19 hours, 43 minutes, and 4 seconds.

Summary

This FOIA case contains all White House Communications Agency (WHCA) audio recordings of any instances where the words "Osama Bin Laden" were spoken. Most of the audio was spoken by press secretaries.

Scope and Content Note

FOIA 2025-0940-F is a request for all audio recordings of any moments where the words “Osama bin Laden” was spoken by President William Jefferson Clinton or otherwise. Osama bin Laden, along with al-Qaeda, in the late 1990s carried out multiple terrorist attacks including bombings of United States embassies in Kenya & Tanzania and an attack on the U.S.S. Cole. Following these events the administration consistently fielded more inquiries from the press during press briefings & statements, detailing the administration’s policies towards Osama bin Laden.

During searches for responsive records for this request, it was determined that President William Jefferson Clinton never spoke the words “Osama Bin Laden” in a public forum as President. This was confirmed by accessing the Federal Register, which documents all the President’s public remarks. The search was expanded to the press secretaries, upon which responsive records were found. As the White House Television (WHTV) unit did not film press secretaries, but the White House Communications Agency (WHCA) did record audio, records determined to be responsive to this case were audio recordings of WHCA.

Records processed consist of all instances of press secretaries & senior administration officials speaking about Osama bin Laden during the Clinton

administration. Staff delivering remarks includes Secretary of State Madeleine Albright, National Security Advisor Samuel “Sandy” Berger, Press Secretary Joe Lockhart, National Security Council Senior Director for Near Eastern and South Asian Affairs Bruce Riedel, Assistant Secretary of State for South Asian Affairs Karl Inderfurth, Press Secretary Barry Toiv, Press Secretary David Leavy, Assistant Secretary of State for European Affairs Mark Grossman, Special Assistant to the President at the National Security Council Chris Hill, Press Secretary Jake Siewert, Press Secretary David Leavy, National Economic Advisor Lael Brainard.

Researchers should note that actual responsive material will be reduced to quick spoken words of the subject matter, meaning many records were processed not wholly responsive to this FOIA case.

Record Type

Audio

System of Arrangement

Records that were responsive to this FOIA request were found in one collection area and one series—Clinton Presidential Records: Clinton Presidential Records: Audio Recordings of the White House Communications Agency and the series therein—Audio Recordings Relating to the Clinton Administration. Processing is done at the individual item/tape level. While this method maintains run time integrity, it frequently results in the processing of audio recordings not wholly responsive to this case. Metadata for White House Communications Agency audio recording’s tape speed was not retained, and as a result this produces audio recording records that potentially do not sync in speed with other audio/visual records or holdings outside of NARA.

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

Audio recordings 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, 2026.

Related Collections

Clinton Presidential Records: Audio Recordings of the White House Photograph Office
Series: Audio Recordings Relating to the Clinton Administration
Cassette Tapes:
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_Africa_20Aug1998 August 20, 1998
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_SB_18Sep1998 September 18, 1998

PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JP-JL_04Nov1998 November 4, 1998
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_Africa_01Dec1998 December 1, 1998
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_Pakistan_02Dec1998 December 2, 1998
PS_ROPS_PressBriefings_04Jan1999 January 4, 1999
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_SB_26Feb1999 February 26, 1999
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JL_04Mar1999 March 4, 1999
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JL_08Jun1999 June 8, 1999
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_10Aug1999 August 10, 1999
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JL_23Aug1999 August 23, 1999
PS_ROPS_PressBrief_Staff_08Sep1999 September 8, 1999
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JL_22Sep1999 September 22, 1999
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JL_27Oct1999 October 27, 1999
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JL_12Nov1999 November 12, 1999
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_Trip_12Nov1999 November 12, 1999
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_SB_18Nov1999 November 18, 1999
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JL_14Dec1999 December 14, 1999
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JL_15Dec1999_1st December 15, 1999
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JL_15Dec1999_2nd December 15, 1999
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JL_16Dec1999 December 16, 1999
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JL_17Dec1999 December 17, 1999
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JL_20Dec1999 December 20, 1999
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JL_21Dec1999 December 21, 1999
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JL_22Dec1999 December 22, 1999
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JS_01Feb2000 February 1, 2000
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_SB_16Mar2000 March 16, 2000
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JL_06Apr2000 April 6, 2000
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JL_18Sep2000 September 18, 2000
PS_ROPS_PressBriefings_12Oct2000 October 12, 2000
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JS_27Nov2000 November 27, 2000
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JS_05Dec2000 December 5, 2000
PS_ROPS_PressBriefings_07Dec2000 December 7, 2000
PS_ROPS_PressBriefing_JS_22Dec2000 December 22, 2000