

Chronology of Events

1993

May 5: The three victims are last seen at approximately 6:30pm. They were riding together on two bicycles on the service road near the interstate close to the Blue Beacon Truck Wash.

At 7:30 p.m., John Mark Byers, Melissa Byers, and Ryan Clark, while driving around looking for Christopher, they stop to speak to a West Memphis police officer. The officer advises them to wait until 8:00 p.m. and then call the police.

At 8:08 p.m., Officer Regina Meeks arrives at the Byers' home to take a missing person's report for Christopher. At 8:10 p.m., Dana Moore arrives at the Byers' home while Officer Meek is taking the missing person's report. She tells the Byers and Officer Meeks that Michael and Steve are with Christopher.

Forty minutes later 8:50 p.m., Officer Regina Meeks arrives at Bojangles Restaurant to investigate a report of a muddy and bleeding African American gentleman who stumbles into the restaurant and makes his way into the ladies' restroom leaving a bloody mess behind. Meeks never gets out of her car and tells the manager who has saved a roll of toilet paper soaked with blood and a pair of bloody sunglasses than the man left behind that he can throw it away. At 9:00 p.m., Officer Meeks leaves Bojangles to answer another call.

Between the hours of 9:00 and 10:00 p.m., John Mark Byers is in the woods behind the Blue Beacon where the bodies of the three boys would later be found.

Officer Regena Meek arrives at the Moore home at 9:24 p.m. home to take a missing person's report for Michael Moore. Almost simultaneously, Officer John Moore arrives at Catfish Island, in response to a call made to the police by Pam and Terry Hobbs. He begins a missing person's report for Stevie.

At approximately 9:30 p.m., Officer Regina Meeks goes to the dead end of McAuley Street to look for the missing boys. She stops by the pipe that leads into the woods behind the Blue Beacon but heads back because the mosquitoes are so awful. On McAuley Street, she runs into Ryan Clark, Britt Smith, Richie Masters and Robbie Young. Together, they search empty houses in the neighborhood.

From 9:42-10:10 p.m. Officer John Moore searches around 1200 Goodwin Street, to try and locate Chris, Michael and Stevie. Officer Moore runs into John Mark Byers. Together, they search the 14th Street woods. At 10:10 p.m., Officer John Moore leaves the 14th Street woods to answer another call.

At 11:00 p.m. John Mark Byers returns home and calls the Sheriff's Department to request more help in looking for the missing boys.

May 6: The first body is found in a ditch in the woods behind the Blue Beacon Truck Wash at approximately 1:45p.m. At 2:45pm, the first body is pulled from the creek by police officers. At 2:56 p.m. Detective Bryn Ridge locates the second body approximately 25 feet south of the first body. At 2:59 p.m. the third and final body is located in the creek 5 feet south of the second body. At 3:55 p.m. when

Coroner Hale arrives on scene, he finds that all three bodies have been removed from the water, placed on the west bank of the creek, and covered with black plastic in the hot sun. At 3:58 Coroner Hale pronounces Steve E. Branch dead. Four minutes later Coroner Hale pronounces Christopher M. Byers dead. Coroner Hale pronounces James M. Moore dead but lists two different times of death on his reports, 4:02 and 4:10 p.m.

At 9:00 p.m., Detective Ridge visits the nearby Bojangles restaurant. Ridge allegedly takes "blood scrapings," which are then later lost and never sent to the State Crime lab.

May 7: At noon Damien Echols is interviewed by Lt. Sudbury and juvenile officer Steve Jones, due to alleged "cult involvement."

May 8: *The Commercial Appeal* reports the reward fund is up to \$6,000. John Mark Byers is interviewed by Inspector Gitchell at 4:00 p.m.

May 9: Damien Echols is interviewed again at Echols' residence, as are Jason Baldwin and Domini Teer.

May 10: Damien Echols is interviewed for the third time at the WMPD, and polygraph follows.

Tuesday, May 11: Michael Moore's funeral at Holy Cross Episcopal Church, West Memphis.

Wednesday, May 12: Christopher Byers' funeral Ingram Boulevard Baptist Church, West Memphis.

At 8:30 p.m. WMPD performs Luminol testing in Robin Hood Hills.

Thursday, May 13: Steve Branch's funeral at Bradshaw's German-Aumon Funeral Home, Steele, Missouri.

A second attempt at Luminol testing by WMPD at the crime scene at 9:00 a.m.

Friday, May 14: *The Commercial Appeal* reports that Inspector Gitchell has suspended daily news briefings. *America's Most Wanted* show about the case airs, leading to a flood of tips.

Saturday, May 15: Jessie Misskelley, Dennis Carter & David Sims call in a tip to the WMPD regarding Tracy Laxton after he tried to lure them into the woods. Laxton turns out to be the son of a Crittenden County Sheriff's Deputy.

Sunday, May 16: *The Commercial Appeal* reports the reward fund is up to \$31,500.

Wednesday, May 19: At 3:59p.m. John Mark Byers arrives at the WMPD and his subject description form is filled out at this time. At 5:20 p.m. John Mark Byers is officially interviewed by Det. Ridge and Lt. Sudbury on tape. Later that day Vicki Hutchinson claims to police that she had attended an "esbat" with Echols and Misskelley.

Thursday, May 20: *The Commercial Appeal* reports the reward fund is up to \$32,000.

Wednesday, May 26: Insp. Gitchell sends a letter to the Crime Lab begging for more information, stating "we feel as though we are walking blind folded through this case at this moment."

At 12:36pm, Detective Ridge interviews William W. Jones, who claimed Echols had confessed to him on May 22. He later recanted, but his statement was used as a probable cause hearing exhibit to obtain search and arrest warrants.

Friday, May 28: *The Commercial Appeal* reports that the Crime Lab finally mailed final autopsy reports to the WMPD.

Wednesday, June 2: Vicki Hutchinson takes a polygraph test. Oddly, it does not appear she was asked if her "esbat" story was truthful.

Thursday, June 3: Detective Allen leaves the WMPD to locate Jessie Misskelley. Misskelley is located between 9-10:00 a.m. Misskelley's subject description form is filled out at the WMPD and Det. Allen's Interview begins. At 11:00 a.m. Misskelley is advised of his Miranda rights even though he has no parent present to sign the waiver along with him since he is a juvenile pursuant to Arkansas law. At 11:15 a.m. Det. Allen and Misskelley leave the WMPD to get Misskelley's father's permission to polygraph Jessie. A conversation is held among the three of them about how Jessie would spend the award money if he could assist the police in making an arrest. Det. Durham administers Misskelley's polygraph at 11:55 a.m. Misskelley is told by Durham that he is "lying his ass off."

Three hours and 50 minutes later, Misskelley's first taped interrogation begins. It ends at 3:18 p.m. At a time, unknown, and after Deputy Prosecutor reads the transcript from the first taped interrogation, a second taped interrogation begins. Jessie Misskelley is arrested after roughly 12 hours at the police station but only two segments, totaling 46 minutes, were audio recorded.^[24] Misskelley quickly recanted his confession, citing intimidation, coercion, fatigue, and veiled threats from police.^[31] Misskelley specifically said he was "scared of the police" during this confession.^[25]

At 9:06 p.m. a probable cause determination is made by Judge Rainey to obtain arrest and search warrants. At 9:50 p.m. to 9:55 p.m. search and arrest warrants are signed by Judge Rainey. Search warrants are executed at 10:28 p.m. at the Echols, Baldwin, Misskelley and Teer residences. Echols and Baldwin are arrested at Echols' residence.

Friday, June 4: Arraignment in West Memphis Municipal Court at 10:00 a.m. for the three defendants. Temporary attorneys are appointed by Judge Rainey. A hearing is scheduled for Monday, June 7. Press conference begins at 10:28 p.m. Inspector Gary Gitchell announces his case is an "eleven" on a scale of 1-10.

Monday, June 7: *The Commercial Appeal* publishes excerpts of Misskelley's statement to police in a copyrighted story. A hearing is held in Crittenden County Circuit Court in Marion. Judge Goodson appoints lawyers to represent the three. Echols: Val Price and Scott Davidson. Baldwin: Paul N. Ford and George Robin Wadley, Jr. Misskelley: Dan Stidham and Greg Crow.

On August 4th, Damien, Jason and Jessie plead not guilty to capital murder charges at a pre-trial hearing.

Thursday, June 17: Prosecutors file a motion requesting samples of blood, hair, saliva, footprints and fingerprints from Echols, Baldwin and Misskelley.

Friday, June 25: Stidham and Crow, Misskelley's attorneys, file a motion in Crittenden County Circuit Court stating that compliance with the State's request to obtain blood, saliva and hair samples from Misskelley would be "an unreasonable intrusion" and would violate his constitutional rights.

Thursday, July 1: Det. Ridge returns to Robin Hood Hills and retrieves two sticks that are later entered into evidence at the trials.

July 26: Stidham and Crow file a change of venue motion for Misskelley, arguing that the amount of publicity the case has generated will prevent a fair trial in Crittenden County.

Wednesday, August 4: Pre-trial hearing in Marion. Misskelley, Baldwin and Echols plead not guilty to capital murder charges. Judge Burnett severs Misskelley's trial from that of Echols and Baldwin. Prosecution's motions seeking blood, hair and saliva samples granted.

Wednesday, September 22: Paul Ford sends a letter to Inspector Gitchell alleging police misconduct. Ford claims Detective Ridge attempted to coerce a confession out of Baldwin while obtaining hair and blood samples. Ford alleged Ridge told Baldwin his attorney "didn't care about him" and "could not be trusted."

Friday, September 24: Defense attorneys file 39 motions, bringing the total pending to over 50.

Monday, September 27: At a Pre-trial motion hearing in Marion, Stidham meets Ron Lax who agrees to assist him on the case.

Monday, October 11: Stidham and Crow file a motion to suppress Misskelley's June 3 statements.

Tuesday, October 19: At a Pre-trial hearing. Judge Burnett rules that Jason will be tried as an adult. Trial dates and locations are announced. Misskelley's trial is scheduled for Jan. 18 in Corning, Clay County, and the Echols/Baldwin trial for Feb. 22 in Jonesboro, Craighead County.

Monday, November 15: Stidham and Crow file a motion asking that Misskelley be ruled mentally retarded, thus not eligible for the death penalty if convicted.

Tuesday, November 16: Pre-trial hearing in Osceola. Judge Burnett rules Misskelley will be tried as an adult.

Wednesday, November 17: State Police being searching a small portion of a lake in Lakeshore Trailer Park (near the former Baldwin residence) and locate a knife later entered as evidence in in the Echols/Baldwin trial.

Sunday, December 19: John Mark Byers gives a knife to a member of the HBO documentary film crew that later is found to have human blood on it.

Monday, December 20: Mark Byers signs a consent form allowing the WMPD and the Arkansas State Crime Lab to search his home. The Byers and Moore residences are searched on this day, but the Hobbs

home is not.

Tuesday, December 21: Pre-trial hearing. Judge Burnett rules Misskelley is not mentally retarded and can face the death penalty if convicted.

1994

Thursday, January 13: Pre-trial hearing in Marion, dealing with suppression of Misskelley's statements. After the State presents its case, Stidham puts Warren Holmes on the stand. Ofshe tells Stidham that he was surprised by some of the testimony regarding Jessie's statements. He tells Stidham that he is not yet prepared to take the witness stand and does not testify. Stidham and Crow convince Burnett to give them 24 hours to file an Amended Motion to Suppress and Brief in Support as they too are surprised by Detective Mike Allen's testimony.

Saturday, January 15: Judge Burnett rules Misskelley's taped confession will be admissible at trial.

Wednesday, January 19: Jury selection begins for the Misskelley trial.

Thursday, January 20: Jury selection continues. Seven women, two men, and two alternates are chosen.

Wednesday, January 26: After some delays from the frigid weather and to sort out some evidentiary issues, Misskelley's jury trial begins in Corning, Arkansas.

Thursday, February 3: At 11:12am, the State and Defense rest their cases. The jury begins their deliberations after hearing closing arguments from both sides.

Friday, February 4: The jury asks to be excused for the night at 12:10 a.m. to resume their deliberations at 9:30 a.m. At 11:54 a.m. the jury reaches a verdict. They find Misskelley guilty of first-degree murder in the death of Michael Moore and second-degree murder in the deaths of Chris Byers and Steve Branch.

Misskelley avoids a Capital Murder conviction and the death penalty. After brief penalty phase arguments from both sides, the jury deliberates Misskelley's punishment. After twenty-six minutes, they return with life in prison plus two twenty-year sentences. Burnett runs all three sentences consecutively.

Friday, February 11, 1994: Judge Burnett rules that Jason Baldwin and Damien Echols will be tried together. Jason's lawyers refuse to argue antagonistic defenses that would have allowed for separate trials yet argue in closing that Jason should not be deemed "guilty by association."

Wednesday, February 16, 1994: Pretrial hearing. Val Price alleges that Aaron Hutcheson has made statements implicating Mark Byers in the murders. Co-counsel Scott Davidson asks to see the HBO documentary crew's film of John Mark Byers where he describes being tied up, sodomized, and thrown in a ditch at the age of 18 or 19. Judge Burnett denies the request. Burnett also denies the prosecution's request to hear a taped statement that Baldwin gave to the HBO film crew.

Tuesday, February 22, 1994

Jury selection for the Echols/Baldwin trial begins, but is put on hold when attorneys file a motion alleging prosecutorial misconduct regarding the State's attempts to get Misskelley to testify against Baldwin and Echols. After a hearing, Judge Burnett rules there has been no misconduct.

Wednesday, February 23-24th: Jury selection continues.

Friday, February 25: Jury selection continues. A jury of eight women, four men and two male alternates is selected.

Monday, February 28, 1994: Echols/Baldwin trial begins.

Thursday, March 3, 1994: Stidham and Crow file motion for new trial based on the testimony of Dr. Frank Peretti in the 2d trial that was so dramatically different in the Misskelley trial. Their motion was denied.

Wednesday, March 9, 1994: Dale Griffis takes the stand, lawyers object stating that is not qualified to be an expert in the "occult." Burnett says that even a third grader with specialized knowledge can take stand if it will assist the jury in understanding the issues in the case.

Tuesday, March 15, 1994: The State and Defense rest their cases, on the eleventh day in court. Judge Burnett agrees to grant the prosecution a continuance until Thursday to conduct closing arguments.

Wednesday, March 16, 1994: Geraldo Rivera tapes a television special entitled "When Kids Kill Kids: Did the Devil Make them do it?" The jury hadn't even reached a verdict in the Echols and Baldwin case. Geraldo later apologizes for his part in promulgating "Satanic Panic."

Thursday, March 17, 1994: The jury begins deliberations after hearing closing arguments from both sides at 4:59 p.m. At 10:35 p.m. Jury deliberations end for the evening.

Friday, March 18, 1994: Jury deliberations resume at 9:30 a.m. At 3:33 p.m. the jury reaches a verdict. They find both Damien Echols and Jason Baldwin guilty of three counts of capital murder.

Saturday, March 19, 1994: Penalty phase followed by brief arguments from both sides. The jury begins to deliberate their sentences at 2:00 p.m. They return with death by lethal injection for Damien Echols and life in prison without possibility of parole for Jason Baldwin at 4:22 p.m. After being asked if he had anything to say Jason Baldwin said "yeah, I'm innocent."

Saturday, March 19, 1994: Stidham & Crow file notice of appeal in Misskelley case.

March 25, 1994: *The Commercial Appeal* announces that John N. Fogleman, the Crittenden County deputy prosecutor who recently won convictions in the West Memphis triple-murder case, filed to run for Circuit judge in the six-county Second Judicial District on Thursday. Mike Walden, a Craighead County deputy prosecutor since 1976, and Chet Dunlap, a Poinsett County lawyer, also are seeking the position from which Circuit Judge Gerald Pearson is retiring. Fogleman wins the election.

Thursday, April 7, 1994: The *Arkansas Times* publishes an article questioning the verdicts which was at odds with much of the State and local press coverage at the time.

Friday, April 22, 1994: In Paragould, Burnett awards more than 140,000 dollars in defense attorney's fees. Val Price received \$30,500, Davidson received \$26,000, Paul Ford \$26,000, Wadley \$20,000 and a joint fee of \$40,000 to Stidham and Crow. Stidham and Crow received the least amount of fees yet had

the most hours of any of the defense teams. Burnett had promised \$40.00 per hour for out of court time and \$60.00 for time spent in hearings and trial. As far as expenses for Stidham and Crow's experts, Holmes got his airfare as he had requested, Ofshe didn't get that much, only \$1,500, \$750 to Wilkins and our jury expert got \$2,005.81. Ron Lax got nothing awarded for his many hours of assistance in Misskelley case. He did get \$7,000 in the Echols case. At the conclusion of the hearing, Stidham asked Burnett what formula he had used to arrive at the figures but Burnett refused to respond.

July 15, 1994: Judge Ralph Wilson signs an Order Extending Time for Filing of the Record on Appeal because the Court Reporter still has not finished the trial transcript.

August 5, 1994: Record on Appeal is completed and filed with the Arkansas Supreme Court. Stidham and Crow can now begin their Abstract and Brief.

August 17, 1994: Dan Stidham and Ron Lax meet with Vicki Hutceson at Lax's office. She admits that she lied during her testimony in the Misskelley case but refuses to recant under oath out of fear of perjury charges being filed against her.

September 9, 1994: Stidham and Crow file a motion for extension of time to file brief and abstract and motion for extension of of page limits for the brief.

October 17, 1994: Stidham and Crow receive a letter from the Arkansas Supreme Court clerk indicating that their motion to file enlarged brief was denied by the Arkansas Supreme Court.

December 29, 1994: Stidham retreats to his hunting cabin to begin the enormous task of abstracting the record while Crow works on the Brief.

1995

January 6, 1995: Juvenile Counselor Danny Williams writes a letter to Jason Baldwin: "Dear Jason: This letter will appear very odd to you because I seriously doubt that you have ever heard my name. First of all let me tell you what I got your address from Joyce juvenile detention center. Joyce speaks very highly of you and I have always trusted her opinion. I asked her about writing to you and she told me I should do whatever I felt was right. I am a counselor in Jonesboro, Arkansas and one of my clients was the young man testified that you confessed to him while you read the detention center. Every word that he said court was talking about me. They were discussing the case in a meeting I told him what people were saying about the victims about what was the lives of the bodies. This young man then went to the police and state that you confessed these details to him while in detention together. When I found out what's going on I had no clue as to what I should do. I was very afraid that if I told anyone that the young man would suit me for revealing confidential information about our discussions. I finally contacted Mr. Ford and told him that the young man's name appeared on the prosecution's witness list that he should call me. The name did appear Mr. for call me and I went to his office and told him everything that transpired. Later, Mr. Ford informed me that he wanted me to testify. I agree later that I will not be allowed to tell the court what happened. I cannot tell you why because I do not know. They said it had something to do with the fact that the information was privileged. Jason I cannot begin to tell you how sorry I. I have never done anything that I regret more than this incident. I was completely out of line and very stupid for engaging in conversation of that nature. I realize the damage is already been done and nothing I can do will help you or convince you how truly sorry him. I would give anything in the world if I could take back the comments that I made a change what happen again you know that is impossible. I

will not ask you to forgive me because if I were in your shoes I said that I could forgive such utter insanity. I do however want realize that the opportunity arises to assist you in any way I will do all that I can't. I'm single and have no children some of financial responsibilities are small. I would never try to buy your that graces but please let me know if I can send you anything. It truly many great deal to me and I knew I do something for you. If, however, choose to never answer this letter I will certainly understand. If you wish to write my address is Danny Williams, 2512 Forest Home Rd., #22, Jonesboro, AR 72401. May God be with you know that you are in my thoughts and prayers. Signed Danny."

February 6, 1995- February 13, 1995: Stidham retreats to the cabin again to finish the abstract of the record. Stays for one week in isolation to get it done, but on February 13th could not stand the isolation anymore and came back to Paragould and finished it up while Crow completed the argument section of the the appeal.

April 3, 1995: Stidham and Crow file a motion for extension of time to file brief and abstract which was due on April 4, 1995.

April 10, 1995: Stidham and Crow file a Motion for Reconsideration and Motion for Leave to file an Enlarged Brief, the Arkansas Supreme Court having twice previously denied Misskelley's request. Misskelley asks to file a brief consisting of 88.5 pages. Stidham and Crow remind the court that the actual transcript of the record in the case consists of 2600 pages and that the trial lasted three weeks. The original abstract of the record in the case was over 700 pages long and has been condensed to 542 pages. Stidham tells the Court that without the page extension they will have to make the difficult decision of having to not argue several adverse rulings in the case.

Monday, May 1, 1995: The Arkansas Supreme Court rules that the state, not Crittenden County, is responsible for paying the defense attorneys for Damien Echols, Jason Baldwin, and Jessie Misskelley. In a 6-1 decision, written by Chief Justice Jack Holt, Jr., the high court said a statute requiring counties to pay for indigent defenders became law after attorneys were appointed to defend the three defendants.

On the same day, May 1, 1995, Stidham and Crow received a letter from the Arkansas Supreme Court clerk advising us that an order had been entered that day granting our motion to file an enlarged brief of up to 65 pages. This decision was a 4-3 decision with justices Dudley, Newbern, and Corbin stating that they would deny our motion.

August 22, 1995: Stidham and Crow asked the Arkansas Supreme Court for an extension of time to file a Reply Brief. On the same day they allowed us until August 30, 1995, to file our reply brief.

August 30, 1995: Stidham and Crow asked the Arkansas Supreme Court for leave to file an enlarged reply brief to the Arkansas Attorney General's brief.

September 18, 1995: The Arkansas Supreme Court entered an order allowing Stidham and Crow to enlarge their reply brief.

December 4, 1995: Stidham and Crow finally received the compensation through the State for the more than 2000 hours put forth in the representation of Jessie Misskelley through the trial which ended in February of 1994. \$40,000 plus interest. This equated to about \$19.00 per hour.

Monday, December 18, 1995: Oral Arguments for Misskelley before Ark Sup Court.

1996

Monday, February 19, 1996: In a 32-page unanimous 7-0 decision, the Arkansas Supreme Court upholds the conviction of Jessie Misskelley stating that Stidham and Crow did not raise the Rule 2.3 issue in a timely manner despite the fact that they had a written motion and brief.

Wednesday, March 6, 1996: Attorneys for Jessie Misskelley file a Petition for Rehearing in the Arkansas Supreme Court pointing the Court to the exact pages in the record where the issue had been raised and considered by Judge Burnett.

Monday, April 1, 1996: The Arkansas Supreme Court denies Jessies Misskelley's petition for rehearing without any comment on the Rule 2.3 issue.

April 26, 1996: Stidham and Crow file a petition with the Arkansas Supreme Court for an award of Attorneys fees outlining over 424 hours of attorney time in the direct appeal to the Arkansas Supreme Court. The total request for fees and costs were \$42,677.14.

May 6, 1996: Arkansas Supreme Court awards the Stidham Law Firm a fee of \$6,450 and costs of \$257.14. This equals \$15.20 per hour expended. Stidham said he would quit keeping track of his time after the direct appeal to the Arkansas Supreme Court.

May 10, 1996: Misskelley files Motion to Recall the Mandate filed with Arkansas Supreme Court Clerk to stay the time for filing the Rule 37 Petition, until the Writ of Certiorari petition which was presented to the U.S. Supreme Court is litigated.

May 15, 1996: Stidham sends his application to practice before the U.S. Supreme Court.

May 28, 1996: Arkansas Supreme Court grants Jessie Misskelley's motion to recall the mandate in a 4-2 vote, Justices Newbern and Glaze would have denied the petition and Justice Dudley did not participate.

Ironically, the same day I receive a letter from the U.S. Supreme Court that my admission to practice before the Court had been granted.

June 22, 1996: Paradise Lost airs on HBO casting doubts on the convictions and bringing worldwide attention to the case.

June 27, 1996: Justice Clarence Thomas granted Stidham's motion for extension of time to file cert petition extending the time to July 30, 1996.

July 30, 1996: Stidham filed his petition for writ of certiorari with the US Supreme Court. Stidham had to call the U.S. Supreme Court Clerk's office in Washington to get an extension in order file the petition, and the Clerk told him how excited that they were that he was filing the Cert petition and that they couldn't wait to read it. Justice Clarence Thomas granted the extension of time.

August 18, 1996: Stidham wrote a letter to Bob Foglenest in NYC thanking he and the other members of the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers assisted me in preparing Misskelley's Petition for writ of certiorari with the US Supreme. Those who granted their assistance were Barbara Bergman of

the University of New Mexico School of Law, Natman Shaye of Tuscon, Arizona and Nancy Hollander of Albuquerque, NM.

Monday, October 7, 1996: The U.S. Supreme Court denies Jessie Misskelley's petition for writ of certiorari. The letter from Clerk William Suter simply read as follows: "Dear Mr. Stidham: The court today entered the following order in the above-entitled case: the petition for a writ of certiorari is denied. Sincerely, William K Suter."

October 30, 1996: Burk Sauls, Grove Pashley and Kathy Bakken travel to Arkansas for first time. Stidham agrees to meet them at 500 West Court Street in Paragould and shows them portions of the case file. KGB as they became known coined the phrase "West Memphis Three." Stidham tells them that the only people who care about the WM3 are in this room.

November 6, 1996: Jessie Misskelley files a *pro se* Rule 37 petition alleging that his trial attorneys were "ineffective" in representing him at his trial. *Pro se* means "for himself," and in legal terms it means a person represents himself/herself in court when either filing an action or responding to an action without the assistance of an attorney.

November 14, 1996: "There was a remarkable lack of physical evidence against anybody." -- *Prosecutor John Fogleman (when asked about the lack of physical evidence against the West Memphis Three - Phoenix Times, 11/14/96.)*

Monday, December 23, 1996: Arkansas Supreme Court rejects appeals of Baldwin and Echols 7-0 just like in the Misskelley direct appeal.

1997

Tuesday, August 5, 1997: Kathy Bakken puts Stidham in contact with a Criminal Profiler who agrees to work pro bono on the case. Case materials were sent to him for his analysis and review.

Monday, August 11, 1997: Joe and Bruce interview Jessie in prison. When asked how he was doing in prison, Jessie said that "it just keeps getting better and better by the day."

Thursday, September 4, 1997: Meeting with the Criminal profiler. We went over the evidence in the presence of the HBO cameras. The footage appears in *Paradise Lost 2: Revelations*.

1998

February 5, 1998: Stidham attends the American Association of Forensic Sciences meeting in San Francisco. Stidham briefly consults with Dr. Michael Baden and Dr. Neal Haskins. They think the injuries on the bodies were the result of animal predation postmortem.

March 2, 1998: In response to a phone call, Stidham interviews Joyce Cureton. She had been the head of the Craighead County Detention Center since 1988. She tells Stidham that she was ordered to leave Jonesboro during the Echols/Baldwin trial by the then Sheriff of Craighead County, Larry Emison because Paul Ford, Baldwin's lawyer wanted her to testify. She left with a state issued car and credit card and

stayed the duration of the trial in a motel in Newport, Arkansas about 30 miles away, with her husband, so that she could not be found to be subpoenaed by counsel for Baldwin.

March 9, 1998: Stidham sends Dr. Neal Haskell all the Weather Service info and information about how bad the mosquitos were the evening of May 5th, 1993.

March 10, 1998: Stidham sends a letter to Prosecutor Brent Davis asking his permission to obtain all the autopsy photographs in the case. He obtains copies of them all at a cost of \$1,600.

Tuesday, May 5, 1998: Damien Echols' Rule 37 hearing begins in Jonesboro, Arkansas. Stidham is called to the stand to explain why he didn't negotiate with HBO regarding money paid to the defendants like the other defense lawyers did believing it to be a conflict of interest.

September, 1998: After Burke Sauls, Kathy Bakken and Grove Pashley visited Stidham in 1996, they formed an organization called WM3.org on the internet which is portrayed in Paradise lost 2: Revelations. They are stunned when I tell them that "the only persons who care about the WM3 are standing in this room." They rise to the challenge and keep the case in the spotlight while I desperately try to find lawyers in the state of Arkansas who will assist me with the appeals.

1999

Friday, March 19, 1999: After 8 days of hearings between May 5 and this date, Damien Echols' Rule 37 hearing comes to an end. Under the law, Judge Burnett has 90 days to rule.

December 1999: Receive a call from attorney John Philipsborn in San Francisco offering assistance in the case. We exchange letters in the case during the month of December 1999.

2000

January 27, 2000: At John Philipsborns' suggestion, I contact Dr. Tim Dering in California about conducting a forensic mental evaluation on Misskelley for post-conviction purposes.

Sunday February 20, 2000: An article appeared in the Arkansas Democrat Gazette on Sunday, February 20, 2000, a couple of weeks ahead of the March 13, 2000, debut of the film on HBO. This article talks about the beginning of the phenomenon known as WM3. WM3 is short for West Memphis three and "in the four years since Paradise lost aired WM3 has evolved rapidly.. It has a heavily visited website and a fund for the convicted." The West Memphis police "remain appalled by both the film and the following [and] contend that WM3 has an unhealthy rabid interest in a case that was unfairly presented to the public. Paradise lost, they say, was slanted from the get go in the defenses favor." "I feel sorry for those 24 jurors in Craighead and Clay [counties] who gave up six weeks of their lives, only to have someone watch a two hour HBO movie and second-guess them," Mike Allen says. But still, police figured they could ride out the ensuing fascination with the case. They figured the documentary was a one hit wonder that would soon be collecting dust on video store shelves." "WM3 is a case that has appealed to both the misfits and the middle-aged, the Gothic crowd and the mainstream. Bankers, fortyish housewives, teenagers feeling the brunt of being different, members of the art scene on both coasts all consider themselves on a quest for justice."

Monday, March 13, 2000: Paradise Lost 2 airs on HBO. Stidham had 5000 emails in my email box the next day. At the request of several local attorneys, I threw my hat in the ring for Greene County Municipal Court Judge, then a part time judicial position that allowed me to continue to work on the WM3 case.

May 24, 2000: Dan Stidham is elected Municipal Judge.

November 17, 2000: Stidham files a Motion to Preserve Evidence and Access to Evidence for Testing on behalf of Jessie Misskelley.

2001

February 8, 2001: Stidham files an Amended Rule 37 Petition on behalf of Jessie Misskelley.

February 14, 2001: Pam Hobbs sent me an email. In it she expresses her heartbreak over the loss of her son and acknowledges the trial was "hard on everyone involved with everything you had to see..." She thanked me for my concern about her and stated that she wished to open a dialogue with me about the case.

February 20, 2001: Dan sends copy of Misskelley's Amended Petition for Relief under Rule 37, pro se to Judge Burnett and Brent Davis.

March 9, 2001: Jason Baldwin files a pro se Motion to Preserve Evidence and Access to Evidence for Testing.

2002

March 27, 2002: Myself and John Phillipsborn visit the WMPD to view the evidence and determine what could be re-tested.

April 4, 2002: On April 4, 2002, Stidham submitted an affidavit and declaration of counsel in support of the motion to preserve evidence and for access to evidence for testing. The declaration reads as follows: I, Daniel T. Stidham, state and declare under penalty of perjury as follows: 1) I served as appointed attorney of record of and for Jessie Lloyd Misskelley, Jr. in the above entitled case; 2) in an effort to assist Mr. Misskelley in preserving his rights, and because of my knowledge of his case, I have assisted Mr. Misskelley with respect to a motion to preserve physical evidence, and for access to the evidence for testing. I have taken these steps in view of the fact that Mr. Misskelley has filed timely appeals, and a pro se petition under Arkansas rules of criminal procedure number 37; 3) an effort to further assist my trial level client, on March 27, 2002 I traveled to the West Memphis Police Department, in West Memphis, Arkansas, to inspect the evidence in the case, and in particular the several items described at pages three and four of the November, 2000, declaration of Marc Scott Taylor, a criminalistics expert who I personally took to the West Memphis Police Department in July, 2000; 4) during my most recent visit, in March 2002, I was accompanied by John Phillipsborn, known to me as a member of the State Bar of California, who is a criminal defense lawyer with experience in the defense of homicide cases as well as in post-conviction litigation. For the purposes of our visit to the police department, Mr. Phillipsborn was there: a) to look at the state of packaging of the evidence; b) to make contemporaneous notes; and c) to take photographs; 5) during the several hours that Mr. Phillips born and I were at the West Memphis Police Department we were in the company of at least one police officer, who supervised this, and

ensure the integrity of the evidence. That same police officer always observed us during our review of the evidence.; 6) we reviewed a number of items including the items listed in Mr. Taylor's declaration. Among the items we reviewed were items: E -1 through E - 14 (largely clothing worn by the victims); E - 53 through E - 62 (large manila envelopes containing smaller envelopes, described as containing various biological fluid samples); as well as E-23 (a knife and scabbard); E - 19 (a hook and a length of rope); E - 79 (a blue shirt from Damien Echols); E - 119; E - 129; E - 134; E - 178. This is not a complete list, but it gives the court and counsel an idea of the extent of the review; 7) during our review, I personally ascertained that several evidence bags had defects, or holes in them. We attempted, as best possible, document this fact in photographs that I intend to make available to the court and counsel. Among the bags at holes were: E - 5; E - 6; E - 7; E - 9; E - 12; E - 13; E - 14; E - 91; E - 23; 8) in addition, a number of items have been kept in bags that have been repaired, for example the bag containing E - 79; 9) in addition, in the interim between the timeouts permitted to review the evidence in the company of Mr. Taylor in July, 2000 and the present, I noted that another person had also reviewed it, including, I believe, a member of the press; 10) I have been informed that the evidence bags are contained in boxes kept inside the evidence fault at the West Memphis Police Department. I was not permitted to see the boxes at issue, but I did look into the evidence fault-formally the actual vault to a bank, the premises of which are now used by the West Memphis Police Department; 11) I did not see any evidence in a refrigerated evidence room, or in laboratory settings-and thus cannot this point explain or describe the court condition of any evidence stored in laboratory settings; 12) during my recent inspection of the evidence, and at all times Mr. Phillipsborn and I wore gloves, changing gloves after every time an item of evidence was handled. We also ensure that any tabletop use for the inspection of evidence was covered by paper, which was changed after each item of evidence was opened or inspected. I do not know how others conducted themselves when they viewed the evidence at issue; 13) as is reflected in Mr. Taylor's November 6, 2000, declaration page 4, paragraph 18, the longer this evidence is stored without being subjected to accepted laboratory methods, the greater the chance of its being compromised. In November, 2000, Mr. Taylor was of the view that all the evidence he described in pages three and four of his declaration may be subject to re-analysis; 14) I am concerned that the rights of my client, as well as those of Mr. Baldwin (who represents himself) and of Mr. Echols, may be compromised unless the court issues a preservation order forth with, so that the evidence can be stored and preserved in the method that meets with current laboratory standards. As noted, had it not been for the fortuity of my recent visit, certain items contained in bags with holes might have been contaminated in some way, or, in the alternative, may have been lost; 15) as noted, I am prepared to submit to the court, and prosecution, as well as to counsel for any of the other defendants, copies of the photographs taken during my March 27, 2002 review of the evidence; 16) on the basis of the information set forth herein, as well as based on the fact that the prosecution has responded to my motion in a "States response to motion to preserve evidence and for access to evidence for testing" on March 9, 2001, and has stated that it has "no objection to a protective order," I believe there is good in just cause for the court to issue the protective order that I have previously submitted to the court; 17) I declare under penalty of perjury that the foregoing is true and correct except as any matters alleged on information and belief, and as to those matters, I believe this declaration to be true and accurate. Signed Dan Stidham April 4, 2002, notarized by Resi Shelton.

April 19, 2002: Arkansas Legislature passes a new law allowing prisoners to challenge their convictions with DNA evidence.

April 16, 2002: At the direction of John Phillipsborn, I send a letter via fax to the Arkansas State Crime Law asking Kermit Channel to confirm that in 1993 and 1994 the state crime lab did not do any in-house DNA testing in the WM3 case. This letter was designed to close the door on the issue of what testing

was done and what was done by outside labs prior to our Motions to Preserve Evidence and have it re-tested.

October 8, 2002: Mara Leveritt publishes the book *Devil's Knot*. The book is a huge success.

October 21, 2002: Jeff Rosenzweig notifies Judge Burnett by letter that he and Michael Burt will be entering their appearances on behalf of Mr. Misskelley. The letter contains the words "We will replace Mr. Stidham." I was not ready to accept my new role as a mere witness, so I worked in the background basically regulated to the now important position of head cheerleader.

October 22, 2002: I notify Jessie by letter that Jeff Rosenzweig and Michael Burt have agreed to represent him in his post-conviction matters including the Rule 37 Ineffective of counsel claim. I tell Misskelley that this is the kind of help that I have been trying to get for him for many years. In order not to spook him, I tell Jessie that even though Jeff and Michael will be taking the lead roles as his attorneys, I will still be actively working on the case. I reminded him of my promise to him nine years earlier and that I would never give up on him no matter what.

2003

February 27, 2003: I write another letter to Jessie advising him that his new appellate lawyers are Jeff Rosenzweig and Michael Burt. Jessie had been complaining to me that Jeff was neither contacting him or coming to see him. I assured him that Jeff has a different personality than I do, but he is one of the best lawyers in Arkansas. I tell him that I will always be there for him and that I intend to keep my promise. I also promise to come visit him soon.

Tuesday, June 3, 2003: Actress Winona Ryder hosts, and Dan Stidham and Mara Leveritt are asked to attend the "Cruel and Unusual" Art Exhibit at the Six Space Gallery. The event raises almost \$25,000 for DNA testing and legal expenses. Winona introduces Dan to a crowd estimated at between 4-5 thousand. Dan also meets Doug Hutchison who starred in the film *The Green Mile* who had along with his wife emblazoned "Free the WM3" across their foreheads.

Thursday, August 14, 2003: Hobbs' evidence turned over to Dan Stidham by Pam Hobbs via her sister, in Steele, MO.

Thursday, October 30, 2003: The Arkansas Supreme Court affirms Judge Burnett's previous denial of Damien Echols' Rule 37 petition.

2004

Wednesday, June 2, 2004: Judge Burnett issues an Order for DNA Testing. Attorneys for all three defendants file a Joint Status Memorandum in order "to report to the Court on recent developments..."

Thursday, October 28, 2004: Attorneys for Damien Echols file a Petition for a Writ of Habeas Corpus.

2005

Thursday, August 18, 2005: William R. Wilson, Jr., U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of Arkansas, issues an Order denying the State's Motion to Dismiss Echols' Petition for Habeas Corpus.

2007

Thursday, August 9, 2007: Stidham and an agent from the Arkansas State Police FedEx the Hobbs evidence to Bode Labs for eventual testing.

Thursday, November 1, 2007: New forensic evidence accumulated by the defense teams is revealed at a press conference at the law school in Little Rock by experts retained by the defense. So convincing is the evidence that people think that the WM3 are being released immediately. In Paragould, people walk up to Stidham on the street and say "you were right all along" congratulations.

Friday, November 21, 2007: District Judge William Wilson issues an order in which he states he plans "to hold [Echols'] second amended petition in abeyance pending exhaustion of state court remedies." He further requests that Echols' attorneys "file monthly status reports to inform the Court of the status of state court proceedings."

December 18, 2007: Dixie Chicks singer Natalie Maines appears with hundreds of people at the Arkansas State Capital to present postcards from around the world to Gov. Beebe asking for clemency for the WM3.

2008

Tuesday, January 29, 2008

Judge David Burnett writes a letter to all counsel of record stating that he has "set aside the last three weeks in April 2008, to hear the pending motions" in all three cases.

Thursday, February 14, 2008: Chief Justice Jim Hannah appoints Dan Stidham to the District Court Resource Assessment Board. Dan is reappointed for a second term in 2010.

Thursday, February 21, 2008: All parties submit a Joint Status and Case Management Memorandum to "inform the Court that for a variety of reasons....they cannot begin a multi week evidentiary hearing on April 14, 2008."

Friday, March 28, 2008: Judge David Burnett writes a letter to all counsel of record stating that he has set aside April 15 for a hearing on all matters in all three cases.

Friday, April 11, 2008: Attorneys for Echols file a Motion for a new trial.

Tuesday, April 15, 2008: Hearing in Jonesboro. Judge Burnett tells the attorneys that he wants all motions filed by May 30th and the State to respond by July 15th. He sets an August 20th hearing for attorneys to give him a status report. After looking at schedules, Burnett schedules hearings beginning September 8th through October 3rd to hear the appeals. Each defendant will have one week. Burnett also issues a gag order, telling attorneys on both sides that any contact with the media is forbidden.

Thursday, May 29, 2008: Attorneys for Baldwin file an Amended Rule 37 petition. They also file a Writ of error coram nobis with the Arkansas Supreme Court claiming prosecutors withheld evidence from Baldwin's trial attorneys.

Friday, May 30, 2008: Attorneys for Baldwin file a Petition for writ of habeas corpus and motion for new trial.

Thursday, June 5, 2008: Attorneys for Misskelley file a Petition for writ of habeas corpus and motion for new trial, as well as an Amended Rule 37 petition. Additionally, they also file a Writ of error coram nobis with the Arkansas Supreme Court.

Thursday, June 26, 2008: Without comment, the Arkansas Supreme Court denies Baldwin's and Misskelley's petitions to reinvest the circuit court with jurisdiction to consider their petitions for writ of error coram nobis. The petitions are "denied without prejudice," which allows the defense to renew the requests later.

Summer 2008:

Dan Stidham and Greg Crow receive letter from the Arkansas Attorney General's Office ordering them not to discuss their testimonies with each other or anyone else who may testify in the case or they could be jailed for contempt.

Wednesday, August 20, 2008: Status hearing in Jonesboro. Judge Burnett tentatively schedules a September 8 hearing to conduct an Act 1780 hearing for Echols first, then a hearing for Baldwin and Misskelley, if needed. However, he says he could follow the prosecutor's suggestion that the DNA evidence offered by defense attorneys isn't sufficient to order a new trial or overturn the convictions of either defendant and that he could rule in chambers before September 8 and forgo a hearing.

Burnett also says he could begin hearings for Misskelley and Baldwin on September 8 to determine if they received ineffective legal counsel at their trials. He also denies the defense's request to recuse from the cases.

Wednesday, September 10, 2008: Judge Burnett, who had refused to recuse himself from the case, issues orders denying, without an evidentiary hearing, Echols' April 11 Motion for a new trial; Baldwin's May 30 Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus and Motion for New Trial; Misskelley's June 5 Petition for Writ of Habeas Corpus and Motion for New Trial.

Thursday, September 11, 2008: Judge Burnett issues a letter stating that hearings for motions for post-conviction relief pursued by Baldwin and Misskelley on grounds not available to Echols is scheduled to be conducted from September 24 through September 30.

Wednesday, September 24, 2008: Jason Baldwin's and Jessie Misskelley's Rule 37 hearing begins in Jonesboro, Arkansas.

District Judge William Wilson issues an order stating that he recuses himself from Echols' case because "Some of the principals in this case are long-time acquaintances and friends of mine."

Monday, September 29, 2008: Greg Crow testifies in Jason Baldwin's and Jessie Misskelley's Rule 37 hearing in Jonesboro, Arkansas.

Tuesday, September 30, 2008: Dan testifies in Jason Baldwin's and Jessie Misskelley's Rule 37 hearing in Jonesboro, Arkansas.

Friday, December 5, 2008: Terry Hobbs sues Natalie Maines and the Dixie Chicks for defamation and in doing so he opens himself to answering questions under oath about the case.

2009

April, 2009: This is a quote from the Associated Press:

"...Burnett has already rejected an appeal by Echols, who is on Arkansas' death row. While Baldwin and Misskelley's appeals continue, Thursday's hearing appeared not to sway Burnett. The recently retired judge rolled his eyes and stared at the ceiling during some of Stidham's testimony."

Friday, October 2, 2009

Testimony concludes in Baldwin's and Misskelley's Rule 37 hearings.

2010

Wednesday, January 20, 2010: Judge Burnett denies Baldwin's and Misskelley's Rule 37 petitions.

Tuesday, May 18, 2010: Judge Burnett wins race for State Senate and is finally disqualified from the case.

August 28, 2010: WM3 supporters stage a concert/rally (Voices for Justice) in Little Rock to raise awareness for the case. Eddie Vedder, Natalie Maines, Patti Smith, Ben Harper and Johnny Depp perform.

Thursday, September 30, 2010: The Arkansas Supreme Court hears oral arguments in Echols' appeal.

Thursday, November 4, 2010: The Arkansas Supreme Court reverses Judge Burnett's September 10, 2008 ruling and orders and remands the defendants' cases back to circuit court for evidentiary hearings to consider new DNA evidence and a charge of juror misconduct.

Just 179 days after Burnett is finally disqualified from the case the case is remanded to the trial court for full evidentiary hearings.

Tuesday, November 30, 2010: Circuit Court Judge David Laser is appointed to preside over the evidentiary hearings ordered by the Arkansas Supreme Court. He replaces retired Judge David Burnett, who presided over the original trials and all subsequent hearings, because Burnett has been elected to the state Senate.

2011

Tuesday, January 4, 2011: Scheduling conference in circuit court in Jonesboro. Judge David Laser orders all parties to file briefs with him by February 18 regarding issues to be addressed at the evidentiary hearings. Laser also decides that a single hearing will be held for all three defendants, which will save time and money for defense attorneys. He also orders a gag order in the case, prohibiting attorneys from talking about the case with the media.

Friday, February 18, 2011: All parties file pre-hearing briefs as ordered by Judge Laser. Additionally, attorneys for Baldwin and Misskelley file their respective Rule 37 briefs with the Arkansas Supreme Court.

Thursday, March 17, 2011: Judge Laser issues an order stating that the evidentiary hearing is "scheduled for December 5, 2011, through December 21, 2011."

Monday, April 18, 2011: Judge Laser issues an order authorizing and directing additional DNA and other scientific testing as requested by defendants.

Thursday, May 5, 2011: The State files briefs in the Baldwin/Misskelley Rule 37 appeal.

Thursday, May 19, 2011: Attorneys for Baldwin file their Rule 37 reply brief with the Arkansas Supreme Court.

Tuesday, May 24, 2011: Attorneys for Misskelley file their Rule 37 reply brief with the Arkansas Supreme Court.

Thursday, August 18, 2011: Judge Laser issues a Notice which states that, "The court will take up certain matters pertaining to the cases of defendants Baldwin, Echols and Misskelley on Friday, August 19, 2011. One session will be conducted out of public presence with all defendants present, and another session will be conducted in open court. The session conducted in chambers will likely begin at 10 a.m., followed by a public session, which will begin about 11 a.m." I knew nothing about this and was not an architect of this plea deal.

Friday, August 19, 2011: Hearing before Judge Laser. It is announced that as the result of negotiations between prosecutors and defense counsel to resolve the cases Judge Laser vacated the convictions on the condition that the defendants enter guilty pleas pursuant to the U.S. Supreme Court case known as *North Carolina v. Alford*. Echols, Baldwin and Misskelley enter "Alford pleas" which means that they plead guilty but do not admit to the act and are allowed to maintain their innocence while acknowledging that prosecutors have enough evidence to convict them. In accordance with the plea negotiations, Judge Laser sentences all three to time served, followed by a ten-year term of suspended imposition of sentence. If they re-offend, they can be sent back to prison for 21 years.

Wednesday, August 24, 2011: Attorneys for Misskelley file a motion to dismiss the Rule 37 appeal that was pending before the Arkansas Supreme Court.

Thursday, September 8, 2011: The Arkansas Supreme Court grants Misskelley's motion to dismiss the Rule 37 appeal. Attorneys for Echols file a motion to dismiss his federal habeas corpus petition.

Wednesday, September 28, 2011: District Judge Brian Miller issues an order granting Echols' motion to dismiss his habeas corpus petition.

2021

Thursday, August 19, 2021: The ten-year period of the suspended imposition of sentence (SIS) part of the Alford Plea for the WM3 passes without incident or fanfare. The West Memphis Three are free, but not exonerated.

2022

April 4th, 2022: Former death row inmate Damien Echols of the infamous West Memphis Three case is on a mission to clear his name. His legal team filed a motion in Crittenden County Court, asking a judge to allow a California lab to test evidence using a new DNA testing system he hopes will prove his innocence. According to Echols he wants his name cleared and see the person who really did commit these horrific crimes to be punished.

At first, the West Memphis Police said the evidence had been destroyed in a fire. The claims of fire turned out not to be true. His attorneys got a court order to search the West Memphis Police Department evidence room and found the boxes they were looking for. "Every single piece of it was right there. Nothing had been destroyed. It was all accounted for and cataloged," he said.

Echols wants a California lab to use new technology that suctions out DNA from the evidence. He wants the shoestrings that were used to tie up the children tested first. "The only person whose DNA would be in that ligature is the person who tied the knots," he said. Echols' legal team says prosecutors are blocking that, too.

"Why do you think they would say there had been a building fire, and the evidence was lost when in fact it was not?" he continued. He said he could only see one reason. "They do not want the truth to come out," he said. "Maybe they know what the truth is and they're trying really hard to keep that covered up, or it could be just the fact that a lot of people have built political careers for themselves off this case. ... I mean, this has been the foundation that a lot of these people have built their livelihoods on and they don't want to have to admit that it was all fraud." The mayor of West Memphis said this has been like a dark cloud hanging over the city for years, and he wants the truth — whatever that is.

June 23, 2022: Echols and his legal team urged a judge to let them test the evidence for DNA. The group has been calling for DNA testing for years as they try to prove that Echols, Jessie Misskelly, and Jason Baldwin were not involved in the killings.

They want to test DNA evidence on ligatures used when tying up the three little boys, who were discovered dead. However, prosecutors argue any DNA testing could forever alter the evidence.

Judge Tonya Alexander, throwing up her hands, said they were tied because of a law, that states in Arkansas, anyone petitioning for new DNA testing must still be imprisoned.

Prosecutors while in court nodded in agreement regarding the state statute when it comes to DNA testing for those who are no longer behind bars.

They argued according to the letter of the law this case is now closed. The judge agreed.

However, Echols and his team said they will continue in their effort to clear his name. Echols' attorney said they plan to appeal this decision with the Arkansas Supreme Court.

2023

April 6, 2023: The Arkansas Supreme Court ruled in favor of an appeal made by Damien Echols, one of the men accused of killing three boys in West Memphis nearly 30 years ago.

Last year, a Crittenden County circuit court rejected his request to have the evidence tested. Echols' attorneys filed the appeal in January, arguing it could help lead to the real killers.

Thursday's ruling turns back efforts by the Arkansas Attorney General to delay the Court's consideration of Echols' appeal of a judge's decision to refuse DNA testing using state-of-the-art M-vac technology.

November 2023: "*A Harvest of Innocence: The Untold Story of the West Memphis Three Case*" is published by Dan Stidham and Tom McCarthy and released on Amazon.