

EXHIBIT A
(Part 2)

EXHIBIT A-11

May 2007 | [Main](#) | [September 2007](#) »

TennWatch/Volitics

July 20, 2007

Satanic Murders Revisited

14 years ago three 8-year-old boys were savagely murdered, their naked bodies bound with their own shoelaces found in a drainage ditch in West Memphis. 3 youths that became known as the West Memphis 3 were convicted of the murders in a trial filled with Satanic overtones and public outrage.

The investigation was sloppy, the only confession coerced and the trial filled with inconsistencies (Freedonian has a nice summary if you can ignore the anti-Christian ranting, the complete story can be found in Court TV's Crime Library). The entire affair has been the subject of 2 films (with another on the way) and 3 books, and numerous celebrities support retrial.

The retrial may be on its way: DNA from one of the murdered boy's step-father, Terry Hobbs, has been discovered on the rope used to tie one of the boys. Terry Hobbs confirms that an investigator for the defense told him that one of his hairs had been found in the knots of the shoelace used to tie victim Michael Moore.

On the other hand, is a single hair enough for a retrial? No way, especially as police chief Mike Allen thinks the hairs presence is due to "normal transference".

Still, the mother of one of the boys expresses her doubts:

Pam Hobbs said she "chose to believe all those years" that Echols, Baldwin and Misskelley were guilty, despite her realization during the trials that the prosecutors "didn't have anything" and persistent doubts afterwards that the defendants "were smart enough or hateful enough to have done it by themselves and clean it up."

Whether you believe the death penalty is a deterrent or not, I can't get past those cases in which the system simply makes a mistake. Which is why I still don't support the death penalty.

In this case, the only one of the West Memphis 3 that sits on death row was a budding sociopath that has an IQ that makes Paris Hilton look brilliant and a history of mental illness. But there is evidence enough to show that a terrible miscarriage of justice took place in West Memphis 14 years ago, ruining the lives of three young men. As Court TV's writer puts it:

The fight to have the guilty verdict reversed would require that the judicial system, intrinsically bureaucratic in nature, look within itself and acknowledge its own weaknesses and shortcomings. Any admission of its own failure will only occur under extreme public pressure and outrage at the injustice which has occurred. It takes time for such a process to occur, statistically at least ten years. Jessie and Jason have a lifetime, but whether Damien's time will run out before this slow process is complete is yet to be seen.

Technorati tags: [West Memphis 3](#), [Miscarriage of Justice](#), [Death Penalty](#)
Posted by AlphaPatriot at [10:39 AM](#) | [Comments \(0\)](#) | [TrackBack](#)

EXHIBIT A-12

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Reported by Janice Broach

West Memphis 3: Mom speaks out on new evidence found at crime scene

Updated: July 21, 2007 02:24 PM CDT

Pam Hobbs has been very vocal over the past 14 years since the murders of three 8-year-old boys in West Memphis.

A jury convicted the West Memphis 3, Damien Echols, Jason Baldwin and Jessie Misskelley for the murders of Michael Moore, Stevie Branch and Christopher Byers.

Stevie Branch was Pam Hobbs' son.

Now, there are new developments in the case and Hobbs is speaking out about the new DNA evidence.

The recent DNA tests are noteworthy because at the time of the murders DNA testing was not as advanced as it is today.

Prosecutors did not have important physical evidence because it was washed away by the water in that drainage ditch where the three boys' bodies were discovered.

Hobbs said she does not think the West Memphis Three committed the crime.

A jury convicted the West Memphis 3 of killing the three 8-year-old boys 14 years ago.

But now, new DNA testing shows a hair from one of the boys' stepfathers, Terry Hobbs, was found in shoelaces used to tie up the 8-year-old boys.

"It blew me away. I was like, oh my God this can't be so," said Hobbs.

Hobbs was blown away because she was married to Terry Hobbs when the murders happened.

When asked in an interview if he murdered the boys, Hobbs said: "I'd have to laugh at that and say there's something wrong with someone who would think that."

But Pam Hobbs thinks it's possible.

"I would say there is a possibility that he could be capable. I hate to say it because I'm going on my thoughts and feelings," she added.

Pam Hobbs said she remembers discovering 14 knives owned by her then husband Terry Hobbs.

"A bunch of knives, a few of them I was aware of but there was quite a few I wasn't aware of. And Stevie's knife being in that collection, that really put up a warning sign. What are you doing with Stevie's knife, it would have been with him," Pam Hobbs explained.

Hobbs said Steve's grandfather gave him the knife. She also said she turned them over to police when she found them.

Terry Hobbs said he had collected knives for years.

"They were stolen out of my home by Pam Hobbs or her sister and given to the defense attorneys," Terry Hobbs said.


Terry Hobbs insists he has nothing to hide.

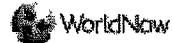
West Memphis Deputy Police Chief, Mike Allen, said Terry Hobbs is not a suspect in the case.

He said the hair found at the scene could have come from the Hobbs' house because the children played there frequently.

Stay tuned to Action News 5 and WMCTV.com. We will keep you updated on any more developments in this case as defense attorneys work to get a new trial.

Click [here](#) to email Janice Broach.

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EXHIBIT A-13



Hobbs: This isn't how things should have been

By LAURA SMITH
laurahoughsmith@gmail.com

Terry Hobbs, the stepfather of one of three West Memphis boys brutally slain in 1993, said he's gotten by during the 14 years since the murders by going to church and spending a lot his time on his knees in prayer.

"That, and being raised in a preacher's home," he said. "My parents taught me the Bible; there's a whole lot of things in there, if you'll look at them, they'll help get you by and get you through."

At the time of the murders, Hobbs was married to Pam Hobbs, the mother

of 8-year-old Stevie Branch who was killed with his buddies Christopher Byers and Michael Moore.

The murders changed the course of the lives of the boys' families.

He and Pam, who's from the Blytheville area, were together for 17 years before they divorced in 2003.

"I had a restaurant up there; that's where we met," he said. "And we had a dream that we would move to the big city, work, save some money and go home and retire. It just didn't happen like that for us."

John Mark Byers was married to Christopher Byers' mom, Melissa Byers, at the time of the killings. A few years later, the couple moved to Cherokee Village, where Melissa Byers died in 1996. John Mark Byers has reportedly moved to Millington, Tenn. He declined comment for this

article, and accurate details as to Todd and Dana Moore's whereabouts were nil.

But the news of the results of DNA testing on crime scene evidence has brought local and national attention back to the victims' families, to the three men in prison for the murders - Damien Echols, Jessie Miskelley Jr. and Jason Baldwin - and West Memphis itself.

The results found that no genetic material recovered at the crime scene belonged to

Echols, Miskelley or Baldwin, and, with the exception of one hair, all of DNA recovered at the scene that was tested belonged to the victims.

The hair was reportedly Hobbs', and police attributed his hair to secondary transfer.

Hobbs said he was recently questioned by police, who have put any speculation of Hobbs' involvement to an end, with Assistant Police Chief Mike Allen noting that Hobbs wasn't a suspect 14 years ago, and he isn't now. In the state's response to a report on the results, Prosecutor Brent Davis said the state stands behind the convictions.

"I went and talked to the police in West Memphis for a follow-up," Hobbs said. "I've always been willing to cooperate, so I went over and done that."

He recalled the day Stevie went missing.

"I worked that day like I've worked everyday of my life," he said. "I got home about 3 or 3:30, and Stevie had gone off riding his bicycle, playing with Michael Moore."

Stevie was supposed to be home at 4:30, and when he wasn't home Hobbs became concerned. Hobbs picked Pam up at work at Catfish Island at 9 p.m.

"Her dad and mom came down; she went with them to look," he said. "I went with a friend. At different times we'd go to the police department. We spent all night driving around."

The bodies of the boys were found a day later, and police arrested Echols, Miskelley and Baldwin a month after the murders. They were convicted of the murders in 1994.

Hobbs said he believes in their guilt.

"I'm more than convinced because [the police are] more than convinced," Hobbs said. "Mike Allen's a good man, and I believe what I know, and I only know what they tell me."

"I think it's just a sad, desperate attempt for the defense to be doing what they're doing."

But the recent attention does take its toll, Hobbs said.

"I try to go on the best I can, then something like this comes up, you know, and Hawaii looks pretty good sometimes, just to get away."

"This isn't how things could have been or should have been for all of us. We only came here to live a dream, and it's been a totally different life, living this."

City planning to seek help from municipal league

By TRIP COOK
trip.cook@gmail.com

The municipal immunity from tort, a state measure that shields cities from lawsuits, will likely not apply to the federal lawsuit against the City of West Memphis from the mother of DeAunta Farrow.

Dodge's robbed; police searching for suspects

brBy Morgan Greer
marymorgan.greer@gmail.com

West Memphis police are searching for two men wanted for the armed robbery Friday morning of the Dodge's Chicken Store, at 1414 E. Broadway Friday morning.

Police hunting felon

By Morgan Greer
marymorgan.greer@gmail.com

West Memphis police are asking the public for help in bringing a felon and sex offender to justice.

Hobbs: This isn't how things should have been

By LAURA SMITH
laurahoughsmith@gmail.com

Terry Hobbs, the stepfather of one of three West Memphis boys brutally slain in 1993, said he's gotten by during the 14 years since the murders by going to church and spending a lot his time on his knees in prayer.

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EXHIBIT A-14

'West Memphis Three' Could Go Free While Step-Father Hangs By A Hair

American Chronicle

by Frank Brooks

August 15, 2007

Beginning in the 1880's, perhaps the only scientific means available to aid criminal investigators in determining who was responsible for a crime was fingerprinting. Fingerprints were used as a primary method of identification until the early 1900's. Flaws in fingerprint evidence such as becoming easily smudged or destroyed completely, rendering inconclusive results, and the fact that perpetrators were able to bypass fingerprinting by using acidic substances to alter their own prints led scientists to look for a better method.

Fingerprinting gave way to ABO blood typing, a forensic investigative tool that remained popular until human leukocyte antigen (HLA) typing became the premier personal identification tool in the 1960's. HLA typing was rendered powerful but eventually useless to all but a small percentage of samples. In the 1980's, DNA testing came to fruition and permitted investigators to perform a level of personal identification far superior to anything else available. For example, the DNA of a single hair root can be used to differentiate a person from all other persons living or dead.

In addition to providing a solid scientific method of identification, DNA testing has been used to determine parentage in both animals and man. Unknown genes can be identified by DNA testing, as well as the possible inheritance of disease. DNA testing is used for positional cloning experiments. But for all of the wonderful things that DNA testing can provide, perhaps its original usage is one of the most important. Not only can DNA evidence identify the guilty, it can vindicate the innocent and wrongfully accused or imprisoned.

It is DNA evidence that four men are looking at, though not all of them in the same light. For Jason Baldwin, favorable results would mean that he will not spend the rest of his life in prison. For Jessie Misskelley, DNA testing could not only allow him to go free, but provide evidence that maybe the West Memphis Police Department really did coerce a mentally retarded teenager into a false confession of a crime he did not commit. And Damien Echols may never have to take the ride from Cell Block Four of Varner Supermax over to Cummins Unit for a date with death via lethal injection.

But for Terry Hobbs, the final results produced by DNA testing may point to something darker. If these final results mimic the findings of the preliminary evidence, a man who has spent fourteen years condemning three teenagers for the murder of his step-son and two other children may not only lead to perhaps his own wrongful imprisonment as many have proclaimed is the case with the 'West Memphis Three', but a decade and a half of secrets could come spilling out and bring this tragedy to an end.

According the preliminary results of over two years of DNA testing, no evidence has been found that links Echols, Baldwin, or Misskelley to the crime scene or the victims. This finding is all the more spectacular because not only have the results been acknowledged by the prosecution, it

seemingly flies in the face of the myth that hair and fiber matches had been made linking the fabled 'West Memphis Three' to the murders, a theory that many feel largely helped Jason Baldwin into a life sentence and Damien Echols onto Death Row.

Secondary transfer occurs when a fiber or hair is physically transferred from one person to another. It should be noted that the hair and fibers that the prosecution suggests came about through secondary transfer in this case are inconclusive. There was one shirt fiber that "may be similar" to an article of clothing found in the home of a defendant. However, it has also been shown that this fiber is similar to materials found in the home of one of the victims as well. There has been a hair found that "could belong to" Damien Echols, but has not been matched. It has not been proven that either the hair or the fiber belongs to any of the WM3, and actual DNA testing refutes this suggestion, rather than solidifies it.

As far as facts are concerned, there is no physical evidence that Damien Echols, Jason Baldwin, or Jessie Misskelley had ever been near Robin Hood Hills, had ever met or been near any of the victims, or committed any sort of crime. There was no murder weapon recovered, no witnesses who can place Echols, Baldwin, or Misskelley at the scene of the crime, and no DNA evidence. So if the DNA evidence doesn't point to these three, then who does it point to?

Well that's another story entirely. According to the DNA status report filed by the defense and acknowledged by the prosecution, DNA evidence has arisen that can not be linked to either the defendants or the victims. As of this time, there is no identity match for the DNA, except for one surprising piece of evidence that managed to turn up. A strand of hair belonging to Stevie Branch's step-father Terry Hobbs was found intertwined with a knot in one of the shoelaces used to tie up one of the victims. This is no longer a case of similarity or possibility. Terry Hobbs has been genetically matched to the scene of the crime through DNA testing.

Terry Hobbs says that the children played at his home often and perhaps a hair ended up in the shoelace through secondary transfer. In all likelihood this is a possibility. But what isn't said is that a shoelace bouncing around in Robin Hood Hills, being removed from a shoe, being knotted and tied to bind an 8 year old boy, being immersed in water, and lying around for over a decade – The hair was still with the shoelace. Still intertwined in a knot in the shoelace after all this time. That's either enough to arouse suspicion, or a very durable and strong piece of hair.

This evidence does not make Terry Hobbs a killer anymore than it does the three who have been convicted of the murders. However, there is a chance that if Terry Hobbs were tried in court on this evidence and prosecuted in the same fashion as the West Memphis Three, it would most likely be Terry Hobbs holding a cell in Varner Supermax, not Damien Echols.

These are very significant results in the DNA testing. No match for Damien Echols, no match for Jason Baldwin, no match for Jessie Misskelley. There is a match for Terry Hobbs and persons unknown. While this single strand of hair may not be the stuff that solid cases are made of, the Arkansas Judicial System finds it more than enough to indict, convict, and sentence people to life in prison and the death penalty.

In addition to a scientific match between Terry Hobbs and the crime scene, there is also strange occurrences regarding his wife Pam. After 17 years of marriage, Pam and Terry divorced for one reason or another. While Pam was going through various belongings, she happened upon a knife that her son Stevie Branch always carried on his person. According to Pam, Stevie always, always had this knife with him, and it would seem strange that the knife was not with Stevie but in Terry

Hobbs' possession. It is possible that the knife could have been discovered at the scene and given to Terry Hobbs. Except that Pam knew nothing about it.

If that is the case, this would be the second instance in which Terry Hobbs failed to inform his wife about her son, the first being when Stevie Branch originally went missing and Hobbs delayed telling his wife for 5 hours. Pam has openly stated that she is somewhat suspicious of her ex-husband, and is praying that the three men convicted are either guilty, or given a new trial.

The West Memphis Police Department decided to investigate Terry Hobbs. They have conducted interviews with Hobbs and are now looking for any other evidence that may point him out as the killer. Between the DNA results and his ex-wife's growing suspicion, trouble certainly seems to be brewing for Terry Hobbs. Many supporters see this as justice coming far too late. To quote one of them, "After all, didn't the 'West Memphis Three' get convicted on less evidence than that?"

For those who believe the WM3 are indeed guilty, this is just a defense tactic to try and get these men a new trial. For supporters of the case, this is a cause for hope that Echols, Baldwin, and Misskelley will be given a new trial, and that the real killer or killers will eventually be caught. Perhaps the final DNA results will yield the true answer to which persons decided to tie up three children, beat them to death, and leave them in a drainage ditch to die.

For Terry Hobbs, being linked to a crime scene where your step-son was found murdered, and being suspected of murder by your own ex-wife can't be a position he'd like to be in. Did a loving stepfather really plan and execute the murder of three 8 year old boys? Is the same man who shot his own brother in the abdomen, disabling him for life, guilty of capital murder?

Could it be that Terry Hobbs failed to tell his wife about her son's disappearance for five hours because he had a sinister reason to do so? For all parties involved, let's hope the final DNA test results will once and for all unmask the perpetrators of the murders and lay to rest the most famous case in Arkansas history.

EXHIBIT A-15

TWV Presents...



Pagan Event Reviews

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Views: **1,753,798**

Year: 2008 ...

- The Sacred Space Conference and Winterfest Banquet
- Toon Town's Pagan Summer Fest.
- Heartland Pagan Festival
- Magickel Hibernation
- Mayfire 2008
- Sacred Harvest Festival 2008
- St. George Utah Wiccan/Pagan Coffee Social
- The Land Institute Prairie Festival 2008
- Sisters in Nature

Year: 2007 ...

- Sirius Rising 2007: Making Connections
- 4th of July Pagan Religious Rights Rally and Ritual and Chesapeake Pagan Community Summer Gathering
- Starwood 2007
- The 12th Annual Halloween Festival London UK
- Pagan Odyssey 2007
- Wiccans Celebrate Solstice in Walker, Louisiana
- Louisville Pagan Pride Day
- Samhain 07 With Green Song Grove
- Pagan Leadership Skills Conference
- Persephone's Masquerade- The Sixth Annual Spring Charity Gala, Dinner and Ball
- Ruach Healing

Pagan Festivals & Events

A Collection of Reviews of Pagan Events from all over the World

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Wiccans Celebrate Solstice in Walker, Louisiana

Author: Freedom Writer

Posted: October 7th, 2007

Times Viewed: 2,343

Article Specs

Article ID: 11933

VoxAcct: 336253

Section: festivals

Age Group: Adult

Days Up: 509

Times Read: **2,343**

RSS Views: **31,291**

A group of 20 Wiccans from Livingston Parish, Louisiana, and surrounding areas gathered at a local residence for the Summer Solstice.

Every year on June 24, Wiccans celebrate the longest day of the year, when the sun is at its most intense in this hemisphere. For Wiccans, the Solstice represents a time for purification, renewal of energy.

The event was led by the Rev. Velvet Reith, the founder and pastor of Covenant of the Pentacle Wiccan Church in New Orleans. She asked for divine wisdom and communion with God and Spirit. Everyone formed a circle, held hands, and prayed for spiritual growth. The event was held outdoors because it is a ritual worshipping nature and the natural order.

Wicca as a religion, founded in Great Britain in the 1950s, has 134, 000 known adherents in the United States (according to the 2001 American Religious Identification Survey) , though many say they are reluctant to associate themselves with the church openly because of the fear of public prejudice.

Like other churches, Reith said her church distributes clothing, toys, and food to the poor and homeless. She said the church has also made donations to the Metropolitan Battered Women's Program in Jefferson Parish, and the Search Dog Foundation, which trains dogs from shelters to work with firefighters and other first responders. Reith herself does volunteer prison work.

Reith voiced her concerns over the recent ban of fortune telling in unincorporated Livingston Parish, an example of local reaction against practices in her church. She believes the ban violates an individual's right to free speech and the practice of one's religion. Wiccans are known to use cards, shells, leaves and water to seek a divine message.

"We should be allowed to have freedom here, " Reith said. "What is the crime? Parish officials are setting themselves up for a lawsuit."

Reith referred to a similar ban on fortune telling in New Iberia in 1982 that was overturned in 1999 by a federal judge who ruled the town had violated its residents' First Amendment rights.

In the early 1990s, some Wiccans were forced to close down a Wiccan shop in Walker after their landlord evicted them following complaints in the community about the nature of the business.

While some attending the solstice ritual speak openly about their Wiccan beliefs, others choose to keep those beliefs private due to common misconceptions about Wicca, they say. The most common myth is that they worship Satan, when in fact Wiccans do not believe the devil exists.

Wiccans do not perform any kind of sacrifices that take life.



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Certification
Workshop
2nd Annual Children's
Camp
Twilight Covening
Central Vermont
Lughnasadh Festival
The Sacred Earth
Yurt Raising

Year: 2006 ...

Harvest Home
Gathering 2006 (pics
added Oct. 18)
Rally for Religious
Freedom
Sirius Rising 2006
Southeast Women's
Herbal Conference
Toronto Pagan
Conference
St. Louis Pagan
Picnic 2006
Akashacon 2006
Florida Moot 2006
Brazilian Mabon
Celebration in São
Paulo
Toronto Pagan
Conference
Pagan Pride Day
2006
WitchFest Wales,
2006
Chesapeake Pagan
Community
Gathering: Dancing
with Devas 2006
Canadian National
Pagan Conference
Wic Can Fest
Celebrate Samhain
2006
The Body Tribal
Sixth Annual Grand
Rapids Pagan Pride
Day
Pagan Pride Day -
Metro Detroit
Midsummer Frolic
The 2006 Between
the Worlds Men's
Gathering
Rochester Pagan
Pride Day
Gardenias Bookstore
and Learning Center:
Pagan Meet and
Greets and Open
Circles
Hellfire Caves Ritual
Beltaine 2006: A
Pagan Odyssey
Sacred Harvest
Festival 2006

Wicca is based instead, adherents say, on an ancient religion of love for life and nature. It is an earth-based religion centered around respect of all living things.

Most Wiccans follow some form of the Wiccan Rede, which says, "An it harm none, do what you will." This means that a Wiccan cannot intentionally or knowingly cause harm to another person.

According to the website www.answers.com, Wicca is a "Modern Western witchcraft movement."

"Some practitioners consider Wicca the religion of pre-Christian Europe, forced underground by the Christian church," the site explains. "That thesis is not accepted by historians, and modern Wicca is usually dated to the work of Gerald B. Gardner (1884 - 1964) and Doreen Valiente (1922 - 1999), who, after the repeal of the last Witchcraft Act in England (1951), went public with the practice of witchcraft, which centered on a horned god of fertility and a great earth goddess. Gardner is credited with introducing the term Wicca."

Wiccans' religious beliefs do not color all aspects of their lives. They can be Republicans or Democrats; they are Americans and individuals. Most Americans think of their country as a place where people can escape persecution for their religious beliefs. Yet many Wiccans nevertheless hide them out of concern that they will be branded as outside this mainstream.

"I like people to get to know me first, as a person, before I talk about my religious beliefs," one of the group said during the Solstice celebration. He said he was concerned other people would not want to know him as an individual, once they knew he was associated with Wicca.

Discrimination can take many forms, including rejection by family members and co-workers. And then there's the spectre of injustice. In the West Memphis community 13 years ago, accusations of satanic ritual played a part in the murder prosecution of three teenagers, one of whom, Damien Echols, was known for the practice of the Wiccan religion. He was sentenced to death while his friends, Jason Baldwin and Jessie Misskelley, received life sentences. There is no link between Wiccan beliefs and Satanism, and yet the prosecutor brought up Wicca as if it was part of a belief system tied to criminal behavior. When Echols took the stand, questions were raised about his religion and the books he read, including ones written by Stephen King.

The case gained national and international attention after the documentaries "Paradise Lost" and "Paradise Lost II," which premiered on HBO. As a result of the publicity, many people, Wiccans and non-Wiccans, support the "West Memphis Three" and believe they were victims of a miscarriage of justice.

Many celebrities have also shown public support for the convicted men, including musicians Eddie Vedder of Pearl Jam, Henry Rollins, Robert Smith of The Cure, and members of the band Metallica, who allowed the use of their music for the two documentaries. Other celebrities, including Johnny Depp, Winona Ryder, Margaret Cho and South Park creators Matt Stone and Trey Parker, have also shown their support by wearing T-shirts and hosting benefits.

One Wiccan belief, the "Law of Three," holds that their actions will be returned to them three-fold for good or ill, an incentive to be cautious about magic that is practiced. Wiccans also deny that they are a cult trying to recruit people, pointing to an emphasis on everyone's right to choose his own path.

"At Solstice," Reith said, the Wiccan group prayed "for peace, clarity in all conflicts, and for each person to have the courage and faith to see the light in others, who are merely celebrating the voice of Deity that speaks to them, without harm to another. What came in our prayer work was a clear voice in Spirit that said, 'Honor the Divine in Humanity' and 'acknowledge and honor the Humanity of the Divine.'"

Note: Less than two weeks after the following story was published, there came a new development in the "West Memphis Three" case. New DNA testing shows a hair from one of the boys' stepfathers, Terry Hobbs, was found in shoelaces used to tie up the 8-year-old boys.

Year: 2005 ...

- Tara Summer Solstice 2005
- Starwood XXV: Feelin' the Love
- Paganstock 2005
- Pagans At Boston's Pride Day
- Pictures from New Orleans
- Heartland Pagan Festival 2005
- Sirius Rising 2005: Restoring the Balance
- Persephone's Masquerade: The 4th Annual OHF Spring Ball
- Free Spirit Gathering
- Harvest Home 2005: Magick, Imagination, and Love
- Pagans On Parade
- Building Bridges at Toronto Pagan Conference
- Beltane
- Spirit's Haven in the Woods
- PCCO Greening 2005
- Pagan Bazaar
- People of Beauty, People of Peace: CPC Summer Gathering 2005
- Ashville's Pagan Pride Day
- Inner Mysteries Intensive with Janet Farrar and Gavin Bone
- Mid-Atlantic Pagan Alliance's Wicked Awesome Lugh Beach Party
- Healing The Spirit
- The 2005 Between The Worlds Men's Gathering
- WES Raises Funds for Katrina Victims
- Adirondack Pagan Pride Day
- Midsummer's Haven in the Woods
- WytcheHaven Weekend 2
- Annual Spiritual Awareness Celebration
- Three Rivers Pagan Pride Day
- Okanagan Pagan Pride Day 2005
- AugustFire 2005: Five More Minutes

Footnotes:

I wrote the above article that was printed in the Livingston Parish News on July 5, 2007.

**ABOUT...
Freedom Writer**

Location: Denham Springs, Louisiana

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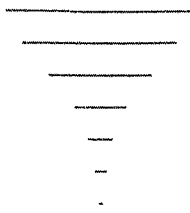
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Your Town: A Link to YOUR Area Page (The largest listing of Witches, Pagans, Heathens and Wiccans on the Planet)
VoxLinks: The Pagan Web: 8,000 Listings

NOTE: For a complete list of articles related to this chapter... Visit the **Main Index** FOR this section.



Festival Tips - White Pages (Resources) - Issues/Concerns - West Memphis 3 - Witch Hunts - Pagan Protection Tips - Healing Planet Earth

Your Voices: Adult Essays - Young Pagan Essays - Pagan Perspectives (On Hold) - WitchWars: Fire in the Craft - Gay Pagan - Pagan Parenting - Military - Pagan Passages

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EXHIBIT A-16

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Forum Name The DU Lounge

Topic subject Echols' Attorneys File New Motion Claiming Wrongful Conviction In 'West Memphis Three' Case

Topic URL http://www.democraticunderground.com/discuss/duboard.php?az=view_all&address=105x7085289#7085289

7085289, Echols' Attorneys File New Motion Claiming Wrongful Conviction In 'West Memphis Three' Case

Posted by johnnie on Mon Oct-29-07 08:18 PM

"DNA Tests and Other Scientific Evidence Prove Damien Echols Was Wrongfully Convicted in 1993 West Memphis Murders, Federal Court Filing Says.

Federal filing says Echols, on death row in Arkansas, must get new trial or be released, citing multiple DNA tests, analysis from several of the nation's leading forensic experts and other substantial evidence."

<Snip>

"The evidence in today's filing includes:

- * DNA test results that fail to link Echols or the other defendants to the crime scene; in light of the prosecution claim that Echols sodomized the victims, the lack of his DNA at the crime scene is exculpatory itself.
- * DNA test results showing that a hair found in the ligature of one of the victims matches Terry Hobbs, the step-father of another one of the victims.
- * DNA test results showing foreign DNA - from someone other than Echols or the two other men who were convicted - on the penises of two of the victims.
- * DNA test results matching a hair at the crime scene to a man who was with Terry Hobbs on the day of the crimes. This places Hobbs at the scene of the crime, since it refutes any theory that the Hobbs hair (found in the ligature of one of the victims) was there before the crime.
- * Scientific analysis from some of the nation's leading forensics experts, stating that wounds on the victims' bodies were caused by animals at the crime scene - not by knives used by the perpetrators, as the prosecution claimed. These wounds were the centerpiece of the prosecution's case, and evidence was presented that a knife recovered from a lake near one defendant's home caused the wounds. The conclusive expert analysis showing that animals caused the wounds after the victims died also completely undercuts the testimony of a jailhouse informant (who testified about Echols using a knife to cause the wounds) and a discredited "expert" who testified that the knife wounds were part of a Satanic ritual.
- * Sworn affidavits outlining new evidence uncovered by Pam Hobbs (the ex-wife of Terry Hobbs) who found a knife in Terry Hobbs' drawer that her son (one of the victims) had carried with him at all times. After her son was killed, the knife was not among his personal effects that police gave to the Hobbs families, and Pam Hobbs always assumed that her son's murderer had taken it during the crime.
- * New information implicating Terry Hobbs - including his own

statements to police in recent interviews where he acknowledged that several of his relatives suspect him in the crime. The filing also includes a chronology of Hobbs' activities on the night of the crimes, when he washed his clothes for no reason other than to hide evidence from the crimes.

* A sworn affidavit that refutes hearsay evidence from Echols' trial. The mother of one of two girls who testified that they overheard Echols admit to the crime at a softball game now says that Echols' statement was not serious and that neither she nor her daughter believes he committed the crime."

<http://www.americanchronicle.com/articles/viewArticle.asp?articleID=41551>

I don't know if any of you follow this tragedy of justice, but this is one hell of a breakthrough in the case.

Edited to add, John Mark Byers has come out as a supporter of the West Memphis Three.

EXHIBIT A-17

ArkansasOnline®

Defense presents new evidence in West Memphis 3 case

BY ARKANSASONLINE PRESS SERVICES

Tuesday, October 30, 2007

Lawyers for a death-row inmate found guilty of killing three 8-year-old boys in Arkansas in 1993 filed a motion in federal court to overturn his conviction based on new evidence, including DNA test results that found no genetic material on the victims' bodies from his client or two others convicted with him.

Dennis P. Riordan, a San Francisco attorney representing Damien Echols, said the findings should exonerate the three men known by sympathizers as the "West Memphis Three."

Echols, now 32, is on death row. Jason Baldwin received life without parole, and Jessie Misskelley, who told prosecutors he saw Echols and Baldwin beat and assault the boys, got life with parole.

Riordan's filings in federal court claim Bode Technology, a private laboratory in Virginia, tested evidence collected on swabs, under fingernails and clothing from 8-year-old victims Stevie Branch, Christopher Byers and Michael Moore. The company handled DNA testing on bone fragments found in rubble at the World Trade Center after the Sept. 11 terror attacks.

A report from the lab included in the filing shows much of the evidence failed to yield reportable results. However, on evidence able to be tested, the lab found no traces of Echols or co-defendants Baldwin or Misskelley.

"That is an exculpatory fact of great importance," according to the brief submitted by five attorneys led by Riordan and Donald M. Horgan of San Francisco.

They said it undercut the confession of Misskelley, who claimed that he saw Echols and Baldwin beat and sexually attack the three boys.

In addition, there was genetic material found on one of the victims that came from an unidentified person.

Tests also revealed that a hair containing DNA consistent with that of Terry Hobbs, the stepfather of one of the victims, was found on a ligature -- black and white shoelaces -- used to hog-tie another of the victims. Another hair found on a tree root at the crime scene contained the DNA of David Jacoby, "who was with Hobbs," according to court documents, in the hours before and after the victims disappeared.

The brief acknowledges that this evidence "does not establish guilt of Hobbs or Jacoby."

Hobbs has said the hair on the shoelaces must have been innocently transferred from himself to one of the victims, who "played with our little boy regularly."

The new petition includes analyses done by seven forensic scientists -- including Dr. Richard Souviron, chief forensic odontologist at Miami Dade Medical Examiners Department, who played a significant role in Florida's successful 1979 prosecution of serial killer Ted Bundy. All of them challenge prosecutors' claims that

Christopher Byers had been sexually mutilated with a knife.

The forensic pathologists and odontologists, who separately reviewed autopsy tests, photos and trial testimony, state that the evidence strongly indicates that after Byers was killed by blunt force blows, animals later ate parts of his body.

The brief also states that some of the key testimony asserting that the teenagers were part of a satanic cult -- something they have denied -- was presented by a "witchcraft expert" with "a fraudulent Ph.D." from a school in California that was put out of business by state authorities.

Echols' lawyers maintain that members of the jury that convicted and sentenced him to death in Jonesboro in 1994 made misleading statements about what they knew about the case when questioned during voir dire and considered Misskelley's confession during their deliberations -- something that they were specifically told not to by the trial judge.

Misskelley was tried first. His lawyers maintained that he was borderline mentally retarded and that he had made a statement to prosecutors only in hopes of being rewarded. At the time he made his statement there was a \$30,000 reward.

He was convicted, but it was established in court that he had changed key aspects of his story more than once after being questioned by prosecutors. He initially told prosecutors that he saw the crimes occur at a time at which it was established that the three victims and Baldwin were in school, Misskelley was at work on a roofing job and Echols was at the doctor.

During voir dire for the separate trial of Echols and Baldwin, the judge learned that virtually all of the jurors had heard a lot about the case, from newspaper and television accounts. The judge specifically told the jury not to consider anything they might have heard about Misskelley's statement to the police. But in recent interviews, three jurors, including the foreman, said the statement definitely was a factor they considered.

"How could you not?" the foreman said, according to court documents. "It was a primary and deciding factor."

The jury's consideration of the statement alone violated Echols' right to a fair trial, according to his attorneys.

Chief prosecutor Brent Davis did not respond to a call and an e-mail seeking comment.

Skeptics have long doubted the guilt of the three. The case also has drawn the attention of documentary filmmakers and rock stars: Eddie Vedder, the lead singer of Pearl Jam, performed at a benefit concert that helped finance the DNA tests and appellate work.

Another was Lorri Davis, a New York landscape architect who saw a film about the case in 1996 and became so interested that she moved to Little Rock, married Echols and took a key role in organizing post-trial investigations and appeals.

The state Supreme Court authorized further DNA testing in the case in 2002.

In 2005, the high court rejected an effort by Echols to reopen the case so he could argue that his trial lawyers mishandled his defense. In that ruling, the Supreme Court also urged those involved in the case to wrap up the genetic testing authorized three years earlier.

Riordan said the state will file a response and a federal judge will decide whether to hold a hearing over their claims.

"They tend to rise and fall together," Riordan said of three. "Anything that erodes the case against any one of them" erodes it against all of them.

Information for this article was contributed by Henry Weinstein of the Los Angeles Times, Shaila Dewan of The New York Times and Jon Gambrell of The Associated Press.

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EXHIBIT A-18

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Archive for Tuesday, October 30, 2007

Lawyers file DNA motion in Cub Scout murder case

By Henry Weinstein

October 30, 2007 *in print edition A-8*

Attorneys for a death row inmate found guilty of killing three 8-year-old boys in Arkansas in 1993 filed a motion in federal court to overturn his conviction based on new evidence, including DNA test results that found no genetic material on the victims' bodies from his client or two others convicted with him.

The sensational case in West Memphis concerned three Cub Scouts whose bodies were found submerged in a drainage ditch not far from their homes; one boy's body appeared to have been sexually mutilated. Two of the defendants frequently dressed in black and were described as "Goths." Accusations of satanic rituals were presented in court testimony.

In June 1993, three teenagers – Damien Wayne Echols, 18 at the time of the killings, Charles "Jason" Baldwin, 16, and Jessie Lloyd Misskelley Jr., 17 – were arrested and charged with murder. They were convicted a year later. Echols was sentenced to death, Baldwin received life without parole and Misskelley, who told prosecutors he saw Echols and Baldwin beat and assault the boys, got life with parole.

But skeptics have long doubted the guilt of the three young men. The case also has drawn the attention of documentary filmmakers and others.

Eddie Vedder, lead singer of the rock group Pearl Jam, performed at a benefit concert that helped fund the DNA tests and appellate work. Lorri Davis, a New York landscape architect who saw a film about the case in 1996 and became so interested that she moved to Little Rock, Ark., married Echols and took a key role in organizing post-trial investigations and appeals.

On Monday in Little Rock federal court, Echols' appellate attorney filed a habeas corpus petition, along with dozens of exhibits and affidavits, alleging that his client, along with the other two young men, had been wrongly convicted.

The brief states that DNA tests of items recovered at the crime scene show that no genetic material of three defendants was present on the victims' bodies.

"That is an exculpatory fact of great importance," according to the brief submitted by five attorneys led by

Dennis P. Riordan and Donald M. Horgan of San Francisco. That, they said, undercut the confession of Misskelley, who said that he saw Echols and Baldwin beat and sexually attack Christopher Byers, Steve Branch and James Michael Moore.

In addition, an unidentified person's genetic material was found on the penis of one victim.

Tests also revealed that a hair containing DNA consistent with that of Terry Hobbs, the stepfather of one of the boys, was found on black-and-white shoelaces used to hog-tie another of the victims. Another hair found on a tree root at the crime scene contained the DNA of David Jacoby, who, according to court documents, was with his friend Hobbs in the hours before and after the victims disappeared.

The brief acknowledges that this evidence "does not establish guilt of Hobbs or Jacoby." Hobbs has said the hair on the shoelaces must have been innocently transferred from himself to one of the victims, who "played with our little boy regularly."

The new petition includes analyses done by seven forensic scientists, including Dr. Richard Souviron, chief forensic odontologist at the Miami-Dade County Medical Examiner Department, who played a significant role in Florida's successful 1979 prosecution of serial killer Ted Bundy. All of them challenge prosecutors' claims that Christopher had been sexually mutilated with a knife.

The forensic pathologists and odontologists, who separately reviewed autopsy tests, photos and trial testimony, state that the evidence strongly indicates that after Christopher was killed by blunt-force blows, animals ate parts of his body.

The brief also states that some of the key testimony asserting that the teenagers were part of a satanic cult – something they have denied – was presented by a so-called witchcraft expert with "a fraudulent PhD" from a California school that was put out of business by state authorities.

Echols' attorneys maintain that members of the jury that convicted and sentenced him to death in Jonesboro, Ark., in 1994 made misleading statements about what they knew about the case when questioned during voir dire, and considered Misskelley's confession during their deliberations – something that the trial judge specifically told them not to do.

Misskelley was tried first. His attorneys maintained that he was borderline mentally retarded, and that he had only made a statement to prosecutors in the hope of being rewarded.

He was convicted, but it was established in court that he had changed key aspects of his story more than once. He initially told police that he saw the crimes occur at a time at which it was established that the three victims and Baldwin were in school, Echols was at the doctor's and Misskelley was at work on a roofing job.

During voir dire for the separate trial of Echols and Baldwin, the judge learned that virtually all of the jurors had heard a lot about the case from newspaper and television accounts.

The judge specifically told the jury not to consider anything they might have heard about Misskelley's statement to the police. But in recent interviews, three jurors – including the foreman – said the statement was a factor they considered. "How could you not?" the foreman said, according to court documents. "It was a primary and deciding factor."

The jury's consideration of the statement alone violated Echols' right to a fair trial, according to his attorneys.

Chief prosecutor Brent Davis did not respond to a call and an e-mail seeking comment.

On Monday, Davis said she was hopeful that her husband and the other defendants would eventually be freed. "After all this time, you have a case that was built on a lot of hysteria and satanic panic. . . . The truth is finally seeing the light of day."

—

henry.weinstein@latimes.com

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EXHIBIT A-19

Thursday, February 26, 2009 9:44:05 AM

Echols' Attorneys File New Motion Claiming Wrongful Conviction In 'West Memphis Three' Case

October 30, 2007

Frank Brooks



DNA Tests and Other Scientific Evidence Prove Damien Echols Was Wrongfully Convicted in 1993 West Memphis Murders, Federal Court Filing Says.

Federal filing says Echols, on death row in Arkansas, must get new trial or be released, citing multiple DNA tests, analysis from several of the nation's leading forensic experts and other substantial evidence.

LITTLE ROCK, AR; (October 29, 2007) - Advanced DNA testing and other strong scientific evidence - combined with additional evidence from several different witnesses and experts - proves that Damien Echols was wrongfully convicted

of murdering three eight-year-old boys in West Memphis, Arkansas, in 1993, according to legal papers filed today in federal court.

The 200 page motion filed today by attorneys for Echols, who has been on death row in Arkansas for more than a decade, says that new evidence proves Echols' innocence - and implicates Terry Hobbs, the step-father of one of the victims.

The evidence includes DNA testing on dozens of pieces of evidence; under the prosecution theory for how the crime was committed, it would be nearly impossible for at least one perpetrator's DNA not to match crime scene evidence. No biological evidence from the crime scene matches Echols or the other two men convicted of the crime, according to the DNA test results included in today's filing. DNA testing on multiple pieces of evidence does, however, link Terry Hobbs to the crime scene - and other evidence has emerged implicating him in the crimes.

"In recent months, we have uncovered powerful scientific evidence that Damien Echols is, in fact, innocent. The motion we filed today with the federal court that is empowered to overturn this conviction lays out overwhelming and irrefutable scientific evidence that Damien Echols is innocent," said Dennis Riordan, Echols' lead attorney. "By itself, any single piece of evidence we present in this filing could overturn Damien Echols' conviction - and, combined, all of this evidence makes clear that this was a grave miscarriage of justice that must be corrected."

The evidence in today's filing includes:

DNA test results that fail to link Echols or the other defendants to the crime scene; in light of the prosecution claim that Echols sodomized the victims, the lack of his DNA at the crime scene is exculpatory itself.

DNA test results showing that a hair found in the ligature of one of the victims matches Terry Hobbs, the step-father of another one of the victims.

DNA test results showing foreign DNA - from someone other than Echols or the two other men who were convicted - on the penises of two of the victims.

DNA test results matching a hair at the crime scene to a man who was with Terry Hobbs on the day of the crimes. This places Hobbs at the scene of the crime, since it refutes any theory that the Hobbs hair (found in the ligature of one of the victims) was there before the crime.

Scientific analysis from some of the nation's leading forensics experts, stating that wounds on the victims' bodies were caused by animals at the crime scene - not by knives used by the perpetrators, as the prosecution claimed. These wounds were the centerpiece of the prosecution's case. and evidence was presented that a knife recovered from a lake

near one defendant's home caused the wounds. The conclusive expert analysis showing that animals caused the wounds after the victims died also completely undercuts the testimony of a jailhouse informant (who testified about Echols using a knife to cause the wounds) and a discredited "expert" who testified that the knife wounds were part of a Satanic ritual.

Sworn affidavits outlining new evidence uncovered by Pam Hobbs (the ex-wife of Terry Hobbs) who found a knife in Terry Hobbs' drawer that her son (one of the victims) had carried with him at all times. After her son was killed, the knife was not among his personal effects that police gave to the Hobbs families, and Pam Hobbs always assumed that her son's murderer had taken it during the crime.

New information implicating Terry Hobbs - including his own

statements to police in recent interviews where he acknowledged that several of his relatives suspect him in the crime. The filing also includes a chronology of Hobbs' activities on the night of the crimes, when he washed his clothes for no reason other than to hide evidence from the crimes.

A sworn affidavit that refutes hearsay evidence from Echols' trial. The mother of one of two girls who testified that they overheard Echols admit to the crime at a softball game now says that Echols' statement was not serious and that neither she nor her daughter believes he committed the crime.

Today's filing amends an earlier filing in the case, which outlined prosecutorial misconduct and juror misconduct in Echols' trial.

The motion filed today in federal court says that the advanced DNA testing linking Hobbs to the crime scene was not available at the time of Echols' trial. The filing notes that Echols was 18 years old and penniless at the time of his trial, and a court-appointed attorney represented him. That attorney failed to challenge a pattern of inaccurate and inflammatory statements made by prosecutors and others during the trial, and also failed to engage forensic experts who could have refuted the testimony that was used to convict Echols, today's filing says.

Today's court filing also notes the poisonous atmosphere during Echols' trial that contributed to his wrongful conviction - citing the lead prosecutor himself, who said at the time that the community's outrage, the national interest and the media coverage created a "shark feeding atmosphere" during the trial. The prosecution alleged that Echols and two other teenagers committed the crimes as part of a Satanic ritual.

"At the time of Damien Echols' trial, there was no scientific evidence to support the prosecution's case. With today's court filing, science is finally having its day in this case - and it shows that Damien is innocent," Riordan said. "The science backs up what witnesses and people involved with the trial now say uniformly: that Damien Echols did not

commit these horrible crimes. The scientific evidence and witness affidavits we filed today flatly refute every supposed piece of evidence and every innuendo that the prosecution used to convict Damien."

In February 1994, Echols was convicted of three counts of first-degree murder and sentenced to die. Three eight-year-old boys were found dead in a drainage ditch in Robin Hood Hills, a local wooded area near their homes, on May 6, 1993. Less than a month later, 17-year-old Jesse Misskelley "confessed" to the crime and claimed that Echols and Jason Baldwin sexually abused and beat the victims. Misskelley, a mentally handicapped boy with an IQ of 72, believed he would get a reward for confessing; many of the details of his confession (including the time of day the crimes were committed) did not match the facts of the crime. Misskelley was tried and convicted of one count of first-degree murder and two counts of second-degree murder in February 1994. Baldwin and Echols were tried together after Misskelley's trial, and they were convicted of three counts of first-degree murder in February 1994. The following day, Echols was sentenced to die, and he has been on death row ever since. Since 1995, Echols has filed a series of appeals on several grounds.

In 2001, the Arkansas Legislature passed a law granting post-conviction access to DNA testing. The law passed largely as a result of widespread doubts about the convictions of Echols, Misskelley and Baldwin. Within months of the DNA testing law taking effect, Echols filed a motion seeking DNA testing in the case. In 2004 and again in 2005, a state court ordered DNA testing to be conducted in the case, and a range of DNA testing has been conducted over the last two years.

DNA Timeline:

2001

Arkansas Legislature passes law granting prisoners access to DNA testing to prove their innocence; Echols' case was an impetus for new law.

Arkansas' post-conviction DNA access law takes effect.

2002

July 23 Echols files motion seeking DNA testing on crime scene evidence.

September 19 The Arkansas Supreme Court grants Echols motions to delay a hearing on his appeal of his conviction, pending DNA testing.

2003

January 27 A state court grants Echols' motion to preserve evidence in the case so that DNA testing can be conducted.

2004

June 2 A state court orders DNA testing on evidence in the case.

2005

February 23 The state court issues an amended order for DNA testing in the case, clarifying the pieces of evidence to be tested.

2007

July 17 Echols' attorneys file a status report with initial DNA test results.

October 29 Echols' attorneys file an amended writ of habeas corpus in federal court, with substantial new scientific evidence that Echols was wrongfully convicted.

Press Release provided courtesy of Alice Whitman Leeds for Public Relations in the Public Interest.

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EXHIBIT A-20

New evidence arises in 1993 triple murder

BY CATHY FRYE

Posted on Tuesday, October 30, 2007

URL: <http://www.nwanews.com/adg/News/206068/>

New forensic evidence shows that three West Memphis boys murdered in 1993 were mutilated by wildlife after their deaths — not by a knife during ritualistic occult killings, according to federal court documents filed Monday by attorneys representing one of the men convicted in the slayings.

The petition to vacate Damien Echols' capital murder convictions is a new attempt by Echols' attorneys to redirect the case from its most sensational element — accusations of satanism — and re-direct the focus to hard science, according to an second amended petition for writ of habeas corpus, filed in the Eastern District of Arkansas at 4 p. m. Monday.

Echols, now 32, was sentenced to death. He has exhausted all of his state appeals.

San Francisco defense attorney Dennis Riordan was reluctant to discuss the specifics of Monday's filing, but did say, "The hard scientific evidence presented in the petition presents a stark contrast to the meager evidence of guilt offered at trial."

Craighead County Prosecuting Attorney Brent Davis, who tried the case in 1994, could not be reached for comment at his office or home Monday evening. Office workers said he was in Little Rock.

Riordan said he and fellow attorney Don Horgan met with Davis in Little Rock on Monday to discuss the petition. "We've had a cooperative relationship and we wanted to fill them in on what we were doing," he said.

The petition, which contains the findings of six forensic pathologists and odontologists from across the nation, contends that new DNA testing hasn't linked any of the convicted men — Echols, Jason Baldwin and Jessie Misskelley — to either the victims or crime scene.

The recent testing has, however, further connected the stepfather of one of the boys, 8-year-old Steve Branch, to the crime scene, the newly filed court documents state.

Recent tests also revealed genetic material on Steve's genitals that doesn't match the DNA of Echols, Baldwin or Misskelley, court documents state.

The petition also alleges: Jury deliberations that improperly included a statement deemed inadmissible in Echols' trial. A lack of evidence with testimony from questionable witnesses. Prosecutorial misconduct in closing arguments that prejudiced

the jury. The effects of pivotal, sensational testimony from a self-described occult expert whose degrees came from an out-of-state university that didn't require class attendance.

The petition also details new findings from a half-dozen forensic experts, all of whom agree that the boys' injuries came from animals that preyed upon the bodies after death, challenging the prosecution's theories that the children were mutilated by knife-wielding satanists. Animals and marine life also were responsible for the removal of 8-year-old Chris Byers' penis and testes, the petition states. "The presence of animal predation exposes the falsity of practically the entirety of the state's case against Echols," the petition states, referring to testimony from the occult expert and that of a jailhouse informant who said Baldwin admitted to drinking Chris' blood and putting the child's testes in his mouth.

EVIDENCE RE-EXAMINED In 2001, the Arkansas Legislature passed a law that allows anyone convicted of a crime to ask for a re-examination of evidence if new tests or science have become available. Little Rock attorney Blake Hendrix, who represents Baldwin, said in an August interview that he and other members of the defense team were blunt when they asked their clients if they wanted to take advantage of the law.

"We told them, 'Now be careful. Yes, this could prove you innocent, but it could also prove you guilty.' All three kids said, 'Absolutely. Let's do this.'"

Attorneys found three-fourths of the evidence they wanted stored in the West Memphis Police Department's basement, Hendrix said. The rest had been entered as exhibits during the two trials and was released by the court for retesting.

Meanwhile, the defense team hired investigators to interview anyone who might have information pertinent to the case. Some were trial witnesses, Hendrix said.

Perspectives have changed since the hysteria that engulfed the case in 1993, he added. He referred to the "Ballpark Girls," who testified that they heard Echols bragging at a softball field about having killed the boys.

"Those girls are all grown up now," Hendrix said. "They testified in the heat of a strong fire, under national focus."

Back then, he said, people fixated on the defendants' penchant for black clothing and heavy metal T-shirts. "Now Metallica is so mainstream," he said, referring to a heavy metal band that formed in the 1980 s. "People's views change. Perceptions change."

Another person interviewed was Terry Hobbs, the former stepfather of Steve Branch. During visits with Hobbs in early 2007, an investigator collected several of his cigarette butts.

They were sent to a California forensic serologist, who determined that mitochondrial DNA taken from the cigarette butts linked Hobbs to a hair found in one of the knots that bound Michael Moore, the third 8-year-old victim.

The investigator who collected the cigarette butts also interviewed David Jacoby, a friend of Hobbs'. On the evening the boys disappeared, Hobbs had visited Jacoby at his

home, the petition states.

Jacoby agreed to let the defense swab his cheek for DNA samples.

Those samples were linked to a hair found in a tree stump at the crime scene.

In the petition, defense attorneys note the absence of DNA belonging to Echols, Baldwin and Misskelley, adding:

“As to Jacoby, who had no apparent connection to the victims and has been fully cooperative with both defense and prosecution investigators, it is certainly possible that Hobbs picked up a hair from Jacoby when Hobbs was at Jacoby’s home just before the victims disappeared.

“ If that is the case, however, then Hobbs is the logical donor of two hairs recovered at the crime scene, and he would be hard pressed to come up with an innocent explanation of how he left Jacoby’s hair on a tree root near the bodies.”

These new findings, defense attorneys say, would have created reasonable doubt during Echols’ trial. Hobbs couldn’t be reached for comment Monday evening. A number listed in his name at his last known address had been disconnected.

A HORRIBLE CRIME To understand the significance of the DNA findings described in Monday’s filing, it is important to remember how the case unfolded, attorneys say, laying forth the details and subsequent test results in a filing that numbers about 200 pages.

Steve Branch, Michael Moore and Chris Byers, all 8 years old, were last seen on May 5, 1993, in the hours after school let out, riding a couple of bicycles and a skateboard. They never got home.

The next morning, searchers found the children’s bodies in a drainage ditch that runs through Robin Hood Hills, where the children often played together.

Detectives described a horrific scene: three small boys, hogtied with their own shoelaces, lay in the water. All of them had suffered numerous abrasions and puncture wounds. Most disturbing were the injuries found on Chris Byers. There were cuts on his inner thighs and a portion of his genitalia had been mutilated and removed.

In June, three local teenagers were arrested and charged in the deaths — Echols, 18; Baldwin, 16; and Misskelley, 17.

The arrests followed a statement by Misskelley, who said he had watched as Echols and Baldwin sodomized at least two of the boys after Misskelley helped subdue them. His friends also forced the children to perform oral sex on them, Misskelley said.

He told police that Baldwin used a knife to cut the boys’ faces and to mutilate Chris Byers’ genitals. Misskelley also described previous occult activity involving orgies, and the killing and eating of dogs.

After the public heard about Misskelley’s statement, rumors involving devil-worshippers

and human sacrifices swept through West Memphis.

His statement later was questioned by defense attorneys, who described Misskelley as mentally retarded.

They also noted numerous inconsistencies in his accounts of what happened, accusing investigators of forcing the teenager to say what they wanted to hear and ignoring the glaring problems in his statement.

For example, Misskelley initially said the attack took place in the morning, when the three children were known to be in school. He changed the time — four times — after prompting from detectives, the defense said.

Misskelley also described brown rope used to tie up the boys, rather than the black and white laces that came from their own shoes.

Misskelley's statement was used in his trial. He was convicted and sentenced to life in prison.

The statement was deemed inadmissible in Echols' and Baldwin's trial, and was the reason their proceedings were severed from his. Baldwin received a life sentence as well.

According to Monday's filing, however, as well as previous state and federal appeals, a witness "shoehorned" a reference to Misskelley's statement into testimony at Echols and Baldwin's trial.

The judge instructed the jury to disregard the reference but refused to order a mistrial, saying, "I suggest, gentlemen, that there isn't a soul up on that jury or in this courtroom that doesn't know Mr. Misskelley gave a statement."

Echols' latest petition argues that the jury not only ignored the judge's instruction, but also considered Misskelley's statement as evidence during deliberations.

One juror even took notes making reference to the statement as a "con," the petition states.

Also a problem, according to the petition, was then-Deputy Prosecuting Attorney John Fogelman's dramatic closing argument in which he cut a grapefruit with a serrated knife found in a pond behind Baldwin's home and compared it to photographs of a wound on Byers' thigh.

The new evidence of animal predation shows Fogelman's argument — unsupported by testimony or evidence — to be false, the petition states. "Their misconduct was devastatingly prejudicial."

Fogelman couldn't be reached for comment Monday evening.