



The Wittliff Collections

Guide to the Jesse Sublett Papers

1978-1995

Collection SWWC-027

Descriptive Summary

Creator:	Sublett, Jesse
Title:	Guide to the Jesse Sublett Papers
Dates:	1978-1995
Abstract:	Book manuscripts, screenplays, drafts, cartoons, clippings, correspondence, photographs, ephemera, sound recordings, and artifacts documenting Sublett's careers as a rock musician and writer.
Identification:	SWWC-027
Extent:	1.5 Linear Feet, 3 boxes
Language:	English
Repository:	The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University

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Biographical Notes

Jesse Sublett was born May 15, 1954, in Johnson City, Texas. He was valedictorian of Johnson City's LBJ High School Class of 1972, and attended Southwest Texas State University from 1972-1974 as an English major.

From 1974 until 1986 Sublett lived in Austin, where he played a dominant role in defining the live music scene as bass player and/or lead singer for a number of bands, most notably The Skunks, who recorded three records between 1978 and 1983.

During this time, Sublett began writing short pieces for the *Austin Chronicle*, including record and restaurant reviews, and in 1984 he was assigned to write a short piece on the club circuit which bands like The Skunks played. Instead, he submitted a semi-parodic music mystery entitled "Traveling the Hardboiled Highway," which imitated the style of a hardboiled detective novel. This marked the birth of Martin Fender, the central character in Sublett's first three novels. He submitted a second Fender piece, "The Nature of the Crime," which the *Chronicle's* editorial staff declined to publish but which they encouraged him to re-work as a novel. After finishing the re-titled *Capitol Crimes*, he wrote *Rock Critic Murders* with the intention of selling the two novels as a series. While waiting for the attention of publishers on the first two books, he began work on a third novel, *Blunt Instrument*. In 1987 he moved to Los Angeles in order to be closer to the spirit of his hero Raymond Chandler. He continued to play music on the West Coast while awaiting responses from publishers and re-writing *Blunt Instrument*. Shortly thereafter, Lisa Kaufman at Viking took an interest in his work and agreed to publish *Rock Critic Murders*. Sublett has written several screenplays, and served as story editor for the Disney series *Adventures of the Old West*. During 1994-1995 he ventured into nonfiction, writing a history of the Texas Turnpike Authority.

Sublett now lives in Austin with his wife Lois Richwine, their son Dashiell, and two cats.

Scope and Contents

Book manuscripts, screenplays, drafts, cartoons, clippings, correspondence, photographs, ephemera, sound recordings, and artifacts documenting Sublett's careers as a rock musician and writer. Many of the drafts of Sublett's writings include handwritten annotations by the author. Copies of certain letters to Richard Holland, former Curator of the Southwestern Writers Collection, have been retained when they shed light on Sublett's creative life.

Administrative Information

Conditions Governing Access

Collection is open for research.

Immediate Source of Acquisition

Gift of Jesse Sublett, 1993-1995.

Physical Location

Materials may be stored off-site. Advance notice is required for use:

<https://www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu/research/makearesearchappointment.html>.

Preferred Citation

Jesse Sublett Papers, The Wittliff Collections, Texas State University.

Conditions Governing Use

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<https://www.thewittliffcollections.txstate.edu/research/visit/policies/publication.html>

Controlled Access Headings

- Authors, American -- Texas -- 20th century
- Detective and mystery stories
- Rock musicians

Detailed Description of the Collection

Series I: Early Works, 1985-1998

Box Folder

1 1 Various annotated drafts including, "The Nature of the Crime," consent and release forms, title pages, and blurbs, for Rock Critic Murders.

Series II: Austin Chronicle, 1983-1985

1 2 Photocopies of stories appearing in The Austin Chronicle (Originals are in Box 3, Folder 8)

3 8 Photocopies of stories appearing in The Austin Chronicle (Originals are in Box 3, Folder 8)

Series III: Novels, 1984-1987

1 3 Letter to Richard Holland explaining Sublett's creative process, February 11, 1993

1 4-5 Annotated typescript of Rock Critic Murders

1 6-8 Annotated typescript of Tough Baby, version titled Blunt Instrument

1 9 Annotated typescript of Tough Baby, version titled The Big Hurt

Series IV: Screenplays, 1988-1993

2 1 Letter to Richard Holland regarding scripts, April 12, 1993

2 2 Master copy of script titled Hey Joe

2 3 Master copy of script titled Rock Critic Murders

2 4 Master copy of script titled Play the Devil

2 5 First draft of script titled Hale Storm, June 14, 1991

2 6 First draft of script titled Shadows in the Sun, February 11, 1993

2 7 Script titled In the West

2 8 Final Shooting Script for In the West, revised, March 27 - April 17, 1995

Series V: Non-Fiction, 1995

3 1-2 Annotated typescript of The History of the Texas Turnpike Authority

Series VI: Reviews and Publicity, 1982-1992

3 3 Photocopies of clippings relating to Sublett's writing and activities with the band The Skunks

Series VII: Photographs, 1978-1990

3 4 Several black and white photographs of The Skunks, Sublett, and one unidentified young boy in a cowboy hat and bandanna

Series VIII: Ephemera , 1982-1992

3 5 Postcard advertising for Boiled in Concrete by Sublett, and Another Chance to Get it Right by Andrew Vachs, Christmas card from The Skunks, ad for Online Data Access magazine, The Skunks debut album poster, "Jesse Sublett's Secret Six" poster, clubfoot debut poster for "Jesse Sublett's Secret Six," Skunks last show poster, Boiled in Concrete poster.

Series IX: Sound Recordings, 1979-1982

3 6 Album cover for The Skunks special edition six song release, album titled, "What do you want...The Racket," album containing songs, "Gimme Some," and, "Promises," album containing songs, "Something about you scares me," and, "Cheap Girl," lyrics sheet dated 1979 with lyrics to various songs

Series X: Artifacts, 1978-1982

3 7 Two metal buttons, one pink and one black, on which "The Skunks" has been printed, two t-shirts, one black bearing the label "The Skunks" one red bearing label "KLBJ FM PRESENTS THE SKUNKS...," black and white leather shoes worn by Sublett