

## Guide to the Michealene Cristini Risley Papers, 1992-2012

### Summary Information

**Title:** Michealene Cristini Risley papers

**Creator:** Cristini Risley, Michealene (primary)

**ID:** 2022.risley

**Date:** 1992-2012 (inclusive)

**Extent:** 1.41 linear feet (physical); 2.1GB (digital)

**Language:** The materials in this collection are in English.

**Abstract:** The papers document Michealene Cristini Risley's career as an author, activist, entrepreneur, and former consumer products executive at Sega of America. The materials are dated from 1992 to 2012. The collection is comprised of licensing agreements, promotional fliers, magazine and newspaper articles, conference programs, and more.

**Repository:**

Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong  
One Manhattan Square  
Rochester, New York 14607  
585.263.2700  
library@museumofplay.org

### Administrative Information

**Conditions Governing Use:** This collection is open for research use by staff of The Strong and by users of its library and archives. Though the donor has not transferred intellectual property rights (including, but not limited to any copyright, trademark, and associated rights therein) to The Strong, she has given permission for The Strong to make copies in all media for museum, educational, and research purposes.

**Custodial History:** The Michealene Cristini Risley papers were donated to The Strong in September 2021 and September 2022 as a gift from Michealene Cristini Risley and Eric Foster Risley. The papers were accessioned by The Strong under Object IDs 121.7341 (Activity ID 14730) and 122.1906 (Activity ID 14942) and were received from Risley along with a video game. An additional lot of papers were donated to The Strong as a gift of Michealene Cristini Risley in honor of Joe Miller and Mike Latham. The papers were accessioned by The Strong under object ID 125.529 and were received from Michealene Cristini Risley in one box.

**Preferred citation for publication:** Michealene Cristini Risley papers, Brian Sutton-Smith Library and Archives of Play at The Strong

**Processed by:** Julia Novakovic, August-September 2022; Stephanie Ball, December 2025.

**Revision Note:** Updated to include additional papers [object ID 125.529] received in February 2025 by Stephanie Ball in December 2025.

### Controlled Access Terms

**Personal Names**

- Risley, Michealene
- Risley, Michealene Cristini

- Clinton, Hillary Rodham

### Corporate Names

- Freshwater Haven
- Sega of America (Firm)
- Adidas USA (Firm)

### Subjects

- Documentary films
- Marketing
- Sonic the Hedgehog (Fictitious character)
- Video games -- Licensing
- Video games – Marketing
- Activism

### Biographical Note

Michealene Cristini Risley is an American author, activist, entrepreneur, and former consumer products executive at Sega of America.

Risley worked in the consumer products and entertainment industry for several years before joining Sega of America in 1993, where she built the consumer products and entertainment division. There, Risley established the Sega Girls Task Force to address gender representation in games and animation. She also led the division in turning the video game character Sonic the Hedgehog into a billion-dollar brand and working on licensing real-life athletes and sports teams for video game use.

Risley later founded and ran the non-profit organization Freshwater Haven to bring to market publications and media to raise awareness of global issues. Notably, she wrote, produced, and directed the 2002 short film *Flashcards*, an award-winning film on sexual abuse. Risley also co-wrote, produced, and directed the feature-length 2009 documentary *Tapestries of Hope*, which followed Zimbabwean activist Betty Makoni and her efforts to help sexually abused young women through the Child Girl Network. In 2007, Risley co-authored the book *This Is Not the Life I Ordered: 50 Ways to Keep Your Head Above Water When Life Keeps Dragging You Down*; the book was revised and updated in 2019.

Risley continues to be involved in human rights activism, as well as public speaking.

### Collection Scope and Content Note

The Michealene Cristini Risley papers are a collection of product and licensing materials from her position at Sega of America from 1993 to 1995, as well as audiovisual media produced by Risley at her non-profit organization, Freshwater Haven. Additional materials added in 2025 include promotional materials, articles, brochures, conference programs, posters, catalogs, and correspondence for Risley's maternity clothing line collaboration with Adidas; Power of Two, *This is Not the Life I Ordered* book, *Tapestries of Hope* documentary, and her lectures and

speaking engagements. Additional scope and content information can be found in the Contents List section of this finding aid.

The papers have been arranged into six series with one series further divided into subseries. The physical materials are housed in four document boxes and one audiovisual media box.

**System of Arrangement**

Series I: Video game industry, 1986-1996

    Subseries A: Sega of America, 1992-1996 and n.d.

    Subseries B: Other video game companies, 1986-1996

Series II: Freshwater Haven, 1994-2012

Series III: *This is Not the Life I Ordered*, 2001-2009

Series IV: Power of Two, 2000-2002

Series V: Lectures and conferences, 2006-2011

Series VI: Personal, 1998, 2010-2012

## Contents List

### Series I: Video game industry, 1986-1996

**Series Scope and Content Note:** Within this series are materials from Risley's tenure in the video game industry, including correspondence, licensing agreements, planning memos, reports, reference, notes, audiovisual materials, legal papers, promotion timelines, storyboards, and more.

#### Subseries A: Sega of America, 1992-1996 and n.d.

**Subseries Scope and Content Note:** This subseries consists of materials from Risley's tenure at Sega of America (1993-1995), including correspondence, licensing agreements, planning memos, reports, reference, notes, audiovisual materials, and more. The products represented in the series are Sonic the Hedgehog, Ecco the Dolphin, and Ratchet and Bolt.

#### Box 1

- Folder 1 Licensing correspondence and agreements, 1992-1994
- Folder 2 Licensing correspondence and agreements, January-July 1995
- Folder 3 Licensing correspondence and agreements, August-December 1995
- Folder 4 Product brief and target audience sheet – "Ganymede," n.d. [c. 1996]
- Folder 5 Product brief and target audience sheet – "Obsidian," n.d. [c. 1996]
- Folder 6 Product brief and target audience sheet – "Rocket Jockey," n.d. [c. 1996]
- Folder 7 Product brief and target audience sheet – "The Space Bar," n.d. [c. 1996]
- Folder 8 Sega of America FY '95-'96 Software Planning memo, agenda, and candidate list; 1993 and n.d.
- Folder 9 Sega of America Toy Division, Individual P & L list (May 1994) and notes, 1994
- Folder 10 Sega Consumer Products Division, Production Planning Report FY 1996, November 19, 1995
- Folder 11 Harvard Business School cases: "Power Play (A): Nintendo in 8-bit Video Games" and "Power Play (B): Sega in 16-bit Video Games," 1995
- Folder 12 Licensees list and sporting event reference, 1995 and n.d.
- Folder 13 Contract and deal samples with notes, 1996 and n.d.
- Folder 14 "Sonic the Movie" treatment ["Sonic: Wonders of the World"], Richard Jeffries, with memo; 1995
- Folder 15 Ecco agreement and correspondence, 1994
- Folder 16 Ecco the Dolphin agreement and correspondence, 1994
- Folder 17 Entertainment recap and department responsibilities, 1995
- Folder 18 Film ROMAN proposal and correspondence [Ratchet and Bolt], 1995
- Folder 19 Fox output deal agreement and correspondence, 1995
- Folder 20 Licensing out overview and licensing promotions, 1995
- Folder 21 Product promotion timeline and acquisitions recap, 1995
- Folder 22 Sega and Deion Sanders agreement, February 7, 1995

#### Box 2

- Folder 1 Sega and DIC Entertainment legal papers, September 1995
- Folder 2 Sega Channel domestic and international clearances, 1995
- Folder 3 Sonic movie deal – MGM, 1994

Folder 4 Fiscal business plan – Licensing division, 1996

### AV Box 1

- Object 1 U-matic tape: “Sega Toys, Stampede w/ final audio, viewing copy, 12/12/94,” 1994 [corresponds to digitized file “Risley 01\_Sega Toys-Stampede\_U-matic\_1994.mp4” (0:00:32)]
- Object 2 U-matic tape: “Sega Technical Institute, Sonic Extreme, E3 Demo, Looped Version, View Copy,” n.d. [c. mid-1990s] [corresponds to digitized file “Risley 02\_Sega Technical Institute\_U-matic.mp4” (0:29:15)]
- Object 3 VHS cassette: "Computer Games Boys and Girls, *Good Morning America* segment," July 16, 1995

### Subseries B: Other video game companies, 1986-1996

**Subseries Scope and Content Note:** This subseries consists of a "Toon Crash Course" addressed to the crew of *Roger Rabbit*, a sample schedule from *Blind Mice from Mars*, an agreement between Kenner and Trilogy Entertainment, and an offer letter from Rocket Science Games.

### Box 2

- Folder 5 "Toon Crash Course," November 17, 1986
- Folder 6 *Blind Mice From Mars* sample schedule, August 2, 1992
- Folder 7 Kenner and Trilogy agreement, 1992
- Folder 8 Rocket Science Games offer letter, May 3, 1996

### Series II: Freshwater Haven, 2002-2012

**Series Scope and Content Note:** This series contains a short film and a documentary produced by Risley’s non-profit organization, Freshwater Haven. (Risley wrote, produced, and directed the short film *Flashcards*, which discloses cultural patterns perpetuating child sexual abuse. She also co-wrote, produced, and directed *Tapestries of Hope*, documenting the work of Betty Makoni and the Girl Child Network in Zimbabwe, Africa). Also included are fundraising correspondence, reports, invitations, and publicity for *Tapestries of Hope*.

Of note is the folder titled "Hillary Clinton" that contains a signed photograph, correspondence, invitations, handwritten notes, statements, and other ephemera related to Clinton campaign events, statements on Zimbabwe and other geopolitical matters.

### Box 1

- Folder 15 DVD: *Flashcards*, directed by Michealene Cristini Risley, 2002
- Folder 16 DVDs: *Tapestries of Hope*, film by Michealene Cristini Risley, Electronic Press Kit, CD Press Kit, and film; 2009

### Box 2

- Folder 9 Hillary Clinton photographs, correspondence, ephemera, and invitations, 1994-2008
- Folder 10 *Tapestries of Hope* fundraising correspondence, invitations, and financials, 2008

- Folder 11 *Tapestries of Hope* publicity, 2008  
 Folder 12 *Tapestries of Hope* publicity – Louisville's International Festival of Films program, October 2009  
 Folder 13 *Tapestries of Hope* publicity, 2011-2012

**Series III: *This is Not the Life I Ordered*, 2001-2009**

**Series Scope and Content Note:** *This is not the Life I Ordered: 50 Ways to Keep Your Head Above Water When Life Keeps Dragging You Down* is a collaborative non-fiction self-help book, written by Michealene Cristini Risley, Deborah Collins Stephens, Jackie Speier, and Jan Yanehiro, published in hardcover in 2007 by Conari Press. The authors share advice from personal experiences on topics such as family life, work, love, and the difficulties in balancing the issues. The book reached the best seller list of the *San Francisco Chronicle* and appeared on the NCIBA best seller list.

The series includes promotional mailers, book catalogs, articles, brochures, posters and more. Of note is the operational agreement between the authors of the book.

**Box 2**

- Folder 14 "Chocolate is a Vegetable" quark files, undated [circa 2001]  
 Folder 15 Articles [Professional BusinessWomen of California (PBWC) *Connections*], Fall 2006  
 Folder 16 Articles and clippings, March 2007  
 Folder 17 Articles and clippings, April 2007  
 Folder 18 Articles and clippings, June 2007

**Box 3**

- Folder 1 Articles and clippings, June 2007  
 Folder 2 Best sellers' lists, April-May 2007  
 Folder 3 Book catalogs, 2007  
 Folder 4 Literary Lunch & book signing certificate and flier, 2009  
 Folder 5 Operating agreement, 2001  
 Folder 6 Promotional brochures, posters, and mailers, 2007

**Series IV: *Power of Two*, 2000-2002**

**Series Scope and Content Note:** In 2000, Adidas announced a partnership with maternity apparel maker, the Power of Two. Risley was the Co-Managing Director at the time. The Adidas branded athletic maternity wear also included baby-oriented accessories such as combination gym-diaper bags. The line launched in January 2001 and was worn by celebrities Cate Blanchett, Josie Bissett, Faith Hill, and more.

The series consists of the Adidas maternity catalog, articles and clippings, the sublicense agreement, and copies of thank you letters from Cate Blanchett and Faith Hill.

**Box 3**

- Folder 7 Adidas maternity catalog, 2001
- Folder 8 Press clippings, 2000
- Folder 9 Press clippings, 2001
- Folder 10 Press clippings, 2002
- Folder 11 Press clippings, undated
- Folder 12 Sublicense agreement, July 1, 2000
- Folder 13 Thank you letters, undated

**Series V: Lectures and conferences, 2006-2011**

**Series Scope and Content Note:** Risley is a noted public speaker and has presented transformational leadership, *This is Not the Life I Ordered*, *Tapestries of Hope*, entrepreneurship, and more. Risley has spoken at the Annual PWBC conferences, International Women's Day events, Spirit of a Woman conferences, and more.

The materials in this series consist of conference and event programs, promotional materials, notecards, correspondence, and speaking invitations. The papers are arranged in chronological order

**Box 3**

- Folder 14 PBWC 17<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference program, May 2, 2006
- Folder 15 Spirit of a Woman Conference program, March 29, 2007
- Folder 16 PBWC 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference program, October 16, 2007
- Folder 17 Woman Sage Conference programs, November 2007
- Folder 18 EPA Transformational Leadership Conversations flier and notecards, March 11, 2008
- Folder 19 Carmel Authors and Ideas Festival program, September 26-28, 2008
- Folder 20 Executive Women in Government Annual Summit and Training Conference program, 2008
- Folder 21 Leadership Through Enrichment, Action, and Diversity [LEAD] program and name badge, 2008
- Folder 22 PWBC 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Conference program and speaking invitation, 2008
- Folder 23 Speaking invitations, 2008
- Folder 24 International Women's Day Awards Luncheon program, March 8, 2011

**Series VI: Personal, 1998, 2010-2012**

**Series Scope and Content Note:** This small series consists of materials related to Risley's presidential campaign, and two articles related to her overall achievements.

**Box 3**

- Folder 25 Presidential campaign article and press links, 2012
- Folder 26 Presidential campaign ephemera [bird seed], 2012
- Folder 27 Presidential campaign statements, 2012

Folder 28     *License!* ["40 Under 40"], November 1998

Folder 29     *Silicon Valley/San Jose Business Journal* Special Supplement "Women of  
Influence," 2010