



To shill a 'Mockingbird'



TOP: ASSOCIATED PRESS FILE PHOTO OF HARPER LEE AND BOOK PHOTO BY THE WASHINGTON POST; ABOVE: G.M. ANDREWS FOR THE WASHINGTON POST; BELOW: ANNIE LAURIE WILLIAMS RECORDS, 1922-1971, RARE BOOK AND MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK
Harper Lee, at top with her famous novel, drew the fictional Maycomb of "To Kill a Mockingbird" from people and events in her home town of Monroeville, Ala. Above, tourists explore the courtroom in the Old Monroe County Courthouse in Monroeville, which was depicted in the critically acclaimed 1962 film adaptation of the book.

The curious case of a rejected 1957 manuscript that has become a 'new' Harper Lee novel

BY NEELY TUCKER

MONROEVILLE, ALA. — Would you like to understand how the "new" Harper Lee novel, "Go Set a Watchman," came to be billed as a long-lost, blockbuster sequel to "To Kill a Mockingbird" — one of the definitive books of the American 20th century — when, by all the known facts, it's an uneven first draft of the famous novel that was never considered for publication?

Would you like to get a glimpse into how clever marketing and cryptic pronouncements have managed to produce an instant bestseller, months before anyone has read it?

Fabulous. Pull up a rocking chair, pour two fingers of bourbon — make it three — and let's have a little chat, in the gloaming in this little town in south Alabama. Here is where Lee grew up with many of the real-life characters whose fictional counterparts would come to populate the only book she ever published.

First, those delicate questions. Harper Lee, 88, had a stroke in 2007. She is, by all accounts, almost completely deaf and blind.

She resides in an assisted-living facility out on the Highway 21 bypass in this slow-moving town of 6,500, still not all that much different from how she immortalized it more than half-century ago.

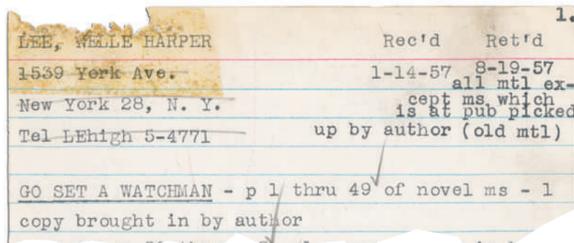
She's also one of the most famously private authors in modern publishing history, up there with J.D. Salinger, who also wrote one iconic work and then hid behind a veil of privacy.

The high drama around the impending publication of "Watchman," which erupted in the literary universe since the novel was announced this month, stems from the fact that Lee had long vowed she would never publish again.

Her attorney, Tonja Carter, took over representation when Alice Lee — the novelist's older sister, housemate, lawyer and lifelong protector — became infirm a couple of years ago. Carter says her client reversed her decades-old stance after Carter stumbled upon a copy of "Watchman" last summer. Now, according to Carter, Lee is delighted it has shot to the top of bestseller lists, five months ahead of publication.

People have questioned the story, wondering if a person in Lee's declining health can be said to have

LEE CONTINUED ON C6



Annie Laurie Williams, a literary agent to whom Lee sent sections of her first attempt at what became "To Kill a Mockingbird," kept records of the author's progress on "Go Set a Watchman."
 To see more photos, visit washingtonpost.com/style.

CRITIC'S NOTEBOOK

D.C.'s new mayor deals a blow to arts, voters

BY PHILIP KENNICOTT

They had already decided on a Saturday night in mid-September, and they had a tentative program: an evening of George Gershwin, Kurt Weill and Daniel Schnyder, a Swiss composer and saxophonist whose music crosses just about every definable stylistic boundary, from jazz to world music to opera. It was going to be a "hard-hat concert," performed in the raw, crumbling space of the 1869 Franklin School. It would showcase the possibilities of the historic structure and generate support for the renovation of the historic building.

It is the kind of edgy, unorthodox artistic event that new generations of Washingtonians, who no longer accept the premise that the nation's capital is a cultural backwater, crave. But it won't happen unless the city reverses course on a decision made this week to end an agreement with the Institute of Contemporary Expression, which had partnered with one of the country's most innovative music groups — the Post-Classical Ensemble — to present concerts at the

NOTEBOOK CONTINUED ON C6



GERALD MARTINEAU/THE WASHINGTON POST

The District this week ended an agreement with the Institute of Contemporary Expression to redevelop the Franklin School for art exhibits and education.

RECORDINGS

'Smoke + Mirrors': Imagine Dragons is so bad + so good

BY ALLISON STEWART
 Special to The Washington Post

Last year during Grammy season, there was a rumor making the rounds that Kendrick Lamar, then and now the nation's most promising young rapper, was forced to perform a song during the show's telecast with the Las Vegas-based Imagine Dragons, then and now the nation's hottest rock band, instead of being granted a much-deserved solo spot.

As rumors go, it was irresistible, like imagining 2004 Kanye West being made to sit with Journey's 1980 lineup in the school cafeteria at lunch. The performance itself, a mashup of Imagine Dragons' biggest hit, "Radioactive" and Lamar's "m.A.A.d. city," was ridiculous and thrilling: Enormous drums were banged, paint bombs were detonated, and everyone wore what looked like decontamination suits and tried to pretend to be

alone onstage.

"Smoke + Mirrors" is Imagine Dragons' first full-length release since that myth-making Grammy performance briefly made them more interesting. It will cement your poor opinion of the band, confirming your suspicions that the group is made up of corporate rock arrivistes more interested in a Jenga-like piling on of cool-circa-2012 influences than in presenting its own point of view. It will advance the notion that Imagine Dragons is an inexplicably popular band that no one will admit to liking, even as a guilty pleasure. It has neither

soul nor taste. It's also pretty good. "Smoke + Mirrors" relies less on hip-hop beats than its predecessor, the group's 2012 major-label debut album "Night Visions," but otherwise it follows much the same formula: carefully sculpted arena rock with freight-train choruses, overlaid

RECORDINGS CONTINUED ON C10



THE RELIABLE SOURCE

SNL, keeping Palin relevant
 The former Alaska governor has a funny bit on the 40th-anniversary special. **C2**

MUSIC REVIEW

Erykah Badu's valentine
 The R&B icon shows what love is all about at the Fillmore Silver Spring. **C2**

THEATER REVIEW

Flawed, fiery 'Doubt'
 Static staging weakens 1st Stage's powerful parochial-school drama. **C3**



BOOK WORLD

A World War II tale echoes
 David Treuer's tender and devastating "Prudence" evokes our own times. **C3**

The long and strange road to Lee's 'Go Set a Watchman'

LEE FROM C1

given reflective consideration to a manuscript she wrote 58 years ago.

Carter and Andrew Nurnberg, Lee's international rights agent, say yes.

Carter described Lee as "a very strong, independent and wise woman who should be enjoying the discovery of her long lost novel," in remarks to the New York Times, the only media outlet to which she has spoken. "Instead, she is having to defend her own credibility and decision making."

Nurnberg, well known and respected in the field, began representing Lee's interests in 2013, after her longtime agent was found to have been involved in usurping her copyright. The domestic and international rights to "Mockingbird" are serious business — according to 2012 court papers, Lee earns about \$3 million per year.

HarperCollins asked The Washington Post to direct its questions about "Watchman" to Nurnberg, who requested those questions be sent through e-mail: Does the newly discovered manuscript bear a date? Did Lee read the work and make comments? Back in the day, did the editors and agents involved in publishing "Mockingbird" see this and approve it for publication? What is Ms. Lee's contract for this book? Since she never married, had no children and is the last survivor of her immediate family, were any of her more distant relatives consulted for approval?

A spokesperson for Nurnberg said he was traveling and could not answer questions. At least one of Lee's nephews located by The Post did not return phone calls. And Carter did not respond to multiple calls, e-mails and visits to her office and rural home just outside Monroeville. When a Post reporter went to the house of her brother-in-law, who lives less than a mile away, asking for assistance in locating the home of Tonja Carter, he politely directed the reporter to the wrong house.

In part, the questions around the new publication were triggered by friends who have known Lee for half a century or more — decades longer than her current lawyer or agent. They say they have witnessed a stark mental decline in their friend and report that her short-term memory is erratic. These friends are also amazed that, after Carter said the book was discovered last summer, Lee appears to have confided that fact to no one else.

"She surprised everybody by coming to the [Alabama] Writers Symposium two years ago," says Mary Tucker, a friend of 50 years and a retired school-teacher here. "I went to see her the next week, telling her how excited everyone was that she came. And she said, 'Oh, but I didn't go to that.'"

Wayne Flynt, professor emeritus of history at Auburn University and a friend of the author, says Lee was "entirely lucid" when he visited her recently. He thinks the idea that she's being manipulated is "ridiculous."

Yet, he adds, "she has trouble remembering what she had for breakfast, that



Gregory Peck won an Academy Award for his portrayal of Atticus Finch, above, in the 1962 film adaptation of "To Kill a Mockingbird." The character, a small-town Southern lawyer, is believed to be based on Harper Lee's father, A.C. Lee.

sort of thing." He also says she never mentioned the discovery of the manuscript in several visits they had since it was discovered, including the day before the announcement.

In the early 2000s, the Lee sisters gave author Marja Mills access to their lives for a gentle portrait — even agreeing for her to move in next door. But after "The Mockingbird Next Door: Life With Harper Lee" came out last year, Harper Lee gave a statement that she had never given permission.

In a recent interview, Mills says that Carter accosted her in the parking lot of the assisted-care facility one day — after she'd stopped reporting but before the book came out — accusing her of taking advantage of her client.

"She was extremely confrontational when there was no cause to be," Mills said last week.

It was such an embarrassing situation that Alice Lee wrote Mills an apology, dated May 12, 2011, which Mills released to the media. In it, Alice wrote that Carter had written the accusation and coaxed Nelle (Lee's first name) to sign it.

"When I questioned Tonja I learned that she had without my knowledge typed out the statement, carried it to The Meadows and had Nelle Harper sign it. ... Poor Nelle Harper can't see and can't hear and will sign anything put before her by anyone in whom she has confidence. Now she has no memory of the



Alice Lee, at left in 2006 with Dawn Hare, center, and Harper Lee, was her sister's lawyer.



Truman Capote, above in 1966, was a childhood friend.

incident.

"I was talking to Tonja about the matter this morning, and she said to me: 'How are we going to get this corrected?' I replied: 'I had no idea and it was her problem, not mine, she created it: I don't know what she has done.'"

She closed with: "I am humiliated, embarrassed and upset at the suggestion of a lack of integrity at my office. I am waiting for the other shoe to fall — Alice."

Carter has never publicly disputed Alice Lee's letter. But, while startling, it is not clear if the incident was serious enough for Alice Lee to lose trust in her younger colleague.

In any event, Alice died, at age 103, in November.

Three months later, "Watchman" appeared, billed as a breathless discovery.

Monroeville, which looms so large in the American literary imagination, has never been much more than a bump on the road between Mobile and Montgomery.

A.C. Lee, an attorney, moved his family here in 1912 from a few dozen miles away. It was homely little place: red dirt, pine trees, cotton fields and unpainted houses; a segregated backwater.

LEE, NELLE HARPER	Rec'd	Ret'd
1539 Yerkes Ave.	1-14-57	8-19-57
New York 28, N. Y.		all mtl ex-
Tel LEhigh 5-4771		cept ms which is at pub picked up by author (old mtl)
GO SET A WATCHMAN - p 1 thru 49 of novel ms - 1 copy brought in by author		
1-21-57: p 50 thru 103 - 1 copy brought in by author		
1-28-57: p 104 thru 152 - 1 copy brought in by author (over)		

2-11-57: p 153 thru 206	- 1 copy brought in
2-19-57: p 207 thru 245	- 1 copy brought in
2-27-57: p 246 thru 293	- 1 copy brought in -- ms is now complete
5-6-57: 1 copy of revised ms	brought in by author
7-12-57: 1 copy of newly revised ms	brought in by author -- this copy is at J.B. Lippincott, pub
8-19-57: 1 copy of further revised ms	brought in by author -- this is the only copy that we have on hand -- everything else has been ret'd to author
This is a complete ms	
Sold to J. B. Lippincott - contract dated 10-17-57 -- Has not been titled by them	
10-27-58: p 1 thru 299 of revised ms	- 1 yellow carbon brought in by author -- picked up by author 10-28-58
5-4-59: 1 copy of newly revised ms	brought in by

PHOTOS BY ANNIE LAURIE WILLIAMS RECORDS, 1922-1971, RARE BOOK AND MANUSCRIPT LIBRARY, COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY IN THE CITY OF NEW YORK

Annie Laurie Williams, an agent who worked with the young writer, kept records of Lee's "Go Set a Watchman," which was drafted before "To Kill a Mockingbird."

LEE CONTINUED ON C7

Neighborhood, civic groups ask mayor to reconsider Franklin School decision

NOTEBOOK FROM C1

long-vacant school at the corner of 13th and K streets NW.

Attracted by the large open spaces of the Franklin School, which would have also hosted art exhibitions, lectures and educational activities, the Post-Classical Ensemble signed on early as a resident ensemble at the proposed arts center. It was excited about finally having a proper home and increased presence in the District, where it hoped to build a new and more diverse audience than it might find at the Kennedy Center or other venues.

"D.C. doesn't have a space that has the vibrancy, modernism, futurism, of a place like this," said Chris Denby, board chair of the ensemble.

The decision to scuttle the city's arrangement with ICE remains opaque. The deputy mayor's office for planning and economic development first said that it doubted the ability of ICE's visionary founder, Dani Levinas, to raise sufficient funds to cover the costs but then backtracked. It suggested that Levinas planned to charge exorbitant admission

fees, even though none of those details had been set in stone. Although it claimed to have conducted a "top-to-bottom" review of the agreement between ICE and the city, the economic development office never met with Levinas and never asked questions about his fundraising. When asked how long that review took and how many staffers participated in it, a spokesman offered this by e-mail: "We took this process seriously and took the time necessary to make a decision that we believe is in the long-term best interest of all District residents."

Strangely, that decision was made almost simultaneously with the announcement of a new venture by the city's Commission on the Arts and Humanities, a "Start Fresh" innovation grant for up to \$100,000. This is designed to aid organizations that are "creative, innovative and groundbreaking," with "multi-disciplinary and multi-platform initiatives." In other words, organizations that plan to do what ICE was already gearing up to do. The coincidence of these two decisions,

one forward, the other several steps back, suggests that not only does the new administration lack a coherent cultural program, there isn't even basic communication between its various offices.

This kind of fiasco is all too familiar to longtime observers of the city's cultural scene, and to people who live near the Franklin School and who have watched the city try for years to develop a coherent plan for it. Local advisory neighborhood commissioner Kevin Deeley, whose district includes the Franklin School, wasn't in office when Mayor Vincent C. Gray's administration chose the proposal by ICE over three others (including a boutique hotel with rooftop restaurant, a technology center and a "live/work space for tech entrepreneurs"). But he likes the idea because the institute would be open to the public, increase foot traffic at night and weekends and offer cultural amenities in downtown Washington.

But it is the possibility of yet more years of delay, with the historic structure moldering yet further, that really frustrates him and his neighbors. There is no

"continuity" between administrations, he says, and the result "is a wasted resource."

"Another administration comes along and the whole process starts again, and now we're looking at maybe two more years before they can break ground," says Deeley. He is sending a letter on behalf of his constituents to Mayor Muriel E. Bowser, asking her to reconsider her decision. Other letters have come from the American Alliance of Museums ("It is hard to imagine any better or higher use of this historic building than the one that Mr. Levinas has proposed," said Ford Bell, the group's president) and from civic groups. Dorothy Kosinski, who as head of the Phillips Collection knows a thing or two about the fundraising climate in Washington, said, "I was disappointed to hear of the project's cancellation this week" and lamented the loss of an organization that would demonstrate how "contemporary art is a vital part of our economy and cultural ecosystem."

The school has been empty for seven years. In 2010, when Adrian Fenty was

mayor, the city held a hearing to determine whether the school should be declared "surplus" and thus open for private development. A transcript of that meeting is telling. While there wasn't an agreement about exactly what the school should become, there was overwhelming sentiment that as a historic building with a long history of public service to the citizens of Washington, it most certainly should not be given up for commercial development.

One resident at that meeting more than four years ago said she "believes it can be used as a facility for children or education." Another speaker suggested "the property could be used as a low-rent space for artist[s] and not a hotel." "The District has enough hotels," said yet another. One after another, through the evening, residents proposed public uses for this public property, as a homeless shelter, a job-training facility, or office space for nonprofit groups.

The city went ahead with the "surplus" designation anyway. But a strange, and

NOTEBOOK CONTINUED ON C7