

**INHERENT RACIAL BIASES
WOVEN INTO AMERICA'S
CRIMINAL JUSTICE
INSTITUTIONS:
A REEXAMINATION OF TO KILL A
MOCKINGBIRD**

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This Article considers the concept of inherent racial biases woven into America's criminal justice institutions as reflected in Harper Lee's novels *To Kill a Mockingbird* and *Go Set A Watchman*. *Mockingbird*—published in 1960, but set in the 1930s, in the fictitious racist-south of Maycomb, Alabama—portrays this concept through the trial of Tom Robinson, a sympathetic African American accused of raping the white Mayella Ewell. Key representatives of Maycomb's institutions—Officer Heck Tate, Judge John Taylor, Mr. Gilmer, Atticus Finch, and Tom's jury—perpetuate these inherent racial biases throughout Tom's experience with the criminal justice system until he is ultimately killed under the sentence of the jury. *Watchman*—published in 2015, but set in the 1950s—provides further insight into the inherent racial biases

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undermine our American criminal justice system, specifically through Lee's final portrayal of Atticus. I intend to use Lee's portrayals to rebut the assertion that African Americans receive colorblind justice in contemporary America. Ultimately, this Article will affirm the notion that America's criminal justice system is not colorblind; that inherent racial biases do in fact undermine various institutions within the American system.