

6-11-2012

# A Well-hidden Secret: Harper Lee's Contributions to Truman Capote's In Cold Blood

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A WELL-HIDDEN SECRET: HARPER LEE'S CONTRIBUTIONS TO  
TRUMAN CAPOTE'S *IN COLD BLOOD*

A Dissertation

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies and Research

in Partial Fulfillment of the

Requirements for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

T. Madison Peschock

Indiana University of Pennsylvania

May 2012



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Throughout the publication and promotion of Truman Capote's *In Cold Blood*, Capote admitted his childhood friend, Harper Lee, accompanied him to Kansas as his research assistant, but he never explained in detail what she did to assist him other than to say she accompanied him on interviews. However, once the book was published, her name never appeared in the acknowledgement page of the book. Capote allowed people to believe that Lee was only in Kansas with him two months and she never returned during the five years he was there to conduct research. It is true that Lee was in Kansas the first few months with Capote; however, she returned to assist him with research at Hickock's and Smith's arraignment, and she returned to Kansas many other times. However, Capote never revealed this information or Lee's major role in the research for *In Cold Blood*. It was not until the publication of Charles Shields' unauthorized biography of Lee, *Mockingbird* (2006), the world began to understand Lee's research conducted for *In Cold Blood*. Shields briefly showed several passages of Lee's notes in one chapter, "See N.L.'s Notes." However, what Shields revealed was only a small part of Lee contributions. By conducting archival research at the New York Public Library and the Library of Congress, and by conducting interviews with people who knew Capote and Lee, I have discovered Lee's exact contributions to Capote's research.

By examining Lee's and Capote's research notes, and by juxtaposing both of the writers' notes, one can see that Lee conducted a majority of the interviews with the townspeople, while Capote focused primarily on Smith and Hickock. This dissertation explores both writers' research note and shows what notes Lee recorded were used in Capote's published book. Their notes not only reveal what research they conducted, but also reveal their personalities and show that the two had major creative differences. This dissertation also suggests possible theories as to why Capote did not acknowledge Lee, because he suffered from narcissism. Because Capote did not acknowledge Lee properly, I suggest that this is one reason Lee stopped writing.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Many people have been instrumental in my completion of this dissertation through their constant moral support, friendship, love and help in the research and the editorial process. I wish to thank all of them. First, my undying gratitude to my dissertation committee: Dr. Ronald Emerick (my director) for all of his help in listening to my ideas and my frustrations, for help with editorial comments, and most of all, for his support and friendship. Likewise, thank you Dr. Martha Bower, for your editorial comments, theoretical ideas, friendship and moral support. And thank you Dr. Tom Slater, for your editorial comments and support, and for coming on board my committee at the last minute. Additionally, I wish to thank one special committee member who passed away during my writing process and left IUP and this world far too soon. Thank you Dr. Karen Dandurand, for recruiting me to attend IUP, for your editorial comments and for your longtime support.

Besides my dissertation committee members, there are also many professors within the English Department at IUP who have lent their moral support to this project and/or who have helped me succeed within the English Department. Thank you to Dr. John Marsden, Dr. Susan Gatti, Dr. Sue Welsh, Dr. Ronald Shafer, Dr. Linda Norris, and special thanks to Dr. Judith Villa and Dr. Laurel Black for helping me see the humor in the writing process. Likewise, there are so many friends to thank for their longtime support, patience, understanding, friendship and love. A very special thanks to Dana and Angela Mitnik and Mike Gergely, particularly for assisting me with copying documents in the Library of Congress. Also, thanks for all your love/moral support: Derek Headley, Wanda, Bob and Mindy Martincic, Holly and Jason Eash, the Strazisar family, Paul

Bower, and Wyatt for understanding when the duties of researching and/or writing called, and I was unavailable. Special thanks to my parents, my uncle Bob and aunt Louise for their support and belief in me. Additionally, I wish to thank the staff of the New York Public Library for their access and help in finding materials in the Capote archives. As well, thank you to the staff of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., for their access and help in finding materials in their Capote archives. Special thanks to Dr. Alice Birney, Literary and Cultural Historian Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress. Special thanks to Professor Lisa Yuro Stevenson, Gorgas Library at the University of Alabama. Thank you to the staff of IUP's library. Also, special thanks to Nadia Dadson for her help in formatting, and thanks to Brittany Antonuccio and Gabe Rindosh for scanning appendixes. Also, I wish to thank Mr. Alan U. Schwartz, Capote's lawyer and executor of the Capote Literary Trust, for allowing me the copyrights for all of Capote's papers to write this dissertation. Also, there are many people who allowed me to interview them and who were willing to share their knowledge about Truman Capote and Harper Lee. Thank you for your assistance: Dr. Wayne Flynt, Wayne Greenhaw, Reverend Thomas Lane Butts, Dr. Marianne Moates Weber, George Thomas Jones, Dr. Kerry Madden, Delores and Clifford Hope, Jr., Jane Ellen Clark, The Monroe County Heritage Museum, Dr. Joanne Carson, Mr. Gerald Clarke, Dr. Robert Gale and, of course, Truman Capote and Nelle Harper Lee for their fiction and research notes on *In Cold Blood*. Likewise, thank you to actress Sandra Bullock for your statements on the *Charlie Rose Show* that led to this dissertation topic.

Last, and certainly not least, a very special thank you to my mentor/friend, Dr. Madeline Smith, who I met as an undergraduate, at a time when I was lost and unsure of

myself. Thank you for your inspiration, constant encouragement, support, friendship and belief in me. Without you I would not have become who I am today.

Know that, without all of you, this dissertation could never have been written.

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“You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view, until you climb into his skin and walk around in it”

Harper Lee – *To Kill a Mockingbird*

## CHAPTER ONE

### INTRODUCTION: HARPER LEE’S DISAPPEARANCE FROM PUBLIC LIFE: A REVIEW OF LITERATURE AND THE PROBLEM AT HAND

Over the past fifty years, southern author Harper Lee has been best known for two things—her Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, and her silence. One reason Lee is known for her novel is because it was the first novel she wrote, and also because it received so much attention and sold so many copies. Before the book was even published, “The grapevine began humming with excitement. Booksellers heard it and increased their advance orders” (Murphy 28). Then, when it was published on July 11, 1960, it was all New York was talking about (Madden 124). While there were a few negative reviews at first, eventually critics started raving about the novel and many wrote glowing reviews that painted Lee as a gifted writer. For instance, F. H. Lyell, a reviewer from *The New York Times*, wrote, “The dialogue of Miss Lee’s refreshingly varied characters is a constant delight in its authenticity” (Madden 124). Furthermore, *The New Yorker* wrote, “Miss Lee is a skilled and totally unpretentious writer who slides unconcernedly and irresistibly back and forth between being sentimental, tough, melodramatic, acute, and funny in this story” (124).

Not only was the novel a great success in New York, but it was also selling well and impressing critics all over the United States. *The San Francisco Chronicle* wrote, “The novel is a moving plea for tolerance,” and *The Chicago Tribune* wrote, “So admirably done that it must be called both honorable and engrossing, of rare excellence” (Madden 125). The novel also made *The New York Times* best-seller list and stayed there for

eighty-eight weeks (124). Furthermore, the novel made *The Chicago Tribune's* bestsellers lists, and by September of 1960, was "selling more than ten thousand copies weekly" (Madden 130). In fact, "One year after its publication in 1960, it had gone through 500,000 copies and had been translated into ten languages" (Johnson 13).

Even more amazing was that *To Kill a Mockingbird* was selected as a Literary Guild Selection, a Book of the Month Club Alternate and a Reader's Digest Condensed Book; however, the biggest accolades came one year later in 1961, when it sold over two and a half million copies and won both the National Book award and the Pulitzer Prize (Madden 130). According to biographer Kerry Madden, "Very few first novels get even one of those honors, much less all of them at once" (130). The novel had been so successful that it had been printed in 94 different printings (Johnson 13). According to Lee scholar Claudia Durst Johnson, "*To Kill a Mockingbird* is one of those books that has reached large numbers of readers and has made a significant difference in the lives of individuals and the culture as a whole" (13). Furthermore, according to Durst Johnson,

A sign of the novel's impact on the people who read it is found in a "Survey of Lifetime Reading Habits," conducted in 1991 by the Book-of-the-Month Club and the Library of Congress's Center for the Book. The survey found that among the books mentioned by its 5,000 respondents, Harper Lee's TKM was second only to the *Bible* in being 'most often cited as making a difference' in people's lives (14).

Therefore, it is easy to understand why Lee's novel made her so famous.

But Lee never had any idea her novel would have such an impact, and she did not have high hopes for it. According to Alice Hall Petry, "she remarked in retrospect that she completed it to fulfill her contractual obligations with Lippincott and in the hope of

earning enough money to enable her to begin her next novel (xviii). But Lee's first book made her a literary star. Even today, Lee remains famous for her 50 year old novel.<sup>1</sup> With the success of *To Kill a Mockingbird*, Lee attended many book signings and received tons of fan mail and requests for interviews because many who had read the novel wanted to know about the woman who wrote it. So, Lee obliged and granted interviews, even saying in one of them that she felt like the "luckiest woman in the world" (Madden 132). From all of these accolades one can understand why Harper Lee has become known for her one and only novel. However, over the years, from 1964 to 2006 and even the present, she has also become known as a recluse.

In March 1964, Lee seemed to be happy and goal oriented. She granted an interview to Roy Newquist for his new book *Counterpoint* (1964), which interviewed sixty-three famous writers. Little did people know then that this would be her last interview until 2006. In this interview, which is very revealing, Lee spoke candidly about her novel, her education, her childhood, her writing process and influences, other great writers, her friend Truman Capote, and her hopes for the future. With regard to her future objectives, Lee stated,

I want to do the best I can with the talent God gave me. I hope to goodness that every novel I do gets better and better, not worse and worse. I would like, however, to do one thing, and I've never spoken much about it because it's such a personal thing. I would like to leave some record of the kind of life that existed in a small world. I hope to do this in several novels—to chronicle . . . small-town middle-class southern life as opposed to the Gothic as opposed to *Tobacco Road*,

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<sup>1</sup> According to Myles Weber, "*To Kill a Mockingbird* continues to sell an additional million copies a year worldwide, making it by some estimates the most popular novel ever published" (235).

. . . In other words all I want to be is the Jane Austen of South Alabama. (Newquist 412)

This statement not only shows that Lee hoped to continue writing, but also that she had a planned objective of what she wanted to write about—small town life. However, something happened to Lee after this interview in March 1964 that changed her mind, because since then, “Lee has never discussed her output, or lack of one, publicly” (Leerhsen). And so her silence began and went on for a little over forty years. Lee stopped granting interviews, stopped writing, stopped appearing in public, and even stopped answering her publisher’s requests for another book. She simply settled into a quiet, private life in her home town of Monroeville, Alabama and became known as a recluse, or as reporter Marja Mills from the *Chicago Tribune* deemed her, “a delicious mystery.”

For these forty some years, Lee has maintained a very low profile and a private life, and over the years, her family and the locals in her home town of Monroeville have come to accept her unwillingness to be interviewed, and they protect her privacy from outsiders. For instance, Lee’s two sisters, Alice and Louise do not talk about Lee.<sup>2</sup> Alice once said with regard to discussing Lee publically, “That’s a no-no. . . . It has been a no-no in my family for 37 years” (Kemp “The Mockingbird Lives”). Louise, Lee’s other sister, has said, “My sister is so private. . . . I don’t want to do anything to mar the love we have for each other. . . . I wish she would talk” (Kemp “The Mockingbird Lives”).

Likewise, the townspeople of Monroeville have an unwritten code not to talk to reporters

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<sup>2</sup> Surprisingly, Lee’s sister Alice has broken her rule of not talking to the press about Lee when she recently spoke on camera on the new documentary about Lee entitled, *Hey Boo: Harper Lee & To Kill A Mockingbird*. She has also allowed herself to be interviewed for Mary McDonough’s new book, *Scout, Atticus & Boo: A Celebration of Fifty Years of To Kill a Mockingbird* (2010).

about Lee and to leave her alone. Most of Monroeville's citizens will not reveal her address or her red brick, ranch home (Garbarino). I discovered the town's protective attitude towards Lee first hand when I contacted the Monroeville post office to obtain Harper Lee's address to write to her for this study. While the postmaster was friendly, he would not give out her address, but rather he instructed me to send a letter to Lee's sister, Alice, who has a law practice in town, and he gave me that address.<sup>3</sup> Even the local police in Monroeville are protective of Lee. The "Local cops often make drive-bys of the house at night, watching out for overzealous journalists and fans" (Garbarino). Furthermore, *The Monroe Journal*, the town's local newspaper, "has an unwritten rule to leave her alone, and write only about what has already been reported on her elsewhere" (Garbarino). However, even with this protection, Lee still seems to attract journalists and literary critics to Monroeville who try to interview her. The problem is that Lee refuses to speak to anyone. So, her reclusiveness seems to make for the most popular stories in out of town newspapers. For instance, over the years, many articles have been published describing Lee's reclusiveness and simple life. One article that attracted a great deal of attention is Marja Mills,' "A life apart: Harper Lee, the complex woman behind 'a delicious mystery,'" which was published in *The Chicago Tribune* in 2002. In this article, Mills explains to readers why Lee has become such a mystery, saying, "Early on, she grew tired of the lack of privacy and demands on her time that accompanied sudden fame. She took a dim view of the press, one she still holds, because of published reports about her that she considered inaccurate and intrusive" (1).

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<sup>3</sup> According to Mary McDonagh Murphy, even today in 2010, "Alice Lee handles real estate transfers and titles when not politely declining interview requests of her sister or sorting through the boxes of mail" (23).



However, even with these explanations, to outsiders of Monroeville, Lee is not only a great writer but a mystery to be seen or uncovered. Many want to solve the forty year old question of why Harper Lee stopped writing. Therefore, many people venture hundreds and thousands of miles to Monroeville every year to see Lee's and Capote's home town, as well as to see many of the buildings, such as the courthouse, Lee described in *To Kill a Mockingbird*. According to Kathy McCoy, executive director of the Monroe County Heritage Museum,<sup>4</sup> "Tourism in the county has climbed to 25,000 visitors a year, about 20,000 of them arriving for 'Mockingbird,' a play version of Lee's novel that is produced every year by the Monroe County Heritage Museum" (Mills 3). According to Jane Ellen Clark, curator of the museum, "Every spring since 1991, the town has staged a several-times-a week theatrical production of *To Kill a Mockingbird* with local volunteer actors in roles" (Leerhsen). The Monroe County Heritage Museum has staged this play and opened the museum to tourists. In short, those who travel to Monroeville "seek . . . an exact replica of Maycomb, the fictional south Alabama town where Scout, the book's narrator, lived with her brother, Jem, and their father, Atticus Finch" (Bond 9A).

Many people also hope to get a glimpse of Lee, and when they don't see her at the play, many seek out her home. Some that are fortunate enough to find her house often drive by hoping to get a glimpse of her; however, most leave disappointed because she rarely comes out. Currently, she resides in an assisted living facility, so her sister, Alice, lives in the house Harper Lee once inhabited. However, even when Lee was in good

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<sup>4</sup> "The Monroe County Heritage Museum was created in its present set up in 1991 . . . the museum has published a bi-annual magazine on county history, hosted exhibits from the Smithsonian, and acquired three more structures now serving the county residents" (*Monroe County Heritage Museums* 100).

health, prior to 2008, she didn't venture out much, and she refused to co-operate in any way with those who produce the play.<sup>5</sup> Lee never attended the play. In fact, when she was in good health and the play was being produced in town, she often travelled to New York to get away from the publicity. According to Thomas Lane Butts,<sup>6</sup> Lee's friend and pastor emeritus at Monroeville's First United Methodist Church, "she isn't happy about any kind of tourism that promotes her novel" (telephone interview). Butts also stated that Lee thinks it is "ridiculous that people want to drive by and see her house where she lives" (Mills 3). She hates the attention the novel has brought her.

Jane Ellen Clark, curator of the museum, is aware of Lee's dislike for the museum and the play that is produced. However, Clark explains that the museum is very important.<sup>7</sup> It educates many young children and adults about two of the South's great writers—Harper Lee and Truman Capote. When I interviewed her, Clark explained she is in a tough spot. She has a great deal of respect for Lee, and she does not want to upset her, yet she feels she has a responsibility to the community and world to educate people about Lee and Capote (telephone interview). She also elaborated on this idea in Mary McDonagh Murphy's new book, stating,

we understand that she [Lee] decided to quit doing interviews. Everybody here knows that. So we don't tell people where she lives or really anything about her

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<sup>5</sup> According to an interview with Thomas Lane Butts, Lee is in deteriorating health. She suffered a stroke in 2008, which has left her partially paralyzed on her left side. Also, she is losing her hearing, and she suffers from macular degeneration disease, which affects both of her eyes; however, her mind is still sharp (telephone interview).

<sup>6</sup> Thomas Lane Butts was Harper Lee's pastor for five years (1993-1998). He first met her in 1984 in a hospital when Lee's sister Alice was hospitalized (telephone interview).

<sup>7</sup> One room at the museum is dedicated to Harper Lee and Truman Capote. The room is filled with original artifacts, such as Truman's baby blanket and a coat worn by Truman's aunt, as well as newspaper clippings and other memorabilia about Capote and Lee (Murphy 20).

business. We just try to answer their questions about the book and about the town. Because everybody wants to know what was real and what wasn't. We try to just tell what we know about who really lived here during that time. (90)

Furthermore, according to Kathy McCoy, who directs the play of *Mockingbird* every year, "Harper Lee does not want us to commercialize her book [or produce the play], but we feel what we're doing is a service to the community and to the rest of the world" (Mills 3). Surprisingly, Harper Lee doesn't put a stop to the play based on her novel; however, Lee did become so mad at McCoy and her staff in the fall of 2001, that Lee's lawyer stopped the sale of a cookbook that The Monroe County Heritage Museum printed and sold in their gift shop. The cookbook, entitled *Calpurnia's Cookbook*, was a collection of southern recipes. Lee protested the cookbook's title. She did not want the museum to sell the cookbook because she felt they were taking advantage of her character Calpurnia and trying to profit from her novel (Leerhsen). Reverend Butts said, "I think it is an attempt to keep the characters from being exploited, as well as herself. . . . When people start using the characters from the book, it sort of fragments the book" (Mills 3). Thus, Lee won that battle and the cookbook was withdrawn.

She is also upset that two dining establishments in her hometown are named after the book: Radley's Café and the Mockingbird Grill. Thus far, Lee has not tried to get either of these establishments to change their names. However, Lee did object to the idea of a billboard being put up that stated Monroeville was the hometown of her and Capote, and she "turned down any attempt to have a Harper Lee Day" (Plimpton *Truman Capote* 5). Likewise, she becomes furious when people try to profit from her or her novel. Reverend Butts stated, "She does not like to be exploited by people. And she does not like to have

her words exploited for profit by people” (Murphy 71). When Lee feels exploited, she withdraws from the public immediately.

For instance, several years ago, Lee stopped signing copies of her book upon requests, especially first editions, because she felt people were taking advantage of her by selling them on e-bay to gain a profit.<sup>8</sup> However, because she was raised with southern manners,

Lee can tolerate proper inquiries, such as correspondence that comes by envelope and stamp. Having been brought up with the courtesy of responding to letters, she started out replying personally; when she developed tendonitis, pragmatism overtook etiquette. That doesn’t mean she likes other contact any better, and she’s still not too fond of those who don’t respect her wishes to be left alone. (Bilen)

Lee even turned down publishers when they asked her to write an introduction for the thirty-fifth anniversary edition of her novel. HarperCollins published her letter:

Please spare *Mockingbird* an Introduction. As a reader I loathe Introductions. To novels, I associate Introductions with long-gone authors and works that are being brought back into print after decades of internment. Although *Mockingbird* will be 33 this year, it has never been out of print and I am still alive, although very quiet. Introductions inhibit pleasure, they kill the joy of anticipation, they frustrate curiosity. The only good thing about Introductions is that in some cases they delay the dose to come. *Mockingbird* still says what it has to say; it has managed to survive without preamble. (qtd. in Bilen)

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<sup>8</sup> In April of 2005, a first edition of Lee’s novel sold for \$19,000 at Swann Galleries in Manhattan. Currently, there are signed first editions selling for \$8,000-9,000 on e-bay (Garbarino).

Lee also turned down a telephone interview with journalist March Childress. She responded in writing with “‘Hell No’ printed in green ink across the top” (Childress 150).

As one can see, Lee does not like any attention upon herself or her novel. She does not like people prying into her private life. According to Reverend Butts, “a lot of people think that she’s a recluse . . . and that is absolutely untrue. She’s a person who enjoys her privacy like any other citizen would” (Murphy 10). Jane Ellen Clark agrees with Reverend Butts and feels that Lee is not a recluse. In an interview with Mary Murphy, Clark stated that Lee “would be at the grocery store. She would go to church. She was not a recluse at all. She just wanted her privacy” (91). Furthermore, according to Butts, she “asks friends not to disclose things about her” (Garbarino). Butts, who is very protective of Lee, adheres to her wishes and only agreed to allow me to interview him because it was for a dissertation and not a book or article for publication. However, Butts is asked frequently why Lee began her silence. Many scholars and journalists feel that she was overwhelmed by fame and that is why she began her silence all those years ago. However, Butts doesn’t know the exact reason Lee withdrew from public life; he has explained she didn’t like fame, but feels there are multiple reasons for her withdrawing from public life. He admitted he doesn’t discuss her writing or withdrawal from public life with her. These two questions are mysteries to many and part of what has also caused Harper Lee to become so famous. In short, “America worships the extrovert” and wants to see her, meet her, question her and show their appreciation to her for *To Kill a Mockingbird*; however, Lee won’t have it (Bilen). Thus, she is just as famous for her silence as she is for her beloved novel.

Over the years many critics have attempted to explain why Lee began her silence. The first possibility that some scholars have presented is that Harper Lee was overwhelmed by success. For instance, Andrew Gumbell suggests:

Lee was stymied by success from the very start. On the day J B Lippincott expressed an interest in her manuscript, she had written more than 100 pages of a second novel, entitled *The Long Goodbye*, but went no further with it. As he puts it: Her pen froze. (Gumbell)

Likewise, Charles Leerhsen states, “Journalists seemed obsessed with determining the degree to which the novel [TKMB] was autobiographical,” and this made Lee uncomfortable (Leerhsen). Truman Capote critic Marianne Moates elaborated on this idea in her book, stating, “Gossip had it that one family was threatening to sue because the character Boo Radley was too much like one of their own family members. When Lee had had enough, she reminded people that her book was fiction, zipped her lips shut, and caught the next plane back to New York” (2). Thus, according to Moates, Lee feared she might be sued because her novel was too autobiographical. Moates implied that Lee only knew how to write using autobiographical elements, and this is one possibility as to why she stopped writing (Moates 2).

Another possible reason for Lee’s silence that Shields suggests is the deaths of several close friends and many distractions. During the early 1970’s, Lee suffered from depression that resulted from the loss of her agent, Maurice Crain, who died from cancer in April 1970. There was also the death of Lee’s editor, Tay Hohoff. Wayne Greenhaw, a close friend of Lee’s, explained that Hohoff’s death caused her a great deal of depression: “They [Lee & Tay] were very close and it just devastated Nelle when she

died” (Shields 263). However, Tom Radney had a different explanation: "She's [Lee's] fighting a battle between the book and a bottle of Scotch. And the Scotch is winning" (Leerhsen). But most critics return to the last interview Lee granted Roy Newquist as evidence why she quit writing, and even though other theories have been suggested, many still insist that she was simply overwhelmed by success, and quote her as saying,

I never expected any sort of success with *Mockingbird*. I didn't expect the book to sell in the first place. I was hoping for a quick and merciful death at the hands of the reviewers, but at the same time I sort of hoped that maybe someone would like it enough to give me encouragement. Public encouragement. I hoped for a little, as I said, but I got rather a whole lot, and in some ways this was just about as frightening as the quick, merciful death I'd expected. (Newquist 405)

However, I contend that many who read the above quote, misinterpret Lee by taking it out of context, and so they do not explain what question she was answering. In this interview, Lee was answering Newquist's question, "What was your reaction to the novel's enormous success?" (405). Lee was answering what she thought about the novel's success, not explaining her reaction to fame. Thus, it seems as if many journalists take the word "frightening" and embellish it and Lee's reaction.

Furthermore, Lee explained in this same interview her hopes and objectives for the future. She explained how much she loved watching the filming of *To Kill a Mockingbird* and watching Gregory Peck on the set. She stated, "There seemed to be an aura of good feeling on the set" (406). And, she stated she had plans to write in the future. So while it remains likely that Lee didn't like all the attention showered upon her, it doesn't seem likely that the attention is why she stopped writing because in the same

interview, when asked by Newquist if she was writing a second novel, Lee responded, “Yes, and it goes slowly, ever so slowly” (405). If she had already started writing a second book, she was probably not overwhelmed by success.

Likewise, I suggest that another article embellished Lee’s lack of writing by using the word “scared” in its title. In “Harper Lee running scared, getting fat on heels of success” by Hal Boyle, Lee stated, “Success has had a very bad effect on me, . . . I’ve gotten fat—but extremely uncomplacent” (Boyle). Lee’s comment implies that she was satisfied with her novel, not that she was scared of writing. Again, it appears as if Boyle took Lee’s comments out of context and then many scholars and journalists have taken his words as truth. Thus, many journalists have taken this remark out of context by focusing on the first part of this statement—“Success has had a very bad effect on me,” but they do not quote or explain the second part of her comment. Therefore, I suggest from these statements that Lee’s silence is not because she was scared of writing or overwhelmed by success, but rather, Lee’s silence occurred because of what occurred in Kansas between her and Capote. They had creative differences, and his lack of acknowledgement had a profound effect on her.

One problem that appears often in Lee scholarship is the suggestion that Lee’s silence and refusal to write are one problem—her pen froze and, because of this, she does not want to be interviewed to discuss why she won’t write. However, after examining many newspaper articles and interviewing several people that knew Lee personally, and by examining Lee’s and Capote’s research notes for *In Cold Blood*, I believe Lee’s silence and her refusal to write are two separate issues. First, it appears that Lee stopped granting interviews because she was tired of being misquoted. According to Lee’s sister,



Alice, “She did not think that a writer needed to be recognized in person. . . . As time went on she said that reporters began to take too many liberties with what she said. So, she just wanted out. And she started that and did not break her rule” (Murphy 39).

However, Lee could have very well still continued to write other novels and kept her rule to remain silent. So why didn’t she?

As to why Lee stopped writing, there are many suggested theories, but none are proven. For instance, in *Mockingbird*, Shields points to Lee’s many distractions during the 1960’s and 1970’s as a reason why she stopped writing. Shields describes the early 1960s as one long series of distractions from her craft: the publicity tours, the making of the Hollywood movie, the invitation from President Johnson to join the National Council on the Arts, and the burgeoning fame bestowed on her, especially in her hometown, as well as her drinking problem. During this time, Lee stated, “I’ve found I can’t write on my home grounds. I have about 300 personal friends who keep dropping in for a cup of coffee. I’ve tried getting up at 6, but then all the 6 o’clock risers congregate” (Shields 236). The only peace she could find, she said, was on the golf course, but that was good only for thinking, not actually writing (236). While all of these reasons may be true; they do not appear to be the ultimate reason Lee stopped writing. After all, she had plans to keep writing, and she had begun writing a second novel. She not only stated she was working on a second novel in an interview, but she went to Kansas to assist Capote in his research, and she published three essays before and after she spent time in Kansas, and before the publication of *In Cold Blood*.<sup>9</sup> Clearly, Lee had plans to continuing writing as

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<sup>9</sup> Lee’s essay publications include “Love—In Other Words” in *Vogue Magazine* (1961), “Christmas to Me” in *McCall’s Magazine* (1961) “When Children Discover America” in *McCall’s Magazine* (1965) and “Romance and High Adventure” in *Clearings in the Thicket* (1983), a collection of essays on Alabama.

she discussed in her last interview. However, I suggest another reason as to why Lee stopped writing.

What remains evident after one examines Lee's research notes and her contributions to Capote's novel is that the two authors had major creative differences while working together. More important, I suggest that these differences, as well as Capote's lack of acknowledgement of her in *In Cold Blood*, which was an ultimate betrayal, are what caused her to stop writing. Because Capote did not acknowledge Lee in his novel, and because she saw what fame did to him after the success of *In Cold Blood*, and because of the creative differences the two had, Lee quit writing. Capote's and Lee's research notes for *In Cold Blood* are very different in both tone and content and these notes prove that the two had major creative differences while working together. The combination of all of these issues—Capote's drinking and drugging, the movie of her novel, her friends' deaths, and especially the ultimate betrayal by her friend, Capote—took a toll on Harper Lee. However, Capote's betrayal seems to be what caused her to give up the vocation she loved so much. Lee's abandonment of her vocation and frustrations with the press when they misquoted her caused her to go into hiding in her hometown in 1964. However, things finally changed in 2006 when Lee broke her silence.

Until recently, some fans of Harper Lee might have thought that the author was dead because she never appeared in public outside of her hometown or her travels to New York in the summers. However, in 2005, 2006, and 2007, Lee did something unusual—she started appearing in public at several ceremonies held in her honor, she allowed a photograph to be taken of her for a newspaper article, and she granted a brief interview.

Even more surprising is that she wrote two short letters for publication. Clearly, this was not the Harper Lee the world had come to know over the past forty years.

Lee first started appearing in public in 2002. In an article entitled “A Life Apart: Harper Lee, the complex woman behind ‘a delicious mystery,’” written for *The Chicago Tribune Tempo*, Lee allowed her photo to be taken—something she had not allowed since the 1960s. The photo was the first step in showing the world that Harper Lee was indeed alive and well. Although, Lee would not agree to be interviewed for the article. Then, that same year, Lee appeared at her alma mater, The University of Alabama, to attend a luncheon and an essay contest for high school students sponsored by the Honors College. The essay contest asks students to write about their reactions to Lee’s famous novel. Lee does not judge the contest or speak about her novel or personal life, but she appeared there to hear what students had to say about her novel. Then in April 2005, *The USA Today* reported that Lee was not only alive, but that she helped raise money for a Tennessee police officer’s son who was dying of cancer by signing a first edition of her famous novel. She even wrote the family a letter that stated, “If you don’t have success with the first edition, sell this [letter]!” (Garbarino). It was reported that Lee helped raise the money for the ailing son’s hospital bills. However, Lee went a step further in 2006, and granted a brief interview to a reporter at an essay awards’ ceremony. She stated, “What these people have done for me is wonderful” (Bellafonte). In the same interview, she also stated, “Students always see new things in *Mockingbird*” (Garbarino). Although brief, she actually spoke on record.

Then, in 2006, Lee appeared in public for a second time. This time she accepted a public award at the Alabama Academy of Honor’s Ceremony where she, baseball great

Hank Aaron, and two others were inducted into the Alabama Academy of Honor. For a second time, Lee spoke publically to a crowd with a brief remark regarding her silence for forty years, saying, “Well, it’s better to be silent than to be a fool” (Associated Press). She was rewarded with a standing ovation for this brief remark, proving that people love Harper Lee no matter what she does or says. But the biggest surprise occurred when Lee left her hometown to accept a second award. In May of 2006, Lee traveled to Los Angeles at the request of Veronique Peck, Gregory Peck’s widow, to accept a literary award at the Los Angeles Public Library. Once again, Lee spoke, but her remarks were brief. She said, “Thank you from the bottom of my heart” (Garbarino). The press reported that Lee was not dead, but very much alive, and this led to many wanting to hear more from her.

In May 2006, Lee also travelled to The University of Notre Dame to receive an honorary doctorate. About a year later, Lee received a third honor—the Medal of Freedom, the highest honor that can be bestowed upon a civilian, from President George W. Bush at the White House on November 5, 2007, but she did not speak other than to say, “Thank You”<sup>10</sup> (“Harper Lee briefly breaks usual public silence at Alabama Academy of Honor ceremony”). However, something even more remarkable happened before her acceptance of this award. Lee actually wrote something to be published—the first written statement she had made since her novel was published in 1960.

In 2006, Lee wrote a letter and essay to daytime talk show host Oprah Winfrey, in which she declined Winfrey’s offer to be a guest on her show. Winfrey, a huge fan of Lee’s, asked Lee to appear on her show to discuss her novel and her life because *To Kill*

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<sup>10</sup> “The Medal of Freedom was established by President Truman in 1945 to recognizes civilians for their efforts during the second world war” (Pauli).

*a Mockingbird* is one of Winfrey's favorite novels (Buncombe). According to Andrew Buncombe, "the two women met in New York but Lee said no to the interview and also declined a second more recent request [to appear on *Oprah*]. She agreed, however, to write a personal letter about her love of books" (Buncombe). The essay Lee wrote to Winfrey, entitled "A Letter from Harper Lee," appeared in the July 2006 edition of *O Magazine* and described Lee's childhood and her favorite writers. In the letter, when discussing how things have changed since her childhood, Lee states, "Now, 75 years later in an abundant society where people have laptops, cell phones, iPods, and minds like empty rooms, I still plod along with books. Instant information is not for me. I prefer to search library stacks because when I work to learn something, I remember it" (Lee "Dear Oprah: A Letter from Harper Lee" 3). Although she still declined to appear in public and give an interview, Lee allowed the letter to be published. This, of course, was a giant step for Lee and her fans and showed the world a much different side of her—that she was willing to discuss her life and preferences. And this was certainly a very different side of Lee from the time the late George Plimpton asked Lee to be interviewed for his biography about Capote just eleven years earlier. Lee refused Plimpton's offer in 1995, stating, "He could never have [my] permission to go ahead with the project" (Garbarino).

So, clearly, Harper Lee had reconsidered her silence over the past forty years and decided to talk. Then, even more shocking was the letter Lee wrote to *The New York Times* responding to the film *Capote*. In this letter, which she also allowed to be published, Lee explains that a part of the film was inaccurate. Regarding the character of William Shawn, Capote's agent, Lee states, "While his imagination produced a personality unrecognizable to me, I can contribute two small facts about Mr. Shawn's

professional involvement: the film has me talk to Mr. Shawn on the telephone—I didn't. And, at any time Truman Capote was in Kansas, Mr. Shawn wasn't" (Lee "The Mail" 55).

So, Lee finally broke her silence by appearing in public and even writing letters she allowed to be published in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Lee's break in her silence caused many newspaper articles to be written that discussed Lee's reclusiveness. Titles of articles, such as "Harper Lee, Gregarious for a Day," "Mockingbird author steps out of shadows," "Harper Lee briefly breaks usual public silence at Alabama Academy of Honor ceremony," "Her Word Endures But She Eludes" and "The Mockingbird Lives: Harper Lee well in town she immortalized," all drew attention to Lee's break in silence and her refusal to talk over the years. But why did Lee break her silence? Why was there a renewed interest in Lee's life? Furthermore, why were there new accolades being showered upon her after all of these years?

The most likely answers to these questions were because of the two recent films released on the big screen, *Capote* (2005) and *Infamous* (2006), which portray a part of Lee's life. *Capote* is the film based on Gerald Clarke's biography, *Capote*.<sup>11</sup> The second film, *Infamous*,<sup>12</sup> is based on George Plimpton's biography, *Capote: In Which Various Friends, Enemies, Acquaintances and Detractors Recall His Turbulent Career*. *Infamous*

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<sup>11</sup> *Capote* was nominated for five Academy Awards and won actor Philip Seymour Hoffman a Golden Globe and an Academy Award for portraying Truman Capote. The film was considered groundbreaking for Hoffman's portrayal of Capote and for showing Lee's role in Capote's project; however, with all of its awards, there were complaints. One complaint was that the film "skirted a very important issue: Capote was gay, and he reportedly had a sexual relationship with one of the murderers [Perry Smith] he wrote about" (Dossi 23). Even though this issue wasn't shown in *Capote*, most critics believe that the film *Capote* "not only did it first, it did it considerably better" than *Infamous* (Inskeep).

<sup>12</sup> *Infamous* was the second film made about Capote's life. And while it portrays the same time period and themes as the film *Capote*, two big differences from *Capote* are that this film shows Capote's sexual affair with Perry Smith. Furthermore, the differences in the authors' notes are discussed more.

was not as critically acclaimed as the first film; however, the two films portray important parts of Capote's life and also a part of Lee's life.<sup>13</sup> Both films portray the time period between 1959 and 1965, when Capote and Lee travelled to Holcomb, Kansas to research and study the effects a mass murder would have on a small town. This research would eventually turn into Capote's best-selling non-fiction novel, *In Cold Blood*. Though the films portray the two authors and the time they spent together, as well as question whether "Capote sold his soul to get the story," they both show different interpretations of Capote and Lee (Horton). However, what comes across on film is that both writers were very close prior to the publication of *In Cold Blood*.

After seeing both films, I was mesmerized, not only by Capote's interesting life, but also by his research efforts for *In Cold Blood*. Likewise, I wanted to know much more about Harper Lee and what specific role she played in Capote's life. Furthermore, and most important, I wanted to know specifically what Lee contributed to *In Cold Blood*. Apparently, I was not alone in this quest, because after the first film, *Capote*, was released, a new, unauthorized biography about Lee's life was published entitled *Mockingbird* (2006) by Charles Shields. In fact, this was the first biography ever published about Lee, and until this text appeared in 2006, most did not know much about Harper Lee's private life at all, mostly because she would not co-operate in any way with any biographer. What Lee hated about the press was that they would not stick to discussing her novel, but rather, the media would intrude on her personal life, and many would misquote her. According to her sister, Alice, "reporters began to take too many liberties with what she said. And what they would print would be apparently what they

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<sup>13</sup> With the release of both films, interest in Capote's and Lee's life has been boosted to its "highest point in decades" (West 248).

wanted rather than what she said” (Murphy 128). Lee would become furious. She did not want the media prying into her personal life; she wanted readers to appreciate her novel for what it was. Lee stated this idea many times to people, and she told her friend, Reverend Butts, she wanted “readers to focus on her book not her life” (Garbarino).

In fact, she made a similar comment thirty years earlier. In the early 1960’s, a librarian at the Huntingdon College, where Lee briefly attended, wrote Lee, asking for biographical information because none existed about her. Lee wrote the librarian, stating, “I’m afraid a biographical sketch of me will be sketchy indeed. . . . With the exception of M’bird, nothing of any particular interest to anyone has happened to me in my 34 years” (Gumble). And regarding Shields’ biography, Lee objected and refused to co-operate in any way. Lee “declined his approaches ‘with vigour’” (Gumble). However, Shields’ biography was published without Lee’s cooperation, and there are many inaccuracies in it. According to Reverend Butts, when the book came out, “The Lees were very unhappy about the Shields’ book” (e-mail interview Aug. 4, 2009). And Lee’s childhood friend, George Thomas Jones, the town historian of Monroeville, counted hundreds of inaccuracies in Shields’ book and was upset with Shields because of the inaccuracies and because Shields “trashed their town” (telephone interview). In fact, while the book is said to be good for some basic facts about Lee and for discussing Lee’s assistance to Capote on *In Cold Blood*, most critics have dismissed it because of Shields’ unusual research methods and because Lee and her family did not approve of it. For instance, one critic wrote a review of the book, stating, Shields,

a former English teacher, says he occasionally relied on unorthodox methods that were surprisingly effective. Translation: he faked his way onto an online school



reunion site to contact Ms. Lee's classmates. . . . He let Google do the walking when it came to library research. . . . he drew on . . . histories of the South, critical 'Mockingbird' studies and material about Truman Capote, whose friendship with Ms. Lee was as catty as it was intense. (Maslin)

In short, Shields book was not well done.

Then, with the release of Shields' biography and the second film, *Infamous*, came even more details about Lee's research notes for *In Cold Blood*. It was revealed that Lee's research notes for *In Cold Blood* differed greatly from Capote's. While Shields' book didn't substantiate or discuss this fact much, Sandra Bullock, the actress who portrayed Lee in *Infamous*, appeared on *The Charlie Rose Show* and discussed how she prepared for her role as Lee. When asked by Rose how she prepared for her role, Bullock responded:

I would never have contacted her. Wouldn't have done it in a million years. I have family that lives very close to Monroeville. There was no reason [to contact Lee] because the essence of what Doug [McGrath, the director of *Infamous*] wrote was a beautiful character based on Nelle Harper Lee, and this incredible writer chose to remove herself from the spotlight on all accounts, all levels not even granting interviews, nothing. She didn't want to be photographed. It's incredible, and people don't understand that and I get it. . . . Doug went to the New York Public Library and said that he found the most interesting fact through the original papers of Truman's during that time. And so, I went up there and we went through the microfiche, and he realized there was a discrepancy between their notes. There were some that were hand written in this sort of chicken scratch that was known as

his writing, and there were some that were typed and so, as we started printing them out, Doug pointed out . . . it says ‘T. C. and I went to the Clutters’, T. C. and I went . . .’ Lee’s notes were copious, very, very factual notes with sort of school teacher’s handwriting, but they were typed. And we assumed that these were Nelle’s. . . . I still have that stack sitting on my desk, and I look at them and go wow! I wonder if this was her contributions to the book? Which I think it was.

(Bullock youtube interview)

Bullock’s statement about a discrepancy in the writers’ notes was the first time Lee’s notes were discussed publically. Shields’ book discussed this idea briefly; however, his book allows readers to think one or two passages differ, not as much as Bullock revealed. Thus, this is one major reason I decided to pursue this project.

After this information was revealed, there was also a collection of essays released about Lee’s novel and life in 2007, entitled *On Harper Lee: Essays and Reflections* edited by Alice Hall Petry, and then a second biography about Lee was published by Kerry Madden: *Upclose: Harper Lee a Twentieth Century Life* (2009). Likewise, in 2010, there was a new book released, *Scout, Atticus & Boo: a Celebration of Fifty Years of To Kill a Mockingbird*, in which friends and acquaintances of Harper Lee recall the author and offer their insights into the novel. Clearly, all of this interest in Lee was sparked by the release of the two films, and the need/desire for more information on her began. The release of the films is why Lee, most likely, did not remain silent and began appearing in public. Thus, the renewed interest in Capote led to the renewed interest in Harper Lee. In fact, there have also been three new books written about Capote since the films on Capote have been made: *The Truman Capote Encyclopedia* (2010) by Robert

Gale, *Tiny Terror: Why Truman Capote (Almost) Wrote Answered Prayers* (2011) by William Todd Schultz, and *Truman Capote and the Legacy of In Cold Blood* (2011) by Ralph F. Voss. As one can understand, Lee's and Capote's lives are so intertwined that new scholarly books and articles are constantly written about the two. So, just what was Harper Lee's role in Capote's life and, more important, what role did she play in assisting Capote to write *In Cold Blood*?

As I researched the information published about Lee and Capote, I discovered one major idea—Truman Capote and Nelle Harper Lee are so intertwined throughout each other's lives that they could not function without one another at times. For instance, in some of Capote's first works and some of his best works, Harper Lee is portrayed in several of his characters. In his first novel, *Other Voices, Other Rooms* (1948), the character Idabel Tompkins was modeled after Capote's best friend, Harper Lee. Furthermore, Lee was the model for Grady McNeil in Capote's novel, *Summer Crossing* (2006), that was just recently published by Gerald Clarke. And it is widely known that Harper Lee modeled her famous character Dill Harris in *To Kill a Mockingbird* after her friend, Truman Capote. But besides using each other as models in their literary works, the two friends also worked together on creating stories as early as childhood. Thus, the two used each other as models for their characters, but their opportunity to actually write and research together would come for a new project that Capote began work on in 1959.

In November 1959, while reading *The New York Times*, Capote was struck by an article with the headline, "Farmer and Three of Family Slain." Immediately, he asked Harper Lee to accompany him to Kansas to be his research assistant, the term Capote created for Lee. So, when Capote asked Lee to accompany him to Kansas to research and

investigate the effects a mass murder of a family of four would have on a small community, Lee admitted, “The crime intrigued him, and I’m intrigued with crime—and, boy I wanted to go. It was deep calling to deep” (Clarke *Capote* 319).

The two authors travelled by train to Holcomb, Kansas to discover the town’s reactions to the Clutter family’s murders. Before arriving in Kansas, Capote had decided that this was his project and that Lee would be his research assistant. As his research assistant, Lee performed many duties for Capote, but she was never given any credit for her research notes by Capote, nor was she acknowledged in *In Cold Blood*. No one seems to have a definitive explanation for why Capote did not acknowledge Lee’s help on his non-fiction novel, and this fact is one that still fascinates readers of both authors. In fact, there are two questions that fascinate scholars of Lee and Capote: what involvement did Capote have in Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* and what role did Lee have in Capote’s *In Cold Blood*? These questions fuel a great deal of scholarship about Lee and Capote. One rumor that existed for years is that Capote wrote some or all of *To Kill a Mockingbird*. This rumor began because Lee never produced another novel after *To Kill a Mockingbird* was published in 1960.<sup>14</sup> However, recently, this rumor or question was answered when a letter Capote wrote to his aunt Mary Ida Carter was discovered by Capote’s cousin, Jennings Carter.<sup>15</sup> In the letter, written from Clarks Island in Duxbury, MA on July 9, 1959, Capote wrote, “Yes, it is true that Nelle Lee is

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<sup>14</sup> According to Lee’s friend, Dr. Wayne Flynt, a retired history professor at Auburn University in Alabama, “some claim Pearl Belle, who is a literary critic and editor in Cambridge, Massachusetts, has actually claimed that Capote implied to her that he had written the book or had a good deal to do with the writing of the book. I think probably the rumor results from the fact that *TO KILL A MOCKINGBIRD* is the only published book that Harper Lee ever did” (Block).

<sup>15</sup> Capote’s cousin decided to come forward in 2006 with the letter with the release of the film *Infamous*. Jennings gave the letter to the Monroe County Heritage Museum in Monroeville (Scheible 1).

publishing a book. I did not see Nelle last winter, but the previous year, she showed me as much of the book as she'd written, and I liked it very much. She has real talent" (Marshall "Myth of 'Mockingbird' help debunked?" (A6). According to many scholars, this letter is proof that Capote did not write *To Kill a Mockingbird* because he gave Lee the credit by saying, "She has real talent" (A6). Many feel that if Capote had anything to do with writing *To Kill a Mockingbird*, he would have never kept his mouth shut, but rather, he would have bragged about the fact. Furthermore, many, including Lee scholar Claudia Durst Johnson, agree that "anyone who has read 'Mockingbird' or Capote can see there are vastly different attitudes, styles and voices, . . . I never had the least doubt that he had anything to do with it" (A6). (See Appendix A to view Capote's Letter to his Aunt Mary Ida).<sup>16</sup>

Although the rumor that Capote wrote *To Kill a Mockingbird* was finally put to rest in 2005, there are still many questions as to what role Lee played in assisting Capote to write *In Cold Blood*. In fact, there is also a rumor that was started in 1984 within Lee's and Capote's circle that "it was she who ghostwrote *In Cold Blood* for him" (qtd in Petry 152). These questions continue to pervade many books and articles written about both authors. For instance, Kim Powers wrote *A Ghost Story: Capote in Kansas* (2007), a novel that depicts Harper Lee and Truman Capote's time together in Kansas. Told in third-person omniscient narration, the book's plot revolves around Capote, who is at the end of his life when he is no longer writing and he is popping pills and boozing. He is haunted by the ghosts of the Clutters and reprimanded by them for robbing them "of their dignity and privacy, for not helping to save Perry's life" (Voss 186). Likewise, Lee is

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<sup>16</sup> Currently, this letter is on display at the Monroe County Heritage Museum (Marshall "Myth of 'Mockingbird' help debunked" A6).

haunted by her dead brother, Ed, and Son Boular—the model for Boo Radley—in her novel. By the end of the novel, Powers has Capote finally apologizing to Lee for not giving her credit for helping him with *In Cold Blood*. While the book is fiction, some of it is based upon facts. Powers writes in the “Author’s Note,”

In broad outline, my accounts of the writing of *In Cold Blood* and *To Kill a Mockingbird* are based on fact, as are the existence of Harper’s sister Alice and the deaths of Harper’s mother and older brother Ed, within five weeks of each other. However, their private thoughts about each other, the details of their burials, the letters that Harper writes to her dead brother, and most certainly her travels to a nearby cemetery (that may or may not exist) are my own invention. (253-54)

Powers’ book shows that people are still intrigued with Lee’s and Capote’s relationship and their time spent in Kansas. More important, writers are curious as to why Capote never acknowledged Lee properly for all of her help on his project. In the end,

Powers is showing that the two writers, both nearing sixty and now long unproductive, have become gothic characters themselves. He is also showing the bond between the two writers, forged in their extraordinary youth in Monroeville, renewed in New York, and strengthened in Kansas, was seriously weakened by Capote’s jealousy after Lee’s Pulitzer Prize. (Voss 187-88)

Thus, it is clear that Powers’ book, much like *In Cold Blood* itself, is based on facts, but its author took great liberty with those facts. Thus, a large amount of scholarship written about Lee and Capote deals with fact and fiction and where the line can be drawn between the two. More important, Powers’ book proves that the Capote-Lee separation is also a topic of interest among many.

Likewise, Ande Parks' and Chris Samnee's *Capote In Kansas: A Drawn Novel* (2005) is a graphic novel that illustrates Capote's and Lee's time spent in Kansas, but Lee's time spent in Kansas is not described accurately. As Ralph F. Voss reports, "in this version, Lee is leaving [Kansas after her first visit], never to return" (Voss 183). However, one particular scene shows Capote telling Lee, "Couldn't do it without you" (Parks and Samnee 19). (See Appendix B to view this illustration). Although Parks and Samnee don't have all of the facts reported correctly, what remains obvious is that Lee and Capote's time spent in Kansas has been a topic of discussion among writers, critics and media. Furthermore, just as Parks and Samnee's work demonstrates, for years, critics and readers of the Capote and Lee have known that Lee assisted Capote in Kansas, but many don't know exactly what Lee contributed to *In Cold Blood*. What I have come to understand is that besides many scholars not knowing exactly what Lee contributed to Capote's project, there also seems to be a cover up of Lee's role by Capote and Capote scholars.

For years, critics and fans of Capote and Lee simply thought that Lee accompanied Capote to Kansas and helped him as a general secretary during his first two months there. In fact, according to Capote's version, "she [Lee] had been thinking about doing a nonfiction book, and wanted to learn my techniques of reportage, so she asked to come along" (Nance 162). Thus, in Capote's version, he never even invited Lee. Furthermore, in an interview with Haskell Frankel in 1966, Capote explained Lee's role on the project, stating:

Harper Lee helped me with the research the first two months. She went out to Kansas with me as my friend—we grew up together—and assistant. You know,

I didn't exactly want to arrive out there all by myself, not knowing what I was walking into with the town in the grips of this immense murder case. A little town like that. So Harper Lee very kindly said she would go along for company, and then she did a lot of research and some special sort of interviews. (Frankel 71)

These statements are just two of many that Capote made about Lee's contributions to his work, and in typical Capote fashion, his statements are exaggerations and not exactly true. Until 2006, with the publication of Shields' biography, many thought Lee simply typed his notes and accompanied him on a few interviews of the townspeople in Kansas. After all, much of the criticism written about Lee up until the 21<sup>st</sup> Century existed only on her novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Many didn't know anything about her life, since Lee refused to co-operate with a biographer and because she had remained such a mystery or recluse.

So, until 2006, readers and scholars of Capote's and Lee's writings did not have solid evidence or documentation confirming Lee's side of what happened in Kansas. Scholars of Lee had to rely on Capote scholars' documentation or Capote's own words from interviews. Thus, Lee scholars could only speculate on whether or not Capote was telling the truth or what Lee's role was in *In Cold Blood*. For instance, Gerald Clarke, a well-known Capote scholar and personal friend of Capote's, explained in his biography *Capote* that Lee wasn't Truman's first choice to take to Kansas, and that "Nelle's help proved more valuable during those difficult first days" (*Capote* 322). However, Clarke doesn't explain Lee's role in *In Cold Blood* in any specifics, and he allows readers to believe that Lee was only with Capote in Kansas for a few days. Clarke states,

Not once was he or Nelle seen taking notes: it was Truman's theory that the



sight of a notebook, or worse still, a tape recorder inhibited candor. People would reveal themselves, he maintained, only in seemingly casual conversations. . . . Only when they had returned to the Warren Hotel did he and Nelle separate and commit to paper what they had learned. Each wrote a separate version of the day's interviews. (*Capote* 322)

However, Clarke doesn't show either Truman's or Lee's notes, not even excerpts. Their notes are, most likely, omitted because Clarke's focus is a biography of Capote's life.

However, other critics don't elaborate on Lee's role in Capote's non-fiction novel either. In fact, none of the criticism about Truman Capote covers anything that Lee did while helping Capote in Kansas other than to say she was his research assistant and that she accompanied him on interviews. And, of course, there is a good reason why Lee's role has never been mentioned. Capote critics do not want Lee's role in his project to be discussed because it will further tarnish Capote's reputation. Capote scholars want him to get all of the attention, accolades and credit for writing his famous non-fiction novel. This bias, and the fact of there being two distinct "camps" or groups of people following the two writers, became evident to me while working on this dissertation. Capote's camp is very protective of him. This was especially evident to me when I interviewed Joanne Carson,<sup>17</sup> Capote's close friend, when I first started thinking about this project. When I interviewed Dr. Carson in 2007, she was happy and even excited to talk to me about Capote. She explained many things about Capote, including how he died at her house, his mannerisms, his

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<sup>17</sup> Joanne Carson met "Capote at his absolute peak, in 1966, at a dinner, held by his publisher, Bennett Cerf, just before Capote's famous Black and White Ball" (West 246).

likes and dislikes, and her personal feelings about the two movies, *Capote* and *Infamous*, which detail Capote's life. Carson told me she thought the film *Capote* was very well done. She explained her feelings more specifically about the film in a magazine article, in which she said that Hoffman's performance as Capote was "the best I've seen since Spencer Tracy" (West 248). Carson and I exchanged many e-mails and talked for almost three hours during my initial interview by telephone, and she seemed interested in only painting Capote in a positive light. However, when I mentioned that I was interested in Lee's involvement with *In Cold Blood*, Carson turned to stone. She rushed me off the phone and tried to persuade me not to write my dissertation on *In Cold Blood*, stating, "it has been done to death" (Telephone interview). Also, Carson explained she didn't know anything about Harper Lee, never met her, and abruptly ended the interview. As further proof that Carson and others are protective of Capote, Carson even belittled Gerald Clarke's biography about Capote in an e-mail to me, stating, "If you are in the middle of Gerald Clarke's *Capote* that is a good place to stop. From there on it is inaccurate, slanted and cruel. I know what happened and why Clarke changed directions and I will share it with you when we speak" (e-mail interview).

Of course, Carson never did share this information with me and has never responded to any of my e-mails to hold more interviews and discuss Capote again since I pried into Capote's relationship with Harper Lee. The only e-mail she sent me was one in which she informed me she was going to be interviewed on *Entertainment*

*Tonight* to discuss the Capote auction<sup>18</sup> that she donated many of Capote's personal items to.

Someone who is also protective of Capote and doesn't seem to want Lee's role in Capote's novel to come out is biographer Gerald Clarke. Clarke, a personal friend of Capote, agreed to let me interview him via e-mail during the summer of 2009, and he commented on Lee's and Capote's friendship. He wrote,

You infer that she [Lee] was a co-author of the book and didn't receive proper credit, either because she didn't want it or because he didn't give it to her.

Neither is the case. She was at loose ends in New York and went along as a friend to keep him company and help him out. She was a great help, as I describe in my book, and he always gave her full credit, in interviews at the time of publication and to me years later. (e-mail interview)

But, in fact, Capote doesn't give Lee the credit she deserves. He simply calls her his research assistant in many interviews and allows readers to believe Lee was only in Kansas during the first two months he worked on the project. However, according to Delores Hope, a friend of the Clutters whom I interviewed, Lee made several trips to Kansas over a five year span to assist Capote.

Clarke further states in the same e-mail that Capote and Lee did not have an estrangement after *In Cold Blood* was published. He states, "He [Capote] never mentioned an estrangement after that, and I don't believe there was one" (e-mail).

However, Carson explained to me via telephone several instances in which Clarke's

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<sup>18</sup> On November 9, 2006 Bonhams in New York held an auction of many of Capote's personal items, such as Capote's signed MasterCard, a first edition of *In Cold Blood* and his tuxedo he wore to his famous Black and White Ball. A portion of the proceeds earned from the auction went to Joanne Carson's animal-rescue charities (West 248).

biography is inaccurate, and she even called it inaccurate during the e-mail I quoted on the previous page. Furthermore, even though Clarke doesn't believe there was an estrangement between Capote and Lee, Donald Windham's book, *Lost Friendships: A Memoir of Truman Capote, Tennessee Williams, and Others*, states otherwise.

Windham, who was also a personal friend of Capote, explains in the afterword of his book that he had Alvin and Marie Dewey and Harper Lee to his home for a dinner in Capote's honor directly after Capote's death in 1984. At this dinner, Windham wrote that Lee stated quietly "that she and Truman had not been in touch for fifteen years" ("Afterword" 269). Clearly, Clarke is trying to protect Capote's memory and doesn't want to admit the truth or his lack of knowledge of what happened.

As further evidence that Capote scholars don't want Lee's contributions to *In Cold Blood* revealed, Capote's first cousin, Jennings Faulk Carter, refused to cooperate with me and be interviewed by phone or mail, and he refuses to discuss Truman any more with anyone. Carter grew up playing with Truman and Harper Lee. He knew both writers as young children very well. When I contacted Mr. Carter and explained what I wanted to do, he said he had no interest in helping me or someone who wanted to discuss Harper Lee and slammed the phone down on me. According to Jane Ellen Clark, director of the Monroeville County Heritage Museum, Mr. Carter gets irritated by Harper Lee questions, and he refuses to help the Monroeville County Heritage Museum with a speech he used to give about Capote. According to Clark, the museum's curator, "Jennings was a panelist at our 'Scenes and Stories of Monroeville' seminar one year, and when a teacher only wanted to ask him about Harper Lee, he became irritated and refused to discuss Lee" (e-mail interview). The

following year, “He decided that he wanted to focus on Truman, and he dropped out of that program” (e-mail interview).

However, the biggest protector that Capote has had over the years is the executor of the Capote trust, Alan U. Schwartz. Schwartz, a personal friend of Capote and executor of the Capote Literary Trust,<sup>19</sup> is in control of Capote’s papers, notes, letters, etc. that are housed at The New York Public Library and The Library of Congress. He has the right to permit or deny scholars the ability to publish information about Capote’s trust. As Crystal K. Wiebe reported, “As trustee of Capote’s estate, Schwartz has the most say over Capote’s work, controlling to some extent the author’s image and the way he’s remembered” (“Author left mark on state” 48). Thus, Schwartz’s “main interest is building his friend’s reputation as ‘one of the great American writers of all time’ (48). Clearly, friends and relatives of Truman Capote are very protective of him and his works, and their remarks and written statements portray this. Thus, there are no books, journal articles or other scholarly materials written by Capote critics that show or quote Harper Lee’s research notes or involvement with *In Cold Blood*. Likewise, there are no dissertations written about Capote or *In Cold Blood* that reveal Lee’s notes. According to Robert Gale’s Encyclopedia on Capote, “Between 1973 and 2008 at least 96 Ph.D. dissertations were written and accepted on the subject of Capote alone or Capote in connection with other writers” (198). Of the fifty-five dissertations written on Capote alone, only

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<sup>19</sup> The Truman Capote Literary Trust was formed in March 1994. It awards prizes “to writers and critics totaling \$114,000 annually” (“Capote Trust is Formed To Offer Literary Prize” C17). Furthermore, “There will be a \$100,000 prize every four years for lifetime achievement in criticism. Also, the Iowa Writers Workshop at the University of Iowa will “award four \$8,000 Truman Capote Fellowships in creative writing in each year, as well as \$50,000 cash prize to be known as the Annual Truman Capote Award for Literary Criticism” (C17).

sixteen dissertations and one master's thesis focus on *In Cold Blood*, and none of these dissertations deal with Harper Lee or her notes. Most dissertations on *In Cold Blood* concentrate either on new journalism or the narrative structure of the novel.

Just as the Capote camp doesn't want to reveal Lee's involvement in Capote's project, Lee's camp of critics do feel her involvement with *In Cold Blood* should be discussed. Several prominent critics and personal friends of Lee whom I've interviewed all have encouraged me to proceed with this project, and most feel that her role and contributions to *In Cold Blood* are long overdue to be explored. During one telephone interview, Delores and Clifford Hope, Jr., personal friends of the Clutters, explained that they had met Harper Lee and Truman Capote many times. In fact, the Hopes had Lee and Capote to their home for dinner on many occasions. Delores Hope stated, "Capote couldn't have functioned without Harper Lee on this project" (telephone interview, June 22, 2009). She further stated, "Nelle sort of managed Truman, acting as his guardian" (Pilkington "In Cold Blood: the Aftermath" 6). Likewise, Wayne Greenhaw, a personal friend of Harper Lee, answered many questions I wrote him in an e-mail interview. Regarding Lee's involvement with *In Cold Blood*, Greenhaw wrote,

He [Capote] did very few interviews in Kansas, other than with the two killers. He did get to know them very well but not the neighbors, the farmers, shopkeepers, even the policemen, all of whom talked to her. Even the investigators talked mostly to her. That's one place where the movie [*Capote*] messed up. (e-mail interview)

In another e-mail interview, Greenhaw explained that people in Kansas didn't like Capote. He stated, "I learned from a newspaper friend from Kansas that the people out there really liked her but looked at Capote as an oddity" (e-mail interview). And, in the same e-mail interview, Greenhaw added that he thought there was a falling out between Capote and Lee: "If there was a falling out, and I do suspect there was, it was because he had begun making himself into a celebrity after *IN COLD BLOOD*" (e-mail interview). Furthermore, when I asked Mr. Greenhaw if he was surprised that Lee was not given credit for her work on *In Cold Blood*, he stated, "After I discovered all the work she did, it surprised me" (e-mail interview). However, Greenhaw admitted that he wasn't surprised at Capote not including Lee in the acknowledgements, stating, "Capote would never give anyone but himself credit for whatever he did. Meeting him the few times I did, I saw that he was a very self-centered person" (e-mail interview).

Besides Wayne Greenhaw, others also feel Lee's numerous contributions to *In Cold Blood* should be acknowledged. For instance, Dr. Wayne Flynt, one of Lee's personal friends, stated in an e-mail interview about my analysis of Lee's contributions to Capote's work,

your analysis of her contribution to ICB is right on target. More important than even the copious notes she took, was her common background as a Methodist girl from a small town, which Truman had long since jettisoned but which in many ways she retained. . . . She was in every sense a coauthor of ICB, whereas he was in no sense a coauthor of TKAM. Dedicating the book to her hardly compensated for his use of her notes. (e-mail interview, May 28, 2009)

Likewise, Alan Gurganus, an American novelist, also believes that Harper Lee was responsible for doing a great deal of research for *In Cold Blood* and contributed to the book significantly. He revealed in an interview with Mary McDonagh Murphy, “I think Capote’s treatment of her [Lee] is an indication of where his work stands in relation to hers, except for *In Cold Blood*, which had the benefit of her extraordinary legwork, her extraordinary political sense, her finesse in covering for him” (100). Additionally, Kerry Madden, who wrote the second biography on Harper Lee, stated in an e-mail to me, “I absolutely believe you’re on the right track!” (e-mail interview).

Thus, after interviewing numerous people and reading many scholarly materials about Capote and Lee, I have discovered there are no books or scholarly articles written by Capote or Lee critics that discuss Harper Lee’s involvement with *In Cold Blood*, other than to report in a general manner that she was his research assistant; no book or article discusses her research notes in great detail. The only works that have gone beyond stating that Lee went to Kansas with Capote and discussed her research notes is Charles Shields’ *Mockingbird* and Ralph F. Voss’s *Truman Capote And The Legacy Of In Cold Blood*. Shields’ biography is the only text that discusses Lee’s role as Capote’s research assistant in a chapter entitled “See NL’s Notes.” In this chapter, he explains Capote’s and Lee’s time in Kansas covering the murders of the Clutter family. He even suggests that Lee helped Capote more than she was ever given credit for through his chapter title. Also, he gives examples of her notes but in very limited detail. After all, Shields’ primary goal in this book was to write a biography of Lee, and no biography about Lee would be complete and accurate without a chapter on her time spent with Capote in Kansas. The chapter, “See NL’s Notes,” does two things. First, it describes, in



chronological order, their time together in Kansas. Second, the chapter alludes to the fact that Lee was instrumental in helping Capote write *In Cold Blood*; however, Shields doesn't prove many of his theories at great length or show Lee's notes in great length. Furthermore, Shields does not cross reference Lee's notes with segments of Capote's novel at great length. Thus, Shields does not show what Lee's full contributions to Capote's novel were. While his book is extremely helpful in understanding Lee, it simply does not show Lee's full research efforts. Voss's book, that was just published in 2011, mentions briefly one major fact that Lee had more notes than Capote, but he doesn't explain what specifically Lee's notes focus on or what of Lee's notes were used in Capote's book.

Therefore, after examining Lee's and Capote's research notes for *In Cold Blood*, I contend that Lee's contributions to Capote's novel have been much more extensive than ever revealed. I suggest her assistance on *In Cold Blood* has been withheld by Capote critics, particularly Alan U. Schwartz, Capote's lawyer and executor of Capote's Literary Trust, because publishing Lee's research would portray Capote poorly. Also, Capote's lack of acknowledgement of Lee in his non-fiction novel is what caused me to want to write this dissertation to acknowledge Lee's efforts. Furthermore, and more important, it is my belief that Lee's and Capote's research notes reveal the true reason why Lee ceased to publish any further works. Before the publication of Capote's novel, Lee was busy writing her second novel. In fact, one month after Lee's last essay was published in August 1965, the serialized edition of *In Cold Blood* appeared in *The New Yorker* on September 25, 1965. From this time on, Lee began her silence.

What exactly did Lee contribute to *In Cold Blood*? She contributed many things that most people do not know because most of her research efforts were not published in Capote's novel, and most of her research has been held in the New York Public Library, where no one has revealed or cross referenced her notes with Capote's notes or novel, prior to this study. Furthermore, many may not even know that Lee's research notes exist because they are housed in Capote's collection.

Most people do know that Harper Lee spent two months with Capote in Kansas helping him interview many people, including the KBI—the Kansas Bureau of Investigation. Likewise, most know that Lee was of great help to Capote because he looked and sounded so peculiar that the local town's people in Kansas looked upon Capote as a freak and refused to talk with him. According to Lee, "he was like someone coming off the moon" (Clarke *Capote* 321). Thus, Lee's "help proved more valuable during those difficult first days" because she was able to relate to people much better than Capote (322). In fact, according to Clarke, Lee "was the kind of woman people in Finney County were accustomed to; where he shocked, she soothed" (322). Of course, most people know this information. However, what people don't know is what specifically Lee contributed to Capote's famous crime novel, and what exactly she did as his research assistant.

What I have discovered, after analyzing Lee's and Capote's notes, is that Lee contributed the following to Capote's research and the book:

1. She was a secretary to Capote and typed his notes, transcribed his notes and typed her own notes.

2. She interviewed all of the townspeople—many by herself without Capote—something never discussed before. She also interviewed many of the KBI investigators, and she helped Capote interview Perry Smith and Richard Hickock while in jail. Thus, in some cases, she was the second set of eyes and ears that Capote needed, but more than this, on many occasions, particularly when interviewing the townspeople, she was the only set of eyes and ears.
3. Lee drew diagrams in her notes in which she shared her own theories on how she thinks Kenyon Clutter was handcuffed and how his throat was slit when he was murdered. Likewise, Lee drew diagrams of the two floors of the Clutters' house and the outside of the house for Capote to use. These maps or diagrams have never been revealed before. They show Lee's mind at work.
4. Lee took detailed notes of all of the town's main shops and cafes as well as the town's history for Capote.
5. She researched all of the places where Smith and Hickock wrote bad checks and put together a list of these places for Capote to use.
6. She pieced together the travel itinerary of Smith and Hickock and mapped out directions for Capote for many places he needed to go.
7. Her notes show Bonnie Clutter in a different light than Capote describes her in his novel. Lee describes Mrs. Clutter as someone going through the change of life, but She also shows her truthfully, whereas Capote seems to make her differently. In fact, during my telephone interview with the Hopes, Mr. Hope explained that Capote misrepresented "Bonnie Clutter's health in his book; her health was reported inaccurately" (telephone interview).

8. Lee's notes differ from Capote's notes in many ways, particularly in regards to how many notes Capote took. There are not many notes he took during interviews with the townspeople, and most of his notes were taken on Dick and Perry, revealing an unbalance of their notes and showing that Capote became obsessed with the two killers.
9. Lee proofread the galleys for *In Cold Blood* before the novel was published; helped Capote tighten his prose, and questioned some of his information.
10. Finally, of the notes that Lee did record, Capote only used a small portion of them. What he did use of her notes seem to be details and specifics she recorded about people and the surroundings.

All of these items reveal that Harper Lee fulfilled more than the duties of a research assistant, or at least enough duties to be given credit in the acknowledgement page of the novel. However, more important, all of this information reveals that Lee had a larger role in helping Capote research *In Cold Blood* than has ever been revealed.

If Lee performed all of these duties, then what did Capote do? It is obvious that Capote analyzed all of Lee's notes and his own, organized them, and did, indeed, organize the novel into its structure and write the non-fiction novel. However, after I analyzed both his and Lee's notes, it became clear that Capote's notes focus primarily on the two criminals—Perry Smith and Richard Hickock. It appears as if Capote became so obsessed with the two killers that his book changed from its original intent—to show “the psychological effect of the crime on the small town” (Madden 118). Instead, Capote's focus became the two killers and his decision to portray them in a sympathetic light because he related to both of their terrible childhoods, especially Perry Smith's.

After examining Capote's and Lee's notes, I have not only discovered Lee's contribution to Capote's project but also plausible theories as to why Capote did not acknowledge Lee properly, and why Lee quit writing. Thus, this dissertation has four goals. First, it will reveal Lee's journalistic skills and show examples of her research notes. Her notes reveal her personality—that she was a skilled journalist who focused on recording facts accurately. Second, many of Lee's exact contributions to Capote's non-fiction novel will be shown by showing segments of her original research notes, which are collected in the Capote Papers housed in the Manuscripts and Archives Division of The New York Public Library's Humanities and Social Sciences Library. Third, this dissertation will explain one plausible reason as to why Capote did not acknowledge Lee properly in his novel. I contend that he suffered from narcissism, which ruled his life, and caused him to forget about Lee's assistance on his project. Last, I will speculate why Lee quit writing by adding another possible theory to Lee scholarship. It appears as if Capote's lack of acknowledgement in *In Cold Blood* and his narcissism and desire for fame caused Lee to quit writing. Thus, the overall objective of this dissertation is not to destroy Capote's reputation, but to restore Harper Lee's reputation and explain that she should be remembered for her work on *In Cold Blood* just as much as she is remembered for her own novel and for her silence. However, before Capote's and Lee's research notes can be discussed, one must understand Capote's and Lee's relationship with each other and their childhoods. Thus, Chapter 2 of this dissertation will explore Capote's and Lee's lives and what caused Capote's narcissism.

“What are the odds of two people like Truman Capote and Nelle Harper Lee coming simultaneously out of a town like Monroeville?” (Murphy 145)

## CHAPTER TWO HOW IT ALL BEGAN

Before one can begin to understand Truman Capote’s and Nelle Harper Lee’s fiction or the research notes each took while working together on *In Cold Blood*, one must understand the lives of each author. Not only are both authors’ private lives fascinating, but also most of the fiction both produced is autobiographical. By reading both authors’ fiction, one can actually see parts of their private lives and the people they were associated with through their characters. Capote, himself, even admitted his and Harper Lee’s use of autobiography in a letter he wrote to Alvin Dewey in 1964, stating: “I often use ‘real’ people in my work, and then create a story around them. Most of the people in Nelle’s book are drawn from life. My story ‘A Christmas Memory’ is entirely autobiographical” (Clarke *Too Brief a Treat* 401). In fact, their own relationships with each other also can be seen in each other’s fiction. Therefore, it is as if each piece of fiction speaks volumes about their past. As William L. Nance has suggested, “some knowledge of Capote’s early life is essential to an understanding of his work, for that work, even though *In Cold Blood*, bears the clear marks of his childhood” (11-12).

Likewise, Nelle Harper Lee’s *To Kill a Mockingbird* is a novel “about people and places at once dear to her and unforgettable” (Beechcroft 1). In fact, of Lee’s writings that do exist, most all show autobiographical elements of some sort. And, just like their fiction, Capote’s and Lee’s research methods and their notes on *In Cold Blood* also speak volumes about the two. By examining each writer’s research notes, one can also see each author’s personality and work ethics. Thus, this dissertation will show what each author contributed to *In Cold Blood*, but it will also show each author’s work ethic and, for the

first time, prove exactly what Harper Lee did and what an important role Lee played as Truman Capote's research assistant while in Kansas. Before the reader can understand Capote's and Lee's research, he/she should understand each writer's personality, his/her childhood and family life, as well as their own complicated relationship together, and the struggles each had to overcome to become a published author.

Truman Capote was born Truman Streckfus Persons on September 30, 1924, in New Orleans, and was named after a close friend of his father's from military school, Truman Moore. Truman's father also chose his middle name, Streckfus, after a family in New Orleans that employed Arch at the time Truman was born (Clarke *Capote* 7). Truman's unusual name was the least of his worries because, from the moment he was born and even conceived, his life was not going to be easy. In short, his family, particularly his parents, was totally dysfunctional and did not show him the love and attention he or any child needed while growing up. In fact, Truman's birth was not planned, and his parents were not only ill-prepared to take care of a new baby, but they did not want him.

Truman's relationship with his parents and the lack of love he received from them would affect him throughout his life, and this lack of love and attention would also affect how he interacted with others. Furthermore, Truman's unconventional and unhappy childhood would not only affect him throughout his life, but his unhappy childhood would also become the subject of most of his great fiction, and the absence of his parents throughout his childhood would dominate most of his writings. In an interview later in life, Capote admitted about his childhood, "my major regret in life, I suppose, is that I was an only child and that my childhood was unnecessarily lonely, and I did not feel as a child very much love or affection or warmth around me" (*Truman Capote: An American*

*Revolutionary*). This statement is how Capote would define his childhood and his childhood, would haunt him throughout his life.

Truman's parents were Lillie Mae Faulk and Archulus Persons. From the moment the two met, they were mismatched, and they married for the wrong reasons. They did not love each other or plan on conceiving children together. The two met in the spring of 1923, while Lillie Mae was enrolled in Troy State Teacher's College in Troy. Lillie Mae was not interested in school; she had more interest in landing a rich man than receiving a college education (Clarke *Capote* 4). In fact, the Faulk's African American housekeeper, Corrie, said of Lillie Mae, she "will never be content. She's born greedy for men's an' money" (Rudisill & Simmons, *Truman Capote* 61). Corrie was right because Lillie Mae hated Alabama and dreamed of making it to a big city. So on that spring day when Arch Persons approached the beautiful Lillie Mae, she saw him as her ticket out of Monroeville. Arch, on the other hand, was smitten by her beauty and wanted to marry her for her looks. When the two struck up a conversation, and Arch offered to walk Lillie Mae back to her dorm, a budding romance began. Instantly, Lillie Mae, who was not attracted to Arch physically, was drawn to him for his charm. According to Truman's cousin, Jennings Faulk Carter, "Arch was a personable man and you would think that every word rolling out of his mouth was the gospel" (*The Tiny Terror*). That's exactly what Lillie Mae thought about Arch, and he told her whatever she wanted to hear, including the fact that he was wealthy, which was not true.

However, Lillie Mae was further attracted to Arch for his name. Arch's family name—Persons—meant a great deal in Alabama. His name was a prestigious one from a long heritage. According to Truman's aunt, Marie Rudisill,



His father had been a prominent chemistry professor at the University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa and had once been called to Washington to confer with President Theodore Roosevelt on some matter. His grandfather had been a governor of Alabama. His mother was a Knox from one of the wealthiest families in the entire state and highly influential in government and business circles. (Rudisill & Simmons, *The Southern Haunting of Truman Capote* 58)

Thus, Arch came from a well-respected family from Alabama. So, “Lillie Mae [only] saw dollar signs dancing around this ‘blue blood’ attorney from a prominent Alabama family” (Moates 25). Arch Persons’ lineage was authentic, but his financial situation was not. Arch often lived off of his mother, was always off on some kind of money-making expedition, and was poor just like most of the people in Alabama during time (25).

Arch’s latest scam required him to be in Colorado in the next few days after meeting Lillie Mae, so he left Alabama to try to make some money. Therefore, he and Lillie Mae’s relationship continued through letters until he returned to Alabama during the summer where their courtship continued. Soon after his return, because he didn’t want to risk losing her, he proposed even though the two didn’t know each other that long. Lillie Mae accepted instantly with the hope of marrying into a social position and moving to New York to live on Park Avenue. On August 14, 1923, Arch convinced Judge Murdoch McCorvey Fountain to grant him a marriage license (Shields 42). A week later, on August 23, 1923, Arch, who was almost twenty-six and Lillie Mae, who was seventeen, married in a small ceremony at Lillie Mae’s cousin’s house. The next day, the newly married couple left by train on their honeymoon for the gulf coast (Clarke *Capote* 4).

Lillie Mae was ecstatic and thought she had finally realized her dream. However, she would soon learn that almost everything she thought and hoped for was not true.

Lillie Mae soon realized that she had made a terrible mistake in marrying Arch Persons because he did not have the money she thought.

Besides learning that Arch was poor, Lillie Mae learned that he was not really a lawyer, as he had told her, but “was a schemer who never practiced law a day in his life” (Moates 25). Although this information came as a shock to Lillie Mae, Arch treated Lillie Mae like a queen and tried to cater to her every want and need. However, he couldn’t make her happy and money was quickly running out. In fact, the money Arch earned and borrowed from his mother for his honeymoon finally ran out while the two were in New Orleans. Because there were no more funds, Arch stayed behind to raise money to pay the bill at the hotel and sent Lillie Mae home alone on a train to Monroeville (Clarke *Capote* 5). After this, Lillie Mae was disgusted and wanted a divorce; however, bigger problems were about to come that prevented this from happening.

Not only was Lillie Mae upset, but she was also embarrassed by Arch’s lack of funds and having to return to her cousins in Alabama by train alone from her honeymoon. She was also bitter at having to return to her relatives. While there, she tried to make the best of the situation and enrolled in business school rather than enrolling in college. Lillie Mae hoped to meet someone new in business school and divorce Arch. However,

It was there during an exercise class in winter 1924, that she fainted and in that rude way learned that she was pregnant. It was not a happy discovery, given the apparent, hopelessness of her marriage, and the prospect of bearing Arch’s child

. . . something that would make her mistake in marrying him permanent and irrevocable. (Clarke *Capote* 6)

Although Lillie Mae was disgusted at the thought of being pregnant and stuck with Arch, he was happy about the pregnancy because he thought this would force Lillie Mae to stay with him; however, he was scared at the thought of becoming a father and the responsibilities that came with it. Thus, Arch was nervous about how he would support his new family. Arch got a more permanent job as a sales promoter with the Streckfus Steamship Company in New Orleans. This job would mean he would have to stay in New Orleans aboard the ship, and Lillie Mae would have nowhere to live at the time. So, Lillie Mae had no other choice but to ask her relatives—the same relatives she worked so hard to get away from—who had helped to raise her—to return to their house for food and shelter (6).

Slowly, Lillie Mae saw her dreams being crushed because now she was pregnant, not in love with her husband, and stuck in a town she hated with her eccentric relatives. In short, she was miserable, and according to Gerald Clarke, “if she had not become pregnant, it is doubtful that they would have stayed together” (Clarke *Capote* 11). To further complicate matters, her family did not accept her as lovingly as they had before. But rather, “Now that she was an adult, they held her at arm’s length . . . Jenny gave Lillie Mae food and a roof over her head, but there was no love, warmth, or family support during this difficult time” (Moates 25-26). Therefore, Lillie Mae was determined more than ever to have an abortion and get out of her cousin’s house once again. Thus, from the instant she found out she was pregnant with Truman, Lillie Mae hated the idea of her pregnancy and did not want the unborn baby she was carrying.

Lillie Mae's cousins included one male and three elderly females: John Byron "Bud"; Nancy Rumbley "Sook"; Virginia Hurd "Jenny"; and Caroline Elizabeth "Callie." Although her cousins helped her, she didn't seem to appreciate their help and did not want to be in their house. Frustrated, she kept trying to discuss the idea of abortion with Arch, but he did not want this. Arch convinced her to go to Colorado and live with some friends he knew there because he thought the climate would calm her and help her think straight. Lillie Mae went to Colorado at Arch's urging. Arch admitted later, "Of course I kept stalling and excusing, . . . because I wanted a little son more than anything else in the world" (Clarke *Capote* 6). Arch's stalling worked, because when she "returned to Monroeville in July, her pregnancy had advanced too far for an abortion to be considered; like it or not, she was going to have Arch's child" (6). Furious, Lillie Mae had nothing else to think than that Arch had used his charm, pulled a fast one on her, and sent her away in hopes of making her forget about the abortion and allowing her pregnancy to run full-term. Now Lillie Mae was more furious than ever about having to give birth to Arch's child. She would resent him and the baby for the rest of her life because of this. Thus, both Arch and Lillie Mae did not plan on having a child together, but like it or not, they were about to become parents. At the end of September, "when Lillie Mae's time came near, Jennie sent her down to New Orleans, where Arch rented a suite in the Monteleone Hotel, on the edge of the Fench Quarter, and arranged for the services of Dr. E. R. King, one of the city's best gynecologists and obstetricians" (*Capote* 6).

Truman was born on September 30, 1924, under less than joyous circumstances. His mother resented him, and his father felt pressured to provide for his new family and keep Lillie Mae happy if he wanted to remain married to her. At first, Lillie Mae tried to be a

loving mother, but this feeling didn't last long. Unlike most mothers who are thrilled by the birth of a new baby, Lillie Mae couldn't help but think of Truman as a mistake.

According to Truman's aunt, Marie Rudisill,

She blamed Arch for her pregnancy and resented him for it. Lillie Mae felt that he [Arch] had betrayed her and his love for her. Thus, she turned her pregnancy into resentment against Arch rather than letting it become the joy it should have been. She never forgave either Arch or Truman. (Rudisill Simmons, *Truman Capote* 90)

Furthermore, she did not know how to be a nurturing and caring mother (Moates 26).

Lillie Mae was too occupied with her own hopes and dreams to be saddled with a small infant. So, she took an infant Truman back to Monroeville to live with her cousins. She could pawn off the infant on her elderly cousins while she continued pursuing her dream of landing a rich man. Lillie Mae, although still married to Arch, who was away in New Orleans working, began cheating on him. However, it was always baby Truman who suffered the consequences of his mother's selfishness. Lillie Mae began to leave Truman alone. In fact, after a few months, "she thought nothing of leaving him alone, sleeping peacefully in his crib in the Monteleone Hotel, while she went out shopping with friends. But as Truman grew, so did his demands. He was awake more. He needed more attention" (26). If she was at home in Monroeville and left Truman alone, she would end up in a terrible fight with her cousin Jenny over Truman's well-being, so she would leave to visit Arch in New Orleans. While in New Orleans, she would stay in the hotel, but when money ran out, she would return to Jenny's in Monroeville. This pattern went on

for months, including Lillie Mae's continuing search for that rich man and carrying on affair after affair.

As Truman grew and began to crawl, walk and talk, Lillie Mae would do the unthinkable. At times, "she carried out her trysts in front of Truman, believing no doubt, that he was too young to notice" (Clarke *Capote* 12). However, this wasn't true. In later years, Truman remembered some of his mother's affairs. For instance, Capote recalled one incident, saying,

she once went to bed with a man in St. Louis . . . I was only two or so, but I remember it clearly, right down to what he looked like—he had brown hair. We were in his apartment and I was sleeping on a couch. Suddenly they had a big fight. He went over to a closet, pulled out a necktie, and started to strangle her with it. He only stopped when I became hysterical. (12)

Finally, because Truman was causing problems for Lillie Mae during her affairs, she went even farther and actually locked Truman in a closet so he wouldn't leave the hotel room, and so he couldn't hurt himself. On several occasions, Lillie Mae even instructed the hotel management to ignore Truman's screams and to leave him alone in the room (Long 2). Surprisingly, the hotel staff did as Lillie Mae wished, and Truman was often neglected. It was at this time that Lillie Mae began to cheat even more on Arch while he was booking "clubs and churches aboard the Streckfus Company's fleet of Mississippi excursion boats" (Clarke *Capote* 8). So, with his father away at work and his mother abusing young Truman, it was he who was suffering.

At this time, Truman was becoming too much of a burden on Lillie Mae, so she returned to her cousin Jenny's house in Alabama again. She continued to have countless

affairs with men and gave up her responsibilities of motherhood, pawning young Truman off on her relatives again. Arch was not blind to these affairs, though, and actually kept track of them. In fact, “in the seven years they were man and wife, Arch claimed to have counted twenty-nine [affairs]” (12). However, Arch was not innocent either and was not a good parent. Capote recalled later in life about his father, “I don’t have any sort of feeling about him. He was a completely strange person I never knew” (Burststein 332). Arch kept conducting scam after scam and even got into trouble with the law on occasion. Surprisingly enough, Lillie Mae defended Arch and “neither mentioned divorce; both of them seemed content with their civilized arrangement” (Clarke *Capote* 13). The couple was separated physically and mentally but was still married legally. The biggest problem was that as Truman grew and demanded more and more attention, neither Arch nor Lillie Mae was willing to be a full-time parent or take on any responsibility for their young son. Furthermore, both parents were never willing to make any kind of sacrifices to be with Truman. Both Arch and Lillie Mae were too preoccupied with their own wants, hopes and dreams. Thus, “They loved him . . . when they were not otherwise engaged” (Clarke *Capote* 14).

By the summer of 1930, as Truman was approaching his sixth birthday, Lillie Mae had finally had enough of motherhood. She resented Truman, Arch, and her relatives for forcing her to be tied down, and she wanted out of Monroeville for good. She left her small southern town for Colorado and then New York while Arch stayed at his job in New Orleans and continued to practice his scams and work on the ship. So, young Truman’s fears were finally realized, and besides just being neglected, he was now abandoned by both of his parents. He stayed behind in Alabama to live with his mother’s

relatives, aging and eccentric southern cousins who had helped to raise her. It was thought that they could provide the stability a young child needed. However, while Capote was taken well care of physically, and even at times pampered, emotionally he was not loved, and because of this, his mind would not develop properly.

From the very beginning of his infancy and his childhood, Capote did not have a normal development. In fact, it seems clear that when he was abandoned by his mother this was the beginning of Capote's narcissism<sup>20</sup>. Narcissism is a personality disorder and is also considered a mental disorder "in which people have an inflated sense of their own importance and a deep need for admiration. Those with narcissistic personality disorder believe that they're superior to others and have little regard for other people's feelings. But behind this mask of ultra-confidence lies a fragile self-esteem, vulnerable to the slightest criticism" (Mayo Clinic "Narcissism Definition"). Capote would show signs of narcissism in later life before, during, and after the writing of *In Cold Blood*. According to the Mayo Clinic, it is not known what causes narcissistic personality disorder, and the cause is complex. However, "the cause may be linked to a dysfunctional childhood, such as excessive pampering, extremely high expectations, abuse or neglect" (Mayo Clinic "Causes"). Capote's narcissistic issues were a result of his neglect by his parents—their lack of love for him and their abandonment of him. Capote's narcissism would continue throughout his adult life—and his parents' abandonment and lack of love for him are what led to his need/desire for attention from others and his love for himself. In his essay, "On Narcissism," Sigmund Freud states, "I may point out that we are bound to

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<sup>20</sup> According to Freud, narcissism is an investment of libidinal energy in the ego. It is a term "derived from clinical description that was chosen by Paul Naeke in 1899 to denote the attitude of a person who treats his own body in the same way in which the body of a sexual object is ordinarily treated" (Freud "On Narcissism" 73).



suppose that a unity comparable to the ego cannot exist in the individual from the start; the ego has to be developed” (76-77). When Capote’s abnormal ego was developing, he did not receive proper love and affection from his parents because his mother didn’t want him and his father was so worried about providing for the family that he was never around. Capote’s parents’ lack of attention and their lack of love burdened his ego. According to Freud, “The auto-erotic instincts are there from the very start, so there must be something added to auto-eroticism—a new psychical action—in order to bring about narcissism” (77).

Furthermore, Freud believed that children, derived their sexual objects from their experiences of satisfaction. The first auto-erotic sexual satisfactions are experienced in connection with vital functions which serve the purpose of self preservation. The sexual instincts are at the outset attached to the satisfaction of the ego-instincts; only later do they become independent of these, and even then we have an indication of that original attachment in the fact that the persons who are concerned with a child’s feeding, care and protection become his earliest sexual objects: that is to say, in the first instance his mother or a substitute for her. (87)

However, Capote never felt this. And he was very aware of not being wanted or loved by his parents. He told Eric Norden in 1968, “I was an only child, very sensitive and intelligent, with no sense of being particularly wanted by anybody” (117). Also, Capote was homosexual and very effeminate—which also, according to Freud, could have added to his narcissism. Freud wrote in “On Narcissism,”

We have discovered, especially clear in people whose libidinal development

and suffered some disturbance, such as perverts and homosexuals, that in their later choice of love-objects they have taken as a model not their mother but their own selves. They are plainly seeking themselves as a lover-object and are exhibiting a type of object-choice which must be termed “narcissistic.” (87-88)<sup>21</sup>

Thus, according to Freud, those who developed normally suffered from the Oedipus complex, which is a necessary part of a child’s development, in which a child experiences an erotic attachment to one parent and hostility towards the other.<sup>22</sup> However, Truman did not appear to suffer from the Oedipus Complex because neither parent was around or wanted him. He was abandoned by both parents and never had the normal triangulation—father, mother, child model—that Julia Kristeva refers to in her work, “Freud and Love.” According to Kristeva, triangulation is “the infant’s instinctual identification with the mother’s desire for the phallus, which links the child to the father of individual prehistory” (238-39). Furthermore, according to Martha Gilman Bower in her book *Color Struck Under the Gaze*, “This identification is essential for the child to enter into primary narcissism and move on to the oedipal stage and development of its ego” (17). Thus, because Capote did not have a close relationship with his father when he was an infant, he did not identify with the father of individual prehistory or the mother’s desire for the phallus, and Capote’s mother, who was very rejecting, prevented him from developing normally.

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<sup>21</sup> Freud’s discovery is not to say all homosexuals are narcissistic, but some may be because of the lack of love they received. Of course, heterosexuals can also be narcissistic because of the same issue.

<sup>22</sup> By definition the Oedipal Complex stems from the Greek tragedy *Oedipus the King*, and is when competition with the parent of the same gender occurs. It is the need by the child for attention and affection of the parent of the opposite gender. This usually occurs between the ages of three to six. “Freud viewed the manifestation of this complex as a universal, and therefore normal experience” (“Oedipal Complex” *The Bedford Glossary of Critical and Literary Terms* 314).

In short, there was no triangulation in Capote's life—no father, mother, and child model—which is so crucial to normal development. When this does not occur, “the child becomes enveloped by the autoerotic state and by the mother who he does not sense is separate from him” (Kristeva 238-39). This rejection from his parents is something that stayed with Truman throughout his entire adulthood and haunted him according to his lover, Jack Dunphy. Dunphy wrote in *Dear Genius*, “That his young life did not include his mother and father bothered him and made him feel abandoned” (123). Thus, Capote began to love himself and see himself in an elevated state, and because of his love for himself, he had a difficult time maintaining relationships with people throughout his life. Furthermore, he especially had difficulty maintaining relationships with those who criticized him or his writing. Thus, narcissism would rule his life. More specifically, Capote developed a narcissistic object choice.<sup>23</sup>

While both his parents were away from Truman, they paid for all of their son's financial expenses and allowed the elderly, unmarried relatives to raise him. Capote recalled this idea in an interview later in life: “I wasn't neglected financially; there was always enough money to send me to good schools, and all that. It was just a total emotional neglect. I never felt I belonged anywhere” (Norden 117). Truman settled into life in Monroeville with his cousins and became the closest to Nancy, who was known as Sook. She was the kindest and most innocent of all the four cousins, and she could relate to Truman the most (Rudisill & Simmons, *Southern Haunting of Truman Capote* 52).

While he loved his other relatives in the house, they were not as nurturing or as motherly

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<sup>23</sup> According to Freud, when one develops narcissism, specifically the narcissistic object choice, the person can exhibit two possible traits. The first is when the child tends to pursue a mother or father that is a substitute for his/her parent as a partner. The other trait is when one becomes totally consumed by himself/herself. This second type is one that often is seen in homosexuals like Capote (Freud “On Narcissism” 88).

as Sook. John Byron “Bud” kept to himself, spending most of his time in his bedroom or supervising a farm he had bought outside of Monroeville (Clarke *Capote* 17). Virginia “Jennie” was bossy and ordered everyone around, and she and her other sister, Caroline “Callie,” were often busy running Jennie’s hat store. They didn’t always have time to play or entertain Truman. In fact, Truman viewed “Callie and Jennie . . . as cold and unloving, as purse-mouthed and pinchpenny spinsters” (Clarke *Capote* 23).

So Sook, who performed most of the family’s domestic chores, bonded with young Truman. In fact, “she cared for him as though he were a gift from heaven. He filled her void for her and gave her life meaning” (Rudisill & Simmons *Southern Haunting of Truman Capote* 52). Sook taught Truman many things during his time with her including how to fly a kite, cook, make dolls out of grass, and play cards. She also read to him every night, including stories from the *Bible* and Grimm fairy tales (Clarke *Capote* 16). It is thought that Sook and Truman bonded so well because “[t]hey were both forgotten people, Sook by her sisters and brother, Truman by his parents” (Long 2). Thus, in some ways, Sook fulfilled a mother role for Truman and taught him many things, but she still could not take the place of his real mother, Lillie Mae.

More important, it was Sook who encouraged role play with Truman and encouraged him to use his imagination. Truman and Sook would often go to the attic where they would act out adventures and role play. Often,

[T]ogether they searched through the boxes and barrels to bring forth from hidden places the finery of an earlier life—folded paisley shawls, fancy hand-crocheted doilies, fine linen petticoats with handmade lace and tiny, tiny tucks, even old valentines. . . . Sook loved to sort through the collection of old clothes and dress

Truman up, putting a bonnet on his head, slipping faded white arm-length gloves on his hands, wrapping a feather boa around his neck, and fitting his feet into embroidered slippers that had grown stiff with age. “Pshaw, Tru,” she would say, “don’t you look like an elegant lady ready for the ball!” (Rudisill & Simmons *Truman Capote* 111)

Thus, Sook played with and pampered Truman and allowed him to role play and have fun. She did whatever he wanted and gave him her undivided attention. In fact, during this time with Sook, Truman craved her undivided attention, and Sook allowed Truman to usurp her attention. Years later, in a 2010 documentary about Capote, Marie Rudisill, Capote’s aunt, explained that “she [Sook] would dress Truman up in all these paisley shawls and put hats on his head and I don’t know if she knew what she was creating” (*An American Revolutionary*). She continued to say, “Truman loved an audience; he had to have an audience” (*An American Revolutionary*). Little did Sook know at this time that young Truman was already psychologically damaged by his parents, nor did she know that she would add to Truman’s psychological problems. It was Sook who appeared to make him take on a feminine persona and also allow his narcissism to grow. Capote would continue to dress very oddly and feminine throughout his life, and one can’t help wondering if this was a way for him to seek attention from others.

Because Sook gave him her undivided attention and because he still craved attention from his own parents, Truman would constantly place himself in roles in which he was the center of attention, and when he played with other children, and as an adult, he often wanted to be the boss or in control of situations. It was during this time that Truman began telling stories to Sook and other relatives and he began exaggerating. Sook would

often allow and encourage this. According to Jennings Faulk Carter, Truman's cousin, "Truman liked to exaggerate. [Sook], Jennie . . . [and others] liked to hear him talk. She would sort of prompt him to expand a little bit. Of course, if he got too wild, she'd tell him right quickly, 'you're just lying, Truman, just get off that'" (Plimpton *Truman Capote* 8).

Furthermore, it was Sook that told Truman about his heritage and stories about the South. And, "He in turn, accompanied her on her autumnal forays into the woods, helping her gather ingredients for her dropsy medicine and the pecans for her Christmas cakes" (Clarke *Capote* 19). Sook became such an influence on Truman that he would later write about her and these experiences in three of his works of fiction: *The Grass Harp*, "A Thanksgiving Visitor," and "A Christmas Memory." According to Clarke, "Sook is the model for his heroine, Dolly Talbo, who makes and sells a dropsy cure from secret ingredients she collects in the woods" (*Truman Capote* 219). According to Marianne Moates, "These relatives, the rural atmosphere, and isolation left indelible marks on Truman, however, for he uses them all in much of his writing: "A Christmas Memory," "The Thanksgiving Visitor," and "Guests" (19). From these works, it is evident that Sook and his cousins had a profound impact on him.

During the first few months he was with his mother's cousins and his mother was away, Lillie Mae would come back to visit Truman, but she only stayed for a day or so and then left for another big city again. This, of course, would greatly upset young Truman because, even though he was being well cared for, he longed to be with his mother. Truman recalled years later as an adult, "I stood in the road watching her drive away in a black Buick, which got smaller and smaller and smaller. Imagine a dog,

watching and waiting and hoping to be taken away. That is the picture of me then” (Clarke *Capote* 24). Likewise, Arch too would come and visit young Truman and try to buy his love and affection by making promises, such as buying him a new dog and books. However, Arch’s promises were nothing but empty hopes that always disappointed Truman (24-25). According to Jack Dunphy, Capote’s long-time companion, “Promises made and broken by his parents were to be remembered by Truman for the rest of his life” (Dunphy 123).

Finally, by the fall of 1930, Lillie Mae decided to ask Arch for a divorce and move to New York permanently. She went to New York and entered the Elizabeth Arden School of Beauty. Surprisingly, Arch “promised to send [Lillie Mae] forty dollars a week for expenses. . . . With that understanding, Lillie Mae left for New York on January 15, 1931” (Clarke *Capote* 27). Lillie Mae was happy for a short time until Arch’s divorce papers never arrived and his allowance checks to her began to bounce. However, Lillie Mae didn’t have to worry financially for long because she finally met that rich man that she had been in search of for years. She met a Cuban business man named Joseph Garcia Capote in 1931. Shortly after, Lillie Mae returned to Monroeville and begged Arch for a divorce once and for all. In 1931, “Lillie Mae’s lawyer formally filed for divorce on August 2, and at the end of August, three weeks after she returned to New York, Arch was presented with legal papers” (*Capote* 32). Then on November 9, 1931, Lillie Mae was finally free of Arch Persons, the man she felt had tricked her into having a baby and staying in Monroeville. She was free of her old life and was now going to live the life she had always dreamed of in New York.

Although free of Arch, Lillie Mae was still saddled with a young son. Even though she did not want Truman,

Under the terms of the divorce settlement, Lillie Mae was to have custody of Truman nine months of the year, Arch the other three, from June 1 through August 31. But for the time being, and for some time to come, that was merely a paper agreement, with neither one assuming the duties of a full-time parent. As far as Truman was concerned, the divorce scarcely mattered. (*Capote* 33)

Shortly after the divorce, Lillie Mae married Joe Capote on March 24, 1932, but Truman remained in Monroeville with his cousins because Lillie Mae saw her son as an obstacle for her climb up the social ladder of success in New York. Her leaving him behind also would have a traumatic effect on Truman throughout his life. According to Jack Dunphy, Capote wrestled with why his mother didn't take him with her all his life. Dunphy wrote, "Years later he [Capote] would talk to her in his sleep, demanding why she had not taken him with her, why she had left him behind to haunt the post office for news of her to enliven his life in the small town of Monroeville" (Dunphy 124).

During this time, Truman was old enough to understand that his own mother really didn't want him. Although he loved being with Sook, he longed for love and attention from his parents. He recalled this feeling many times in interviews as an adult. He stated once, "Except for my cousins and relatives, there was a great absence of love in my childhood" (Grobel 47). Because he didn't receive it, he often felt isolated and alone because his cousins were so much older than he and because he didn't have many friends. Although he had Sook, it wasn't the same as having children to play with or his own mother. As much as he loved Sook, he wasn't always happy. According to Truman, it



“was not that Jennie was short-tempered, that Callie was a nag, or that there was not enough money for all the tantalizing things he saw in the store windows in Mobile. It was that none of the Faulk sisters, even the beloved Sook, could take the place of his real parents” (Plimpton *Capote* 23-24). When Truman wasn’t with Sook, he spent time with two playmates. The first was one of his own relatives, a cousin, Jennings Faulk Carter.

Jennings was the son of Mary Ida Faulk and William Jennings Carter, so Jennings was Truman’s first cousin. Jennings, “Big Boy,” spent most of the summer and some winter weekends at Jenny’s house and was a good playmate for Truman. However, Truman’s closest playmate was a tough, tomboy girl named Nelle Harper Lee who lived next door to Truman’s relatives. Nelle, who was five years old at the time she met the six year old Truman, “had cropped hair, wore coveralls, went barefoot and could talk mean like a boy” (Moates 28). Besides Jennings, Nelle was the only true friend that Truman ever had. This was partly because there weren’t other children Truman’s own age in the neighborhood, but mostly because many of the other children who were older than Truman picked on him. In fact, Truman was seen by other children as a sissy and thought of by others as feminine. Thus, “Truman knew early on that he was different. He thought different. He acted different” (Moates *Truman Capote’s Southern Years* 39). Truman would recall his childhood as being lonely, saying, “I felt isolated from other people . . . I had few friends my own age” (Nance 12).

Nelle, who was the youngest of four children in her family, would often come over and play with Truman. She was often his protector from the other mean children because she was tough. According to George Thomas Jones, a former classmate of Nelle’s brother and author of a short story about Nelle, “She was Queen of the Tomboys,” Nelle,

“had gained the reputation of being a true tomboy and was tough” (e-mail interview). Furthermore, according to Charles Shields, “Nelle was too rough for the girls, and Truman was scared of the boys so he just tagged on to her and she was his protector” (Shields 34). Thus, Truman and Nelle seemed perfect for one another because they were both misfits to an extent. Both children, “By most accounts . . . were brighter than their classmates ” (Marshall “Capote’s Arrival Always a Splash” A7). Also, Truman and Nelle did not take on “normal” characteristics of their expected sex, and so they found comfort in each other’s company. Thus, “from the start they recognized in each other ‘an apartness,’” as Capote later expressed it, and they both loved reading (Long 3). However, they had other things in common as well.

Like Truman, Nelle didn’t receive a great deal of attention from her parents, particularly her mother. Nelle’s parents were Frances Cunningham Finch and Amasa Coleman Lee. Her father was known around town as A. C. Lee. The couple had married on June 22, 1910, and had four children: three daughters and one son. Nelle, who received her name because it was “Ellen spelled backward, after her maternal grandmother,” was the youngest, and her two sisters were much older when she was born (Madden 32). When Nelle was born on April 28, 1926, her sister Alice was fifteen years old and about to go to college, and her sister Louise was ten years old. So Nelle was closest to her brother, Edwin, who was six years old when she was born (Madden 40-41). Nelle’s brother would often read to his younger sister and Truman before they could read. According to Kerry Madden, Nelle stated, “when we were a bit too young to read, brother, who was a voracious reader, would read many, many stories to us. Then we’d

dramatize the stories in our own ways, and Truman would always provide the necessary comic relief to break up the melodrama” (40).

When Nelle wasn’t playing with her brother, she was often out of the house playing with Truman at his cousin’s house to get away from her own mother. Mrs. Lee, “Miss Fanny,” was thought to have a nervous disorder that today would be thought of as bipolar disorder. Nelle’s mother would often have mood swings. For instance, one minute she wanted to be left alone to play her piano or to do crossword puzzles and other times she would stay on the porch watching everyone in town or yelling at people (Madden 33). Then at other times, she would talk “a blue streak to passersby, while at other times she’d retreat into silence” (33). According to Truman, Nelle’s mother disliked her so much that she had tried to drown her on two separate occasions, but Nelle and her older sisters, Alice and Louise, all deny this ever happened (Madden 37). This could be true or another one of Truman’s exaggerations; no one knows. However, what is certain is that “Frances Lee’s ‘nervous disorder’ deprived Nelle of affection while she was growing up and approval from one of the most important figures in a child’s life” (Shields 41). Because of her distant relationship with her mother, it is thought that Nelle took on a masculine identity; however, her sexuality is not known. She never appeared to have any long-term relationships with a male or a female.

Thus, Nelle and Truman had a great deal in common by having unloving mothers who did not show them the proper affection that a loving mother shows her child. In fact, according to Clarke, “The bond that united them was stronger than friendship—it was a common anguish. They both bore the bruises of parental rejection, and they both were shattered by loneliness” (*Capote* 22). Because of her distant relationship with her

mother, Nelle gravitated towards her father. In fact, her father was “the most influential person in Nelle’s life” (Madden 30). Nelle and A. C. Lee had a close relationship when he was available, but he was a busy attorney, working for the law firm Bugg, Barett & Lee. He was also the editor of the local town newspaper, *The Monroe Journal*, from 1928-1947 (35).

Though Mr. Lee was busy a great deal of the time, he did make time for his daughter and her friend, Truman. In fact, when Mr. Lee did have free time, if he wasn’t working a crossword puzzle for himself, he would play word games with Nelle and Truman. According to Shields, “One of them would think of a word and provide two clues: one letter in the word and the total number of letters. Then the other would have to guess the word. Nelle’s vocabulary shot up as a result” (59). Nelle loved the affection she received from her father and loved playing these word games with him. Likewise, Truman, who disliked Nelle’s mother, was very fond of Nelle’s father, and he had a great impact on Truman’s life. Mr. Lee always gave Nelle and Truman encouragement regarding their education and imagination. In fact, it was Mr. Lee who gave Truman a pocket dictionary that he used to draft many of his first short stories (*Truman Capote—the Tiny Terror*).

The gift from Mr. Lee was not Truman’s first dictionary. According to Truman’s aunt, Marie Rudisill,

from the time he was five years old he would lug around this huge Webster’s Dictionary--that was bigger really than he was—and he would take this dictionary and he told me that he was going to memorize the dictionary. He would take it out in the front yard by this great big yellow rose bush . . . He would take that

dictionary and go out and sit under the tree with Nelle Harper Lee. She would go out with him, and they would study that dictionary, and used words that were absolutely unreal. Once I took him to New Orleans and we went to see a show and he meant to say “grotesque,” and he said to me, “that was the most grotesque thing I’ve ever seen.” He was always straining to know and use big words. Truman loved words; he played with words; he lived with words. (*An American Revolutionary*)

Likewise, according to Jennings Faulk Carter, Truman used to love to use big words that other people in the family did not know. Using big words was how he got attention. His vocabulary increased, and he thought of using these words that others didn’t know as some kind of secret language that only he and Nelle knew (*Truman Capote –the Tiny Terror*). When Mr. Lee was at work or busy, Nelle spent much of her time at Truman’s cousin’s house. Truman, Nelle, and Jennings would often tell fantasy tales to Sook and eat homemade cakes in the kitchen (Moates 28). But when Jennings wasn’t around, Truman played almost exclusively with Nelle at his cousin’s house. Often, the three children or just he and Nelle would use their imagination and create skits. Moates, in her 2008 book, *Truman Capote’s Southern Years: Stories from a Monroeville Cousin*, depicts some of the many adventures of Truman, Nelle, and Jennings during their childhood. Some of the adventures include collecting money from neighborhood children to see a grotesque carnival the three put together in which a two-headed chicken they built was on display, building a homemade swimming pool, creating homemade popguns, and holding a Halloween party. These tales were all told to Moates by Jennings Faulk Carter, who is still alive today. According to Jennings, Truman was “always the

leader who dreamed up schemes for us to get into. He set the stage for their little episodes and played them out to the end. But his quick thinking could lead us out of the schemes just as fast” (34). Of course, all of these fun times together would help Truman’s creativity and his exaggeration skills, and most of the time Truman played with his friends, he would establish himself as the leader. According to Jennings, Truman often “would continue to get Nelle and me to do the physical part of any game and he would be the brains” (Plimpton *Truman Capote* 12). Thus, often Truman would manipulate Jennings and Nelle into allowing him to be the boss and in doing things his way. An example of Truman’s personality can be seen when the three would play school. Jennings said, “Nelle and I liked to play school with Truman, even though we were usually the students and he was the teacher with a lot to say on numerous subjects” (Moates 47). When the three played together, Truman needed to be the center of attention and the one in charge. It is at this time also that one can see Truman’s narcissistic tendencies appearing. It appears that Truman substituted his friends’ love and the act of writing for his parents’ love and affection. He blocked out his pain and found a way to substitute the pain he felt with something else—writing.

Kristeva explains this concept in “Freud and Love,” stating, “If narcissism is a defense against the emptiness of separation then the whole contrivance of imaginary, representation, identification and projections that accompany it on the way to strengthening the Ego and the Subject is a means of exorcising that emptiness” (257). In short, when one feels an emptiness, he/she portrays an inflated ego which is shown through narcissism—one’s exclusive focus on his own body/needs. It is a “barely covered abyss where our identities, images and words are the wish of being engulfed”

(257). Truman longed for attention, and when he couldn't get it from his parents, he projected his feelings onto his friends and demanded his needs be met by them. They gave him the attention he craved. Lee appears to have used writing as a way to substitute the lack of affection from her mother also. However, Lee had one thing that Truman didn't—she had triangulation—a mother and father in her house, and, even though she was closer to her father, she had the attention of both parents.

When Nelle and Truman were together, they sometimes did different things than when they were with Jennings. For instance, they would work jigsaw puzzles and read comics and/or books. Their favorite book series was Seckatary Hawkins—an adventure series about a boy's club in Kentucky (Shields 51). Likewise, they enjoyed reading the Sherlock Holmes mysteries as they got older. If they weren't reading, the two loved to watch jury trials at the Monroe County Court House. They felt that “some trials were better than picture shows, and they were free” (Madden 48). The trials they would observe in Monroeville would also serve as practice for later in life when the two worked together on *In Cold Blood*. Both Nelle and Truman were intrigued by crime; however, Nelle loved the law, especially since her father was a lawyer. In fact, Nelle would eventually use two of the trials she watched as a child as inspiration for a trial her protagonist, Atticus Finch, would defend in, *To Kill A Mockingbird* (1960). According to Madden, “In the late 1990s, Harper Lee told a biographer of Richard Wright that the Walter Lett trial was the inspiration for Tom Robinson” (70). Not only did the Lett trial apparently influence Nelle in her novel, but so did the Scottsboro trial that dominated the news when she grew up. Thus, “Without question, these trials influenced the fictionalized trial of Tom Robinson” (Madden 70).

Besides reading, playing, and observing trials, Nelle and Truman also enjoyed using their imagination and creating their own stories. Truman enjoyed reading and writing because he was able to forget about his lonely childhood. According to Jennings Faulk Carter, “Truman was ‘different’ from the very beginning. He had a marvelous gift with words, and so he began to write. First, the truth; then the truth enlarged with fantasy” (Moates 8). So, Truman and Nelle would spend hours either in Truman’s cousin’s front yard or in Nelle’s backyard in a chinaberry tree using their imaginations to tell stories. They even began writing their own stories at this young age. As Nelle said, “If I went to a film once a month it was pretty good for me, and for all children like me . . . we didn’t have much money. Nobody had any money. We didn’t have toys, nothing was done for us, so the result was that we lived in our imagination most of the time” (Shields 46). Truman felt the same way—that his early childhood was spent creating/writing stories with Nelle, which became his substitute for affection. These times spent with Lee were great experiences, and his and Lee’s loneliness sparked their creativity. Capote told Lawrence Grobel, “Harper Lee was my best friend” (qtd. in *Going* 138). Capote also stated, “Growing up in some places like Monroeville, as it surely must have been in similar towns, produced a strange loneliness which added to sensibility, and seemed to increase creativity. In a way, I used up some of my loneliness by writing” (Nance 13). Thus, the two felt like professional writers when Nelle’s father gave them the best gift the two could ever receive, a black Underwood No. 5 typewriter that they used to type their stories.

Although Lee preferred to verbally tell the stories or write them out by hand, Truman convinced her that “typing was what real writers did, instead of printing in block letters”



(Shields 51). It would be this typewriter that brought them closer together, and they created a special way of working with one another. One friend would dictate the story while the other friend typed it out. Usually it was Truman who dictated and Nelle who typed; however, the two often took turns performing each role (Madden 42). According to Myles Weber, “Their joint apprenticeship served as preparation for months they later would spend together in Kansas comparing notes and drafting chapter studies for *In Cold Blood*” (233).

Likewise, as young children, the two also started a new way of composing their own stories. They began to use their senses, particularly of sights and sounds of their neighborhood, to create their stories. They began to observe small-town life in Alabama. One of the first stories Truman wrote was entitled, “Old Mr. Busybody,” in which he wrote about neighbors. As he told Pati Hill in 1957, “I wrote a kind of *roman à clef* called ‘Old Mr. Busybody’ and entered it in the contest. The first installment appeared one Sunday, under my real name. . . . Only somebody suddenly realized that I was serving up a local scandal as fiction, and the second installment never appeared” (Hill 21). Even from Capote’s first published work, he was causing scandal and gaining attention that he craved. Lee also wrote, but did not publish her early works, but she also wrote about her town.

Later as an adult, Nelle recalled that when she was a child living in Monroeville, “life in a small town provided the most fertile training for storytelling. We did not have the pleasure of the theater, the dance, of motion pictures when they came along. We simply entertained each other by talking” (Madden 43). One of their first short stories together was supposedly entitled “The Fire and the Flame”; however, it has been lost or

destroyed (Shields 51). In fact, according to Madden, ‘It is not known whether any of Nelle’s stories from childhood have survived, but Truman’s mother, an alcoholic, burned all of his in a fit of rage after he grew up” (43). The two continued to write when they weren’t in school or didn’t have homework. Capote recalled as an adult, “I used to come home from school and other kids did whatever they did, but I would write for three or four hours every day, just like some kids would practice the piano. It was an obsession” (Grobel 52). Even though they both loved to write, both disliked school a great deal and would rather be by themselves writing than attending school.

When Truman lived in Monroeville, he began attending school in September 1930. Jenny enrolled him in the Monroeville County Elementary School. Nelle attended the school one year later as a first grader. Both did not like school very much because they were separated and in different classes since they were a year apart. Besides not being able to be with Nelle in classes, school was hard for Truman because he was often bored and picked on by other students and even teachers. Teachers disliked him because he felt he was smarter than they were and liked to show off his extensive vocabulary he accumulated while reading and writing. Capote stated, “When I first started school I did well . . . But in the third grade, I started getting straight F’s. And marks for bad behavior too. They thought that something had happened to me between the second and third grade, or that I was retarded. Of course what happened was I just got bored” (Steinem “Go Right Ahead and Ask me Anything” 95). Besides being bored, Truman had another major problem; he was often bullied, especially for his short stature and his feminine voice.<sup>24</sup> As with the neighborhood children, Truman had trouble with many children at

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<sup>24</sup> According to Joanne Carson, Capote’s growth was stunted and his voice was feminine because his mother, Lillie Mae, underwent a lot of x-rays during her pregnancy (Carson telephone interview).

school. He was often beat up and found “his face in the sand with the help of some other eager boys. He was a perfect target, dressed in fancy duds from Aunt Jenny’s shop” (Madden 53). Often Nelle rescued Truman from these scenarios as she had done in their neighborhood quarrels that took place after school or during the summers off from school. As an adult, Truman stated that “it would [have been] . . . easier if he had been born a girl” (56). But Nelle always defended Truman because he was her best friend, and she never let anyone “influence her decisions” (54).

Because Truman wasn’t accepted by the students and the teachers, he created every excuse not to attend school. According to his aunt Marie Rudisill, “He lied shamelessly and feigned one illness after another. Truman was a great little actor. His asthma attacks looked so real that Sook was always ready to send him in an ambulance to Mobile” (Rudisill and Simmons *Truman Capote* 175). Of course, Truman’s gift for exaggerating and acting as a child would also follow him as an adult when he would alienate friends later in life. But more than hating school for the students, Truman was bored by the teachers’ lectures and felt he already knew much of what they were teaching, or didn’t have an interest in what they were teaching. So, he often would try to write in class or fall asleep in class. In short, Capote felt he was better than most people, and he knew early on what he wanted to be—a writer. He explained in a newspaper article,

The thing about people like me is that we always knew what we were going to do. Many people spend half of their lives not knowing. But I was a very special person and I had to have a very special life. I was not meant to work in an office . . . I wanted to be a writer and that I wanted to be rich and famous. (Fleming “The Jumbled private life behind Truman Capote’s public façade” 9)

Nelle didn't enjoy school either. According to Nelle's older sister, Alice, "School was not Nelle's favorite place . . . [she] was extremely bored by the school curriculum' and . . . teachers regarded her as an 'unchallenged student'" (Madden 50). Thus, because both children were bored by the curriculum, they poured all of their energies into their writing. In fact, one of Truman's first stories, "Old Mr. Busybody," was written while he was still living in Monroeville and when he was pouring all of his passion and creativity into his writings. He submitted it to a contest held by the local paper, *The Mobile Register*. It was thought that this story was about four people in his town, including Nelle's mother. In fact, "The whole town recognized the four characters, Capote recalls, and the resulting furor brought his publishing career to a temporary halt. He continued writing, however, entering a number of newspaper competitions" (Nance 13). Later as an adult, Truman admitted that the story was indeed about Nelle's mother, saying, "I wrote something called 'Mr. Busybody' about Mrs. Lee . . . I won second prize and they printed the whole thing and it was just ghastly" (Grobell 53). But Truman would not have to worry for long because in September 1932, he got good news that would take him out of school. It was during this time that Truman's mother finally sent for him.

When Truman received news that his mother wanted him to join her in New York, he was thrilled. While he was sad to be leaving Sook and Nelle behind, he was excited for a new start in New York, and, more important, he was finally ready to receive the love he so long missed from his mother. So, it was during the fall of 1932, that Truman and Nelle were separated, but their friendship would still survive. They would write letters back and forth with Truman returning to his relative's house to see Nelle every summer. Nelle was sad to see Truman leave, but eagerly awaited summers for his return. Even

though the two wrote to each other while Truman was in New York and wrote to each other as adults, no letters that scholars are aware of “between the two friends have survived or been made public” (Madden 94).

When Truman first arrived in New York, he was impressed with his new home on Park Avenue, but he was disappointed immediately with his mother’s attitude. Not only did his mother have a new name, as she changed her first name from Lillie Mae to Nina, but she was also transformed into a new, sophisticated woman who still did not shower him with the love and affection he so longed for (Clarke *Capote* 40). Instead of receiving her love and attention, he was ignored at first. All of his mother’s attention was showered onto her new husband, Joe Capote, a New York accountant. A friend of Nina’s from New York, Ly White, admitted that Nina and Joe “didn’t want to do anything but be together” (40). So, once again, Truman found himself rejected by his mother and saw himself as an obstacle in her way. Not only was he an obstacle for her relationship with Joe, but also he now found himself being an embarrassment to his mother.

In Alabama, Truman, even though feminine, was not such an eye sore, but in New York, as he grew older, he became more flamboyant and noticeable when compared with other boys his age as he attended social gatherings with his mother and step-father. Nina Capote was torn because she tried to love Truman, but she wanted him to change and be a normal male. Thus, “Her feelings toward him oscillated between polar extremes, in other words, and from one day to another, sometimes from one hour to another, he could not predict how she would greet him” (Clarke *Capote* 41-42). In fact, according to one of Truman’s friends, Phoebe Pierce Vreeland, Nina Capote “seemed almost to have an antagonistic attitude in many respects towards him. She would talk about his sexuality in

a way that just made everybody cringe, and we'd pass it off as a joke, but it wasn't"  
(*Truman Capote—Tiny Terror*).

Furthermore, Nina was so embarrassed by Truman's feminine mannerisms that she took him to several different psychiatrists "in hopes of finding a cure, a drug or therapy that would turn him into a real boy" (Clarke *Capote* 43). However, nothing worked. Truman remained who he was and could not change. He still remained effeminate. According to Clarke,

As the years passed, the differences between him and other boys became even more pronounced: he remained small and pretty as a china doll, and his mannerisms, little things like the way he walked or held himself, started to look odd, unlike those of other boys. Even his voice began to sound strange, peculiarly babylike and artificial, as if he had unconsciously decided that part of him, the only part he could stop from maturing, would remain fixed in boyhood forever, reminding him of happier and less confusing times. (42)

Because of his mannerisms, Truman's mother constantly corrected and fought with him to change. At times, she even hated him for who he was. Once she said, "I know it is contemptible of me . . . , but I just can't stand the sight of my son—not because he is my child but because he is not my child . . . , that boy is so strange, so utterly strange . . . . He does not look or act like a normal boy" (Rudisill with Simmons *Truman Capote: The story of his eccentric boyhood by an aunt who helped raised him* 207). It was Nina Capote's attitude towards Truman that hurt him most. She made no attempt to hide her disapproval from him.

Not only was Truman unhappy with his mother for her attitude towards him, but he did not like all of the affection she showered on his new step-father. In short, Truman was jealous of his step-father. So, “Truman went out of his way to antagonize him, making fun of his Cuban accent” (Clarke *Capote* 42). Joe Capote, however, loved Truman and spoiled him every chance he got. In fact, Joe loved Truman so much that he formally adopted Truman with the urging of Nina, who declared Arch Persons an unfit father because of his scams and recent arrest. Joe and Nina filed formal adoption papers in September 1934 (37). Finally, after several months, Nina’s “petition was granted: Joe became a father, and at the age of ten Truman Streckfus Persons was renamed Truman Garcia Capote” (Clarke *Capote* 38). Nina hoped the adoption would allow Truman to bond better with Joe and take on masculine mannerisms. However, that was not to be, and Truman became more of a problem than ever. He began taking many of his frustrations and problems from home out on his teachers and classmates at school.

Truman attended several different private schools in New York. Among these were Trinity School and St. John’s Academy. He was unhappy at all of them (Nance 13). As in Monroeville, he was an average student and performed poorly in some subjects, but now in New York, he was having temper tantrums in school and often attracted the attention of school administrators who had to either deal with him or discipline him. In fact, both teachers and school administrators felt that “he was a very disturbed child” (Clarke *Capote* 44). One administrator stated,

I always felt sorry for Truman . . . I had the feeling that he was somewhat of an unwanted child. There were problems at home, and his mother would call to talk about his temper tantrums, which I gather were not uncommon. She was

completely at a loss to know what to do. The year he entered I witnessed one such incident myself. He was lying on his back in the hallway, kicking his feet like a child of two. He was obviously on the verge of hysteria. (44)

Thus, since Truman was having problems at Trinity School and throwing temper tantrums, and because of his poor grades and feminine tendencies, Nina decided to have Truman transferred to St. John's Military Academy—an all boy's school. Nina felt that “where she and the psychiatrists had failed, tough drill instructors and the company of other, more virile boys might succeed” (Clarke *Capote* 45). So, in 1936, Truman went to military school at the age of twelve; however, life was no better there. Truman hated wearing the cadet uniform and disliked living in the dorms. What he hated even more was that he was again sent away from his mother. In short, all he wanted was her love, but for some reason, she was unable to give it.

At St. John's, Truman was still bullied and now was mocked for his southern accent. He was also now older and actually was sexually molested by other boys. Truman spent one year at the military school until 1937 and was then transferred back to Trinity School, where he remained for two more years; however, in 1939, the Capotes moved to Greenwich, Connecticut (Clarke *Capote* 50). At this point, he entered yet another new school, Greenwich High School. At Greenwich, Truman learned to emulate his father's charm, and he “learned how to set himself apart from everyone else . . . he discovered how to turn the spotlight on himself and himself alone” (51). Truman became a show off and entertained students and teachers by telling stories, but more important, Truman developed his passion for writing again by writing for the school's literary magazine (54). Although he was failing most of his subjects such as algebra and French, he poured all of



his energies into writing for the paper and working on his own writing. At this time he received encouragement from his 11<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher, Catherine Wood. In fact, she tried to get Truman accepted by other students and teachers. Wood stated, I “tried to make the other teachers understand him, so that they would not expect a great deal from him” (53). Thus, because of Ms. Wood, Truman continued to write and began publishing in the school newspaper; his works “were, considering his age, remarkably good” (54).

One piece<sup>25</sup> that does exist that has never been published is a story Truman wrote in middle school, entitled “I feel like A Motherless Child”<sup>26</sup>—about an African American family in which a twelve year old boy, the protagonist, has to do everything, including helping to provide for his family. This story is very revealing. If we think that Truman is his protagonist, Willie, then, he feels as if he doesn’t have a mother because she doesn’t do anything and he does everything. In the story, Willie has to walk far to get rations or food for his family. His mother orders him to do this grown up task while she cuts out pictures from a magazine. Emma, Willie’s mother states, ““You’ll have to go back up to the Rileys now Willie, . . . and get our rations, we ain’t got nothin’ here fo supper” (Capote “I feel like A Motherless Child” 2). Besides performing this task, Willie also “helped with the plowing or later in the season the cotton picking, he was almost able to do a grown man’s work in the field” (3). After he walks far to get the rations and is told he can’t have any until tomorrow, Willie once again performs a grown up task by picking berries in the wilderness because he feels he can’t go home empty handed. He has to provide for his mother, sister, and blind grandfather. Besides this information, it is

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<sup>25</sup> Few of Truman’s early writings exist. Several pieces of his early writings from high school can be found in the archives at The New York Public Library; however, a majority of his early works did not survive. Many were burned by Truman’s mother in one of her alcoholic rages (Madden 42-43).

<sup>26</sup> This draft can be found in box 22, folder 13 at The New York Public Library in the Capote archives.

revealed that Willie has a sister, Elva, with whom he is close. At the end of the story, he calls to his sister and “started to run to her” (7).

It seems clear that, like his other stories that are autobiographical, this one is too. First, the title of the story is revealing because Truman himself felt like a motherless child all those years he spent with his mother’s cousins in Monroeville. Furthermore, in the story, Willie’s mother’s name is Emma—four letters—the same number as Truman’s mother’s new name Nina. It seems obvious that Truman is Willie, and that Elva, his older sister with whom he shares a close relationship, could be Harper Lee because the two shared a close relationship and Truman did not have a sister. The closest person he had as a child was Harper Lee. Even at this early age, Truman was able to articulate that he was unhappy with feeling like an adult in a child’s body. He cast himself as the protagonist doing everything for himself and his family with his mother not around. This story was written after he arrived in New York while he was in junior high school, and is thought to be one of his very first stories written in New York. (See Appendix C to read Capote’s entire story).

By the time Truman approached his senior year, he was writing a great deal, but his relationship with his mother became even more strained. Nina continued to try to take Truman to psychiatrists, but now he refused to go. Thus, it was the same old story—she was embarrassed by him and he hated her. However, now she began drinking as a way to cope with him. According to Joe Capote, she drank to deal with Truman’s feminine mannerisms. Nina was now drinking more heavily, and it was taking a toll on Truman because she began humiliating him in front of the few friends that he had. Often, Nina would scream obscenities at Truman regarding his sexuality. One such example is when

she screamed at him, “‘You’re a pansy! . . . You’re a fairy!’” (Clarke *Capote* 62). Furthermore, Nina actually began telling Truman that she didn’t want him and never wanted him. She told him he was the reason she had two abortions when she became pregnant by Joe Capote. She said, “I will not have another child like Truman . . . and if I do have another child, it will be like Truman” (41). Nina treated Truman so badly that now he loathed his mother more than he ever had before, but at the same time, he was desperate for her to accept him and love him. According to Jack Dunphy, Truman “did not love her, but he wanted her to love him” (Dunphy 125). As an adult, Capote said about his mother, she was “the single worst person in my life” (Long 3). By this time, it was clear that Capote, who was now obviously homosexual, had a form of narcissism. Freud defined several types of narcissism. However, Capote appears to be a person who engaged in anaclitic object choice narcissism—a type in which one invests his libidinal energy in aspects of himself (Freud “On Narcissism” 95). As a result of loathing his mother, Truman created mothers in his fiction that were either absent or that were too occupied to be around the protagonist. Examples of absent mothers in his fiction can be seen in *Other Voices*, *Other Rooms*, *The Grass Harp*, “The Thanksgiving Visitor,” and in many other short stories. Mothers are not important in Capote’s fiction.

Eventually, the Capotes moved from Connecticut back to New York in 1942, and because of Truman’s terrible grades, he couldn’t graduate with his class, so he had to begin his senior year again in September. He hated Trinity School so he transferred to a private school—Franklin School—but eventually dropped out of school without graduating to pursue his passion to become a professional writer (Clarke *Capote* 67-68). Truman felt that school was a waste since he felt he could educate himself. As an adult,

he said in his book, *The Dog's Bark*, "The reading I did on my own was of greater importance than my official education, which was a waste and ended when I was seventeen, the age at which I applied for and received a job at *The New Yorker Magazine*" (5). Thus, "Capote is the perfect illustration of his own belief that education can neither make nor break a novelist" (Allen "Capote Reconsidered" 11). After he left high school and started his first job, he realized that life wasn't easy. Truman had to perform many menial tasks at this job including working in the mail room, cleaning, and sorting through rejected comic strips and notifying the artists. However, he didn't have it rough for long, and caught a break when he was fired from his job (Nance 13).

In 1944, after being fired from *The New Yorker Magazine*, Truman began working on a long story that would eventually become his first novel, *Summer Crossing*, which would not be published until 2006 by Random House, because he abandoned working on it and put the manuscript aside once he had ideas for other short stories and another novel, *Other Voices, Other Rooms*. This work would be published as his first novel in 1948. He was able to write full-time with the help of his step-father, who agreed to help him pay bills. Thus, his decision to drop out of school and to become a writer would turn out to be the best one Capote ever made.

His first novel would also garner him a great deal of attention instantly—not for his writing, but for the picture of him posing provocatively on the back cover. The picture was of "a beautiful, young, blonde Capote [who] reclines on an elegant couch and glares into the reader's eyes provocatively" (Garson 6). The picture got everyone talking about the book and then reading the book. Again, the picture was just another example of Capote's need for attention. He thrived on attention and he "always wanted fame. He

coveted and curried it, calculatedly at first [as with *Other Voices, Other Rooms*] then instinctively almost needing it even more than he wanted it” (Fleming “The Private World of Truman Capote” 9).

Once Truman became a writer, family seemed to matter to him very little. Eventually, his mother committed suicide in 1954. Capote admitted in an interview that his mother’s suicide was devastating. He answered the question, “Is it [your mother’s suicide] still a painful subject?” by stating, “I was very upset” (Grobel 48). He said, “yes” when asked in the same interview, “Do you think about her often since then?” (48). Clearly, his mother’s death had an effect on him, and she influenced his life, even if it was in a negative way. By the late 1960’s, he grew apart from his real father and Joe Capote. He stated, “I cut my father out long ago. He never did anything for me and he was not my responsibility. I finally cut Joe out too” (Clarke *Capote* 258). While family seemed to matter very little to Truman, he always kept a special place in his heart for Nelle Harper Lee.

Once Truman decided to become a professional writer, he met many people who assisted him, including: Mary Louise Aswell, an editor at *Junior Bazaar*, a sister magazine of *Harper’s Bazaar*. Mary Louise read Truman’s manuscripts and gave him editing advice. In fact, “Mary Louise was more like a mother; not since Sook had he met a woman who was so warm and unstinting in her affection . . . she seemed to make good people want to be better and encouraged mediocre writers” (Clarke *Capote* 94). She also put Truman in touch with the right people who would publish his works, including Bennett Cerf, who was at Random House. Cerf put Truman in contact with Robert Linscott, a senior editor at Random House. In October 1945, because he was so

impressed with Truman's short story "Miriam," at the urging of Cerf, Linscott signed Truman to a book contract for *Other Voices, Other Rooms* "with a small advance, twelve hundred dollars, to be doled out in installments of a hundred dollars a month beginning December 1" (98). Thus, several of Truman's short stories, "Miriam" (1945), "Tree of Night" (1945), and "Shut A Final Door" (1948), were published and earned awards. "Miriam" made the first impression when it was published in *Mademoiselle*. It won an award in 1946 for Best First-Published Story, and then "Shut A Final Door" won the O'Henry Award in 1948 (Clarke *Capote* 182). Then, Capote got his biggest break that same year, when his first novel, *Other Voices, Other Rooms*, was set to be published. However, Capote's controversial picture on the back not only brought the book a great deal of attention, but also, the picture became a fixture in the public's mind that Capote was not just a writer, but a gay, effeminate writer. According to Jeff Solomon, "Capote succeeded by constructing a public image that became fixed in the public eye through the widespread exposure of the author photo from *Other Voices, Other Rooms*" (295). Capote made a conscious decision to seek out fame and attention not only for his book, but for himself—a quality he learned to do from childhood. Thus, Capote's narcissism was beginning to advance slowly during this time; however, he seemed to be able to keep it in check. While Truman had finally made it and was starting to be a successful writer, he could not forget his best friend Nelle, and continued to write to her and use her as a model in his fiction. Likewise, Nelle was experiencing her own success at school and in the publishing world.

Like Capote, Nelle Harper Lee had her share of difficulties in school, but she received her share of accolades and opportunities. When Truman left Monroeville for

New York in 1932, Lee “wrote only in secret, though not in a journal. Her desk at home contained personal essays, short stories and limericks. But she never dare share them with her parents or siblings, because in a family as literate as hers, she dreaded the possibility that her efforts would fall short” (Shields 64). After Truman left, Nelle continued at the Monroeville County Elementary School and then graduated into the new high school that was built in 1936. While Nelle was in school, she earned good grades but, like Truman, was bored by the curriculum and longed “to be the Jane Austen of the South” (Madden 75). She longed to write, and her teacher, Miss Gladys Watson, encouraged her and became her mentor. Miss Watson “lived across the street from the Lee family and . . . introduced Nelle to British Literature” (75). Nelle loved 19<sup>th</sup> century British literature, especially Jane Austen, and spent hours in the library reading her. Other favorite authors and books were *The Way of All Flesh* by Samuel Butler, *Tom Jones* by Henry Fielding, *Remembrance of Things Past* by Marcel Proust, and *Huckleberry Finn* by Mark Twain (Boyle). She, like Truman, continued to write using Ms. Watson’s rules. Ms. Watson “emphasized the three Cs in her teaching: ‘clarity, coherence, and cadence’” (Madden 75). It was these rules that, most likely, helped Nelle in her writing career, especially as she helped Capote research *In Cold Blood*.

Nelle graduated in 1944 and then went to Huntingdon College in Montgomery, Alabama to study law, but spent only her freshman year there. While there, she wrote for the school paper, *The Huntress*. Also, Nelle published several stories in *The Prelude*, the college literary magazine. In fact, “Two of her fictional stories, ‘A Wink at Justice’ and ‘Nightmare,’ feature courtroom settings and lynchings” (Shields 81). While at Huntingdon, she did not fit in with other students and proved that she was an iconoclast.

She didn't "care what she looked like and didn't wear make-up and avoided all formal events" (83). Instead of wearing skirts and blouses, like other girls on campus, Nelle wore jeans and a sweatshirt, and she even smoked a pipe at times. However, even though she didn't assimilate with other students, she excelled in all of her classes and even made the dean's list. Because Huntingdon did not offer a law degree, she transferred to The University of Alabama in Tuscaloosa (91).

At the University of Alabama, Nelle tried to fit in more. Surprisingly, she joined the sorority Chi Omega (The Nu Beta Chapter) (Shields 84). She also joined the literary honor society, Chi Delta Phi, the scribblers club, and the glee club; however, she refused to have her photograph taken with any of these groups (77). Even though she tried to mix with students, she still maintained her own sense of self. While all of her sorority sisters and friends were going out on dates and socializing, Nelle was playing golf or doing homework or writing for *The Rammer Jammer*, the college magazine. In fact, she "was appointed the editor in chief of *The Rammer Jammer*," and editing the magazine took up a great deal of her time (91). She served as editor during fall 1946-spring 1947. A sample of Nelle's writing entitled "Some Writers of Our Times" written for the November-December 1945 edition of *The Rammer Jammer* (See Appendix D). In this satire about southern writing, Nelle describes what helps one to become a writer. One of her main ideas is that an environment is of great importance to a writer. Lee says, "An author's environment is important to his training in the gentle art of self-expression" (Lee "Some Writers of Our Times" 15). She further states that people make a difference in a writer's life, as well as a soul:

The first and foremost qualification one must have if he aspires to the higher



Brackets of the intelligentsia are (1), a sadistic father (2) an alcoholic mother. He must be beaten into insensibility by the former and ostentatiously loved and hated by the latter in her drunken orgies . . . This comes under the flexible category of the Unhappy Childhood. . . . Another factor in the development of creative talent is that a soul is required . . . no matter what kind of soul the budding writer has, it must be flaunted before the eyes of his readers . . . The element of frustration is another MUST. If a person is not frustrated what would he have to write about? (14-15)

In short, Lee feels that one must have a dysfunctional family. Although this piece is a satire, what emerges from it is Nelle's true feelings about Truman's and her childhood, and she reveals Truman's ego. In this same piece, Lee discusses her friend Truman. She writes about a young gentleman who discusses writing with her while she sips a coke. The young man discusses his childhood and when he began writing, saying, "I've been writing ever thince I wath eight years old, and I'm not going to let him bully ME!" (14). Even in this early piece of writing, Nelle used autobiographical elements, and it shows the impact her family and her best friend Truman had on her. It also reveals Capote's ego and how he craved attention.

After spending one full year as editor for *The Rammer Jammer*, Nelle quit because her law classes had become too demanding. She needed more time to study and use the library (Shields 99). She continued in law school at The University of Alabama, but she was growing more tired and unhappy with her classes. During her summer break in 1948, Nelle joined an exchange student program and went to Oxford University in England. While she was there, she attended a twentieth-century literature seminar and

fell in love with England (108). When she returned to The University of Alabama in the fall of 1948, she only stayed for one more semester and then decided to drop out and move to New York to become a professional writer as Truman had. So, in the spring of 1949, Nelle left the University of Alabama without taking the bar exam or any type of degree and moved to New York to write. It is suggested that she “Left [school] not long before she would have graduated. The philosophy and human drama of law interested her; the dry technicalities did not” (Mills 2). However, Capote suggested that Nelle dropped out of school because of an affair with a university professor. According to Shields’ biography, *Mockingbird: A Portrait of Harper Lee*, Capote claimed Lee had the affair and told a reporter, “She had a great love affair with one of her professors at college, and it did something to her. It didn’t end up well” (Shields 105).

Whether this is true or not, Truman continued to be of great help to Nelle during this transitional period in her life. According to Madden, Truman helped Nelle get settled in New York. One of his first acts of kindness was to introduce her to his friends Michael and Joy Brown, who lived in New York and were Southerners by birth. According to Shields in both his books, *I Am Scout* and *Mockingbird*, Capote had brought Lee to rehearsals of *House of Flowers* in 1954. This show was to be a musical on Broadway (Shields *I Am Scout* 82). However, according to a new documentary entitled *Hey, Boo: Harper Lee & To Kill A Mockingbird*, in which Michael and Joy Brown are interviewed, they claim Capote wrote a letter to them, in which he asked them to look after Harper Lee while she stayed in New York until he arrived. The letter is not in Gerald Clarke’s *Too Brief a Treat: The Letters of Truman Capote*, but can only be found in the Browns’

personal collection of Lee's letters at their home. They were nice enough to show it on screen and read part of it during the documentary.

According to Michael Brown, Capote wrote to him from Tangers. He said, "Out of the blue came a letter from Truman—very short letter—written in very tiny handwriting—saying, I have a friend who is coming to New York. Would you look after her? Her name is Nelle Harper Lee" (*Hey Boo: Harper Lee & To Kill A Mockingbird*). Brown continued, "had she been a dreadful person, I would have, out of comradeship, looked after her the best I could" (*Hey Boo*). So, it was Capote who introduced Lee to the Browns and many people in New York, and he also showed her around the city. In fact, when in New York, "Nelle and Truman occasionally got together with a group of Alabama transplants living in New York. They would bring a bottle of bourbon and join the party, although it doesn't appear that Nelle was close with many in the group other than Truman" (Madden 96). The two were finally together again after years of being apart, and Nelle was eager to learn what Truman had learned as a newly published author.

After getting acquainted with people and places in New York, Nelle landed her first job in a book store. However, because it didn't pay well, she quit, and in 1950, accepted a job at Eastern Airlines as a ticket agent. Then, a few months later, she switched airlines to The British Overseas Air Corporation (BOAC) as a reservations clerk (Madden 99). Like Capote, Lee also had to work several menial jobs before she became a published author. During this time and over the next several years, Nelle worked at the airlines and wrote several short stories. By November 1956, she felt she had several stories ready for publication, which included: "The Land of Sweet Forever," "A Roomful of Kibble,"

“Snow-on-the-Mountain,” “This is Show Business,” and “The Viewer and the Viewed” (Shields 112). Lee showed these stories to her new friend, Michael Brown, a Broadway composer and an ex teacher from Texas, and Brown encouraged Lee to find a literary agent. In 2010, in *Hey Boo: Harper Lee & To Kill A Mockingbird*, a documentary about Lee’s life, Michael Brown stated, “we had read character sketches that she wrote about people in Monroeville and they were so perceptive. She just amazed us . . . I knew if she could get her work seen, she would have it. And it was little enough to do for a fellow southerner.” Nelle accepted Brown’s advice and found an agent, Maurice Crane (Shields 113).

After several weeks, Crane complimented Nelle and “her ability to tell a good story,” but only believed that “Snow-on-the-Mountain” could be published. He gave the other stories back to Nelle. Of course, Nelle was disappointed, but Maurice gave her something better than a stack of unusable stories. He gave her good advice. He encouraged Nelle to keep writing and suggested that she write a novel because they were easier to publish. For two years, Lee worked hard at her job at the airlines, but found little time to write full-time. Maurice suggested that she quit her job as a reservation clerk and devote all of her energies to writing full-time, but she couldn’t; she needed to pay her bills. During this time, Lee became closer to the Browns; she spent a great deal of time with them and often babysat their two sons (*Hey Boo*). Surprisingly, by Christmas of 1956, Nelle would receive a gift that would not only change her life, but would also allow her to pursue her writing career and write full-time as Maurice had suggested (Shields 113).

Like Truman, who had received financial help, Lee received a great deal of financial help. During December 1956, Nelle received a gift of a lifetime from her close friends, Joy and Michael Brown. The Browns were entertaining Nelle for the Christmas holidays since she was unable to return to Monroeville for Christmas due to working at the airlines. Because this would be her first Christmas without her family, the Browns hosted Nelle for Christmas dinner, and as a Christmas present, they gave her an envelope. Inside there was a blank check and a note that read, “You have one year off from your job to write whatever you please. Merry Christmas” (Madden 104). Nelle was extremely grateful for such a gift and called it a “miracle” and an “act of love” (Shields 114 ). Nelle accepted the Browns’ gift and would eventually memorialize them as characters in an essay she would write years later entitled “Christmas to Me” (1961) that was published in *McCall’s Magazine* (Madden 103). In the essay, Lee writes,

One Christmas, though, was different. I was lucky. I had the whole day off, and I spent Christmas Eve with them. When morning came, I awoke to a small hand kneading my face. . . . I got downstairs just in time to see the little boys’ faces as they beheld the pocket rockets and space equipment Santa Claus had left them. . . . They took their time. Finally she said, “We haven’t forgotten you. Look on the tree.” There was an envelope on the tree, addressed to me. I opened it and read: “You have one year off from your job to write whatever you please. Merry Christmas.” . . . They assured me that it was not some sort of joke. They’d had a good year, they said. They’d saved some money and thought it was high time they did something about me. (Lee “Christmas to Me”)

Soon after the essay was published, Lippincott offered Lee a contract for several thousand dollars for another work—"Go Set A Watchman"—she began (Shields 116). With the advance in pay, she repaid the gift to the Browns (Mills 2). However, in the meantime, she began writing more short stories, which included "The Cat's Meow" and the first fifty pages of a novel she called "Go Set A Watchman," which was about a lawyer, Atticus Finch (Shields 114-115). This draft would eventually become her Pulitzer Prize winning novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, but in 1957, it still had a long way to go. Crain suggested that Nelle change the title of the novel to *Atticus* and add more material to it. She took his suggestions and sent it to J. B. Lippincott for publication. She then began working on a second novel, *The Long Goodbye*, that was never published.<sup>27</sup>

While working on *The Long Goodbye*, Lee received a phone call from Lippincott Publishing asking her to come in for a meeting to discuss her manuscript of *Atticus*. Nelle was thrilled. Lippincott Publishing put Nelle in touch with several editors who worked with her over three years to rework *Atticus*. The editors loved the characters in her manuscript, but they explained to her that it "had structural problems: it was more a series of anecdotes than a fully conceived novel" (Shields 115). So after much rewriting, Nelle's book was finally ready to be published; however, it was suggested that she change the name of the book from *Atticus* to *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Nelle agreed, but also wanted to go by the name Harper Lee rather than by Nelle Lee for fear of being called Nellie by readers and editors (129). Soon, Nelle would become Harper Lee, and her first novel would be published and become a great success.

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<sup>27</sup> In his acknowledgments and throughout his book, Charles Shields references that some private papers of Lee's are housed in the Williams' papers at the University of Texas at Austin. However, it is unclear if Harper Lee still holds rough drafts of *Atticus* or other works.

While both writers took different paths to become published authors, one thing can't be denied. They both were influenced highly by their childhoods, and both would use autobiographical elements from their childhoods, including each other, as models for characters in their first novels. The first major idea that can be seen in Capote's early writings is that his characters often felt unloved and were isolated much as he was ignored by his parents and isolated. His writings show his fear of being abandoned. According to William L. Nance, "The early fiction of Truman Capote is dominated by fears. It descends into a subconscious ruled by the darker archetypes, a childhood haunted by boggy men, a world of blurred realities whose inhabitants are trapped in unendurable isolation" (Nance 16). Besides showing the feeling of abandonment, Capote's early works also show one protagonist with one or no parents and a close friend of the opposite sex.

These ideas are seen in several works, but the best examples are in, *Other Voices*, *Other Rooms*. This novel is an initiation novel in which the protagonist is searching for his identity and his father. In fact, although he didn't have a close relationship with his father, he is showing his feelings of abandonment and his wish for a relationship with his father. According to his aunt, Marie Rudisill, "In that book [*Other Voices*, *Other Rooms*], he is seeking his father. That is really what he is seeking . . . the golden haired boy is Truman" (*An American Revolutionary*). His protagonist, Joel, leaves his hometown, New Orleans, where he was raised by relatives, and travels to Skully's Landing to find his father. Joel Knox, is "too pretty, too delicate and fair-skinned; each of his features was shaped with a sensitive accuracy and a girlish tenderness," much the way Truman was grew up (*Other Voices*, *Other Rooms* 6). Thus, Joel is Truman.

Likewise, Capote gave Joel the last name Knox—which was Truman’s mother’s last name. But one of the biggest ideas that can be seen in the novel is that he used Nelle Harper Lee as the model for Joel’s best friend, a tough tomboy, Idabel Tompkins, who spends much of her time with Joel and with whom he shares adventures. According to her twin, Florabel, Idabel isn’t “afraid of nothing” and she often protects Joel (*Other Voices, Other Rooms* 23). Furthermore, readers can see that Idabel is a tomboy much like Lee was. In the novel, Idabel states, “I’ve fooled around with nobody but boys since first grade. I never think like I’m a girl; you’ve got to remember that, or we can’t never be friends” (74). Thus, “Lee had grown into the fascinating and bumptious young person whom Truman used as the model for Idabel Tompkins—a forceful personality, quick with a dirty joke, haughty, and angry about the constraints of her gender” (Shields 59).

As a first novel, Capote wrote about what he knew, and:

With these similarities, it is easy to understand that this novel is an autobiographical one: Truman had written, in symbol and allegory, the story of his boyhood. Joel is his alter ego, his emotional and spiritual doppelganger. Joel’s mother rejects him by dying; Nina rejected Truman by leaving him so often in the care of Sook and her other Faulk relations. The invalid at Skully’s landing is Joel’s father in name only; so was Arch little more than a name to Truman. Joel is desperate for love much like Truman was. (Clarke *Capote* 80)

Besides some obvious similarities between author and protagonist, one major similarity deals with Capote’s homosexuality. Joel is also thought to be homosexual like Truman. Joel is trying to find his own identity, and in the end of the novel, he chooses to stay at Skully’s Landing and be with his cousin, Randolph, a transvestite. Clearly, as Clarke



states, this novel was “not just a novel, but his psychological autobiography: charity, under the guise of fiction, the anguished journey that ended in his discovering of his identity as a man, as a homosexual, and as an artist” (Clarke *Capote* 150). Furthermore, Capote himself admitted that *Other Voices, Other Rooms* contained characters that he knew. He stated “that many of the people he knew at the time are in the novel in some guise or other. Idabel was inspired by Harper Lee” (Long 47).

Besides *Other Voices, Other Rooms* being autobiographical and reflecting his friendship with Harper Lee, Capote’s first novel, *Summer Crossing*, that wasn’t published until after his death, also contains autobiographical elements. *Summer Crossing* was thought to have been lost for fifty years because Capote claimed to have destroyed it, but a house sitter of his Brooklyn Heights apartment discovered it in the trash in the 1940’s and saved it. Upon Capote’s death and the death of the house sitter, the nephew of the house sitter sent the manuscript to Sotheby’s for auction in 2004. It was later published by Gerald Clarke with permission from Capote’s lawyer Alan Schwartz. In *Summer Crossing*, Capote creates a friendship between a female protagonist, Grady McNeil, and her best friend, Peter Bell, much like the friendship he had with Harper Lee. Grady and Peter’s parents are friends and from the same social circle. They are also friends from childhood, and Grady has always protected Peter. Furthermore, Grady has a crush on Peter, but he is uncertain about his own sexuality. With these similarities, this novel is also thought to be an autobiographical one. According to Robert Emmet Long,

The relationship of Grady and Peter has a certain affinity with that of Idabel and Joel Knox in *Other Voices*. In both cases they are misfits in their social environments, and although they are close they do not enter into a physical or

sexual relationship; the girl in each case is the stronger of the two. These characters seem to derive from Capote's own childhood friendship with Nelle Harper Lee. (36)

Capote also used Lee as a model for the character Ann "Jumbo" Finchburg in his short story, "Thanksgiving Visitor." In this story, Capote writes,

Nobody ever picked a fight with him [Odd Henderson] except one time a girl named Ann "Jumbo" Finchburg, who happened to be the other town bully. Jumbo, a sawed-off but solid tomboy with an all-hell-let-loose wrestling technique, jumped Odd from behind during recess one dull morning, and it took three teachers, each of whom must have wished the combatants would kill each other, a good long while to separate them. (*Thanksgiving Visitor* 1)

William T. Going agrees with my observation, stating, "[t]he narrator's school life interestingly includes a somewhat exaggerated portrait of Harper Lee" (Going 139-40).

Thus, it is clear that Lee had a special place in Truman's life and that he thought a great deal of her. It is also clear that the two were inseparable during their childhood and that Lee felt the same way towards Capote. Furthermore, just as Truman memorialized Nelle in his early works of fiction, Nelle also modeled a character in her first novel, *To Kill a Mockingbird*, after him. Nelle's novel, like Truman's *Other Voices, Other Rooms*, is an initiation novel in which the protagonist is searching for an identity. In fact, the main character, Scout, is a girl who is thought to be Harper Lee. Scout's best friend is a neighbor boy, Charles Baker Harris, otherwise known as Dill, who lives with relatives and visits every summer just as Truman did. In the novel, Scout states, "Dill was from Meridian, Mississippi, was spending the summer with his aunt, Miss Rachel, and would

be spending every summer in Maycomb from now on” (Lee *To Kill a Mockingbird* 7). Lee also mentions how short Dill is in the novel, stating, “He wasn’t much higher than the collards” (7). Thus, Truman was the model for Dill. Shields confirmed this idea, stating, Lee “would later write of him, when Truman became Dill, the lonely boy next door in *To Kill A Mockingbird*” (34). Likewise, Capote himself verified that Lee’s novel was autobiographical, stating, “the first two-thirds of the book, the portion about Scout, Dill, and Jem (Nelle, Truman, and Nelle’s brother, Edwin, probably) trying to coax Boo Radley out of his house is “quite literal and true” (127).

So, both childhood friends, who shared many adventures, not only helped each other—Nelle protecting Truman from bullies and Truman encouraging Nelle to write—but they also used a great deal of autobiography in their writing. But Capote’s writing was always used as an escape from real life and a way to relieve his anxiety. In fact, according to both Helen S. Garson and Conrad Knickerbocker, Capote’s writing can be divided into two main categories—the happy stories and the darker stories. For instance, according to Knickerbocker,

There are two Truman Capotes. One is the artful charmer, prone to the gossamer and the exquisite, of ‘The Grass Harp’ and *Holly Golightly*. The other, darker and stronger, is the discover of death. He began the latter exploration as a very young man in his first novel ‘Other Voices, Other Rooms’ and in such stories as ‘Master Misery,’ ‘The Headless Hawk’ and ‘A Tree of Night.’ (Knickerbocker 2)

Lee simply wrote about what she knew and used autobiography throughout her writing, such as her town in *To Kill a Mockingbird* and her own real experience with the Browns in “Christmas to Me.”

By 1959, the two would have a chance to actually work together again on a project that was not autobiographical, but rather, a novel that was based on an actual murder case and would become *In Cold Blood*. As Alice Hall Petry explained, “*In Cold Blood* confirms how Lee’s and Capote’s impulse to collaborate had not ceased once they left childhood” (“One Hit Wonder” 152). While working together as adults, the two would conduct many interviews and record research notes that would become valuable documents which reveal not only what each contributed to Capote’s novel but also display both authors’ personalities. However, something would eventually cause a rift in this close friendship while both worked on this case. Chapter Three of this dissertation will explore Lee’s notes, show large portions of her notes and observations for the first time, and explain the creative differences the two authors had while researching this project.

“He knows what he wants and he keeps himself straight. And if it’s not the way he likes it, he’ll arrange it so it is” (Zoerink 308)

Harper Lee

### CHAPTER THREE

#### HARPER LEE AS JOURNALIST: HER INSIGHTS, INTERVIEWS & CAPOTE’S CHANGE IN PLAN

In November 1959, while sitting in his New York apartment, Truman Capote picked up a copy of *The New York Times* and was struck instantly by an article with the headline, “Wealthy Farmer, 3 of Family Slain.” The article went on to explain how “father, 48-year-old Herbert W. Clutter, was found in the basement with his son, Kenyon, 15. His wife Bonnie, 45, and a daughter, Nancy, 16, were in their beds” and had been killed by shotgun blasts (9)<sup>28</sup>. (See Appendix E to view the article). Although the article was brief, it discussed the slaying of the Clutter family in Holcomb, Kansas, an area Capote knew nothing about. No one quite knows what attracted Capote to the article about a murdered family more than 1,200 miles away, but within a few days of reading it, Capote realized that this murder would be the perfect topic for his next project—an article he wanted to write, and within a few days, he was in Kansas with his childhood friend, Harper Lee, ready to research what happened (Nance 159).<sup>29</sup> But what exactly happened in Kansas between the two authors as they researched the crime? What did Capote research and contribute to his novel? More important, what specifically was Harper Lee’s role in this project and what did she research and contribute to Capote’s masterpiece? Recently, these topics have been discussed and debated by critics and

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<sup>28</sup> At the time of the murders, the Clutters had two other daughters, Beverly and Eveanna, who did not live at home in 1959.

<sup>29</sup> Many different dates have been given as to when exactly Capote went to Kansas. According to William L. Nance, “Three days later [after reading the article], Capote was in Kansas attending the funeral of the murder victims” (155). However, other scholars, such as Gerald Clarke, have listed the date for Capote’s departure to Kansas as mid-December 1959 (319).

scholars briefly; however, not until 2006, with the publication of Charles Shields' unauthorized biography about Harper Lee, *Mockingbird*, did the world begin to understand what research Lee conducted to help Capote write *In Cold Blood*.

However, Shields' 44 page chapter, "See Nelle's Notes," gives readers only a glimpse of what Lee contributed to Capote's novel. After all, Shields' biography was not an in depth study of Lee's research notes or *In Cold Blood*; rather, this text was a biography about her life, and no biography about Lee would be complete without examining her time spent in Kansas with Capote. One chapter of this biography is extremely important for discussing Lee's time in Kansas, but this chapter only narrates Capote's and Lee's time there, and does very little to reveal her extensive research skills. Shields' chapter only shows brief excerpts of Lee's notes. Thus, Shields had good intentions of giving Lee the long overdue credit she deserves for her work on the project, but he does not indicate all she did to assist Capote. Then, in 2010, Ralph F. Voss's book, *Truman Capote And the Legacy of In Cold Blood*, mentions briefly Lee's assistance on Capote's project. And while Voss mentions one or two more examples that Shields does not, Voss's text does not examine Lee's full contributions to Capote's novel either. After examining all of Lee's and Capote's original research that is housed at The New York Public Library and The Library of Congress, I have discovered many of Lee's exact contributions to Capote's non-fiction novel for which she was never acknowledged. Lee's contributions to Capote's work are more in depth than Shields or Voss reveals, and this chapter and Chapter 5 will analyze Lee's contributions to *In Cold Blood*.

In 1959, after Capote read the brief article, "Wealthy Farmer, 3 of Family Slain," he decided to approach his boss and editor of *The New Yorker*, Mr. William Shawn, to ask

for permission to write about this topic as his next project. Originally, Capote had claimed that he asked for permission to write an article on the impact the murders had on the town of Holcomb, Kansas, rather than a book. Thus, Capote wanted to show the effect the murders had “on that small and isolated community” (Clarke *Capote* 319). Apparently, “Shawn liked the idea and commissioned the article but neither had as yet any inkling of how much larger an undertaking would be involved or of how many years would elapse during Capote’s investigation of crime and punishment in America’s heartland” (Long 83). After receiving Shawn’s permission, Capote realized that he did not want to go to Kansas alone, and he has been quoted as saying, “I didn’t exactly want to arrive out there all by myself, not knowing what I was walking into with the town in the grips of this immense murder case. A little town like that” (Frankel 71). However, more important, he knew how demanding the research phase of this article would be. He would need to interview and speak with hundreds of people, so he asked his childhood friend, Nelle Harper Lee, to accompany him (Madden 112).

Surprisingly, however, as close as Capote was with Harper Lee, she was not his first choice as a research assistant. Initially, Capote “asked Andrew Lyndon<sup>30</sup> to go with him, but Andrew was otherwise engaged” (Clarke *Capote* 319). When Lyndon declined Capote’s offer, he asked Lee to go to Kansas with him as his “‘salaried assistant researchist’—a term he invented for her” (Shields 139). Lee agreed to go with Capote immediately. In fact, she was very excited to go even though she was busy reading the galleys *To Kill a Mockingbird* and placing the finishing touches on it. With regard to going to Kansas, she stated, “He said it would be a tremendously involved job and would

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<sup>30</sup> Andrew Lyndon was a former roommate of Capotes who was also a writer (Shields 133).

take two people. . . . The crime intrigued him, and I'm intrigued with crime—and, boy, I wanted to go. It was deep calling to deep" (139).<sup>31</sup> So when Capote called her, Lee was so excited to travel to Kansas with him. Their job "was to take a six-inch news item in *The New York Times* about the murder of the farm family in Holcomb . . . and find out the humanity buried beneath the crime" (139).

Before the two authors could travel to Kansas, the first thing they had to do was make a contact in Kansas. With the help of Capote's publisher at Random House, Bennett Cerf, Capote was able to contact the President of Kansas State University, Dr. James McCain, who made Capote a proposition. If Capote agreed to speak to the English faculty at the University, then Dr. McCain "would provide letters of introduction to key people in Garden City" (Shields 133). Once this connection was made, Capote and Lee met at the Grand Central terminal and boarded a train, the Santa Fe Super Chief, sometime in December 1959, and they rode 800 miles to Chicago (134). They changed trains in Chicago and rode to St. Louis and changed trains again, riding to their destination in Kansas. In all, they spent three entire days on the train until they reached Kansas (Madden 113). Once they arrived, the two headed straight to Kansas State University where Capote kept his promise to speak to the English faculty, and where they finally met Dr. James McCain. Once this commitment was met, the two rented a Chevrolet and drove four hundred miles to Garden City (Shields 134). While they were driving, the radio repeated the news of the Clutter murders, stating, "Police authorities, continuing their investigation of the tragic Clutter slaying, have requested that anyone

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<sup>31</sup> Lee submitted *To Kill a Mockingbird* to her publisher when she returned from Kansas in 1960; it was published on July 11, 1960 by J.B. Lippincott & Co.



with pertinent information please contact the sheriff's office" (136). After hearing this, Capote was more eager than ever to begin work on his new article.

The two arrived at the Warren Hotel,<sup>32</sup> the nicest hotel in the area and one of the closest to the Clutter's farm. The next day, Capote and Lee went to the Finney County court house to meet the lead detective assigned to the case, Alvin Dewey (Shields 137). From this point on, the two would spend several months in Kansas researching the crime and would return to Kansas several times over the next five years because the article that Capote had hoped to write soon would become a non-fiction novel instead, and this novel would garner him a great deal of success, fame and money. When the book was finally published in January 1966, it "soared within two weeks of publication to the top of the best-seller list, where it remained for over a year. In the process of selling 800,000 copies in hard cover and over 2,500,000 in paperback—in America alone—it became one of the biggest money makers in publishing history" (Norden 111). However, not once would Capote acknowledge Lee's help in the acknowledgements of his non-fiction novel.

The final acknowledgements that were published in the first edition of *In Cold Blood* were short—only one page—and read as follows:

#### ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

All the material in this book not derived from my own observation is either taken from official records or is the result of interviews with the persons directly concerned, more often than not numerous interviews conducted over a considerable period of time. Because these "collaborators" are identified within the text, it would be redundant to name them here; nevertheless, I want to express a formal gratitude, for without their patient co-operation my task would have been

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<sup>32</sup> Today, the Warren Hotel no longer exists (*Bibliomania: In Cold Blood with Truman Capote Part 2*).

impossible. Also, I will not attempt to make a roll call of all those Finney County citizens who, though their names do not appear in these pages, provided the author with a hospitality and friendship he can only reciprocate but never repay.

However, I do wish to thank certain persons whose contributions to my work were very specific: Dr. James McCain, President of Kansas State University; Mr. Logan Sanford, and the staff of the Kansas Bureau of Investigations; Mr. Charles McAtee, Director of the Kansas State Penal Institutions; Mr. Clifford R. Hope, Jr., whose assistance in legal matters was invaluable; and finally, but really foremost, Mr. William Shawn of *The New Yorker*, who encouraged me to undertake this project, and whose judgment stood me in good stead from first to last.

T.C.

Surprisingly, the acknowledgments do not thank or even mention Harper Lee. Why? As of today, no one quite knows. However, what Charles Shields and I have both come to understand after analyzing Lee's primary research notes is that Lee's contributions were invaluable to Capote's work and that she, most certainly, deserved credit for her journalistic skills. However, instead of being acknowledged for her research and the help she gave Capote, the book is dedicated to Lee and Jack Dunphy, Capote's longtime boyfriend. The dedication reads, "For Jack Dunphy and Harper Lee with my love and gratitude." Even here Capote places Lee second and lists his lover first rather than Lee, the woman who helped him research the book. Thus, "Not even the perfunctory acknowledgment page paid tribute to Nelle's large and important contributions" (Shields 253). It seems that not only was the acknowledgement page an exaggeration, but most of Capote's work on *In Cold Blood* was also exaggerated.

From the beginning to the end of the research phase, publication, and promotion of *In Cold Blood* (1959-1966), Capote exaggerated or contradicted himself when he spoke about this project. For instance, he told William L. Nance in 1965 that when he opened *The New York Times* in November of 1959, the story about the Clutters just jumped out at him. Capote stated, “I was reading the *New York Times*, and just for no reason at that very same moment, because it never crossed my mind, I thought, maybe that’s it. . . . There wasn’t anything about it that appealed to me” (Nance 160). Capote acted as if the story just caught his eye and he decided that would be his next project.

However, this is not what he told George Plimpton in 1966. When asked, “Why did you select the particular subject matter of murder; had you previously been interested in crime?” Capote responded,

Not really, no. During the last years I’ve learned a good deal about crime, and the origins of the homicidal mentality. Still, it is a layman’s knowledge and I don’t pretend to anything deeper. The motivating factor in my choice of material—that is, choosing to write a true account of an actual murder case—was altogether literary. The decision was based on a theory I’ve harbored since I first began to write professionally, which is well over twenty years ago. It seemed to me that journalism, reportage, could be forced to yield a serious new art form; the “nonfiction novel,” as I thought of it. (Plimpton “The Story Behind a Nonfiction Novel” 196)

Capote continued to state that, “after reading the story it suddenly struck me that a crime, the study of one such, might provide the broad scope I needed to write the kind of book I wanted to write. Moreover, the human heart being what it is, murder was a theme not

likely to darken and yellow with time” (199). Thus, Capote wanted people to believe he just randomly selected the topic about the Clutters when he was interviewed by Nance; however, in reality, he was searching for a topic for two years about which he could write a nonfiction novel as he told George Plimpton.

After comparing these statements, several important ideas can be seen by juxtaposing these two statements. First, Capote exaggerates and lies on occasions to suit his own personal needs, and he continued to do so while talking about *In Cold Blood*. Even Capote’s closest friend and confidante, Joanne Carson, admitted to George Plimpton that Capote exaggerated on many occasions. According to Carson, “in Truman’s mind, he doesn’t lie, he makes things the way they should have been” (304). Second, Capote’s main reason for writing *In Cold Blood* appears to have been calculated for years. In short, he was searching for a subject that was timeless and had many characters to create the non-fiction novel. He told Nance what he thought the requirements for a non-fiction novel were. According to Nance,

A large cast of characters was one criterion Capote kept firmly in mind during his two-year search for a subject for his nonfiction novel. Another was timelessness. “The difficulty,” he says, “was to choose a promising subject. If you intend to spend three or four or five years with a book, as I planned to do, then you want to be reasonably certain that the material will not soon ‘date.’” (Nance 158)

Third, Capote was searching for an idea to bring him attention—something he craved since childhood.

Therefore, it doesn’t seem likely that Capote had been surprised by the article that informed him about the Clutters’ murders as he once stated, and he had not just picked it

randomly on the spur of the moment, but rather he had been searching for the perfect subject for two years. It also appears that Capote had planned to write a novel from the very beginning of his venture out to Kansas, and only convinced William Shawn, his editor, to let him go by telling him he would write an article. If the crime didn't make for the perfect topic for the book he wanted to write, then he could write the article he had promised Shawn and keep searching for a new topic. This idea seems evident because he had been searching for the perfect topic for over two years, and he had specific requirements he wanted to use. Likewise, Capote told Lee that "the crime intrigued him" (Shields 139). However, he answered George Plimpton's question, "had you been interested in crime?" by stating, "not really, no" (16). So, from the beginning of this project, Capote had established himself as someone who exaggerated or lied, or as Lee has stated, "if it's not the way he likes it, he'll arrange it so it is" (Zoerink 308). Thus, Capote appeared to be someone who wanted to take sole credit for his research/writing without regard for the truth or others' feelings. Capote's actions appear to stem from his childhood and his want/need for attention because he was denied this his entire life, as Chapter 2 discussed.

Not only did Capote exaggerate or lie as to why he chose the article and topic to write about, but he also exaggerated by taking most of the credit for conducting all of the research for his novel, and by not stating exactly how Harper Lee assisted him. For instance, Capote stated in an interview with *The New York Times* in 1966, as published in George Plimpton's, *Truman Capote* (1997), specifically what Lee's role was in the project. When Capote was asked what Lee's specific contributions to his work were, Capote answered,

She kept me company when I was based out there. I suppose she was with me about two months altogether. She went on a number of interviews; she typed her own notes, and I had these and could refer to them. She was extremely helpful in the beginning, when we weren't making much headway with the townspeople, by making friends with the wives of the people I wanted to meet. She became friendly with all the churchgoers. (199-200)

Likewise, Capote granted William L. Nance an interview in November 1966, which led to the publication of his now famous book, *The Worlds of Truman Capote* (1970), in which he elaborated on why Harper Lee went to Kansas with him. Capote stated, "She had been thinking about doing a nonfiction book, and wanted to learn my techniques of reportage, so she asked to come along" (162). Furthermore, he told Haskell Frankel from the *Saturday Review* in 1966 that "Harper Lee very kindly said she wanted to go along for company, and then she did a lot of research and some special sort of interviews" (71). From these comments, one would think that Harper Lee was only in Kansas one time for about two months, that she wanted to go to Kansas to keep Capote company and that she wanted to assist Capote to learn from his research methods; however, Capote's statements are extreme exaggerations. From interviews with people who knew Lee personally and from Capote's own letters, I can prove that Lee was in Kansas more than two months and that she was not just with Capote to learn from his research methods.

With regard to the first statement, Capote allows readers to believe that Harper Lee was only in Kansas one time and for a very short time; however, this is completely false. Harper Lee went to Kansas with Capote in December 1959 and stayed two months at first, and then she returned to New York to deal with her own book's publication.

However, she made several return trips to Kansas with him. Delores and Clifford Hope Jr., Herb Clutter's personal attorney and his wife, confirmed this idea. Although the Hopes did not remember the exact year that Capote and Lee returned to their home, they do remember that Lee pulled them aside in their kitchen when she visited and told them not to mention that she won the Pulitzer Prize in front of Capote because he would be jealous. Delores Hope recalls that Capote was taking his jacket off and hanging it up in her hall closet when Lee stated this to her and her husband in their kitchen. Thus, Lee would have been in their home sometime after 1961, when she won this prize. Likewise, Shields explains in his biography about Lee that "Two months later, she and Truman were back in Kansas for the trial, scheduled to begin the third week of March [1960]" (176). Also, Marie Dewey stated that "Nelle returned with him two or three times" (Plimpton *Capote* 172). However, the biggest pieces of evidence that prove Lee returned to Kansas after her initial visit in November 1959 are letters Capote, himself, wrote to the Deweys. The first was a postcard dated December 13, 1961. Capote writes,

[Verbier, Switzerland]

[13 December 1961]

Marie dear—

A quick note to say that what I wrote you about Nelle was unfounded; her father had a heart attack and she has been in Monroeville the past 2 months nursing him. She is coming with me to Kansas.

Love to all

T. (Clarke *Too Brief a Treat: The Letters of Truman Capote* 336)

I suggest the second letter written to the Deweys, dated February 15, 1963, also confirms that Lee planned to return to Kansas after her initial visit in 1959. In this letter Capote writes, “I think our friend Nelle will meet me in G.C. [Garden City]. . . . we leave here 3 March. . . . Will write before departure. Much, much love T.” (Clarke *Too Brief a Treat: The Letters of Truman Capote* 382). Therefore, Delores Hope’s interview, Capote’s own statements and his letters prove that Lee was in Kansas more than the one time that he originally acknowledged.

Furthermore, Lee might have kept Capote company while she was in Kansas with him, but she did much more than that. She did not just befriend the citizens of Holcomb. So what did Capote mean when he said Lee “did a lot of research and some special sort of interviews”? (Frankel 71). Capote should have said she went on interviews with him and at times went on many interviews by herself without him, and wrote her own notes, typed his notes, and provided many of her own insights into the interviews. In fact, Lee went on many interviews with him and was a second pair of eyes and ears. Lee was “a trained observer . . . [and unlike Capote] she entered into an immediate rapport with the local farmers and their wives, having lived for years in similar farming country in the south” (Long 83). For instance, when the two authors first met Alvin Dewey, the lead detective on the case, and other Kansas citizens, Capote did not make a good initial impression on them, and because of this, not many people would co-operate with him. When Capote first met Alvin Dewey, he stated that he needed special access to the information the detectives gathered and insisted that he was different from other reporters. In short, he made himself out to be superior and set himself apart from other reporters. Even worse, Capote really made a bad first impression on Dewey when he



explained he didn't care if the case was ever solved. Capote told Dewey, "But I'm not a newspaperman . . . I need to talk to you in depth. What I'm going to write will take months. What I am here for is to do a very special story on the family, up to and including the murders. It really doesn't make any difference to me if the case is ever solved or not" (Clarke *Capote* 321). Capote's superior attitude did not go over well with the KBI, but he also had problems making friends with the townspeople.

When Capote first arrived in Kansas, many had never heard of him or his fiction, and many could not even pronounce his name. According to Delores Hope, "I don't think too many people knew much about him. Various people called him Cappuchi" (Wiebe "Author left mark on state" 46). Even worse, many thought he looked peculiar. Capote made a bad impression on the townspeople by the attire he wore and through his speech and mannerisms. In short, many thought he was a freak. According to Robert Emmet Long, many Kansas citizens made

snide comments . . . about his fey manner; yet after a while—and largely through Lee's ingratiating effect on the locals—people began to change their minds about Capote. Fascinated by his conversation, they began to invite him to their homes for dinner. The real breakthrough occurred when Lee befriended the southern-born wife of Alvin Dewey, who had been put in charge of the Clutter murder case.

(84)

Because of Capote's peculiarity and the fear that many citizens felt, many would not even speak to him. At first, when Capote and Lee arrived in Kansas, many people were terrified by what had just occurred. People were terrified even to open their doors to strangers, and "Hardware stores sold out of locks and bolts" (Nance 170). Harper Lee

recalled, “Everybody was looking at his neighbors, wondering if they could be murderers—the killings seemed so motiveless. You’d see porch lights on all night. We were given the cold shoulder” (Nance 164). In fact, “when Capote went alone to Mrs. Hideo Ashida, the neighbor of the Clutters, she refused to open the door until he could provide her with the name of someone to verify his identity” (qtd in Shields 140). This may be one other reason that Capote decided to take Harper Lee with him on many interviews because many people would not open their doors when they saw this odd looking little man standing on their front porch. However, it was Harper Lee who got people to accept Capote in Kansas. In short, people did not like Capote’s arrogance and his rude demeanor, but many were drawn to Lee’s down to earth and caring attitude.

According to Harold Nye, one of the investigators on the case, Harper Lee “had the room next to Truman. Absolutely fantastic lady. I really liked her very much. But I did not get a very good impression of that little son of a bitch. We got up there and he’s parading around in his negligee, it was not a good impression . . . and that impression never changed” (Plimpton *Truman Capote* 170). Likewise, Gerald Van Vleet, a farmer in Holcomb, did not like Capote. He said, “I thought Capote was queero” (Shields 141). Furthermore, according to Bill Brown, a newspaper editor in Garden City at the time, “[Capote] was hard to forget. . . . His personality and appearance were foreign to western Kansas” (“Capote remembered in town of ‘*In Cold Blood*’” 9B). Brown further explained, Capote “would strut jauntily into the newsroom of the *Garden City Telegram* and expect immediate attention. . . . He’d come in right before deadline and think I could drop everything. . . . He had this celebrity air. . . . He thought he deserved immediate and undivided attention” (“Capote remembered in town of ‘*In Cold Blood*’” 9B). Also,

Duane West, a Finney County attorney, said, “Capote seemed to go out of his way to come across as odd. . . . When he came out here, I think he made a conscious effort to appear the part of the kook” (Stineman). Thus, Capote appeared to have wanted to be the center of attention as he had done during his childhood. It was because of this attitude that, according to Lee, Capote was shunned by many people. Clarke reported, “His ability to charm, which had overcome many other formidable obstacles momentarily failed him, moreover” (*Capote* 321). Thus, the citizens thought he was strange, and many “had never seen anyone like Truman—he was like someone coming off the moon” (Shields 141).

However, Lee, who had a warm and caring personality, started to speak with people and was much more accepted in Kansas than Capote was. Furthermore, in a 2002 interview, Nye told Charles Shields, “Truman didn’t fit in, and nobody was talking to him. But Nelle got out there and laid some foundations with people. She worked her way around and finally got some contacts with the locals and was able to bring Truman in” (157). Therefore, without Lee, Capote would have never broken the ice in Kansas and obtained interviews or information he needed to write *In Cold Blood*. Lee was able to win the Kansas citizens over because she “was like the girl next door with her sense of humor and easy ways, which immediately made people feel comfortable in her presence” (Madden 115). Lee’s demeanor was very warm and loving. She was very mannerly, always saying “please” and “thank you,” and she was very down to earth (Hope telephone interview August 2010). In fact, Dolores Hope also explained Lee’s demeanor to biographer Kerry Madden, stating, “Nelle walked into the kitchen, and five minutes later I felt like I’d known her for a long time” (115). Nelle was very kind and giving.

She “never showed up empty-handed when invited to dinner” (Madden 116). Likewise, Delores Hope told me that she just loved Lee. According to Hope, “I felt totally at home with her; she was friendly, courteous and always seemed to say the right thing” (telephone interview August 2010).

Besides her mannerly and down to earth demeanor, Nelle also appeared normal and dressed like a woman of the 1960’s, as many of the Kansas women did. Lee wore skirts and dresses while in Kansas. Thus, her normal appearance was key to helping her get accepted. However, Capote seemed to dress and act very different from Lee and the local citizens, which is why he wasn’t accepted. Added to the pressures of being scared by the crime that just happened, the citizens in Kansas were also put off by Capote’s demeanor and attire. Alvin Dewey recalled the first time he saw Truman, in an interview with George Plimpton. Dewey stated,

The first time I saw him he was wearing a small cap, a large sheepskin coat, and a very long, fairly narrow scarf that trailed plumb to the floor, and then some kind of moccasins. He was dressed a little different than our Midwest news reporters. I’d speak to him in the hall there just as I would with the other news media, but as far as becoming fast friends or anything like that, it didn’t develop then. (169)

Most people in town felt the same way towards Capote. In fact, at one point Capote told Lee that “he was thinking of giving up and going home” (Clarke *Capote* 323). Capote was frustrated that most people wouldn’t talk with him, and he felt at a loss. He further told Lee, “I cannot get any rapport with these people. . . . I can’t get a handle on them” (323). However, Lee encouraged Truman to stay in Kansas, saying, “You *will* penetrate

this place” (323). And, thanks to Lee, Capote stayed and did gain some co-operation of the local citizens, mostly because she appeared with him at those interviews.

Lee’s manners and demeanor also proved helpful at getting the two writers invited to outings and dinners while there. For instance, on December 20, 1959, Capote and Lee arrived at the Clutters’ house to investigate the home and conduct research. At first, they were denied access. Detective Nye was mad that Capote and Lee were able to explore the house. Nye stated, “I was in charge of securing the house. [Detective] Roy Church was helping me. We examined the entire house for evidence during which all was secured. And how they [Capote and Lee] got in later, I don’t know” (Shields 143). It was Clifford Hope, Herb Clutter’s personal attorney, that assisted Capote and Lee. Hope was someone Dr. James McClain, had encouraged Capote to contact, and Mr. Hope had agreed to help them. According to Shields, “The KBI had placed the farm off-limits but Hope agreed to intercede with the family’s executor, Kenneth Lyon, explaining that Nelle and Truman were friends of Dr. McClains” (143). Apparently, Hope agreed to help the two writers because his wife, Delores, was a newspaper reporter for the *Garden City Telegram*. So, Hope brought the two writers to the Clutters’ house to meet Kenneth Lyon, the administrator of the Clutter’s estate.<sup>33</sup> (Clifford Hope Jr. telephone interview).

It was at the Clutters’ house, while showing Capote and Lee the house, Clifford Hope was struck instantly by Lee’s down to earth demeanor. After he spent time with them, when he arrived home, Mr. Hope told his wife, Delores, about the two writers and how nice Lee was (Clifford Hope Jr. telephone interview). Likewise, he, and especially his wife, felt bad that the two would not have anywhere to spend Christmas. When he

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<sup>33</sup> Kenneth Lyon had been chosen by the surviving daughters of the Clutters to be the administrator of the estate, and he was the only one with keys to the house (Clifford Hope Jr. telephone interview June 2009).

told his wife this, Delores remembers telling her husband to invite them to Christmas dinner because she remembered being alone for Thanksgiving in a strange town years earlier, right after she graduated from college. She recalled eating a can of tomatoes alone in a room she rented and being without any company on a holiday, and she did not want the two writers to endure the loneliness she felt years ago. Therefore, she was prepared to host the two writers since they would be alone on this holiday and because the Hopes were not having any company or going anywhere on this specific Christmas<sup>34</sup> (Delores Hope telephone interview August 18, 2010). So, on Christmas Eve, Clifford Hope Jr. called Capote's hotel room to invite him and Lee to Christmas dinner at their home. According to Shields, Mr. Hope "mentioned that he and his wife, Delores, were having another couple over: Detective Alvin Dewey and his wife, Marie" (154). However, according to Delores Hope, this statement by Shields is false. She did not have Alvin Dewey and his wife over to their home on that particular Christmas day.<sup>35</sup> Shields also made another inaccurate statement on the next page, stating, "The Hopes' four children—Christine, Nancy, Quentin, and Holly—sat at a miniature version of the grown-ups' table" (155). Delores Hope recalls that her children ate an early lunch and were excited to go to their friends' homes to see what they got for Christmas. Once the children left, at 2:00 p.m., Capote and Lee came to their home and the four of them sat and chatted over an early dinner that lasted well into the evening. Mrs. Hope said, "It was only the four of us; the Deweys were not at that Christmas dinner. I don't know how

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<sup>34</sup> Delores Hope explained that on Christmas 1959, they could not make their usual trip to Nebraska to visit her parents because they were ill with the flu, and Mr. Hope's parents went to New York, so the Hopes would be alone for Christmas (Delores Hope telephone interview June 2009).

<sup>35</sup> Gerald Clarke's *Capote* proves this statement is false. Clarke writes, "Within a night or two [of the Hope's Christmas dinner] Truman and Nelle were at the Dewey house dining on grits, gumbo, and red beans and rice" (323).

Mr. Shields mixed that up in his book” (Delores Hope telephone interview August 18, 2010). Mrs. Hope recalled how wonderful and how mannerly Lee was:

Nelle was just a wonderful person who not only kept Capote in check, but she also kept bringing the conversation back to him. She always allowed him to be in the spotlight. Cliff and I both noticed this, and we enjoyed hearing his tales. Nelle allowed Capote to be the center of attention, and she knew how to handle him.

There is no doubt that she helped him get accepted in Kansas. (Telephone interview August 18, 2010).

However, Capote was “pleasant but demanding. True of his character, he gabbed for the whole evening and forced all attention on himself” (Wiebe “Author left mark on state” 46). Even so, the Hopes enjoyed having both authors over to their home for dinner.<sup>36</sup>

After many of the townspeople heard that the Hopes had Capote and Lee over for dinner, and they heard how nice the authors were, the two writers began to receive invitations to many other dinners, including one at the Deweys’ home for red beans and rice. Thus, “Entertaining [Capote] became the in-thing to do. He was an attraction and people didn’t want to be left out” (Clarke *Capote* 323). Slowly, Capote began to become more accepted, but “everyone took their cue from Nelle” (Shields 156). However, there were still some people who did not like or accept Capote. According to Gerald Van Vleet, Capote “was nosy as hell and very, very rude. He came out to my farm on a few occasions to talk to me, and I tried to avoid him” (qtd in Shields 141). On many occasions, Capote used Lee to assist him, and when that didn’t work, he often paid for

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<sup>36</sup> Delores and Clifford Hope, Jr. still maintain a friendship with Lee. They visited her in Monroeville, AL in the 1990s (Wiebe “To Kill a Mockingbird’ author helped Truman Capote break the ice in Kansas” 49). Likewise, Delores still receives Christmas cards and letters from her on occasion, though not recently because of Lee’s health. Clifford died in 2010.

interviews (Wiebe “Author left mark on state” 46). Thus, it appears as if Lee conducted many interviews from people who would not accept or speak with Capote. Also, Capote and Lee went on some interviews together. In short, Kansas citizens liked Lee a great deal and tolerated Capote because of her. Therefore, “Without Nelle, Capote might never have gained access, much less the town’s trust” (Madden 117). In fact, “Today, many residents of Holcomb and Garden City remember Lee more fondly than they do Capote” (Wiebe “Author left mark on state” 46). After viewing Lee’s research notes, I discovered that this idea is true because Lee conducted a majority of the townspeople’s interviews alone, a fact that has never been discussed before. Clearly, Capote counted on Lee’s rapport with people and her research skills.

Because Capote had grown up with Lee, and because he knew her so well, it is likely that he knew taking Lee to Kansas would be beneficial to him for two major reasons. First, “he was aware of Nelle’s ability to get along with people and tolerate his need for attention” (Shields 154). Second, Capote knew that Lee had attended law school and was extremely familiar with research, that she could write and that “she was extremely articulate on every kind of constitutional law known to man. . . .” (Steinem “Go Right Ahead and Ask Me Anything” 94). In fact, Capote himself even stated about Lee, “She is a gifted woman, . . . courageous and with a warmth that instantly kindles most people, however suspicious or sour” (Nance 165). Apparently, Capote knew what he was doing when he took Lee to Kansas. Therefore, it appears that taking Lee to Kansas was a calculated move. Likewise, it appears as if Capote definitely exaggerated or lied when he told interviewers that Lee was only in Kansas the first two months of 1959, and that she only kept him company there. Furthermore, he exaggerated even more when he blatantly



told William Nance that Lee “simply did not help me that much” (166). Of course, this was not the case.

Surprisingly, Capote mentioned that Lee “went on a number of interviews; she typed her own notes, and I had these and could refer to them” when he was interviewed in 1966 (Plimpton *Truman Capote* 199-200). But Capote did not mention what exactly Lee did. And no one has shown exactly what Lee’s full contributions to Capote’s work were. Even Shields’ *Mockingbird* does not fully or accurately reveal all of Lee’s hard work.

So, until now, what most people have known about Lee’s contributions to *In Cold Blood* is that she went to Kansas with Capote and assisted him by interviewing people. Furthermore, most of the criticism published prior to Shields’ *Mockingbird* concentrated on Capote’s research methods. For instance, according to Gerald Clarke, when Capote and Lee went on interviews together, “not once was he or Nelle seen taking notes: it was Truman’s theory that the sight of a notebook, or worse still, a tape recorder, inhibited candor. People would reveal themselves, he maintained, only in seemingly casual conversations” (322). So, when Capote and Lee interviewed people, they gave them their undivided attention and simply listened to what they had to say. Unlike Lee, Capote claimed that he had 95% total recall of everything he heard, and stated,

Long before I started *In Cold Blood*, I taught myself to be my own tape recorder. It wasn’t as hard as it might sound. What I’d do was have a friend talk or read for a set length of time, tape what he was saying, and meanwhile listen to him as intently as I could. Then I’d go write down what he had said as I remembered it, and later compare what I had with the tape. I got better and better at it, and I started doing finger exercises that led up to this book. . . . Finally when I got to be around 97%

accurate, I felt ready to take on this book. (Nance 167)

Likewise, during an interview, Capote told Charles Ruas, with regard to his memory, “I have a fantastic memory. . . . I invented a thing to use in interviews so that I never had to take a note. I can repeat almost verbatim any conversation up to as long as eight hours” (52). So, while Capote claimed to be able to repeat verbatim what he heard during interviews, he would need help observing other details, since he concentrated on what was said. Thus, Lee was to function as that second set of eyes and ears and help to observe things that Capote missed. After the interview(s), both writers would return to the Warren Hotel and each would write a separate version of what they just heard. Then, according to Clarke, the two “compared notes over drinks and dinner” (322). Occasionally, “when their combined memory failed, as it sometimes did, they went back and asked their questions in a slightly different way” (Clarke *Capote* 322).

However, after examining both writers’ research notes, I found that Harper Lee conducted a majority of the interviews with the Holcomb citizens—more than half of the number that Capote conducted. Why this appears to be the case, there doesn’t seem to be a definitive answer. I can only speculate that Capote was busy interviewing the two killers—Dick Hickock and Perry Smith—or that the townspeople would not co-operate with him. Other explanations could be that he did not take accurate notes, or he was busy with other research.

While it is true that Capote went on many interviews and has interview notes of some townspeople in Kansas, Lee’s notes are much more in depth and extensive. More important, Lee’s notes reveal that she interviewed and has notes on forty-eight people plus twelve jurors that describe them physically and emotionally. However, Capote’s

interview notes only reveal that he interviewed twenty-six people. While Capote does have interview notes of the townspeople and KBI agents, his notes are not as extensive or detailed as Lee's. After examining each author's notes, I found that Lee interviewed seventeen other people that Capote did not. Therefore, the remaining part of this chapter will juxtapose Lee's and Capote's research notes and show, for the first time, what specific notes each took by using many of the best examples.

Before I can begin to discuss Capote's and Lee's notes, several major ideas that are very important, yet problematic for researchers when researching Capote's and Lee's notes must be explained. First, the typed notes of both authors are housed in The New York Public Library, and others are housed in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. For instance, all of Harper Lee's original notes are in The New York Public Library in Box 7, Reel 7, Folders 11-14. When I refer to them, I simply say, Lee's notes. However, Capote's notes are in two separate places. Many of his typed research notes are in The New York Public Library in Box 7, Reel 7, Folder 1-5 and 6-10. However, Capote's handwritten notes or "field notes," and his notebooks on Perry Smith, his rough drafts of the book, and the galleys are housed in the Library of Congress. It isn't until one juxtaposes Capote's two sets of notes from both libraries that one is able to see the differences between his notes and Lee's notes. For instance, Capote's typed notes from The New York Public Library always are written in a chronological order. Most of these notes begin, "As told by . . . ." When juxtaposing Lee's notes to Capote's handwritten notes from The Library of Congress or even his typed notes from The New York Public Library, one is easily able to see the differences between the authors' notes. However, two problems arise. 1.) When did Capote type these notes? Before or after he viewed

Lee's notes? After examining them, I conclude that they were typed without viewing Lee's notes because they are different than hers. However, a second problem arises. 2.) There is a third set of typed notes in The New York Public Library that are simply labeled "Kenyon" or "Nancy," etc. These notes seem to combine some of Lee's and Capote's details. I conclude that these notes were typed after Capote viewed Lee's notes. However, because they are not dated, researchers do not know when they were typed, and who wrote them. Therefore, I will not be referring to this third set of typed notes throughout this dissertation. Furthermore, when I distinguish which set of Capote's notes I'm using, I will refer to his handwritten notes or "field notes" as the ones from The Library of Congress and his typed notes, Box 7, Reel 7, folders 1-10, as the ones from The New York Public Library. Therefore, I will not cite his notes or Lee's notes from this point on.

The first notebook that Capote began taking notes in when he arrived in Kansas was a gold bound journal he purchased in Italy. This journal can be found at the Library of Congress in Box 4, folder 9.<sup>37</sup> This journal shows Capote's first contact, Dr. James McCain's name, position and telephone number on the first page. Also, the name of the hotel and the hotel's phone number appear on this same page—"Warren Hotel—Tel Bridge 6-3221." On the same page, there is other minor information, such as the name of Harold Nye and the name of the local sheriff, Earl Robinson. This journal appears to be the very first book Capote began recording information in, and it is quite revealing for what it doesn't show. (See Appendix F to view Capote's first page of notes). On the next page—page 4 of the notebook—Capote lists many names of local Kansas citizens to

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<sup>37</sup> The Library of Congress labels this journal as Tan. However, it is gold, so I refer to it as his gold bound journal.

be interviewed.<sup>38</sup> In fact, at the very top of the page, Capote writes, “to be interviewed.” Clearly, this information proves that this notebook is the very beginning of Capote’s research phase or field notes for *In Cold Blood*. The names of people to be interviewed on this page are as follows: Bob Wells, Gerald Van Vleet, Alfred Stockleine, Susan Kidwell, Nancy Ewalt, Sheriff Earl Robinson, Pastor Leonard Cowan and wife, Principal High School, all teachers of Nancy and Kenyon, all school friends of Nancy and Kenyon, brother of Herbert Clutter, family lawyer, Lyons, family doctor, and Erhart, Director of 4H, Taylor Jones, boyfriend of Nancy (?), girl friend of Kenyon (?), Lestor McCoy, coroner, undertaker, local newspaper. Scribbled on the side of this page and circled are the names of the Clutter children: “other children of H.W. Clutter, Beverly, student at University of Kansas, and Mrs. Donald Q. Jackson, Mt. Carroll, Illinois.” (See Appendix G to view this page).

After reviewing these pages, I discovered that Lee’s name is written next to one of the Kansas citizens. Next to Pastor Leonard Cowen & wife is “Nelle”—meaning Lee should interview these people. However, after examining her research notes and Capote’s research notes, it is clear that Lee interviewed a lot more people than just Pastor Cowen and his wife. Lee’s name next to the pastor’s name also signals that Capote wanted Lee to interview him and his wife because of Lee’s religious background.<sup>39</sup> However, the most important idea one can see after examining this first notebook—the gold bound journal—is that Capote definitely had a difficult time befriending and being accepted by the citizens of Kansas because he barely has any notes recorded from interviews with people. Instead, there are thoughts or observations recorded in small

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<sup>38</sup> Capote’s gold bound journal does not have numbered pages; therefore, I have numbered the pages by hand. Thus, the page numbers that I refer to in this chapter are ones that I have numbered.

<sup>39</sup> Lee was a devout Methodist.

phrases or sentences. In fact, those that are recorded are extremely brief. Thus, this notebook is extremely important for what it does not reveal—interviews. This signals that Lee was making efforts to get them both accepted and set up interviews while Capote, most likely, stayed in the background. (See Appendix H for an example of Capote’s brief notes). So, while Lee was making contacts, Capote was doing other things—most likely, looking around the town or staying in the background so Lee would be accepted and get him accepted.

After examining Capote’s initial notebook on this case, one can see that it is filled with scribbled names, telephone numbers, a list of questions to ask interviewees, a list of possible motives, drawings, details about the Clutters’ house, details about the crime and a few short comments regarding several townspeople, questions for Alvin Dewey, a pastry recipe and a list of expenses Capote had while working in Kansas. (See Appendix I-K to view several pages from Capote’s gold bound journal). The last page of the journal reveals a list of expenses, which shows how much Capote paid Lee for her assistance—\$900 salary. Additionally, he gave her \$50 dollars for incidental expenses and \$25 dollars for something not identified. (See Appendix L to view Capote’s list of expenses). Likewise, this notebook is important for revealing what the two writers knew about the crime at that particular time. For instance, on page 5 of this notebook, Capote writes what he knows about the crime so far. In his observation, it is clear that the killers were not apprehended yet because he lists the killers as “killer (?) or killers (?). Capote writes,

On Saturday night, Dec. 14, between 9:30 p.m., when Mr. Herbert William Clutter talked on the telephone with his business partner, Gerald Van Vleet, and 9:30 a.m.

on Sunday Dec. 15, 1959, a killer (?) or killers (?) entered the Clutter farm-home and murdered Mr. Clutter (aged 48), his wife, Bonnie, 45; his son Kenyon, 15, and daughter Nancy, 16. (See Appendix M)

Once again, this information proves that this gold journal was the very first set of notes that Capote took for this project because the killers weren't even caught yet and his remarks are so brief. More important, this gold bound notebook reveals short comments that appear to be the initial interviews with some Kansas citizens.

In fact, in this research notebook, there are only ten interviews with the following people: 1.) Bob Wells, 2.) Mrs. Stringer 3.) Mrs. Kathryn Sughrue, 4.) Mr. Van Vleet, 5.) Mrs. Ashida, 6.) Mrs. Hendricks, 7.) Mr. Bob Johnson, 8.) Sheriff Earl Robinson, 9.) Mr. Earhardt, 10.) Susan Kidwell. For instance, Capote records a statement from an interview with Bob Wells on page 32 of this notebook. Capote writes: "Clutter was a busy man. You never saw him loafing around town. He was just a man you didn't run into on the streets." Another interview in this gold journal is on page 44 with Mrs. Kathryn Sughrue, who told Capote about the Clutter family. Capote writes,

Saturday – 9:30 -12

Mr. Clutter      4 H Community Leader

(45 or 50 members)

Nancy cooking cherry Pies until 1 p.m. Saturday – 3 & 4 children 12 and thirteen years

(Arlene Rupp, Joleen Katz)

Nancy was a real leader reorganized food and clothing-

Kenyon Vice-President of 4 H Council in the county –

This interview continues on p 46:

Mrs. Clutter clearly worried about doing the right thing.

Lynn Russell

Kenyon rather indifferent to honors; shy, . . . Kenyon loved horses. “If Kenyon was looking at T.V. night.”

didn’t get bed -----

Nancy “You just looked at her and liked her.”

Kenyon: Judy Golay – Carol Cowann

worried her (Bonnie) to make decisions.

Clutter: violent abstainer - . . . worker drank got rid of him. Mr. Clutter would have no money on a drinker—out they would go, even if they were starving. (See Appendix N).

Thus the notes in this gold bound journal show that Capote recorded only brief notes either during or after the interviews, and/or that this notebook could be the only notes on interviews Capote recorded with the townspeople because this is one of the only notebooks that exists with Capote’s handwriting.

The second notebook that appears in Capote’s handwriting is a small, spiral bound, pocket sized green notebook that is housed at the Library of Congress in Box 4, Folder 1, and this notebook also contains very brief comments that appear to be from interviews. For instance, on one page, Capote appears to record simple statements from an interview with Mrs. Helm:

Mrs. Helm-

Did their laundry



Nancy did own housework

Saturday – made large

dinner steak in sink

soup bowls – 3-

cold supper- steak lunch

telephone in broiler -. (See Appendix O)

These notes and the notes in the gold bound journal prove that Capote recorded only brief notes either during or after the interviews. However, besides these notes, Capote has over 200 pages of typed notes from interviews with townspeople that can be found on microfilm at The New York Public Library. These notes are much different than the notes Capote recorded in his gold bound journal, and these typed notes are different than Harper Lee's notes. It appears as if Capote recorded initial comments, "field notes," in his gold bound journal and green spiral notebook either while interviewing each citizen in Kansas, or directly after these interviews were conducted, so he would not forget major ideas that he would type. Then, Capote typed his written notes soon after these interviews.

These written field notes Capote recorded in his gold bound journal and green spiral notebook would discredit his statements in which he brags that he can recall almost any conversation verbatim because these notes appear to be reminders of what to write about. However, more important, what we do not know or may never know is just when Capote typed his ideas from the interviews. There are several possibilities (1.) Capote could have typed his notes immediately after he interviewed each local citizen because Clarke and Plimpton both report that Capote and Lee separated to type their own versions of

what happened. Likewise, Marie Dewey also confirmed this theory, stating, “Neither one of them took any notes when they interviewed people, but then they would go back to their rooms and write down their memories of the day. Check one against the other” (Plimpton *Truman Capote* 172). However, (2.) Capote could have discussed his ideas with Lee first and then typed his notes. This would be a significant idea because this would prove that Lee was, again, extremely helpful to Capote—more than he ever gave her credit for. No matter what happened, the most imperative idea to understand is by observing the two author’s notes, one can see that Lee’s and Capote’s research notes are very different, even after interviewing many of the same citizens, and these notes reveal the two had different approaches in reporting information. Thus, they had creative differences while working on this project.

After juxtaposing Lee’s and Capote’s typed notes, I discovered that they interviewed 24 of the same people. Kansas citizens that they both interviewed include: 1.) Lester McCoy, 2.) Mrs. Hartman, 3.) Polly Stringer, 4.) Katherine Sughrue, 5.) Gerald Van Vleet, 6.) Bob Johnson, 7.) Bob Rupp, 8.) Clarence Ewalt, 9.) Paul Helm, 10.) Andy “A. B.” Erhart, 11.) Wilma Kidwell, 12.) Nancy Kidwell, 13.) Alvin Dewey, 14.) Marie Dewey, 15.) Joeline Katz, 16.) Dr. Fenton, 17.) Cliff Hope, 18.) Sheriff Earl Robinson, 19.) Richard Hickock, 20.) Perry Smith, 21.) Clarence Duntz, 22. & 23.) Mr. and Mrs. Hendricks and 24.) Harold Nye. However, both authors also interviewed people separately. It appears as if Capote interviewed 5 people without Harper Lee. These people include 1.) John Riggs, 2.) Mr. Vaughn, 3.) Mrs. Myrtle Clare and 4. & 5.) Mr. & Mrs. William Warren-Browne. However, Harper Lee appears to have interviewed seventeen additional townspeople without Capote, or Capote’s notes on these people

were destroyed or not catalogued in the New York Public Library or the Library of Congress.

Also, it appears as if Lee kept notes on all twelve jurors and countless people who gathered in the crowd to observe Hickock and Smith when they were first brought to Garden City, and Capote did not. The citizens that Lee interviewed without Capote include 1.) David Williams, 2.) Dr. John R. Brinkley, 3.) Pastor Leonard Cowan, 4.) Judge Tate, 5.) Judy Swartley, 6.) Bobby Jones, 7.) Mr. C. D. Davis, 8.) Judge Schrader, 9.) Mr. Kenneth Lyon, 10.) Harrison Smith, 11.) Logan Green, 12.) Roy Church, 13.) Mr. J. D. Adams, 14.) Mrs. Lena Thrasher, 15.) Bill Brown, 16.) Mr. Alfred Stoecklein, and 17.) Mr. Fleming. Clearly, this shows that Lee did a great deal of leg work and research for Capote. Thus, Shields was correct when he stated in his book, *Mockingbird*, that “Nelle scoured the town for information that might be useful to Truman, applied the eye of a novelist to identify elements of Drama, and opened doors of homes for him that otherwise might have remained closed” (163-64). However, Shields does not reveal the information that I have listed above and on the previous two pages. In fact, Shields does not even mention this imbalance of notes by the two authors, nor does he compare and contrast Lee’s and Capote’s notes well throughout his book. In fact, throughout his chapter, “See NL’s Notes,” which is valuable for bringing this idea to light, Shields only compares and contrasts the two authors’ notes one time, and this is to show how each author captured different qualities about Susan Kidwell, Nancy Clutter’s friend.

Regarding Lee’s and Capote’s interview with Susan Kidwell, Shields shows both Capote’s and Lee’s notes. The first example below is from Lee’s notes. Shields writes,

completely against the grain of the majority of her contemporaries and life in Holcomb and G.C [Garden City], Nelle realized. “Pathetically sensitive and lonely; stands out on landscape like a fine and well-wrought thumb. Girl of remarkable sensibility for 15 .... Every cut, every pleasure, everything shows in her eyes.... Loved Nancy as she loved no other person. (162)

Next, Shields juxtaposes Lee’s notes with Capote’s notes, showing Capote’s perceptions of Susan Kidwell:

Susan is very thin and extremely tall for her age. ‘[S]he has a broad-boned but thin and very expressive face, and a poor complexion [sic]; nevertheless, she is an attractive girl with a good-speaking voice (low, and rather elegant inflections) and a nice sense of humor.... She has long sensitive fingers; her hair is long, a sort of greenish/brownish blonde, and rolled up at the bottom. She has had an unhappy life; her father deserted Mrs. Kidwell some years ago etc. She and her mother live in a kind of genteel poverty (Mrs. Kidwell, ‘Of course, it’s easy for you to see that we once had money’). (162)

However, Shields leaves a great deal of Lee’s observations about Kidwell out of his book for this particular example, and by not showing Lee’s full notes, Shields does not show how helpful Lee’s journalistic skills truly were.

Although Shields had good intentions to portray Lee as an important part of the creation of *In Cold Blood*, he did not succeed in doing so. In some cases, he misrepresented how specific Lee’s notes really were. In Lee’s original notes, she also writes about Kidwell,

Very tall, enormous feet and hands but not out of proportion to rest of her.

Medium brown hair worn v. long and curled at bottom; Pouty-sweet face made wholly sweet by large expressive blue-grey eyes. Every cut, every pleasure, everything shows in eyes.

In fact, Lee writes more observations about Susan, stating,

Has a quietly humorous gift of narrative, is a fiddler? Fiddled with book until deprived of it by mother . . . have clawed her hands had she not had match folder. But she did not fiddle when T. was asking her to write of herself and Bobby Rupp. Thoroughly adorable in blue jeans, shirt and bare feet. Hates her mother so much it's pitiful. Probably extremely shy and has been pushed forward; prob. Pushed into first interview, found akindred spirit, and will now tell T. anything he wants to know. Nancy her only friend. Probably attracted to Nancy by N's qualities—practical, sensible, sensitive, open, self-assured in any pursuit—admired in Nancy all qualities that Susan herself possesses, if given half a chance, but too shy to let come to the surface. Loved Nancy as she loved no other person. Transferred to Garden City High School this year to “get art courses” but probably to get away from her mother as soon as she could. Mother might have seen wider social opportunities for Susan, so let her go, even though Mrs. K. seems a gorgon in the matter of Susan and boys.

Not only does Shields omit all of this important information, but by not quoting Lee's notes exactly, Shields misses a key idea—that Lee was a much better observer than Capote. For instance, Lee observes that Susan “hates her mother so much its [sic] pitiful” and that Kidwell “loved Nancy as she loved no other person”—qualities that Capote

missed. Thus, Clarke was correct when he stated, “Nelle’s gift for creating character sketches turned out to complement Truman’s ability to recall remarks” (*Capote* 140).

Because the two authors’ research notes are so different in many cases, the rest of this chapter will juxtapose some of the best examples of Lee’s notes with Capote’s notes, and these notes will show the differences that each writer observed as they interviewed the same twenty-three people. However, more important, these notes will show that Lee was not only a better observer than Capote and that she was extremely helpful on this project, but also that each writer’s own personality can be seen through the research notes they took.

After Capote and Lee arrived in Kansas and made their initial contact with Dr. McCann at Kansas State University, they went on many interviews together, and even interviewed many of the same people multiple times in order to get the correct information for Capote’s project. The first two people the two interviewed were Susan Kidwell and her mother. One of the first ideas that one can see after examining Capote’s and Lee’s notes is that each author has his/her own style of recording information. For instance, Capote’s notes are almost never dated, but Lee’s are. Furthermore, Capote’s notes are always arranged in chronological order and he records general information, but records very little about his surroundings. Also, his notes are to be very brief in contrast to Lee’s. Lee’s notes are much more meticulous than Capote’s and show straight reporting. She discusses specifics such as what the Clutters watched on television and other events that occurred. At times when they didn’t go on interviews, “The hotel’s trial room coffee shop became their unofficial office during the day for reviewing notes, or for

keeping appointments with folks who could spare only enough time for a chat and a cup of coffee” (Shields 140).

One of the first persons that each interviewed was Mr. Gerald Van Vleet, a man who was employed by Mr. Clutter to take care of his farm. The first noticeable difference between Capote’s research notes and Harper Lee’s notes for this individual is the length. Capote’s notes are brief and much shorter than Lee’s for almost every person they interviewed. This could indicate that many, like Van Vleet, felt more comfortable with Lee and did not like Capote. Thus, Lee proved to be very necessary as a fellow researcher because Van Vleet didn’t want to speak with Capote.

Second, Capote’s notes are almost never dated. He simply writes the day and time, but no specific date is given. For instance, for Van Vleet’s interview, Capote writes, “SATURDAY EVENING- 9:30,” whereas Lee appears to have interviewed Van Vleet on three separate occasions. From Van Vleet’s interview, Capote writes,

#### CHRONOLOGY

##### SATURDAY EVENING- 9:30

A Conversation as reported by GERALD VAN VLEET: (Van Vleet, who is called “Van” by his friends, is forty-two, has a very deep voice and virile manner in a rather grinnish-boyish style (muchly resembles the actor Dana Andrews); calls himself Clutter’s partner, but apparently was not so in any legal sense and, though he claims to have had capital in the business, this too is open to question (see JOHNSON, BOB); he smoke [sic] with cigarette stuck in his mouth, and crinkles his bright eyes in a shrewd way; was born in Oklahoma and has two young daughters;

would be ideal model for one of those Marlboro ads; had been working with Clutter since April, 1955. . . .or 4 ½ year prior to that with the soil conservation program; had been at farm in Clutters office until 10:30 a.m. Saturday, then went about his own chores: “I called about 9:30 that night (Saturday) and I said how are you; and he said oh he had a headache but it was better. He said he and Kenyon had got home from the 4H around twelve-thirty and everything had been quiet. Then I told him that I’d been talking to Art Cook and J. T. Lear about some grass seeding they planned to buy and it looked like they might buy from us if that suited their tenants. Then we talked about plans for next week and I said I’d see him on Monday, and he said Yeah, see you on Monday. He sounded fine to me. Nothing wrong.”

V.V. “Herb? How are you? Everything under control?”

Clutter: “Everything quiet. Got a a kind of a headache, but its getting better.” (See Appendix P to view Capote’s notes on Van Vleet).

From these notes, it is clear that Capote is concerned with Van Vleet’s physical appearance and the phone conversation that Van Vleet had with Herb Clutter the night before he was murdered. Thus, Capote concentrates on what was said; however, Lee’s notes with Van Vleet are much more extensive and also discuss other elements that Capote did not record. Lee writes,

Mr. Gerald Van Vleet – 42 yrs old.

Dark, medium height but stocky and immensely strong. Big thick work-hardened fingers, dirt under fingernails (permanent stains), windburned outdoor skin; dark eyes that won’t hold your gaze for long; fiddled with machine belt while in car;



head not exactly mis-shapen, but long and narrow skull. Has an odd quality of faint slyness about him. Was cheerful, happy, as he took us through house. “I wasn’t here,” was answer to every direct question put to him about crime. (See below)

Van Vleet (continued; interview Dec. 22)

Slightly shark-mouthed,-wide, thin in repose; sudden, good smile—eyes smile With mouth; teeth not too good. Smokes filter Raleighs; is a Methodist who keeps whiskey in the house and didn’t care if Clutter knew it. Rather a massive nervousness in movements--looks like on the verge of slamming something around when he touches it, but doesn’t. Regulation khaki farm clothes and cap, heavy shoes. Looks away when talking, i.e., Begins Sentences looking away then looks at you as he finishes. Seemed thoroughly relaxed in Clutter’s chair, swiveled around freely in it. “Winds up” before he writes something.

Born “1 mile in Nebraska, but family moved 1 mile into Kansas.” Attended K. State; was In Soil Conservation Service until “Uncle Sam got hot and heavy”. From June ’43 to April ’46 in service. Never went overseas; “fought the war in Texas”. Was 1<sup>st</sup> Lt. Flight Engineer instructor on B-29. After war joined Soil Con. Ser. Again and went into partnership with Clutter April, 1955. Daughter has Nancy’s clarinet, 2 dtrs, 8; 13.

In the notes written above, Lee describes Van Vleet’s physical appearance; however, she analyzes much more than this in the rest of her notes. In fact, it appears that Lee took specific notes about Mr. Clutter’s farm acres, what livestock he owned and how much the animals cost—information Capote does not record. Lee writes,

Dec. 22

Mr. Gerald Van Vleet

Clutter wrote down every business transaction he made. Was not a “settle it with a handshake” type. Was extraordinary meticulous about making notes on every phone call he made. “On the phone all the time.”

He was an “operate on the other fellow’s money” farmer.

V.V. thinks Clutter looked his age.

Loathed Ezra Taft Benson’s farm policies. Disagreed with him in Washington.

Clutter couldn’t see how farmers could make “living money” cutting down on acreage farmed.

Thought that markets should be expanded, rather than productive acreage cut. C.’s idea was that you couldn’t make more money on less land, and farmers are obliged to make a certain amount of cash a year to survive on.

When Clutter entertained in Washington, gave to understand that NO LIQUOR would be served.

Clutter owned 855 acres outright. Grand total operation 3415 acres.(A year ago Operated on 9310 acres.)

Owned 810 head of cattle. Mostly Hereford (red, white faces). A larger operation in this part of the country, thinks V.V., but at present moment cannot sell them for what they paid for them.

(300-pound calf worth \$100. 600lb. animal \$150.)

(one herd of 100 head worth \$20,000.)

Arkansas river South Boundary of farm.

Clutter always asked if prospective employee drank. Arrangement with Van V. was, V.V. put capital into the enterprise, drew weekly stipend, and shared profits (if any) at the end of year.

Lee also took notes on a few questions she must have asked Van Vleet about Mrs. Clutter, although no questions are recorded or written. According to Shields, “To every question Nelle put to him [Van Vleet] about the murder, he answered, “I wasn’t here” (145). However, once again, Shields appears to be wrong and misrepresents Lee. Lee records Van Vleet’s answers to her questions:

Clutter to Mrs. Kidwell re Bonnie (on Mrs. K’s suggestion that B. try Mayo’s): suggested that Bonnie was getting adequate treatment where she was; “I can’t worry about her. implied that drs. Told him if he shouldered Mrs. C.’s worries he’d crack up too.

From the above interview, Lee records Clutter’s personality. Not only do Lee’s notes prove that Shields is inaccurate in his book, but her notes also prove that she writes and observes Mrs. Clutter’s habits, unlike Capote. Lee writes, “Van Vleet: Mrs. C. usually took nap after lunch. Seldom if ever ate lunch. ‘Times I ate with Herb she never ate with us.’”

However, like Capote, Lee also gathers some information regarding Van Vleet’s telephone conversations with Herb Clutter, but more importantly, she reconstructs the last 24 hours of Clutter’s life. Lee’s notes show:

Van Vleet:

says Nancy came in office about 9:30 Saturday morning. Kenyon sitting at father’s desk to right of father; father trying to teach him to make out expense sheet.

Clutter jumped up and said they'd be late; had evidently forgotten about meeting.  
Left for meeting in '59 half-ton Chevrolet pickup.

Van Vleet says Helm says Clutter talked to 2 Mexicans Saturday afternoon. Helm had been working on his car-starter; was not painting.

V.V. says Kenyon bought lumber to make sheep-feeder while in Garden C. It was on back of pick-up. They had been to Dodge City previous Tuesday where Kenyon bought 39 head of sheep.

Van Vleet: called Clutter about 9:30 p.m. Saturday night.

"Hello?" Clutter a soft-spoken man; voice not deep as V.V.'s.

V.V.: "Did you get everything under control this morning?"

Clutter: "Yes, we finally got back about 12:30."

They discussed their efforts to sell Art Cook and J.T. Lear grass seed. Both had tenants to check on about grass seeding.

C: "If tenants haven't made prior arrangements (to buy from some-one else) we get first crack at it."

They talked about Mondays work, which was primarily to "hammer-mill Indian grass."

V.V.: "See you Monday morning."

More important, unlike Capote, Lee records Van Vleet's reaction to hearing about Clutter's murder on Sunday, November 15. She writes,

On Sunday, November 15

Gerald Van Vleet, about 8:am. Was "up north checking cattle." (Up north means 6 miles north of C. farm?) "I was having float trouble, but fixed it and let the cattle

drink, then made sure the water didn't leak out of the tank."

He got home about 11:00 a.m. and heard it then. Telephone rang and it was the church wanting Eveanna's and Beverly's addresses. "I changed my clothes and went over to the church."

Van Vleet didn't go to the house until Sunday afternoon, and then he went only as far as the highway patrol barricade. "Guess you had to believe it. . . I still don't believe it." Van Vleet of two minds re killer(s): thinks they knew the house well (knew where upstairs bedrooms were); on the other hand thinks they didn't: "If Herb's family was at stake, he'd do anything they told him." Thinks Clutter, held at gunpoint, toured the house?? (See Appendix Q to view Lee's notes on Van Vleet).

Clearly, Lee's notes prove that she is much more meticulous than Capote, and that she is concerned with many more aspects of each interview than he is. She records the entire picture. In all his interviews, Capote seems to concentrate on Herb Clutter's personality, the interviewee's physical description, and what was said word for word. However, Lee observes as many aspects as she can about a person and topic.

More important, in many interviews, including this one, Lee's personality can be seen through the notes that she has recorded. Prior to her work with Capote on this case, she was studying to be a lawyer and was extremely thorough in all of her research. Her thoroughness can be seen in her note taking abilities. Like Capote, Lee records Herb Clutter's personality and Van Vleet's physical appearance, but also she records Van Vleet's theories on how/why Clutter might have been murdered. She appears to be very interested in who committed the murders and why. Capote does not mention these ideas

in most of his notes. But Lee, who has a law background, appears to be interested in law and solving the murders. Lee's notes also reveal her other personality traits.

The second person Capote and Lee interviewed was Mrs. Phil "Polly" Stringer, the Home Economics teacher at Nancy and Kenyon Clutter's school. Both authors interviewed Mrs. Stringer, but they date their notes differently. Capote dates his interview with Mrs. Stringer as December 18 and Lee dates her notes as December 19. This may indicate that Lee and Capote interviewed Mrs. Stringer separately, or it may indicate that one of the authors made an error in dating his/her notes. Capote writes a great deal about his interview with Mrs. Stringer; however, Lee's notes are much more detailed. Capote records,

As told by Mrs. Phil "Polly" Stringer. Home economics teacher who is from Arkansas and whose husband is the Garden City athletic coach, a sharp-tongued, vivacious, rather pretty woman who also does Home Visits in the Holcomb area, and is, I should think, very well liked: "I never felt closer to a student than I did Nancy. She was so clean and attractive and well-groomed and appreciative: had black hair and black, black eyes. Every night before she went to bed she brushed her hair and cold-creamed her face: she told me once she never got to bed before midnight, what with her school work and house work: Nancy, you see, she really ran the house . . . planned the meals, cooked. On account of, as you know, Mrs. Clutter was away a lot of the time (at the Wesleyan Hospital in Wichita) and when she was home she just stayed in bed most of the day and cried. Mrs. Clutter was a real mystery-like person, the sort of person you'd [sic] think of as being kept in an attic; very quiet and nervous---when you met her she just held out her hand in this

strange, limp way. Though I must say when she got all dressed up she could make a very smart appearance. And she was very thoughtful and overly polite; its amazing to me how the Clutters did so much entertaining; but that house was a masterpiece of time-saving devices. About a week before the murder she went up to Wichita, but she only stayed one day and called Mr. Clutter to come bring her home; so he had to make that long trip all over again. But I remember it was that week that Nancy said to me she was so happy because the Doctors had found out what was wrong with her Mother: it was pressure on the sciatic nerve. I thought to myself: you poor innocent little thing, you still believe its physical.

Mrs. Stringer, cont. "Once Nancy said to me 'My mother used to be like you, So friendly and full of life. But now we can never talk, and everythings [sic] different.' I know for a fact that Nancy was much happier when her mother was away. But she adored her father. I've never known such a Daddy's girl. When they had to sell part of their farm (after all, Mrs. Clutter's medical bills must have been astronomical!) she came to me crying, and saying 'oh daddy doesn't want the sale! I don't know why Mrs. Clutter should have been so unhappy: with that beautiful home, and those lovely children---there's never been a family that had more to offer to the world. Sometimes I think it was because Mr. Clutter made her feel inferior. I mean he was such a confident, dominant kind of man; he could stand up and make a speech and seem to be completely at his ease; he seemed to know exactly who he was, and not to be afraid of anything (it just seems unbelievable to me that anyone could have got the best of Mr. Clutter, could have killed him; he was the kind of man seemed like he could handle any situation,

anybody, even a murderer: I'll bet he wasn't afraid that night, I'll bet he thought he could handle it.). He had a lot of sex appeal: dark hair, broad shoulders and very trim, no stomach. And such wonderful teeth, such a nice smile. And the energy, the things he did! May'be that had something to do with Mrs. Clutter's illness: he was away from home so much, so active in everything: when the President appointed him to the Federal Reserve he just went off to Washington and left the family. It gives me the creeps to think how often Nancy was alone there in the house. Of course she was the apple of her father's eye. They had their differences, though.

For instance, Mr. Clutter didn't want Nancy to go on with her Home Economics (Nancy's ambition was to be an interior decorator); he wanted her to study Speech, and he made her change for a while; but then she convinced him that she should come back to me. Oh that girl had talent. She could make her own clothes, and did; she didn't [sic] have nearly as much wardrobe as a lot of the other students, despite the fact the Clutters were a whole better off than most Holcomb familys [sic]; but she always looked so Smart--- she could cut and line a suit, and just before the murder she'd made herself the most beautiful blue tweed suit; about a year ago she made a red silk sheath dress, and that was the dress she was buried in; I remember at the Christmas party last year she looked so lovely in it (we had to have the Christmas party this year in the afternoon . . . Dec 18 . . . on account of the parents in Holcomb won't let the children come out after dark; some of those children, you know, come from sixteen miles away). Another thing, I'm sure Mr. Clutter didn't like Nancy going steady with Bob Rupp. Holcomb is predominantly



a Catholic community, I should say eighty percent German etc. Catholic, and Bobby Rupp was a catholic; he'd given Nancy a book about Catholicism and was trying to convert her. Well---there's never been a Methodist like Mr. Clutter! He would have been furious if he'd known about it; and maybe he did. Of course Nancy wasn't in love with Bobby; she was a flirt and always interested in dating other boys (the night of the play she held hands with Leroy Roth and wrote about it in her Diary; it was the next to the last entry; the last one was that Bobby had left the house at 11p.m. that night: Bobby thinks the killers were waiting for him to leave). But Bobby had never loved another girl, and says he never will; oh he was terribly broken up; he and Susan Kidwell saw Nancy at the funeral home---that's how I know she was wearing the red sheath; she had cotton all over her face; the K.B.I investigator, Mr. Dunn, said to me 'Mrs. Springer, if its [sic] any comfort to you, the killer treated Nancy better than the others; she didn't have to look at the gun when they shot her; they shot her in the back of the head'). Well, like I say, I'm sure Nancy wasn't serious about Bobby Rupp; but she needed a regular boy to take her to the dances and things like that. And of course she was a lonely little thing; oh very popular---but lonely. And she was especially unhappy this fall because her two best friends, Susan Kidwell and and Judy Swartley, had transferred to Garden City High. Well, then, the night of the play, Dec. 13<sup>th</sup>. She was so worried about remembering her lines; all that afternoon she sat out in the barn playing with her kitten; Nancy was crazy about cats. She had a cat that she adored, one she'd raised from a kitten; and it had died two weeks earlier and she was inconsolable: she told me she'd come home and just

found it lying in the barn stratched [sic] out and dead; then she'd buried it in a special place (afterwards, the KBI men looked everywhere for the grave but couldn't [sic] find it: they thought maybe somebody had poisoned it and there might be some connection). Nancy used to go home from school (she drove her own car) and the first thing she would do was pick up that cat and hug and kiss it on the mouth (her brother Kenyon used to say it was wrong to kiss an animal on the mouth). Anyway, a classmate, Rosanna Joseph, had given her this kitten to take its place. Well, it turned out that Nancy was the only one in the play who did remember her lines. She looked beautiful; she wore an old-fashioned dress (playing Becky Thatcher) and had a white ribbon in her black hair; a couple of days after the murder, her sister, Eveanna, the one who looked so much like Nancy it was spooky, came to the school and ask me did I have some of Nancy's things; oh she was dry and cool as a cucumber: so I gave her the white ribbon, even though I wanted so much to keep it for myself. That other girl who went into the house and found Nancy with Susan Kidwell, that Nancy Ewalt, she's a rotten spoiled brat---ugly, but her mother thinks she's Marilyn Monroe. She wasn't a friend of Nancy's. I wish it had been her instead of Nancy. Well, who knows who did it or why. I think it's connected with drugs, and Mrs. Clutter, and maybe somebody she met in the hospital. People in Holcomb, a lot of them, say that when they find out who done it we'll [sic] be just as surprised as we were by the murders themselves.

Capote wrote in his own handwriting at the bottom of this interview: "Nancy was menstruating on Saturday." He also wrote, "She is kept home that night because had

been out late Wednesday and Friday nights.” In this specific interview, Capote appears to have learned from observing Lee’s notes on their first interviewee because he covers a more topics in this case. For instance, this time he doesn’t just concentrate on the physical description of Mrs. Stringer and Herb Clutter’s personality; he also mentions Nancy Clutter’s personality, Mrs. Clutter’s health and Bob Rupp’s religious background. However, once again, Lee’s notes are very revealing in what they show.

Lee also was present for the interview with Polly Stringer or she interviewed her a day later because her notes are dated Dec. 19. From this interview, Lee observed and wrote about the following:

“I don’t believe he was ever frightened of anything, I don’t believe he was even frightened that night.”

According to Stringer, Clutter was utterly sure of himself in all his dealings.

Stringer felt some resentment of him at times, especially when Nancy Clutter was involved. Felt it when Clutter told her, “She’s had about enough home ec.” (See Nancy Clutter.) Stringer knew him as a man who was accustomed to bending others to his will (in the most Christian way, of course); a man with a great talent for budgeting his time, but who gave everything but time to his wife and children.

“He was away so much. . .”

He was the kind of man who thought women were women . . .” and not to be paid attention to otherwise: Belonged in some sub-class; should have been happy in their domestic lives; should have lived for their men & children. Clutter sold a parcel of land and Stringer thinks it was to pay Bonnie’s medical bills.

(WHEN??) (See Nancy Clutter.)

Clutter's favorite child was Nancy. Stringer thinks he recognized in Nancy several of his sterling qualities and was trying to make her conform to his own image.

(See guess who?)

Clutter obviously resented (or Stringer thinks he resented) Nancy's closeness to her Home ec. teacher. Once, when Bonnie was away, and there was a Mother-Daughter banquet plus fashion show at the high school Nancy was distressed because she had no mother to bring. Stringer said, "Then I'll be your mother for the evening," and told Nancy to okay it with Mr. Clutter. Mr. Clutter said, "No, I think Mrs. Holstrom would be best."

Stringer says Clutter was good-looking: no middle-aged pot in front, broad shoulders, dark hair; she especially liked his mouth and teeth. Described him as looking far younger than his years; vigorous and alert. Stringer's deepest impression of Clutter was that he was a man who struck her as, "I'm sure of myself: I know what I'm doing."

Lee has also written on the bottom of this page: "I can't imagine anyone overpowering Mr. Clutter."

Although Lee took a great deal of notes from her interview with Mrs. Stringer about Herb Clutter, Lee also recorded Mrs. Stringer's physical description:

Black hair, brown eyes so dark they seemed black, slender, good figure, Immaculately groomed ("Not a hair out of place") funny little nose that turned up slightly at the tip; neat little feet. Head ever so slightly flat on top; hair worn long and caught with a clasp on right side; good posture.

Stringer: "Nancy put her hair up if it was 2 Am."

Stringer couldn't understand how Nancy always looked bandbox-neat in view of her heavy household and school responsibilities. Nancy said she never got to bed before 12 or 1 every night.

(Last night of her life Clutters made her stay home because she had been up so late every other night that week. IF. . . ).

Like Capote, Lee records what a good student Nancy was, and how much she loved Home-ec:

Nancy made most of her own clothes. "The best little tailor I ever saw." (Stringer.)

Was buried in red sheath dress she made for school Christmas party a year ago.

Stringer thinks Eveanna must have requested that Nancy be buried in dress because Eveanna was home and saw her in it.

Nancy had the least amount of money to spend of any of her friends. She was frugal in the use of what she did have.

However, unlike Capote, Lee observes how Nancy Clutter suffered and made sacrifices:

Apparently for several years Nancy had assumed most of the responsibility for running the Clutter household. She cooked and kept her (and Kenyon's?) clothes, and ran the house in general with aid of a maid who came in several times a week.

Stringer says Clutter household was one of the best organized and efficiently run of any she'd ever seen.

Nancy's greatest ambition (academically) was to go to KSU and study Interior Decoration. Her public personality was one of warmth, sweetness, high spirits, normal extroversion noted in teenager who's popular and sought-after. Not much different from her generation (The Present Teen-Age) in that she wanted a Steady

for security reasons. (This seems to be the rationale in modern teen-age psychology: the gals are seldom if ever in love with their Steadies, they always want to be sure they have a date for any important social event; best way to secure certainty of having an escort for all occasions is to nail one down.)

Nancy's Steady was Bob Rupp. Bob an R.C. Nancy not in love with Bob, but he with her.

Association discouraged by Clutters because of religious reasons. Nancy & Bob fought heartily at times; probably over religion, probably personality clashes arising from one-sided-ness of affair. Nancy a virgin, Stringer thinks.

"Nancy was a little flirt." Stringer. She held hands with Jerry Roth the night of the play. Was definitely giving the eye to other boys, and since Bob Rupp never dated another girl, probably the source of most of friction between them. The week she was killed, Nancy dated another boy. (WHO?)

Played Becky Thatcher in School (Junior) Play Friday Nov. 13\*, wore white dress, long sleeves, high at throat, tight waistband, flaring skirt. Wore white ribbon in hair. Was emotionally overwrought before play because she didn't know her lines, but by playtime she knew her own and everybody else's.

On Thursday afternoon Nancy "sat out in the barn with her little cat." (Springer.) Nancy loved cats, and had owned one but recently found it stretched out stiffly cold (in the barn?). She buried it (investigators sought place to dig up cat for possible poisoning activity) herself. "Why is it wrong to kiss my cat? I kiss my cat. . ."

Rosanna Joseph presented Nancy with new cat shortly after decease of other one.

CHECK CHECK.

“Please prompt me, please prompt me.” Nancy begged Stringer the night of the play. Stringer had been helping direct Tom Sawyer and had prompted during rehearsals. Stringer said she would, but Nancy didn’t need prompting.

The Question About Nancy: How did she maintain the outward semblance of a wholesome, extremely bright and popular sweet teenager without cracking at the seams? Her family life was ghastly. Stringer probably her only release.

\*\*\*\*\*

Nancy had realized for many years that something was radically wrong with her mother, but thought it was organic. (Cheer and happiness to Stringer: “They’ve found out what’s wrong with mother. . .”) S. said the Clutters said the doctors said it was pressure on the sciatic nerve. Did Nancy accept this??

There is not a shred of evidence of anything resembling a normal mother-daughter relationship in Nancy’s life. Mrs. Clutter seemed to be a presence in the house that stayed in bed and cried when she was home. “I’m almost glad when mother’s away. . .”

(Nancy to Stringer)

Had Nancy inherited her father’s methodicalness or had he conditioned her to it? She sounds like a child who had been trained by an expert to make every second and every penny count, bear her private sorrows in private and present a cheerful aspect to the public; she was taught early in life to take everything to God in prayer and until Stringer appeared, Nancy probably did.

(Either to God or her cat. Every afternoon after school Nancy would get on the

floor and play with her cat, and it is safe to assume that if she kissed her cat she would whisper to it of the day's burdens.)

Nancy was one of the lonely ones, not made any the less lonely by the fact that her days were spent in almost unceasing activity, if she carried the major household responsibilities plus a full social and religious/ social life, plus schoolwork, her evident pride in her personal appearance. (which DO TAKE TIME, HONEY.)

When she was at the age when she needed a mother most in the world, she found one. With Stringer, one afternoon as Stringer was driving her home, the dam broke. Nancy asked Stringer to pull up by the Chinese elms that lined the road to the Clutter house, and Nancy cried away her years of loneliness. “If you only knew about Mother. . .”

Nancy went to Stringer with everything after that. Stringer advised her on the feminine wiles of dating, petting, “how far to go”, and as a teacher developed Nancy's evident talent for domestic activities (sewing, cooking) and wanted her to follow her bent for interior design and make a career of it.

When Nancy filled in a Survey Sheet of her life and ambitions, she said she was going steady, she wanted to go to Kansas State U. and major in interior decorating, and concluded, “If there's one thing I'm afraid of, it's to get up in front of people and talk.

This year at Mr. Clutter's insistence, Nancy was enrolled in a speech course. (See Clutter's comment to Stringer under Clutter).

Not even the love and respect and conditioned reflexes Clutter had instilled in Nancy could overcome her horror of being bent in that direction. She broke down



& wept to Stringer about it, and seems to have rebelled successfully, for Nancy was reenrolled in Home Ec.

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Thursday night Stringer had a nightmare about Nancy; woke up crying thinking something terrible had happened to her. Next day at school (Fri. 13?) Stringer told her and Nancy laughed. “Yes. We (Bob Rupp) had a fight last night.”

From the above notes, one can understand that, unlike Capote, Lee concentrates heavily on the relationship that Nancy had with Mrs. Stringer. She reveals how Mrs. Stringer was a mentor and a friend to Nancy, and how Nancy vented to Mrs. Stringer on occasions. This is another instance where Lee’s research role was crucial. Perhaps, Mrs. Stringer felt more comfortable with Lee; this we will never know for certain, but we do know that Lee has more notes than Capote again, and she writes about many issues Capote has missed.

Besides this crucial information, Lee observed many other physical attributes of Mrs. Stringer and her home that Capote ignored or forgot to record. She wrote,

Tall, short dark hair, extremely bright brown eyes, sturdily built but with good figure; Wore brown wool dress (probably McCall pattern) and dark shoes. Sits erect in straight Chair with hands in lap, feet neatly in front of her. Leans forward when enthusiastic about some-thing she’s saying. Looks you in the eye when she speaks. Was one of large family in Arkansas; flattened vowels (bright, light) most noticeable in otherwise pleasantly noncommittal accent; small grammar lapses she doesn’t bother to cover up, “Worked my way through college picking cotton. . .” Brother struck oil in Texas, and is worth quarter-million dollars.

Livingroom “just moved into”; vivid blue walls with deep cream baseboards; light rug and wine “modernistic” sofa & armchair. Two dark-haired children (girls; abt. 6 & 8) asleep in corner of livingroom on quilts. Clutching night toys, and TV set humming gently out of focus in front of them.

Nice fat faded yellow cat on porch; unpainted ranch-style cat house (no comments, please) cat looked like he’d have to squeeze into, so fat he was.

Obviously vigorously in love with basketball coach husband; “when Phil goes on a convention I go with him . . .” alive and not about to sacrifice husband for career, but gives impression of keeping abreast of everything new in her field. A healthy intelligence, and a running river of information.

Nancy’s last words to Stringer: “Thank you for helping us with the play, we surely appreciated it.”

First things Stringer set eyes on when she went to schoolroom Monday were the white ribbon she had fixed in Nancy’s hair the previous Friday evening, and Nancy’s play-book.

They were on Stringer’s desk.

Stringer excused Nancy from class to go to the Clutter land sale.

Lee has in her writing under this statement the word “check.”

By juxtaposing Capote’s and Lee’s research notes, one can understand that both record several of the same facts that describe Herb Clutter’s personality; however, what remains obvious is that Capote tries to capture what Stringer has said word for word, and he concentrates on Nancy Clutter’s personality. But Lee’s notes prove that she records observations by summarizing ideas and concentrates more on Mr. Clutter’s personality.

More important, she passes judgment on people or makes important observations that Capote misses. For instance, when looking at both authors' notes on Polly Stringer, Lee's notes show that she believes that Mr. Clutter was jealous of Nancy's relationship with her home-ec teacher. Lee writes, "Clutter obviously resented (or Stringer thinks he resented) Nancy's closeness with her home ec. teacher." However, Capote does not say this, or make any reference to this relationship in his notes. This is, most likely, because Capote was not interested in a "mother figure" relationship between Nancy and Mrs. Stringer because his own mother abandoned him; she left him with elderly relatives who raised him. Because his mother was absent throughout most of his life, and when she was present their relationship was extremely dysfunctional, he could not allow himself to get emotionally involved with a relationship like this. However, Lee, whose mother was present throughout her entire life, was interested in a relationship such as this. Thus, by examining both authors' research notes, one can understand their own interests and personalities.

Another person both authors interviewed was Mr. Lester McCoy, a well-known western Kansas landowner & businessman. By juxtaposing Capote's and Lee's notes, I found that both authors interviewed him at the same time on December 27<sup>th</sup> because both of their notes have the same date. However, in this particular case, both authors chose to focus on different ideas when they interviewed McCoy. This may indicate that they learned from conducting their first few interviews together or by comparing notes. For instance, during their interview with Mrs. Polly Stringer, both authors recorded many of the same facts; therefore, they may have assigned specific ideas to each other to focus on during their interviews. Thus, the fact that both focused on different ideas was, most

likely, planned by the two authors in advance. However, after analyzing Capote's notes on Lester McCoy, I found that Capote wrote at the top of his interview notes, "See notes: N.L." This indicates that Capote made this note to himself to check Lee's notes because he felt he would incorporate her ideas into his book or that her notes were better or concentrated on ideas he missed. Either way, at this particular time during his project, it seems apparent that he planned to use Lee's research.

His notes for Lester McCoy show many ideas. Capote writes:

H.W. Clutter

As described by Mr. and Mrs. Lester McCoy: (Except for Clifford Hope, Sr. Mr. McCoy, who had the Ford concession in Garden for thirty years, is probably the county's most eminent citizen; a very civil and civilized sort of man who, when he smiles, looks exactly like John Foster Dulles; his wife is a less plump Mrs. Harry Truman." Outside of a certain circle, the Methodist clique, I don't think too many grieved over Herb Clutter. He was a self-centered man with a strong power drive; he did a lot of things, but not much that didn't help Herb Clutter. I never saw any evidences of temper myself, but a lot of people have told me he was a hard man to deal with. He wanted things done his way, and I never knew him to change his mind. Mrs. Clutter was just a quiet thing completely dominated by him. Of course the murder has affected everybody in this county. I have a farm out there in Holcomb, and my tenant told me the other day he was going to move, he said "Nobody sleeps around here anymore. The lights are on all night. The porch lights and everything. There's just too much bitterness. People taking turns to sit up with a gun. Right after it happened you couldn't get the women to go to bed, even

sit down. They just wanted to stand up all night.

“Of course the church was the whole of the Clutters social life, and us being Presbyterian we didn’t see too much of them.

“Naturally Clutter was a gambler; any man who farms in Western Kansas has to be. If we had an inch more of rain a year it would be paradise. He was terribly in debt. Most of these people have spent their crop before they harvest it.”

(See Appendix R to view Capote’s notes on Lester McCoy).

However, Harper Lee writes and observes many different aspects from interviewing McCoy. From this interview, Lee writes,

The Garden City Company owns 25,000 acres of land north and west of Holcomb. About 25,000 acres of land north and west of Holcomb. About 80% of Holcomb residents are tenants on G.C.C. lands. They farm on a share-cropping basis, for instance, the company gets 1/3 of wheat grown, 1/5 of mile, etc. in return for tenants’ use of land and tenant houses.

In this way, the tenants are more secure than if they operated on their own land.

The risks of operation are far less in that they do not pay property taxes, are not subject to capital losses through crop failures. Their probable greatest cash outlay is in buying seed and farm machinery.

The Garden City Company is owned by the estate of Pennsylvania Spencer Penrose/ (Brother of Sen. Penrose or Sen. Penrose himself?) Was begun about 1907-1910? recovery & regrouping was happy one, for has shown steady profit since. Penrose estate owns most of stock, but a good deal of Northern capital (Bernard Baruch is investor) in corporation. There is a local management office in

Garden City, but corporation itself is an absentee landlord.

Most tenants of G.C.C. are second generation. Heavy influx of Russians to Holcomb community and most are Catholic.

Social strata still undefined, but clearing: people have a tendency to associate according to religion out here. (Religion great factor in lives, and obviously so: probably churches are greatest social outlets for majority of people around here.)

The Methodists stick with the Methodists, the R.C.'s with the Pope; only cracks in gen. Puritan social life seem to be Presbyterians & Episcopalians.

Holcomb petrified, and still petrified.

The Ulrich family drives in to Garden City every night.\*

One man became afraid when he was alone in his yard of an evening.

(CHECK.)

\*They think murders have something to do with Kan. Wheat Growers Assn.

Dec. 27

When Mr. Lester McCoy goes goose hunting through Holcomb, he says it's not unusual to see porch lights on at 4-4:30 in the morning.

What is interesting after juxtaposing the two writers' notes is that Capote focuses on Herb Clutter's character and personality, while Lee focuses on the community, particularly the social strata and the religious values that the citizens hold. Also, Lee focuses on the fear the town has after the murders have occurred—the key idea that Capote had originally wanted to convey in the newspaper article he was going to write. (See Appendix S to view Lee's notes on Lester McCoy).

On January 4, 1960, Capote and Lee interviewed Mrs. Hartman. Each writer recorded different ideas and focused on different aspects during this interview too. This may signal that they felt their previous interview with Lester McCoy was successful when they concentrated on different ideas. Again, this may indicate that the two divided responsibilities and planned what topics each would concentrate on. Capote recorded the following during this interview:

Vignette

Jan 4<sup>th</sup>

Scene: Mrs. Hartman's café. The café is attached to a garage; it has a counter and three tables. There are shelves filled with candy and Bomo-seltzer and aspirin. There are always quite a few overalled [sic] or khaki-panted men lounging around drinking coffee and 3.2 beer. Mrs. Hartman has blonde and yellow hair, is very spare and leathery, and always wears a big pair of bright red earrings; she describes herself as a "tough old bird"; she was born and brought up in Holcomb. . . I believe Myrt Clare is her cousin. The "kitchen" of the café is visible. Sitting on top of the icebox is a small radio.

Radio (newsbroadcast, station Kiul, [sic] Garden City): ". . . Hickok fainted in a Hallway After [sic] telling in the statement how Clutter's throat was cut and then how Clutter and the others were shot, one by one. His jaws weresunken [sic] and his brown hair touseled [sic] as he emerged from the interrogation room. . ."

Mrs. Harman. "I should think he would. I should think he would faint. Killing those people one by one. Imagine pulling a stunt like that."

Man: "Yessir. Some trick.

Mrs. Hartman. "And imagine Bonnie listening to it. Hearing those shots. One by one. The torture. I don't see how they'll ever get a jury in this country."

Mrs. Helm (moving towards the radio, as though to turn it off: "I just don't want to hear anymore about it"

(over)

But somebody said Hush, and she didn't turn off the radio.

Radio: "Word of the break in the case was met with little reaction in the town of Holcomb, a half mile from the Clutter home. Generally, townspeople in the community of 270 expressed relief. . ."

Man: "Relief! Huh. When I heard it I fell into a chair. Not backwards either head first."

Myrt Clare (wearing that day a rawhide jacket, and cowboy boots): "Hush . . . hear, that's me."

Radio: ". . .and the postmaster, Mrs. Myrtle Clare, said the residents are glad it has been solved but some of them still feel there may be others involved. She said plenty of folks are keeping guns in their houses."

Mrs. Hartman (amid laughter) "Who did you say that to, Myrt?"

Myrt: "Never mind." Then adding, "One of those boys from the Telegram. Was in the paper."

Man: "What did you mean by it, Myrt? You don't still think one of us. . . Anybody around here had anything to do with it?"

Myrt (inscrutable): "Well. You never know. Now do you?"

Mrs. Hartman (after a solemn pause in the café): "All I hope. I hope we



never have to live through anything like this again.

Mrs. Helm: “I’ll tell you what I hope. I hope when they get those fellows back to Garden City, they lock them up good. I won’t feel easy as long as they’re in the vicinity.”

Man: “ask me, right now those fellows are more afraid of us here in Holcomb than we are of them.”

Present in Café: 5 or six men, Mrs. Hartman, Mrs. Clare, Mrs. Helm.

What is interesting about Capote’s notes on Mrs. Hartman is that he already envisioned this project becoming a book, and wrote much of this particular interview in a vignette style, like he would a play or book.

Again, Lee records her ideas much differently:

Jan. 5

Hart’s Café

Café/fillingstation a great curiosity. Enter through filling station; café screened off by ordinary porch screening, enter café through a screen door. One black shiny table (modernistic, chrome-legged chairs) seating 4; 2 of same material seating two people. Eight stools at lunch counter (red). Very narrow and long, as if kitchen dept. tacked on. Kitchen open and beyond lunch counter. Enormous gas stove taking up most of table space, with stove-pipe curling to ceiling. Light green board (wooden) walls. 4-H calendar on wall by stove. Carefully curtained window between café and car shop in rear. Magnificent view.

Place frequented by farm workers; drink coffee and 3.2 beer. Sit around stove and steam boots. Dressed in khaki shirts, pants, or overalls. Some wear red caps made

of plastic material, some in wool hunting caps. All in heavy work boots or shoes. Myriads of merchandise on shelves behind lunch counter. Handkerchiefs (5/c), Anacin, room air purifiers, popular candies (Mars Bars, Hershey bars, etc.), Sen-Sen, cigarettes.

Mrs. Hart; pale faded blonde-grey hair, thin, plastic-rimmed spectacles. “Guess you heard I was a rough old character.”

Petrified lest they bring killers out to reenact crime. Hoped they “are handcuffed and feetcuffed”. Didn’t like the idea of them driving to G.C. through Holcomb.

Mrs. Hart had just unbuttoned her dress and was getting it off last Sunday night when someone called and asked if she’d seen the tv news broadcast. She said yes, she had it on. Well, didn’t she hear that “they’d” (error, only Hickock had then) confessed?

Well she hadn’t, but she was glad she could sleep well that night.

Mrs. Hart didn’t know “how you could feature anybody pulling a stunt like that.”

She was born and reared in Holcomb, and nothing like Clutter case had happened as long as she could remember. She hoped nothing like it would happen again. (A likely story.)

They were all so relieved when they heard of the confessions.

(Nelle’s note: relieved and very disappointed that it was not a “grudge” killing; that it was not someone they knew who’d done it.)

Mrs. Helm: sweet face, dark, black hair, plump; very respectful of Mrs. Hart—very sure to get all dimes and nickels for coffees.

What remains clear after juxtaposing both writers' notes on Mrs. Helm and Hart's café, is that there are many differences. Capote and Lee concentrate on the characters that frequent the café and the customers' wardrobes, but Capote seems more preoccupied with what exactly was being said by what specific people and what was being said on the radio. However, Lee, again, seems more preoccupied with the atmosphere of the café and the atmosphere of the town. What is interesting is that both record some of the same ideas, such as what the people drink, etc. However, one major idea to be seen is that Capote dates his notes January 4, whereas Lee dates her notes January 5. Once again, this could indicate that the writers went to the café on different days, or that one writer made an error when labeling his/her notes. However, one can see that Capote was already beginning to write his notes in a novel form by using a vignette, whereas Lee, like always, was conducting straight reporting.

Another townspeople that both Capote and Lee interviewed was Bob Johnson. While Lee's notes are dated December 23<sup>rd</sup>, Capote does not date his notes. Capote records a great deal about Bob Johnson and what he knows about the Clutters. He writes,

#### CHRONOLOGY

##### SATURDAY AFTERNOON 3 to 6

As told by R.M. (Bob) Johnson: Johnson, about 43, is local representative of New York Insurance Co; he is medium height and a little plump; wears very scuffed shoes, a cheap sort of pale suit: shouldn't think he was doing too well; is a Presbyterian, but met Clutter when he came to him to borrow money from New York Life for the building of the First Methodist Church; is moderately intelligent; is a little chagrined at having sold Clutter an insurance policy on the very eve of his

death (for 40, 000 dollars, which paid a double indemnity, “we could have gotten out of it legally, since the check hadn’t been cashed; but morally we were obligated”) and believes the Clutter relatives are sore at him for having spoken to reporters; is not a local, but came here ten years ago and thought of it as a Jumping Off Place: “I called Herb about two, and Nancy answered the phone and said could her father call me back (maybe he was sleeping or talking to those Mexicans).”

I wasn’t an intimate friend of his and only saw him once in a while about business matters. Now I’d first spoken to him about this matter two years ago; but nothing came of it then. Then six months ago I brought it up again. What it was was an Estate Plan, not just insurance, whereby his heirs could inherit with the least tax.

Early in October Herb took a physical, and he was in excellent health. So I called him on Saturday and told him I had all the information he wanted and could I make an appointment to see him next week, and he said (this was when he called me back at 2:30) “Come on out this afternoon; I haven’t got anything planned.”

When I got there Kenyon was in the office with him; then Kenyon went off to buy some lumber in Garden City to build a sheep feeder. From then until six Herb and I went over things. We went over the insurance he already owned and the Planning of the Estate.

Personal Matters? Well, naturally when a man is discussing his will you touch on personal things. That’s a kind of solemn occasion. But I never saw a man more optimistic than he was; he was looking forward to the future; he thought there was money to be made, and he was going to make it. He was very proud of Kenyon,

and hoped that Kenyon would carry on the farm. And he was so pleased about his two sons-in-laws [sic], Eveanna's husband and the boy Beverly was going to marry very English; he couldn't [sic] say enough good about them. He was in just wonderful spirits. The only time he mentioned Mrs. Clutter was to say that she couldn't carry on the farm by herself, the operation. I would say Clutter was a very successful man, among the top 25 percent around here. He farmed irrigated land, which is less of a risk than dry land (where a man is totally dependent on the weather); but even so he was always taking a gamble, and his investment was terrific---upwards of fifty thousand dollars in machinery alone; all the farmers take terrific chances around here. When I left around six it was getting dark; was hungry, we usually eat around six thirty. So I said, "Well, I guess its [sic] time to go, and Clutter turned to Kenyon, who come in from the yard, and said "Yes, and its [sic] time for us to do the chores."

Further addenda: Clutters [sic] plans for the Estate made no mention of Van Vleet, and Johnson was "shocked" to learn the next day that Clutter had a partner; though say Van Vleet not a real partner as had no capital in the venture etc.

When Johnson heard of the tragedy: he was just getting ready to eat Sunday dinner and a friend called and told him: "I couldn't believe it, I thought there must be some mistake. I had Clutter's check for the insurance policy in my pocket, right there in my pocket. So I called our office in Wichita and asked them what I should do since the check had not been put through. Well, legally we could have gotten out of making the payment, but morally we were obligated. We paid."

Capote, once again, is concerned with what is said by Bob Johnson, Herb Clutter's personality, and Bob Johnson's physical description.

However, Lee's notes show, once again, that she is concerned with much more. Lee writes,

Dec. 23

Mr. Bob Johnson aiding Mr. Clutter in working out an estate planning program.

Idea is to convey estate to heirs with the least amount of taxes. The plan, rather they began working on the plan two years ago but didn't do much to begin with.

Six months before death, when he auctioned farm, Mr. Clutter again conferred with Mr. Johnson, and toward the latter part of September gave him (Johnson) a financial statement. In early October Mr. C. underwent physical examination; report, excellent.

In the Saturday afternoon conference, they went over all insurance Mr. Clutter owned at the time, worked on the estate planning program, and made the program ready for Clutter's lawyers to go over. (Mr. Clutter signed policy? Johnson said he signed it, but then he said that on Sunday when he heard of murder, he had C.'s check for first premium in his pocket and that the policy had not been signed. You pays your money and you takes your choice.)

Johnson thinks Clutter in upper 5% of farm income bracket; that C. was a very successful farmer in spite of reverses in last three years. (In '56, lost most of sheep in snowstorm; in '59 there was a sharp drop in price of sheep. In spite of all this, Clutter still had sheep.) Van Vleet simply not in the picture in Clutter's estate planning. This mean there was no actual partnership, or that there was some

arrangement wherein the partnership would cease on death of one of the parties, but this seems screwy.

The Clutter house was worth \$40,000 in 1943. (J. says in G.C. now, such home would bring \$50,000 to \$60,000.) Hard to sell till crime solved. See (Crime) for C.'s general mood, and references to Kenyon & sons-in-law.

Confidential: C. was insured with NY life for \$40,000 which paid off double indemnity. Insurance Co, not required to pay off on policy (leads me again to think Clutter hadn't signed it.) but did. Prob. Gen. good will reasons.

The following notes are dated Dec. 23, which leads me to believe that Lee must have gone back on a second occasion to interview Bob Johnson, and Capote didn't. On this second occasion she writes,

Dec. 23

Sunday, November 15

Mr. Bob Johnson was at home, had not gone to church; was eating Sunday lunch.

First reaction was disbelief.

Second was, what shall I do? He called his Wichita office and asked his boss what to do, as "I had his check in my pocket . . . his insurance policies. . ."

Lee also created a chronology or timeline, much like Capote created, and Lee physically described Bob Johnson and his office in her notes.

Another person the two interviewed was Nancy Clutter's boyfriend, Bob Rupp. In Capote's notes, he details Rupp's relationship with Nancy Clutter:

As told by Bob RUPP: "At the time it happened (the murder) we weren't going steady; that is, Nancy wasn't wearing my ring (a silver ring set with a little piece of

petrified wood which was found wrapped with tape so it would fit in Nancy's drawer). When she wore the ring, that meant it was official, our going steady. But we had a falling out early in September; someone told her that they'd seen me drinking a beer. It was true; I'd gone to somebody's [sic] wedding and had a beer. She was furious about it. No, I never smoked in the Clutter's house, at least not in Fr. Clutter's presence; so of course I didn't smoke when I was there that Saturday night.

"I'd known Nancy all my life; we'd gone to school together from the first-grade. The first time I dated her was when we were in the eighth grade. She was very popular and pretty and nice to everybody, so I took her to the Eighth Grade Graduation dance. We were both twelve; my father lent me the car, and I drove her to the dance. The more I saw her, the more I liked her. On Sunday afternoons (last summer and fall) we used to drive out to McKenney Lake and take motorboat rides or sit by the lake and do our school homework together (school opened Aug 31<sup>st</sup>). I always gave her presents on her birthday and Christmas. Last present I gave her was an Identification bracelet with her name on one side and mine on the other. That pink Teddy bear . . . I won it for her two years ago at the Finney County Fair: throwing baseballs . . . it cost me over five-dollars, at a quarter a throw. She wanted a brother for it, a twin, so last I tried again, and I spent seven dollars, but I didn't win anything.

The following notes are a chronology that Capote put together based on his interview with Rupp, in which Capote details Rupp's time spent with the Clutters:

#### CHRONOLOGY



SATURDAY EVENING, Nov. 14<sup>th</sup>, 7:10 to 10:30

As told by Bob RUPP: (Bob, or Bobby, is the last known person to have seen the Clutters alive; he and Nancy were the same age, sixteen, and he had been her more or less “steady” boyfriend since they were twelve years old and in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade; he is a quiet, gentlemanly boy, fair-haired, with a smooth, long face and fresh complexion [sic]: very clean looking; he has big bony hands, but is, if not really delicate, rather insubstantially built: one feels that he hasn’t [sic] filled out, hasn’t got his full growth. His hair is crinkly-curly and his head doesn’t seem quite large enough; he habitually dresses in light-colored slacks and sport-shirts; and a trench-type outdoor coat; the evening of the murder, however, he was wearing black suit-trousers and a wool sport-shirt, collar open at the throat. He has a pleasant voice, and is average intelligence. He is the third of eight children: an older sister is married, another brother, Leroy, works with the father on the farm (they raise several crops, but primarily sugar-beets), and there is a younger brother called Larry. The Rupp farm is a rather slovenly looking place; there are barns and a bunk-house adjoining the farm-house is made of a yellowish stucco concrete, and seems too small for such a large family . . . the youngest child, a boy, is only two. The Rupps are Catholics of German origin; they are very nice, kindly people (but not in the same social class with the Clutters). . . the mother, though a harried sort, seems young for her years. The house inside is clean and cozy. Bob doesn’t want to be a farmer, but an athletic coach: he plays baseball and basketball (practically every boy we have spoken to out here wants to make a career of Coaching). He says he never smoked much before the tragedy, but now he is virtually a chain-

smoker. He is 5 feet seven inches tall, and 135 pounds. He can't swim. In the summers he works on his father's farm, and he learned to drive by driving tractors in the fields when he was seven years old. He has been driving the family car since he was eleven, and last June he bought his own car, a 1955 Ford. He was most cooperative during the interview, but did not volunteer much information that was not the result of a direct question: "I called Nancy, I guess it was about ten of seven. We had a date to go into the movies in Garden City. But the night before, Friday night, we'd been in to see the midnight show and didn't get home until after one. The show, it was supposed to scare you, it being Friday the 13<sup>th</sup>, and it was scary, kinda. Nancy's parents didn't let us stay out later than 12 on fridays [sic] and saturdays [sic] and on weekdays we had to be in by 10: my folks had the same rules. So when I called Nancy said she'd have to ask her father if she could go. She put down the phone. When she came back she said Mr. Clutter said No; but why didn't I come over and we could watch television. I spent a lot of time at the Clutters watching Television. They were the nicest family around here; there wasn't anyone like them. No, I never went there to dinner; all the years I'd been going there I don't remember ever eating a meal there. So . . . I got over to the Clutter's house about ten after seven [sic]. Nancy and Kenyon and Mr. Clutter, they had already eaten and cleaned up the kitchen, and were sitting in the living room watching "Bonanza" on T.V. (Mrs. Clutter was upstairs asleep.) There were lights on in the office, the living room and the kitchen; but no lights upstairs. Mr. Clutter was sitting in the stuffed rocking-chair; he was wearing overalls and his work shoes; he was reading a book and eating an apple . . . whenever the program

interested him he'd put the book aside and watch for a while.

Nancy and Kenyon and I sat on the curved couch (note: one upholstered with Liebes fabric). During the evening Mr. Clutter received two telephone calls (note: see Van VLEET; but check second). He seemed very relaxed and in good-spirit, no different than any other time. Kenyon teased Nancy about getting chubby (eating ice-cream; Nancy always conscious of her weight). Kenyon was always teasing Nancy about something. He was wearing blue-jeans and a white T shirt, and his work-shoes. Nancy was wearing bluejeans [sic] and a green corduroy shirt and slippers and socks.

“About 8:30 Kenyon said he wanted to go upstairs and practice his horn (baritone); he was a good player and very fond of music. He didn't want to watch the program we were watching and he and Nancy argued about it, so he wanted to go practice his horn. But Nancy told him he couldn't because Mrs. Clutter was asleep upstairs. Then his father told him why didn't he go down to the basement to the recreation room: nobody would hear him down there. But he was stubborn and wouldn't. ‘We watched the ten o'clock News and then the weather report (Mr. Clutter always perked up when the weather reports came on: weather was what interested him most) and then the Sports, which is what most interested me. (Kenyon wasn't good at sports; he liked horses and music and motors). Right after the weather report Mr. Clutter went into the kitchen and got himself another apple; he asked me if I wanted one, but I didn't. As soon as the Sports was over I got up to leave. No, neither Mr. Clutter or Kenyon said goodbye to me; people around here don't say goodbye if you are in and out of their house a lot. Nancy walked me

to the door. We made plans for the next day. I was going to drive into Garden City to the Methodist church (Rupp is Catholic) to a 6:30 meeting of the Young Methodists, then we were going to the State to see a picture she'd been looking forward to, "Blue Denim".

"I got into my car. Nancy didn't walk me out to the car. There were still leaves on the trees and you could hear them rustling. It was full moon, quite clear and cold. I drove off. Stoeckleine (the hired man who lived with his family a hundred yards from the house) told the KBI that he heard my car drive off. (But Stoeckleine didn't hear four shotguns blasts somewhat later). And I don't understand that; how he could have heard my car and not heard the shots."

"We'd gone into St. Mary's (Catholic church) in Garden City and came back and I was out in the bunk-house. Mr. Ewalt, who discovered them (the Clutter's bodies) drove over to our house (this must have been directly after Ewalt took his family home, after having been to the Kidwells); he spoke to my father and told him what had happened; then they came out to the bunk-house and told me together. I didn't believe it; I still don't believe it. I wanted to go over there right away, but my father wouldn't let me. After dinner, I had to sit through dinner, my father let me go, but he sent my brother Larry with me (Larry is younger brother, but taller than Bob) because I was so upset my father thought I might do something crazy. We went up to the entrance to the Clutter property, but there was a barricade and the police wouldn't let us go through. So we went over to the Kidwells, and we just sat there in that little front parlor and people kept calling up and wanting to know what had happened. I kind of stayed around the Kidwells for

the next couple of days, and Susie and I went to the funeral together. (They also went to Phillips Funeral Home together and saw Nancy, but did not bring this up during interview as could see it would upset him too much; but see KIDWELL, SUSAN).

“Mr. Dewey (Alvin Dewey of the KBI) had me come to his office on three successive days. He talked to me for about two hours each time. Tough; but that was their duty. I believe now that they (the killers) were waiting outside for me to leave.” (Box 7, Reel 7, Folders 6-10)

Lee recorded notes about Bob Rupp as well:

Sixteen; 5’7”/junior Holcomb High School. Family mainly sugar beet farmers although they grow mill, wheat, alfalfa. Third of eight children. Rupp’s R.C.’s. Live in Holcomb community.

Fair, good thin face, lips too heavy; scar on left corner of mouth; large, blue-grey eyes; fair hair short, not well cut—sort of patchy; good hands, thin nervous fingers; wears H.H. ring on left hand; voice quiet and shy, sometimes erratic grammar; sits forward in easy chair when talking. Looks straight at you when speaking.

Dressed brown (orange brown) sports shirt; grey pants; v.light brown wool jacket.

Argyll [sic] socks (grey, yellow-red pattern) black shoes.

Is letterman on H.H. basketball team; plays guard. Likes baseball (really favorite sport) pitches and plays first base. Wants to go to Kansas University and major in phys. ed. with view to coaching basketball. Likes all pop music.

Owens (since June) ’55 Ford, blue and white. Has an allowance in winter months; works on farm in summer mostly to “pay out on my car.” Has been driving since

seven years old.

Was last person(?) to see Clutters on Saturday November 14, before crime. Was in love with Nancy Clutter and still is. Been to school together all their lives.

Dec. 24

Mr. Clutter would sometimes take off his shoes and sit in his sock feet. Bob cannot remember seeing Mr. Clutter in bedroom slippers. Bob thought that the Clutter family usually ate in the breakfast room. They seldom had fires in the fireplaces; basement fireplace specific-ally[sic]; when there was a fire they burned wood. Never saw Mrs. Clutter when she was ill.

Dec. 24

#### Bob and Nancy

Bob and Nancy had been dating four years, since they were twelve years old. Bob: "I liked her ever since the eighth grade."

On their first date, Bob called and took her to their 8<sup>th</sup>-grade graduation exercises. He called for her in car, drove himself. The Clutters did not mind. (Bob had been driving since he was seven. Said when he was twelve, however, his father wouldn't let him drive in town.)

Until they were fourteen, their "dates" limited to such occasions as above. They had to wait—"We were nearly fifteen when we first went out." Theirs were parlor dates, if you can call them that. "I'd go over there and watch TV. . ."

As far as Bob was concerned, they went steady from then on. On their dates, they would mostly go to movies, or in the summertime after school had started they would drive out to the Lake McKenney, where they went speed-boating. They

would take their books out and study together. Bob said he saw Nancy less in the summer months, as he was working on his father's farm. Their summer dates were on weekends (Friday, Saturday nights, Sunday afternoons and evenings.)

It was Bob's habit to take Nancy in to Garden City on Sunday evenings to attend the Methodist Youth Fellowship meeting from 6:30 to 7:30. As Bob is a Catholic, he said he usually "drove around" while he waited for Nancy. Afterwards their routine was a movie. Nancy did not go to evening church (or do they have night services? Possibly not.)

They had to be in between 10:00 and 10:30 on school nights, by midnight on weekends. They seem to have held the line pretty well.

When they "broke up", Bob said it would be for no longer than 2 days at the time. Their last "break-up" was 2 months before her death, when Bob drank a bottle of beer at wedding party of his cousin's and "I don't know how she found out about it, but she did. . ." Bob had given Nancy his ring (silver, with a piece of petrified wood in the center. Nancy wore it on her right hand and made it fit by wrapping a piece of adhesive tape around the ring.) When they "broke up" over Bob's beer, Nancy asked him if he wanted his ring back, but he said he didn't.

Two years ago, at the Garden City fair, Bob expended \$5.00 winning a bear for Nancy (teddy bear in room) by pitching baseballs at \$.25 for three. "I spent more than \$5.00 this year but I didn't win one . . ." Bob considered himself a pretty fair pitcher, and thinks this affair rigged.

They had some small arguments, usually about what they would do or where they would go. But ended up most of the time doing what Nancy wanted. Bob said

they never argued about religion, that their discussions of it were usually question-answer ones on their faiths.

“Neither of us did date others.” Seemingly, after their last break-up, Nancy and Bob weren’t going steady, but according to Bob, they didn’t date other people.

Last August they met briefly in Sharon Springs, Colorado. Nancy and the Kidwells had been there for a week; Bob and his party had just arrived (they stayed 3 days). Bob and Nancy saw each other from about 3:00 p.m. on for “the rest of the afternoon.” When buying her gifts, Bob would usually find out what Nancy wanted and then try to get it; he never went “on his own” in choosing her gifts. His last gift to her was a silver I.D. (identification) bracelet, with her name on the front. Bob: “There was another name on the back.”

On Friday, November 13, Bob and Nancy left the high school (Bob thinks she was wearing a black sweater) and drove into town for the midnight movie, which began at 11:30. They were home “a little after 1”. Nancy didn’t think Tom Sawyer had gone so well, but Bob in the audience thought so. Play well received. Nancy was happy, and glad it was over. Bob didn’t think the movie was too good; didn’t scare him. (See T.’s clipping for title.)

Bob on Nancy: her best friends were Susan Kidwell, Evelyn Base, Judy Swartley.

One of her cats was called “Boobie” . . . Nancy was on girls’ basketball squad; played forward, and Bob thought she was one of the best on the team.

Nancy liked all kinds of pop music.

She disliked conceited persons; persons who thought they could do things better than everybody else. Bob said Nancy could do almost anything, tried to do



everything better than others, but she was not conceited about it. Bob thought her the most popular girl in the school. Nancy watched her weight. Thought she saw herself gaining; thought she ate too much.

Bob Rupp

“Kenyon was always studying.”

Kenyon would go out for athletics, but was never any good. He played forward when he played basketball.

“Kenyon liked scientific movies.”

Bob thought Kenyon liked electric/mechanics better than farming. But he loved animals and probably stayed in the 4-H club for his sheep projects.

Bob says Kenyon was almost always in his sock feet when around the house at night. “Kenyon couldn’t play basketball without his glasses . . .”

Bob thinks Kenyon was extremely dependent on his glasses, remembered a time when he broke them playing ball, and couldn’t function. Bob didn’t think Kenyon could navigate, (say, down steps and out in the yard) without them.

Kenyon had a sense of humor in that he joked; was a quiet boy. Teased Nancy—thought he (Kenyon) detected chubbiness; probably a sensitive subject with her.

Saturday, November 14

A little before 7:00 p.m. Bob Rupp phoned Nancy. They were planning to go to the show. Nancy went and asked father, but Mr. C. wouldn’t let her go because she’d been staying out too much all week. Nancy asked Bob to come on over and watch TV. Bob went to Clutter house about 7:10 p.m. in his car. Parked car in front of cement walk. Teddy was “at front of house” and barked at him.

Clutters had already eaten dinner. So had Bob. Bob said Mrs. Clutter was in her room upstairs. Nancy, Kenyon, and Mr. Clutter in the livingroom.

Nancy had on blue jeans and green corduroy shirt, wore moccasin bedroom slippers. Kenyon wore blue jeans & t-shirt and work shoes.

Mr. Clutter wore blue overalls (strap kind) and work shoes. Bob didn't remember what kind of shirt.

They watched television on portable TV (Bob thinks a Zenith. Set on TV stand); One program seen was "Bonanza", vaguely about western family.

(There are two stations they can get. Apparently they switched stations from time to time.) Nancy and Kenyon argued about which programs to watch. Nancy, Kenyon, and Bob sat on couch; Mr. Clutter in rocking chair. The kids looked at TV; Mr. Clutter had book—would read steadily sometimes, but sometimes would put book down and watch a program. During the evening, Bob saw him eat 2 apples. Watched 2 whole programs.

About 8:30 Kenyon was seized with desire to practice his baritone. Mr. C said go upstairs, but Nancy said no, Mrs. Clutter was asleep. Why not go to the basement? Bob said "Kenyon wouldn't do it. He sat back down and watched TV.

The only lights Bob remembered being on were the livingroom and possibly kitchen lights. During the evening Mr. Clutter had 2 phone calls. He answered each on office phone. Bob had on black suit pants, dress shirt (sports) and light tan jacket. At 10:30, after looking at the news and sports, Bob left. Nancy saw him to door (Mr. C. and Kenyon still in livingroom. Doesn't know if they were about to turn off set or not.). They said goodnight, and made a date for Bob to take her to

MYF meeting next evening (Sunday). MYF from 6:30 to 7:30. They were going to show afterwards. Show Nancy wanted to see called "Blue Denim."

Dec. 26:

No he didn't. He drove into Garden City, met some friends, had a hamburger & they all went back to Holcomb, arriving about 11:45. (Friends were neighbors, who lived in area.) (See T's notes for TV programs).

Bob:

Mr. Stoecklein said he heard Bob's car drive away.

Bob noticed nothing unusual about the house, the grounds, or the family. It was a routine Saturday night with him. Bob placed the railway track some 400 yards from the house. He thought the river farther away, but couldn't estimate exactly.

Dec. 24

Sunday, November 15

Bob Rupp

had just returned from church (St. Mary's, G.C.). It was between 10:30 and 11:00. He was out in the "bunkhouse, where the boys sleep", and his father and Mr. Ewart came in and told him. Mr. Ewart went to the Rupp house and told Mr. Rupp first, then they went to the "bunkhouse" and both told him what had happened.

Bob's first reaction was disbelief, and it lasted quite a while, but about believing it, "I guess you have to . . .".

After dinner, he went to the Kidwells. Bob's "little brother, but he's taller than I am."(Larry) went with him. Bob's father wouldn't let him go alone, didn't trust him to drive car.

At the Kidwells were the Kidwells and “the Swartley girls”; people were calling and going in and out all afternoon. They were in the Kidwell livingroom.

For the next three days, when Bob and Susan were together, they “just drove around.” Bob can’t remember that they said anything in particular.

Bob’s present feelings: that killers knew house very well. He can’t understand why the Stoeckleins didn’t hear anything when, after all, Mr. Stoecklein said he heard Bob’s car drive off Saturday night. Bob says anybody could walk down railroad track. He estimates railroad about 400 yards from Clutter house.

Lee’s notes on Rupp are much more specific and focus on ideas that Capote does not, such as Kenyon and specifics in the Clutters’ house. However, this interview seems to be one in which both authors’ personalities are not revealed.

While Rupp’s preference for Lee was never revealed in the authors’ notes, Rupp gave a revealing interview years later. In 2005, Rupp gave one of his first interviews in years to journalism students at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln for a project entitled *Cold Blood: A Murder, a Book, a Legacy*. In this interview, Rupp stated, “He wasn’t fond of Capote” (Lee “Resilient Spirit” 14). He further explained that he originally refused to be interviewed by Capote because he was not “too impressed by the small, flamboyant man with the high-pitched voice” (18). Rupp also stated that “Capote never stopped asking questions” (18). And, he told *The Galveston Daily News* in 1984, that he “regrets giving him permission to use his name in the book” (“Capote remembered in town of ‘In Cold Blood’” 9-B). More important, Rupp revealed the real reason he agreed to allow Capote to interview him, which was because “KBI agent Alvin Dewey Jr. told him it was a good idea” (Lee “Resilient Spirit” 18). Therefore, once again, it was another

person—Alvin Dewey—who assisted Capote to get an interview. So, it seems that both Dewey and Lee made Rupp feel comfortable enough to allow Capote to interview him. However, the most revealing piece of information that Rupp revealed was that he remembered that “most of the questions were asked by Harper Lee, so much so that ‘sometimes I wonder who really wrote that book’” (Pilkington “In Cold Blood, half a century on”).

Besides recording notes on the townspeople, Capote and Lee also recorded notes on the KBI, the county coroner, and the town sheriff. Likewise, these notes are very revealing. The first idea that is evident when the two authors interviewed Sheriff Earl Robinson is the amount of notes each recorded. Capote’s notes are extremely brief. He records,

Aged 63. A stocky man, average height or a little below; has large balding head, and a big-featured face; drooping jowls, small eyes set behind rimless spectacles; has big protruding ear, like John O’Hara’s, whom he resembles in other respects. A deep twangy voice with marked Western accent. Wears dark slate gray shirts, no coat, and tight, non-uniform trousers with belt that bites into his paunch. Addicted to gaudy ties . . . particularly one pictorially adorned with flying geese. No one seems to have much respect for him, and the case has been pretty much taken out of his hands, though he says that he “Hasn’t worked on much of anything else around here for the last month; we’ve just let everything else slide.”

See N.L. notes for complete text of interview. (See Appendix T to view Capote’s notes on Sheriff Earl Robinson).

The second idea that is evident after viewing Capote's notes is that he writes on the bottom of them, "See N.L. notes for complete text of interview." Clearly, this signals that Lee's notes are better than Capote's and that hers are not only more descriptive, but also more complete, or that Capote and Lee discussed what ideas each would focus on prior to conducting an interview such as this.

Lee's notes record what the sheriff saw and what was said. For instance, Sheriff Robinson explains what Susan Kidwell saw when she first realized that Nancy Clutter had been murdered. Lee records,

Dec. 29

Sunday November 15

Sheriff Robinson

. . .

"Ewalt wanted to show me what the kids had seen, so we went right on upstairs."

Sheriff said they saw Nancy, and he said the following:

"Where the devil do you reckon Herb is? . . . Have you tried to figure out what happened?" Nancy's door open.

Kenyon's door wide open. Room looked like "somebody had slept in bed."

Mrs. Clutter's room door closed. (Sheriff said she was tied to the bed.)

He then went and called the police department. He went back to the house and

"Heard a racket in the basement." It was under sheriff Myers. Sheriff: "We've got two upstairs." Myers: "There's one downstairs."

Sheriff: "what's in this other room?" (Indicating furnace room.)

He opened the door to the furnace room.

Sheriff: “Is that Herb?”

Mr. Ewalt came forward & looked. He said, “That is Herb.”

Sheriff: “I was so stunned couldn’t think what to do for a while—then I radioed for the coroner, the county attorney, and the ambulance.”

He also called the assistant chief of police (Richard Rohleder) to come take pictures. He called deputy Hawkins and another deputy to come out and set up a road block. Rev. Cowan arrived before the coroner. Nobody knows who told him. The sheriff “looked for evidence of ransacking” but found none. Inspected & sniffed Mr. Clutter’s guns, but there was no odor of being recently fired. Nothing was disturbed as far as the sheriff could see.

The KBI took fingerprints on Sunday afternoon.

Sheriff Left between 11:30 & 12:30. (See Appendix U to view Lee’s notes on Sheriff Robinson interview).

From Lee’s notes, it is clear that she is discussing the sheriff’s initial thoughts of what happened when he first arrived at the Clutters’ house on the day of the murders. Lee’s notes are not only more specific, but she records different aspects than Capote does. Once again, Lee’s notes are clearly more useful than Capote’s.

Another person both Capote and Lee interviewed was county coroner, Dr. Robert M. Fenton. Lee records a great deal of notes on Fenton, including his physical description, his personality, academic degrees, what Fenton did on the day of the Clutters’ murders, how the bodies were examined and Dr. Fenton’s theory of what happened. Lee writes,

Dr. Fenton’s Theory:

Thinks murders the work of one person. Thinks killer entered by east door and

subdued Mr. Clutter as “you’d dog a calf”. Pictured murderer with gloves on, just enough nylon cord, not too little, at any rate (about 10 feet left over) possibly a mask on, and adhesive tape already torn in strips and attached to shirt front at chest. Thinks killer didn’t have a gun to begin with.

(Query: does Dr. Fenton think rope already cut in sections for 4 people, or did killer tell them to wait a second while he cut rope?)

He thinks Kenyon went to bed in his shorts and t-shirt; had just enough time to put on dungarees.

(If they were all shot where they were tied, and killer didn’t have a gun to begin with, and Kenyon’s glasses were where they were, K. would have waked up all Holcomb getting from upstairs to basement under duress and mole-blind.)

He think [sic] Nancy either had not gone to bed, or had gotten up.

He thinks Mrs. Clutter definitely in bed (with socks on. Heating pad and Vicks seem to bear this out. Cold.) and had put on her bathrobe. He thinks each person in the family was in some way aware of unusual happenings and were getting ready to investigate.

(If they were all shot where they were tied, Nancy and Mrs. C. never got out of their rooms. Quick work after tying up Mr. C & Kenyon in the basement).

Dr. Fenton “could even guess the height and weight” of the person who knew the house so extremely well, who knew the Clutters’ habits so very well that he could subdue all four of them, or who had been watching the house so carefully that he knew where everybody had gone to bed for the night. Dr. Fenton thinks killer knew the Clutters (Mr. & Mrs.) slept in separate rooms.



Dr. Fenton knows a thing or 2 we don't. He seemed so damn sure of himself when He said that the killer "didn't have a gun to begin with."

(Why does old Robinson still have Mr. C's shotgun??)

Fenton thinks killer wore a mask, and at some time during the proceedings it slipped, therefore he had to kill them all.

(Masks don't hide people you know: don't hide voices, clothes, physical description, etc. Masks do hide faces of people you don't know, but either way, if Clutters had lived

they could have given a pretty good description of the intruder.)

Lee's notes on Dr. Fenton are extremely important, not just for reporting on what Fenton said, but more important, Lee's personality comes through her notes, which reveals that she is unafraid to challenge or question some of the information that a medical doctor has said. She asks questions throughout her notes: "does Dr. Fenton think rope already cut...?" She questions his theory of the killer wearing a mask., etc. Lee even draws a diagram in which she writes that Dewey's idea is wrong if she and Capote believe Fenton's theory. Thus, she feels one or both Dewey and Fenton—a police chief and a coroner—are incorrect with their theories. (See Appendix V to view Lee's notes on Dr. Fenton).

Capote's notes on Dr. Fenton vary from Lee's in length because they are much shorter, but also because they only concentrate on the actions of the coroner, but not who could have committed the crimes. Furthermore, Capote's notes don't question theories as Lee's do. Even more important though in this instance, Capote wrote on his notes, "see

N.L.'s notes. This is another instance in which he regards her notes as superior to his. Capote writes,

### CHRONOLOGY

SUNDAY MORNING, Nov. 15, 10:10 to 12 noon

As told by Dr. Robert Fenton: (Fenton is young Coroner: for full report on him, and Coroner's Report see N.L.'s notes): "I've seen some gory things in my time, but nothing as gory as that: what we found in the Clutter house Sunday morning. In my opinion Herb was the last one killed; they'd all been dead about eight hours, and though Herb was stiff, rigormortis had set in, the blood was still damp, it hadn't coagulated; of course maybe this had something to do with the furnace, the fact he was lying near the furnace in the furnace room.

What is important to discover from Capote's notes is that he writes that Fenton is "in Mrs. Clutter's bedroom speaking into Dictaphone: "The bed-covers are thrown back as though the patient . . . the person . . . had been awakened, put the robe on, a peach colored robe; she is wearing a peach-colored nightgown and then white socks. Lying on a stool in front of the dresser is a heating pad and a small bottle of Vick's nose drops. No sign of a struggle is seen . . ."). From this idea, readers of Capote's notes can see that Capote took notes on his interview with Fenton, but also he must have borrowed Fenton's Dictaphone tape and had Lee transcribe it, as she reports in her notes that she transcribed Capote's notes from a Dictaphone. (See Appendix W to view Capote's notes on Fenton). This is another example in which Capote had others do his work for him, which will be further discussed in Chapter 4.

In this chapter, I have presented some of the best examples of the differences that exist between Capote's and Lee's notes. After examining both authors' notes, one can see that Lee conducted a great amount of research for Capote and that she is thorough in her journalistic skills. She attended many interviews with Capote and functioned as a second set of eyes and ears, but on many occasions, her notes are more specific and detailed than his, and the two concentrated on different aspects during these interviews. However, Harper Lee also conducted many interviews alone without Capote. This was made clear when Shields explained in *Mockingbird* that "Occasionally, Nelle and Truman went their separate ways in Garden City" (162). However, Shields did very little to explain or substantiate these interviews in his book, and Capote never explained what exact research Lee conducted. These interviews and other research Lee conducted will be discussed further in Chapter Four of this dissertation and continue to prove that Lee played an integral part in the creation of *In Cold Blood*.

“I think everytime Truman looked at Perry he saw his own childhood” (Malin 56).  
Harper Lee

#### CHAPTER FOUR MEETING PERRY: THE BEGINNING OF THE END— THE REGRESSION INTO CHILDHOOD AND A SELFISH DECISION

In November and December of 1959, Truman Capote and Harper Lee were interviewing many of the townspeople in Holcomb, Kansas about the effects the murders of the Clutter family had on the town, and they accumulated hundreds of pages of notes. Up until December 30, 1959, Capote had planned to write an article for *The New Yorker* about the crime and its effects on the town. However, Capote’s plans changed when he and Lee “were at the Dewey’s [for dinner] the night of December 30, 1959, when Alvin received the phone call he had been praying for: two suspects in the Clutter murders had been arrested in Las Vegas” (Clarke *Capote* 325). Even though a month or so earlier, Capote had told Dewey, “It really doesn’t make any difference to me if the case is ever solved or not,” now it did (321). Capote was extremely excited by the news that the killers had been captured, and he wanted to accompany Dewey and the KBI agents to Las Vegas to document what he saw. He begged Dewey to go so he could interview the killers, but Dewey responded, “Not this time, partner” (324). Thus, Capote and Lee would have to wait about a week until the two men were brought to the Finney County Courthouse (324).

On December 31, 1959, the KBI left Kansas on an excursion across the country to extradite Perry Smith and Eugene Hickock back to Kansas. They arrived in Las Vegas on January 2, 1960. Once Smith and Hickock were in Kansas, what happened next surprised not only Capote, but I contend, would alter not only his project and attitude, but more important, would ultimately affect and alter his friendship with Harper Lee forever.

Thus, within Capote's and Lee's notes are clues to what caused a rift in their friendship. However, what also remains clear is that Capote did not only depend on Lee's assistance, but others too.

While Lee and Capote were waiting for Smith and Hickock to arrive in Kansas for their arraignment and trial, it appears that Lee kept interviewing several of the townspeople and recording descriptive information about the town. After all, she has interviews with seventeen additional people that Capote does not, and she has numerous descriptive notes about the town that Capote does not. For instance, she writes about the town:

HOLCOMB: World War I Battleground.

Unpaved, grey-black dirt streets. Hoping for gutters. Matchbox houses; one extremely new modern ranch-style deep red brick dwelling owned by Holstroms. Holstrom house at road leading to Clutter farm just across railroad tracks.

. . .

This information proves that the two writers were together at the Post Office because Lee writes "could we come back" yet Capote does not have any field notes on this within his notebooks.

Likewise, Lee records information about the history of the town:

Was largely the work of Mr. C.J. (Buffalo) Jones, an itinerant buffalo hunter who finally broke his rifle over a wagon wheel in disgust at the senseless extermination of the beasts. He then lassoed a buffalo and carried him around state fairs, charging a fee to a person who tried to catch it, and awarding a prize to whoever did. Mr. Jones erected a series of buildings in G.C. known as The Buffalo Block,

rode high in the boom, but was felled in the subsequent crash.

Lee appeared to be recording information about what the town was like and some history of the town for Capote's project; however, he does not record this information. Thus, up until this point, Capote's notes on the town and the local citizens were not as meticulous as Lee's notes; however, Capote's notes would quadruple in size once he met the two killers.

Lee also records information about the killers. Unlike Capote, she began recording notes about them before they arrived in Holcomb by describing their arrival and the atmosphere that surrounded it:

January 6

About 3 p m we went to the sheriff's office; quiet but for lady radio operator and seedy old gentleman reeking of booze but not drunk. Sat for a while until radio call lessened; then announced to the lady that he was W.W. Packard and he had come for his car that was stolen. (We thought him Pa Hickock.) Lady said she'd heard about it, but there was nobody to wait on him, and could he come back tomorrow or next day? Mr. Packard could.

About 3.25 we went for a stroll and met Bill Brown sneaking into the building. At about 3:45 we returned for the press conference, waited until 4:10 when the radio lady announced that Mr. Duane West would be unfortunately delayed, and could the press conference be held at five.

...

I returned to the press line. The thermometer was dropping and T's ears (good barometer) were red; my feet numb. We had stood for perhaps twenty minutes

when we were aware that the few teenagers grouped under a tree nearby was now a definite crowd. Two Holcomb High basketball jackets in the midst. As they waited, the teenagers squirmed, wriggled, fought mock battles; the girls giggled and flirted with the photographers—two ran over to the press line and asked to be photographed. Two were interviewed by a man with a tape recorder.

...

A car drove up and parked in front of the south door. Al Dewey was outlined in light from the courthouse; sitting in the back of the car on the right side. As he got out of the car he was in darkness, and only vague shapes were discernible at the corner of the courthouse. As they walked quickly up the sidewalk, they sprang from moving shadows into two-dimensional black-and-white men in the glare from some dozen flash bulbs and a strong tv-camera floodlight. Al was on Smith's left, holding his arm lightly. Al's huge brown eyes look apprehensively into the glare; two heads taller than Smith; moving him quickly. Smith almost ran up the steps, like a dark furry thing. Wore dirty-looking dungarees and a dark zippered windbreaker (or close-fitting Eisenhower jacket.) (January 7: Marie said Al said that when Smith got out of the car and saw the crowd, he became frightened nearly out of his wits.) A policeman thought it necessary to stand mostly in front of me when Hickock was brought in; got a flash of a lowered head and hands handcuffed and chained at waist. Cut and ran up the steps; got to second floor in time to see door to sheriff's residence open and Hickock going up steps. Body leaning sharply forward, soles of shoes and a glimpse of something that looked like bare ankles. Door shut behind them. (See Appendix X to view the notes Lee recorded).

As shown above, Lee recorded information on the killers and their arrival. Capote did not, most likely because he was mesmerized with Perry Smith when he first saw him.

On January 6, 1960, when Capote observed the two killers on the first night they were escorted into the Finney County Courthouse, he was drawn immediately to Perry Smith, because Smith was short just like him. In fact, Capote would observe them better at their arraignment the next day on January 7, 1960. Capote wrote in his research notes dated January 7, 1960, “After debacle of last night, got first good look at Smith and Hickock today at arraignment in court.” According to Gerald Clarke, “When Perry sat down in front of the judge to be arraigned, Truman nudged Nelle. ‘Look, his feet don’t touch the floor!’” (*Capote* 326). Directly after Alvin Dewey arrived back in Kansas from capturing Smith and Hickock, Capote wrote Dewey, whom he called “Foxy,” a letter from his hotel. Apparently, he also gave him a bottle of alcohol. This was, most likely, to try to gain special access to Smith and Hickock immediately. In the note, Capote writes, “After your long and hectic journey, we are certain you will appreciate a long swig of this.” Even more important, Capote signs it “From your faithful historians, Truman and Nelle.” Capote’s signing of both authors’ names signals that they were working together. (See Appendix Y to view Capote’s note). After viewing Perry Smith, Capote’s objective for his project would change, but, I contend, he never told Lee because her notes appear to continue to focus on the townspeople, and she continues to conduct straight reporting. However, after getting to meet and interview the two killers, Capote would not care about Lee’s notes or the crowd atmosphere, etc.; but rather he was only interested in Perry Smith, especially when he learned that Perry’s height was not the only thing that he and Smith had in common.



Before Capote was able to interview Perry Smith and Dick Hickock, he would need to be granted access to meet them and gain letter writing privileges with them. At the time, the killers were only permitted to receive and write letters to their family or significant others. So, this did not go as Capote had planned. Since Capote was not related to Smith or Hickock, he would need to be granted special access to write and meet them. He wrote Charles McAtee, who was director of the Kansas State penal institutions, for special permission to have access to Smith and Hickock. At first, McAtee denied Capote access. Then, a few weeks later, Capote invited McAtee out to dinner. However, Capote did not attend the dinner with McAtee alone; he brought Harper Lee with him. McAtee hit it off with Lee. He told a reporter in a 2002 interview, he “enjoyed the evening at the Holiday Inn restaurant, and especially liked talking with Lee” (Carpenter). Although “access to the killers wasn’t discussed that night, Capote made fast friends with powerful people in the Kansas government [including McAtee] and a few weeks later, he received the access he desired” (Bruntz 59). Again, it can’t be denied that Lee played a crucial role in helping Capote to gain access to the killers by attending that dinner.<sup>40</sup> Capote would learn through many interviews with Smith that Smith and he shared similar backgrounds. For instance, Capote and Smith had

Alcoholic mothers, fathers mainly out of the picture, childhood rejection and insecurity, getting fobbed off on others to raise (Capote had aunts; Perry, nuns), suicide (Capote’s mother, Smith’s siblings) . . . [also] Just like Capote, Smith from a very early age consoled himself with art. He wanted to paint and write. He was a gifted musician with a natural ear, playing five or six instruments, the guitar, his

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<sup>40</sup> According to Charles McAtee, the dinner Lee and Capote attended with him was “at the Buccaneer Club, a restaurant in the basement of the Holiday Inn South in Topeka known at the time for its atmosphere and steak” (Bruntz 59).

favorite. But what he told Capote again and again—a remark that no doubt hit home—was that never in his life had anyone, not his father nor the different reform-school staff members, “encouraged him in any single creative thing he wanted to do.” He tried to make someone interested in him but nobody ever paid the slightest attention. (Schultz 89)

It was because of these similarities between killer and author that Capote began to think about taking his project in a different direction. Now, instead of simply documenting the townspeople’s reactions to the murders as he originally planned, he wanted to include the killers and their backgrounds in his project. Therefore,

with the men who had committed the crime behind bars on the fourth floor of the courthouse, his story had expanded far beyond his original conception. He [and Lee] had done only half [their] reporting; and a worthless half at that unless he could reconstruct the lives of the killers as precisely and minutely as he [and Lee] had those of their victims. (Clarke *Capote* 324)

And this is exactly what Capote did. In a majority of Capote’s research notes, his emphasis remains on the two killers—Smith and Hickock—not the townspeople. More specifically, from December 30, 1959, to the arraignment and until the killers were hanged, Capote’s notes reveal that he was only interested in Smith and Hickock. He had hundreds of pages of notes on the two men; however, he did not have any notes recorded about the townspeople after Dewey received the phone call on December 30, 1959, which announced the killers had been captured. Nor does he have any notes on anything other than Smith and Hickock after their arraignment on January 7. At the arraignment, Capote records notes on Smith; he even writes at the top of his notes, “first good look at Smith

and Hickock.” His first notes on Smith are a physical description. (See Appendix Z to view Capote’s first observation of Smith at his arraignment).

What Capote does record are notes detailing when, where and how the two killers were caught and arrested, their interrogation by the KBI, Smith’s and Hickock’s extradition back from Las Vegas to Kansas, their arraignment, and interviews he conducted with the two. Also, Capote records very detailed physical descriptions of the two and a chronology of their lives. While Lee has some notes on Smith and Hickock and their arraignment, her notes do not entirely focus on Smith and Hickock as Capote’s journal does. Capote dedicated an entire notebook to interviews with just Perry Smith. This notebook can be found in Box 4, Folder 1 at the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. The fact that Capote’s notebook is filled with interviews between Smith and Hickock, particularly Smith, proves that Capote’s main focus had become Perry Smith. After examining this notebook, I discovered that Capote created a list of questions he wanted to ask Perry and then recorded Perry’s responses to each question at the interview. For instance, one of the first questions Capote asks in this notebook is “Perry, when . . . driving between fort [sic] Wayne and Corpus Christi you picked up 2 hitchhikers, a man and a boy, why did you pick them up?” (See Appendix AA to view Capote’s first page of questions in his notebook on Perry Smith).

Besides a notebook being dedicated to just Perry Smith, Capote also kept other notebooks filled with information on both killers. In these notebooks, he recorded their trial, the physical description of the prison, and the travels of Dick and Perry. These notebooks total hundreds of pages of notes that are just dedicated to the two killers and their surroundings. For instance, Capote writes,

Perry and Dick: Interviewed at Lansing: 1 May 1963

Dick entered the conference room clutching his back and growning [sic]; he said:

“They never let us out of these cells. Never. Except once a week to take a shower.

They let us take a shower and change our clothes (denim trousers, faded denim shirt, brown shoes). I’ve been wearing these same clothes the last six days.’ (See Appendix BB to view this interview).

In the same notebook, Capote describes the prison and death row:

Death Row is in a very narrow, antiquated [sic] grey stone building, 100 years old shepell [sic] like a coffin. A large sign over the entrance says “SI”, which stands for Segregation & Isolation. The first floor contains cells with no beds: it is for prisoners receiving special punishment – they must sleep on the floors. Death Row is on the second floor, one reaches it by climbing a . . . spiral staircase. The death row cells are very small – contain a bed and a toilet: lights are kept burning day and night. (See Appendix CC to view Capote’s notes).

Also, Capote has drawn diagrams of Death Row in which he details specifics about where particular inmates are housed. (See Appendix DD to view his diagram). Capote’s own research notes reveal that he recorded information about the surroundings of the prison and death row, as well as many interviews with both Dick and Perry, particularly Perry. However, he also collected information from others who did his research for him.

Throughout Capote’s research efforts for *In Cold Blood*, Harper Lee assisted him with a great deal of research; however, others assisted Capote by gathering facts as well. For instance, on several occasions, Capote asked others to write letters on his behalf to gather information. Likewise, he collected many newspaper articles on the case and Dick

and Perry. For instance, many of the newspaper articles that were in *The Hutchinson News* or *The Garden City Telegram* reported specific information that Capote could return to without recording notes. These newspaper articles made it easy for him to get quotes from the KBI and check facts that anyone supplied him with. For instance, in one article, “Arrests In Nevada Seen As Major Break,” it was reported that “a portable radio was missing from the room of Kenyon Clutter, 15, who was killed in the mass murder . . . the radio [was] a Zenith 3-way portable which had been purchased here shortly before the tragedy. It is a ‘Holiday 58’ model A400G, with serial number 6-102025” (“Arrests in Nevada Seen as Major Break”). Facts such as this could help Capote with specifics. (See Appendix EE, FF to view examples of newspaper articles Capote collected). Likewise, while doing research for Beverly Clutter’s wedding that took place four days after her parents’ and siblings’ murders, Capote also “quoted the *Garden City Telegram*’s wedding announcement instead of talking to the surviving daughters” (Smith Sisters Honor Family” 24). Thus, he relied on others and other sources on many occasions without doing the research himself.

Besides collecting newspaper articles, Capote also wrote many letters to the KBI and other state representatives and officials to find out facts about the state of Kansas and statistics about the death penalty in the state. He also needed personal information from some of the KBI agents if he was going to include them in his book. The reply letters he received helped to supply him with this information. For instance, one letter that Capote wrote was to Detective Harold Nye because he needed information about Nye’s personal life for his book. Nye answered Capote in June 1962. In the letter, Nye tells Capote the

names of his wife and children, that he tried to contact Perry's father, and other details. (See Appendix GG to view Nye's letter to Capote).

Likewise, Capote needed help in retrieving some information because he was not able to acquire it. One example of this is when he asked Clifford Hope, Jr., Herb Clutter's attorney, to assist him with getting transcripts of the trial. Hope wrote Capote in June 1962: "I will plan to call James Taylor on your behalf; I am doubtful if I have any influence with him but will be glad to try" (See Appendix HH to view Clifford Hope's letter to Capote).

Another example of Capote needing assistance was when he wanted statistics regarding the number of people put to death in Kansas. He was unable to get this information on his own. He needed Guy C. Rexroad's, Director of Penal Institutions, assistance. In a letter Rexroad wrote to Dale Saffels, he requests statistics on this subject. Saffels replies, "In response to your letter of February 28, 1962, I am forwarding the information requested by Mr. Truman Capote regarding the number of executions at Lansing and staffing plan for the Penitentiary." (See Appendix II to view this letter). Another example is when Alvin Dewey supplied Capote with his resume which detailed his career and when he married. Therefore, Capote did not record his own notes on Dewey's life, but rather, had Dewey provide him with this information that he could refer to at any time as he wrote. (See Appendix JJ to view Dewey's resume).

Also, Dewey, who eventually shared a close relationship with Capote, provided him with special access to the case, which Dewey always denied. Years later Dewey said, "Capote got the official word on developments at the press conferences along with everyone else. Some people thought then, and probably still do, that he got next to me

and got in on every move of the law. That was not so. He was on his own to get the material for his story or book. . . .” (Shields 160). However, this was not true. In one letter, Dewey writes to Capote, “Also, I am enclosing the brief filed by the state in this case, which is really a counter abstract and brief that tends to answer the allegations made by the defendants in their appeal” (See Appendix KK to see Dewey’s letter to Capote).

This document, along with Harper Lee’s notes, proves that Dewey broke KBI protocol by providing Capote with special access to the case. Lee’s notes record the day Dewey got the phone call about the capture of Smith and Hickock. But even more important, Lee’s notes prove that Dewey shared information with Lee and Capote about the case. She writes:

Al got his call in the midst of the proceedings. (They had provided scotch and bourbon for us, and everybody imbibed generously before dinner—us on our vodka.)

We had heard everything, and Al knew it, and let himself go probably for the first time since the beginning of the case; . . . Al stopped eating after his phone call. He did demolish his desert, however, but that was later.

He produced picture. Hickock: ghastly face . . . .

Smith: face equally ghastly, but eyes show certain shrewdness and intelligent cunning. . . . Al’s 2 pieces of evidence: “Catspaw” footprint—checked out.

Diamond heel print that was only caught by camera; invisible to naked eye.

Checked out. That plus the story of the ex-employee in Lansing seems to be Al’s case, unless he gets confessions. The ex-employee left Clutter’s farm in 1948 or ’49. Oneweek [sic] after the killing, Al got the lead.

Besides using Dewey, Capote also got important information from others, such as Susan Kidwell, who supplied Capote with Nancy Clutter's diary, so that he could better understand Nancy. Kidwell also gave Capote one of Nancy's English assignments. In this assignment, Susan Kidwell was to write an observation of Nancy. Thus, Capote could see Susan Kidwell's assessment of Nancy. (See Appendix LL to view Susan Kidwell's English assignment). Thus, Capote did not record or observe every detail that became a part of *In Cold Blood* as he led the world to believe.

By having Lee record notes on many of the townspeople, by collecting newspaper articles and having others gather information for him, clearly, Capote was not the researcher he had led the press and scholars to believe he was. In short, he needed many people's assistance, including Harper Lee's. Nowhere do his notes reveal any evidence of interviews with the townspeople after December 1959 or original research on any other subject except Dick and Perry. Instead, Capote became intrigued with Perry Smith and actually started to become obsessed with him as he tried to gain information for his project. What is apparent is that after he saw Perry, he decided to change his project from a newspaper article to a book. Capote wrote Alvin and Marie Dewey on January 23, 1960, only days after Smith and Hickock's arraignment, that he was writing a book and had signed a contract to do so. He wrote,

I have had long talks with the staff at "The New Yorker", and with Random House. Just today I signed a contract for the book. Everyone is very enthusiastic. When we come back, I very likely will bring with me Richard Avedon, who is quite easily the world's greatest photographer (because we may use a few photographs in the book—and I'm afraid those in existence are not quite good enough). . . .Nelle



and I parted at the Railway terminal, and haven't seen each other since, but we've talked on the telephone, and she misses you, all of you, Paul and Dewey and Pete, very much. So do I.

I will ring you soon.

Meanwhile, much love—

Truman. (Clarke *Too Brief a Treat* 278)

Clearly, Capote knew after meeting Perry that he wanted to focus on him, and he knew that this case had the potential to become a book very early on in the research process, even before he recorded hundreds of pages of notes on Smith and Hickock. Thus, he followed the plans of his letter to the Deweys, brought Richard Avedon to photograph the killers and began focusing on Smith and Hickock—not the townspeople.

Capote began his new project by interviewing both men and by having Avedon take photos of both killers.<sup>41</sup> In fact, at one point, Capote even posed in a photograph next to Perry Smith. In these photographs, Capote stands next to Perry and they are almost exactly the same height, except that Perry appears to be an inch taller (Schultz 88). After this photograph, Capote continued to interview both Smith and Hickock on many occasions; however, how much time and access he was given to interview the two killers has been disputed. According to Robert Emmet Long, “Truman was allowed to visit Perry and Dick almost at will and, beginning in June 1963, to correspond with them as well” (343).<sup>42</sup> However, according to Schultz, “Charles McAtee, former Kansas Director of Penal Institutions—a man, therefore, very much in the know—claims Capote only

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<sup>41</sup> These pictures are in *Observations: Photographs by Richard Avedon, Comments by Truman Capote*.

<sup>42</sup> Perry Smith's and Dick Hickock's letters to Truman Capote “numbered in the hundreds” (Clarke 343). All of his letters to them were destroyed by Capote (343).

visited the killers twice before their execution. He *corresponded* with them—“over our objections”—but the author and killers rarely sat face to face” (91). If McAtee’s statement is correct, this would be the reason why Harper Lee’s notes indicate only two instances in which she was at the prison with Capote. However, even though Capote’s notes concentrate mainly on Smith and Hickock, Lee also has notes on the two killers. In fact, she was at the jail on two separate occasions. On one instance, on March 19, 1960, her notes explain that she couldn’t hear well when she was with Capote at the jail. She writes, “(Was trying to keep one person less from hovering around D.A., so retired to corner. Could not hear too well. See T.’s notes).” (See Appendix MM to view Lee’s notes). This proves that Lee was at the jail and she did record information on Perry and Dick. Not surprisingly, though, Lee’s notes are more specific than Capote’s in this instance too.

For example, both Capote and Lee record notes on what Smith and Hickock did after they murdered the Clutters. In Capote’s notes, he records a chronology of where Smith and Hickock went and what the two did:

DEC. 16<sup>th</sup>. After hot-check spree in Kansas City and Olathe, they leave for Miami. Smith is driving and throws Iowa license plate into Big . . . lake outside U.S., and Hickock doesn’t even remember leaving Kansas City; when he woke up they were in Springdale, Arkansas; he drifted back to sleep again, and when woke again they were in Shreveport, LA . . . and here they stop because the generator in the car has burned out.

From the above notes, Capote shows that the two killers traveled and wrote bad checks; however, Lee's notes explain the exact places that Smith and Hickock travelled and wrote bad checks, but she also details what they bought and where Perry Smith was at times:

On November 21, Hickock said, he and Smith went on the following check spree:

Best Jewelry

39<sup>th</sup> & Main, K.C. Mo.

diamond ring set—i.e., engagement & wedding ring.

(Pawned same day in K.C. Kan., Smith in car.)

Lyon & Rooney

35<sup>th</sup> & Main, K.d. Mo.

TV Set

(Sold in Monterrey to banker 23 November. Crossed border 2 a.m. 23 November.)

Rothschild's, K.G. Mo.

Bought clothing—work pants, shirts, sport jacket, cufflinks & tie bar. (Smith walking round on street.)

Elko Camera Co., Ka C. Kan

Bought 8 mm Revere Camera, \$192.79. (Smith in shop on this)

(Sold to Paul Berri, Mexico City)

Shepherd & Fosters (clothing store), K.C. Kan.

(Smith inside)

Goldman's Jewelry, K.C. Kan.

Bought watch (Smith inside)

(sold to Walter Rapp, Mexico City)

Clothing Store between 6<sup>th</sup> & 7<sup>th</sup> on Minnesota (?), K.C. Kan.

Bought clothes (Smith inside)

Shoppers Paradise

18<sup>th</sup> & State, K.C. Kan.

(Smith inside)

Eagle Buffet

31 & Main, K.C. MO.

(Had sandwich. (Nye said chicken salad)

Went by Physician's Exchange Ambulance service and talked to a friend of  
Hickock's.

Furthermore, unlike Capote, Lee records the contents that were found in Hickock's car when he was arrested in Las Vegas; however, Capote does not record any of this information. Lee records:

Contents of Car: (Trunk)

('56 Chevrolet 2-door Black over white over black. —the car they sold in Mexico was washed & scrubbed by new owner--)

1 3-gallon gas can (empty)

3 5-gallon cans completely filled

1 5 gallon can about ¼ full.

8-foot black rubber hose (for siphon).

Nye calls the above equipment a “cross-country credit card”.)

2 burlap bags

1 torn-up blanket

1 flowered rag stub antennae

oil can

Side-cutter pliers

#### INSIDE CAR:

on rear floor of car, a gallon Coca-Cola syrup jug containing syrup—about 3 inches from

bottom full—

red cord 30” long, red tab saying REA (Railway Express Agency)

yardstick under rear seat: Joyce Lumber Co., Griswold, Iowa.

fairly new baby’s undershirt; size 4. “honeysuckle” brand. Very greasy.

1 roll, black electrician’s tape

toothpick paper from Cattleman’s Café, Truckston, Arizona.

1 6” crescent wrench)

1 lug wrench) front seat, passenger side

Mans: Texas, Central U.S., Nevada.

box containing battery, under hood in front of radiator.

Lee was able to review these materials and get this information from Harold Nye—

someone Capote did not get along with—when she interviewed him (Shields 173).

According to Shields, “Nye provided her with all the information he’d gleaned along the way while he pursued Hickock and Smith through the Plains and the Southwest” (173).

Although Capote didn’t have a good relationship with some of the KBI, such as Nye and other Kansas officials such as Duane West, the district attorney of Finney County,

because they didn't like Capote, Lee was able to gain access to their findings.<sup>43</sup> In fact, Capote even referenced his feelings for Duane West in his notes. Capote wrote on January 5<sup>th</sup> that Perry confessed to Alvin Dewey, writing, "Ran into Duane West. Showed us letter addressed to Duane 'Sherlock Holmes' West. The phony bastard. Just anxious to make political hay and steal all the glory that rightly belongs to AD and his agents." This statement reveals Capote's true feelings, and it seems evident that Lee was a crucial part of gaining access to information that Capote couldn't gain in situations where he was not accepted or liked.

Besides this information, Lee also recorded more specific notes on Perry and Dick's interrogation. Capote's notes are not dated when the two recorded the information, but rather when the interrogation had taken place; however, Lee's notes reveal that they both recorded this information on January 11<sup>th</sup>, not January 2-3, as Capote's notes indicate. The two could not have recorded this information on January 2-3 because Smith and Hickock were in Las Vegas being interrogated and did not arrive in Kansas until January 6, 1960. Thus, it appears as if Capote and Lee listened to a recording of this interrogation and took turns recording specific parts of the interrogation. This is another time when Lee was helpful to Capote. In fact, Capote reminded himself in his notes to view Lee's notes for a separate section of this interrogation. He writes, "For complete record of questioning see N.L.'s notes; these are only the last hour, after the preliminary warning, and Smith's recital of past life". Also, unlike Capote's notes, Lee recorded Smith's recitation of his past life to Alvin Dewey, and his background, whereas Capote

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<sup>43</sup> Both Nye and West would claim that Capote did not portray them accurately in *In Cold Blood*. This will be discussed in the conclusion of this dissertation.

concentrated on where Smith and Hickock went after they murdered the Clutters. Lee records,

Al: Is your father living?

Perry: Yes.

Al: What's his name?

Perry: Tex John Smith. (Age 66 years, lives in Alaska.) (See Appendix NN for complete record of Lee's notes).

From the above notes, it is clear that Lee has a very meticulous style and that she was indeed the second set of eyes and ears for Capote. However, more important, it remains clear that Capote did not do all of this research on his own. Clearly, he relied on Lee's notes. While Capote focused on Perry, Lee continued to record interviews with the townspeople, and she has meticulous details about the Clutters' house, the jury, and some of the courtroom proceedings that occurred in March 1960. Thus, Lee did a large amount of research, conducted many interviews, and gave Capote a great deal of help—more than he ever gave her credit for. This is why Lee's notes are so valuable, yet her notes have hardly been discussed or shown by Capote or Lee critics.

However, what remains unknown is exactly how much access Capote had to Smith and Hickock when he interviewed them. There is a huge discrepancy among critics as to how much access Capote was granted to interview Smith and Hickock. For instance, while McAttee insists that Capote was only at the prison on two occasions, others disagree with this theory. For instance, "Others suggest Capote had *carte blanche*, having bribed a high-ranking official with a \$10,000 note (this was, in fact, Capote's contention)" (Schultz 91). Likewise, there are others who support the idea that Capote

had unlimited access to Smith and Hickock because of an interview KBI agent Harold Nye gave to *The New Yorker* in 1997. In this interview, Nye dropped a bombshell, explaining that Perry and Capote were lovers: “They had become lovers in the penitentiary . . . . They spent a lot of time up there in the cell, [Capote] spent a considerable amount of money bribing the guard to go around the corner, and they were both homosexuals and that was what happened” (Plimpton “Life and Letters: Capote’s Long Ride” 70). However, according to Schultz, “McAtee denies such access existed” (92). Even crime writer J. J. Maloney doubts Capote was ever in Smith’s cell because “on death row the rooms are open-faced (with plywood partitions between them)” (93).

No matter how much access Capote was granted in order to interview Hickock and Smith, what remains certain is that from the beginning of the trial on March 22, 1960 through the men’s hangings on April 14, 1965, Capote began interviewing them and formed a close relationship with both of them. However, Capote favored Smith because of their many similarities. For instance, Marie Dewey admitted to George Plimpton in an interview to *The New Yorker*, “Truman became very fond of Perry. He didn’t like Hickock” (Plimpton “Life and Letters: Capote’s Long Ride” 65). Likewise, even Lee noted Capote’s closeness with Smith, and she told *Newsweek*, “I think every time Truman looked at Perry he saw his own childhood” (Malin 56). In this same interview, she continued, “Truman saw himself in Perry Smith, not in being deadly of course, but in their childhood. Their childhood was more or less the same” (65). Even Capote, himself, admitted many times, including in a 1966 interview, that “we [he and Perry] became very close and [had a] very intimate and intense and –intimate sort of friendship. . . some kind of relationship that had to deal with his total loneliness and my feelings of pity for him



and even a kind of affection” (*Truman Capote: An American Revolutionary*). Capote also stated to Jane Howard in an interview that he saw himself in Perry Smith. When she asked him, do you like “Perry and Dick”? Capote responded, “That’s like saying, ‘Do you like yourself?’” (Plimpton “Life and Letters: Capote’s Long Ride” 57). Not only did Capote and people who knew Capote testify that he saw himself in Perry Smith, but so did critics. According to William Todd Schultz, in his 2011 book, *Tiny Terror: Why Truman Capote (Almost Wrote Answered Prayers)*:

The sympathy Capote felt for Smith was narcissistic . . . . Capote saw Smith as a self-extension, a second, especially wayward, rage-filled possible self. A doomed alter-ego: the sum of an equation that could have been Capote’s too. The technical term for this kind of process is projective-identification, a tool indispensable for artists, and one at Capote’s constant disposal. (95)

So, Perry Smith was Capote’s doppelganger—“a double, a look-alike” (95). In fact, early on in the project, in 1960, Capote even sketched a portrait of Perry in his little green spiral notebook. (See Appendix OO to view Capote’s sketch of Perry Smith). This doppelganger theory is important because it appears to explain why Capote changed directions on his project. However, because Capote changed directions on his project and wanted to focus on Smith, this may be why he did not use Harper Lee’s notes—because he did not want to use straight reporting, but instead—he wanted to be more creative.

Many critics such as George Plimpton and Gerald Clarke and even Capote’s editor, Joe Fox, saw Perry as Capote’s doppelganger. Fox stated, “He adored Perry. Perry was a sort of doppelganger” (Plimpton “Life and Letters: Capote’s Long Ride” 65). While many critics have suggested this doppelganger theory, Schultz is the first critic to expand

on it by adding psychoanalytic theory and applying Carl Jung's shadow-confrontation theory to Capote's life, to explain why Capote was so close to Smith. Schultz explains, according to Carl Jung, "A more theoretical term for doppelganger is a shadow—a side of ourselves we don't dare express. Forbidden impulses, rejected thoughts and feelings, repellent fantasies all get exiled to a shadowland where they form a virtually ancestral personality-in-waiting" (95). Therefore, according to Jung, in life, one must have balance—a totality of self, and achieving this requires shadow-confrontation. Shultz discusses this theory in his book:

The shadow self has to be known; it has to be acknowledged and assimilated. It cannot be held at bay forever. If we ignore it or deny it, it only agitates more restively. It whispers, then speaks out loud, then howls till we hear. It might appear in dreams, it might appear in art, it might appear in symptoms, but most commonly it shows itself in relationships. We get to know the shadow by projecting it on other people, who then mirror it back to us. (96)

Capote projected himself onto many of his other characters in his novels and short stories—the art—he created. As explained in Chapter Two of this dissertation, Capote used writing as a way to heal from his painful childhood. Thus, he created autobiographical characters and projected himself onto many of them. Several examples of autobiographical characters include: Grady McNeil in *Summer Crossing*, Joel Knox in *Other Voices, Other Rooms*, Collin Fenwick in *The Grass Harp*, and Holly Golightly in *Breakfast at Tiffany's*. These characters are perhaps some of Capote's most

autobiographical characters, and all of these ideas and characters have been discussed at great length by critics such as Helen S. Garson.<sup>44</sup>

For it is in these novels that Capote first used the doppelganger theory. For example, he allowed Joel Knox in *Other Voices, Other Rooms* to see Randolph as his doppelganger. “When Joel first sees Randolph as the mysterious woman, he recognizes aspects of himself” (Pugh 163). As Pugh discusses, Joel does not have parents—his father eventually dies and his mother is dead. Thus, “Joel partners with Randolph acting either as his mother-or father figure; rather Capote asserts throughout the text that the two are equals, nearly mirror images of each other” (163). This is just one example of how Capote used the doppelganger technique in his early work. But even more important to understand is that *Other Voices, Other Rooms* is not only an autobiographical work, but it is one in which Capote wrote about narcissism. According to Pugh, “Capote is playing with tropes of Narcissism in his depiction of Joel’s and Randolph’s relationship. Though homosexuality has often been viewed as an excessive form of self-love, Capote redeems Narcissistic tropes from their traditional allegations of egotism and posits” (163). Thus, on many occasions, Capote wrote about a condition he had, either consciously or subconsciously.

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<sup>44</sup> In her book, *Truman Capote*, Garson discusses at great length how Capote wrote different types of stories. For instance, she categorizes his short stories as, “the sunny or daylight stories, and the dark or nocturnal ones. The sunlight stories are often comic, somewhat realistic, and sometimes sentimental. The nighttime stories are concerned with a world of dreams and nightmares, gothics and grotesques, aberrations and evil” (27). Examples of the “sunny or daylight” stories include: “Children on Their Birthdays,” “Jug of Silver,” “A Christmas Memory,” as well as *The Grass Harp* and *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*. The “dark” stories include: “A Tree of Night,” “Miriam,” “The Headless Hawk,” “Shut a Final Door,” and “Mastery Misery” (28). As well, Garson explains that Capote’s writing can be divided into three cycles. The first cycle contains *Summer Crossing*, *Other Voices, Other Rooms* and early stories. The second cycle includes *A Tree of Night and Other Stories*, an anthology of many of his short stories, *The Grass Harp*, *Breakfast at Tiffany’s*, *The Muses are Heard* and many essays. The third cycle includes all later works: *In Cold Blood* and *Answered Prayers* (7-8). Furthermore, Garson discusses briefly how many of Capote’s works are autobiographical in some ways because they discuss issues and people that were close to Capote, such as abandonment, loneliness, homosexuality, etc.

He also used the doppelganger theory or the alter ego theme in his short stories. One perfect example of this is “Miriam.” According to Garson, “The theme of the double or alter ego appears again in “Miriam” (39). In this story, Mrs. Miller, the protagonist, is haunted by a little girl who has the same name as her, Miriam. However, the little girl, Miriam, is not a separate character, but rather, Mrs. Miller’s alter ego. As Garson suggests, “Mrs. Miller has lost her hold on reality and has entered the secret, private world of the schizophrenic. She is entrapped forever with the other Miriam, her alter ego, who is everything that she is not self-assured, demanding, forceful, beautiful, and young” (43). As seen, Capote used the double or doppelganger theory prior to working on *In Cold Blood*.

Thus, all Capote’s life shows, as Jung suggested, that art can be used to alleviate trauma, fear, or anxiety and also to repair or heal, and this is exactly what Capote did when he created many of his characters. Capote had so much trauma in his childhood when his mother abandoned him, locked him in a closet, enrolled him in private schools, took him to psychiatrists and ridiculed his sexuality that Capote used his writing as a way to heal himself. Therefore, since he had projected himself onto his previous characters, projecting himself onto Perry Smith—a real flesh and blood person—was just a natural next step. As Schultz has suggested, “Perry Smith, in Jungian terms, was Capote’s projected shadow”—or other self (96).

Therefore, since the killers were now captured, Capote was fascinated with them, particularly Perry Smith, and he saw Smith as a second self; therefore, his project changed from writing an article to writing a book—something he felt much more comfortable doing. However, more important than the project changing is how he

viewed Perry in comparison to Harper Lee. When Capote began this project, Lee was his best friend, and he wanted her help. However, that changed once he saw Perry Smith. Since Smith was an extended self of Capote, he became much more important to Capote than his best friend, Harper Lee. If this was the case, it explains why *In Cold Blood* turned into a novel—something creative—more than a reportage/factual work. Likewise, this also explains why more than half of the book is written about the killers, specifically Perry Smith: “It is Perry Smith—not the victims, the investigators, the lawyers, not even the pair of killers who dominates this book” (Malin 56). This is why, as Long proclaims, “It is always Smith rather than Hickock who is the focal character in the book” (90).

So from their first meeting through to his hanging, Capote formed an intense relationship with Smith, and this changed not only his entire idea for his project but also alter his relationship with Harper Lee. Since the project’s concept was now changed, what would become of the hundreds of pages of research notes the two recorded? According to Schultz, the authors “Produced thousands of pages of material, much of which never made it into the finished product” (77). The reason was that, since he was taking the project in a different direction, why not use what came more easily to him? As Schultz suggested, when Capote wrote his novels, he did not have meticulous notes, interviews, or transcripts to comb through. Thus, “his earlier writing came much easier” to him, partly because he used his imagination (79). Perhaps Schultz was correct when he explained that Capote did not have the discipline or the mindset to write reportage (76). Reportage seemed to be Lee’s area of expertise, especially since she studied Law. So, with his decision to change directions on his project, this meant not only not including Harper Lee’s research—which was shown to be very factual or straight

reportage in Chapter Three of this dissertation—but also changing his project to a novel, which allowed him to draw upon what he knew best—his imagination. More important, what seems plausible is that Capote never informed Lee of his plan not to use most of her notes.

Capote's decision not to inform Lee of his plan not to use most of her notes, and to write a novel, rather than a factual book, appears true because of a photo that the two writers posed for in *The Advertiser Journal* on October 11, 1964. In this article, "World-Famous Authors Were Childhood Pals," a caption underneath a picture of Capote and Lee states, "Capote and Harper Lee Are Still Close Friends. They Are Collaborating On A New Novel" (Hendrix). Was this caption, written by Vernon Hendrix, a mistake, or was Lee led to believe she was going to be a co-author of *In Cold Blood*? (See Appendix PP to view the photo and newspaper article). If this caption is true, it appears that Capote allowed Lee to believe she would share co-authorship or be acknowledged for her research efforts from 1959 through 1964 and even later until the publication of *In Cold Blood* in 1966. Furthermore, maybe this is why Capote wanted all of his research for *In Cold Blood* destroyed. In an interview with George Plimpton, when he was asked, "What will you do with this collection?" Capote responded,

I think I may burn it all. You think I'm kidding? I'm not. The book is what is important. It exists in its own right. The rest of the material is extraneous, and it's personal, what's more. I don't really want people poking around in the material of six years of work and research. The book is the end result of all that, and it's exactly what I wanted to do from it." (Plimpton "The Story Behind A Nonfiction Novel" 43)

Perhaps Capote wanted his research destroyed because he did not want people to know that Lee conducted a large portion of the book's research—a majority of the townspeople's interviews—and that, in some cases, her notes were better than his because they were much more detailed. Likewise, his notes showed many of the letters and newspaper clippings he relied upon to research the book. But Capote relied on Lee's notes also. But what do Harper Lee's research notes prove? More important, what did Lee record in her research notes?

As exemplified in Chapter Three, Lee interviewed a many of the townspeople—44 people with Capote, but interestingly enough, she interviewed and recorded notes on seventeen people for whom Capote does not have any notes recorded. Therefore, did Lee interview these people by herself? Or, did Capote simply not record any field notes on these people? Or perhaps Capote assigned her to conduct these interviews because he did not want to conduct them, or he did not have time to conduct them. Perhaps these are people that Lee interviewed without Capote, and what he meant when he told Haskell Frankel in 1966, “Harper Lee very kindly said she would go along for company, and then she did a lot of research and some special sort of interviews” (Frankel “Truman Capote: Conversations” 71). Likewise, what did Bobby Rupp mean when he stated in 2009 that when Capote and Lee interviewed him, “most of the questions were asked by Harper Lee”? (“In Cold Blood, half a century on”). Rupp, who refuses to talk to most people, told Ralph Voss, “if it weren't for the kindly presence of Harper Lee, he would probably have walked out of the room” (195). If this was the case when the two authors interviewed Rupp, then did Lee ask most of the questions with all or many of the other

people the two interviewed? Furthermore, did Lee make all those the two interviewed feel more comfortable than Capote?

The rest of this chapter will show many of the best examples of notes that Lee recorded from interviews that she appeared to have conducted by herself. These notes prove that Lee continued to interview residents of the town and record the atmosphere of the town at the end of December 1959 and the beginning of 1960, particularly after Alvin Dewey received the telephone call that the Las Vegas police had apprehended Smith and Hickock on December 30, 1959.

One of the many people Lee appeared to interview without Capote was Judy Swartley, a friend of Nancy Clutter. In this interview, on December 30, 1959, Lee records what Nancy was like and what the two friends did together:

Nancy sang for a dance band 2 years ago. (Alto voice.)

liked the color red.

Judy a veteran of slumber parties at Nancy's. Usually slept in basement on couch and roll-away bed. One night they slept in the hayloft, and Nancy's cat got into the tuna. They usually listened to records or watched TV. They'd get up and going around nine, and all fixed their own breakfast. The Clutters dined earlier, around seven, and Mrs. C. would have breakfast when she was home.

When Evelyn Base and Judy (with Nancy) saw Bob Rupp riding another girl around, Nancy got mad and cried.

The young people around G.C go to The Civic Center for parties after ball games.

You can dance, buy soft drinks, listen to a juke box or look at Tv.

Nancy was elected a senior cheerleader this year. Colors, black and white. The



cheerleaders wore white skirts and orange sweaters. Election based on general popularity of girls.

Lee also recorded an interview with Bobby Jones and Mrs. Taylor Jones on December 31, 1959. Bobby was a friend of Kenyon and Mrs. Jones was Bobby's mother. Lee recorded what Kenyon was like and what Bobby and Kenyon's relationship was like:

Kenyon and Bobby Jones were close friends. In order to communicate more easily (Clutter farm about a mile from Jones's.), in their later years they built a bridge across an irrigation ditch separating the farms, so they could drive their jalopies across. They were hunting companions, and shot everything, whatever was in season. Pheasant, rabbits, coyotes, etc. When they went duck hunting in the Arkansas, "You walk the river." Their way of duck hunting was to sneak up on them and shoot them, not sit in a blind with decoys nearby.

. . .

Kenyon received no allowance, and was not paid for the farm work he did, but Bobby guessed that Mr. Clutter gave Kenyon money as he needed it. Kenyon did not spend much money, but spent his own (from his 4-H earnings and garden produce) for his major purchases, as his car (51 Chevvy) [sic] and amplifier.

Kenyon once successfully took apart and reassembled a watch; his chief interests according to Bobby were music, hunting, mechanics, and his studies. Kenyon had not discovered girls; when asked about one in particular, Bobby said, "He'd rather have worked on his car than gone with her."

Bobby thought Kenyon in the habit of putting on his glasses first thing when getting up, but thought he could navigate fairly well without them—yet needed them badly.

Kenyon was not a very good athlete, but was good on the trampalene. (?)

Kenyon slept in his shorts. He was extremely neat, and “careful with his tools.” He had a sense of humor that usually involved teasing; he could take it as well as dish it out. Mrs. Jones considered him quite a gardener. He would bring her pan-fuls of fresh asparagus, and once for a Halloween party to be held in the Jones’s basement playroom, when requested to bring over a few pumpkins for decorations, Kenyon arrived with a pick-up load of pumpkins and squash.

It appears that Capote relied on these notes Lee recorded because he does not have any notes on Bobby Jones or Mrs. Taylor, yet they are mentioned in the second section of his novel, “Persons Unknown.” In this section, Taylor Jones is thought to have been the killers’ missed target; however, Capote doesn’t have any notes on these folks other than to say, “Yesterday interviewed Bobby Jones and his mother Mrs. Taylor Jones—see N.L.’s notes” (See Appendix QQ to view Capote’s note).

Besides recording notes on the people listed above, that are useful in understanding both Nancy and Kenyon Clutter’s personality, Lee also recorded notes on interviews she conducted with Mr. Hendricks, who will be discussed more at length in Chapter 5, and his wife, Mrs. Shirley Hendricks and the Hendricks’ apartment. Capote has a small amount of information on Mr. Hendricks, but none on Mrs. Hendricks. Lee recorded information on Mrs. Hendricks:

Mrs. Shirley Hendricks

Watery blue

eyes behind plastic (light) rimmed glasses; idiot eyes & smile. Nice person.

Hendricks’s live amid shit/piss baby odor (odor not in Mrs. Ashida’s house.) in

smallest livingroom I ever saw. Crammed with furniture (brown covered overstuffed sofa). . . . Dark dreary hallways. Thoroughly squalid. Are moving.

. . .

Shirley Hendricks felt that Nancy's reputation was damaged by her having to stay alone at Clutter house. Implied that N. entertained persons of the opposite sex while rest of family Away. So what?

From these notes, one can see that Lee records details about the Hendricks' lives and their personalities as well as information about Nancy Clutter. Lee even reveals her attitude as a non-conformist by writing "So what?" in reference to Nancy being alone with a boy. Capote used these notes because Larry Hendricks and a description of his house are seen in his book in section one, "The Last to See Them Alive."

In addition to these interviews, Lee also interviewed Reverend Leonard Cowan, the Clutters' pastor. In her notes, Lee describes Rev. Cowan's physical appearance, his living arrangements, and his attitude:

Rev. Leonard Cowan

From panhandle of Okla.: seminary work in Boston. In his third year as pastor, G.C.

First Methodist Church.

(M. Church congregation: 1700.)

Blond hair, almost bald on top; large blue eyes; soft indoor face; about 5'10", narrow in shoulders, medium build. Keeps hands clasped on lap when talking. . . . Grey wool suit. Neatly groomed.

Made tape recording of Clutter funeral and transcribed his oration “for the members of the family”. Is extremely sensitive about being misquoted.

Lives in bright pink stucco bungalow; uninteresting furnishings; wife, 3 children (two snotty).

ELDEST DTR. DATED KENYON CLUTTER. Check check check.

Wife & eldest dtr. In Wichita. When they come back??

Snob of the first order. Church snob, that is. Cannot Approve of big bad New Yorker (eyes narrowed when mag. spoken of); has no earthly idea of what mag. is about, and probably thinks it’s dirty.

Or at most Unwholesome. Has definite ideas about what is Proper for the press to know & what is Improper.

From the above notes, one can see that Lee passes judgment on Reverend Cowan, and Lee records that the reverend taped his eulogy and the funeral for the Clutters, so Capote could have had access to this too. Thus, once again, it is Lee and others who have done research for Capote.

Another person Lee interviewed was Mr. C. D. Davis, one of Herb Clutter’s former professors:

Mr. C.D. Davis

Professor Emeritus of Agriculture at Kansas State University. About 75. Lives in small hutch-like office surrounded by pale green walls and loose manila files.

Does not smoke, but does not care if you do. Opens the window. Wrinkles when he smiles; probably the Mr. Chips of KSU although Dr. Clapp follows a close second. Light blue and extremely honest eyes, gray hair, short and small-boned.

Was closely associated with Clutter when Clutter was a student. Was faculty adviser for Farm House fraternity and gives the impression that F.H. is the center of his memories. Indulges in what to him must have been a racy anecdote (esp. in the presence of a lady):

“There was a fellow named H-O-A-R who was president of Farm House...when he had served his term and the new president was installed, the incoming president said he didn’t think he ought to write his folks that he was following a Hoar at KSU.”

“...DON’T REMEMBER EXACTLY WHAT I GAVE HERB BUT IT WAS NEVER LESS THAN A B.

This material did not appear in the book.

In addition to conducting interviews and recording notes on many townspeople, Lee also recorded notes about the Clutters’ house. As Shields reports, Capote and Lee examined the house separately. What I have discovered is that Lee’s notes are much more detailed than Capote’s, but also her notes helped Capote refer to the home in his novel. Both writers’ notes, most likely, were recorded the only time when she and Capote went to the Clutters’ house on December 20, 1959 with Clifford Hope, the Clutters’ attorney, and Kenneth Lyon, the administrator of the Clutters’ estate. (Lee records a physical description of both Lyon and Clifford Hope in her notes.)

Immediately what one is struck by after reviewing these notes is that Capote only records three small pages about the Clutters’ house, but Lee’s notes are much longer. For instance, Capote writes:

Nancy’s room

Very small. Plain dark wood bed

Pictures above bed: three kittens. On walls pictures of Jesus (is in all rooms). . . .

desk: cork bulletin board to which pictures, clippings, . . . animal figures mostly

kittens. Very feminine. Easy chair inhabited by a huge stuffed pink bear.

#### Bonnie

Room in which she killed had brass plate: "Eveanna". See rooms here . . .

Bathroom: bottles of different pills, . . . labeled Bonnie Clutter, Wesley

Hospital, take four a day.

#### Kenyon

Two cars; 1951 Chevrolet and 1958 Chevrolet; 2 pick up trucks and Kenyon

"Coyote wagon"

Kenyon: name of dog, Teddy. His coyote wagon, an old truck in which he roamed

The Country side hunting coyotes. . . .

Capote's notes, as seen above, are very brief and show his initial impressions of the house. In fact, his notes on Kenyon's room do not deal with the physical description of the room. All of Capote's notes seem to list household items. (See Appendix RR to view both pages of Capote's notes on the Clutters' house).

However, Lee has nine pages of meticulous notes that describe the Clutters' house. One can see after juxtaposing the two authors' notes that they are very different. For instance, Capote only writes one sentence about Mr. Clutter's office: "Office: His sliding door leading into living room. This was ordinarily open." However, Lee's notes paint a clearer picture of the Clutters' house. She writes two pages just on Clutter's office and even details what contents are on his shelves and in each room. Furthermore,

she lists the cost of the house to build when it was built and the price it would be sold for currently. She writes:

#### CLUTTER House

“Cost \$40,000 to build in 1943 – (G.C. price now between \$50-60 thousand.)

She further records:

#### NANCY’S ROOM

Low, sloping, almost curving ceiling, eight feet high at the highest part. Long, narrow room. Walls faded pink; ceiling blue.

Narrow single bed; seems to have been re-done; varnished oak head & foot boards.

Modest design.

Bulletin board above knick-knack desk.

full-face picture of J.C. on wall between door and window. 3 kittens over bed.

large pink-white teddy bear on boudoir chair (faded neutral color)

Floor bare (moved rugs??)

#### KENYON’S ROOM

Hollywood bed with modern grey wood headboard. Bookshelf in head-board;

about fifteen books, half boys’ books, half best-selling novels (Parrish one of them.

Literary Guild Selections, I think.

Old glass cabinet-desk containing picture of eveanna [sic] on right (top shelf)

inscribed,

KENYON

ALWAYS BE GOOD

EVEANNA

in small, neat handwriting.

Picture of Beverly, uninscribed, on left. Top shelf.

3 dog figurines, plastic model automobile on first shelf in front of picture.

Grey plastic model cruiser (Revell Kit) on top of cabinet.

Complete set of Hardy Boys Series (F.W. Dixon) on 2<sup>nd</sup> shelf plus 2 more plastic model

Cars—about 4 horses figurines.

2 snapshots prize sheep right of bed under 4-H club citation.

Old fashioned stand-up crank Victrola in room by windows.

Walls pale grey-green. Carpet of same texture.

Lee's notes are more specific in that they reveal the entire house—all rooms in the house, whereas Capote's notes do not. (See Appendix SS to view the nine pages of Lee's note on the Clutters' house).

Besides both writers' notes on the Clutters' house being different, both writers also created diagrams of the house and the outside surroundings of the house that are different too. For instance, Capote drew one small diagram of Nancy's room, but he did not record any other diagrams that detailed the inside of the Clutters' house (View Appendix TT to see Capote's diagram of the Clutters' house). Likewise, Capote drew a diagram that details where Smith and Hickock travelled (See Appendix UU to view Capote's diagram of Smith's & Hickock's travels). However, once again, Lee's diagrams are much more specific than Capote's, particularly her diagrams of the inside of the house. She drew two large diagrams that show the entire floor plan—both upstairs and downstairs—of the Clutters' house (See Appendix VV & WW to view Lee's diagrams of



the first and second floors of the Clutters' house). Besides this diagram, Lee also drew a diagram that shows the outside of the Clutters' house, but unlike Capote's diagrams/maps, Lee's map indicates how many yards away other buildings are in relation to the Clutters' house. (See Appendix XX to view Lee's diagram of the outside of the Clutters' house). Whether Lee's diagrams were constructed while she was at the Clutters' house or back at the hotel while looking at Capote's notes or from her memory, the evidence cannot be denied that her diagrams, which have never been published or discussed prior to this study, are much more specific than Capote's, and he clearly used them to describe the Clutters' house when he wrote his book.

Once the arraignment (January 7, 1960) and trial (March 22, 1960) started, Lee attended these events with Capote. Both writers have a great deal of notes on the trial, and many of their notes are very similar; however, Lee's are much more factual and detailed with regard to the jurors. Capote's notes on the jurors are simple, short statements that are not detailed. For instance, he wrote, "Juror Meyer: 3<sup>rd</sup> accepted—short, red-faced, but fairly young. Fat - . . ." He also drew a picture that indicated that Capote was not interested in the information about the jurors and he was bored, so he was doodling during the trial (See Appendix YY to view his notes).

On the same day, Capote drew another picture when detailing juror 4—Mr. Davis. (See Appendix ZZ to view Capote's drawing). Likewise, Capote took notes on other jurors once the trial began on March 22; however, his notes are very brief. For example, Capote wrote: "Juror no. 5 –Merrill- lived in Garden City 30 years—would stand by conviction if all others against his opinion. Accepted though he said he couldn't give a fair verdict ." However, once again, Lee's notes are much more specific and longer than

Capote's. For instance, Lee never referred to a juror as juror no. 5, and she used the jurors' first names. She writes,

Pete Merrill- Farm equipment salesman. Thirty-year resident of Finney County.

Judge put him on after asking Merrill if he could possibly put aside any opinions he might have and judge the case fairly on the evidence, etc. Mr. Merrill reluctantly said yes. Was a sullen juror. Tan face, dirty blonde hair, gold-rimmed glasses; heavy-set, never looked at defendants during the trial. Turned red when saw picture.

In all the examples of Lee's notes on the jurors, her notes are much more specific than Capote's (See Appendix AAA to view Lee's two pages of notes on the jurors).

In conclusion, I found that Harper Lee's notes aided played a crucial role in helping Capote research *In Cold Blood*. As evidenced in Chapters Three and Four of this dissertation, Lee helped Capote get accepted in Kansas by the local citizens. She was a second set of eyes and ears on many interviews and in court; she attended interviews by herself; she recorded many notes about the atmosphere and crowd before, during, and after Smith and Hickock's arraignment; and she created maps in which she outlined the Clutters' house and surrounding areas to aid Capote. Also, she typed her own notes, typed Capote's notes, questioned theories and passed many judgments in her notes. This was much more than Capote ever acknowledged or gave her credit for. It can also be proven that on many occasions Capote relied not only on Lee, but on others to help him with research, and many of these people received credit in the acknowledgement page of his novel.

Clearly, while Capote was in Spain and Switzerland writing his novel, he relied on Lee's notes to assist his memory with details, particularly the first half of the novel that details the town and townspeople, because he was only interested in the two killers. Likewise, he relied on others for help. However, if Capote thanked and gave credit to Alvin Dewey, Harold Nye, and other townspeople in his acknowledgement to his novel, why was Lee never given proper acknowledgement? And what exactly of Lee's notes were used in *In Cold Blood*? Furthermore, would Capote's novel have been a completely different book had more of Lee's notes been used? These questions will be explored in the next chapter of this dissertation.

“A story . . . can be as inaccurate by what it leaves out as by what it puts in” –Duane West  
(Smith “Outspoken Critic” 67).

## CHAPTER FIVE THINGS AREN'T ALWAYS WHAT THEY SEEM

In the first two sections of Capote’s *In Cold Blood*, “The Last to See Them Alive” and “Persons Unknown,” Capote describes the horrible murders of the Clutter family, as well as their lives before the murders, and he discusses several neighbors and friends of the Clutters. Furthermore, he details the surrounding area and juxtaposes all of this with the two killers—Dick Hickock and Perry Smith—as they approach the Clutters’ farm, kill the family and flee. The first and second sections of the book have a back and forth structure which reveal the victims and the killers, while the last two sections of the novel, “The Answer” and “The Corner,” detail the capture of Hickock and Smith, their murder trial and sentences, as well as their deaths by hanging. Thus, a majority of the novel concentrates on Smith and Hickock—two individuals Capote came to know well when he interviewed them and wrote to them on death row over the five years he researched and wrote the novel.

In fact, Capote has Smith and Hickock appear in every section of the novel—not just the two chapters that detail their capture and hangings. What is evident after I researched both Lee’s and Capote’s notes and juxtaposed them with Capote’s novel is: 1.) Capote had an imbalance of notes recorded on the killers vs. the townspeople. He had many more notes about Smith and Hickock, especially Smith, than those he interviewed in Holcomb and the surrounding areas, an idea I’ve already demonstrated in this dissertation. 2.) Capote could not have written his novel, particularly the first two sections—the first half of the novel—without Lee’s assistance—another idea I’ve

communicated throughout this dissertation. 3.) However, the biggest discovery is that if it weren't for Lee's descriptive notes, many of the details about the townspeople and the surrounding area would not have been accurately described in the novel because Capote does not have many supporting details about the town and surrounding area, particularly specific descriptions of people, and the history of the town in his notes. As discussed in Chapter Three, Lee assisted Capote immensely by befriending many of the townspeople and by getting Capote accepted in Holcomb. However, her notes prove not only that she was a skilled journalist, but also that her eye for details helped Capote to write his novel.

Since the publication of *In Cold Blood* in 1966, Delores Hope, a citizen of Garden City and wife of Clifford Hope, Jr., an attorney to the Clutters, has claimed, "Nelle provided many specific insights and descriptions that Capote would have missed if she wasn't with him" (telephone interview). Hope's comment is accurate because, while both writers report many of the same basic plots elements, conversations and specific information about the Clutter family in their research notes, Lee provides many more specific details throughout all of her notes, particularly her notes on the townspeople, that Capote missed or did not record. Therefore, it would have been impossible for Capote not to have relied on Lee's notes as he wrote the book.

Another reason it is clear that Capote used Lee's notes to assist him write the non-fiction novel is because he wrote a majority of the book two years after he finished conducting the research. Furthermore, he wrote the novel while in Palamos, Spain and Verbier, Switzerland. According to Clarke, "The pattern of their [Capote and Jack Dunphy] lives change hardly at all during the next two years: spring and summer in Palamos; fall and winter in Verbier. Truman worked on *In Cold Blood*" (Capote 335). A

number of Capote's personal letters to the Deweys and others he met in Garden City confirm Clarke's point that Capote wrote his novel in these two locations and during a two to three year period. Additionally, according to Clarke, "Although he had brought with him trunks full of notes, Truman continued his reporting by mail, bombarding his friends in Garden City with more questions and requests for updates . . ." (330).

However, because Capote was so far away from Lee and others who resided in the United States while he was in both Spain and Switzerland writing *In Cold Blood*, and because of the long distance and time zone changes, he could not always speak instantly to Lee or the people he interviewed or receive information through the mail instantly; therefore, he would have had to rely not only on his own notes, but also on Lee's to write his novel. So, exactly how many or what parts of Lee's notes were used in *In Cold Blood*? Capote could have never written his non-fiction novel, particularly the first half of the book—"The Last to See Them Alive" and "Persons Unknown"—without Lee because the first two sections detail the town, the Clutters' house, the Clutters' neighbors and friends—people and issues Lee assisted Capote with by conducting interviews. As mentioned previously, Lee interviewed seventeen people without Capote, or notes on these seventeen people were recorded by Capote and destroyed or haven't been uncovered yet. The rest of this chapter will juxtapose Lee's and Capote's notes with *In Cold Blood* and show some of the best examples of Lee's notes that were used in Capote's book.

In the first section of the non-fiction novel, "The Last to See Them Alive," Capote discusses the town and the Clutters before they were murdered, as well as many of the Clutters' friends and neighbors. For instance, Capote describes how Nancy Clutter's friend, Jolene Katz, visits the house to learn how to bake a cherry pie from Nancy. Also,

Capote writes about Kenyon making a hope chest for his sister Beverly's wedding present, and how Herb Clutter purchases a \$40,000 dollar New York Life Insurance policy. Then, Capote details how Susan Kidwell and Nancy Ewalt discover Nancy Clutter's body. In short, many neighbors and citizens of Holcomb appear in the first chapter: Bob Rupp, Jolene Katz and her mother, Mr. and Mrs. Paul Helm, Mrs. Ashida, Susan Kidwell, Mrs. William Kidwell, Nancy Ewalt, Clarence Ewalt, Larry Hendricks and his wife Shirley, Sheriff Robinson, Myrtle Clare, Mrs. Bess Hartman, Bob Johnson, Mr. Lynn Russel, Mr. Gerald Van Vleet, and Wendle Meirer—all people that Lee interviewed with and without Capote. However, some of the most valuable information Capote used of Lee's research is her descriptive notes on the town.

While he was in Kansas, surprisingly, Capote recorded very few notes describing Holcomb and the surrounding areas. I could not find any pages in his "field" notes at The Library of Congress or in his typed notes at The New York Public Library that describe the town at great length. Instead, Capote recorded small sentences or phrases about the town in his gold bound journal as these thoughts came to him. Thus, these thoughts are sprinkled throughout his notebook. For instance, he writes on page 16, "Pleasant hunting season." On page 18, he writes, "Grows in the fields- Tumbleweed." On page 24, he writes, "The Town—remote, wheat, the rest of Kansas call 'out there.' Stetson hats- last drought—cycles of weather, 7 year cycles."

The biggest section of notes on the town is on page 64 of this notebook. Capote describes the post office and houses in the town as follows:

Post office: Mrs. Mrytl [sic] Claire, a crisp elderly woman who wears bluejeans [sic] and works with a stiff leg. Two garages: one – functions as a fully blown

grocery store, and another that contains a café. A Presbyterian Community church.

Houses are storied [sic] and bleak. Dirt rocks.

However, Lee's notes on the post office differ greatly from Capote's. She writes,

Postoffice [sic] minor horror. Known as the Federal Building. Unpainted wooden floors; bank of "combination" p.o. boxes, half of which are hanging open in some degree; only sign is "transfer" saying US Post Office in building's single window. White wooden exterior; Mrs. Clare behind bars (dirt-daubers' nests in angle between ceiling and stamp cage). Jesus posters on one wall. Mrs. Clare walks rocking motion—wooden leg?—says she's the only employee and snowed under with Xmas rush and could we come back, but old crone in background hauling mailbags. One rural carrier—70-mile route. . . . (See Appendix BBB to view Lee's notes on the Post Office and the town of Holcomb).

Thus, when describing the post office in his novel, Capote consulted Lee's notes. He writes,

The people of Holcomb speak of their post office as "the Federal Building," which seems rather too substantial a title to confer on a drafty and dusty shed. The ceiling leaks, the floor boards wobble, the mailboxes won't shut, the light bulbs are broken, the clock has stopped. "Yes, it's a disgrace," agrees the caustic, somewhat original, and entirely imposing lady who presides over this litter. "But the stamps work don't they? Anyhow, what do I care? Back here in my part is real cozy. I've got my rocker, and a nice wood stove, and a coffee pot, and plenty to read" (*In Cold Blood* 67)



In a Vignette, which, most likely, Capote typed after viewing Lee's notes, he writes, "Local joke; The postoffice, being on Federal property, is known as the Federal Building. All the walls and ceilings are peeling; the whole thing seems about to fall down." Clearly, Capote used Lee's notes to describe the specifics about the post office.

Another building that Capote doesn't appear to have described in his notes, but Lee describes in hers, is the Teacherage building where Mr. and Mrs. Hendricks and the Kidwells live. Lee records,

Teacherage two-story, yellow stucco-like material. Big bungalow-type house.

White trim. Dark wooden wainscoting in interior. Divided up into rabbit-warren apartments. Grimmiest building I ever saw.

Capote describes the Teacherage briefly in his novel: "The Teacherage, which stands opposite the up-to-date school, is an out-of-date edifice, drab and poignant. Its twenty-odd rooms are separated into grace-and-favor apartments for those members of the faculty unable to find, or afford, other quarters" (*In Cold Blood* 59).

Also, Capote has a few typed pages of notes he labels "INCIDENTAL NOTES ON GARDEN CITY.":

Pop: 10,688

Signs seen entering town: "Howdy Folks, Welcome To Garden City," A Friendly Place." "Swim in World's Largest FREE Swim Pool." "Kansas' Largest Zoo--- See Sea Lions, See "Penny" the Elephant, See Polar Bears."

VALLEY VIEW CEMETERY . . .

New First Methodist Church: a huge r shaped building made of very bleak raw-looking brick. Really looks like a factory, and first several times passed it

didn't realize it was a church, but thought it might be local coca-cola plant.

Coyotes: Often seen streaking across the fields. Look like drab and rather small foxes; very agile and thin.

Capote also records in his own handwriting at the bottom of this page,

Industrys [sic]: Farming (wheat, surgar beets, alfalfa), and natural gas.

50 years ago no trees in this area except cotton woods growing by the river.

Air: crystal, like Greece, so clean you can see a man's hat lying on the ground a mile away.

Wind: when the wind blows more than 30 miles an hour; they call it blowing "blue hand." (over)

Holcomb was originally called Sherlock; then a man named D.C. Holcomb established a large hog ranch there, and the town, in about 1908, was renamed in his honor

Summer temperature goes to 107; but the nights are cool.

Only natural vegetation: buffalo grass.

Scarcely rains in winter; rainfall May to Sept.

Capote goes on to describe Holcomb, very vaguely:

Reached by driving west from Garden City on Route 50: seven miles.

You might drive through Holcomb without realizing you had been there.

The actual village consists of a filling station, a grocery, a wooden yellow small railway station (Santa Fe), a shabby old red brick bank, and a school. A church (?)

These are the only notes that Capote recorded about the town. His notebooks, including the ones kept on Perry Smith and the killers, housed at The Library of Congress, and the trial, and the townspeople, do not have more specific information about the description of the town. And Capote used his own notes when he described the town in the first paragraph of his novel where he writes, “The Village of Holcomb stands on the high wheat plains of western Kansas, a lonesome area that other Kansans call ‘out there’” (*In Cold Blood* 3).

However, Harper Lee recorded a great deal of specifics about the town—other details that Capote missed. She writes,

Garden City laid out catty-cornered on west side; in block on east side. Traffic lights almost indiscernible [sic] on Main Street during Christmas season—decorations. Parking meters abound; . . . Yellow Courtesy Boxes disturbed at Convenient Points (only one we’ve discovered is in front of Warren Hotel) for patrons’ contributions.

G.C. not an old town, but older citizens would like you to think it is. They speak in reverent tones of 1885; 1876 when grandpa first came out here. Apparently the hierarchy of the Old Families is determined by the amount of land their ancestors homesteaded. (“Grandpapa had a section. . . Uncle Jake homesteaded a quarter . . . Cousin Ike cornered all the land in downtown Garden City...”)

Social scale has something to do with one’s religious denominations:

Presbyterians & Congregationalists at top; Methodists are comfortable upper middle-class; R.C.’s lower middle; Assembly of God, African M.E., Baptists on the bottom.

In his book, Capote describes in detail the people of Holcomb and their religious strata. Yet, he does not appear to have any “field” or typed notes on this subject. He writes,

A hundred miles west and one would be out of the “Bible Belt,” that gospel-haunted strip of American territory in which a man must, if only for business reasons, take his religion with the straightest of faces, but in Finney County one is still within the Bible Belt borders, and therefore a person’s church affiliation is the most important factor influencing his class status. A combination of Baptists, Methodists, and Roman Catholics would account for eighty percent of the county’s devout, yet among the elite—the businessmen, bankers, lawyers, physicians, and more prominent ranchers who tenant the top drawer-Presbyterians and Episcopalians predominate. An occasional Methodist is welcome, and once in a while a Democrat infiltrates, but on the whole the establishment is composed of right-wing Republicans of the Presbyterian and Episcopalian faiths. (*In Cold Blood* 34)

Much of this description clearly came from Lee’s notes.

Besides these notes on the town, Lee also recorded the following:

See the Polar Bears

Pennie the Elephant

Sea Lions

Garden City

Garden City has largest zoo in state of Kansas

Has largest free outdoor swim pool in the country. (World?)

Garden City

Was largely the work of Mr. C.J. (Buffalo) Jones, an itinerant buffalo hunter who finally broke his rifle over a wagon wheel in disgust at the senseless extermination of the beasts. He then lassoed a buffalo and carried him around the state fairs, charging a fee to persons who tried to catch it, and awarding a prize to whoever did.

Mr. Jones erected a series of buildings in G.C. known as The Buffalo Block, rode high in the boom, but was felled in the subsequent crash.

Capote used the above notes that Lee recorded in “The Last To See Them Alive,” particularly the section about the founder of the town, information which he didn’t record in his notes:

A town of eleven thousand, Garden City began assembling its founders soon after the Civil War. An itinerant buffalo hunter Mr. C. J. (Buffalo) Jones, had much to do with its subsequent expansion from a collection of huts and hitching posts into an opulent ranching center with razzle-dazzle saloons, an opera house, and the plushiest hotel anywhere between Kansas City and Denver—in brief, a specimen of frontier fanciness that rivaled a more famous settlement fifty miles east of it, Dodge City. Along with Buffalo Jones, who lost his money and then his mind (the last years of his life were spent haranguing street groups against the wanton extermination of the beasts he himself had so profitably slaughtered), the glammers of the past are today entombed. Some souvenirs exist; a moderately colorful row of commercial buildings is known as the Buffalo Block, and the once splendid Windsor Hotel, with its still splendid high-ceilinged saloon and its atmosphere of spittoons and potted palms, endures amid the variety stores and supermarkets as

a Main Street landmark—one comparatively unpatronized, for the Windsor’s dark, huge chambers and echoing hallways, evocative as they are, cannot compete with the air-conditioned amenities offered at the trim little Hotel Warren, or the Wheat Lands Motel’s individual television sets and “Heated Swimming Pool.” (32-33)

Capote continues in his book,

the newcomer to Garden City, once he has adjusted to the nightly after-eight silence of Main Street, discovers much to support the defensive boastings of the citizenry: a well-run public library, a competent daily newspaper, green-lawned and shady squares here and there, placid residential streets where animals and children are safe to run free, a big, rambling park complete with a small menagerie (“See the Polar Bears!” “See Penny the Elephant!”), and a swimming pool that consumes several acres (“World’s Largest FREE Swimming pool!”). (33)

Besides writing about the town history, Capote also discusses the school system in Holcomb in the first section of the book:

Holcomb School, a good-looking establishment, which reveals a circumstance that the appearance of the community otherwise camouflages: that the parents who send their children to this modern and ably staffed “consolidated” school—the grades go from kindergarten through senior high, and a fleet of buses transport the students, of which they are usually around three hundred and sixty, from as far as sixteen miles away—are in general, a prosperous people. (4)

Although Capote describes the Holcomb School system, I could not find any information on the school system of Holcomb in his notes. In fact, it was Lee who interviewed David

Williams, the Principal of Holcomb School, and described the school. In her notes, she records,

Holcomb School—86 or 87 high school students, about 260 kindergarten through 12 grade pupils.

Modern and progressive (in the sense of up-to-date) school leaning heavily toward home economics, agricultural and vocational work.

New part of school building follows pattern of all recently (last ten years) designed schools. Low roofs, asphalt tile floors, (green and neutral squares), wide hallways with recessed niches for trophy and project displays, multitudes of water fountains.

Lee continues to record other aspects of the school building and the grounds, which categorize the school system as a modern school, a fact Capote wrote about in his book. (See Appendix CCC to view Lee's notes on Principal Williams and on the school).

Another example of Capote using Lee's notes to describe the setting occurs when he writes about the Kidwells' apartment in the first section of the novel. In Capote's notes, I could find no evidence of any notes on the Kidwells' apartment. However, as usual, Lee details the atmosphere around her when she interviewed the Kidwells:

January 2

Kidwell Apartment: Tiny livingroom, pink walls, dark furniture; Hammond Organ (two keyboards, foot pedals) dominates room. Free-form Christmas decoration by Susan still hanging from ceiling light fixture (convex glass disc, frosted), books—art books of Susan's—pictures (print) of fat ruddy cardinal on wall. (R.C., not St. Louis.) Duncan-Frye diningtable in livingroom.  
Extremely small & dark kitchen.

. . .

Apt. shows earnest attempt to make something cheerful out of gloominess of Teacherage. Pretty successful, on the whole, considering what they had to work with.

In his book, Capote describes the Kidwells' apartment as follows:

The Teacherage, which stands opposite the up-to-date school is an out of date edifice, drab and poignant. . . . Nevertheless, Susan Kidwell and her mother had managed to sugar the pill and install a cozy atmosphere in their apartment—three rooms on the ground floor. The very small living room incredibly contained—aside from things to sit on—an organ, a piano, a garden of flowering flowerpots, and usually a darting little dog and a large, drowsy cat. (59)

Another instance in which Capote relied on Lee's notes is to describe the Clutters' house. As mentioned in Chapter Four of this dissertation, Lee recorded many more notes on the Clutters' house than Capote did. And Capote used her notes to aid him in his description of the house. For instance, Capote wrote about the Clutters' house, "There were four bedrooms on the second floor, and hers [Mrs. Clutters] [sic] was the last at the end of a spacious hall, which was bare except for a baby crib that had been brought for the visits of her grandson" (28). However, Capote does not have any notes describing the hall or Mrs. Clutter's room or the fact that there was a crib in the Clutters' house, but Lee does. Lee observed,

Large upstairs hallway containing double-decker bunks (blue patterned spreads) and baby crib. (Same baby crib Clutter children used?)

No carpeting in upstairs hallway or on stairs. Built-in floor to ceiling cabinets on



west wall. Upstairs John; small, pink fixtures, pink tile.

Likewise, Capote wrote in his book about the Clutters' house and its worth, "The house—for the most part designed by Mr. Clutter, who thereby proved himself a sensible and sedate, if not notably decorative architect—had been built in 1948 for forty thousand dollars. (The resale value was now sixty thousand dollars.)" (9). However, other than the cost of the house, which was recorded in Capote's "field" notes, I could not find any mention of what the house's resale value was. However, Lee recorded this information in her notes: "Cost \$40,000 to build in 1943 – (G.C. price now between \$50-60 thousand)." This is another instance in which Capote has relied on Lee's notes for specific details.

Another detail mentioned in *In Cold Blood* and Lee's notes, but not mentioned in Capote's notes, involves the Deweys' family cat. Capote writes in *In Cold Blood*,

His wife had asked had asked him to be sure and collect the family cat, Courthouse Pete. Pete, a tiger-striped tom weighing fifteen pounds, is a well-known character around Garden City, famous for his pugnacity, which was the cause of his current hospitalization; a battle lost to a boxer dog had left him with wounds necessitating both stitches and antibiotics. (148)

Capote doesn't have any notes on Courthouse Pete, but Lee recorded,

Courthouse Pete: tiger striped cat weighing 13 pounds. Most enormous domestic cat in the West (as opposed to the Orient). Stripes exactly match. Fights; got an eye put out, and they had to take him for a shot of penicillin for a leg wound.

Dewey Dewey [sic] has hay fever, and the question arose as to whether Dewey or the cat should go; they gave Dewey allergy shots and kept them both.

Clearly, the specifics that Capote includes, particularly about the history of the town and the atmosphere are all from Lee's notes. There is no way he could have remembered all of these specific details two and three years after he was in Kansas to record them in his book. Thus, he relied on Lee's notes for this section of the novel.

Other examples of Lee's notes being much more meticulous than Capote's are when she describes people. For instance, when the two authors interviewed Mrs. Ashida, one of the Clutters' friends/neighbors, Lee's notes are much more specific, particularly because Capote doesn't have many notes about Mrs. Ashida. Despite Ralph Voss' claim, "I could find no field notes on Capote's interview with Mrs. Ashida among those in the New York Public library, but of course, such notes may exist," I have discovered these notes (92). While Voss is correct, that these notes on Mrs. Ashida are not in The New York Public Library, they are in Capote's gold, bound journal housed at the Library of Congress. In this instance, Capote's notes on Mrs. Ashida are revealing because they are so brief. Both Lee and Capote record the fact that Mrs. Ashida has four children, though Capote records the children's ages and Lee does not. However, Capote does not have any notes on Mrs. Ashida other than on the children. The only other notes attributed to Capote on Mrs. Ashida are a typed set labeled, "Mr. and Mrs. Hideo Ashida." This is typed as a vignette. If Capote typed these, then both authors record the fact that Mrs. Ashida wanted to buy her husband gold teeth for Christmas since he was missing teeth, and that Mrs. Ashida knew Mr. Clutter because they were involved in 4-H together. However, Capote's notes do not record the specifics that Lee's do, such as Mrs. Ashida's description. Lee writes,

Not more than 5 feet tall, round as a tub, short arms and small chubby hands, short

legs and enormous middle. Lives amid cheerful disorder and seeming abundance of edibles. (Homemade peanut brittle, popcorn balls, walnuts on table beside chair.) Thoroughly middle-western “tasteful furniture”—modernistic hideous brown and green overstuffed chairs. Boy-child asleep on sofa covered with quilt when we called.

Lee continues to describe exactly what Mrs. Ashida was wearing and what the house looked like. Lee’s notes also reveal that she recorded information about Mrs. Ashida’s involvement in the 4-H club with Mr. Clutter:

Dec. 21

attended 9 a.m. meeting at 4-H Building in Garden City; left just a few minutes after 12:00. She was late to meeting; says from ten to fifteen minutes late. Mr. Clutter and Kenyon

. . .

“We have a big basement at our house, and the club is welcome at any time to come use it.”

Mrs. Ashida on Mr. C: “He did so much, we just took it for granted.”

Mrs. A. last to see Clutter & Kenyon at meeting. Clutter offered her some demonstration

literature (on interior decoration, lawn improvement, etc.) and when Mrs. Ashida said she couldn’t use it, Mr. C said,

“Well, Kenyon, let’s take it home to mother, she might enjoy it.”

Mrs. Ashida didn’t know Clutters too well, only through 4-H work, but her opinion of but her opinion of them very high. Rather touched when she commented that

the Clutters were the same to people of all social standings.

Capote mentions Mrs. Ashida in his novel, as well as the fact that she wants to buy her husband gold teeth for Christmas and her association with Mr. Clutter in the 4-H program; however, Lee's notes were used in *In Cold Blood* to describe Mrs. Ashida. Capote writes, "Her children tugged at her, punched her; the oldest boy shouted, 'Hey Ma, that's you!' But Mrs. Ashida was bashful; she rubbed her eyes with her baby-plump hands and laughed. . . . After 4-H conferences, Mr. Clutter usually drove the Ashidas home, and he did so today" (35). Although minor, Capote used Lee's description of Mrs. Ashida in his novel by categorizing her hands as plump. Lee wrote in her notes, "short arms and small chubby hands." This is just one example of Lee's attention to details that Capote did not record.

Another example of differences between Capote's and Lee's notes and of Capote using Lee's notes is when the two interviewed Larry Hendricks and his wife Shirley. Mr. Hendricks was a new English teacher at Nancy Clutter's school. In his book, Capote describes Hendricks as, "a teacher of English, aged twenty-seven, lived on the top floor of the Teacherage. He wanted to write, but his apartment was not the ideal lair for a would-be author" (60-61).

Capote's notes on Hendricks are vague and not very descriptive when juxtaposed with Lee's notes. In fact, if one doesn't understand that Capote is recording information that Hendricks told him about when he went to the crime scene, Capote's notes would be very hard to understand. For instance, Capote writes,

Mrs. Hendricks

9:40 came in screaming

Sue: “we shook her, and said blood on pillow.”

Mrs. Kidwell was very upset. We were trying to keep her away from the window.

Had to give her a nerve pill.

Mrs. Kidwell saying over and over; “Bonnie was well. She was never going to take sick again. Hope she hadn’t done it (killed them).

Mrs. Ewalt silent-

Mrs. Hendricks (trying to . . . Mrs. Kidwell).

Talked about difficulties in living in home. Planning to move. Trips taken.

Sue: Jumped up from piano seat and ran screaming into her bedroom.

Nancy went into corner with her mother and cried.

No one said anything about being murdered.

Larry, 27, Hendricks (studying Palmer method for short story writing; writing T.V. scripts).

Shirley Hendrick, 22.

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Sunday, Nov. 15

9:40 Mr. H reading Sunday – heard door slam. On vaguely hysteric but not hysterical.

Wife said something serious way.

Mr. Ewalt had clearly called sheriff – “Something wrong. . . .  
got in car with Ewalt and waited at highway until sheriff came.

The rest of Capote’s notes detail how Hendricks went to the scene of the crime—the Clutters’ house—and how the bodies were found and positioned.

Lee's notes are much more detailed than Capote's. First, she has a full description of both Larry and Shirley Hendricks:

Mr. Larry Hendricks

Age 27; writing master's thesis on Dr. Conant's [sic] report on High Schools—at Lengthy odds with Dr. Conant. First year at Holcomb; teaches junior high and sophomore English—heavy on composition, light on lit. Native of Oklahoma, was in Navy; went through school on G.I. Bill.

Student of Palmer Institute of Authorship, Hollywood, Cal. Approves of courses he's received, and says they'll give him 3 free criticisms of 3 types of work he submits. Hasn't gotten around to submitting anything but 1 short story. Can write a short story from newspaper heading, but must be hell with dialogue. Favorite authors Hemingway and Eugene O'Neill. Wife says he likes Shakespeare . . . .

Drives school bus (prob. To supplement income.)

Very tall, iron handclasp, quite dark (touch of Indian blood, I fancy) jet black hair, high cheekbones, snub nose, rather thick lips, black rather full mustache. Hands large with spade-like nails either cut or bitten very short. . . .

Next, Lee describes more specifically and clearly that Hendrick was in his apartment when he heard about the Clutters' murders:

Sunday Nov. 15

Mrs. Hendricks

. . .

About 9:40, "Susie and Nancy came in screaming their heads off . . ."

Mrs. Hendricks joined

Mrs. Kidwell

Susan

Nancy Ewalt

Mrs. Ewalt in Kidwell apartment. H. & Ewalt to Clutter farm.

Shocked, vaguely knowing what had happened, but did not discuss it while waiting for Hendricks and Ewalt to return. “We talked about the kids ... about having to go all the way to the basement for the washing ...about Nancy Ewalt’s debating trips.” (Larry took 2 debating teams to tournaments over weekends.) “I found out more about the trips then [sic] than Larry ever told me...”

Larry appeared and told Shirley “They’ve all been shot, they’re dead.” Larry didn’t speak when he came to Kidwell apt; told this to Shirley alone.

Susan ran screaming and crying into bedroom, when saw L.’s face.

Mrs. Kidwell all this time in agony of apprehension, scared Bonnie had cut loose. Mrs. C. had told Kidwell night before that she was well now, and she’d never be sick again. Shirley said everybody thought it but no one said it. Shirley on Mrs. K: “She hoped Bonnie hadn’t done it because last night she told her she was well--”

Larry told Mr. McCart, who told Kidwells and Ewart [sic] women. Also yard conversation with Mr. Riggs by Larry & Ewart [sic].

Lee’s notes are much easier to understand than Capote’s. However, both authors’ notes make the final version of Capote’s novel. Both record the same basic plot elements, but it is Lee’s eye for detail that seems to have made the novel. For instance, it is Lee who recorded Mr. Hendricks’ physical description, that he drove a school bus to

supplement his teaching salary, and that he was a writer and admired Hemingway. Capote wrote in his novel,

Though as yet unpublished, young Hendricks, a he-mannish ex-sailor from Oklahoma who smokes a pipe and has a mustache and a crop of untamed black hair, at least looks literary—in fact, remarkably like youthful photographs of the writer he most admires, Ernest Hemingway. To supplement his teacher's salary, he also drove school bus.

“Sometimes I cover sixty miles a day,” he said to an acquaintance. “Which doesn't leave much time for writing. Except on Sundays. Now, *that* Sunday, November fifteenth, I was sitting up here in the apartment going through the papers. Most of my ideas for stories, I get them out of the newspaper—you know? Well, the TV was on and the kids were kind of lively, but even so I could hear *voices*. From downstairs. Down at Mrs. Kidwell's. But I didn't figure it was my concern, since I was new here—only came to Holcomb when school began. But then Shirley—she'd been out hanging up some clothes—my wife, Shirley, rushed in and said, ‘Honey, you better go downstairs. They're all hysterical.’ The two girls—now, they really were hysterical. Susan never got over it. (61).

Once again, Lee's details are what aids Capote to write about the townspeople.

Another contrast between the authors' notes is when they interviewed Andy Erhart, a friend and neighbor of Herb Clutters. Again, in this case, it is the combination of both authors' notes that helped Capote portray this character in the book. In his little green spiral notebook, housed at The Library of Congress, Capote appears to have written the basic ideas that he gathered from Erhart at his interview. He records,



questions for Erhart

- 1 What is the Co-op.
- 2 What is at Garden City co-operation
- 3 All details of cleaning up day (See Appendix DDD to view Capote's "field notes).

Besides this information, Capote recorded notes on how Erhart and his friends went to the Clutters' house to clean the day after the bodies were discovered. He wrote in his "field" notes of his gold bound journal,

Erhardt [sic]

Monday 16<sup>th</sup>

Dr. J. E Dale (veterinarian), Everett Ogburn, (Henklyn Drilling Co) Carol Myers (dairyman), and hired men Vic Iksik, and Alfred Stoek [sic].

Went out 1:30 p.m. stayed till 4:30

Cleaning equipment, soap, detergent, wash-clothes

Took all the bedding off beds-

Took mattresses –

Took out mattresses box-

Took couch and pillows

Put them in pick-up and took them out to field; burned by Alfred Stoecklein.

Capote also typed notes about his interview with Erhart:

As told by Andy Erhardt: [sic] "On Monday, the 16<sup>th</sup>, sometime after lunch, around 1:30, I went out to the Clutter place to help clean it up. Several of us did, all old friends of Herb (and all Methodists). There was Dr. J. E. Dale, (local

veterinarian) Everett Ogburn (Henkle Drilling co), Carl Myers (dairyman); we'd none of us been in the house since it happened, and it was terrible coming there ...and remembering other times. We brought our own cleaning equipment: detergents, soap, washcloths. Two of the hired men, Vic Irsik and Alfred Stoeckle, helped us clean up. We took all the bloody bedding off the beds; took away the mattresses. We hauled away the mattress box that Herb had been lying on. Then we took away the couch and pillows (the couch Nancy had refurbished, the one on which Kenyon was found). The hired men piled all these things on the pickup truck and drove them out to a field. Then they poured kerosene on them and set them on fire. When we'd finished it was about four-thirty."

Lee appeared to concentrate on different facts, such as what Erhart looked like and other minor details. She wrote,

Erhardt: [sic]

Was called out of church. Drove out to Clutter house but was stopped by police barricade.

Reaction was one of disbelief. Met Rev. Leonard Cowan returning from Clutter house; Cowan told him what had happened.

"We knew it had happened because the preacher had been there..."

In the second chapter of *In Cold Blood*, "Persons Unknown," Capote begins by discussing the basic plot he recorded in his notes in which friends of Herb Clutter go to his house to clean. But he mentions details that Lee recorded and he didn't, such as the fact the "On the present occasion a highway patrolman welcomed them. The patrolman, guardian of a barricade that the authorities had erected at the entrance to the farm, waved

them on, and they drove a half mile more, down the elm-shaded lane leading to the Clutter house” (78).

Capote describes Erhart in great detail in his book, stating,

Of those present, none had been closer to the Clutter family than Andy Erhard<sup>45</sup> [sic]. Gentle, genially dignified, a scholar with work-calloused hands and sunburned neck, he’d been a classmate of Herb’s at Kansas State University. “We were friends for thirty years,” he said some time afterward, and during those decades Erhart had seen his friend evolve from a poorly paid County Agricultural Agent into one of the region’s most widely known and respected farm ranchers: “Every thing Herb had, he earned with the help of God. He was a modest man but a proud man, as he had a right to be. He raised a fine family. He made something of his life.” But that life, and what he’d made of it—how could it happen, Erhart wondered as he watched the bonfire catch. How was it possible that such effort, such plain virtue, could overnight be reduced to this—smoke, thinning as it rose and was received by the big annihilating sky? (79)

In her notes, Lee recorded many of the details and physical description Capote used of Erhart seen above. She writes,

A.B. Erhart

Head of KSU Agricultural Experiment Station

Medium height, lightly built, dark eyes, black hair sprinkled with silver worn in crew cut. Youthful and alive in appearance. Type of spectacles worn probably account for the oddly scholarly touch in his looks: think metal frames with nose-piece going straight across tops of lenses. Dresses well quietly, and with more

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<sup>45</sup> Capote often misspells Erhart’s name throughout his research notes.

taste than usually seen in Garden City. Wore short boots with vaguely western tops but regular flat heels.

Radiates waves of quiet intelligence. Neither smokes nor drinks, is an active Methodist, married with three sons (one in the air force, one in college, one in the second grade).

Erhart was a classmate of Clutter at KSU and was a close friend. He mostly saw Clutter family at church on Sundays and at church socials.

Again, Capote used Lee's notes in this instance to write his description of Erhart; Lee describes Erhart as intelligent and as Herb Clutter's best friend and college classmate, facts Capote did not record.

Another way Lee aids Capote is with his description of characters. Throughout his non-fiction novel, Capote describes many of the characters in great detail; however, his own notes do not have some of these details in them; rather, Lee's notes have these specifics. One example is when Capote describes Bob Johnson, Herb Clutter's life insurance salesman. In his book, Capote describes Johnson as, "The agent, a stocky, somewhat bald, rather informal man named Bob Johnson, hoped his client wasn't having last-minute doubts" (46-47). It is a combination of Lee's and Capote's notes he used to create his description for Bob Johnson. Capote recorded in his typed notes, "Johnson, about 43, is local representative of New York Life Insurance Co; he is medium height, and a little plump; wears very scuffed shoes, a cheap sort of pale suit: shouldn't think he was doing too well." Lee's description of Johnson is slightly different: "Not much above medium height; fair, blue eyes, balding, grimaces before he says something and immediately afterwards." Capote used her specifics—balding—in the book.

Other examples of Lee's keen eye for description include her notes on Alfred Stoecklein, Clarence Ewalt, detective Clarence Duntz and Mrs. Hartman, owner of Hartman's cafe. By juxtaposing both authors' notes with Capote's book, one can see Capote used Lee's notes to describe these characters. For instance, Capote described Alfred Stoecklein as "A long-faced man with brown teeth. . ." (*In Cold Blood* 12). However, Capote does not have any description of Stoecklein in his "field" notes or typed notes. In fact, his notes on Stoecklein are almost nonexistent. On the other hand, Lee describes Stoecklein in her notes as, "Face like a pleasant fox; pointed nose, chin, and the most incredible teeth I've ever seen in a functioning human's mouth. Drinks and Clutter knew it." Once again, although minor, Capote used Lee's notes to help him construct his description of Stoecklein.

Another similar example is that of Clarence Ewalt. Both authors have detailed notes on Ewalt, particularly how Ewalt assisted his daughter in finding the Clutters' bodies. Capote describes Ewalt in his book as, "Clarence Ewalt, a middle-aged sugar-beet farmer" (*In Cold Blood* 58). In his typed notes on Ewalt, he wrote, "Ewalt is a farmer, and a neighbor of Clutters." However, in Lee's notes, she records more specifics: "came to Holcomb 1949; from Cimarron, Gray County; raises wheat, sugar beets, cattle. Lives about ½ mile from Rupps." Thus, Capote used the specifics of "sugar beet" farmer from Lee's notes.

Likewise, I could not find any notes that Capote recorded on detective Duntz in either The New York Public Library or in his "field" notes at The Library of Congress. However, although brief, Lee discussed Duntz in her notes, saying, "ole Man Duntz says S&H drove across Arkansas River Bridge, looked back at Clutter farm, saw lights.

Debated whether or not to go to house, but did. (Then saw light in Stoeckleins' house—sick one—go off, then on, then off.)” Although minor, Capote used Lee’s description of Duntz’s nickname, Old, in his non-fiction novel. Capote described Duntz as “(Members of the K.B.I. are partial to nicknames; Duntz is known as Old Man—unfairly, since he is not quite fifty,” (85).

Once again, Capote uses Lee’s notes to describe Mrs. Hartman, owner of Hartman’s café. In the book, he describes her as, “Mrs. Bess Hartman, a sparsely fleshed, unfoolish lady with bobbed gray-and-gold hair and bright, authoritative green eyes. . .” (70).

However, Capote simply describes her in his own notes as, “Mrs. Hartman has blonde and yellow hair, is very spare and leathery, and always wears a big pair of bright red earrings.” Lee, on the other hand, describes Hartman as “Pale faded blonde-grey hair, think, plastic-rimmed spectacles.” Capote used Lee’s notes by describing Mrs. Hartman’s hair as “grey.”

Besides using Lee’s notes to write the first half of the book, Capote used some of Lee’s notes to write the latter half as well. One clear example in which Capote relied on Lee’s notes is when he described the atmosphere of the town when the killers were brought back to Garden City in the third section of the book, “Answer.” Capote writes, “Wednesday, January 6, for the area swarmed with Finney County vehicles that had brought to town part of the crowd populating the square” (246). He continues,

Indeed, the congregation in the square might have been expecting a parade, or attending a political rally. . . . And the middle-aged membership of a women’s bridge club arrived en masse. Mr. J. P. (Jap) Adams, head of the Local Veterans Commission office, appeared attired in a tweed garment so oddly tailored that a

friend yelled, “Hey Jap! What ya doing’ wearin’ ladies’ clothes?”—for Mr.

Adams, in his haste to reach the scene, had unwittingly donned his secretary’s coat.

(247)

However, Capote doesn’t mention these events in any of his notes; rather, it is Lee who has recorded this information. She writes:

January 6

Notes on crowd:

A ladies’ bridge club went en masse to the courthouse square.

The Veterans’ Administration office is across the square from the courthouse.

The Administrator, Mr. J.D. “Jap” Adams, looked intermittently out the window

all Wednesday afternoon, but told his secretary Mrs. Lena Thrasher, that he had

no special interest in the activity on the square. Between 4:30 and 5:00, he told

Mrs. Thrasher they’d about finished for the day, and Mr. Adams added that he’d

better go over to the courthouse and get his new license plates. He duly departed.

He returned about 30 minutes later with a silly look on his face. “Do you see any-

thing the matter with me?” he asked Mrs. Thrasher. Mrs. Thrasher said she didn’t.

“I’m wearing your coat.”

(Delores Hope says it was probably a ¾ length dark coat with red specks. Tweed.)

It is clear that Capote used Lee’s notes in this instance, because he doesn’t just record the basic ideas that Lee has recorded, but he even uses her own words “en masse” in the book.

Likewise, Capote used Lee’s description to describe the temperature while people waited for the police cars carrying the killers to arrive: “Numbed and pruned it; by six

o'clock, fewer than three hundred persons remained. Newsmen, cursing the undue delay, stamped their feet and slapped frozen ears with ungloved, freezing hands. Suddenly, a murmuring arose on the south side of the square" (248). Capote doesn't have notes on the crowd. Thus, he relied on Lee's notes, which record: "I returned to the press line. The thermometer was dropping and T's ears(good barometer) were red; my feet numb. We had stood for perhaps twenty minutes when we were aware that the few teenagers grouped under a tree nearby was now a definite crowd."

One of the most interesting examples in which Capote used Lee's notes to aid him in writing his book deals with Dick Hickock and Perry Smith. Capote records a large portion about Perry Smith's interrogation and about his family history:

said he'd had a sister, Fern, who had either jumped or fell from a 5<sup>th</sup> floor window in San Francisco in 1950, though he "preferred to think she slipped", and said this sister was an alcoholic; [sic] said he had another sister with whom he was not very close, and from whom he had not heard since 1958 (this is Dorothy Marchant, a very respectable woman living in San Francisco and married to a Schenley liquor salesman.) . . .

See N.L's notes and skip to ..[sic] (See Appendix EEE to view Capote's notes).

Lee's notes have more specifics about the two killers:

January 8

Name: Richard Eugene Hickock

Age: 22

Born: Kansas City, Kansas, June 6, 1931.



Address: Edgerton, Kansas.

Moved to Edgerton in 1947. Edgerton is the extreme southwest corner of Johnson County, 20 miles east of Edgerton; he also works in an automobile body shop in Olathe, Kansas. (See Appendix FFF to view Lee's notes on Hickock).

Lee records similar information about Perry Smith:

Name: Perry Edward Smith

Age: 31

Born: October, 1928, Elko, Nevada

Address: Elko/Las Vegas, Nevada (See Appendix GGG to view Lee's notes on Perry Smith).

Although Capote was extremely close to Hickock and Smith, I could not find any such information in his own notes, yet he recorded similar information in his book:

Hickock, Richard Eugene (WM) 28. KBI 97 093; FBI 859 273 A. Address Edgerton, Kansas. Birthdate 6-6-31. Birthplace: K.C., Kans. Height: 5-10. Weight: 175. Hair: Blond. Eyes: Blue. Build: Stout. Comp: Ruddy. Occup: Car Painter. Crie: Cheat & Defr. & Bad Checks. Paroled: 8-13-59. By; So. K.C.K.

The second description reads:

Smith, Perry Edward (WM) 27-59. Birthplace: Nevada. Height 5-4. Weight: 156. Hair: D. Brn. Crime: B&E. Arrested: (blank). By: (blank). Disposition: Sent KSP 3-13-56 from Phillips Co. 5-10 yrs. Rec. 3-14-56. Paroled: 7-6-59. (*In Cold Blood* 164)

Another example from the latter half of the novel in which Capote used Lee's notes is when he describes the jury:

The fourteen men ultimately elected consisted of half a dozen farmers, a pharmacist, a nursery manager, an airport employee, a well driller, two salesmen, a machinist, and the manager of Ray's Bowling Alley. They were all family men (several had five children or more), and were seriously affiliated with one or another of the local churches. During the *voir dire* examinations, four of them told the court that they had been personally, though not intimately acquainted with Mr. Clutter; but upon further questioning, each said he did not feel this circumstance would hinder his ability to reach an impartial verdict. The airport employee, a middle-aged man named N. L. Dunnan, said, when asked his opinion of capital punishment, "Ordinarily I'm against it. But in this case, no"—a declaration which, to some who heard it, seemed clearly indicative of prejudice. Dunnan was nevertheless accepted as a juror. (273)

While Capote has notes recorded in his handwriting about every juror, Lee's notes, as shown in Appendix AAA, in Chapter Four of this dissertation, are much more specific. In fact, Lee writes at the bottom of her notes, "This jury was no different from any others in not looking at the defendants after the verdict. Why they never look at people they've sentenced to death, I'll never know, but they don't. No chicken-hearted jurors, they." Capote used Lee's observation when he described Smith and Hickock being led away after the verdict was announced, stating, "At the door Smith said to Hickock, "No chicken-hearted jurors, they!" (307).

With all of the information revealed in this chapter, it is evident that Capote used Lee's notes to aid him in writing his novel. However, there was also a great deal of Lee's notes that Capote didn't use. The biggest example of Lee's notes not making the book deals with the truth about Bonnie Clutter. As she recorded information from the townspeople, what was emerging in Lee's eyes about the Clutter family was that they were not a perfect, all American family, and her research notes prove this. However, critics, Charles Shields and Thomas Mallon, who have mentioned that Lee's notes differ from Capote's notes too, do little to substantiate this idea. For instance, Mallon's 2006 article, "Big Bird: A Biography of the Novelist Harper Lee," only states:

the Clutters' emotional arrangements had been inhumanly rigid, enough to have turned the mother, Bonnie, into 'one of the world's most wretched women,' a nervous medicated creature, bedridden with the sense that she had failed her go-getting husband. What Lee took to be the strange and greedy behavior of the two oldest Clutter daughters, who had moved out of the house before the murders, sealed her impression of a tight collective misery that must have rendered the existence of Nancy Clutter, the perfectionist teen-ager who was shot along with her parents and brother, an ongoing torment. How, Lee wondered in her notebook, had the girl avoided "cracking at the seams"? (83)

Mallon does very little quoting from Lee's actual research notes to prove this theory. Nor does Shields' *Mockingbird* do much to explain this theory. Shields' book does show more than Mallon's article by quoting several short passages from Lee's notes, particularly information regarding Nancy Clutter's unhappiness, and he explains that Bonnie Clutter was depressed. He also explains that Lee analyzed the Clutters differently

than Capote. For instance, Shields writes, “The Clutters were an emotionally troubled family, and Nelle wrote pages of notes providing evidence of it” (152-53). While Shields does discuss Bonnie Clutter’s depression and Nancy Clutter’s closeness to her Home-Ec. teacher, who functioned as a substitute mother, Shields does not mention much about Mr. Clutter’s temperament, and he doesn’t discuss Kenyon Clutter’s shyness or much about the family dynamic as a whole. In short, both critics do not show long passages of Capote’s notes or Lee’s notes, and neither juxtaposes large segments of these notes with each other. Clearly, both critics’ objectives were to reveal biographical information about Lee, especially that she went to Kansas to assist Capote, but not to explain how Capote’s and Lee’s research notes on the Clutter family differed or why Capote never acknowledged Lee properly for her contributions to *In Cold Blood*.

It is evident that Lee saw a very dysfunctional Clutter family, and she recorded the truth about their lives. For instance, Lee wrote that Bonnie Clutter was ill with depression a great deal of the time, and it caused other family members to be unhappy or stressed. Lee writes,

Mrs. Clutter spent most of the days in bed in the master bedroom (when no entertaining was going on) then moved upstairs to bed at night.

...

According to Kidwell, Mrs. Clutter would attempt to cook and keep house at times, but it was always too much for her.

In fact, it is Bonnie Clutter’s illness that dominates Lee’s notes at times, and Lee shows that Bonnie’s illness was making her family uncomfortable and stressed. For instance, Lee’s interview with Mrs. Kidwell reveals Mr. Clutter’s disgust with his wife’s illness:

Clutter to Mrs. Kidwell re Bonnie (on Mrs. K's suggestion that B. try Mayo's): suggested that Bonnie was getting adequate treatment where she was; "I can't worry about her." Implied that drs. told him if he shouldered Mrs. C.'s worries he'd crack up too.

Likewise, because of Bonnie's illness, Mr. Clutter appeared unhappily married according to Mrs. Stringer, and Nancy even appeared to have realized that her parents' marriage was strange. Lee writes,

(He had his fun on the side, and Bonnie probably knew it.)

Nancy bewildered by mother's insistence that there be twin beds in her room:

"You're married, aren't you?" "I'd go crazy if I had to sleep with your father."

(Stringer.) (See Appendix II for a full example of Lee's notes on Mr. Clutter).

Furthermore, Lee's research notes reveal Mr. Clutter as a selfish person who is agitated with his wife, but they also reveal his personality. Lee records his personality as a harsh man without a sense of humor:

Clutter's personality from the time he was a student until his death remained the same. It is reasonable to assume that his prudence stifled any sense of humor he may have had. His life was blameless, closely woven—so closely woven that there is not a shred of evidence of any deviation from the set pattern of total abstinence, absolute honesty in his business dealings, a striver to make better the lives of those under his care, a worker for church and civic causes, a careful manager, methodical, earnest, cheerfully sober.

No wonder his wife was seeing a head-shrinker.

Lee characterizes Herb Clutter as a strict, self-disciplined man that appeared hard to live with. She even goes as far as to think that he caused his wife's mental problems. Even more important, Lee records a very revealing response from Mrs. Stringer about how Mr. Clutter treated his family: he was "a man with a great talent for budgeting his time, but who gave everything but time to his wife and children. . . ."

Lee not only recorded notes on how unhappy and stressed Herb Clutter was, but also analyzed Nancy and Kenyon Clutter, and how stressed they were because of their mother's depression and their father's harshness. For instance, Lee shows how nervous Nancy was about her mother and her life. She writes, Nancy "was a nail-biter; refrained in peaceful times, but 'Let something go wrong and off they came' (Susan). . ."

Likewise, because of the stress she felt, Nancy often resorted to smoking. Lee writes: "Nancy was an occasional smoker. At home would smoke secretly in the basement."

One of the most important observations that Lee makes is that Bonnie and Nancy did not have a normal mother-daughter relationship because of Bonnie's depression:

There is not a shred of evidence of anything resembling a normal mother-daughter relationship in Nancy's life. Mrs. Clutter seemed to be a presence in the house that stayed in bed and cried when she was home. I'm almost glad when mother's away . . ." (Nancy to Stringer)

In fact, Lee passes judgment throughout her notes, and she even questions how Nancy stayed sane:

The Question About Nancy: How did she maintain the outward semblance of a wholesome, extremely bright and popular sweet teenager without cracking at the seams? Her family life was ghastly. Stringer probably her [Nancy's] own release.

\*\*\*\*\*

Nancy had realized for many years that something was radically wrong with her mother, but thought it was organic. (Cheer and happiness to Stringer: 'They've found out what's wrong with mother. . .') S. said the Clutters said the doctors said it was pressure on the sciatic nerve. Did Nancy accept this??

From another interview with Mrs. Stringer, Lee also discovered that Nancy was not faithful to Bobby Rupp, her steady boyfriend:

Nancy was a little flirt. Stringer.

She held hands with Jerry Roth the night of the play. Was definitely giving the eye to other boys, and since Bob Rupp never dated another girl, probably the source of most of friction between them. The week she was killed, Nancy dated another boy.

Besides just recording these notes, Lee also felt sorry for Nancy Clutter and saw the pressure she was under by being parented by a depressed mother and a strict father. She writes:

Had Nancy inherited her father's methodicalness [sic] or had he conditioned her to it? She sounds like a child who had been trained by an expert to make every second and every penny count, bear her private sorrows in private and present a cheerful aspect to the public; she was taught early in life to take everything to God in prayer and until Stringer appeared, Nancy probably did.

As Lee continued to interview people, she realized that Nancy was not only unhappy and stressed, but also lonely and in need of a mother who was emotionally stable and not depressed. Nancy found a substitute mother in her home-ec teacher. Lee writes:

Nancy was one of the lonely ones, not made any the less lonely by the fact that her

days were spent in almost unceasing activity, if she carried the major household responsibilities plus a full social and religious/social life, plus schoolwork, plus her evident pride in her personal appearance. (which DO TAKE TIME, HONEY.) When she was at the age when she needed a mother most in the world, she found one. With Stringer, one afternoon as Stringer was driving her home, the dam broke.

Nancy asked Stringer to pull up by the chinese [sic] elms that lined the road to the Clutter house, and Nancy cried away her years of loneliness. “If you only knew about Mother. . .” Nancy went to Stringer with everything after that. Stringer advised her on the feminine wiles of dating, petting, “how far to go” and as a teacher developed Nancy’s evident talent for domestic activities (sewing, cooking) and wanted her to follow her bent for interior design and make a career of it.

When Nancy filled in a Survey Sheet of her life and ambitions, she said she was going steady, she wanted to go to Kansas State U. and major in interior decorating, and concluded, “If there’s one thing I’m afraid of, it’s to get up in front of people and talk.” This year Mr. Clutter’s insistence, Nancy was enrolled in a speech course. . . . Not even the love and respect and conditioned reflexes Clutter had instilled in Nancy could overcome her horror of being bent in that direction. She broke down & wept to Stringer about it, and seems to have rebelled successfully, for Nancy was reenrolled in Home Ec.

Lee recorded more information about Mr. Clutter and his personality and how he treated Nancy:

Stringer knew him as a man who was accustomed to bending others to get his will



(in the most Christian way, of course); a man with a great talent for budgeting his time, but who gave everything but time to his wife and children. “He was away so much. . .” “He was the kind of man who thought women were women. . .” and not to be paid attention to otherwise: Belonged in some sub-class; should have been happy in their domestic lives; should have lived for their men and children.

. . .

Clutter’s favorite child was Nancy. Stringer thinks he recognized in Nancy several of his own sterling qualities and was trying to make her conform to his own image.

At the bottom of the page, Lee writes in pencil: “Stringer: “I can’t imagine anyone overpowering Mr. Clutter.” Remarks such as these reveal Mr. Clutter to be a domineering man who got what he wanted, and it appears clear that Nancy Clutter was unhappy and stressed by living with an ill mother and a domineering father.

Besides recording information about Nancy and Mr. and Mrs. Clutter, Lee also recorded information that revealed how Kenyon was affected by his mother’s depression. Lee writes:

Kenyon inherited his mother’s shyness to begin with. Was not a Clutter if Nancy was like her father re extroversion. Probably Bonnie’s most extreme illnesses in Kenyon’s early childhood. (Who took care of him when she was away? Eveanna & Beverly? Eveanna perhaps ten years older than K.)

At any rate probably at early age sensed something wrong with mother and withdrew into self. Pile all quirks of adolescence on top, and result is someone who has a completely secret inner life, guessed at only by outward manifestations (riding furiously over fields; love of animals; liking to be alone; hobbies indicative

of withdrawnness—all “one man” hobbies, not group diversions.) . . .

His shyness at opposite poles of today’s educational theories, which tend to mob activity, so probably was neither inspired to get good grades and didn’t care.

Hendricks thought highly of K’s mental capacity and implied that if he worked he’d be a straight A student. (He almost was.)

Kenyon probably prodded into 4-H activity by father to begin with; record shows he certainly held his own, and shows he was far more interested in work involving use of hands (elec., mechanical) than in raising sheep and gardening. Lived in shadow of extrovert father and sister.

Kenyon probably admired and respected his father, and wanted to love him, be close to him as a boy is close to his male parent; but there is no evidence that the two maintained anything but a genial and somewhat distant relationship. Clutter probably tired to “mold” him. . . .

Thus, not only did Nancy have a dysfunctional relationship with her mother, but from Lee’s account, Kenyon also had a dysfunctional relationship with his father. However, Lee did not stop there. She also recorded the temperament of the two older Clutter daughters—Eveanna<sup>46</sup> and Beverly<sup>47</sup>—as a result of her interviews with Mrs. Stringer. For instance, Lee learned that there was friction between Nancy and Beverly, and that Beverly and Eveanna often clashed about Nancy:

Most of the friction arising between Beverly and Nancy. . . ‘was like Beverly would say, when I was your age I couldn’t do that, but Eveanna would say go ahead and let her do it.’

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<sup>46</sup> Eveanna was living in Mt. Carroll, Illinois at the time of her family’s murder.

<sup>47</sup> Beverly was studying nursing at Kansas University Medical Center at the time of her family’s murder.

Likewise, Lee learned that the two older girls' personalities were just as strange as the rest of the family. Lee writes:

Eveanna: Miss Iceberg of 1959.

Stringer: Eveanna did not break down at the funeral. Wept a little when the choir began to sing.

Went to home ec. room after funeral for Nancy's things. Stringer in tears; Eveanna calm & collected.

"I've never seen people like the Clutters at that funeral. . . maybe they were under sedation." Stringer

Thus, in her notes, Lee paints a picture of a neurotic/depressed mother, a strict, unfeeling father and children who were affected by their parents' personalities. Nancy had become a perfectionist; Kenyon was a shy introvert, and the older daughters didn't see eye to eye. Comments like these paint a picture of a dysfunctional family who had a hard time expressing their true emotions. Clearly, Capote could not use a family like this in his book if he wanted the Clutters to represent the perfect American dream juxtaposed against poor, deprived men who were turned into killers by society toward whom Capote wanted to show sympathy. Therefore, as Shields states, "a harsh view of a murdered family would have been unacceptable" (152). Comments such as those in Lee's notes are not shown in Capote's notes, and Lee's notes on the Clutters did not make the novel. Thus, this is a classic example of how Capote bends the truth. In fact, his own aunt, Mary Ida, stated this about her nephew: "'Truman can't stick to the truth' . . . But that was Truman. He took nuggets of the truth, gave them a new twist, and made them bigger than life'" (Moates 17).

Furthermore, many other descriptive notes about townspeople, places, the Clutters and the Deweys, such as the fact that Marie Dewey loved to sew and sewed most of her own drapes, did not make the novel. I don't claim here to have uncovered every one of Lee's notes that made the book; there are probably more. However, one fact is evident—Harper Lee's notes were invaluable to Capote as he wrote his famous non-fiction novel.

So, why did Capote not use all of Lee's notes for *In Cold Blood*? More importantly, why would Capote use Lee's notes and not formally acknowledge her help in his acknowledgments of the book? What would Harper Lee think of Capote's use of her notes and not acknowledging her in his non-fiction novel? What would become of the two authors' friendship after their time spent in Kansas and the publication of *In Cold Blood*? These questions will be answered in Chapter Six of this dissertation.

“I don’t care about you anymore, or want to have anything to do with you. If you can’t appreciate something really extraordinary like *In Cold Blood* and the five-and-a-half years I put into it, and all of the artistry and the style and the skill, then fuck you” – Truman Capote (Clarke *Capote* 400).

“Success has had a very bad effect on me” –Harper Lee (Boyle).

## CHAPTER SIX

### WHAT HAPPENED IN KANSAS STAYED IN KANSAS: THE DOWNWARD SPIRAL AND THE END OF PUBLIC LIFE

Throughout his childhood and during most of his adulthood, Truman Capote had been extremely close to his friend Nelle Harper Lee. Both writers shared similar childhood experiences, played together, used each other as confidants, became writers and used each other as models for characters in their early fiction. They even worked together on research for *In Cold Blood*, and then they even went on vacation together in June 1963, while Capote was writing *In Cold Blood*. (See Appendix HHH to view the article that announced Capote’s and Lee vacationing together. See Appendix III to view a picture of Lee & Capote vacationing together). However, something occurred that caused a split in the two writers’ friendship after they worked together on Capote’s non-fiction novel. By the time *In Cold Blood* was published in 1966, Lee had stopped granting interviews and was done with public life, and she rarely saw Capote again. Furthermore, she didn’t attend Capote’s famous Black and White Ball in 1966, to celebrate the publication of his novel—a work she helped him research, and she didn’t attend the private screening Capote held for the film version of *In Cold Blood*. But why? Clearly, what happened in Kansas stayed in Kansas and was never spoken about or uncovered because Capote died in 1984 and never discussed it, and Lee refuses to speak about her time in Kansas. Thus, over the years, while many scholars have addressed Lee’s friendship with Capote and many other facets of her relationship with him, no one has presented a solid reason as to why their friendship deteriorated after the publication

of *In Cold Blood* or what happened between the two until recently with the release of the films, *Capote* (2005) and *Infamous* (2006). The films alluded to the fact that Capote's and Lee's relationship deteriorated after their time in Kansas, and after the popularity of the films, several critics began discussing this idea and what Lee's role was in Kansas. However, those who discussed this issue always seemed to discuss Lee's silence. Many have speculated that she simply had enough of public life, and therefore, withdrew from the public eye. However, in a 2010 documentary, *Hey Boo: Harper Lee & To Kill a Mockingbird*, Lee's older sister, Alice, explained, for the first time, why Harper Lee retreated from the public eye. In short, Alice Lee blamed Capote for the friends' fallout. While Alice Lee's statement may be true, I also suggest other explanations—that she was devastated by Capote's lack of acknowledgment for her research on *In Cold Blood*, and that she was disgusted with how Capote's narcissism took over his life as he indulged in drugs and alcohol. In short, I suggest that Lee abandoned writing because if Capote, her best friend, could betray her, what would others in the publishing world do to her? It seems possible that Capote did not acknowledge Lee's assistance on his book because his narcissism was controlling his life after he met Perry Smith. Thus, Capote saw Smith in himself and this recognition led to Capote's obsession with Smith, his delusions of grandeur, and his indulgence in drugs and alcohol. All of these factors are probable reasons as to why Lee and Capote's friendship suffered and why they barely had any contact with each other after *In Cold Blood* was published.

After *In Cold Blood* was written or while it was being finished, Capote wrote a rough draft of the acknowledgement page for his novel. Until now, this draft has never been published or referred to by other scholars, but it has been housed in the Capote archives

division of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. The acknowledgement draft reads,

My debts are significant to fill a small telephone directory. In a large and general way, I wish to thank the people of Finley County, Kansas, for their kindness and, under sometimes trying circumstances, . . . shown to both myself and the reporter assisting me, Miss Harper Lee.

An adequate listing of those to whom I am indebted would fill a school volume. Be that as it may, I want to thank Mr. Oscar Bernstein and Mr. George Clarkson for their valuable assistance in, respectively, Mexico and Florida. Also, in gratitude for their help and advice: Dr. James McCain, of Kansas State University; Dr. Joseph Satten, of the Menninger Clinic, Topeka, Kans.; Mr. Roy Church, Mr. Alvin Dewey, Mr. Clarence Duntz, Mr. Harold Nye, agents for the Kansas Bureau of Investigation; Mr. Kenneth Lyons; Mrs. Vere English and Mrs. Donald Jarchow; (Mr. Jack Dunphy) Mr. and Mrs. Clifford R. Hope, Jr.; Mrs. Alvin Dewey; Mr. Dick Parr, of "The Kansas City Star"; Mr. Bill Brown, of "The Garden City Telegram"; Mr. Harrison Smith; Mr. Arthur Fleming; Mr. Duane West; P.A. Burns, Judge and Mrs. Roland Tate; Mrs. Lillian Valenzuela; Sheriff Wendell Meier; the Reverend James E. Post; Mr. and Mrs. Lester McCoy; Mr. and Mrs. Robert Wells; (Mr. Richard Avedon); Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Clutter; (Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Guinness;) Mr. David Williams, of the Holdomb Consolidated School; Mr. Donald Cullivan. Mr. Herb Caen. (See Appendix JJJ to view both pages of Capote's acknowledgement draft).

Although Capote does not thank Harper Lee specifically for her assistance on his project, he does mention her name and acknowledge her assistance in the first paragraph of the draft. Thus, he indicates that she was integral in helping him with the text by mentioning her first. However, this was only a rough draft of the acknowledgements and did not make the final publication of the novel. Instead, Capote made hand-written revisions to this draft and scratched out the entire first paragraph. And he never replaced Lee's name anywhere else in the typed draft of the acknowledgement page which eventually was published in the novel. This omission had to be hurtful to Lee, especially when many others, such as Clifford R. Hope Jr., Bill Bown and Lester McCoy, who did much less work than Lee, were thanked on the acknowledgement page.

It is clear that Capote had originally planned to acknowledge that Lee had assisted him in his research for *In Cold Blood*; however, at some point, he made a conscious decision not to acknowledge her assistance. But why would Capote not recognize Lee? After all, while promoting *In Cold Blood* after the publication of the book, Capote mentioned that Lee was his "assistant researchist" on two different occasions during television and radio interviews—which have been discussed in this dissertation. So, why would Capote not acknowledge her in writing in his novel?

Although critics and scholars may never have an exact answer as to why Capote chose not to acknowledge Lee's assistance on the acknowledgement page, what remains clear is that he planned to cut Lee out of his project before the book was ever published. We know this because of a remark KBI agent, Harold Nye, made that was published in Charles Shields' *Mockingbird*. According to Nye, while Capote was writing the final chapter of *In Cold Blood*, "Capote stopped off in Topeka to see KBI detective Harold



Nye at his home. While they were talking about the case and the final stages of the book, Nye remarked, ‘Well, Nelle will certainly play a part in all this’” (240). To this Capote remarked, “No, . . . she was just there” (240). Nye did not like this response, and he would tell Shields in a private letter years later, “There is no reason not to give some credit to her” (240).

Many critics have speculated that Capote never acknowledged Lee’s help because he was jealous of her success over *To Kill A Mockingbird*, especially when it sold so many copies and won both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award<sup>48</sup>—two prizes he wanted desperately. According to Capote’s cousin Jennings Faulk Carter, “The only time I’ve ever heard him say anything about Nelle’s book was that he remarked ‘she got the Pulitzer, and I’ve never, never done that’” (Plimpton *Truman Capote* 14). But more than that, critics have speculated that Capote was jealous over Lee’s achieving all of this success as a first time author—also something he didn’t accomplish when he published his first novel, *Other Voice, Other Rooms*, in 1948. Besides acquiring all of these awards, Lee was soaking up all of the attention among their mutual friends and people Capote and Lee were both acquainted with. For instance, according to Marianne Moates, in April 1963, Lee and Capote returned home to Alabama to attend a party at Capote’s aunt’s home. However, instead of all the attention going towards Truman, it was going towards Nelle, the new “hometown girl who’d made it big in New York. . . . After all, the Pulitzer Prize was Nelle’s, and a movie about her book had just been released. People fussed around her, holding copies of the book for her to autograph” (11). So, we know

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<sup>48</sup>“By September, . . . [it] was selling more than ten thousand copies weekly. The book was picked as a Literary Guild Selection, Book-of-the-Month Club Alternate, Reader’s Digest Condensed Book, and British Book Society Choice. Very few first novels get even one of those honors, much less all of them at once. By early 1961, it had already sold two and a half million copies. That same year, it won the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize for the best American novel of 1960” (Madden 130).

that Capote was jealous of Lee's success, and many scholars confirmed that Capote's and Lee's friendship suffered because of his jealousy through the comments that Lee's sister Alice Lee made during a 2010 interview/documentary, *Hey, Boo: Harper Lee & To Kill a Mockingbird*. In this documentary, Alice Lee states,

Truman became very jealous because Nelle Harper got a Pulitzer and he did not.

He expected *In Cold Blood* to bring him one and it did not. And his anger grew up, and you know, he got involved with the drugs and heavy drinking and all. And that was it. It was not Nelle Harper dropping him; it was Truman going away from her.

While this may be true—that Capote was jealous of Lee's success and their friendship suffered—it does not explain why Capote did not acknowledge Lee's work on his project in writing, but would do so verbally in interviews. My research has uncovered several possible reasons why Capote did not acknowledge Lee's assistance in *In Cold Blood*.

First, it is plausible that Capote didn't acknowledge Lee's assistance because she didn't mention his name in *To Kill A Mockingbird* after he apparently assisted her.

According to Harper Lee's friend Joy Brown, who gave her first interview about Lee in the 2010 documentary, *Hey, Boo: Harper Lee & To Kill a Mockingbird*, in which she discussed Capote's involvement in Lee's novel: "regarding Lee's *Mockingbird*, it was in galleys when they went to Kansas. And it was finished . . . . She showed him [Capote] *Mockingbird* one time, and he commented on it. So he never laid eyes on it except for that one time."

In her interview, Brown was trying to put to rest a recent rumor that Capote wrote all

or parts of *To Kill a Mockingbird*.<sup>49</sup> If Capote edited *To Kill a Mockingbird* or provided Lee with some editorial remarks, perhaps he felt that he had assisted Lee with her book by reading it and commenting on it, and more important, by introducing Lee to the Browns in the first place. As discussed in Chapter Two of this dissertation, the Browns assisted her by giving her a monetary gift to take time off from work for a year so she could write. What she wrote during this time was *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Perhaps Capote felt that by doing these two things, he had a hand in helping Lee achieve her Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. Furthermore, because Lee did not thank him in writing in an acknowledgement page after he proofread her galleys, why should he thank her in writing in his novel?<sup>50</sup>

Even more important is the fact that Lee edited the galleys for *In Cold Blood*—a fact that has not been discussed at great length in major publications. Lee’s editing of the galleys has been mentioned three times prior to my dissertation; however, Lee’s assistance with the galleys could be easily overlooked because these three works do not discuss this fact at length and this fact does not stand out. For instance, the first time this fact was mentioned was in Don Keith’s 1966 article,<sup>51</sup> “An Afternoon with Harper Lee.” In this article, Keith asks Lee what her next literary project is. She explains that she is to leave for New York to read, before publication, Capote’s finished manuscript. Keith

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<sup>49</sup> This rumor was put to rest in a letter that was discovered in the 21<sup>st</sup> century that Capote wrote to his aunt Mary Ida in Monroeville on July 9, 1959. A copy of this letter can be found on display in the Monroe County Heritage Museum in Monroeville, AL, as well as online. In the letter, Capote writes, “yes, it is true that Nelle Lee is publishing a book . . . she showed me as much of the book as she’d written, and I like it very much. She has a real talent” ([http://www.tokillamockingbird.com/capote/index.cfm?Fuseaction=Myth\\_Busters:\\_D](http://www.tokillamockingbird.com/capote/index.cfm?Fuseaction=Myth_Busters:_D)). Likewise, Thomas Mallon cited correspondence between Lee and her editor and publisher that argued that she wrote the novel.

<sup>50</sup> Harper Lee does not have any acknowledgement page in *To Kill a Mockingbird*.

<sup>51</sup> This article is rare and no one could find it for me through IUP’s interlibrary loan system. Furthermore, this article was not considered an interview of Lee. She simply allowed Keith to observe her.

writes, “It must seem a chore,” and Lee responds, “But one I’m looking forward to” (qtd. in Shields 248). The second time Lee’s editing of Capote’s galleys was discussed was in Shields’ unauthorized biography of Lee, *Mockingbird*, in which he mentions that Lee “jotted only succinct comments on Truman’s pages” (249). Shields doesn’t identify exactly what changes she made to the galleys, but rather explains briefly that Lee’s hand had been burned in a kitchen accident and that she could “hold a pen or pencil again, but her fingers’ movement was slightly constricted and her handwriting—normally open and highly legible—looked compressed” (249).<sup>52</sup> The two points that are most interesting about Shields’ observation is that he does not mention this important information in the chapter “See NL’s Notes”—the chapter that discusses Lee’s assistance on *In Cold Blood*, but rather, in a chapter entitled “The Second Novel” that is near the end of his biography. Thus, if one does not read the entire biography, one would miss this information. Furthermore, Shields only mentions one example of a comment Lee wrote while editing Capote’s galleys. Shields states that she notes, “Everybody talks in short sentences” (249).

The third mention of Lee’s editing the *In Cold Blood* galleys appears in Robert L. Gale’s 2010 book, *The Truman Capote Encyclopedia*. In his entry on Harper Lee, Gale writes, “Capote finished his book and asked Lee, busy though she was in trying unsuccessfully to write a second novel, to read and tighten up his completed manuscript” (146).<sup>53</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> This accident is also evident from a letter Capote wrote to Perry Smith on January 24, 1965. He wrote, “Nelle is in the hospital, the result of a serious kitchen accident. She burned herself very badly, especially her right hand” (Clarke *Too Brief a Treat* 412).

<sup>53</sup> When I spoke with Gale on the phone, he admitted to me that he found this information in Shields’ *Mockingbird*. He explained where he found the information and that it was not in the chapter, “See NL’s Notes” (Telephone interview).

Lee edited the galleys for *In Cold Blood*, but what exactly did she add to them? After I examined the *In Cold Blood* galleys that are housed in the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C., it is clear that Lee corrected many grammatical errors, tightened up Capote's prose, added specifics that Capote missed, and corrected Capote's memory when he forgot names. For instance, on one page Capote wrote Nancy, but he really meant Susan. Lee corrected this mistake. On several occasions, Lee even questioned Capote's facts. For instance, in one section, Capote typed, "Perry, who thought them nevertheless hilarious, had had the manuscript leather bound and its title, 'Dirty Jokes,' stamped in gold" (Galleys Box 8). Lee questioned Capote's facts by writing next to this idea, "in a prison shop?" (Galleys Box 8). In another instance, Capote typed, "Dick told him [Perry]. 'Aw, come on, baby. Get the bubbles out of your blood. We scored. It was perfect'" (Galleys Box 8). Lee wrote in the margins next to this information, "I'm surprised to hear that. All things considered"<sup>54</sup> (Galleys Box 8). Lee's editorial comments, once again, suggest that she is a factual person, and believes Capote should be as accurate as possible. (See Appendix KKK-NNN to view samples of Lee's comments on Capote's galleys).

Because Lee edited Capote's galleys, and Capote edited the galleys for *To Kill a Mockingbird*, it could be that even though the two provided favors for one another maybe they both decided in advance that the favors would go unacknowledged. Capote could have also cut Lee out of his work because he paid her \$900.00 for her research assistance, as evidenced by his records in his gold bound notebook that I discussed in Chapter 4. However, perhaps one of the biggest reasons why Capote did not acknowledge Lee's

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<sup>54</sup> I think Lee is referring to the fact that Perry Smith was thought to be homosexual.

assistance in *In Cold Blood* is because the two authors appeared to have different objectives for the project, and these differences contributed to Capote's cutting Lee from the acknowledgement page. So perhaps they had an argument or disagreement.

The two different objectives the authors had appear to deal with mixing fact and fiction. Lee, an experienced journalist, wanted to show the facts or the truth—the true Clutters, the dysfunctional, unhappy family they were. She appears to have wanted to show factual evidence because she recorded such specifics and detailed notes about the Clutters, facts discussed in Chapter Five. However, Capote did not, and he did not use her notes or show ideas exactly as they were. Recently, the two authors' objectives have been discussed. For instance, according to Thomas Mallon, Harper Lee was “unafraid to propose to Capote a much darker view of the Clutters than the one he was beginning to set down himself” (83). But Capote was out to make a name for himself by creating a new kind of fiction—the non-fiction novel<sup>55</sup>. Once he stated, ““I had this theory about reportage. . . . I've always felt that if you brought the art of the novelist together with the technique of journalism-fiction with the added knowledge that it was true—it would have the most depth and impact”” (“In Cold Blood: An American Tragedy” 59). Thus, Capote had another goal in writing this book. He wanted attention, and he wanted to create a new genre of literature. In fact, after *In Cold Blood* was published, Capote bragged that he did invent this new art form—the nonfiction novel. He claimed he “developed a unique art form [however, this] has been another source of controversy among literary

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<sup>55</sup> Capote defined “*In Cold Blood* as an innovative art form, to which he has given the name ‘nonfiction novel.’ Combining journalism with the techniques of fiction, the work as Capote describes it is imaginative narrative reporting, new both to journalism and to fiction” (Garson 143).

critics, and the field has been split by those who see his work as documentary, as fiction, or as art—that is, creative journalism” (Garson 143).

The 2006 film, *Infamous*, refers to Lee’s and Capote’s differences in opinions about the Clutters and the direction the novel should take.<sup>56</sup> In fact, it is clear that Lee not only recorded truthful responses about the Clutters from those she interviewed, but she also recorded her own thoughts and observations about the “picture” she was putting together about the Clutter family based on all of the interviews she and Capote conducted. The picture that was emerging in Lee’s eyes was one of an unhappy, stressed family who did not always get along with each other and who were not the all American family Capote had hoped to write about.

Furthermore, after Capote met the killers and formed a relationship with them, particularly Perry Smith, his own objective for his project changed from one of a newspaper article to that of a non-fiction novel. When Capote’s objective for his project changed, he realized that he wanted to shed a sympathetic light on the killers and show how they became misguided as a result of how the world and their family and friends had treated them. So, he decided to juxtapose the killers—sympathetic men who were made into violent men by society—with the Clutters—the perfect, all American family. However, what Lee was discovering and recording by conducting a majority of the interviews, was not what Capote wanted to hear—that the Clutters were not the perfect family. In short, “Capote wasn’t having it” (Mallon 83). Clearly, Capote’s “victims had a purely literary job to do” (83). If this was the case, then Capote did not care about

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<sup>56</sup> In *Infamous*, Toby Jones and Sandra Bullock, the actors who portray Capote and Lee, stated during an interview with Charlie Rose that they reviewed Harper Lee’s and Truman Capote’s research notes at the New York Public Library to prepare for their roles. In this film, in one particular scene, the two argue in a hotel room about portraying Mrs. Clutter accurately in Capote’s novel. Bullock states, “you shouldn’t be doing what you’re doing; the truth is enough” (*Infamous*). The fictional Lee shows that she is concerned with how Capote is portraying the character of Bonnie Clutter.

recording the truth, as Lee was doing. He was more interested in creating the non-fiction novel than in creating a truthful account of what really happened. He revealed in 1966 to Plimpton:

I did at one time feel an artistic need to escape my self-centered world. . . . I wanted to exchange it, creatively speaking, for the everyday objective world we all inhabit. Not that I'd never written nonfiction before—I kept journals, and had published a small truthful book of travel impressions: 'Local Color.' But I had never attempted an ambitious piece of reportage until 1956, when I wrote 'The Muses Are Heard.' (Plimpton "The Story Behind a Nonfiction Novel" 2).

From the above quotation, it is clear that Capote wanted to write nonfiction—truth—but he was unable to free himself from what he knew—fiction.

However, it appears that Lee was performing the role of a journalist and recording facts or the truth, and would not like Capote mixing fact and fiction. According to Lee's friend/pastor, Thomas Lane Butts, Lee always felt that fiction and non-fiction had two different functions. According to Butts, "Her sentiment is that fiction is fiction and non-fiction should be historically correct, and that never the twain should be mixed.

However, she is not prone to impose her opinions on other people" (e-mail interview August 23, 2009). Lee's feelings about mixing fact and fiction can be seen in her rare essay, "Romance and High Adventure." She wrote, "We Americans like to put our culture into disposable containers. Nowhere is this more evident than in the way we treat our past. We discard villages, towns, even cities, when they grow old, and we are now in the process of discarding our recorded history, not in a shredder, but by rewriting it as romance" (14). Clearly, Lee did not like history or facts being distorted as she wrote in



her essay. She felt the same way about her own novel when the Boleware family began insinuating that Boo Radley was based on their son and was threatening to sue Lee. Lee responded, "It's only fiction" (Moates 2). Thus, if Lee felt this way, this difference in opinion with Capote was clearly a major problem between the two writers because their notes are so different. Lee recorded the truth about the Clutters by writing about the details of their unhappy life, while Capote completely ignored many of the facts Lee recorded. What happened next, we do not know for sure. Perhaps a disagreement occurred between the two, especially after Lee edited the galleys and saw the differences and saw that her ideas and notes were not used. This is plausible because, as mentioned earlier, Lee questioned some of Capote's facts in his galleys. Thus, Capote wrote his non-fiction novel the way he wanted. In the end, as Voss explained, "He selected and arranged the details that he used, and in so selecting and arranging, he created an artistic narrative that is 'based on a true story'" (Voss 81).

Furthermore, he did not use much of Harper Lee's research about the Clutters, the neighbors, etc., as Chapter Five has discussed, because Lee's research was too factual. He did use some of her descriptive details; however, since he had recorded many similar basic facts, he did not see the need to acknowledge her. But what about all of the interviews she conducted without Capote and all of the meticulous notes she recorded? Also, what about the fact that she helped Capote get established in Kansas when no one would accept him?

Obviously, Capote did not care enough about Lee's contributions to his project to acknowledge her properly. So, in the end, he didn't use large sections of Lee's research, only small details, so perhaps he thought he could slight her. However, what would *In*

*Cold Blood* have become if Capote had used all of Lee's research? Had Capote used the information she recorded, he still could have shown a sympathetic family. He could have shown the Clutters as they truly were and still juxtaposed them with the killers, and he could have shown the killers in an even more sympathetic light. Would revealing the real Clutters have changed the impact of the book and the book's success? Sadly, we will never know. However, Lee's research notes and her own observations reveal not only that she was a hard worker and a skilled journalist/researcher, but that she preserved the truth about the Clutter family, their house, their town and their neighbors.

While it is likely that Capote did not acknowledge Lee's assistance because he didn't use her notes to reveal the truth about the Clutters, it is also likely that he didn't acknowledge her because he suffered from narcissism, and it was accelerating during this period. He saw himself in such an elevated status while "creating" a new art form that he felt the need to backstab Lee and anyone else who stood in his way of receiving attention and the two awards he coveted—The Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. This mental disorder turned him into a completely different person than the one he had been prior to writing *In Cold Blood* and witnessing Perry Smith hang.

Prior to Capote's coming to Kansas and meeting Perry Smith, he had had a troubled life with a mother who didn't want him and who was ashamed of him because of his homosexuality. He had been an only child who did not have his biological father in his life for years, and he had been picked on and harassed by other male neighbors and classmates. As a result, he had gravitated into writing to compensate for his lack of love and the ability to bond with others. Thus, writing became a coping mechanism for him. And, throughout his life, one of the only people who had accepted him and with whom he

had been close was Harper Lee. From the beginning of his friendship with her, he had always treated her nicely, but he always felt he was her superior. For example, when they played together and wrote together, he allowed her to type his manuscripts, and it was his idea that they both practice writing in the chinaberry tree in Lee's back yard. Furthermore, it was Capote who had brought Lee to New York and introduced her to the literary world, and it was he who published first.

Also, when the two left for Kansas, he convinced the world that he was the writer and she was the research assistant or secretary—a lower position than his. In a recent article published on the internet entitled “Garden City couple recount friendship with Truman Capote, Harper Lee,” Kay Wells, a local Kansas woman who met and came to know both Capote and Lee, remembered, “when they first found out Capote would be visiting the area, they were told he'd be traveling with his secretary. ‘First of all, we had no idea that Capote's secretary was Harper Lee’” (Preiner). Once again, by using the terms secretary and researchist, Capote implied that Lee was not his equal. However, something changed while he was in Kansas researching his new book; he met Perry Smith and Lee won both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award. Both of these had lasting effects on Capote.

Now that Capote saw Lee win two prizes that he coveted, and he met Perry Smith, a man who was clearly his inferior, these issues caused Capote to see himself as less than superior to Lee because now she had two prizes he did not. Furthermore, in Perry Smith, Capote saw himself. As many who knew Capote have attested, including Alvin Dewey, “Truman saw himself in Perry Smith, not in being deadly, of course, but in their childhood. Their childhood was more or less the same” (Plimpton *Capote* 172-73).

Because Capote connected with Smith so closely, especially regarding how they both were raised, Capote regressed to thinking about himself as he had when he was a child—lowly, and with hopes and dreams of finding success. By Capote seeing himself in Perry, not only did his project take a different direction—changing from a newspaper article to a novel—but Capote, himself, changed drastically when he saw Perry die for the crime he committed. As has been discussed by many critics over the years, including Clarke and Plimpton, Capote was conflicted over whether to help Smith and Hickock by getting them better legal representation and by appealing their sentences or whether to hope for their death. According to Clarke, “He desperately wanted his book to be published. But publication almost certainly meant the painful deaths of two men who regarded him as their friend and benefactor, two men whom he had helped, counseled, and, in Perry’s case, tutored” (*Capote* 352). However, once it was decided that the two would have no more appeals and their punishment would be carried out, Capote slowly fell apart.

Up until their executions in April 1965, he had been a disciplined writer and a good friend to Harper Lee, and he had been a professional writer with goals. He had written successful books such as *Other Voice*, *Other Rooms*, *The Grass Harp* and *Breakfast at Tiffanys*, and he had been noticed by critics in a positive light. According to John Knowles, Capote “had been tremendously disciplined up to that time. One of the most disciplined writers I’ve ever met. But he couldn’t sustain it after that. A lot of his motivation was lost. That’s when he began to unravel” (Plimpton *Capote* 176). In fact, over a five year period, from the time the men were sentenced until the time they were executed, Smith and Hickock both wrote to Capote. (See Appendix OOO to view one of Hickock’s letters to Capote). However, it was Smith who Capote truly connected with

and saw a part of himself in Perry and identified with him because of their physical similarities and similar backgrounds: “Truman’s identification with Smith caused him to think about the life he might have had if his unhappy childhood had led him on a different path. He believed there was a moment when he could have made a bad choice, a wrong turn” (Davis 62). Thus, it was seeing his own reflection in Smith that caused Capote to feel such remorse for him, and because he now identified with Smith, he saw Perry as his equal. If Capote saw Perry as his equal, then he now forgot about Harper Lee. He didn’t care about writing; he only cared about Perry. Thus, he became obsessed with Smith because he saw himself in Smith. Also, Capote’s inability to assist Smith and Hickock with their appeals caused him great remorse. This remorse would only worsen once the two were hung on April 14, 1965, and this day appears to mark the beginning of Capote’s downfall.

According to Charles McAttee, “Truman was not eligible under our statutes to attend [the executions]. But the condemned can select three witnesses. Both Hickock and Smith wanted Truman as one of their witnesses. They also wanted Nelle Harper Lee”<sup>57</sup> (Plimpton *Capote* 178). In fact, McAttee “sent a telegram to Truman that said, ‘H. and S. request Nelle as a witness, please advise’ (178). This request further shows that Lee was at the prison and had spent time with both Smith and Hickock—a fact many may have not known because Capote never gave Lee credit. Likewise, a letter written by Capote to Perry Smith on January 24, 1965, in Gerald Clarke’s collection also proves that

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<sup>57</sup> The fact that Smith and Hickock wanted Lee present at their hangings also proves that she formed a relationship with them and was present during one or more interviews with them—something Capote never acknowledged as he led many to believe she only assisted him with interviewing the townspeople in Kansas.

Lee knew the killers. In the letter, Capote writes to explain Lee's absence, "Nelle is in the hospital, the result of a serious kitchen accident" (412).

On the day of the hangings, Capote was in his hotel room, the Muehlebach, with his editor, Joe Fox. According to Fox, Capote was in tears and said, "I just can't do it" (Plimpton *Capote* 179). He remained in bed for hours crying and did not want to see Smith die. In the end, though, Capote could not do anything to save Smith and Hickock. Their case had been to the Supreme Court on four different occasions, and the two had "exhausted three 11<sup>th</sup> hour attempts to escape the hangman. It was their fifth date with the executioner. Four others were reprieved" ("Hickock, Smith Pay Extreme Penalty").

Although Capote could not help them escape their death, he did witness the hanging of Perry Smith<sup>58</sup>. Harper Lee did not attend the hangings. According to Harold Nye, "when Smith came in, . . . Truman fell apart" (188). Furthermore, according to Bennett Cerf, Capote's friend and founder of Random House, while at the hanging, Capote became nauseous and ill and went behind some stacks of lumber . . . and barfed" (184). After Capote had witnessed Smith's death, he boarded a plane with Fox to return to New York. According to Fox, "I sat next to Truman on the plane ride back to New York. He held my hand and cried most of the way" (190). From that day on, he was never the same person who had gone to Kansas five years earlier.

Immediately after Capote returned to New York, he began writing friends about the terrible event he had witnessed in Kansas. For instance, he wrote to Cecil Beaton on

April 19, 1965—just days after Smith's death:

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<sup>58</sup> There are conflicting reports as to whether Capote witnessed both Hickock and Smith hang. Plimpton's *Truman Capote: In Which Various Friends, Enemies, Acquaintances, and Detractors Recall His Turbulent Career* discusses many different interviews with people who knew Capote. Several people claim Capote was not present for Hickock's hanging—only Smith's. Likewise, Voss reports in his book, *Truman Capote and the Legacy of In Cold Blood*, that some have reported that Capote did not attend the hangings. However, Harold Nye states that Capote witnessed both men hang (Plimpton 188-189).

just an exhausted scrawl . . . , but I wanted you and Kin to know the case is over and my book is coming out next January. Perry and Dick were executed last Tuesday. I was there because they wanted me to be. It was a terrible experience. Something I will never really get over. One day I will tell you about it—if you can bear it. (Clarke *Too Brief a Treat* 421)

Several days after Smith's and Hickock's deaths, Capote was still shaken, and it seems apparent that by continuing to write about them, Capote could not forget about Perry. Capote finished *In Cold Blood* in June 1965—two months after the hangings—though the book would not be published until January 1966. However, as he put the finishing touches on the book, one of his first orders of business was to provide Smith and Hickock with a proper burial. Capote paid seventy dollars and fifty cents each of his own money and “ordered headstones to mark the graves of Perry Smith and Dick Hickock, a generous gesture. . .” (Davis 66). He made sure that they would be buried properly—“side by side in a cemetery near the prison” (Clarke *Capote* 355). This was not the only nice gesture, but clearly a gesture of someone who cared a great deal about the men. Capote's act also signified a closing of one chapter of his life and the beginning of a new one. He had hoped to forget about Perry Smith and re-enter into his old life. Sadly, he would be unable to do so, and the new chapter that he was about to open would begin well, but would end in destruction and heart-ache.

After finishing the book, Capote had hoped to move on with his life and put Smith and Hickock behind him, as well as his entire Kansas adventure. He was ready to enter New York society once again, and his life after *In Cold Blood* started well, but it would not last. He began by buying and moving into a lavish new apartment in June 1965, five

rooms on the 22<sup>nd</sup> floor of the United Nations Plaza (Davis 72). Next, in July 1965, he celebrated with a cruise to Greece with his friend Kay Graham. He wrote to Jack Dunphy, his long-time companion, about the cruise, “So I sailed alone on the yacht with Kay Graham. Imagine that!—having a whole huge yacht to yourself” (Clarke *Too Brief a Treat* 422). Capote appeared to be enjoying himself and not thinking about Smith and Hickock. However, this good time would not last. When he returned from his cruise, he saw all four chapters of his book published in four separate installments in *The New Yorker*: “The Last to See them Alive” in the September 25<sup>th</sup> issue, “Persons Unknown” in the October 2<sup>nd</sup> issue, “Answer” in the October 9<sup>th</sup> issue and “The Corner” in the October 16<sup>th</sup> issue (Davis 74-75). Once people started reading it, they could hardly wait to get the next edition to see what happened. *In Cold Blood* was all people were talking about and all book reviewers were writing about. In fact, “when the book itself was published in January, 1966, the modern media machine—magazines, newspapers, television and radio—became a giant band that played only one tune: Truman Capote” (Clarke *Capote* 362). His new work was discussed in *Newsweek*, *Saturday Review*, *Book Week*, *The New York Times*, and *Life*. Conrad Knickerbocker raved that “*In Cold Blood* is a masterpiece” (qtd. In Clarke *Capote* 363). And *The New York Times* called the book “the hottest property since the invention of the wheel” (Davis 95). *In Cold Blood* was being discussed everywhere and selling off the shelves. By “February 13, there were 340,000 copies of *In Cold Blood* in print, not counting additional copies earmarked for Book-of-the-Month Club subscribers” (Davis 95). Furthermore, the book was being reviewed everywhere and by everyone. Overall, the reviews for *In Cold Blood* were excellent:



The *Miami Herald* compared Truman to Dostoyevsky. The *Philadelphia Inquirer* called the book a masterpiece of storytelling. The *Charlotte Observer* praised Capote for creating a book that claws its way into your very being and stays. And the all-important *New York Times* proclaimed that Capote had written a modern masterpiece. (Davis 96)

Likewise, “The *San Francisco Sun Chronicle* said, ‘*In Cold Blood* goes down the gullet like custard’” (96). Capote was finally receiving all of the attention he had longed for when he was a child, and Capote was eating up this attention. But the continuous press coverage of his Kansas saga would not allow him to forget about Perry—his doppelgänger.

Although there were many positive views of Capote’s book, some critics did not rave about it. For instance, several critics didn’t know how to classify the book. Some thought it should be classified as a novel, while others saw it as non-fiction (97). Nevertheless, during this time, “Truman broke many records for media attention” (Davis 97). He was eating up the attention he had always dreamed of. According to Deborah Davis in her book, *Party of The Century: The Fabulous Story of Truman Capote And His Black and White Ball*,

In addition to its standard review, the *New York Times Book Review* published a piece on Truman that was ‘the longest interview in its history. *Life* devoted an unprecedented eighteen pages to the book, profiling Capote, the Clutters, and the killers. *Newsweek* featured Capote on its cover, as did the *Saturday Review*. *Vogue* published Truman’s article about the cruise with Kay Graham and the Agnellis. (97)

Then, there were the negative reviews.

One critic, Kenneth Tynan, an old friend of Capote's, wrote a mean spirited, hurtful review in which he implied that Capote was a hypocrite: "Truman probably could have saved Perry and Dick from the gallows if he had spent time and money to prove that they were insane" (qtd. in Clarke *Capote* 364). Tynan continued, "for the first time . . . an influential writer of the front rank has been placed in a position of privileged intimacy with criminals about to die and—in my view—done less than he might have to save them....It seems to me that the blood in which his book is written is as cold as any in recent literature" (qtd. in Clarke *Capote* 364). In short, Tynan was accusing Capote of wanting the two dead in order to publish his book. He "charged the author with winning the friendship of Smith and Hickock for his own literary purposes and then failing to help them. In particular, he said Mr. Capote should have helped provide better psychiatric appraisal to avoid their executions" ("Capote Answers Tynan's Attack" 85).

Of course, Capote fired back his own counterassault, saying:

Tynan is a bully; and, true to tradition, he is also a coward. There are some very rotten things he wants to say about me, but he hasn't got the guts to come right out and say them himself. Even a man with the morals of a baboon and the guts of a butterfly could not do anything sneakier or more cowardly than that. ("Capote Answers Tynan's Attack" 85).

According to Clarke, who knew Capote personally, Truman was hurt deeply by Tynan's remarks because part of them were true. Clarke stated, "Truman could not have saved Perry and Dick if he had spent one million dollars, or ten million, but Tynan was right when he suggested that Truman did not want to save them" (365). Capote wanted his

book published and fame more than he wanted to save them. Perhaps it was Tynan's remarks or Perry Smith's death which caused Capote's narcissism to spiral out of control. We may never know for sure. However, one thing remains clear: after Tynan's remarks and Smith's death, Capote became interested in only one thing—himself. He loved all of the attention being showered upon him, and all the attention was building his ego and accelerating his narcissism.

Despite Tynan's negative review, by 1966, Capote continued to party to celebrate the publication of *In Cold Blood* and soak up the attention paid to him and his novel. During this time, he saw Harper Lee one more time after the publication of his novel that scholars are aware of. According to John Knowles, "The Cerfs gave a dinner party at their house in New York after the publication of *In Cold Blood*. The Deweys were there from Kansas. I sat next to Harper Lee . . ." (Plimpton *Capote* 243). Obviously, Lee had attended the party, but she did not attend any other events regarding *In Cold Blood* or given by Capote after this. Therefore, it is plausible that she did not feel comfortable at this event, seeing Capote usurp all the attention over a work she helped him create. According to Capote scholar, Marianne Moates, Lee and Capote did not have much contact after this. In an e-mail interview, she told me,

I know they went for years without any real contact. It may have been due to his slight of her work with his book. . . . I have no way of proving what I believe as truth. Nelle will probably never speak of it. I doubt her friends and peers will say anything as long as she is alive. (e-mail interview)

After this party, Lee retreated back to Alabama and Capote focused more attention on himself. He continued to promote his masterpiece by attending book signings, and he

was riding the media wave of his new celebrity status. Then, he had an idea. He wanted to throw a ball for him and his friends to celebrate his return into New York society and *In Cold Blood*'s success. For five years while he was researching and writing his novel, he did not have much time to devote to his closest friends—his swans.<sup>59</sup> According to Deborah Davis,

Truman lived a complicated life during this time [1966]. He would party with the Paleys and other wealthy and privileged friends, then escape with Jack [Dunphy, his companion] to a fishing village in Spain. They hibernated in a snow-covered chalet in Verbier, Switzerland, where it seemed to be eternal winter, and moved to a less punishing climate in the Mediterranean during the spring and summer. (63)

Since Capote travelled so much and needed to be secluded in order to write and did not have time to spend with his swans,<sup>60</sup> he couldn't wait to "re-enter" New York society and see them. However, he would not just throw a party or a celebration, he would throw the biggest, most elaborate affair that New York had ever seen. As he prepared the guest list, he realized that "He wanted to see every notable in the world, people of importance from every walk of life, absolutely dying to attend a party given by a funny-looking, strange little man—himself" (Clarke *Capote* 369). He assembled a guest list of 500 of the most successful and biggest stars from many different walks of life.<sup>61</sup> (See Appendix PPP to

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<sup>59</sup> Capote's swans were Babe Paley, Gloria Guinness, Marella Aguggi, Slim Keith, C.Z. Guest, and Pamela Harriman.

<sup>60</sup> According to Davis, "Truman was inspired to use the word swan by a passage he read in a nineteenth-century journal by Patrick Conway, a poetic young gentleman who wrote that he had seen 'a gathering of swans, [and] . . . and was reminded of beautiful women'" (33-34).

<sup>61</sup> His guest list included politicians, writers, entertainers and celebrities, personal friends and, of course, his swans. More specifically, the guest list included Frank Sinatra, Mia Farrow, Candice Bergen, Tallulah Bankhead, Norman Mailer, William F. Buckley, Katherine Anne Porter, Christopher Isherwood, and many others; however, he purposely would not allow his guests to bring companions of their choice (Clarke *Capote* 373).

view a copy of Capote's guest list with Harper Lee's name on it). The invitations were mailed out in October and read,

In honor of Mrs. Katherine Graham  
Mr. Truman Capote  
Requests the pleasure of your company  
At a Black and White Dance  
On Monday, the twenty-eight of November  
At Ten O'Clock  
Grand Ballroom, The Plaza

RSVP  
Miss Elizabeth Davis  
Black Mask  
46 Park Avenue  
Dress  
New York

DRESS  
Gentlemen: Black Tie;  
  
Ladies: Black or White  
  
White Mask; Fan

One person who also made the guest list was Harper Lee (Davis 140).

While Capote tried to forget Tynan's remarks and focus on preparations for the ball, the attention on him and his masterpiece was everywhere. In fact, "Truman was a wreck. Friends who were invited to the ball descended upon him from various locations in America, Europe, and South America, and everyday brought new distractions" (Davis 197). The distractions and his anxiety were beginning to take a toll on Capote, and for the first time, he longed to get away from the limelight. According to Davis, in *Party Of The Century: The Fabulous Story of Truman Capote And His Black and White Ball*, Capote had a great deal of anxiety because of the preparations for the ball that also coincided with the printing of the paperback edition of *In Cold Blood* and "the telecast of ABC's dramatization of 'A Christmas Memory' starring Geraldine Page" (197).

Besides all of this, *In Cold Blood* was about to be made into a movie, and Capote wished to help with the filming. While all of this attention was nice, it was taking a toll. In order to escape the attention from friends and work, Capote said, "my nerves were

jangling, and so were all my telephones, [so he] withdrew from sight and went to his house in the Hamptons” (197-98).

After his brief getaway to the Hamptons, Capote returned and his ball went off without a hitch. However, Capote’s closest childhood friend, Harper Lee, was nowhere to be found. She would tell her friend, George Thomas Jones, years later when he asked her about Capote’s ball, that she did not attend. According to Jones, “When I asked Nelle if she went to Capote’s black and white ball in New York, all I can say is that the tone of her voice when she said ‘NO,’ was anything but an open invitation to continue the conversation” (e-mail interview). The fact that Lee did not attend Capote’s ball speaks volumes about what she thought about what Capote had done to her—cut her out of his book. After all, why would she not rejoice with Capote at his party for a work she assisted him with? Something was clearly wrong. However, Capote’s nerves soon vanished and he and his guests were in the spotlight with his famous ball. Both before and after the ball, everyone in New York was talking about Capote’s ball, including Russell Baker, the humorist of the *New York Times*, who stated, “sociologists are still debating whether it was the most important party of the Twentieth Century” (Clarke *Capote* 379). In fact, after the ball, the news of Capote’s party spread across the country and “made front-page headlines” (Clarke *Capote* 370). According to the *Houston Chronicle*, “Splendor Runs Over at Capote Ball of Decade,” and according to the *Fort Lauderdale News*, “Capote’s Big Bash Was Just That” are just some of the headlines that were printed in papers (379). Another article explained, “The guests, as spectacular a group as has ever been assembled for a private party in New York, were an international Who’s Who of notables” (Curtis 53). Finally, Capote was getting the attention he so long

desired, and this attention would last for another year. However, all of this new attention was causing his narcissism to spiral even further out of control.

After Capote's black and white ball, the party's reputation grew. According to Clarke, "Every subsequent ball was compared with his, and magazine or newspaper profiles of famous people often noted if they had been on the guest list, which was the irrefutable proof of their importance" (*Capote* 381). Besides his ball's reputation, Capote's reputation also grew. He began to be invited everywhere. According to Kay Meehan, "his name has a magic ring to people today [and] . . . his mere presence virtually guaranteed the success of any event he attended. . . . He no longer received invitations; he received beseechments: come to lunch, dinner, cocktails, anything—but come" (*Capote* 381). In fact, Capote's social status now took priority even over his writing; he was receiving attention and fame even more now than during his early writing career. All this attention was not helping Truman's ego or his narcissism. Furthermore, after the success of his ball and his now golden reputation, Capote seemed to forget about Harper Lee, who now resided in Alabama. All his life Capote tried to help Lee as she always helped him, but now their friendship appeared to be on the rocks and they were separated. In fact, it is almost as if Capote replaced her with a new friend with a similar name—Lee Radziwill (Jackie Kennedy's sister).

Although Capote met Radziwill in 1956, they became inseparable during this period of time. In fact, "They were together so often that a woman friend wrote to complain: 'I don't want to see another picture of you holding Lee Radziwill's hand. I want you to hold my hand'" (Clarke *Capote* 382). Capote continued to be in the company of

Radziwill and the rest of his swans, and then in April 1967, Capote returned to Kansas to watch the filming of *In Cold Blood*.<sup>62</sup> However, once again, he was without Harper Lee.

While he was in Kansas watching the filming of *In Cold Blood*<sup>63</sup>, he caused an uproar among journalists and media crews, so much so that the director of the film, *In Cold Blood*, Richard Brooks, informed Capote, “You’re not in the way, Truman, but your personality is, bringing all these people out here. I can’t shoot with them around” (386). Although Capote was disappointed by Brooks’ remark, he eventually left, but not before he was interviewed by reporters and had his picture taken with the two actors who portrayed the killers. Then, “Two weeks later *Life* put him on its cover . . .” (Clarke *Capote* 386). (See Appendix QQQ for the picture of this cover). After he returned from Kansas, Capote was riding high, but clearly, writing was now taking a back seat to his celebrity status. He continued to love the attention, and he was “sunning himself in the glow of the book’s renown” (*Capote* 386). His next projects included taking part in a documentary on capital punishment, “which sent him to several Death Rows to interview still more prisoners awaiting execution” (387). But when he heard the news of who won the Pulitzer Prize and National Book Award for 1966, his life took yet another dramatic change.

All of his life, all Capote had ever wanted was to be accepted since his mother did not want him. He found solace in writing as a way to cope with this rejection; however, now the critics rejected him. All the fame and money he was showered with could never replace the two awards he so coveted. According to Clarke,

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<sup>62</sup>The film was directed by Richard Brooks and starred two unknown actors, Scott Wilson as Dick Hickock and Robert Blake as Perry Smith (Clarke *Capote* 385).

<sup>63</sup> A second film of *In Cold Blood*, which was in color, was made in 1996. It was a miniseries that starring Anthony Edwards, Sam Neill and Eric Roberts and was directed by Jonathan Kaplan.



how he longed for praise from the right people, . . . . But that respect and praise were withheld. *In Cold Blood* did not receive either of what he believed, somewhat ingenuously, to be the established official seals of approval, the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award, . . . the judges for both awards passed over the most talked-about book of the year in favor of worthy but less important contenders.<sup>64</sup> (398)

Many scholars, such as Clarke and Plimpton, have suggested that Capote was never the same after writing *In Cold Blood* because of the death of Perry Smith, but also because he did not win the Pulitzer Prize or the National Book Award, and he felt cheated out of the adulation of these prizes. Capote stated after being rejected,

The decisions not to give them to me were truly totally unjust. So at that point I said: Fuck you! All of you! If you are so unjust and don't know when something is unique and original and great, then fuck you! If you can't appreciate something really extraordinary like *In Cold Blood* and the five-and-a-half years I put into it and all of the artistry and the style and the skill, then fuck you! (*Capote* 399-400)

It didn't take long for people to realize that Capote was bitter and that he was changing for the worse. Many people who were close to Capote observed this, including Phyllis Cerf, Bennett's wife: "He never really recovered from that book . . . but it was destructive for him, especially when those boys wanted him to witness their hanging" (*Clarke Capote* 397). She also stated, "that book started the unsettling of his life. He began to live—I don't know—recklessly" (397). Capote, himself, even agreed that the book wrecked him. Capote told Clarke,

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<sup>64</sup> According to Clarke, in a footnote in his biography on Capote, "David Brion Davis' *The Problem of Slavery in Western Culture* won the Pulitzer Prize; Justin Kaplan's biography of Mark Twain, *Mr. Clemens and Mark Twain*, won the National Book Award" (398).

No one will ever know what *In Cold Blood* took out of me . . . It scraped me right down to the marrow of my bones. It nearly killed me. I think, in a way, it did kill me. Before I began it, I was a stable person, comparatively speaking. Afterwards, something happened to me. I just can't forget it, particularly the hangings at the end. Horrible! (398)

Because the critics rejected him for what was once his substitute for rejection—writing—he felt like nothing was worth living for. So now, he began living in excess and indulging in alcohol and drugs. According to Phyllis Cerf, Capote's drinking "grew, grew, grew, grew. He would start with a double martini, have another with lunch, then a stinger afterward. That kind of heavy drinking was new with him" (Clarke *Capote* 402). Even Capote's friend Cecil Beaton wrote in spring 1966, "He has become a real neurotic case" (402). Thus, Capote's life was beginning a downward spiral and during this time he was not writing. He had not written anything original since he finished *In Cold Blood* in the summer of 1964 (*Capote* 404). However, that was all about to change. He was planning a new book that he hoped would be published in 1968 (Davis 94).

In fall 1967, Capote announced the title of his next book, *Answered Prayers*, and he explained that his book would be "a dark comedy about the very rich" (*Capote* 406). He had decided on the title, "with a bow to Saint Teresa of Avila ("More tears are shed over answered prayers than unanswered ones)" (Brinnin 156). According to Clarke, Capote, had received a twenty-five thousand-dollar advance from Random House, and without showing anybody as much as the first line of the first chapter, he had sold movie right to Twentieth Century-Fox for the staggering sum of three hundred and fifty thousand dollars—a figure one would have to multiply at least three times to

find an equivalent in today's dollars. All he had to do for that money was sit down and write the contractually guaranteed minimum of sixty thousand words: a short novel, in other words, of less than two hundred and fifty pages. (*Capote* 406)

With this contract, Capote began to write. He was also excited for the release of the film version of *In Cold Blood*. He held a private screening for 85 of his closest friends at "the Fifth avenue offices of Columbia Pictures" (Carmody 53). As usual, Capote and his guests, who included Lee Radzwill, Alvin Dewey, Bennett Cerf and Katharine Graham just to name a few, dazzled the press by appearing lavishly dressed as they emerged from their limousines and taxis. Harper Lee did not attend the event according to Thomas Lane Butts (Telephone interview). Her name is not listed among those of Capote's friends who attended the event (Carmody 53).<sup>65</sup>

Although Capote enjoyed the evening and the film, his happiness didn't last long. His partying, drinking and drug dependency started to worsen and he could not stay focused. Once again, his writing took a back seat to his partying and socializing. During this time, "it had become obvious to him, as well as to everyone else, that he could no longer exist without the bottles in either his medicine chest or his liquor cabinet" (*Capote* 402). Because of his drinking and dependency on drugs, he missed several deadlines for his new work; however, he set a new deadline for *Answered Prayers* for January 1, 1971

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<sup>65</sup> In fact, it appears as if Lee would not have contact with Capote from her time working with him on *In Cold Blood* in 1965 until she visited him in 1976. There is evidence Lee visited Capote in 1976 when he was interviewed by Patricia Burstein, who reported that Lee was visiting Capote. Lee said, "We are bound by a common anguish" (Burstein 332). Although she had visited Capote and shared this small tidbit about their childhood, it does not prove the two had made up after Capote betrayed her. As evidenced throughout this dissertation, Lee was never the type of person who would share her private life with others. In fact, Shields briefly refers to this interview, however, not in the same way I am here. Shields states, "Joy Brown could always be relied on for shopping trips and jaunts to secondhand bookstores" (265). Thus, it seems as if Lee did not go to New York just to see Capote. And, of course, Lee would see him after being estranged from him for several years after his betrayal. A bond like they shared could not be easily broken. Lee stayed for the interview and saw how Capote was changing with his consumption of drugs and alcohol, and left for Alabama again, not to see him until years later at his funeral.

(*Capote* 414). However, he missed this deadline as well, but when he failed to produce any pages for this new novel by this date, “Twentieth Century-Fox demanded the return of the down payment it had made on film rights, two hundred thousand dollars, and to his chagrin, Truman had to give it back” (*Capote* 441). Although he gave the money back, Capote had always told reporters and friends that he had completed two-thirds of the book. But this same song and dance continued until March 1975. Finally, Capote proclaimed that he was finished with one chapter of *Answered Prayers* and it would be released soon (441).

The new work was entitled “Mojave” and would appear in *Esquire* magazine in June (*Capote* 455). When it was finally published, response was positive. Even Tennessee Williams remembered, “I’ve never read anything by him, except possibly ‘Miriam,’ that was comparable . . .” (461). With this news, Capote was relieved and then promised to submit more chapters. When *Esquire* pushed him for more, he made the worst decision of his life, which furthered his downfall and led to his death. According to Clarke’s biography, Capote had several chapters of *Answered Prayers* written in notebooks, but none were entirely finished: many were “still in his head” (462). So, Capote submitted “La Cote Basque,” the only other story that was completed. Submitting this story would be a terrible decision and further his downfall.

The story has the narrator, P.B. Jones, encounter Lady Ina Coolbirth, his friend, inside the restaurant. While together, the two share scandalous tales about friends they both know; however, what many who read it didn’t realize was that Capote’s stories within “La Cote Basque” were all true events that happened to his close friends. For instance, Lady Coolbirth looked exactly like Capote’s friend, Slim Keith. Likewise, there

were character sketches of Babe and Bill Paley and Babe's sister, Betsy Whitney, as well as Gloria Vanderbilt, Jacqueline Kennedy and her sister, Lee, and Carol Matthau. In short, Capote had gathered some of the most scandalous gossip he had ever heard from them or about his friends over a twenty year time period and used the material to write this story. In particular, two stories within "La Cote Basque" centered on the worst stories Capote had ever heard, such as: "Carol Matthau's dirty mouth ... Princess Margaret's dislike of poufs ... Gloria Vanderbilt's failure to recognize her first husband ... Oona O'Neill fluffing off the boyish J.D. Slinger... Joe Kennedy having his way with an eighteen-year-old school chum of his daughter's... and his womanizing and social climbing" (Smith "Capote Bites the Hands That Fed Him" 45). Likewise, the story also included the Ann Woodward killing and an affair that Bill Paley, the CBS mogul, had (*Capote* 463-64). It seems as if Capote's ego was out of control and his narcissism had completely taken over, and he now felt that he could do anything or write about anything and the world would accept it. In the end,

"La Cote Basque" is probably the one piece that can be called a tour de force: he has transformed a table in a Manhattan restaurant into a stage on which he has placed his own jet-set Vanity Fair. One by one, he shines a spotlight on his glittering cast, which includes, besides his fictional characters, the very real Carol Matthau, Gloria Vanderbilt and Lee Radziwill. There is no plot—the only unifying element is a tone of profound disenchantment—and he has pulled off one of the most difficult tricks in fiction, which is the fashioning of a seamless narrative out of disparate characters and unrelated deeds. (464-65)

When the chapter was released, Capote had thought he had created great art. He stated in an interview, “Basically deep down I don’t give a damn what any of them think about my writing . . . If ‘Answered Prayers’ is as good as I want, I’ll have nothing further to prove” (Fleming “Truman Capote’s World/Part 2: The Descent From The Heights 15). Finally, in the November *Esquire* issue, “La Cote Basque” was published, and several bombs dropped. First, Ann Woodward<sup>66</sup>, who was portrayed in a very negative light in the chapter, saw the story before it was published, when someone smuggled her an early edition of the magazine. On October 10, 1975, Woodward committed suicide over Capote’s story by overdosing on Seconal (Clarke *Capote* 467). Then when the story was published several weeks later in *Esquire*, “many were angered by the embarrassment Truman had caused” both them and Woodward (468). Many were upset because the “characters in ‘LCB ‘65’ are so thinly disguised as to be seen through tissue paper” (Smith “Capote Bites the Hands That Fed Him” 45). However, Capote felt that he had created great art and that no one would know whom he was writing about.

When discussing his disguised characters, he was quoted as saying about his friends, “They’re too dumb. They won’t know who they are” (Casey D5). However, many weren’t dumb, and they did recognize who Capote was writing about. Because of this story, Capote lost many friends, including Slim Keith, Babe Paley and Lee Radzwill, and many disowned him or mocked him. Sadly, “Only C-Z Guest, his longtime socialite pal, stayed the course” (Smith *Natural Blond* 280). Capote’s friends’ rejections caused journalists to detail what Capote had done. For instance, the *New Yorker* published an

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<sup>66</sup> Ann Woodward was an American socialite who pursued a modeling and acting career. In 1955, she accidentally shot and killed her husband, William Woodward, Jr. Capote wrote about this in “La Cote Basque,” and Woodward was said to have committed suicide over the story (Plimpton *Truman Capote* 344).

article entitled “Capote Bites the Hands That Fed Him,” that discussed what Capote had done to his friends, and on the cover of the magazine was a cartoon of Capote being shunned by society. (See Appendix RR to view the cover of the magazine). It is interesting to juxtapose Appendix QQ, with Appendix RR; several years prior to Liz Smith’s article, Capote was on the cover of *Life* magazine, and an article was praising *In Cold Blood*, but just a few years later, Capote was being crucified for betraying his friends. Furthermore, Liz Smith, who was interviewed for the documentary on Capote, *Truman Capote: An American Revolutionary*, explained regarding Capote’s actions,

When he published this piece describing a luncheon in a French restaurant in New York . . . he had all these real-life people in it, and he told all these terrible stories.

They thought they were terrible. He wrote about what he knew which is what people always tell writers to do, but he just didn’t wait until they were all dead to do it. And, it was really considered to be just beyond the pale. He was a beast, and it was as if he slapped the Queen. . . . He thought he was gonna get away with it.

He was going to be the one that could tell the truth and get away with it because it was art, and he was an artist. And it didn’t work out that way. These people in New York are very unforgiving.

Liz Smith also discussed Capote’s actions in her memoir, *Natural Blonde*. Smith explained, “Truman was indignant. He couldn’t see that he’d done anything wrong. [He said] ‘Hadn’t these people ever heard of a-r-t?’” (280).

Of course, Capote went on the defensive in public. He felt he had created great art and explained that “he had done nothing that Proust had not done before him”<sup>67</sup> (Clarke

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<sup>67</sup> Capote was referring to Proust’s *In Lost Time*.

*Capote* 473). In Smith's article, "Capote Bites the Hands That Fed Him," Capote defended what he had done, saying,

I don't feel I betrayed anybody. This is a mere nothing, a drop in the bucket. To think what I could have done in that chapter. My whole point was to prove gossip can be literature. (52)

In the same interview, Capote continued,

I didn't mean anything vengeful, not even remotely. And I'm disappointed in these people, with all their presentations for reading art, theater, and culture that they're so stupid and can't see it as a work of art. This book is a serious work of art—if you don't see it as that, then you don't see it as anything. (55)

Besides discussing the book in this magazine interview, he went on many talk shows and tried to defend what he had done in "La Cote Basque". For instance, he appeared on the "Stanley Siegel Show" in 1978 to discuss the story, but was clearly intoxicated and extremely upset. He was slurring his words and appeared groggy. Siegel asked him about his alcohol problem and asked him what would happen if he didn't stop drinking? To this, Capote replied, "The obvious answer is that eventually I'll kill myself" (*Truman Capote: An American Revolution*). In another interview with Siegel a year later, Capote defended "La Cote Basque" and stated, "Everybody knew I was doing this book. Everybody knew what kind of a book it was. There was no mystery there. I was not pretending or camouflaging anything at all. If you takes your chances, you takes your chances; that's it" (*Truman Capote: An American Revolutionary*). While Capote tried to defend his position and pretend he wasn't hurt by the rejection of "La Cote Basque," deep down he was truly devastated. According to his close friend Joanne Carson, "When



Truman got the rejection from it [“La Cote Basque”] it was like a child who had been slapped and not knowing why. He was just in shock, and it was first, shock and then hurt and then anger”(Truman Capote: *An American Revolutionary*). Of course Capote tried to mend things with Babe Paley by writing her two long letters; however, she never replied (Clarke Capote 471). Furthermore, according to Carson, “It’s the only time I saw him cry. . . . He was so hurt” (West 248). Carson also stated that he was devastated by the loss of friendship with Babe: “he loved her dearly and he was terribly hurt by that. That was the one friendship that he lost that totally shattered him” (Truman Capote: *An American Revolutionary*). The great Capote had risen and fallen, and now many didn’t want anything to do with him after the publication of “La Cote Basque”.

After the loss of several friends, Capote sank deeper into depression and continued to turn to alcohol and drugs. He was even arrested for drunk driving in 1976 (Truman Capote: *An American Revolutionary*). Although his writing had become second to his partying, he continued to try to write. Many stories he had hoped to publish as his novel, *Answered Prayers*, were partially written in notebooks, so he finished two more stories and submitted them to *Esquire*. In May 1976, *Esquire* published “Unspoiled Monsters” and then “Kate McCloud” in December 1976 (Clarke Capote 483). But Capote officially stopped working on *Answered Prayers* after this, mostly because these works weren’t received well and because of the disapproval of “La Cote Basque.” Even though Capote had great hope for *Answered Prayers*, this was, yet again, another disappointment—much like his disappointment in not receiving the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award for *In Cold Blood*.

So, Capote quit writing his novel and *Answered Prayers* was not published while he was alive.<sup>68</sup> It appeared that Capote could no longer write this book and gave up.<sup>69</sup> Jack Dunphy explained that Capote couldn't finish *Answered Prayers*:

Reporter: Did he [Capote] write the rest of *Answered Prayers*?

Dunphy: No!

Reporter: What was he doing?

Dunphy: Nothing!

Reporter: Why not?

Dunphy: He couldn't. It was over! (*Truman Capote: An American Revolutionary*).

From Dunphy's interview, it is evident that Capote was depressed and his writing was no longer his number one priority. He had given up on writing and his friends and replaced them with alcohol and drugs. He continued to drink and found solace by doing cocaine and by frequenting a new club, Studio 54. It was at this new club that Capote could release his pent up frustrations and energy by dancing and meeting new men. By this time, Capote had broken up with Jack Dunphy, his companion of 35 years, and began several unhappy love affairs, but none of them lasted. Friends tried to get him help, and throughout the next few years, Capote was in and out of rehabs such as the Smithers Clinic in Manhattan (Clarke *Capote* 504). Although his writing was not his top priority, he ended 1979 with hope; he began writing many short stories for what eventually would

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<sup>68</sup> *Answered Prayers* was published by Random House in 1987 as *Answered Prayers, The Unfinished Novel* (*Truman Capote: An American Revolutionary*).

<sup>69</sup> Although Capote's editor, Joe Fox, thinks that further chapters of *Answered Prayers* may still exist, Capote's aunt, Tiny Rudisill, is adamant that Capote never finished *Answered Prayers* (*Truman Capote: An American Revolutionary*).

become his last book, *Music for Chameleons*.<sup>70</sup> This work included “Handcarved Coffins: a Nonfiction Account of an American Crime”<sup>71</sup> (516). *Music for Chameleons* was finally published in 1980, and had mixed reviews. While Capote had a renewed sense of hope and self-confidence, it seemed as if it was too late. It had become the fashion to hate or belittle Truman Capote, and although he had hoped that *Music for Chameleons* would restore his reputation as a writer, it did not. The next four years of his life would continue to be disastrous. All of this time, he had no contact with Harper Lee.

During the 1980s, many friends tried to wean him off drugs and alcohol, but it was another decade of great disappointments. One major disappointment occurred when his aunt, Marie “Tiny” Rudisill, published *Truman Capote: The Story of His Bizarre and Exotic Boyhood by an Aunt Who Helped Raise Him* in 1983, a book that discussed Capote’s bizarre childhood. This would lead him to drink even more. However, Capote would seek treatment for his alcoholism, stay sober for a few weeks or months, but slip right back to his old addictive ways throughout the 1980s. In 1983, Truman was admitted to Manhattan’s Mount Sinai hospital for treatment. Dr. Bertram Newman said about his health, “If he straightens out, he has many, many years left. . . . But if he keeps going the way he is now, he might just as well put a gun in his mouth” (538). Capote

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<sup>70</sup> The book is divided into three sections. Part one, headed “Music for Chameleons”, includes the title piece and five other stories (“Mr. Jones”, “A Lamp in a Window”, “Mojave”, “Hospitality”, “Dazzle”). Part two, the core of the book, is *Handcarved Coffins*, a supposedly “nonfiction account of an American crime”. In the third section, “Conversational Portraits”, Capote recalls his encounters with Pearl Bailey, Bobby Beausoleil, Willa Cather, Marilyn Monroe and others. These seven essays are titled “A Day’s Work”, “Hello, Stranger”, “Hidden Gardens”, “Derring-do”, “Then It All Came Down”, “A Beautiful Child” and “Nocturnal Turnings.”

<sup>71</sup> “Handcarved Coffins” was the best of all the works, and was a story Al Dewey had told him about murders in Nebraska. According to Clarke, he “followed the case by telephone and he may also have conducted interviews. But this [story] . . . was, nonetheless, mostly fictional. His homespun detective was not a real person, but a composite of several lawmen he had known—not least of whom was Al Dewey” (Clarke *Capote* 516).

simply refused to listen. He died on August 23, 1984, at 12:21 p.m. at age 59, at Joanne Carson's home in Los Angeles, less than a year from his time at Mount Sinai hospital (545). According to Clarke, "The autopsy, which was performed by the Los Angeles County Coroner, could find no 'clear mechanism of death . . . . It had been determined that he died as the result of liver disease which was complicated by phlebitis and multiple drug intoxication'" (545-46). According to Carson, she wanted to summon help for him, but Capote would not let her, and said, "No! . . . I don't want to go through that again. No more hospitals. My dear, I'm so tired. If you care about me, don't do anything. Just let me go" (547). Capote may have died of liver failure, but Clarke implies in his biography that he could have committed suicide because of the large amount of drugs he had ingested days earlier. He had consumed Valium, Dilantin, codeine, Tylenol and several different barbiturates, which gave him a fluttery pulse while at Carson's house (546).

Capote's funeral was held in Los Angeles days later, and a memorial service was held later in New York at Broadway's Shubert Theater. Harper Lee attended both. According to Shields, "Nelle, along with Al and Marie Dewey, attended Capote's memorial service in Los Angeles, where the first chapter of *In Cold Blood* was read aloud as a tribute" (266). This was the first time Lee had seen Capote in years. In fact, according to Donald Windham, in his book, *Lost Friendships: A Memoir of Truman Capote, Tennessee Williams, and Others*, Lee was at Capote's New York memorial and at a dinner at his house after the memorial. It was at this dinner that Lee admitted the length of time that had passed between her and Capote seeing each other. She "said quietly that she and Truman had not been in touch for fifteen years" (Windham 269).

Ten years after Capote's death, in October 1994, another memorial was held for Capote after Jack Dunphy died. As Clarke explains in the afterword of his biography, Capote and Dunphy were both cremated. For the longest time, Capote's ashes remained with Dunphy in his New York apartment; however, when he died, Clarke had both of their ashes scattered at Dunphy's Long Island property which was donated to the Nature Conservancy. It is there that a stone was dedicated to the two with two of their favorite quotes on it (551). There is also a memorial plaque for Capote in Los Angeles at the Pierce Brothers Westwood Village Memorial Park. What is sad is that by the end of his life, Capote "had become a grotesque to the younger generation, a terrible example for their elders, who could remember the great talent of the young Capote and comprehend the tragedy of its destruction" (Allen "Capote Reconsidered" 10). After his death, Capote seemed to be remembered more for his downfall than the books he wrote. For instance, a one-man play entitled *Tru* written and directed by Jay Presson Allen, that starred Robert Morse, was produced at the Henry Fonda Theater in 1991. The play focuses on the downfall of Capote in 1975 after the publication of "La Cote Basque" and *Answered Prayers* (Drake 1).

As for Lee, she never published any major works after *To Kill a Mockingbird*. Although she published several short stories, such as "Love—In Other Words" in *Vogue* (1961), "Christmas To Me" in *McCall's* (1961), and "When Children Discover America" in *McCall's* (1965), no other novels were published.<sup>72</sup> However, according to Capote, in 1960, Lee was trying to start a second novel. Capote wrote to Alvin and Marie Dewey on

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<sup>72</sup> Lee wrote an essay entitled "Romance and High Adventure" (1983). It was presented in Eufaula, Alabama and collected in 1985 in the anthology, *Clearings in the Thicket*. Today, it is considered rare and hard to find.

November 24, 1960, saying, “Haven’t heard from Nelle in several weeks. She’s trying to get started on a new book. I don’t envy that: no harder task” (Clarke *Too Brief a Treat* 306). Also, Capote wrote a second letter confirming that Lee was writing a novel. This letter was written to Donald Cullivan, a friend of Perry Smith’s that Capote came to know during his research in Kansas. Capote wrote, “I can’t tell you much about Nelle’s new book. It’s a novel, and quite short” (Clarke *Too Brief a Treat* 372). This second novel was to be entitled *The Long Goodbye*. According to Shields, she gave her publisher, Maurice Crain, 111 pages of this novel, but *To Kill a Mockingbird* was accepted, and she never returned to this project. However, after Capote’s death, Lee tried to write another novel. This time, the novel was about several crimes committed by the same man. Her never novel would be much like *In Cold Blood*. According to Shields,

in the mid-1980’s, retracing her steps over familiar ground, Nelle embarked on a book project that resembled *In Cold Blood*. It would be a nonfiction novel based on a serial murder case in Alabama she’d read about involving a man accused of killing relatives for their insurance money. And this time, unlike *In Cold Blood*, the book and the credit would belong wholly to her. The working title she chose was *The Reverend*. (267)<sup>73</sup>

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<sup>73</sup> According to Shields, this book was about W.M. “Willie Jo” Maxwell, known as Reverend Maxwell, who was accused of killing his wife, who was found murdered and tied to a tree a mile from their home. Because a neighbor provided him with an alibi, Maxwell was found not guilty, and later married the woman next door who provided him with the alibi (267). This second wife turned up dead. He was acquitted on these charges due to lack of evidence. After this incident, Maxwell’s brother was found dead on the side of the road due to alcohol poisoning. Again, Maxwell was found not guilty. Later, Maxwell was also charged with the death of his nephew, who was found dead behind the wheel of his car. Maxwell was again found not guilty because there was no cause of death to be determined. Last, Maxwell’s niece, Shirley Ellington, died while changing a flat tire. The car jack failed and crushed her. While at her funeral, Shirley’s uncle, Robert Burns, shot Maxwell, and he never went to trial (268-69).

She worked on this new book for about a year. She settled into a routine at the Horseshoe Bend Motel in Alexander City “where she pored over the records of the trials and took notes on the setting. Then she shifted to her sister Louise’s house in Eufaula [Alabama] for three months” (Shields 269). However, Lee became distracted again, and nothing materialized. Shields’ book reports that “according to Jack Dunphy, Capote’s former lover, Nelle couldn’t find a satisfactory structure for the material,” and she began a battle with scotch, and alcohol was getting the best of her (270). Harper Lee scholar Claudia Durst Johnson, a retired University of Alabama English Professor, learned that Lee abandoned *The Reverend* in the early 1990s, when “Johnson persuaded Lee, through mutual friends, to sit down for a talk about her book and writing in general” (Kemp “Mockingbird Won’t Sing” E1). During this talk, Johnson learned that Lee was working on her memoirs. What is ironic is that Lee began writing another book again after Capote’s death. Therefore, it is highly possible that Capote caused Lee a great amount of self-doubt and psychological damage with regard to her writing career because she abandoned writing after she assisted Capote with *In Cold Blood* and attempted to resume her writing career after his death.

There are rumors that both *The Long Goodbye* and *The Reverend* and her memoirs—what is written of them—are safely stored away and may surface after Lee’s death. According to Lee’s pastor, Thomas Lane Butts, Lee’s affairs will be taken care of by her sister, Alice. When I interviewed him by e-mail to ask what would become of Lee’s papers and unpublished works, he stated, “I do not know, but my guess is NYC Library or University of Alabama. Disposition of her papers has probably been arranged by

Alice. Alice does not leave loose ends to important things” (e-mail interview Aug. 23, 2009).

Today, Nelle Harper Lee is still alive and will turn 86 on April 28, 2012. For the longest time, she lived in Alabama with her sister Miss Alice Lee<sup>74</sup>, who is fourteen years older than Nelle, and who just turned 100 on September 11<sup>th</sup> of this year. According to Lee’s close friend/pastor, Reverend Butts, Lee has had many health problems as of late and can no longer live with her sister, and she now lives in an assisted-living center. According to Butts,

She has suffered a stroke that has paralyzed her left side. Speech and mind not affected. Only short term memory, but that is mostly because she is 83 years old. She has poor hearing and limited vision. Reads with a large magnifying glass and powerful light shining through it. Enjoys time with other people in the assisted living facility where she lives. I drop by to see her at least once a week, and more often if she calls and asks me to do something for her, or when I take her mail that is sent to me because my name is associated with her in several books and articles. Sometimes I answer letters for her. Has trouble writing. I take her special things like West Indies salad, fried oysters, scuppernongs, etc. (e-mail interview August 23, 2009)

Also, Lee has macular degeneration of her pupils (Garbarino). Although Lee’s health has changed over the years, her attitude has not. According to Butts she is still a private person and won’t talk to the media, even though she broke her rule and appeared briefly in public to receive awards recently, as discussed in Chapter One of this dissertation.

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<sup>74</sup> Lee’s sister, Alice or Miss Alice, as she is known around town, is still a practicing attorney and performs small tasks such as notarizing documents, etc. in the office she keeps in town (e-mail interview August 23, 2009).



However, Lee still refuses to discuss her friendship with Truman Capote or talk about her time in Kansas. According to Voss' new book, *Truman Capote and the Legacy of In Cold Blood*, Claudia Durst Johnson discovered this fact when she tried to interview Lee. According to Voss, "Lee scholar Claudia Durst Johnson, in telling of her efforts to find out more about who wrote what from Lee, said that Lee was not forthcoming, suggesting, in effect, [that Lee said], 'Just forget it. I wrote *Mockingbird* and he wrote *In Cold Blood*'" (191).<sup>75</sup> But what does this statement mean? Did they provide favors for each other as I suggested in this chapter?

Likewise, I discovered that Lee still refuses to discuss Capote when I wrote to her in June 2009. I didn't expect her to respond to my questionnaire or to my letter, but I had to try, especially since it is rumored that Lee answers all of her mail with personal letters.<sup>76</sup> Surprisingly, I received a letter from Lee dated June 15, 2009, in which she declined to answer my questions, and she did not return my questionnaire. (See Appendix SSS to view Lee's letter to me). Lee also refused to co-operate with Charles Shields' unauthorized biography, *Mockingbird* (2006), and Kerry Madden's *Up Close: Harper Lee* (2009). However, both biographers spoke with friends of Lee to write their biographies about her life. Madden's biography notes that Lee has seen both recent movies about her and Capote and their time spent in Kansas. She discussed the films with her friend, Wayne Greenhaw, who told Madden that Lee stated,

The first one [actress Catherine Keener] had my name but that was the end of my likeness. And if New York had a party for my premiere they didn't invite me.

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<sup>75</sup> This information was explained to Voss in an e-mail to him from Claudia Durst Johnson (Voss 191).

<sup>76</sup> According to Paul Harris "she always declines them [interviews], she does write each refusal individually. When asked why she did not simply send out a stock response to the media's pleas, she quipped such a letter would simply say: 'Hell, no.'"

However, the Capote actor [Philip Seymour Hoffman] got it. As for Sandra Bullock's portrayal of her in *Infamous*, Nelle only said, 'I never wore socks.' (179)

The fact that several people spoke to Shields, Madden, Voss, and me is fortunate, because most people who know Lee refuse to speak to scholars. Many are fearful that they will offend Lee. Because "If offended, she cuts close friends off for months" (Garbarino). I discovered this as well when I conducted primary research. While some friends of Lee were happy to talk to me via the telephone or via e-mail, many were not, and I had several surveys returned that were not answered. In fact, when I asked several people, including Wayne Greenhaw, if they had any personal letters they could share with me for this study, all of them answered no. Greenhaw wrote to me, "I'm afraid the private letters I have from her are just that: private. I would not feel right sharing them. They are very special and very personal" (e-mail interview). Reverend Butts and Delores Hope expressed the same feelings. But some people who may not be willing to discuss details of Lee's personal life are still willing to talk about her time in Kansas.

While writing this chapter, I discovered a recent article, "Garden City couple recount friendship with Truman Capote, Harper Lee" that was published on April 15, 2011. The couple, Bob and Kay Wells, met Capote and Lee when they visited Kansas to research *In Cold Blood*. The Wells got to know the two writers well and still remain in touch with Lee today by writing cards and letters to her. Lee always writes back and remains friendly with all the people she met while in Kansas. Hoping for an interview, I spoke on the telephone with Kay Wells, who thought that my dissertation topic was good, but she didn't want to comment on anything out of fear of upsetting Lee. However, she did state that "If Capote did use Lee's notes to write *In Cold Blood*, Nelle would never set the

record straight; that's just the type of person she was" (Phone interview). This same idea was repeated by many others whom I interviewed, such as Delores Hope. Shields' *Mockingbird* also commented on Lee's personality: "Her faithfulness was something she never hesitated to prove. Truman touched in her a desire to see underdogs treated 'fair and square'—a sentiment that would be important to her throughout her life" (50).

Although Lee is still alive, she, most likely, will never discuss what she specifically assisted Capote with while he wrote *In Cold Blood* or if she has written any other novels. Therefore, we can only hope that one day, perhaps after she passes from this earth, some of her friends or her sister will come forward and discuss/prove just how she assisted Capote with *In Cold Blood*. Until then, scholars only have her notes to refer to, which is fortunate because according to Lee, "I have systematically thrown away most of what I have written. It was a form of self-training" (Boyle). Fortunately, Lee's research notes were in Capote's possession and are housed with his original research materials in the New York Public Library. Therefore, scholars can access them, examine them and write about them, and learn what her contributions were to *In Cold Blood*.

“People that write think they have a divine right to say anything they want.” Mary Ida Carter (“Capote Can’t Stick To the Truth” 34-D).

## CONCLUSION

After examining Harper Lee’s and Truman Capote’s research notes for *In Cold Blood* and the galleys and other research documents housed in the Capote archives at both The New York Public Library and The Library of Congress, I have concluded that Harper Lee assisted Capote with the following while he was working on his non-fiction novel:

1.) She traveled to Kansas with Capote and helped him get established with the local townspeople in Holcomb. Even when many did not like or accept Capote, Lee continued to speak highly of him to them. She allowed Capote to receive all of the attention and gave him unconditional support. Without her, Capote might not have been accepted there because of his blatant homosexuality and odd demeanor. Likewise, she was his secretary.

2.) She took extensive research notes on many interviews she accompanied him on, and she functioned as a second set of eyes and ears for Capote. She recorded copious notes—150 pages—on these interviews. On many occasions, her notes record issues that Capote’s notes do not. This is evident because Capote writes at the bottom of many of his notes, “see N.L.’s notes”. Capote’s referral to Lee’s notes speaks volumes and tends to disprove Capote’s own claim of 97% recall.

3.) Lee not only went on many interviews with Capote, but she also conducted seventeen interviews with townspeople without him. At least this is what I conclude because Capote does not have any “field” notes on these seventeen people.

4.) Lee examined the Clutters' home, with Capote and separately, and drew many maps and outlines of both the inside and outside of the house, which are much more detailed than Capote's notes. She also recorded notes on many of the town's shops and recorded the history of the town. These were aids to Capote when he wrote the novel in Switzerland and Spain.

5.) She attended Smith's & Hickock's arraignments with Capote and recorded notes.

6.) She met/visited with Smith and Hickock at the jail and, again, functioned as a second set of eyes and ears for Capote. Though Capote's notes focus primarily on Smith and Hickock, Lee visited Smith and Hickock several times, which Capote never acknowledged. She also pieced together Smith's and Hickock's travel itinerary and mapped out directions for Capote for many places he needed to go.

7.) Lee typed some of Capote's notes from a Dictaphone and was his secretary.

8.) Lee edited Capote's final typed galleys for *In Cold Blood* before it was published.

9.) Lee's notes show Bonnie Clutter in a different light than Capote's notes. While Capote's notes appear to show Mrs. Clutter in a harsh light, he changed Mrs. Clutter's description in his novel so that she appeared as the perfect wife/mother.

10.) Many of Lee's descriptive notes were used in the final publication of Capote's non-fiction novel.

Clearly, for performing all of these duties, Harper Lee should have been acknowledged by Capote on the acknowledgement page of the published book because Capote could have never completed *In Cold Blood* without her help. Perhaps she should have even been given co-authorship of the novel. Many of Lee's friends such as Wayne

Greenhaw and Wayne Flynt agree with me, and feel that Lee assisted Capote much more than Capote or other scholars ever revealed. For instance, Greenhaw told me in an e-mail interview,

Nelle had done much of the legwork in Kansas for *In Cold Blood*, interviewing the people in the small town there. . . . Many people thought she should have been given much more credit for *In Cold Blood*. Far more than simply having it dedicated to her. I have heard a number of people say that it could not have been written without her input. At least, not the way it was. (e-mail interview)

Likewise, Flynt, another personal friend of Lee's, stated, "She was in every sense a coauthor of ICB, . . . . Dedicating the book to her hardly compensated for his use of her notes (which tends to refute his allegation of 98% total recall)" (e-mail interview May 28, 2009)<sup>77</sup>. At any rate, it is clear that Capote used some of Lee's research notes to write his book. Furthermore, Capote's research appears to have concentrated mostly on Perry Smith and Dick Hickock, while Lee's research concentrates on the townspeople and the description of the town.

Although Capote wrote *In Cold Blood*, he should have acknowledged Lee's help. But something happened between Capote and Lee that caused him not to acknowledge her in the final published version of *In Cold Blood*. And this lack of acknowledgement may be why she did not have any contact with Capote from 1966 until his death. Just two years prior to the publication of *In Cold Blood*, in 1964, Lee gave her last public interview to Roy Newquist in which she bragged about what a great writer Capote was. She stated, "There's probably no better writer in this country today than Truman Capote .

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<sup>77</sup> There has been a discrepancy among many critics about what the exact percentage of accuracy that Capote claimed to have been able to remember. In this particular e-mail, Dr. Flynt states 98%, but the percentage fluctuates among critics; however, it is always between 95-98%.

. . . Capote, I think, is the greatest craftsman we have going” (409). But what happened between Lee and Capote after that interview? Sadly, we probably will never know for sure since Lee refuses to speak about her time in Kansas or what happened between her and Capote, and Capote is deceased and can’t speak. However, I speculate that Capote’s narcissism, a lifelong condition he suffered from due to rejection of him by his mother, took over his life. Furthermore, after he met Perry Smith, his narcissism spun out of control and caused him to cut Lee out of his project. What we do know is that without Lee’s help there is a very real possibility that *In Cold Blood* may never have been written, especially if the citizens of Kansas would not have co-operated with Capote. But what would *In Cold Blood* have become if Capote used more of Lee’s notes? Sadly, we will never know this either; however, what has become apparent over the years is that many who appear in the book as characters are not happy with Capote’s version of the “truth.”

Over the past several years, many people who were a part of the Clutter murder investigation have come forward to express their displeasure with Capote’s novel and Capote’s journalistic skills. Many feel that Capote’s book is inaccurate and that he did not report the facts truthfully, but rather took too many liberties. For instance, Duane West, the district attorney for Finney County during the case, was upset with the book for its failure to report facts accurately. According to West, “many others share stories of Capote misquoting people, describing things incorrectly and making up scenes” (Jensen 9). In fact, “West is among a number of key people who made important contributions to the case, only to be grievously underrepresented in Truman Capote’s book” (Smith “An Outspoken Critic” 65). West explains that there are many problems with Capote’s novel due to inaccurate facts. First, he is upset with how he has been portrayed in the book.

According to West, he “was the lead prosecutor [on the case], but Capote painted Logan Green, a veteran attorney who helped prosecute Smith and Hickock, as solely responsible for the case” (Smith “An Outspoken Critic” 65). West wasn’t given any credit for all the work he did on the case. In fact, Capote barely mentions West in the book; Capote only discusses him once. But the truth is, “West gave the opening statement and performed 15 of 28 witness examinations” (67). Another fact that West claims is that Dewey is not the real hero of the case; rather, Richard Rohleder, the assistant police chief, was responsible for discovering Smith’s boot print left at the scene of the crime. Had this not been found, the case might not have been solved. The KBI were frightened that Floyd Wells’ confession would not be enough to convict Smith and Hickock (Voss 201). Yet, Capote only mentions Rohleder in one paragraph of the novel. In a 2005 interview, West explained that “Rohleder was turned off by Capote’s homosexuality” (Smith “Garden City Officer Forgotten in Capote’s Book” 68). Thus, because some folks did not have good relationships with Capote, they did not appear much in the book, while Dewey, someone who had become good friends with Capote, was portrayed as the hero of the case, when in reality, he was not.

Likewise, Clarence Duntz, a member of the KBI, played an important role in locating Smith and Hickock in Las Vegas and with arresting and convicting them, yet, he is barely mentioned in the book. According to his daughter, Darlene Laffere, “I don’t think Dad ever really felt comfortable with (Capote) or the book. . . . There was too much of it he didn’t agree with” (Roberts). Darlene’s husband, Vernon, stated, “He thought (Capote) fictionalized. . . . Of course, he didn’t like that. He dealt in facts” (Roberts). Also, KBI agent Nye felt very similar to Duntz. According to Voss, Nye called Capote’s book



“trash” and “walked out of a screening of Richard Brooks’s film” (205). Others who are upset with Capote for reporting inaccuracies are Beverly English and Eveanna Mosier, the Clutters’ two surviving daughters. They feel “betrayed and exploited by Capote and others in the media” (Smith “Sisters Honor Family” 23). According to English and Mosier, Capote,

communicated to us that we (the daughters) would be given the opportunity to review the article before publication. Mr. Capote did not honor his agreement, nor did he talk to any family members or friends who could have provided accurate and reliable information about the family. The result was his sensational novel which profited him and grossly misrepresented our family. (23)

Clearly, John Richardson was correct when he proclaimed that “Truman had absolutely no respect for the truth” (qtd. in May). But part of the legacy of Capote’s *In Cold Blood* is what is considered fact and what is considered fiction. Philip K. Tompkins explored this idea in his 1966 article, “In Cold Fact,” that was published in *Esquire*. In the end, though, Capote succeeded in creating his greatest achievement. He “took a crime that in the grand scheme of things was not sensational outside of Kansas—a story buried in the interior pages of the *New York Times*—and made it sensational through his own artistic determination” (Voss 95). Furthermore, he succeeded in creating a work that drew a great deal of attention to him and the crime both then and now—even years after his death. As David Carr wrote, Capote was “A novelist who developed a passing interest in real events, he transformed the hackwork of journalism into something far more literary and substantial” (E1). Therefore, his novel has become a legacy in many ways.

One part of the *In Cold Blood* legacy that causes much debate today is whether or not the book is really a non-fiction novel. Many scholars and students don't know what to call the book—fiction or nonfiction. In fact the term itself—nonfiction novel, as Voss discusses, is an oxymoron in itself. The term, which Capote coined for the book, could have been a publicity stunt to gain attention for the publication of the book. In short, Voss explains that Capote's *In Cold Blood* was not the first book to report about a true crime, yet many remember his account as one of the first because of how the book reported the crime and how it was marketed and publicized (81). Therefore, "Today, with some credit due to Capote, we are used to seeing books and films advertised as 'based on a true story' or 'inspired by a true story'" (81). There have been many other non-fiction writers who followed in Capote's footsteps, such as Joe McGinniss,<sup>78</sup> Ann Rule, Jerry Bledsoe, Aphrodite Jones, Donald Davis, Ken Englade and others. Thus, we

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<sup>78</sup> Much like Capote, writer Joe McGinniss gained the trust of army doctor Jeffrey MacDonald, a former Green Beret, who was accused of murdering his pregnant wife and two daughters in February 1970. MacDonald phoned the Military Police from his family's apartment at Fort Bragg, NC, claiming they had been stabbed to death by intruders. MacDonald was put through an army trial—an article 32 hearing—immediately after the murders in July 1970. However, in October 1970, the army recommended the case be dismissed due to evidence being mishandled. In December 1970, MacDonald was honorably discharged from the army. Shortly after, he moved to California to begin a new life. Five years later, on January 24, 1975, with the insistence of his former father-in-law, Alfred Kassab, who filed a citizens complain against MacDonald, he was indicted for the murders of his family. His trial began on July 16, 1979. Like Capote, journalist Joe McGinniss was led to MacDonald by reading an article in *The Los Angeles Times*, that discussed a local physician who was being tried for the murder of his family (Malcolm 15). In June 1979, McGinniss met MacDonald for the first time, and he hoped to interview MacDonald to write a column about his case. However, while McGinniss interviewed him, MacDonald asked McGinniss to write a book about his case to help show his innocence. Therefore, McGinniss would be allowed to live with MacDonald, sit in on his trial, and be given access to MacDonald and his defense team. McGinniss agreed, and MacDonald thought McGinniss' book was going to help exonerate him. However, at the last minute, McGinniss turned on MacDonald because he was persuaded by the prosecution's argument. McGinniss also concocted a theory that MacDonald was high on Eskatrol—an amphetamine—and snapped when his daughter wet his side of the bed. Thus, McGinniss wrote *Fatal Vision*, a non-fiction novel, accusing MacDonald of the terrible crimes. MacDonald sued McGinniss for breach of contract and won the law suit. The case was examined in Janet Malcolm's 1990 book, *The Journalist And The Murderer*. McGinniss also angered many residents of Toms River New Jersey when his 1989 book *Blind Faith* was published about wife killer, Robert Marshall. Many citizens of Toms River "alternate between accusing the author of malicious invention and trying to pierce the book's veil of pseudonyms to discover just who supposedly did or said what to whom in the unfolding of the Marshall family's tragedy" (King).

remember Capote today as someone “who developed a passing interest in real events, he transformed the hack-work of journalism into something far more substantial” (Carr E1). More importantly, Capote, much like other non-fiction writers, has taken advantage of many he interviewed. As Janet Holcolm explains, “Every journalist who is not too stupid or too full of himself to know what is going on knows that what he does is morally indefensible. He is a kind of confidence man, preying on people’s vanity, ignorance, or loneliness, gaining their trust and betraying them without remorse” (Malcolm 3). Thus, Capote betrayed Perry Smith and Dick Hickock, as well as many other people he interviewed and his research assistant Harper Lee, much as other non-fiction writers, such as Joe McGinniss, had done. According to Malcolm, many journalists have a control or power over their subjects and take advantage of them. She writes,

The journalistic encounter seems to have the same regressive effect on a subject as the psychoanalytic encounter. The subject becomes a kind of child of the writer, regarding him as a permissive, all-accepting, all-forgiving mother, and expecting the book will be written by her. Of course, the book is written by the strict, all-noticing, unforgiving father. (32)

However, another part of the legacy of the book is the crime itself. Over the years, anyone who has been involved with the murder case became popular and they were sought out. For instance, many high school and college students who live near Kansas often travel to Garden City and the Finley County Courthouse to view some of the original documents involving the case. According to Sheriff Kevin Bascue, people come from all over to view the original documents that are housed there such as “Floyd Wells’s statement to the KBI, KBI reports from the Las Vegas interrogations, reports on the

discovery of evidence, and Dick Hickock's and Perry Smith's transcribed confessions. . . .” (Voss 206). Likewise, many people stop every year outside the Clutters' house to view where the killings occurred. According to Donna and Leonard Mader,<sup>79</sup> who bought the house in 1990, “Someone is always showing up at the end of the lane with a camera and the same old questions about what it's like to live in a house where four people were murdered” (Wiebe “A House With a History of Murder Finds New Life” 42). Of course, the movies—*Capote* (2005) and *Infamous* (2006)—recently made about Capote's life and the case have sparked much discussion. And because of these films, it seems new interest has been created in the case, and recently many have started to question Lee's involvement, which has now also become part of the legacy of *In Cold Blood*.

In the end, we will never know what *In Cold Blood* could have been had Capote used more of Lee's notes, but I think it is fair to suggest that had Capote used all of Lee's notes about the townspeople, the book might have been much different from the *In Cold Blood* we have today.

Nevertheless, what we do know is that *In Cold Blood* is “certainly the most detailed and atmospheric account ever written of a contemporary crime” (Allen “London Letter” 230). It can't be denied that Harper Lee had a lot to do with this account by helping Capote get accepted in Kansas and by recording detailed notes that Capote used. Even though Capote exploited Lee and their friendship suffered severely after *In Cold Blood*, she did reunite with him once that we are aware of by visiting him in New York in 1976. At the time, he was being interviewed by Patricia Burnstein. Lee spoke very briefly and explained in the interview how Capote was treated badly in school (332). Although the

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<sup>79</sup> Leonard Mader died in 2008; however, Donna still lives in the house. Prior to her husband's death, she began selling tickets to people who wanted to tour her home. However, she stopped when the community became upset and accused her of profiting from tragedy (Voss 207).

two reunited during this time in 1976, it still does not explain Lee's long twelve year period of not seeing Capote. Clearly, their friendship had been damaged, but Lee was always loyal, even to those who hurt her. And she, most likely, would not have brought Capote's betrayal to the attention of the public because she was such a private person, and she would never want to be in the public eye again, especially fighting with Capote, who had loved attention and the media.

In the end, Capote wrote a book that "propelled him to household fame and fortune, and in the process ensured that Holcomb was put on the map, and changed forever, in ways that many of the townspeople did not—and still do not—appreciate" (Pilkington "In Cold Blood, half a century on"). While many aren't happy that they weren't represented correctly in the book, Capote did not seem to care about what others thought, but only cared about how the book made him look. Among those people he didn't care about was Harper Lee. He did not acknowledge her properly for her help. Her experience with Capote, I contend, is what caused Lee to abandon her career in writing. If Capote, her best friend, could betray her by using her notes and not acknowledging her, what would others in the publishing business do to her, even after she had already won the highest honor in literature—the Pulitzer Prize? Therefore, after examining Lee's and Capote's research notes and many other articles written about the legacy of *In Cold Blood*, I believe that Capote caused Lee to stop writing. She simply had enough and wanted out of the spotlight.

Although *In Cold Blood* is an incredibly well-written book and Capote is a gifted writer and one I admire, what he did to Harper Lee was wrong. And in the end, researching/writing this book ruined both authors' lives. Their friendship was a bond so

strong both before and while they were working on *In Cold Blood* that they could not work without each other. As discussed throughout this dissertation, both authors grew up together, used each other as models for their literary characters, edited the galleys of each other's books, and assisted the other when he/she could. They even "had uncanny success as an interviewing team" (Long 84). However, something happened while the two were in Kansas that changed this bond. After the publication of *In Cold Blood*, Capote was never able to write anything substantial again, and Lee never wrote again or gave any interviews, and their friendship became strained and almost non-existent. Even today, Lee refuses to discuss Capote and her time in Kansas. However, one interesting fact is that the New York Public Library confirmed that on April 27, 2005, Harper Lee was at the New York Public Library looking at her own notes on microfilm—the same notes she recorded for Capote—and copying many of them (Manuscripts and Archives Division the New York Public Library). Perhaps this means that she has decided to set the record straight and reveal what she contributed to *In Cold Blood*. Because nothing has been published by her, and because she doesn't grant interviews, I speculate that she may have written her account of her time spent in Kansas with Capote and that it will be published after her death. So perhaps one day the truth will be revealed. However, for now it is fortunate that scholars have her research notes which reveal all of the hard work she contributed to Capote's project so we can give her the credit she so rightfully deserves. Thus, I contend that Harper Lee should be remembered just as much for her journalistic skills and contributions to Capote's *In Cold Blood* as she is for *To Kill a Mockingbird* and for her silence.

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Appendix A – Capote's letter to his Aunt May Ida

yes, it is true that melle bee is  
publishing a book. I did not see melle last  
winter, but the previous <sup>year</sup> she showed me as  
much of the book as she'd written, and I liked  
it very much. She has real talent.

Oh I do wish I could have some  
butter beans. now! This very minute.

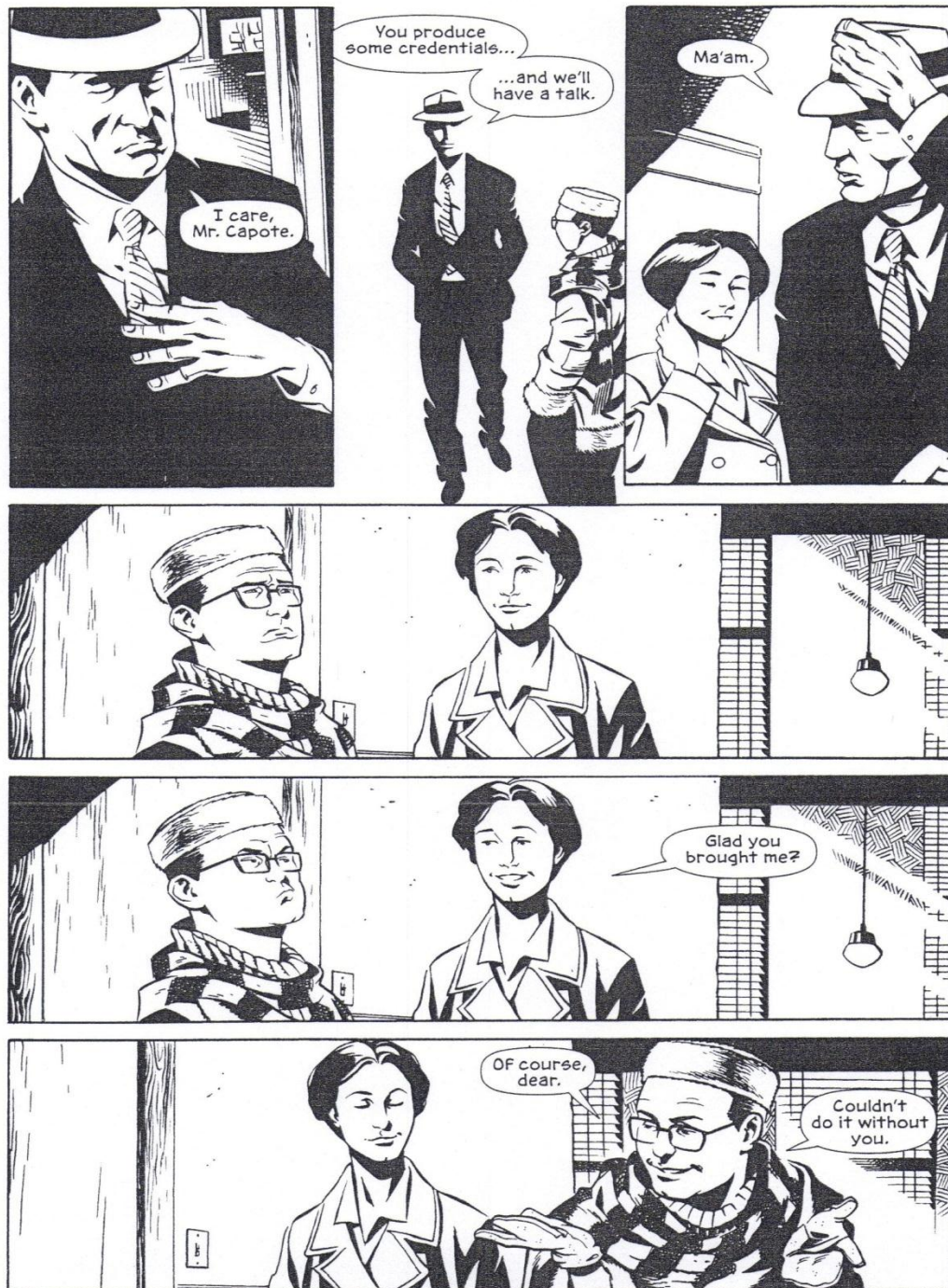
Love to all, hugs and kisses

T

Courtesy the Monroe County Heritage Museum



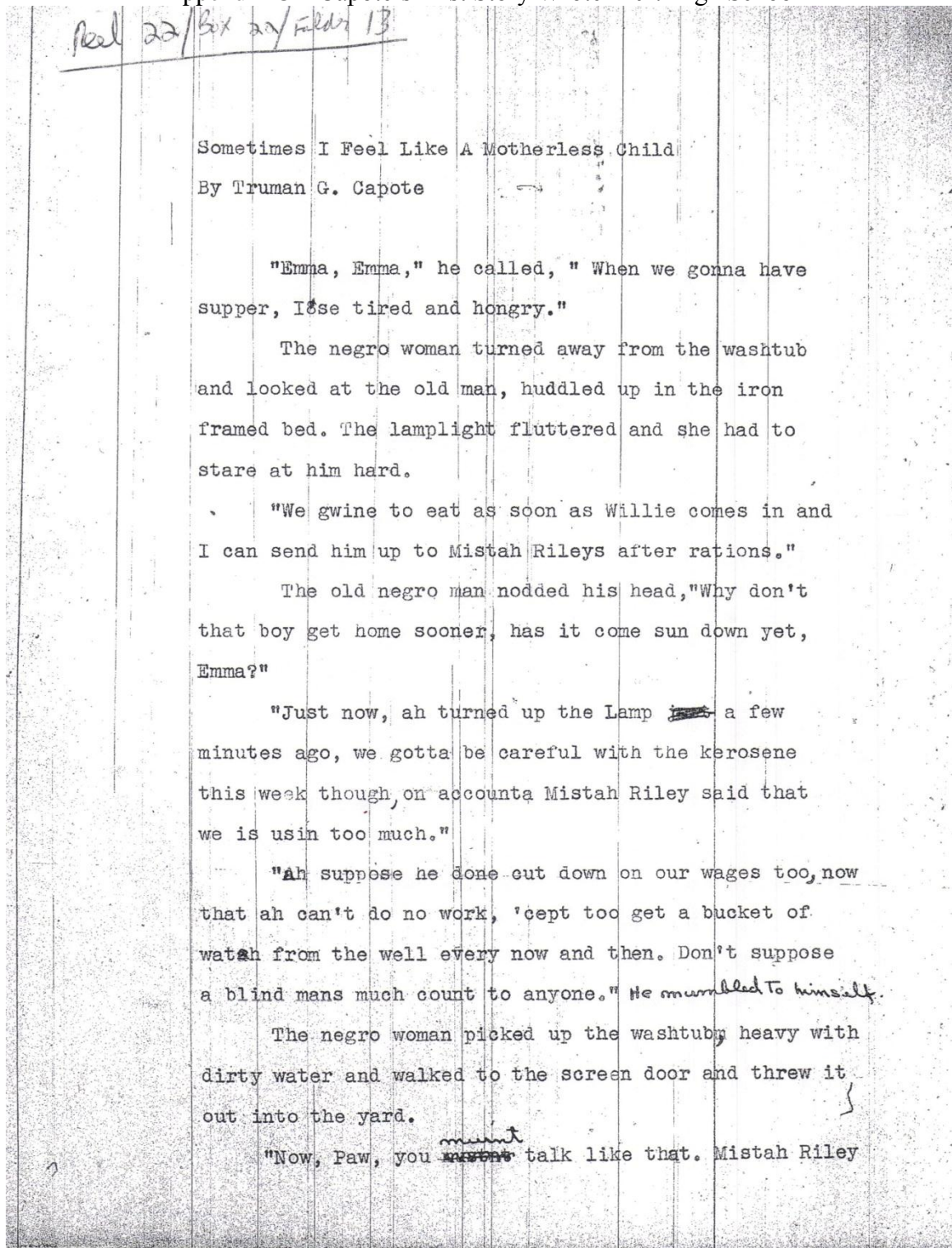
Appendix B – A Comic Book Page That Shows Lee's Assistance



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Parks, Ande, and Chris Samnee. *Capote in Kansas: A Drawn Novel*. Portland: Oni, 2005. Print.

Appendix C – Capote's First Story Wrote in Jr. High School



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told you that if his crop was good this year he wuz gwine take you up to the town and have the Dootah cut them cataracts <sup>things</sup> offen yo' eyes. You know he did."

The negro man nodded his head and grinned. Emma came back across the room and put the washtub up against the wall. She looked around her and picked up some old magazines that lay scattered ~~around~~ <sup>on</sup> the floor. Mrs. Riley had given them to her. Emma couldnt read but she liked to cut out the pictures and paste them along the bare cabin walls, it seemed to make the room look brighter.

Suddenly a young negro boy burst into the room. His skin was jet black, the whites of his eyes stood out against his face like pieces of glass. He grinned sheepishly as he walked across the room to ~~the~~ Emma, his mother. He was about twelve years old.

"Willie," Emma exclaimed, "whar you been all this time, you should have been home before sundown?"

"Mistah Riley had me feed the hogs 'fore I left."

"Thats somthin' new, ain't it, boy?" <sup>Asked</sup> ~~the~~ the blind man.

"No, suh, I'se did it befo'."

Emma shook her head. She didnt mind Willie working, but she didnt want them to drive him like a mule.

"You'll have to go back up to the Rileys now Willie," she said, "and get our rations, we ain't got nothin' here for supper."

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"Yes ma'm."

He turned to go out the door and Emma called after him, "Tell Mistah Riley <sup>Sorry</sup> ~~is~~ ~~sorry~~ if we is overdrawed, but that we ain't got nothin' in the house to eat and we need it right away fo' suppah."

"Yes ma'm."

He raced on out <sup>of</sup> the yard into the path. He was glad she had sent him, he liked to be outside and anyway it was his favorite time, when dusk was dissapearing and the stars were beginning to come out. The earth was still faintly warm beneath his naked feet. He scudded along in the soft, beach like sand, as he ~~walked along~~ <sup>hurried</sup> down the path. During the day he helped with the plowing or later in the season the cotton picking, he was almost able to do a grown mans <sup>work</sup> ~~work~~ in the field.

Along the <sup>way</sup> ~~path~~ to the Rileys big <sup>head</sup> ~~head~~ house the path ran through a little strip of woods, his mother was afraid to walk through there, even in the daytime. She told him dead people lived there and at night they came out and played among the trees and sang there ghostly songs to the wind. He always listened for the music, and strangely looked for the evil spirits, although he was quite sure they were not there. He was not afraid to walk through here, sometimes he would even go off the path and into a little hollow where there were gum trees with sweet black gum oozing out of their trunks.



Whenever something happened to him or if he felt bad he would come down in here and sit among the cool grass and listen to the songs of the whipporwill. There was almost always one near, and somehow the lonesome cry of the bird, high among the tree tops, put his spirits at rest. Once he had had ~~and~~ <sup>a</sup> ~~little~~ dog, it was a little piece that some man had given him rather than drown it, but his father had killed it because they couldn't feed it. Willie had buried it somewhere down in the Gum hollow, and whenever he was down there he would always look for its <sup>buried</sup> ~~grave~~ <sup>grave</sup> although he could never quite remember where he had ~~put~~ it. Sometimes he and Elva, that was his <sup>big</sup> ~~big~~ sister who worked on the Williams place, would come down here and sit and talk. No, he was not afraid of it, he didn't believe that death haunted the place or that ghost played in it, it wasn't like his mother said, the garden of the Devil.

He had gone through it and now he was on the moonlight path ~~again~~ again. Ahead of him he could see the Riley house. There was a light on in the dining room, so he knew <sup>that</sup> they were at supper.

It was towards the end of summer and the nights were getting colder. He was thinking about January and February when it would be <sup>freezing</sup> ~~so cold~~, even in the south. That ~~small~~ cabin ~~was~~ was cold in the winter and it was like an oven in the summer, that was because of the tin roof. In the winter the winds blew through ~~the~~ <sup>the wide</sup> ~~boards~~ <sup>boards</sup> and in the morning after a bitter night there would usually be

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icicles dripping off the eaves of the roof and the wash basin would be frozen solid. In the summer, sometimes they would sleep out on the porch and let the misquitos eat them alive rather than stay in the oven ~~low~~ temperature of the cabin.

Already he had reached the back door at the Rileys. He stood on the porch, out in the back and knocked gently against the woodwork that surrounded the screen door. After a few minutes he heard foot steps and the rustle of a skirt, he knew it was Mrs. Riley. When she looked out into the darkness she didn't see him, at first, finally she said:

"Oh, it's you Willie. What do you want child?"

He smiled gently, hoping by so doing to disarm her, it was a trick his mother had taught him. "I've been sent by mama fo' our rations Miz Riley."

He knew that she was not pleased ~~and~~ <sup>by the</sup> way she turned and said, "Wait just a moment, I'll go tell Mr. Riley and see if it's all right."

"Yes ma'm."

He leaned back against the porch railing and listened attentively when he heard Mr. Riley talking ~~loudly~~.

"Those damn Niggers eat more than they're worth. Just gave them a whole months rations not more than two and a half weeks ago, Must sit around and stuff they're ~~stomachs~~ bellys eternally. By the infernal, I don't see how they expect me to keep going if-----"

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6.

He whistled softly and did not bother listening to the rest. He knew it would be just another five minute discourse about the trifling of "niggers" and the lazy stupidity of himself and his father and mother and sisters, and even blind Grandpa.

After a while Mrs. Riley ~~appeared again~~ reappeared.

"I'm sorry, Willie, but Mr. Riley said you can't have anymore rations untill tomorrow when he goes to town."

"But Miz Riley, mama says they ain't nothin' at the house to eat. We done et all last months rations."

"I'm sorry, but that's what Mr. Riley said." And she closed the door.

All the way back home he was so mad he wanted to cry. But some how he could'nt cry. He thought may'be he was all cryed out. He was'nt ever sorry for himself anymore, and after all that's the only real reason people cry anyway. Grandpa would certainly be mad. May'be they could scrape up ~~enough~~ enough for just Grandpa. And then, may'be Elva would bring something home with her from town.

He was going through the Woods now and suddenly he remembered a Bullis vine that grew somewhere along the woods there. He dissappeared into the thicket and when he came out he had a handful of hard little bitter bullises.

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He toyed with the plum like berries untill he reached the moonlight path again. Then he saw Elva coming across the fields toward home. He called to her, and then as he started to run to her he popped one of the berries in his mouth and bit into it viciously.

Truman G. Capote

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Rammer Jammen Nov. 1945 601 21 no 3

## Some Writers of Our Times

A VERY INFORMAL ESSAY

by Nelle Lee

Several days ago I was sitting in the Supe Store meditating over a coke when I heard a soft voice say, "May I thit here?" I looked up and beheld a blonde young gentleman, so I answered certainly. As soon as he was seated he embarked upon a diatribe which would have put Gertrude Stein to shame. Any attempt to reproduce the genteel intonations of his vowels would be impossible, but here's what he said: "I thimply refwoose to call that man MISTHER Kimbrough. Afther all, I'm thix months older than he ith, and there's no thense whaththoever, WHATTHOEVER, in calling him that. I've been writing ever thince I wath eight years old, and I'm not going to let him bully ME! It's 'Glotz' this and 'Glotz' that, and 'Glotz you've got nerve!' But it's 'thank you, MISTHER Glotz' whenever the whithkey's therved!"

I choked down a laugh and assured him that things couldn't really be that bad. I realized my mistake a moment later when he exclaimed, "Honey, I'm thück. My novel ith about a thenthitive boy from the time he'th twelve until he ith a gwown man. MISTHER Kimbrough thez I've justh got to cut it thum, but all of it ith thö poignant I justh can't bwing my-thelf thö change a WORD of it."

Reeling under this verbal onslaught I went to my Shakespeare class. There I found the usual motley array of students, but my attention was attracted by a dark fellow in the back of the room. He looked as if he were going to cry upon the slightest provocation. He was screaming, "I'm going quite mad! I've written for six hours and all I've got is four sentences!"

I asked him what he was writing.

He looked at me with a glassy eye and said, "My novel," but he implied, "You idiot." I asked him what it was about. I'm sorry I asked him that, because he consumed the whole hour telling me about it. He talked in a low voice, casting furtive glances at Mr. Strode. "It's poetical prose," he said. "It's a novel of frustrations in a small town, entitled A HOUSE A MOUSE AND A LOUSE." He then branched off into et ceteras which have no business in this essay.

After class we strolled together down the sidewalk. He suddenly asked me what I was doing here. I told him. "Have you read FIN-NEGAN'S WAKE?" he queried. Yes, I said.



"Well, don't you think there's a remarkable resemblance between Othello and Here Comes Everybody?"

I could see no resemblance between Othello and Here Comes Everybody, but I answered in the affirmative.

"Claude!" (He shouted this to a young man with a somewhat abortive black mustache who was lurking at our heels.) "This young lady has it!"

I wondered what it was that I had. (I am still wondering, for young Pagliacci has never told me.) I did not press the matter, and our conversation glided into the inevitable channels of sex.

"How do you like sex?" he asked.

I said I liked it very well.

"But I don't. Sex has been run

into the ground. It is the most over-rated thing in the world today. Do you know how many wives Joseph Stalin has had?"

I ventured three.

"NO!" he exclaimed with a hoot of triumph. "That's merely propaganda put out by the capitalists to undermine the morals of the I.W. W.! He's never had a wife!"

I wondered vaguely how Uncle Joe had acquired his five children, but I didn't say anything.

The young gentleman in question was now the color of his politics. He turned to me and placed his face about twenty inches from mine. He asked, "What are you?" I wondered if this question referred to my gender, nationality, or traits of character. I asked him what he meant.

"I mean you're an atheist, aren't you?"

No, I said.

"WELL!" His eyebrows danced disdainfully across his forehead. "I had thought that you showed some spark of intelligence, but I see that you're just another one of the cattle. Goodday, Miss Lee."

With that he was off. Somewhat stunned, I went on my way. But not until I resolved to make an intensive study of what is vulgarly known as "The Writer." The foregoing paragraphs are facts gleaned from the cream of Kimbrough's Juvenile Delinquents.

The first and foremost qualifications one must have if he aspires to the higher brackets of the intelligentsia are (1), a sadistic father; (2) an alcoholic mother. He must be beaten into insensibility by the former and ostentatiously loved and hated by the latter in her drunken orgies. Any maltreatment by older brothers and sisters also helps. This comes under the flexi-

University of Alabama



201.21 no.3

ble category of The Unhappy Childhood.

Another factor in the development of creative talent is that a soul is required. Now there are several classifications of souls, namely: The Frustrated Soul, The Somnambulist's Soul, and The Warped Soul. (The W.S. results in the most profit these days.) But no matter what kind of soul the budding writer has, it must be flaunted before the eyes of his readers. Some kind of soul is absolutely essential.

The element of frustration is another MUST. If a person is not frustrated, what would he have to write about? He must love himself to an unbearable degree, curse God at regular intervals, be scorned by the one person he loves better than himself. Then he will have the material with which to produce the most provocative novel of the century. If he has any sexual frustrations he must be sure to include them in his novel, for s. f.'s are popular in this age. Also, a fear of birds, cats, dogs, and similarly harmless creatures provide good copy.

An author's environment is important to his training in the gentle art of self-expression. The general trend today is small towns, preferably Southern villages. There must be the annual race riot full of blood & gore which causes violent reactions in his sensitive (I use that word because all writers are supposed to be sensitive) soul. A whole chapter of his book must be devoted to pondering over the vigorous religion of the holy-rollers ensconced in a tent just outside of town. And he certainly must not omit his reflections upon the way justice is so casually administered by the crooked Judge in the broken down courthouse. Yes, it is to the writer's advantage if he comes from such surroundings. He has a chance to expose to the public the immoral goings-on in an out-of-the way village, have himself hailed as the H. W. Beecher of the day, and instigate a movement

R. J. Esquire

which would do away with small towns forever.

Much criticism has been made of the writer's somewhat Bohemian way of life. But remember, some of the most poignant prose of our day is the result of benzedrine parties, sinful living, and alcohol benders. The public must realize that the author does not indulge himself in these vices for his own pleasure; he does it only to collect material for his books. He sacrifices his virtue in order to give the great American public The Truth. And when he becomes a mere hulk of a man, unable to perform his literary chores, he is cast into oblivion. The public forgets him. But he wins out in the end. About ten years after his death someone will rediscover him, and his books will reach their zenith in sales. His name will be on everyone's lips. But what good will this do him? The royalties will be divided equally between his cast-off mistresses, and they will wallow in his reflected glory. So let us forgive our bud-

ding literary geni for their lapses from the straight and narrow; they're only sacrificing themselves for their art.

The final and perhaps the greatest qualification one must have if he is a writer is this: he must know how to write.

The minister arose to address his congregation. "There is a certain man among us today who is flirting with another man's wife. Unless he puts five dollars in the collection box, his name will be read from the pulpit."

When the collection plate came in, there were nineteen five dollar bills and a two dollar one with this note attached: "Other three pay day."

"You look broken up. What's the matter?"

"I wrote home for money for socks and underwear."

"So what?"

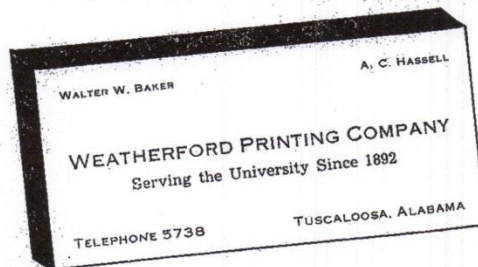
"They sent me some socks and underwear."

Quality . . .

## GATES CLEANERS

2409 BROAD STREET

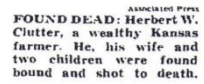
PHONE 5546



p. 15

15

new York Times (1837-1899), Part 10, 1929, *Chosŏnŭi Hanŭlŭi* Newspapers The New York Times (1837-1899), pg. 39



H. W. Clutter Wife and 2  
Children Are Found Shot  
in Kansas Home

Two daughters were away. They are Beverly, a student at Kansas University, and Mrs. Donald G. Jarchow of Mount Carroll, Ill.

Appendix F – Capote's First Set of Handwritten Notes In His Gold Journal

m. 2.0300  
 Lg. MORRIS  
~~Tommy Morris~~  
~~George Morris~~  
 m. 2.0300  
 Kansas  
 Topeka, m. R. Santa Fe  
 m. 2.0377  
 WIBW TV  
 Hutchinson - m. R. Howard Peterson  
 m. 5.55-13 KTVH.  
 call -  
 m. R. Kenneth Lyon  
 Wichita -  
 Dr. James McCain  
 m. 14.11  
 President Kansas State University  
 Manhattan, Kansas  
 Tel. Jefferson 9-3705  
 Shariff Earl Robinson  
 Times  
 Holcomb, Kans. - m. 15.  
 Warren Hotel - Tel. Bridge 6-3221  
 Garden City, Kansas

Courtesy of The Library of Congress and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan U. Schwartz, trustee



Appendix G - Capote's First Set Of Notes On The Clutter Case

Bob Wells  
6-3232  
BR6-5668

To Be Interviewed

Bob Wells

Gerald Van Vleet - business Partner ✓

Alfred Stockmeier - hired hand

Susan Kidwell ✓

Nancy Sweet } girls who discovered the crime

Sheriff Earl Robinson ✓

Pastor (First Methodist Church)  
Leonard Cowan & wife - melle.

Principal High School ✓

All Teachers of Nancy and Kenyon ✓ (Mrs. Ruff)

All school friends of " " "

Brother of Herbert Clutter

Family Lawyer

Cy. W. S. Doctor

Family Doctor

4 H (Heath, Heart, Hand, Honeymoon)

Boy friend of Nancy (?)

Girl friend of Kenyon (?)

Go to Cemetery

Undertaker

Local newspaper

Other children of H.W. Clutter  
Beverly, student at University of Kansas, and melle.  
Donald G. Jackson, Mt. Carroll, Illinois

Andy ERhart -  
Director of

Taylor Jones

Lester McCoy  
CORONER

Courtesy of The Library of Congress and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan U. Schwartz, trustee.

DR. Williams - Long Lane - Indians - Archie Rupp - direction  
to Mrs. Ashida farm - Mrs. Paul Helm - playbill -  
Mr. Hendricks - postmistress (Mrs. Myrtle Parker)  
Mrs. Riggs (English theme).

MRS. Clarence Katz - 90 west 7 miles. lost  
home, right hand side of the road keeping in injection  
ditch.

Kangaroo: never without his 7 leaves (can  
win when found?)

<sup>Katz</sup>  
Tulane <sup>1</sup> west and 9-<sup>by</sup> apr 12

To last cooked a pie, new water  
another cherry pie.

showed old dishes that belonged to  
grandmother.

Courtesy of The Library of Congress and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan U. Schwartz, trustee.

Appendix I - Questions Capote Recorded About The Crime

question: finger prints

question of Tying-up -

1) were they tied up simultaneously in the same room, headed there for this purpose?

2) what types knots employed in Trussing?

3) How Tied?

4) How possible for one person

to overcome and tie them. 2

5) Gun, what gauge. Shotgun: straped buck shot.

question: was mr. clutter faithful?

question: ask of the girls about smell of gun powder when they entered house

6. Did the clutters normally

lock their house at night? Any sign

of forced entry. Answer: no

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Appendix J – Nancy Clutter's Cherry Pie Recipe Capote Recorded

PASTRY

1 1/2 c. sifted flour

3/4 T. salt

1/2 cup shortening

1/3 - 1/2 cup milk

few drops of vinegar

Sift flour and salt into  
mixing bowl and blend in  
half of the shortening until mixture is  
mealy. Blend in remaining shortening until  
mixture looks like lamp glass.  
Add combined milk and vinegar  
gradually and stir lightly with  
fork. Knead lightly and divide  
into half and roll out bottom

crust which is larger. Then roll out other dough  
and make lattice top. Fill bottom crust with  
filling and quickly interweave strips across, seal  
and flute edges. Bake in oven 400° for 35  
to 40 minutes. Remove from oven and cool on wire rack.

Courtesy of The Library of Congress and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan U. Schwartz, trustee.

Appendix K – Questions Capote Recorded To Ask Alvin Dewey

QUESTIONS FOR A. Dewey

When was Kengon's g-lenses?  
Were his <sup>Kengon's</sup> feet tied to the safe? or was it  
it true? ~~the~~.

Was there any money in the house? wallet,  
Purse. Travellers. no money. Mrs. Clutch's (S)  
(rubbery) -

Who shot who?

Bloody footprints?

X What kind of stairs on stairs leading  
to basement.

May we see Mary's diary? At least  
last two entries?

See Survey Report written in  
Mrs. Stripes. "Story of my life."

Telephones?

2 Mexicans

gags? yes - confusion of  
black lead & mixed tape house.

Courtesy of The Library of Congress and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan U. Schwartz, trustee.

Total \$ 5,428  
5,690  
314  
6,004.08

Expenses

find figure	217.50
\$6,343.69	250.18
	46768

fare to Manhattan, Kansas: 217.50 check  
~~Tel. fare to Manhattan, Kansas: 5.50~~  
Hotel, Manhattan, Kansas - \$15.  
Train - meals - \$25 plus \$30.  
X miss Lee - \$50 incidental expenses  
X " " - \$25.  
X Hotel Warren - \$338.  
X fare return to N.Y. \$250.18 check  
don't include → advance to me \$250 check  
X spent cash, (including) \$1400  
X Hotel Warren \$238 check  
X HERTZ CAR - \$344.93 check  
X Oscar Bernstein - \$25.  
X plane fare - \$466. (west trip)  
X L. distance telephone calls to Doug \$155.  
X miss Lee, salary - \$900  
X Bunt's car hire \$210.00  
payment Perry Smith \$100. checks  
" Hitchcock \$100.  
X Hotel Warren in March \$370.  
fare well 9/4/5 \$135.00  
X Count Record \$314.68

D. PARK: \$50  
Jack Curtis - photo: \$40  
Chad record \$5.  
2 days miami - \$90.  
2 days Las Vegas - \$105.00  
Trip: London } \$370  
DR. J. Saffon }

LEGATORIA  
PIAZZESI  
VENEZIA  
S. Maria del Gioglio 2517

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## Appendix M- Capote's First Writing & Thoughts About The Crime

### The Crime

Dec 14

On a Tuesday night, Dec 14, 9:30 P.M.,  
when Mr. Herbert William Clutter talked on  
the telephone with his business partner, Gerald  
Van Vleet, and 9:30 a.m. of Sunday Dec. 15, 1959,  
a killer (?) or killers (?) entered the Clutter  
farm-house and murdered Mr. Clutter, <sup>(aged 48)</sup> his wife,  
Bonnie, 45; ~~his~~ his son Kenyon, 15; and daughter  
Nancy, 16.

question: what is closest estimation & time of  
death. bet. 11 and 2 a.m.

question: weather Dec. 13, 14, 15.

question: were the telephones cut outside or inside,  
and were the phones jacked from the walls? was  
this done before or after crime? (If killers sneaked  
into house, probably after - since would make noise)

question: what kind of gun. Is this  
duck-hunting area? no, pheasant

R.S.

Courtesy of The Library of Congress and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan U. Schwartz, trustee.



Appendix N – Capote's First Interview

MRS. Ashida - Holcomb

MRS. Kathryn Hughes 10/6 N5  
Tel: BR 6-4983

Clutter + Kenyon  
Saturday - 9:30 - 12

Mr. Clutter 4 H Community Leader  
(45- or 50 members)

Mary Gentry Cherry Pies until  
~~Sat~~ 1 P.M. Saturday - 3 & 4 children  
12 and thirteen years (Arlene Rupp, JoAnn  
Katz)

Mary was a real leader  
Recognized food and clothing.

Kenyon Vice-President of 4 H Council  
in the County.

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MRS. Clutter always worried about

doing the right thing.

Lynn Russell

Kenyon neither indifferent to honors; shy,

reluctant - Kenyon loved horses. "If Kenyon was  
looking at T.V. night."

didn't get beds made.

1:30 Clutter to MRS. Sue

Marj "you just looked at her  
and liked her."

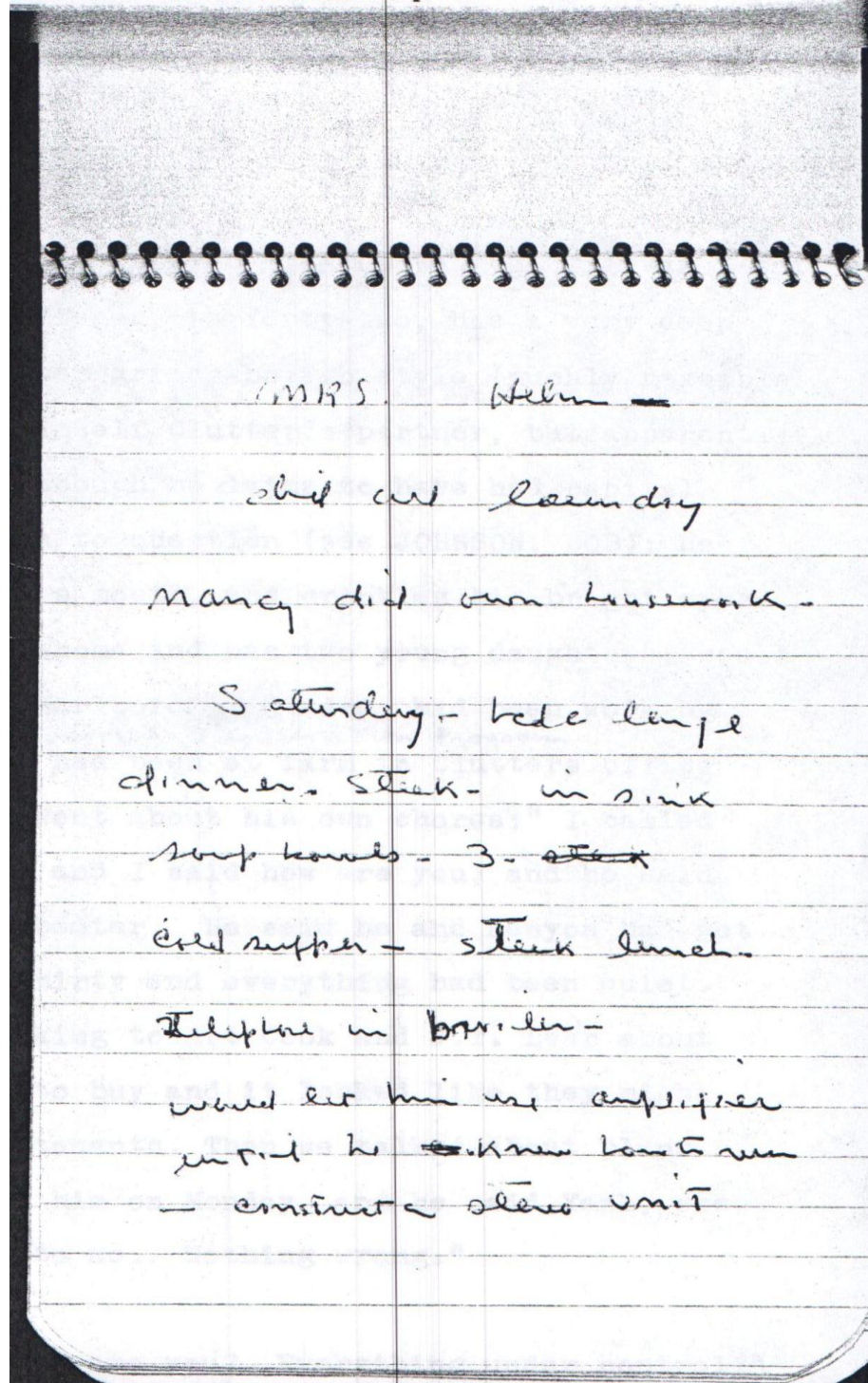
Kenyon: Judy Golay - Carol Cowan

wanted her (Bonnie) to make decisions.

Clutter: violent abstainer - Temperance  
is abstinence - if woman drank got rid  
of him. M R Clutter would have no  
mercy on a drinker - out they  
would go, even if they were starving.

Appendix O - Another Interview By Capote ("Field" Notes)

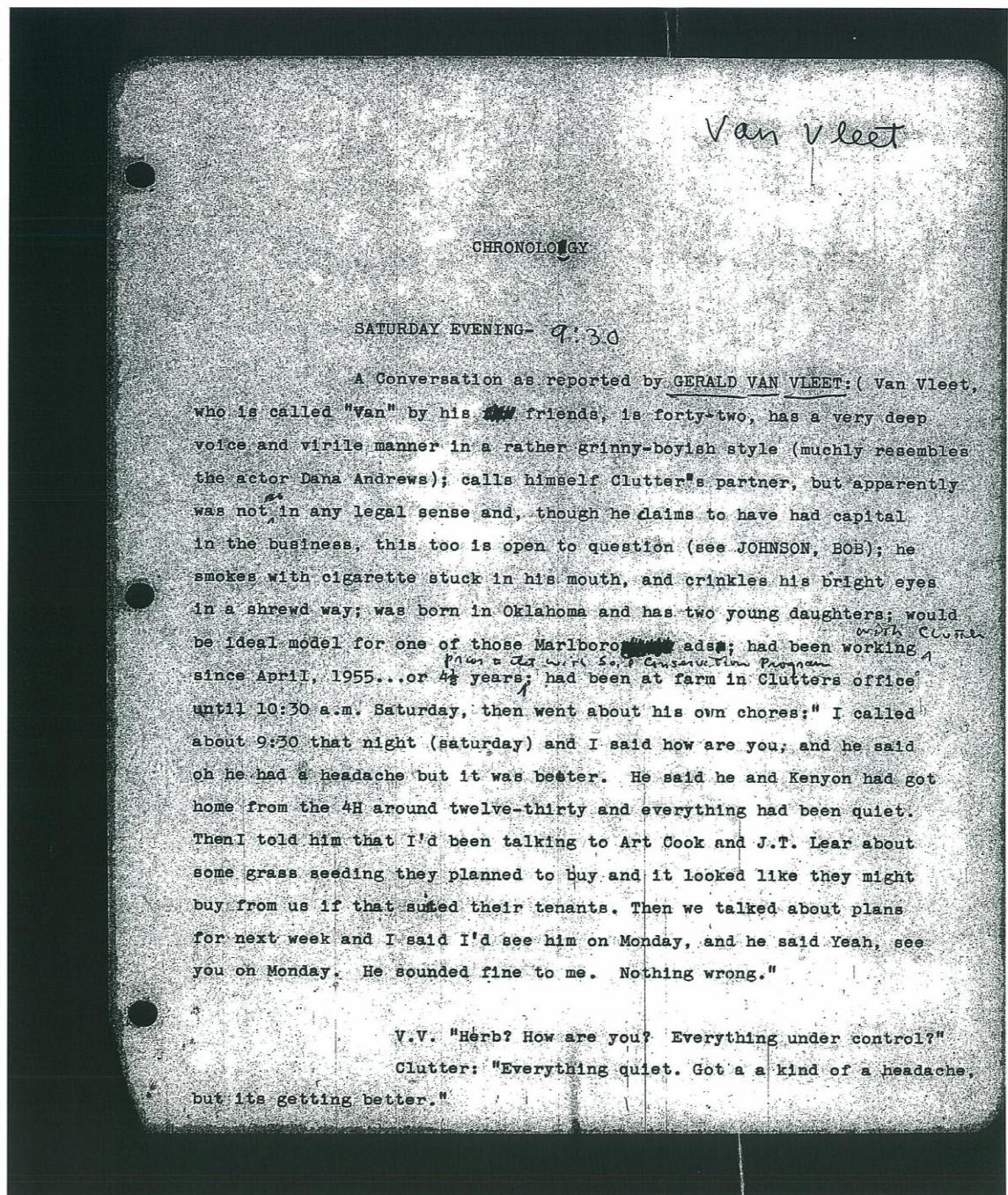
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Appendix P - Capote's Notes On Mr. Van Vleet's



Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
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Appendix Q – Harper Lee's Notes on Van Vleet

Dec. 22

Mr. Gerald Van Vleet

Clutter wrote down every business transaction he made. Was not a "settle it with a handshake" type. Was extraordinarily meticulous about making notes on every phone call he made. "On the phone all the time."

He was an "operate on the other fellow's money" farmer.

V.V. thinks Clutter looked his age.

Loathed Ezra Taft Benson's farm policies. Disagreed with him in Washington. Clutter couldn't see how farmers could make "living money" cutting down on acreage farmed. Thought that markets should be expanded, rather than productive acreage cut. C.'s idea was that you couldn't make more money on less land, and farmers are obliged to make a certain amount of cash a year to survive on.

When Clutter ~~ex~~ entertained in Washington, gave ~~xx~~ to understand that NO LIQUOR would be served.

Clutter owned 855 acres outright. Grand total operation 3415 acres. (A year ago operated on 9310 acres.)

Owned 810 head of cattle. Mostly Hereford (red, white faces). A large operation in this part of the country, thinks V.V., but at present moment cannot sell them for what they paid for them.

(300-pound calf worth \$100. 600-lb. animal \$150.)  
(One herd of 100 head worth \$20,000.)

Arkansas river South Boundary of farm.

Clutter always asked if prospective employee drank.

Arrangement with Van V. was, V.V. put capital into the enterprise, drew weekly stipend, and shared profits (if any) at end of year.

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Saturday  
Nov 14

Van Vleet:

says Nancy came in office about 9:30 Saturday morning. Kenyon sitting at father's desk to right of father; father trying to teach him to make out expense sheet.

Clutter jumped up and said they'd be late; had evidently forgotten about meeting. Left for meeting in '59 half-ton Chevrolet pickup.

Van Vleet says Helm says Clutter talked to 2 Mexicans Saturday afternoon. Helm had been working on his car-starters; was not painting.

V.V. says Kenyon bought lumber to make sheep-feeder while in Garden C. It was on back of pick-up. They had been to Dodge City previous Tuesday where Kenyon bought 39 head of sheep.

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Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



Saturday  
Nov. 14

Van Vleet: called Clutter about 9:30 p.m. Saturday night.

"Hello?" Clutter a soft-spoken man; voice not deep as V.V.'s.

V.V.: "Did you get everything under control this morning?"

Clutter: "Yes, we finally got back about 12:30."

They discussed their efforts to sell Art Geck and J.T. Lear grass seed. Both had tenants to check on about grass seeding.

C: "If tenants haven't made prior arrangements (to buy from someone else) we get first crack at it."

They ~~xxxx~~ talked about Mondays work, which was primarily to "hammer-  
mill Indian grass."

V.V.: "See you Monday morning."

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On Sunday, November 15

Gerald Van Vleet, about 8:am. was "up north checking cattle."  
(Up north means 6 miles north of C. farm?) "I was having float trouble, but fixed it and let the cattle drink, then made sure the water didn't leak out of the tank."

He got home about 11:00 a.m. and heard it then. Telephone rang and it was the church wanting Eveanna's and Beverly's addresses. "I changed my clothes and went over to the church."

Van Vleet didn't go to the house until Sunday afternoon, and then he went only as far as the highway patrol barricade.

"Guess you had to believe it...I still don't believe it."

Van Vleet of two minds re killer(s): thinks they knew the house well (knew where upstairs bedrooms were); on the other hand thinks they didn't: "If Herb's family was at stake, he'd do anything they told him." Thinks Clutter, held at gunpoint, toured the house??

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Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



Appendix R – Capote's Typed Notes on Lester McCoy

McCoy: "Thayer &  
Porter - Porter, from  
Indiana.

Interview Dec 27<sup>th</sup>

See notes; M.C.

H.W. CLUTTER

As described by Mr. and Mrs. Lester McCoy: (Except for Clifford Hope. Sr. Mr. McCoy, who had the Ford concession in Garden for thirty years, is probably the county's most eminent citizen; a very civil and civilized sort of man who, when he smiles, looks exactly like John Foster Dulles; his wife is a less plump Mrs. Harry Truman." Outside of a certain circle, the Methodist clique, I don't think too many grieved over Herb Clutter. He was a self-centered man with a strong power drive; he did a lot of things, but not much that didn't help Herb Clutter. ~~There~~ I never saw any evidences of temper myself, but a lot of people have told me he was a hard man to deal with. He wanted things done his way, and I never knew him to change his mind. Mrs. Clutter was just a quiet thing completely dominated by him. Of course the murder has affected everybody in this county. I have a farm out there in Holcomb, and my tenant told me the other day he was going to move, he ~~was~~ said "Nobody sleeps around here anymore. The lights are on all night. The porch lights and everything. There's just too much bitterness. People taking turn to sit up <sup>with</sup> a gun. Right after it happened you couldn't get the women to go to bed, even sit down. They just wanted to stand up all night.

"Of course the church was the whole <sup>of the</sup> Clutters ~~social~~ social life, and us being being Presbyterian we didn't see too much of them.

"Naturally Clutter was a gambler; any man who farms in Western Kansas has to be. If we had an inch more of rain a year it would be paradise. He was terribly in debt. Most of these people have spent their cup before the harvest J."

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



Appendix S – Harper Lee's Notes On Lester McCoy

December 27

Mr. Lester McCoy

~~XXXXXXXXXX~~

The Garden City Company owns 25,000 acres of land north and west of Holcomb. About 80% of Holcomb residents are tenants on G.C.C. lands. They farm on a share-cropping basis, for instance, the company gets 1/3 of wheat grown, 1/5 of milo, etc. in return for tenants' use of land and tenant houses.

In this way, the tenants are more secure than if they operated on their own land. The risks of operation are far less in that they do not pay property taxes, are not subject to capital losses through crop failures. Their probable greatest cash outlay is in buying seed and farm machinery.

of Pennsylvania

1967-  
1027  
The Garden City Company is owned by the estate of Spencer Penrose (Brother of Sen. Penrose or Sen. Penrose himself?) Was begun about ~~twenty~~ years ago and has been in receivership two times, but last recovery & regrouping was happy one, for has shown steady profit since. Penrose estate owns most of stock, but a good deal of Northern capital (Bernard Baruch is investor) in corporation. There is a local management office in Garden City, but corporation itself is an absentee landlord.

Most tenants of G.C.C. are second generation. Heavy influx of Russians to Holcomb community and most are Catholic.

\*\*\*\*\*

Social strata still undefined, but clearing: people have a tendency to associate according to religion out here. (Religion great factor in lives, and obviously so: probably churches are greatest social outlets for majority of people around here.) The Methodists stick with the Methodists, the R.C.'s with the Pope; only cracks in gen. Puritan social life seem to be Presbyterians & Episcopalians.

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.

Holcomb petrified, and still petrified.

The Ulrich family drives in to Garden City every night.\*

One man became afraid when he was alone in his yard of an evening.  
(CHECK.)

\*They think murders have something to do with Kan. Wheat Growers  
Assn.

Dec. 27

When Mr. Lester McCoy goes goose hunting through Holcomb, he says  
it's not unusual to see porch lights on at 4-4:30 in the morning.

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan.  
U. Schwartz, trustee.

## Appendix T – Capote's Notes on Sheriff Earl Robinson

### SHERIFF EARL ROBINSON

Aged 63. A stocky man, average height or a little below; has large balding head, and a big-featured face; drooping jowls, small eyes set behind rimless spectacles; has big protruding ears, like John O'Hara's, whom he resembles in other respects. A deep twangy voice with marked Western accent. Wears dark slate gray shirts, no coat, and tight, non-uniform trousers with belt that bites into his paunch. Addicted to gaudy ties...particularly one pictorially adorned with flying geese. No one seems to have much respect for him, and the case has been pretty much taken out of his hands, though he says that he "Hasn't worked on much of anything else around here for the last month; we've just let everything else slide."

See N.L. notes for complete text of interview.

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



Appendix U – Harper Lee's Notes on Sheriff Robinson

Dec. 29  
Sunday November 15

Sheriff Robinson

was cruising around in car looking for desperadoes when a police car-radio call informed him to "come in, there was a bad accident in Holcomb." Sheriff said he started to "go in", but another call said "there'd been a shooting at the Clutter house." The sheriff drove out to Holcomb and found Ewart & Hendricks waiting on North side of schoolhouse; he followed them to the Clutter house.

"Ewart wanted to show me what the kids had seen, so we went right on upstairs." Sheriff said they saw Nancy, and he said the following:

"Where the devil do you reckon Herb is?...Have you tried to figure out what happened?"

Nancy's door open.

Kenyon's door wide open. Room looked like "somebody had slept in bed."

Mrs. Clutter's room door closed. (Sheriff said she was tied to the bed.)

He then went and called the police department. He went back to the house and "heard a racket in the basement." It was Undersheriff Myers. Sheriff: "We've got two upstairs." Myers: "There's one downstairs."

Sheriff: "What's in this other room?" (Indicating furnace room.)

He opened the door to the furnace room.

Sheriff: "Is that Herb?"

Mr. Ewart came forward & looked. He said, "That is Herb."

Sheriff: "I was so stunned I couldn't think what to do for a while-- then I radioed for the coroner, the county attorney, and the ambulance."

He also called the assistant chief of police (Richard Rohleder) to come take pictures. He called deputy Hawkins and another deputy to come out and set up a road block.

Rev. Cowan arrived before the coroner. Nobody knows who told him.

The sheriff "looked for evidence of ransacking" but found none. Inspected & sniffed Mr. Clutter's guns, but there was no odor of being recently fired. Nothing was disturbed as far as the sheriff could see.

The KBI took fingerprints on Sunday afternoon.

Sheriff left between 11:30 & 12:30.

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



Appendix V – Harper Lee's Notes on Dr. Fenton (The Coroner)

Thinks "that they were all shot where they were tied." Impossible for them to move.

Dr. Fenton thought the crime was carried out by someone of "high-school intelligence."

He described the bodies tied as "you'd dog a calf."

DR FENTON'S THEORY:

Thinks murders the work of one person. Thinks killer entered by east door and subdued Mr. Clutter as "you'd dog a calf". Pictured ~~murderer~~ with gloves on, just enough nylon cord, not too little, at any rate (about 10 feet left over) possibly a mask on, and adhesive tape already torn in strips and attached to shirt front at chest. Thinks killer didn't have a gun to begin with.

(Query: does Dr. Fenton think rope already cut in sections for 4 people, or did killer tell them to wait a second while he cut rope?)

He thinks Kenyon went to bed in his shorts and t-shirt; had just enough time to put on dungarees.

(If they were all shot where they were tied, and killer didn't have a gun to begin with, and Kenyon's glasses were where they were, K. would have waked up all Holcomb getting from upstairs to basement under duress and mole-blind.)

He thinks Nancy either had not gone to bed, or had gotten up.

He thinks Mrs. Clutter definitely in bed (with socks on. Heating pad and Vicks seem to bear this out. Cold.) and had put on her bathrobe. He thinks each person in the family was in some way aware of unusual happenings and were getting ready to investigate.

(If they were all shot where they were tied, Nancy and Mrs. C. never got out of their rooms. Quick work after tying up Mr. C. & Kenyon in the basement.)

Dr. Fenton "could even guess the height and weight" of the person who knew the house so extremely well, who knew the Clutters' habits so very well that he could subdue all four of them, or who had been watching the house so carefully that he knew where everybody had gone to bed for the night. Dr. Fenton thinks killer knew the Clutters (MR. & MRS.) slept in separate rooms.

Dr. Fenton knows a thing or 2 we don't. He seemed so damn sure of himself when he said that the killer "didn't have a gun to begin with." (Why does old Robinson still have Mr. C's shotgun??) Fenton thinks killer wore a mask, and at some time during the proceedings it slipped, therefore he had to kill them all.

(Masks don't hide people you know: don't hide voices, clothes, physical description, etc. ~~Masks~~ Masks do hide faces of people you don't know, but either way, if Clutters had lived they could have given a pretty good description of the intruder.)

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



December 26

Dr. Robert M. Fenton

Dr. Fenton is Finney County coroner as well as County health officer. Received med. degree from Kansas U in 1954; native of Kansas City, Mo. Has been practicing in Garden City about two years; took over practice from a friend who was a year ahead of him in med school and who had established a practice in Garden City. Friend was killed in automobile accident and Dr. ~~Kinnertz~~ Fenton took over his practice. Married, two boys, 1 girl.

Was bombardier on B-17 during war; shot down and imprisoned Stalag Luft III in 1943.

Is tall man, well built, fair receding hair and large blue eyes. Has difficult stammer that increases when he reads something aloud, is not too noticeable when he's talking, and vanishes completely when he talks of his war experiences.

Very pleasant individual who tried his best to help us. Good, modern office; waiting room, cubby-hole for nurse (receptionist?); own private office, then consulting rooms down a long hall.

Academic degrees (framed) on wall beyond desk; on ~~opposite~~ adjacent wall (within his own and the public's eyeshot) photographs of his children. Three pictures in color. Discussed children while T. mooching evidence, and Dr. Fenton turned on his office light for me to get a better look. Couldn't've been a more cooperative witness under the circumstances. The circumstances: Al Dewey.

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.

December 26

Sunday, November 15

Dr. Fenton:

At nine-thirty, Dr. Fenton was at Sunday School in the First Methodist Church, G.C. He knew it was about then because "we sang a couple of songs and were waiting for our teacher." Thought highly of teacher, who had been black sheep until several years ago, then saw the light.

Dr. Fenton was called by a man in the church office--the man who answered telephone during S.S. & church. Dr. Fenton said he and Mr. Duane West were asked to proceed immediately to the Clutter farmhouse, as there were four bodies there.

Before he went to Holcomb, Dr. Fenton got Mr. Clyde Daniel, Fenton's own lawyer and G.C. police court judge, to go with them. They arrived about 10:10, and 2 Phillips ambulances were on the scene. He saw the sheriff's car, deputy's car; Richard Erolatar (who took official pictures) was there. *RHOLATER*

At some time before the bodies were moved and house gone over for whatever the officials were looking for (probably snowballs), Mr. Clyde Daniels had the presence of mind to think of his dictaphone; Mr. Daniels got it, and Dr. Fenton and he talked what they saw into the machine as they went from room to room in the house.

The Bodies:

Dr. Fenton estimated death to have occurred between 11 p.m. and 2 a.m. Saturday/Sunday. He could not estimate the individual times of death, but thinks that all were killed within a relatively short time. He thought that Mr. Clutter was the last to die, due to the condition of blood found not entirely coagulated, body not entirely cold, and body in a less advanced stage of riger mortis than the other three. Dr. Fenton figured riger mortis as progressing about one foot per hour. He also took into consideration, however, the fact that the furnace room was warm (whereas the basement was cool) and that Mr. C. was lying near the furnace. This did not materially alter his opinion that Mr. Clutter died last, but did have some bearing on the doctor's belief that Mr. Clutter was not alive for very long after his family was dead.

Mr. Clutter had received a wound in the neck starting just left of center, severing the trachea and "nicking" the jugular vein. The cut was deep to begin with, but much deeper on the right side than on the left, leading Dr. Fenton to deduce that Mr. Clutter's throat was cut by a right-handed man (person) standing behind him.

(Dr. Fenton probably estimated the height of the killer who tied Mr. Clutter to the pipe by the height of the rope found on the pipe. We do not know how high up on the pipe the rope was, and Dr. Fenton did not volunteer this information or tell us how tall he thought the killer was.)

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Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



The Crime

Dewey: Clutter stabbed with hog-sticking stab; wound no longer than three inches in side of throat. Corpse was "about bled dry" when found.

~~Remember 25x~~

This wrong  
if we believe  
Dr. Fenton's  
version:



{ See Dr. Fenton }  
{ in this section }

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Rope marks on Mr. Clutter where tied.

Dr. Fenton does not think that Mr. Clutter's throat was cut while his killer was cutting C's hand loose from the water pipe. He is positive that Mr. C.'s throat was cut before he was shot, because of the heavy loss of blood. There was blood, of course, from the gunshot wound (through left cheek at range of 6 inches or less) but Dr. Fenton felt that the amount of blood lost came from heart pumping blood through the throat wound.

Dr. Fenton said, however, that the gunshot wound was the actual cause of death--"finished him off"--and so stated in Mr. Clutter's death certificate: (cause of death was listed as the same for the 4.)

"Severe trauma ~~xx~~ to brain and vital cranial structures."

On Mr. Clutter's death certificate, Dr. Fenton listed as a significant condition contributing to death "Laceration of neck, trachea, and jugular veins." Adding "shot in left side of face with shotgun by person or persons unknown."

Dr. Fenton's description of Mrs. Clutter's injuries: "shot in left preauricular area with shotgun by person or persons unknown." He thought she was shot from a range of one or two inches.

~~XXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXXX~~

Truman's notes (copied from dictaphone transcript):

(Mrs. C.) peach-colored gown, white socks. (Nelle's note: gown & bathrobe and "small plain white socks.")

Into dictaphone: "The bed covers are thrown back as though the patient had been in bed and awakened, put the robe on; lying on a stool in front of the dresser is a heating pad and a small bottle of Vicks nose drops. No sign of a struggle seen."

Truman's note on Nancy: red and white candy-striped pajamas. Chartreuse-colored bathrobe. "Fancy" white bobby-socks.

Dr. Fenton described Nancy as "Shot in right (writing almost illegible) occipital (??) area with shotgun by person or persons unknown." He thinks Nancy was shot almost point-blank range. Shot went through head and blasted face.

Kenyon was "shot in right side of face with shotgun by person or persons unknown," and Dr. Fenton thought that the face wound (here he made a circle about the size of a silver dollar with his thumb and forefinger) and powder burns indicated that he had been shot with the gun held against his face. "Kenyon was cold."

There were rope marks on all the bodies, giving some indication as to how tight they had been tied and also that they had struggled to get free.

Dr. Fenton thought a good reason for all persons being shot at such close range was that the noise of the blasts was lessened thereby. He didn't think a person could work off a two-inch wide adhesive tape gag if hands were tied. He said adhesive tape with nothing else is an excellent gag, and offered to demonstrate.

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Appendix W – Capote's Typed Notes on Dr. Fenton

CHRONOLOGY

SUNDAY MORNING, Nov. 15, 10:10 to 12 noon

As told by Dr. Robert Fenton: (Fenton is ~~young~~ young ~~Coroner~~ Coroner: for full report on him, and Coroner's Report see N.L.'s notes): "I've seen some gory things in my time, but nothing as gory as that: what we found in the Clutter house Sunday morning. In my opinion ~~the~~ Herb was the last one killed; they'd all been dead about eight hours, and though Herb was stiff, ~~a~~ rigor mortis had set in, the blood was still damp, it hadn't coagulated; of course maybe this ~~had~~ something to do with the furnace, the fact he was lying near the furnace in the furnace room. After I'd examined the bodies, Clyde Daniels, who is my lawyer, ~~and~~ went out there with me, <sup>he</sup> drove back into town and brought his dictaphone, and we went around the house talking into the dictaphone and ~~and~~ describing everything we saw (Sample, Fenton in Mrs. Clutter's bedroom speaking into dictaphone: "The bed-covers are thrown back as though the patient...the person... had been awakened, put the robe on, a peach colored robe; she is wearing a peach-colored nightgown and thin white socks. Lying on a stool in front of the dresser is a heating pad and a small bottle of Vick's nose drops. No sign of a struggle is seen..."). Frohlater was there taking photographs. Two ambulances from the Phillips Funeral home took the bodies away, two in each ambulance, about noon; prior to that, I'd called Al Dewey, <sup>at 11 o'clock</sup> who was in Wichita at a meeting, to ask his permission to release the bodies; because I knew Al would be in charge of the case (Sheriff Robinson seems to have counted for very little). Around four thirty I

(over)

*Quoted from Transcript*

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again examined the bodies at Phillips...but I didn't do a post-mortem, which some people have criticised us for. But all a post would have told us is what they ate for dinner (steak, according to what Mrs Helm found in the oven). There was no Inquest because we thought it would be a waste of time."

Kenyon: blue powder-burns on face. Gun held right against face - seen noise.

Maney: Candy-striped pajamas

Dwan last arrived after eleven.

Fenton: "nobody told us anything when we first arrived, went to second floor. Shucked. somebody said, "There's 2 more in the basement."

Present when arrived 10:10: Sheriff Robinson, undersheriff Mosier

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Appendix X – Harper Lee's Notes On The Atmosphere Outside Of The Courthouse

January 6

About 3 p m we went to the sheriff's office; quiet but for lady radio operator and seedy old gentleman reeking of booze but not drunk. Sat for a while until radio calls lessened; then announced to the lady that he was W.W. Packard and he had come for his car that was stolen. (We thought him Pa Hickock.) Lady said she'd heard about it, but there was nobody to wait on him, and could he come back tomorrow or next day? Mr. Packard could.

About 3:25 we went for a stroll and met Bill Brown sneaking into the building.

At about 3:45 we returned for the press conference, waited until 4:10 when the radio lady announced that Mr. Duane West would be unfortunately delayed, and could the press conference be held at five.

Captain Murray, enormous girth, always with cigar in hand or mouth, red face, red hair, red eyebrows, brown horn-rimmed glasses; Captain of highway patrol; subscribes to The New York Times)--Captain Murray stood by the door and announced, among other things, "I always tell the truth." He outlined to the reporters and photographers the route of entry of the prisoners into the courthouse. The prisoners would alight at the south entrance to the building, walk north on the sidewalk and enter through the east door. The press was requested to keep one portion (1/3) of the courthouse steps clear, plus the sidewalk leading to the steps.

Sunny, clear, cold afternoon, as the press arranged themselves loosely (at first) in a rough line down the steps and to the sidewalk. Their cameras were ready, their light readings taken in about two minutes.

I walked to the south entrance of the building and stood against a tree for some fifteen minutes. As I stood there, traffic around the square increased slowly and quietly. Around and around, cars filled with people cruised at a snail's pace. People were drifting onto the south side of the square in twos and threes; people were standing on the sidewalk across the street from the square, until sensing safety in numbers, they began to cross the street and stand on the grass at the edge of the square.

I returned to the press line. The thermometer was dropping and T's ears (good barometer) were red; my feet numb. We had stood for perhaps twenty minutes when we were aware that the few teenagers grouped under a tree nearby was now a definite crowd. Two Holcomb High basketball jackets in the midst. As they waited, the teenagers squirmed, wriggled, fought mock battles; the girls giggled and flirted with the photographers--two ran over to the press line and asked to be photographed. Two were interviewed by a man with a tape recorder.

At first the photographers were professionally eager & avid to get their work done, but as time passed and ~~the~~ the afternoon grew colder, fingers became rigid, feet stamped, jokes turned bluer.

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January 6

One photographer persuaded a small boy to pose with a bubble-gum feat; boy couldn't blow a good one; photographer quit in disgust.  
had

By this time, adult citizens/drifted on the scene, many with their children in tow. A group of Mexican women crossed the south side of the square--two carried infants swathed in yellow blankets.

A photographer on the steps gestured to a colleague in the yard and pointed: behind us, a man was holding a four-year-old boy on his shoulders to get a better look. The photographer in the yard shook his head and dismissed the shot as being too grim.

Mrs. Lowe appeared, saying cheerfully that she'd seen Nancy Clutter about 1 p m Saturday Nov 14 (couldn't hear well enough to catch much)--brightly inquisitive about the photographers' equipment and the Author in the press line. Two small boys were pressing close behind us, escorted by a teenager. When asked why they were there, teenager said they knew the Clutters.

Carnival atmosphere increased as sun was setting. A lone woman came up the sidewalk and stood like a lost chicken until a highway patrolman asked her to leave. One patrolman was assigned to keep 75 teenagers and children in line.

The press line swelled and diminished with reporters leaving and returning. In the beginning, the area ~~xxxxxxx~~ in front of the courthouse steps was wide enough for everybody to get pictures and have elbow room, but due to the pressure of waiting and people behind us, the press line gradually became compact, and the area by the steps had ~~xxxxxxxxx~~ shrunk to less than half its original size.

Shortly after five p m, Marie Dewey drove up and parked in one of the places reserved for the sheriff's cars. A patrolman waved to Captain Murray, and Captain Murray went to the car. (January 7: Marie said he told her that they'd "gotten in", but that they were out at the place looking for the shells.)

Light was fading, and as darkness grew the crowd increased. People were growing quieter.

A stir from the crowd at the south end of the sidewalk brought cameras to faces. Bill Brown and two associates came walking quickly up the walk.

"Thank God it was only them," a photographer said. "I didn't have the damned thing turned on."

up the driveway and entered the courthouse by  
Duane West walked/~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~  
the south doors. His figure was only faintly recognizable in the dim light.

This action was beginning to work a change in the crowd, by now standing four and five deep along the sidewalk leading to the east doors. The teenagers no longer cavorted, people pressed closer

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January 6

in behind us; activity ceased and the crowd was quiet.

A car drove up and parked in front of the south door. Al Dewey was outlined in light from the courthouse; sitting in the back of the car on the right side. As he got out of the car he was in darkness, and only vague shapes were discernable at the corner of the courthouse. As they walked quickly up the sidewalk, they sprang from moving shadows into two-dimensional black-and-white camera floodlight. Al was on Smith's left, holding his arm lightly. Al's huge brown eyes looked apprehensively into the glare; two heads taller than Smith, moving him quickly. Smith almost ran up the steps, like a dark furry thing. Wore dirty-looking dungarees and a dark zippered windbreaker (or close-fitting Eisenhower jacket.) (January 7: Marie said Al said that when Smith got out of the car and saw the crowd, he became frightened nearly out of his wits.)

A policeman thought it necessary to stand mostly in front of me when Hickock was brought in; got a flash of a lowered head and hands handcuffed and chained at waist.

Cut and ran up the steps; got to second floor in time to see ~~Hickock~~ door to sheriff's residence open and Hickock going up steps. Body leaning sharply forward, soles of shoes and a glimpse of something that looked like bare ankles. Door shut behind them.

Went to courtroom and sat on first row. TV lights and four microphones set up to face east wall. KBI agents appeared; Al staring a bit in light from floodlamps. Said, "Hello, Bill," to someone (probably s.ass Brown), grinned in our direction. Sat down and was completely uncommunicative.

When asked what time they "got here", Al paused, thought it over, and said, "About five."

Glanced at watch. It was now 6:30.

Duane West flapped about for a while. End of press conference.

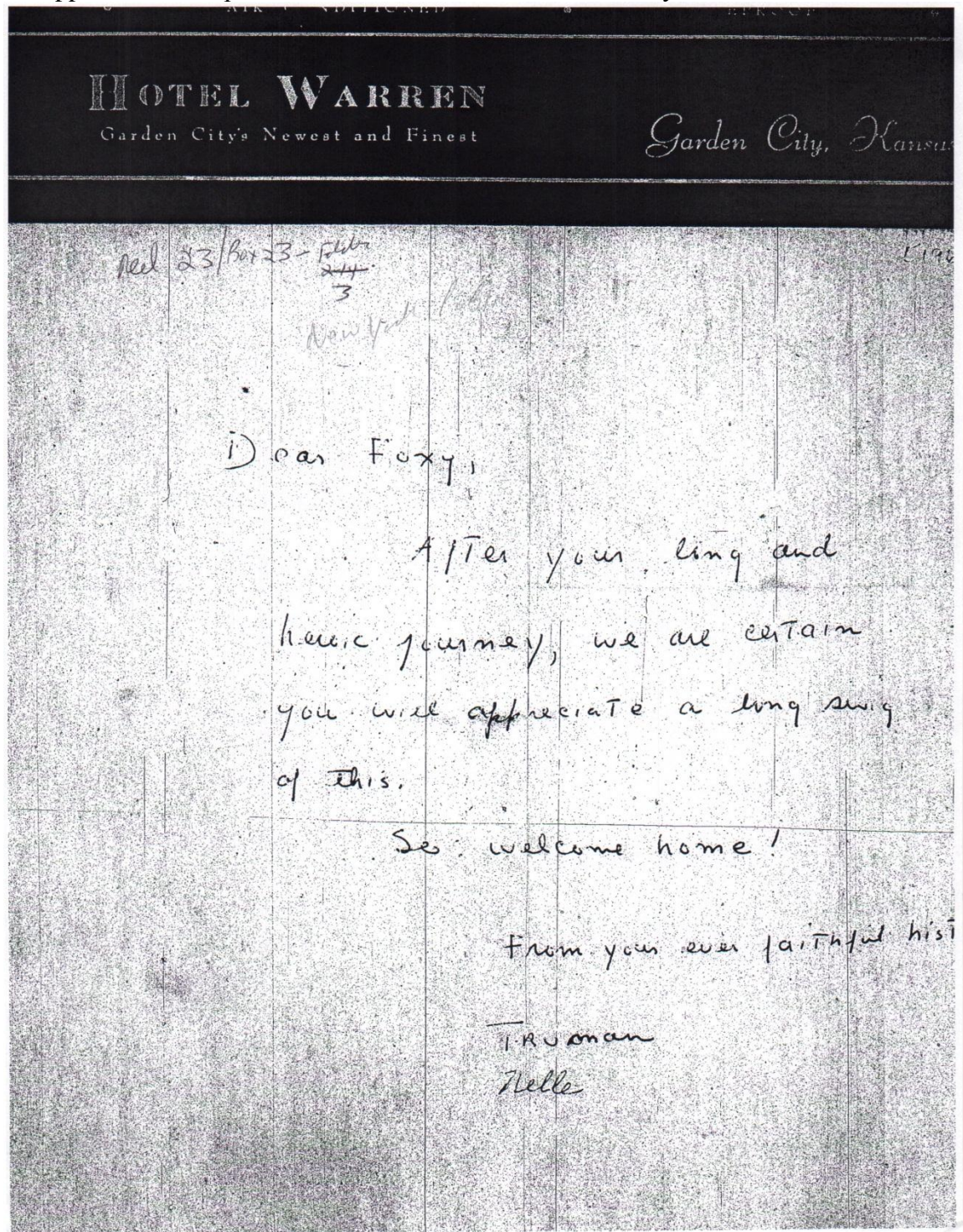
As we went down the <sup>east</sup> steps, the courthouse square was completely deserted except for four highway patrolmen standing in a group at the bottom of the steps.

Garden City from the square to the Warren Hotel was quiet. Almost no traffic.

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Appendix Y – Capote's Handwritten Note To Alvin Dewey From Lee And Him



Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
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## Appendix Z – Capote’s Notes On Smith And Hickock’s Arraignment

Clift      involved  
                  magel

Today, Jan 7, arrangement of courthouse  
and first good look at Smith and Hickock -

Smith is 28, but one might suppose him younger; for one thing he is slender and, in a juvenile way, rather uncoordinated; <sup>dishwater</sup> ~~his~~ hair, cut semi-crew (or perhaps it is a crew-cut that has grown out), and the spindly body-parts of him, his delicate ~~every~~ legs, his fleshless arms, his thin-chested torso, do not seem to compose a whole person, at least not a whole man - the effect is of an incomplete figure, albeit boyish. The face? when seen <sup>side-view</sup> ~~frontal~~, the first impression is of a passably <sup>decent-looking</sup> ~~decent~~ young man, though the profile ~~does~~ suggest something slightly wrong: ~~a striking face~~ and then, when he turns full-view, one at once <sup>realizes</sup> ~~sees~~ what it is - simply everything. It is really quite startling, the transition from profile to full-face: the eyes, weak-blue and sickly, like the eyes of an ill-bred and diseased cat, stare out with a hopeless and, as it were, accidental

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Appendix AA – Capote's Notes From His Notebook Filled With Interviews From  
Perry Smith From The Library Of Congress

Reproduced from the Collections of the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

Q. Perry, when was driving between Fort Worth  
and Corpus Christi you picked up 2 hitch hikers,  
a man a boy, ~~at the 4 pop~~

why did you pick them up?

~~what relationship?~~ Older man and boy: what age,  
what relationship? father and son - father  
elderly - poverty stricken - Boy: 15 - close in the world. He really  
knew about pop bottles "

~~where did you~~

where did you was it to pick up the pop  
bottles? Did you spend the ride with them?

Sold them in a bar before we got Corpus Christi -

"It was 5 or 6 dollars" - paid for gas.

quite a few left after we left them there  
in river.

Courtesy of the Library of Congress and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan U.  
Schwartz, trustee.

Perry and Dick: Interviewed at Lansing: 1 May 1963

Dick entered the conference room

clenching his back and groaning; he said: "They never let us out of these cells, never. Except once a week. To take a shower. They let us take a shower and change our clothes (denim trousers, faded denim shirt, brown shoes). I've been wearing these same clothes the last six days."

About Cells and Death Row: "They keep the lights burning in our cells 24 hours a day. If the bulb goes out at 3 o'clock in the morning, why they come put in a new one."

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## Appendix CC – Capote's Notes On The Prison

The prison

question: How many guards? Custodians?

At the present time (Feb. 1962) there are

five men on death row: Lee Andrews, Perry and Dick,

York and Graham: between them they have committed

fourteen murders.

Death Row is in a very narrow, antiquated

100 years old

grey stone building, shaped like a coffin. A large

sign over the entrance says "SI", which stands

for Segregation + Isolation. The first floor contains

cells with no beds: it is for prisoners receiving special

punishment. They must sleep on the floor. Death Row

is on the second floor, and reaches it by climbing a

iron staircase. The death row cells are

very small. Contain<sup>a</sup> beds and a toilet: light and

kept burning day and night. ~~cells~~

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Appendix DD – Capote's Notes on Death Row

(4)

Dick

"I take to like Andrews quite a bit. He's  
a funny kid."

Death Row

empty	empty	Lee Andrews	Dick	Perry	York	Carson	Edley
-------	-------	----------------	------	-------	------	--------	-------

↑ : Guard's visitor. "And this is Mr. Andrews; and  
this is Mr. Hilkoek etc."

Both Dick and Perry are very concerned  
about their "public relations"; concerned that some  
of the "gossip" attributed to them in newspapers ("I'd  
had '56, 60. I'd just sit up there on death row and he he")  
are untrue; "These sort of things give the public  
the wrong impression."

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## Arrests In Nevada Seen As Major Break

The most promising development yet in the Herbert W. Clutter family slayings gave officials here hope today that the case may be solved soon.

The arrest of two Kansas State Penitentiary parolees in Las Vegas, Nev., late Wednesday was the break for which investigators had been waiting on for almost two weeks.

The two, identified as Richard Eugene Hickock, 38, Edgerton, Kan., and Perry E. Smith, 31, Las Vegas, are now being questioned by Kansas Bureau of Investigation agents in Las Vegas concerning the Clutter case and other crimes in Kansas.

They also are wanted on check charges at Kansas City.

Finney County Attorney Duane West today said:

"We are hopeful that this is the solution we have been seeking."

West said that he has not filed any warrants charging the pair in the Clutter crime, but is "prepared to do so on short notice." He did not disclose what evidence had been obtained to implicate the two in the four killings.

The two men are expected to be returned here for further questioning early next week — possibly Monday or Tuesday.

West also revealed for the first time that a portable radio was missing from the room of Kenyon Clutter, 15, who was killed in the mass murder along with his parents and sister, Nancy, 16. The crime was discovered in the modern farm home a half mile west of Holcomb Nov. 16.

The county attorney described the radio as a Zenith 3-way portable which had been purchased here shortly before the tragedy. It is a "Holiday 58" model A400G, with serial number 6-102025. Color is mist gray with aqua-blue trim, has a gold grill, flexible plastic handle, weighs 5 pounds with batteries and is 7½ inches high, 11 inches long and 2¾ inches wide.

West appealed to the public throughout the nation for help in locating the radio. "It may have an important connection in the case," he added.

He urged anyone having any information concerning the radio to contact the Finney County Sheriff's office of the KBI office in Topeka.

"We appreciate the public's help in the case so far," he added.

The search for the two who were arrested in Nevada started after investigators obtained a tip from a former Clutter employee



Richard E. Hickock



Perry Edward Smith

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# Hint Death Penalty Will Be Asked For Two Accused Slayers

HURCHINSON  
NEWS  
JANUARY 6, 1936

(Editorial Comment Page 4)

GARDEN CITY — The death penalty probably will be asked when Perry Edward Smith and Richard Eugene Hickock go to trial for killing the Herb Clutter family.

Unofficial sources Tuesday indicated County Attorney Duane West will ask for the hangman's noose for the two ex-convicts. West is saying nothing at present.

"I've thought this over carefully and have prepared a statement which I will make public when I think it the proper time."

Kansas lawmen, who left Las Vegas, Nev., Monday noon with late Monday night that Smith had orally confessed he participated in the Clutter killing.

Hickock, who was arrested with Smith a week ago in Las Vegas, confessed Sunday and implicated Smith. Though the confessions were welcomed by law officers, West said enough evidence had already been compiled to bring murder charges against the suspects.

West said late Tuesday night he had received no new information from the Kansas-bound lawmen. He said he was still sticking to the Wednesday night or Thursday morning arrival time of Smith and Hickock.

**May Arrive Wednesday**  
The county attorney did not indicate the whereabouts of "the Kansas lawmen and prisoners Tuesday night."

However, there was much speculation here they would arrive sometime during the day Wednesday.

Smith and Hickock will be taken straight to the courthouse. Though murder complaints have been written and sealed, they still will be served formally.

This probably will be West's first official act after Smith and Hickock are returned here. He will advise them of the charges and will explain their rights under the law.

If Smith and Hickock so desire, they can have a preliminary hearing before County Court Judge M. C. Schrader. Or they can waive this hearing and be bound over to District Court.

If the two men decide on a hearing, the county attorney will have to present enough evidence to show the suspects were involved in the crime. Then they will be bound over to District Court for trial.

**May Be May Term**  
West said it may be the May term of District Court before the two can be scheduled.

The county attorney explained a puzzling old clue in the case



**MURDER WEAPONS** — Officers showed for the first time Tuesday the weapons used in the killing of the four members of the Herb Clutter family. Left to right are Finney County deputy Mickey Hawkins, Garden City police investigator, Rich Rohleder and KBI Chief Logan Sanford who holds the knife.

## Father Blames Hickock's Troubles on Prison Life

EDGERTON — The age-old feelings of father for son reached across suspicion, the blood and gore of four murders and a troubled mind.

Richard E. Hickock, whose son is charged with first-degree murder of the Herb Clutter family near Holcomb, said:

"Prison ruined that boy."

The elder Hickock referred to his son as a "good kid." He said his son was a bright boy who was prevented from a col-

lege career by family poverty.

"There's been so much bad written about him, I'd just like to point out a little of the good," Hickock said.

He said Richard Eugene, 22, was ruined by prison. "It really did. You could sure tell the difference in him when he came back."

Richard was paroled from Lansing last year after a burglary conviction.

Hickock's parents live on a 44-acre farm two miles from

Edgerton, in Johnson County. The father also works in an Olathe automobile body shop.

"Mother's taking it awfully hard," the father said.

The father, shaken by the news his son has written, said he would help his son all he could.

The shiny new shotgun, believed to be the murder weapon, was found in the elder Hickock's garage. A hunting knife was found in a fishing tackle box.

### Clutter Prowler Given Jail Sentence

GARDEN CITY, Kan. (AP)—A 36-year-old Wichita man, arrested Dec. 10 at the farm home where four members of the Herbert W. Clutter family were slain in November, was given a 90-day jail term Tuesday on a charge of carrying a concealed weapon.

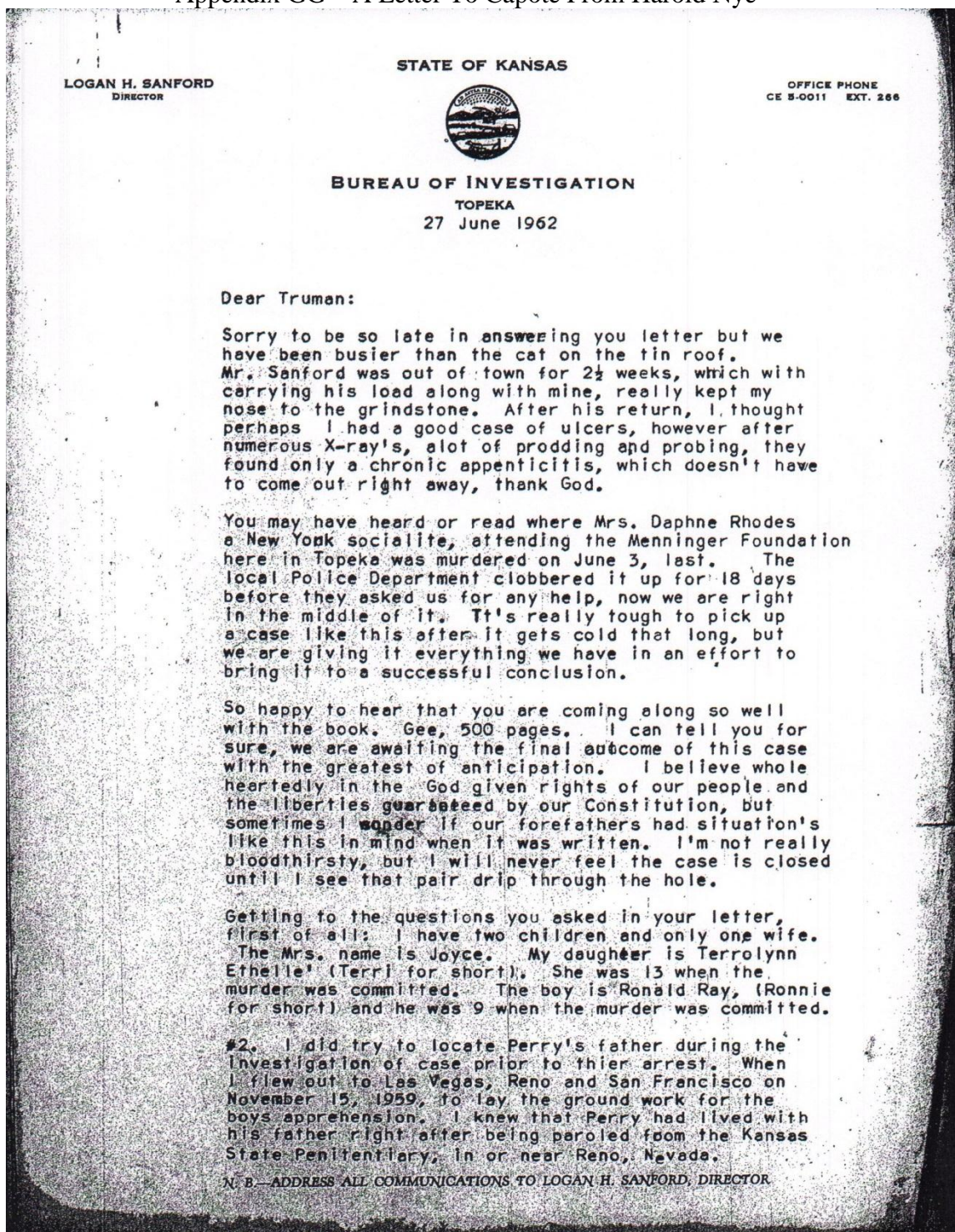
County Atty. Duane West said the man, Jonathan Adrian, will be paroled to a Wichita hospital for mental treatment.

Adrian, who told officers he visited the Clutter place and entered the home out of curiosity but didn't take anything, also had been charged with burglary. That

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Appendix GG – A Letter To Capote From Harold Nye



Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



Perry's father was a prospector and had a truck or pickup truck converted into a mobile home (if that is what you want to call it). At Reno, I found that Perry and his Dad had been seen in Reno with the truck during the period shortly after Perry was released from KSP, however they hadn't been seen for a long time. Through the Postal Authorities, I found that Perry and his father received mail General Delivery, however they had left Reno shortly after Perry's release. I could never find a forwarding address for Perry, and the only thing I could find on the Father was that he had gone to Alaska, with some indication that he was going to prospect north and east of Fairbanks. Of course with this country being so desolate in that section, it would have been like looking for a needle in a haystack. I checked out many, many sources in Reno trying to find further information that might furnish a lead as to his whereabouts but was unsuccessful. When I talked to Mrs. Marchant in San Bruno, she was unable to furnish anything as she said she had no idea where her father was as she hadn't heard from him for a long time. In fact, as I recall, Mrs. Marchant had gone with her mother when the father and mother split up, and that she was not too friendly toward the father. This is one of the reasons that she kind of pitied Perry, because he had to live with the father until he was old enough to get out on his own. Now, without a doubt, if we hadn't have been so lucky and the boys had not have been apprehended when they were, the leads into Alaska would have been checked out and every effort made to locate him. Between the trip west on Nov. 15 and Nov. 30 when they were apprehended, I had already started to lay the ground work to have these leads checked out, thinking that this would have been a good spot to hide out, however it wasn't necessary. Then after I had a chance to talk to Perry at Las Vegas, I again tried to get a location on the Father. Perry told me that he didn't know where his father was, except that the last he had heard was that he was going to the Northeast corner of Alaska to prospect. Perry refused to give any further information and definitely didn't want his father contacted or advised about his being in trouble.

Truman, I hope this has answered your questions. If there is anything further you would like to know, please ask and I will be most happy to advise.

One thing that I have wondered and worried about that you might have been able to find out when you talked to Mrs. Marchant. Is she aware now, that it was I that talked to her that day when I posed as a parole agent seeking information for Kansas. If so, what was her feeling toward it? She was such a nice lady, and I always felt like a dirty dog for pulling that trick.

As Ever and Best Wishes to you.  
Harold R. Nye, 1280 Macvicar, Tor

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



Appendix HH –A Letter To Capote From Clifford Hope, Jr.

CLIFFORD R. HOPE  
LLOYD H. HAAG  
DALE E. SAFFELS  
CLIFFORD R. HOPE, JR.

LAW OFFICES OF  
HOPE, HAAG, SAFFELS & HOPE  
S. E. BRIDGES Bldg. 432B  
GARDEN CITY, KANSAS

June 19, 1962

AIR MAIL

Mr. Truman Capote  
Poste Restante  
Palamos  
Costa Brava  
Spain

Dear Truman:

I thought you would be interested in this latest report on Perry. As you can see, the Kansas Legislature is the source of all his troubles.

Thanks for the card just received. We are glad to know that Mrs. Hayward will continue to represent The Book.

I will plan to call James Taylor on your behalf; I am doubtful if I have any influence with him but will be glad to try. I understand that Selby Soward, attorney at Goodland, handled most of the trial work but that Taylor did investigation, research, etc. If you would like for me to contact Soward, however, please let me know what particular information you would like to have from him.

Dolores sends her best.

Sincerely,

*Cliff*  
of HOPE, HAAG, SAFFELS & HOPE

CRHjr:mb

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.

Appendix II – A Letter From The Director of Penal Institutions On Behalf Of Capote

OFFICE OF DIRECTOR OF PENAL INSTITUTIONS



STATE OF KANSAS  
11th Floor, State Office Building  
TOPEKA

March 2, 1962

Mr. Dale E. Saffels  
Hops, Heng, Saffels & Hops  
Keller Building  
118 Grant Avenue  
Garden City, Kansas

Dear Mr. Saffels:

In response to your letter of February 28, 1962, I am forwarding the information requested by Mr. Truman Capote regarding the number of executions at Lansing and the staffing plan for the Penitentiary.

I am enclosing a summary regarding the re-enactment of the capital punishment statute in Kansas, along with a list of all State and military prisoners executed at the Penitentiary since 1935. This summary was prepared as a result of the many inquiries we have received regarding the history of capital punishment in the State.

To provide the information regarding the staffing plan at the Penitentiary, I am enclosing copies of the summary personnel sheets which were included in the budget request for fiscal year 1963. These sheets contain an alphabetical listing, by civil service title, of all positions authorized at the Penitentiary. You will note that 247 civilian positions are authorized for the current fiscal year. In addition to these 247 positions paid from the Penitentiary budget, we also employ 20 civilian administrative and supervisory personnel in the prison industries located at Lansing. The salaries for these positions are paid from the separate prison industrial revolving fund.

Enclosed is an organizational chart showing the number of personnel assigned to each major department of the Penitentiary.

I hope that these reports will provide the information desired by Mr. Capote.

Yours very truly,

*Gay C. Rexroad*  
GAY C. REXROAD  
Director of Penal Institutions

GCR:dja  
Enclosures

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



Appendix JJ – Alvin Dewey's Resume That He Gave Capote

A RESUME BY ALVIN ADAMS DEWEY

I am 47 years of age, having been born Sept. 10, 1912 in Kingman County, Kansas.

I attended Cheney, Kansas Grade and High Schools and in 1931 moved with my parents from Cheney to Garden City, Kansas where I graduated from Garden City High School in June, 1931.

I attended Garden City Junior College from 1931 to 1933. From 1933 to 1935 I was employed at my father's motel in Garden City, and in 1935 I returned to Garden City Junior College where I graduated in June 1936 with an Associate of Science Degree.

During the vacation periods in high school and Junior college I was employed by my father on a farm or at the motel.

In June, 1936, I obtained employment with the Garden City Police Department. My duties were Radio Dispatcher, Record Clerk and Patrolman. I obtained a leave of absence from the Garden City Police Department in August of 1937 and attended San Jose State College in San Jose, California until 1938, majoring in Police Administration. In June of 1938 I returned to my position with the Garden City Police Dept.

In July of 1939, I accepted a position as State Trooper with the Kansas Highway Patrol, Topeka Kansas. My duties consisted chiefly of patrolling the highways of the state of Kansas.

I accepted a position as Special Agent of the FBI in January, 1940. I attended the FBI training school in Washington DC and Quantico Va. for two months before being assigned to a field office.

OVER

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.

I served with the FBI in New Orleans, San Antonio, Miami and Denver. At the outbreak of the war, I was ~~sent~~ sent to San Francisco where I participated in apprehending Japanese aliens that were considered dangerous to the Internal Security of this country.

During my tenure with the FBI, I attended a Police Instructors school and later taught at Police Training Schools throughout the country.

In November 1945 I resigned from the FBI to take over the management of my father's motel, due to fact that he had suffered a heart attack. In 1947 the motel was sold, and I filed for and was elected to the office of Sheriff of Finney County, Kansas. I remained in the office until Nov. 1955 when I was offered and accepted a position as Special Agent of the KBI.

As a Special Agent of the KBI I am charged with the handling of all major crimes committed in my district and conducting investigations of any public ~~or~~ or elected official because of dishonesty or moral turpitude.

With money that I had saved from previous employment, I purchased a 240 acre farm in Finney County in 1951. I still own this farm and have it rented on a share basis.

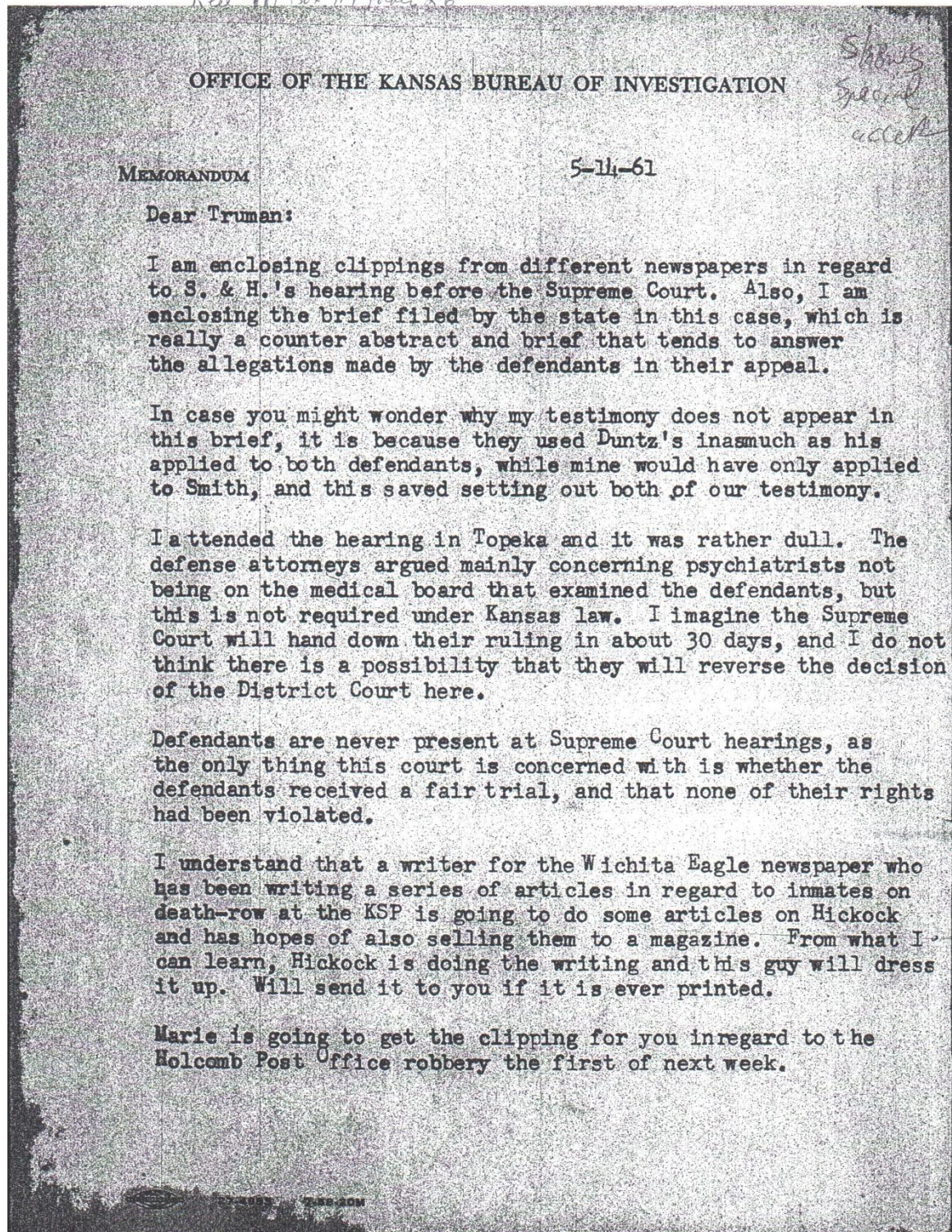
I was married to the former Marie Louise ~~Bellocq~~ Bellocq, an FBI stenographer in New Orleans in 1942. We have two sons, Alvin, 12, and Paul, 9. We own our own home and reside at 602 N. First St.

Garden City, attending the Methodist Church and being active in all civic activities.

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



Appendix KK – A Letter To Capote From Alvin Dewey



Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



OFFICE OF THE KANSAS BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

MEMORANDUM

Page 2

The new house is moving along, and we hope to be in in about 3 weeks. School is almost over, and the boys are looking forward to the vacation. We are always glad to hear from you.

Sincerely,



P.S. I would like to have the brief back when you have finished with it.



27-4963 7-56-20M

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



IN ANCY

By Susan Kidwell

## Portrait of Nancy

A portrait could never have been painted of Nancy. She was never in one place long enough for an artist to put her business on canvas. Her sparkling smile could charm the meanest, bitterest heart. Nancy smiled often and at everyone, but still every smile was fresh and shiny like a new penny.

Her copper-colored freckles were delicately sprinkled over a young face showing no sign of worry or experience. But in her 16 years, but always kept her chin up and faced each day as a butterfly does. As if it were her first day and perhaps her last.

Her eyes were deep brown with amber and gold flecks. They were, in a way, the thermometer of her emotions. When happy they danced and sparkled, when angry they flashed like an uninhibited gypsy's eyes, when sad, those same eyes were dark, bottomless pools.

She had a nose which had been borrowed from a Greek goddess. It was chiseled straight and narrow and lent her an aristocratic air.

Her crowning glory was a halo of gleaming chestnut hair. When the sun shone on her hair, every strand was gilt-edged.



Nancy

By Susan K. Hall

2.

Nancy.

Nancy was small - loved with capable hands and tiny feet. Her appearance was one of simplicity and good taste.

She loved the whole outdoors and would rather be outside than anywhere else. Her favorite season was summer and she hated late fall because of everything dying and turning brown. She loved animals, too. She would sit by the house and play with her fuzzy, multicolored kittens.

It is said that the face is the mirror of the soul. As a close friend of Nancy's I know that her soul was truly as beautiful as her face. With the passing of time the memory of Nancy's face may fade, but the memory of her spirit and love will dwell with me through eternity.

misely written  
interesting description  
Sweet small ears which should be heard-up.

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



## Appendix MM – Harper Lee's Notes On Hickock

March 19, 1960

Hickock is fatter, greener, and more gruesome. Same yellow teeth; tattoos hitherto undetected by us: open-mouthed dragon (looks more like a horse to me) with skull in mouth--upper right arm; rose on right shoulder.

The custodian of the jail went off his stick a while ago, due to the death of his wife; was placed temporarily in a cell near or with Hickock. (Dewey: custodian had been needling S&H about murders--no love lost). Hickock says custodian threw water at him until H. tired of this and tried to get the tin cup away from him. In the scuffle, third finger of H's left hand was caught between cell bar and tin cup, and H. presently sports a purple fingernail. H. says Custodian tore up mattress in cell. Was glad to see him go.

Hickock's recurrent dream is that he is in "something" going at a terrific rate of speed; he goes a long way, then sees "something" coming at him at an equally terrific speed. Just before the collision he wakes up.

H. gave T. intricate directions on how to get to the Somerset Hotel. H. had not forgotten how to get there, according to T.

(Was trying to keep one person less from hovering around D.A., so retired to corner. Could not hear too well. See T.'s notes.)

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



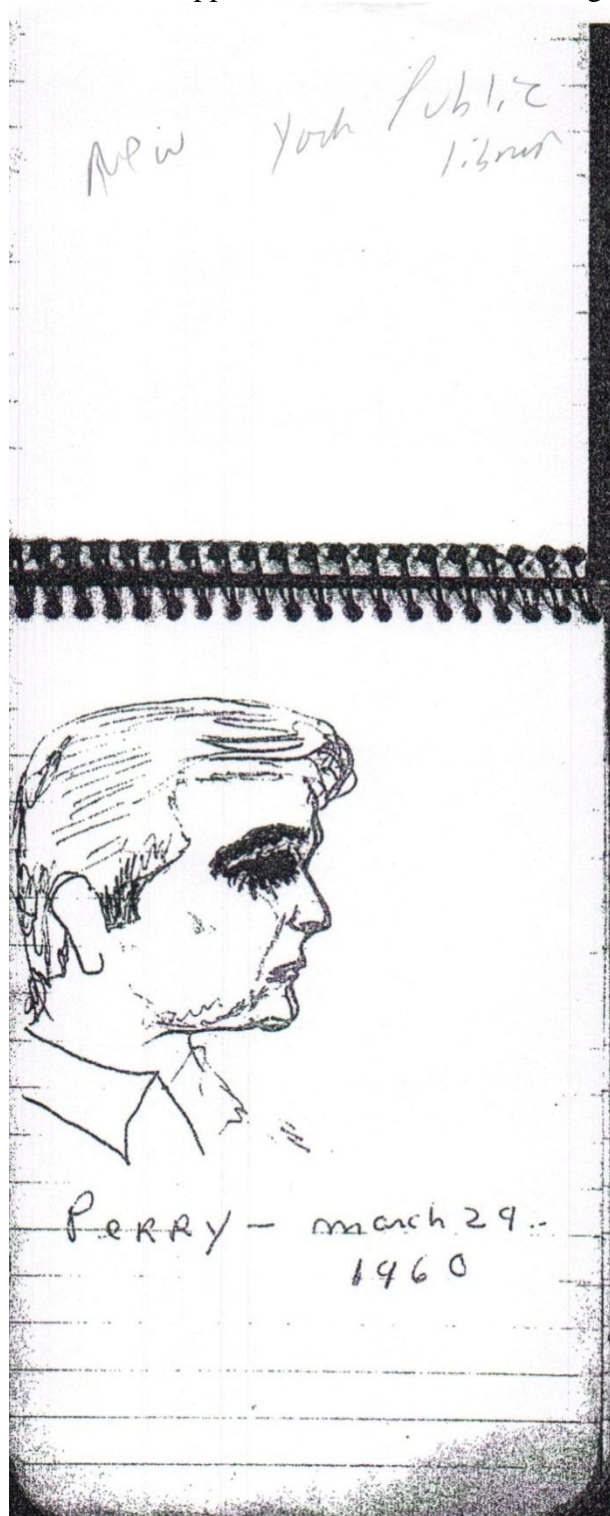
Appendix NN – Lee's Notes On Perry Smith's Interview With Alvin Dewey

January 11 2

Al: Is your father living?  
Perry: Yes.  
Al: What's his name?  
Perry: Tex John Smith. (Age 66 years, lives in Alaska.)  
Al: Is your mother living?  
Perry: She is dead. (Mother was Florence Julia Buckskin. Died 1948, San Francisco.)  
Al: Any brothers, Perry?  
Perry: One that is deceased. (Tex John Smith, Jr. later changed name to James Smith. He and his wife committed suicide in Seattle, 1949. He thought she was unfaithful; she killed herself, he a day later.) Perry said, "Family trouble."  
Al: How many sisters do you have?  
Perry: Two. One is dead. Her name was Fern. (He couldn't recall her married name. She either jumped or fell 5 stories in San Francisco, 1950. Perry preferred to think that she fell.)  
Al: And the other?  
Perry: CONFIDENTIAL: living sister in San Francisco named Dorothy Marchant. Last time he heard from her was early in 1958. Wrote her from Lansing; she was then living in Albuquerque. They weren't very close, Perry said.  
Al: What about her?  
Perry: (After their parents' separation, she went with her mother, Perry with his father.)  
Al: What's your military background, Perry?  
Perry: (11/9/48 joined Infantry (army) at Anchorage, Alaska; later transferred to engineers; spent most of his time in Japan and Korea; honorable discharge in 1952--awarded Bronze Star with 1 cluster (equals 2 Bronze Stars). Was first Korean Veteran returning to Alaska.)  
Al: How did you get that scar on your leg?  
Perry: (Has had scar on left leg as result of a motorcycle accident after the war. He took up motorcycle riding (sort of black leather jacket type) and had a fall. Spent 1 year in the hospital and 9 months on crutches near Bellingham, Washington. When he recovered from first accident, he had another and injured the same leg. In hospital 4 months. But, they got as far as Bellingham. Father went on to Alaska, Perry.  
Al: Now Perry, about that trouble you were in back in Kansas, in Phillipsburg in 1955--what about that? responsible for springing him?  
Perry: That was with another boy named Jack Smith.  
Al: Why were you in Kansas?

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee

Appendix OO – A Hand Drawing Of Perry Smith By Capote



Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



Appendix PP—A Newspaper Article Claiming Capote & Lee Are Collaborating On A New Book Which Is Thought To Be *In Cold Blood*

# World-Famous Authors Were Childhood Pals

By VERNON HENDRIX  
IT HAPPENS "once in a lifetime" that two children who grow up as next-door neighbors and playmates in a small town become world-famous authors.

It happened in Monroeville. The authors are Truman Capote and Harper Lee—known here as Nelle.

When Nelle's father brought an old typewriter home from his law office, Truman and Nelle took it into the backyard and set up an "office." Truman suggested, "Let's write a story about running away from home—I'll write a while, and then you take over." There they sat for hours, one dictating and the other writing—just playing they were in the writing business. Other times they wrote perched up in a treehouse in Nelle's yard—just two blocks from the town square.

So that is the way it was—two small children, Truman Capote and Harper Lee, writing their little stories in the lost time of innocence.

This was the beginning of their famous careers. Both have become world-known authors; both have written stories which have been made into movies, and their success has been based in no small measure on the wistful tales they have written about their childhood.

Nelle won the Pulitzer Prize for her first novel, "To Kill a Mockingbird," a story of her childhood in which the principal characters are her father, herself, her brother and the boy she decided to marry—Truman Capote.

TRUMAN'S IDENTITY as an author, especially in Alabama, is long past due. He has twice won the O. Henry Memorial Short Story Prize, and in 1959 received an award from the National Institute of Arts and Letters. His first novel, "Other Voices—Other Rooms," was an international literary success.



Truman Capote on a recent visit to Monroeville

"A Christmas Memory" is a touching story dedicated to his aunt "Sook" which is of special interest to people in Monroeville. Also of interest is his "Breakfast at Tiffanys"—made into a movie and shown in the theater he visited constantly when a child. "I simply lived in the picture show—sometimes seeing a show over and over—each time seeing something different—and each time dreaming that someday I might write a story which would be made into a movie," Truman said.

"I shall always cherish the memory of my childhood here—I have traveled all over the world and found there is no place like the USA—and truly no place like home." He is remembered here as a brilliant little boy—with yellow hair in his eyes—talking incessantly and using big words most people had never heard.

BORN TRUMAN PERSONS. In Monroeville, son of Archie Persons and the beautiful Little Mae Faulk, he spent his childhood here in the home of his adored great-aunts, Misses Jennie, Cattie and "Sook" Faulk, who reared his mother following the death of his grandmother, the former Edna Hendrix. The Misses Faulk, members of a prominent pioneer family, owned and operated Monroeville's first millinery store.

After his mother's marriage to Mr. Capote, of New York, he became known as Truman Capote. She died a few years ago while he was in Greece writing.

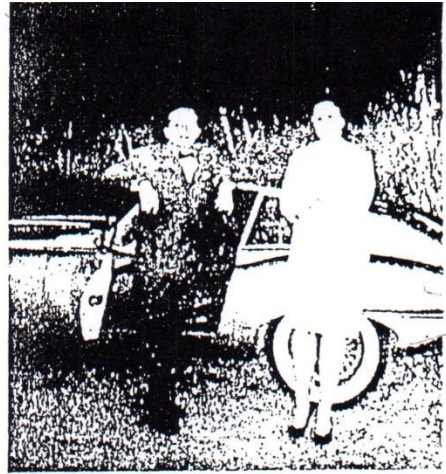
His charming personality is hardly average, but his literary personality at least, has undergone constant, always refreshing, change. The next change will become evident when the book on which he is working, "In Cold Blood," is published. It is the re-creation of a brutal murder case and its consequences—which he considers his most ambitious undertaking.

Truman and Nelle have remained close friends through the years. Neither has ever married.

Recently, they were both in Monroeville at the same time—Truman just back from his home in Switzerland for a visit with his aunts, Mrs. Jennings Carter and Mrs. Lucille Ingram—and Nelle for a visit with her sister, Miss Alice Lee, an attorney, where she spends most of her time.

They then left for final research on the Clutter Murder Case. Nelle cast herself in the unlikely role of occasional legal advisor and researcher for Truman, having come within a semester of a law degree at the University of Alabama. After accompanying Truman on a fact-finding and mood-gathering trip to Garden City, Kan., Nelle packed her childhood pul off to his Swiss writing retreat.

She is presently working on her second novel, which also has a Southern background. Since January she has been at home recuperating from a severely burned right hand caused by blazing grease. She is soon to have plastic surgery, and expects to be back at the typewriter soon.



Capote And Harper Lee Are Still Close Friends. They are collaborating On A New Novel.

Advertiser Journal Oct. 11, 1964

Appendix QQ -Capote's Notes on Clarence Duntz

Clarence  
Duntz

DEWEY - Dec. 31st.

AD and Duntz reached Alburquerque N.M., around eleven New Years eve. He called Marie and said they still had six hundred miles to go, and the roads were all but impassable with snow-storms. The Kansas City Star published a news story linking H. and Smith with the Clutter case, and AD frantic that H. and Smith will learn of this before he reaches Las Vegas and gets a waiver of extradition signed; because he is banking heavily on getting a confession on the long ride back to Garden City. AD ought to arrive in Las Vegas late New Years day. Meanwhile, Bill Brown on Telegram planning to break the story Saturday. Somebody told Marie that keeping a Christmas tree after New Years day bad luck; but as Courthouse Pete and the kids love the tree and like to have it around long as possible she can't decide whether or not to throw it out.

yesterday - interviewed Bobby Jones and his  
mother Mrs. Taylor Jones - see M.C.'s notes.

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.

Appendix RR - Capote's Notes On The Clutter's House

List - Furniture.

Living Room.

Leaving Couch with Dorothy likes material, silver and gold threads woven through mobby material of indeterminate, muddy colors: apparently a "must" in all respectable western Kansas decorating. Plain pinkish (another favorite Kansas color) carpet with scripted floral design. Fireplace, brick.

Dining-room: very simple, table seating 6 comfortably. Linoleum floors.

Kitchen and kitchen-mock, a ~~subterranean~~ horseshoe-shaped enclosure upholstered in bright blue leather and surrounded by windows with pretty white curtains looped back and tied with leery-like black bows. Kitchen last word in modernity and Clutters had spent many years planning the house. It was built ten years ago.

Utility room, which leads down to "recreation" room. Contains dish washer, ~~washing~~ laundry washer, CROCK Separation (Clutter provided milk for all his hired-help).

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



master bedroom; not really double-bed, more  
3/4. Bedside tables. Large double closet with  
sliding doors. 1/2 containing mrs. e's clothes (old  
work shoes, a pair of brown town-shoes, black rubbers,  
about 3 suits, a white panama hat, a large  
box saying STATION (he was modified western  
hats and clothes). not many of mrs. e's wardrobe  
on view.

Telephones: one in kitchen (portable), one in  
office (this one had line from wall.)

office. Has sliding door leading into living  
room. This was ordinarily open.

Stockholm house: Albert Stockholm (youngish  
man, lean, with spectacles and yellow riding teeth);  
has 3 children, all boys, age 1 to six. Plain  
wood house, <sup>(original farmhouse)</sup> only a hundred yards from Clinton's -  
but both extremely well-insulated, also separated  
by a huge tin barn (containing mountain of  
milo seed): so this why, presumably, the S.  
family didn't hear shots

Trains passing. whistles. Sound of  
coyotes.

## Kernon

Two cars, 1951 Chevrolet and 1958 Chevrolet, 2 pickup trucks and Kernon "Coyote wagon"

Kernon: name of dog, Teddy. His "Coyote wagon", ~~in which~~ an old truck in which he hunted the country side hunting coyotes. Bern here he conducted his "sheep operation" - hung with heat lamps for the ewes.

### Marcy's Room

Very small. plain dark wood bed.



Picture above bed: Three kittens. on walls picture of Jesus (as in all rooms). Above desk: cork bulletin board to which pictures, clippings, memoranda were attached safety-pins. wall-cube cabinet with diverse animal figures, mostly kittens. <sup>very tame</sup> easy chair inhabited by a huge <sup>stuffed</sup> pink bear

### Bernie's

Room in which she killed had brass plate: "Eucema". All rooms have name of occupant with (in) knockers attached. Venetian blinds. Just bed and bureau: quite impersonal.

Bath room: bottles of different pills, tranquillizers etc., labeled Bonnie Clutter, Wesley Hospital, TAKEN four a day.

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



Appendix SS – Harper Lee's Notes On The Clutters' House

*CLUTTER House*

*cost \$40,000 to build in 1943 - (G.C. price now between \$50-60 thousand)*

**LIVING ROOM**

Light green sectional sofa, threaded gold/silver; light threaded gold/silver armchair

pink carpet

light green walls

floorlamp, hideous; light shade.

Console record player (not hi-fi; probably one of the earliest 33 r.p.m. consoles) of unobtrusive design, dark wood.

livingroom about 25ft long; rectangular; picture of J.C. on wall over record player. Uninteresting Ladies Home Journal type prints on one wall.

Guideposts & A Man Called Peter (modern religious crap) on shelves to right of fireplace.

**DINING ROOM**

Modern blond built-in breakfront

grey-blond dining table and chairs

walls same light green as livingroom

large linoleum on floor of light grey pattern

**KITCHEN**

small, narrow, but extremely well-planned. Waist high <sup>cabinets</sup> ~~shelves~~ built along wall under window; electric dishwasher built in. Waist-high cabinets on wall next diningroom; 4-burner gas stove flush with cabinets.

Serving hatch between kitchen and breakfast nook.

color scheme royal blue and white.

**BREAKFAST ROOM**

Royal blue simulated leather (vinyl) <sup>banquet</sup> ~~table~~ built in wall under window. Studded (silver-colored studs). Table to fit banquet. Blue and white curtains at window.

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.

*House*

Master Bedroom

Light blue walls

Dark (walnut?) double bed

Guess who looking down at city of Jerusalem on wall?

Double closets of light paneling

dark dresser

Clutter's field shoes (2 pr?), galoshes, in bottom of closet. Abt. 3 suits of unexpensive cut. White summer hat with black band on top shelf.

Did not see Bonnie's closet except to glimpse a fairly full wardrobe hanging therein.

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.

*House*

DOWNSTAIRS JOHN

In heavy blue and pink tile. Blue extremely up-to-date tub/shower arrangement separated from toilet by partition of glass brick. Other fixtures blue. (T. see your own notes for contents of m.c.)

UTILITY ROOM

Washer/dryer combination of recent vintage but looked heavily used. Waist-high cabinets with built-in double sink ~~xxxxxxxxxxxxxxxx~~ under ~~west~~ windows. ~~Door to right of sink~~ Door to left of same. Built-in square nook on which sat milk separator. Linoleum-covered in same pattern as on floor (light yellow-neutral pattern). Worn and dark from use. Stairway leading to basement covered in same linoleum. Built-in wall shelves on east wall.

Was J.C. in Utility Room?

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



Mr. Clutter's Office

Enormous, extremely modern but quietly-designed desk of dark wood (probably walnut) plus matching chair. Walls paneled almost shoulder-high in dark wood (again, probably walnut). Built-in cabinets/shelves floor-to-ceiling on wall behind desk.

Shelves contained file folders and business manuals. Noted among books: Trees; Discipline of The Methodist Church, 1939. (See below.)

Map of Clutter's holdings & tree plantings on wall by cabinets. Presidential citation on wall next livingroom.

Black-framed document saying  
Farm House  
(Coat of Arms)  
Herbert Clutter  
May 18, 1930  
signed by two illegible hands  
(On wall beside door.)

Smaller desk and chair under window at east wall, to left of entrance door. (This is when in the room facing east)

\*Some sort of ~~citation~~ farming citation on wall above and left of smaller desk.

South wall and passage to livingroom blocked by chairs. (Probably put there by Lyon & Van Vleet.)

(Dec. 22 interview with Van Vleet)

Shelves:  
addenda on contents:

Insects  
Crops in Peace and War  
Grass  
Beef Cattle in Kansas (pamphlet)  
Information Please Almanac 1953 (all books)  
The Farm Book  
The Pocket Bible (Pocket Books)  
Textbook of General Botany  
Farmers at the Crossroads

Powerful (short-wave looking) radio in bottom cabinet; "Herb listens to weather reports on it..." (V.V.) Barometer on upper shelf.

\* (Framed citation headed: "Superior Achievement In Agriculture")

In closet were a rifle and .410-gauge shotgun Kenyon's grandfather had given him. Also barrel of .12 gauge shotgun (sheriff has rest) with modified choke.

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.

*House*

Large upstairs hallway containing double-decker bunks (blue patterned spreads) and baby crib. (Same baby crib Clutter children used?)

No carpeting in upstairs hallway or on stairs.

Built-in floor to ceiling cabinets on ~~east~~ <sup>west</sup> wall.

Upstairs John; small, pink fixtures, pink tile.

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.

House

Beverly's Room

Did not do more than glance: double bed dark furniture.

Evanna's Room (called by Lyon the "Guest Room". Where Mrs. C. was found.)

Double bed, dark head-and-footboard.

old-fashioned dresser with long mirror; empty glass pin saucer, bath powder box,

Atrocious table lamp on table beside bed.

Room uncarpeted. Throw rugs.

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



*House*  
PLAYROOM--see Nancy's drawing.

TV set (according to Susan) a portable RCA used in basement as well as livingroom. Not there when we were.

regulation-sized ping-pong table; dark green with silver stripe down the middle. Paddles. No balls.

Eight-pointed star clock (modern design) affixed to wall (cement block) over brick fireplace. (Nancy's 4-H book says her father drilled the holes)

cement floor

small table on which were true love & romance magazines, movie magazines, Pogo comics, Disney comics. Redbeek.

BASEMENT (leading off playroom)

Extremely low ceiling, unfinished walls, cement floor.  
Khaki irrigation boots hanging from ceiling at one end of room.  
(Kenyon's, according to Van Vleet)

Gas thermostat-controlled furnace

three water heaters (of cast iron, probably)

well apparatus and lawn irrigation pump

low rough shelves (see Kenyon's 4-H project; electrical doodads on shelves.

Small lat machine (Van Vleet said Kenyon was tinkering with it)

display of Clutter's on wall showing various cereal grasses he experimented with.

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.

*House*

NANCY'S ROOM

Low, sloping, almost curving ceiling, eight feet high at highest part. Long, narrow room. Walls faded pink; ceiling blue.

Narrow single bed; seems to have been re-done; varnished oak head & foot boards. Modest design.

Dark, 1936-modern dressing table; separate, very wide mirror (see just below skirt length in it); bench.

Bulletin board above knick-knack desk.

full-face picture of J.C. on wall between door and window. 3 kittens over bed.

large pink-white teddy bear on ~~maroon~~ boudoir chair (faded neutral color)

Floor bare (moved rugs??)

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



*House*

KENYON'S ROOM

Hollywood bed with modern grey wood headboard. Bookshelf in headboard; about fifteen books, half boys' books, half best-selling novels (Parrish one of them. Literary Guild selection, I think.)

Old glass cabinet-desk containing picture of eveanna on right (top shelf) inscribed, KENYON

ALWAYS BE GOOD

EVEANNA

in small, neat handwriting.

Picture of Beverly, uninscribed, on left. Top shelf.

3 dog figurines, plastic model automobile on first shelf in front of pictures.

Grey plastic model cruiser (Revell Kit) on top of cabinet.

Complete set of Hardy Boys Series (F.W.Dixon) on 2nd shelf plus 2 more plastic model cars--about 4 horse figurines.

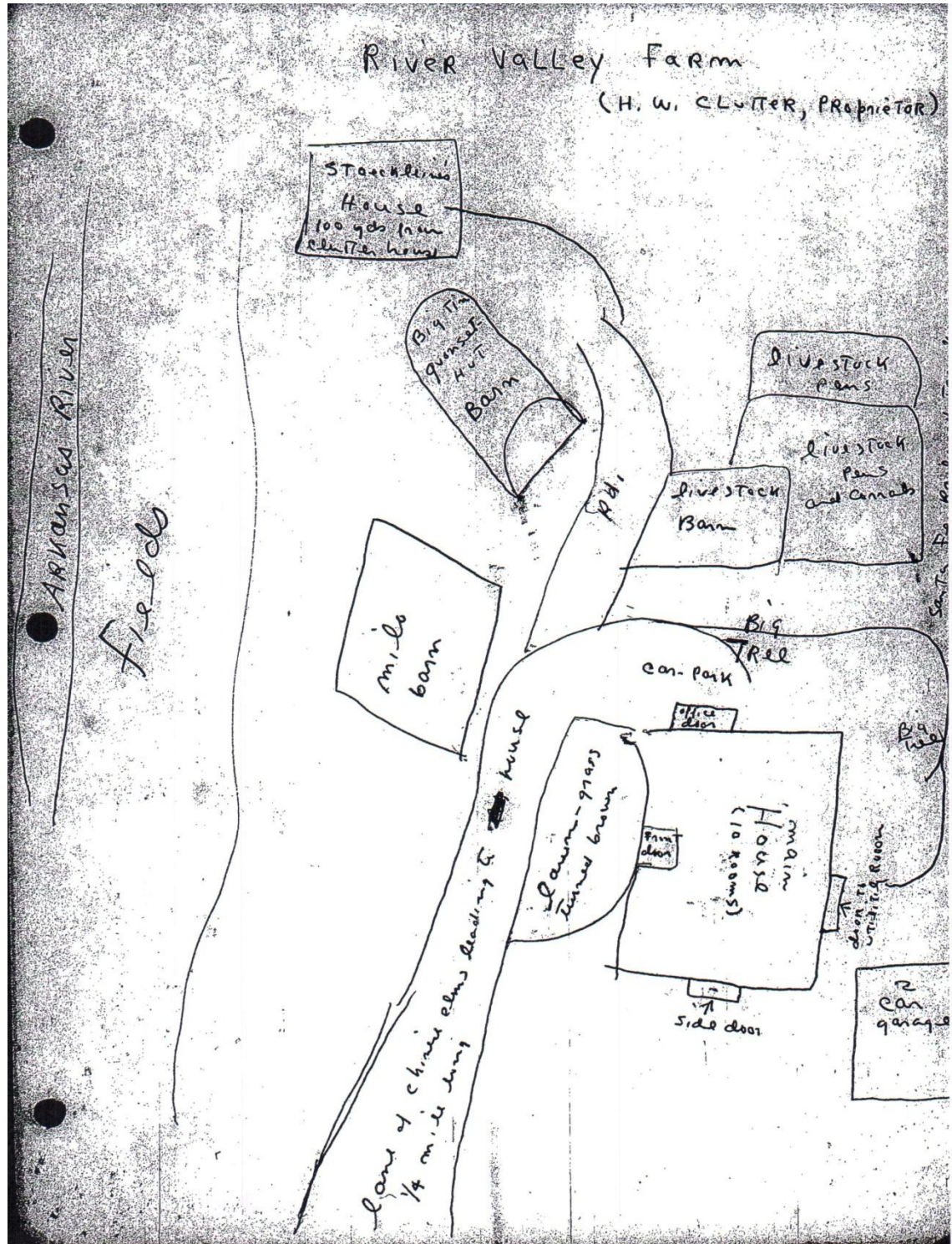
2 snapshots prize sheep right of bed under 4-H club citation.

Old fashioned stand-up crank Victrola in room by windows.

Walls pale grey-green. Carpet of same texture.

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.

Appendix TT – A Map Of The Clutters' Farm That Was Drawn From Capote



Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



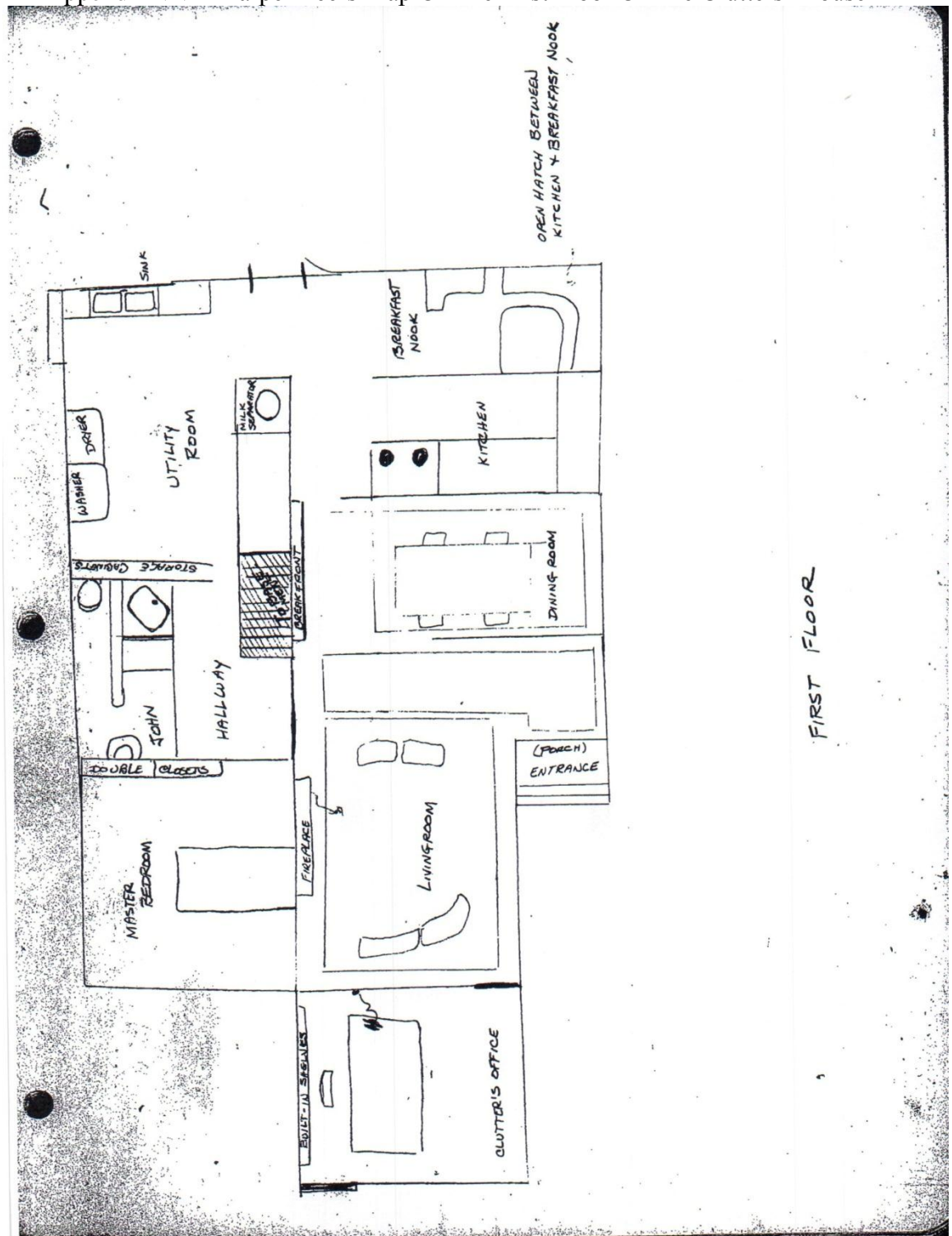
# Appendix UU – Capote's Map of Smith's & Hickock's Travels



Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.

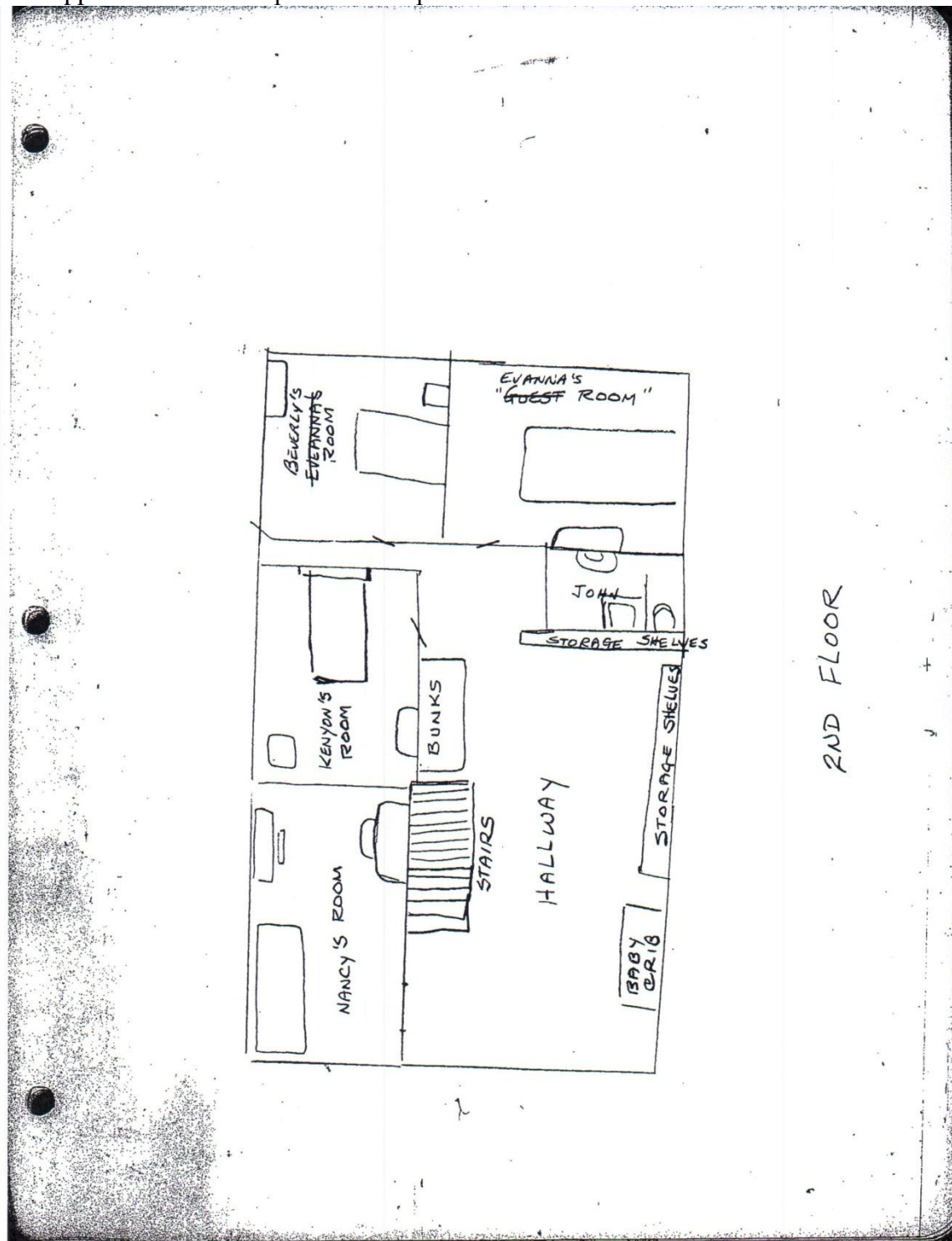


Appendix VV – Harper Lee’s Map Of The First Floor Of The Clutters’ House



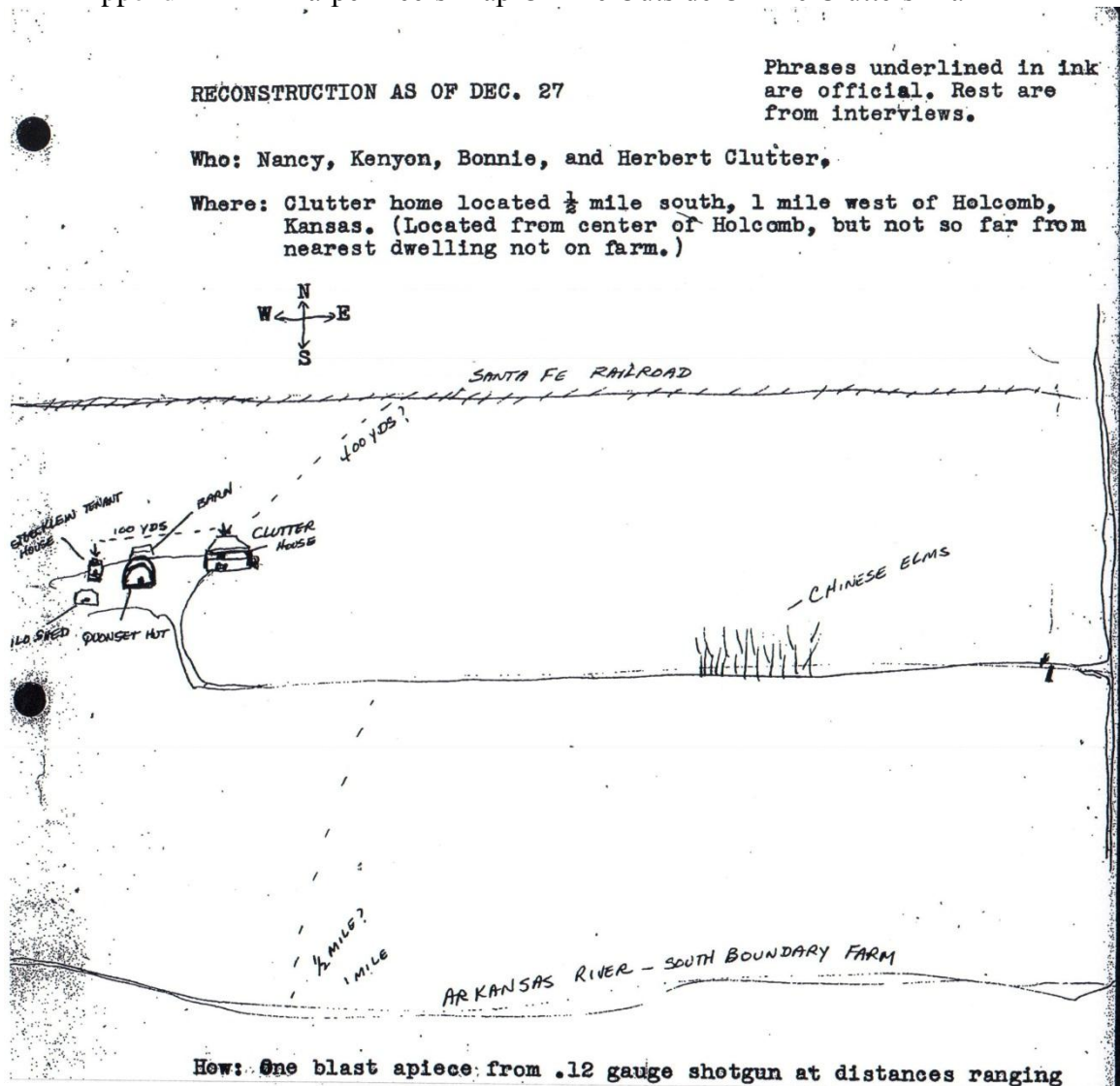
Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.

Appendix WW – Harper Lee's Map Of The 2<sup>nd</sup> Floor Of The Clutters' House



Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.

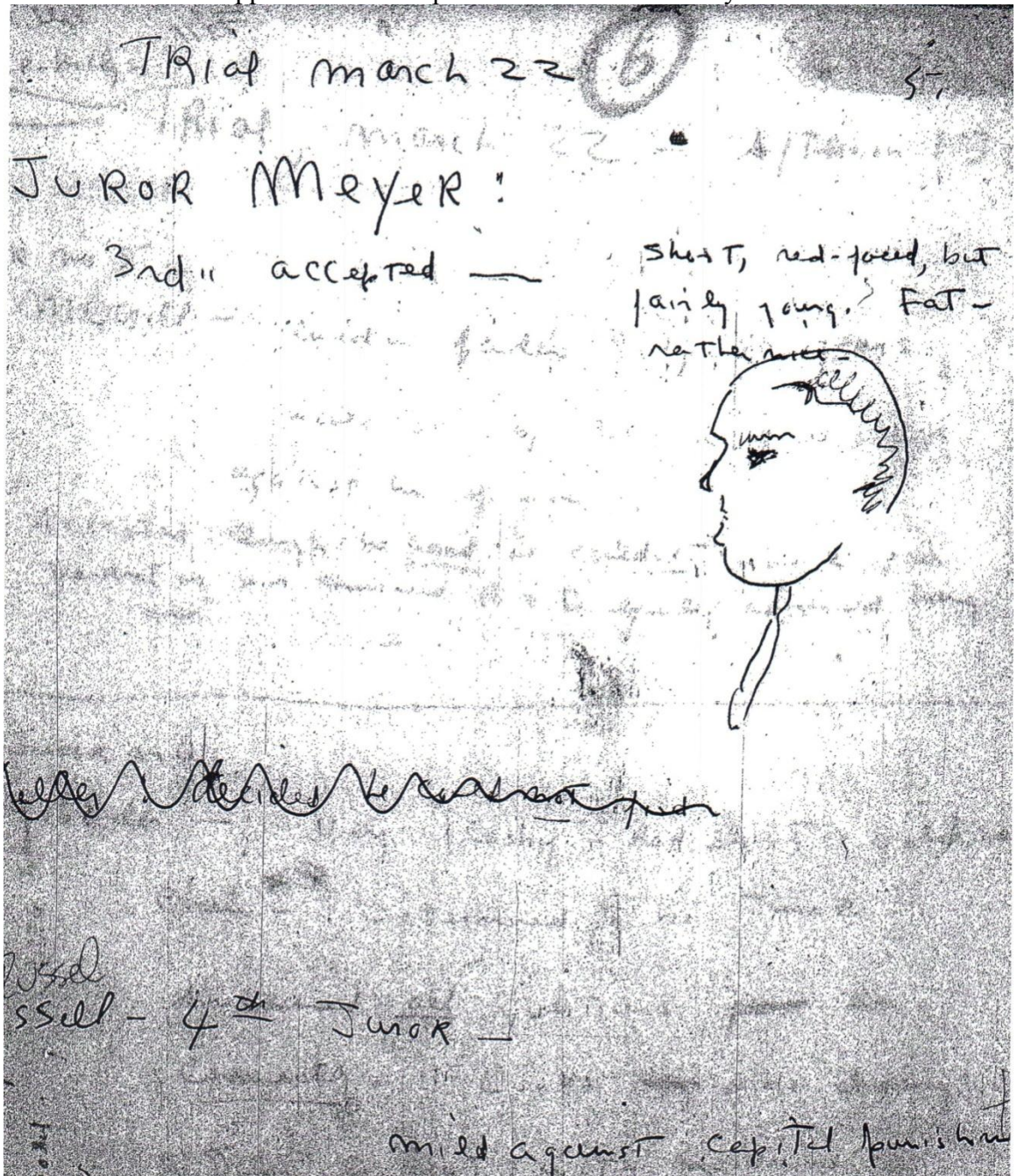
Appendix XX – Harper Lee's Map Of The Outside Of The Clutters' Farm



Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.

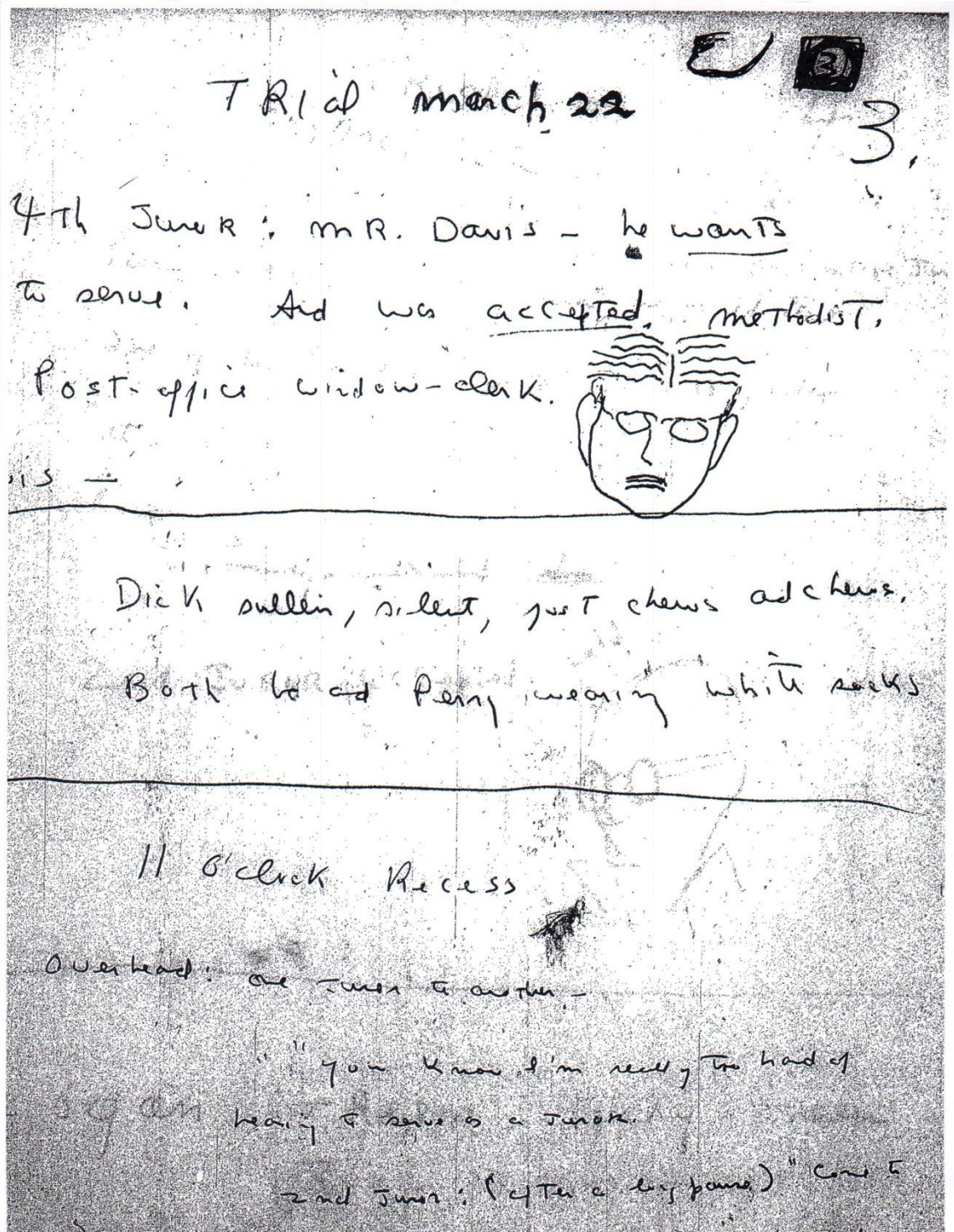


Appendix YY – Capote's Sketch of Juror Meyer



Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.







## Appendix AAA – Harper Lee's Typed Jury Notes

### THE JURY

#### Pete Merrill

Farm equipment salesman. Thirty-year resident of Finney County. Judge put him on after asking Merrill if he could possibly put aside any opinions he might have and judge the case fairly on the evidence, etc. Mr. Merrill reluctantly said yes. Was a sullen juror. Tan face, dirty blonde hair, gold-rimmed glasses; heavy-set, never looked at defendants during the trial. Turned red when saw pictures.

#### Otto E. Bader

Water well drilling company. One daughter, 5-year resident of Finney County. Lutheran. Sam Slick From Punkin Crick. Thin dark pencil-mustache, rather hollow cheeks; sat with his hands in his lap during trial. Did not show much reluctance to serve.

#### Claude Harkness

Farmer. 30-year resident. Methodist. When challenged as to cause, this juror expressed his belief that he could decide between a death or life imprisonment sentence if so instructed.

#### William M. Turrentine

Farmer. Methodist. Dimples. Gap-toothed. Ruddy complexion. Looked at the press table, at the spectators, at Captain Murray, far more than he looked at what was going on in court. A disgraceful performance for a juror.

#### Albert Shackelford, Jr.

Methodist. Endowed with curious shock of <sup>dark</sup> red hair, almost kinky, growing straight back from his forehead. Sharp features.

#### Ralph McClung

Drugstore owner. Christian church. Five children. Rabbity blonde little man who ran Juror Turrentine a close second in not paying any attention to the legal proceedings. Seemed fascinated with the New Yorker delegation. Watery blue eyes, tiny teeth in abundance, thick-lensed shell-rimmed glasses. Sparse blonde hair.

#### Dean Hart

Refinery employee. Community church. Didn't get a good look at him.

#### Jacob J. Dechant

Farmer. Catholic. Endowed with rough, virile, Aw Clem good looks. Dark, with bright blue eyes and captivating bashful smile. Household teeming with young.

#### Ray Shearmire

Bowling alley operator. Youngish, decent-looking but sleepy. Dark, small eyes.

(Harrison Smith: "Are you a member of the church across the street?" Shearmire: "Yes." He said he was a member of "The Brethren.")

When questioned for cause, SShearmire said he would be able to follow court's instructions re life or death sentence alternative.

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.

William Lewis

Presbyterian. Florist and nursery operator. Did not get to see him.

N.L. Dunnan

Airport operator. Christian church. When asked if he were against capital punishment, Dunnan said, "Normally I am--in this case no." However, Judge Tate decided that he would be a fair juror. Dunnan a victim of jock-strap itch, apparently scratched for a week.

W.P. Bryant (Foreman)

Farmer. Methodist. Old man. Knew Clutters but also knew his own mind. Was given the least questioning all round by any of the lawyers. Sat attentively through the trial, flushed slightly when pictures were shown.

Alternate jurors Larry Lohmeier, Otis Jennings, sat beyond the jury box and I could not see them.

---

With the exception of Jurors Turrentine and McClung, the jury pretty well followed the testimony. It grew restive at Harrison Smith's 50-minute oration (so did Harrison Smith. He read a great portion of his argument, and seemed bored with what he was reading.) The jury listened respectfully to Mr. Fleming, and was willing to listen to Duane West's thin fulminations, but it was riveted by Logan Green.

Question: why was the "pulpit" placed squarely in front of the jury box for Duane West's and Harrison Smith's speeches, but pulled back behind Highcock for Mr. Fleming & Logan Green? It may have been accidental, again, maybe not. There is something psychologically effective in a jury's being able to take in defendants and prosecution orator at a glance, which was the case when Logan Green spoke.

---

This jury was no different from any others in not looking at the defendants after the verdict. Why they never look at people they've sentenced to death, I'll never know, but they don't.

---

No chicken-hearted jurors, they.

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Appendix BBB – Harper Lee's Notes on Holcomb

HOLCOMB: World War I Battleground.

Unpaved, grey-black dirt streets. Coping for gutters. Matchbox houses; one extremely new modern ranch-style deep red brick dwelling owned by Holstroms. Holstrom house at road leading to Clutter farm just across railroad tracks.

Old red brick two-story business building saying "Holcomb Bank" in concrete plaque on front. Now apartment house. (Went out of business in depression.)

Postoffice minor horror. Known as the Federal Building. Unpainted wooden floors; bank of "combination" p.o. boxes, half of which are hanging open in some degree; only sign is "transfer" saying US Post Office in building's single window. White wooden exterior; Mrs. Clare behind bars (dirt-daubers' nests in angle between ceiling and stamp cage). Jesus posters on one wall. Mrs. Clare walks rocking motion--wooden leg?--says she's the only employee and snowed under with Xmas rush and could we come back, but old crone in background hauling mailbags. One rural carrier--70-mile route.

See INTERVIEWS, David Williams, for Holcomb School.

Teacherage two-story, yellow stucco-like material. Big bungalow-type house. White trim. Dark wooden wainscoting in interior. Divided up into rabbit-warden apartments. Grimmiest building I ever saw.

Tiny, neat railway station; Santa Fe colors. (See T.'s photo.)

Community church, Presbyterian.

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



Appendix CCC – Harper Lee's Notes on Principal, David Williams And The School

David Williams

Principal, Holcomb Consolidated School

*Teeny  
Muskie* Rather thickset, not too tall, close-cropped mousy greying hair, front teeth too perfect to be his own, clear plastic-framed spectacles. Inclined to be close-mouthed at first. Modestly proud of his school.

Holcomb School-- 86 or 87 high school students, about 280 kindergarten through 8th grade pupils.

Modern and progressive (in the sense of up-to-date) school leaning heavily toward home economics, agricultural and vocational work.

New part of school building ~~extremely~~ follows pattern of all recently (last ten years) designed schools. Low roofs, asphalt tile floors, (green and neutral squares) wide hallways with recessed niches for trophy and project displays, multitudes of water fountains.

Modern offices--principal sits out in open with secretary on his right.

School equipment fitted to size of children in lower grades and kindergarten. Happy, well-lit rooms. *Blonde furniture except in kindergarten.* Gymnasium enormous and thoroughly modern. Two huge ropes hang from ceiling to about two feet from the floor for children to swing on. Basketball equipment predominates (No football at H.H.)

Building two music rooms and 6 additional classrooms.

Excellent home economics facilities: four complete kitchens in one big room plus ~~extra~~ washing machine and dryer (aside from separate laundry room which contains two machines & dryers. Wash athletic uniforms & towels.) Preparations for FHA (Future Homemakers of America) dinner in progress when we called. Other room is classroom, with tables and chairs. (Nancy Clutter probably spent great deal of school time in these rooms.)

New science room in old part of school building.

Old part had been modernized as much as possible. Light hallways, schoolrooms light with modern desks.

Agricultural building has one huge classroom (rather dreary and less well lighted than the others) and a big machine shop. Lathes and buzz saws for ~~handicraft~~ woodwork (boy was making a corner what-not; using a white glue to affix shelves to stand.)

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Children are made to walk single file when in a group. Batch of fourth-graders marched in to lunch. (Two Indians and one Japanese boy. Jap fat, jolly.)

Lunchroom light, airy, with light-grey painted wooden tables and benches. First-graders dining. School lunch program: \$.25 a meal for grammar-schoolers; \$.35 for high schoolers.

Green blackboards. (paging Dr. Syntax.)

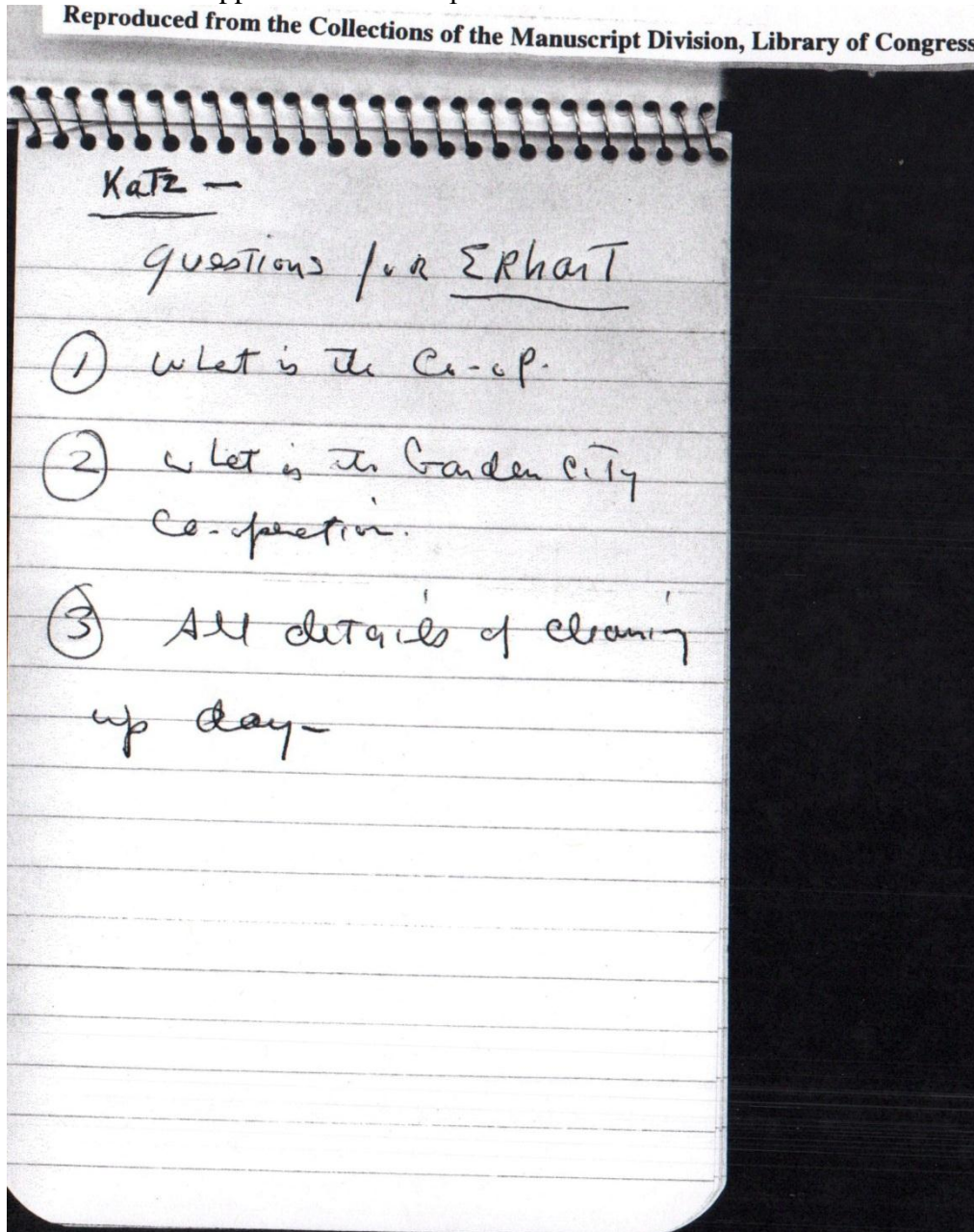
School day begins at 8:48 A. M. Lasts till 4 p.m.

Usually 1st of September to 27th of May. Started Aug 31 this year. 180 teaching days.

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Appendix DDD –Capote's "Field" Notes on Mr. Erhart

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# Appendix EEE – Capote's Notes On Perry Smith's Interrogation

Perry: Look up at the ceiling, eyes on ceiling, turning yellowish, <sup>making report</sup>  
 "from here on out this will write quite a book, quite a book" Repeat 3 times  
 "my first day has always been on the 15<sup>th</sup>"; sentence, "my last day."

DEWEY

2.

Las Vegas - Interrogation of Perry Smith

...fessionals, character of Smith and Hickok.

you in court. There won't be any threats. No violence. And  
no promises. planned it on the way out there, exactly how we were

Perry: I follow you. I've been through this before, you know.

DEWEY: Then we'll start by getting a little background. Your  
 full name?

PERRY: PERRY Edward Smith

Dewey: Address?

Perry: General Delivery, Las Vegas

During the next part of the formal questioning Perry said  
 that his father's name was Texas John Smith, a prospector now living  
 in <sup>Alaska</sup> ~~Alaska~~, aged 66; said his mother's name was Florence Julian Smith,  
 maiden name BUCKSKIN, that she was half cherokee, that she was ~~an~~ an  
 alcoholic who died in San Francisco in 1948; ~~she~~ said he had a  
 brother, T.J. Smith Jr., who had changed his name to James, said his  
 brother and his brother's wife had both committed suicide in 1949--- )  
 because the brother had thought the wife unfaithful, so she killed  
 herself and the next day the brother followed suit; said he'd had  
 a sister, Fern, who had either jumped or fell from a 5th floor window  
 in San Francisco, <sup>in 1950</sup> though he "preferred to think she slipped", and said  
 this sister <sup>was</sup> an alcoholic; said he had another sister with whom he  
 was not very close, and from whom he had not heard since 1958 (this  
 is Dorothy Marchant, a very respectable woman living in San Francisco  
 and married to <sup>a</sup> Schenley liquor salesman.) <sup>Remarked that his ex. had not been</sup>  
 a bed of roses.

See N.L's notes and skip to..

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Appendix FFF – Harper Lee's Notes On Richard Hickock

January 8

Name: Richard Eugene Hickock

Age: 28

Born: Kansas City, Kansas, June 6, 1931.

Address: Edgerton, Kansas.

Moved to Edgerton in 1947. Edgerton is in the extreme southwest corner of Johnson County, 20 miles from Kansas City. Father, WALTER HICKOCK, owns a 44-acre farm 2 miles east of Edgerton; he also works in an automobile body shop in Olathe, Kansas.

Record: sentenced from Johnson County, Kansas, March 15, 1958, after an arrest in Denver on Dyer Act charges but turned over to Johnson County authorities: charges, burglary of a deer rifle from home in Edgerton. He served 10 months, 27 days of a five-year sentence. Was paroled ~~Spring~~ <sup>AUGUST 13</sup> 1959 to Mr. Ed Hays, parole agent. For a time he reported routinely, but then he "ran away."

He was arrested 4 times since, once for a traffic violation. Nature of arrests unknown. Convictions unknown.

After his parole, he went to the home of his parents and worked for a while at an Olathe automobile company. He was also a railroad worker, body shop man, and painter.

Personal History:

I.F. Eberhart, high school principal, said he was a low-average student and frequently in trouble with school authorities. Had been "kicked out" several times.

Pa Hickock said his son was a good boy until he went to prison, that the idea, "he'd steal anything he could get his hands on" was a myth until Dick served time. Then "something happened to him", he was a changed man.

Edgerton rumor has it that the Hickock sons were always in trouble and the reason for it was no home discipline.

Somewhere along the line, Hickock was married two times and has children (number not clear) by both marriages. Has "3 boys" -

*Parole Statement: "I am going to farm with my father - He is going to buy some more land so that I may be able to do so. I have 3 boys who I will definitely take care of. My wife is married again. I have been married twice but I don't want anything to do with my second wife. I can, and will, live down my parole."*

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Appendix GGG – Harper Lee's Notes on Perry Smith

January 8

Name: Perry Edward Smith  
Age: 31  
Born: October, 1928, Elko, Nevada  
Address: Elko/Las Vegas, Nevada

Mother was a Cherokee Indian (Al Dewey); now dead.

Record:

1952--Tacoma, Washington: reckless driving, resisting arrest; charges dropped.

July, 1955-- caught burglarizing Chandler Sales Pavilion, Phillipsburg, Kansas (stole adding machines & typewriters); crawled out of a jail window three days later. Escaped.

Late 1955--Worcester, Mass: arrested for vagrancy, freed on \$10 bond, forfeited it & disappeared.

March 1956--St. Joseph, Missouri: arrested and identified as Phillipsburg escapee.

March 13, 1956--sentenced from Phillips County, 5 years 2nd-degree burglary, larceny, jailbreaking; sentences to run concurrently.

July 6, 1959-- Paroled

(take your choice)

1. notified board he was moving to Bullingham, Washington

2. was not released to a parole agent, but was to return to Reno, where he was to join his father to go to Alaska.

December 15, 1959--Parole revoked on grounds that he failed to "keep his conduct above reproach at all times."

Personal History:

See Jan. 11-  
interview Al,  
Dewey, Perry

HICKOCK & SMITH spent 16 months together in prison;  
if HICKOCK paroled in August - if he served "10 months  
& 27 days" of sentence, they were together that  
long

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## Truman Capote, Harper Lee Vacationing At Broadmoor

By MADELAINE WILSON

Harper Lee, Alabama author of "To Kill a Mockingbird," and Truman Capote, New Orleans author of "Breakfast at Tiffany's," are in town—at the Broadmoor.

The movie of Miss Lee's Pulitzer Prize-winning novel opens at a downtown theater Friday, and Sunday is her 37th birthday. But she didn't come here to celebrate either.

They both came (1) to try out his new silver blue Jaguar on a cross-country trip; (2) to rest from research they're sharing on a book he is writing, and (3) they chose Colorado Springs because the detective who solved the murder recommended it.

The murder involved two male killers and a family of four who lived in Garden City, Kan. It is referred to as "The Clutter Murder," but the name of Capote's book will be "In Cold Blood."

Alvin Dewey of the Kansas Bureau of Investigation, is the detective who solved the mystery and he and Mrs. Dewey are here for the five-day vacation with the two authors.

First, let's get this straight: Capote has three syllables.

A short man with a large blond head and broad shoulders, Capote isn't the effervescent, dynamic, amusing man you somehow expect as the author who put Audrey Hepburn through her paces in "Breakfast."

But he's as friendly as a puppy and has a habit of smiling as he talks.

Miss Lee, who was called Nelle (one syllable) Harper by her family ("Most Southern girls have double names,") has dark eyes and dark hair worn short and softened by its own natural wave. Her face was windburned on the Broadmoor Golf Course Thursday.

"And you can say your golf courses here are hard."

"You mean difficult," he suggested with a smile.

"I mean hard," she insisted.

"Even the ground is hard."

"You are being difficult," he said, again smiling.

She has seen her own movie, "To Kill A Mockingbird," six times,

thinks it is a fair interpretation of her book. But she has never seen "Breakfast At Tiffanys," and doesn't intend to. She liked his book very much and considers that sufficient.

Truman has never seen the movie of his book in its entirety.

"I saw about half of it once and had to leave, it was so awful."

He can't hurt his movie profits with such remarks. He accepted a lump sum. She played it differently: she'll receive a percentage. "But so far, I haven't received a dime."

She, too, is working on another novel; this, too, about the south but it has no name yet.

She wore an apple green silk dress, simply tailored with three quarter length sleeves for the interview. She was an entirely different person from the one in the picture in slacks.

Earl Wilson wrote in his column recently that when Harper Lee learned her novel had received the Pulitzer Prize, she didn't say a word; she just broke out with hives.

She admitted the story Thursday.

"She has them frequently," Capote volunteered. "If you'll stay a little while, she will break out for you."

But we couldn't wait.



Appendix III – A Picture Of Harper Lee & Truman Capote Vacationing Together



Truman Capote and Miss Harper Lee are currently vacationing at the Broadmoor. Capote's "Breakfast at Tiffany's" among other literary works have brought him to international prominence as a writer, and Miss Lee's best selling "To Kill a Mockingbird," catapulted her to world wide fame.

Appendix JJJ - Truman Capote's Rough Draft Of The Acknowledgement Page For  
*In Cold Blood*

my debt is ~~not~~ sufficient to list a small  
telephone directory. In a large and general way, I wish  
to thank the people of Finney County, Kansas, for the kindness  
and, under sometimes trying circumstances, tolerance shown to  
both myself and the reporter assisting me, Miss Harker Lee.

An adequate listing of those to whom I owe  
my debt is ~~impossible~~, it would require  
undoubtedly find a second volume. As it is, I may  
~~be able to list a few of the more important ones.~~ I want to  
thank Mr. Oscar Bernstein and Mr. George Clarkson for their  
assistance  
valuable ~~contributions~~ in, respectively, Mexico and Florida.  
Also, in gratitude for their help and advice: Dr. James McCain,  
of Kansas State University; Dr. Joseph Satten, of the  
Manning Clinic, Topeka, Kans.; Mr. Roy Church, <sup>Mr. Alvin Dancy</sup> ~~Mr. Harold~~  
~~Page~~, Mr. Clarence Dantz, Mr. Harold Myle, agents for  
the Kansas Bureau of Investigation; Mr. Kenneth Lyons;  
Mrs. Vene English and Mrs. Donald Jarchow; (Mr. Jack  
Dunphy) Mr. and Mrs. Clifford<sup>R</sup> Hope Jr.; Mrs. Alvin  
Dancy; Mr. Dick Parr, of "The Kansas City Star"; Mr.  
Bill Brown, of "The Garden City Telegram"; Mr. Harrison  
Smith; Mr. Arthur Fleming; Mr. Duane West; <sup>Mr. Logan Green;</sup>

Mr. and Mrs. P. A. Butts

Courtesy of the Library of Congress and the Truman Capote Literary Trust,  
Alan U. Schwartz, trustee.

Acknowledgments

2.

P. A. Burtis

Judge and Mrs. Roland Tate; Mrs. Lillian Valenzuela;  
 Sheriff Wendell Meier; The Reverend James E. Post; Mr.  
 and Mrs. Lester McCoy; Mr. and Mrs. <sup>Robert</sup> Wells;  
 (Mr. Richard Avedon); ~~Mrs. Margaret Foster~~; Mr. and  
 Mrs. Arthur E. Lutter; (Mr. and Mrs. Patrick Guinness);  
 Mr. David Williams, of the Holcomb Consolidated School;  
 Mr. Donald Cullivan. Mr. Herb Caen,

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 Alan U. Schwartz, trustee



Appendix KKK – Capote's Galley's For *In Cold Blood* That Lee Edited

Reproduced from the Collections of the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

G NY'r OM-363

6796-ELEVEN

other, but he was jealous as hell, and he made her so miserable, being jealous and always thinking she was passing it out behind his back, he made her so miserable she went and suicided. So did Jimmy—shot himself the next day. The day it happened—this was 1949 and I was in Alaska with Dad, up around Circle City—I told Dad, 'Jimmy's dead.' A week later we got the news: Lord's truth. Another time, over in Japan, I was helping load a ship, and I set down to rest a minute. Suddenly a voice inside me said, 'Jump!' I jumped I guess ten feet, and just then, right where I'd been sitting, a ton of stuff came crashing down. I could give you a hundred examples. I don't care if you believe me or not. For instance, right before I had my motorcycle accident, I saw the whole thing happen: saw in my mind—the rain, the skid tracks, me lying there bleeding and my legs broken. That's what I've got now. A premonition. Something tells me this is a trap," he said, tapping the newspaper. "A lot of prevarications."

Dick ordered another hamburger. During the past few days, he'd known a hunger that nothing—three successive steaks, a dozen Hershey bars, a pound of gumdrops—seemed to interrupt. Perry, on the other hand, was without appetite; he subsisted on root beer, cigarettes, and aspirin. "No wonder you got the leaps," Dick told him. "Aw, come on, baby. Get the bubbles out of your blood. We scored. It was perfect."

The quietness of Perry's tone italicized the malice of his reply. But Dick took it, even smiled—and his smile was a skillful proposition: here, wearing a kid grin, was a very personable character, clean cut, affable, a fellow any man might trust to shave him.

"O.K.," Dick said. Maybe I had some wrong information."

"Hallelujah."

"I'm surprised to hear  
that. All things considered."

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Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.

Appendix LLL - Capote's Galley's For *In Cold Blood* That Lee Edited

Reproduced from the Collections of the Manuscript Division, Library of Congress

he especially disliked Mr. Bell's outbursts—hearty barks that sounded very much like the laughter of Tex John Smith, Perry's father. The memory of his father's laughter tripled his tension. His head hurt, his knees ached; he chewed three aspirin and swallowed them dry. Jesus! He thought he might vomit, or faint; he felt certain he would if Dick delayed the "action" much longer. The light was dimming, the road was straight with neither house nor human in view—nothing but land winter-stripped and sombre as sheet iron. Now was the time, *now*. He stared at Dick, as though to communicate the same realization, but a few small signs—a twitching eyelid, a mustache of sweat drops—told him that Dick had already reached the same one.

And yet, when Dick next spoke, it was only to launch another joke. "Here's a riddle. The riddle is: What's the similarity between a trip to the bathroom and a trip to the cemetery?" He grinned. "Give up?"

"Give up."

"When you gotta go, you gotta go!"

Mr. Bell barked.

"Hey Perry, pass me a match."

But, just as Perry raised his hand, and the rock was on the verge of descent, something extraordinary occurred—what Mr. Bell later called "a goddam miracle." The miracle was the sudden appearance of a third hitchhiker, a Negro soldier, for whom the charitable salesman stopped. "Say, that's pretty cute," he said, as his savior ran towards the car. "When you gotta go, you gotta go!"

*was ped*  
**I**T was December 16, 1959, and Agent Nye was in Las Vegas, Nevada. Age and weather had removed the first letter and the last—an "R" and an "S"—thereby coining a somewhat ominous word: "OOM." The word, faintly present upon a sun-worn sign, seemed appropriate to the place it publicized, which was, as Agent Nye wrote in his official K.B.I. report, "run-down and shabby, the lowest type

*X - not near Bell*

*Hand*

Courtesy of the Library of Congress and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



Appendix MMM - Capote's Galley's For *In Cold Blood* That Lee Edited

nineteen to the twenty...  
continued to see his friend Perry Smith, but otherwise, or so far as you know, he maintained a normal routine: lived at home, and reported to work every day. On the 21st, he disappeared, and so did Perry Smith. And since then you've not heard from him? He hasn't written you?"

"He's afraid to," said Mrs. Hickock. "Ashamed and afraid."

"Ashamed?"

"Of what he's done. Of how he's hurt us again. And afraid because he thinks we won't forgive him. Like we always have. And will. You have children, Mr. Nye?"

He nodded.

"Then you know how it is."

"One thing more. Have you any idea, any at all, where your son might have gone?"

"Open a map," said Mr. Hickock. "Point your finger—maybe that's it."

IT was late afternoon, and the driver of the car, a middle-aged travelling salesman who shall here be known as Mr. Bell, was quite tired. He longed to stop for a short nap. However, he was only a hundred miles from his destination—Omaha, Nebraska—homesite of the large meat-packing company for which he worked. A company rule (for) but Mr. Bell often disobeyed it, particularly if he was bored and drowsy, so when he saw the two young men standing by the side of the road he immediately braked his car.

They looked to him like "O.K. boys." The taller of the two, a wiry type with dirty-blond, crewcut hair, had an engaging grin and a most polite manner; and his partner, the "runty" one holding a harmonica in his right hand and in his left a swollen straw suitcase, seemed "nice enough," shy but amiable. In any event, Mr. Bell, very unaware of his guest's intentions, which included trotting him with a belt and leaving

X forbid him to  
pick up hitchhikers, but

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Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



Appendix NNN - Capote's Galley's For *In Cold Blood* That Lee Edited

barrelled, and with a sportsman's scene of pheasants in flight etched along the handle. A flashlight, a fish knife, a pair of leather gloves, and a hunting vest fully stocked with shells contributed further atmosphere to this curious still-life.

"You wearing that?" Perry asked, indicating the vest.

Dick rapped his knuckles against the windshield. "Knock, knock. Excuse me, sir. We've been out hunting and lost our way. If we could use the phone . . ."

"Sí, Señor. *Ya comprende.*"

"A cinch," said Dick. "I promise you, honey, we'll blast hair all over them walls."

"Those walls," said Perry. A dictionary buff, a devotee of obscure words, he had been intent on improving his companion's grammar and expanding his vocabulary ever since they had celled together at Kansas State Prison. Far from resenting these lessons, the pupil, to please his tutor, once composed a sheaf of poems, and though the verses were very obscene, Perry, who thought them nevertheless hilarious, had had the manuscript leather bound and its title, "Dirty Jokes," stamped in gold.

Dick was wearing a blue jumper suit; lettering stitched across the back of it advertised "BOB SANDS' BODY SHOP." He and Perry drove along the main street of Olathe until they arrived at the Bob Sands establishment, an auto-repair garage, where Dick had been employed since his release from the penitentiary, in mid-August. A capable mechanic, he earned sixty dollars a week. He deserved no salary for the work he planned to do this morning, but Mr. Sands, who left him in charge on Saturdays, would never overhaul his own car. With Perry assisting him, he went to work. They changed the oil, adjusted the clutch, recharged the battery, repaired a throw-out bearing, and put new tires on the rear wheels—all necessary undertak-

in a prison shop

— Mr. Sands knew he had paid him to overhaul etc.

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Appendix OOO – A Personal Letter To Capote From Richard Hickock

LI

Mr. Truman Capote  
Box 501  
Bridgehampton, New York

August 1, 1964

Dear Truman:

Enclosed please find a written statement of events that have transpired in instant case. I believe you will find the chronological order to be correct. I hope this is what you wanted to show your friend who is a federal judge.

In your most recent letter you stated that you had obtained a copy of the tenth circuit court's ruling. I don't know how familiar you are with the issues raised, but, the court's decision was pitifully ridiculous! The court completely ignored several ~~constitutional~~ constitutional issues and, it appears with malice, deliberately misinterpreted the U. S. Supreme Court's rulings in several cases (especially *Irvin v. Dowd* 366 U. S.). The circuit court ruled (on page 16 of its decision) that a juror who, "can lay aside his impression or opinion and render a verdict based upon the evidence presented in court," is an adequate and competent juror. The U. S. Supreme Court ruled in *Irvin v. Dowd* 366 U. S. that "a juror's ability to lay aside prior prejudice is immaterial." Any juror who has stated his prior belief of guilt or prejudice is not to be sworn as a juror. So the circuit court is in error in its ruling. I could point out several additional errors, however, it isn't necessary to do

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so at this time.

I have a "seventy one" page letter prepared and ready for mailing to the Chief Justice (Earl Warren) of the United States Supreme Court, in which I point out the many, many errors of past court rulings. The reason I wrote the letter is to influence the court (more correctly, help influence) to grant a writ of certiorari.

I wanted to make nine copies and send one to each of the Supreme Court Justices. However, for me to do so would require six months writing and one hundred and fifty thousand words. I need someone to type the copies for me - but I certainly can't afford that. I also have two exhibits I'm sending to the court. (Just decided to send one to you).

Hope this material meets with your approval and according to your request.

Let me know when you receive it.

Respectfully

Richard E. Clickock #14746

P.O. Box 2,

Lansing, Kansas 66043

P.S.

Found the book "Candy". Will read it tonight!

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Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.



Appendix PPP – Capote’s Guest List For The Black And White Ball

# Appendix

## The Guest List

List of those who were invited to the party at the Plaza Hotel

Leroy Aarons	Mr. and Mrs. Theodore Bassett
Charles Addams	Cecil Beaton
Richard Adler	Mr. and Mrs. Frederick S. Beebe
Count Adlerberg	S. N. Behrman
Mr. and Mrs. Gianni Agnelli	Mr. and Mrs. Harry Belafonte
Count Umberto Agnelli	Marisa Berenson
Edward Albee	Candice Bergen
Mr. and Mrs. Archibald Albright	Mrs. Seymour Berkson
Nelson Aldrich	William Berkson
Shana Alexander	Mr. and Mrs. Irving Berlin
Mr. and Mrs. Charles Allen	Sir Isaiah and Lady Berlin
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Alsop	Mr. and Mrs. Leonard Bernstein
Mr. and Mrs. Stewart Alsop	Mr. and Mrs. Robert Bernstein
Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland Amory	Lemoyne Billings
Princess Charles d'Arenberg	Mrs. Pierre Billotte
Mr. and Mrs. Harold Arlen	Carol Bjorkman
Odette Arnaud	Mr. and Mrs. Watson Blair
Mrs. W. Vincent Astor	Mr. and Mrs. Charles Bohlen
Mary Louise Aswell	Mr. and Mrs. Anthony di Bonaventura
Mr. and Mrs. William Attwood	Mrs. Rene Bouche
Mr. and Mrs. Louis Auchincloss	Anthony Bower
Mr. and Mrs. Richard Avedon	Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Braden
Mr. and Mrs. George Axelrod	Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Bradlee
Don Bachardy	Count and Countess Brando Brandolini
Mr. and Mrs. George Backer	Henry Brandon
James Baldwin	Mr. and Mrs. Frederick Brisson
William Baldwin	James E. Broadhead
Miss Tallulah Bankhead	Donald Brooks
Samuel Barber	Mr. and Mrs. Richard Brooks
Trumbull Barton	Eve Brown
Benedetta Barzini	Mr. and Mrs. John Mason Brown
Charles Baskerville	Mr. and Mrs. David K. E. Bruce
	Mrs. Mellon Bruce

Davis, Deborah. *Party of the Century: The Fabulous Story of Truman Capote and His Black and White Ball*. Hukoke: Wiley & Sons, 2006. Print.

Valentine Lawford  
Barbara Lawrence  
Mr. and Mrs. Irving Lazar

Harper Lee

Vivien Leigh  
Mrs. Oates Leiter  
Mr. and Mrs. Jack Lemmon  
Leo Lerman  
Mr. and Mrs. Alan Jay Lerner  
Herman Levin  
Mr. and Mrs. Alexander Lieberman  
Mr. and Mrs. Goddard Lieberman  
Mayor and Mrs. John V. Lindsay  
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Lippmann  
Mr. and Mrs. Joshua Logan  
Mrs. Nicholas Longworth  
Anita Loos  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert Lowell  
Mr. and Mrs. Henry Luce  
Andrew Lyndon

Shirley MacLaine  
Mr. and Mrs. Norman Mailer  
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph Mankiewicz  
Marya Mannes  
Mr. and Mrs. Stanley Marcus  
Mr. and Mrs. William Marshall  
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Masoner  
Mr. and Mrs. Walter Matthau  
Paul Matthias  
Mr. and Mrs. Peter Matthieson  
Mr. and Mrs. Graham Mattison  
Dr. and Mrs. Russell Maxfield  
Albert Maysles  
Ken McCormick  
Roddy McDowall  
John McHugh  
Mr. and Mrs. Robert McNamara  
Mr. and Mrs. Joseph A. Meehan  
Marcia Meehan  
Aileen Mehle  
Frederick Melhado  
Mr. and Mrs. Paul Mellon  
Gian Carlo Menotti  
David Merrick  
Robert Merrill  
David Metcalfe  
Mrs. Agnes E. Meyer  
André Meyer

Mr. and Mrs. James Michener  
Catherine Milinaire  
Mr. and Mrs. Arthur Miller  
Mr. and Mrs. Gilbert Miller  
Mrs. Walter Millis  
Mr. and Mrs. Vincent Minnelli  
John Moore  
Marianne Moore  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Moore  
Mr. and Mrs. William S. Moorhead  
Mr. and Mrs. Walthes Moreira-Salles  
Edward P. Morgan  
Stanley Mortimer  
Ann Mudge  
Mrs. Natalia Murray

Mr. and Mrs. Samuel I. Newhouse Sr.  
Mrs. Stavros Niarchos  
Mike Nichols  
Eric Nielsen  
Norman Norell

Serge Obolensky  
Lord and Lady David Ogilvy  
John O'Hara  
Patrick O'Higgins

Mr. and Mrs. Bruno Pagliai  
Mr. and Mrs. William S. Paley  
Mr. and Mrs. Gordon Parks  
Mr. and Mrs. Iva S. V. Patcévitch  
Mr. and Mrs. Samuel Peabody  
Mr. and Mrs. Drew Pearson  
Mr. and Mrs. Gregory Peck  
William Pennington  
Mr. and Mrs. Frank Perry  
Mr. and Mrs. Michael Phipps  
Mr. and Mrs. Ogden Phipps  
Mr. and Mrs. Thomas W. Phipps  
Princess Luciana Pignatelli  
Duarte Coehlo Pinto  
George Plimpton  
Mr. and Mrs. Norman Podhoretz  
Katherine Anne Porter  
Dr. and Mrs. Joel Pressman  
Mr. and Mrs. Harold Prince  
Alan Pryce-Jones

Prince and Princess Stanislas Radziwill

Davis, Deborah. *Party of the Century: The Fabulous Story of Truman Capote and His Black and White Ball*. Hukoke: Wiley & Sons, 2006. Print.



Appendix QQQ – Capote On The Cover Of Life Magazine With The Two Actors  
Who Portrayed Perry Smith and Richard Hickock





Appendix RRR – A Caricature Of Capote Making A Joke Of Him And His Work,  
*Answered Prayers*



15 June 59

Dear Mr. Peschock:

Thank you for  
your kind letter, but  
I don't answer personal  
questions or give  
interviews.

Sincerely,  
Harper Lee



Appendix TTT – A Picture of Harper Lee with Truman Capote in Kansas in 1960



Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.

Appendix UUU – A Picture of Harper Lee With One Of Alvin Dewey's Sons



Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.

Appendix VVV- A Picture of Harper Lee (Center) With Marie Dewey And One Of Her Sons



Truman Capote papers, Manuscripts and Archives Division, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox, and Tilden Foundations.

Courtesy of the New York Public Library and the Truman Capote Literary Trust, Alan. U. Schwartz, trustee.

Appendix WWW – A Copy of the E-Mail From Alan Schwartz, Capote's Lawyer  
Allowing Me Copyrights To Capote's Papers

**Subject: RE: Capote copyrights**

**From:** [schwartz@gtlaw.com](mailto:schwartz@gtlaw.com)  
**Date:** 03/08/10 08:49 PM  
**To:** [T.M.Peschock@iup.edu](mailto:T.M.Peschock@iup.edu)

Dear Mrs. Peschock: You have the permission of The Truman Capote Literary Trust to use your notes solely and exclusively as part of your dissertation, as you describe it below. No permission is granted for any other use, including but not limited to publication or exploitation in any form. Please confirm your acceptance of these conditions.

Your Very truly,  
Alan U Schwartz, Trustee