

**Press Release**

T.K. Thorne, author  
205-251-0111  
205-438-8599  
tk@tkthorne.com

## **Birmingham Church Bomber, Thomas E. Blanton, Should Not Be Paroled Says Birmingham Civil Rights Author, T.K. Thorne**

BIRMINGHAM, AL August 1, 2016 – One of the last members of the KKK Cahaba Boys convicted of the 1963 church bombing, Thomas E. Blanton, is up for parole this week. “His parole would create a wave of unrest” says author T.K. Thorne. “But justice is not about that.”

Thorne is a retired Police Captain in Birmingham, AL . She is primarily a novelist, but when she heard a talk by Ben Herren, one of the case investigators of the infamous 1963 church bombing, she knew the story of the four decade investigation needed to be recorded. On the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the bombing, after 18 months of interviews and two additional years of research, [\*Last Chance For Justice: How Relentless Investigators Uncovered New Evidence Convicting the Birmingham Church Bombers\*](#) was published (288 pages, Chicago Review Press, September 1, 2013, : ISBN-101613748647).

The case was re-opened for the second time 32 years after the infamous 1963 Birmingham bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church that killed four young girls preparing for Sunday school. Ironically, the case was reopened because of the remaining distrust from the black community.

“The black community felt that the FBI and local law enforcement never really tried to convict the suspects,” says Thorne, “Blanton got to go free all those years while the family suffered.” Moved by the community’s unresolved pain, Rob Lankford, SAC of the Birmingham FBI in the mid 1990’s, decided to secretly look into the case and move forward if any new evidence could be developed. Through the dedicated work of the investigators and prosecutors, courageous witnesses, and the discovery of lost evidence, the remaining two suspects were tried and convicted.

“One word pops in to my head with the name Tommy Blanton—evil. I don’t use that word lightly or without the realization that it is subjective,” Thorne says. “But Blanton was a mean-spirited, evil person. He gleefully injected a toxin into meat at a store because it was owned by a Jewish man who served blacks. He swerved his car to deliberately try to run over a black man for no other reason than the sight of the man on the street made him angry. He was a small man in more than stature. I know people can change, but Tommy Blanton spent 37 years free from consequences of what he did and has shown no remorse. He is where he belongs. That is justice.”

*Last Chance for Justice* details the investigation primarily from the perspectives of the police detective and FBI agent assigned to the case. Working as an unusual team, they encountered the worst and best in human nature on their journey to find justice.

*What a great job telling this little known or understood major historical story!”*

—**Morris Dees, the co-founder of the [Southern Poverty Law Center](#)**

*“T.K. Thorne portrays the remarkable skill, determination, and tenacity of Alabama law enforcement officials on a mission too long forsaken and largely forgotten. . . . As a civil rights activist fifty years ago and a reinvigorated one today, I am especially grateful for the commencement and completion of that mission. The author’s deeply researched account is at once marvelously entertaining and enlightening.”*

—**Judge U.W. Clemon, former chief justice, U.S. District Court for Northern District of AL.**

*“I don’t have time to read books, but I decided to read the first chapter. I didn’t put it down until I finished it, and I learned things I didn’t know.”*

—**Bill Baxley, former Alabama Attorney General and prosecutor.**

When T.K. Thorne retired as a captain, she took on Birmingham’s business improvement district as the executive director. Both careers provided fodder for her writing, which has garnered national awards for historical fiction for two novels about unknown, unnamed women in two of the Bible’s most famous tales, [Noah’s Wife](#) and [Angels at the Gate](#). *Last Chance For Justice* made the New York Post’s list of “Books You Should Be Reading.”

Thorne loves traveling and speaking about her books and life lessons. She writes at her mountaintop home near Birmingham, often with two dogs and a cat vying for her lap.  
[www.tkthorne.com](http://www.tkthorne.com)

All of her books are available anywhere books are sold.

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**Media:**

You can contact T.K. Thorne via

Email: [tk@tkthorne.com](mailto:tk@tkthorne.com)

Phone: 205-205-438-8599

Twitter: <https://twitter.com/TKThorne>

More information is available on her website media page: <https://tkthorne.com/speakermedia/>