



The Last Trial

Robert Bailey

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Former law professor Tom McMurtrie has brought killers to justice, and taken on some of the most infamous cases in Alabama's history. Now he's tackling his greatest challenge.

McMurtrie's old nemesis, Jack Willistone, is found dead on the banks of the Black Warrior River. Willistone had his share of enemies, but all evidence points to a forgotten, broken woman as the killer. At the urging of the suspect's desperate fourteen-year-old daughter, McMurtrie agrees to take the case.

But as seasoned as McMurtrie is, even he isn't prepared for how personal and dangerous this case is going to get. With the trial drawing near and his sharp young partner, Rick Drake, dealing with a family tragedy, he recruits his best friend, Bocephus Haynes, to help investigate.

As key witnesses disappear and old demons return, time becomes McMurtrie's most fearsome opponent. Soon loyalties will be tested and the boundaries of law will be broken as McMurtrie fights to save his legacy—and his client's life—before the truth is buried forever in the muddy waters of the Black Warrior.

The Last Trial Details

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Author : Robert Bailey

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From Reader Review The Last Trial for online ebook

Diana says

All my reviews are posted on my log : <https://ahavenforbooklovers.wordpress...>

I couldn't resist getting this book. I love the cover. It has such a vybe to it. Being a Grisham fan, I am always on the lookout for good legal thrillers. This one was perfect in every way.

The story begins with the murder of a man who has just recently been released from jail. The police think they have their suspect. However, lawyer McMurtrie has a reason to fight the conviction. It's a tough case especially with the mounting evidence and I was curious to see how the lawyer would handle it.

I didn't know that this was the third book in a series until I started reading it. I quickly noticed references to past events in the characters' lives. I was disheartened when I discovered that I was two books behind and this made me struggle a bit at the beginning of the story. It took time to know the characters and follow the case. However, a few chapters in, I was finally able to fully connect with the story. I really liked McMurtrie. He is a unique lawyer being over seventy years old and a law professor. McMurtrie has taught almost everyone in the legal profession in his town. He has also worked with many of the lawyers, judges and law enforcement officers so there is a lot of history there and most interactions (good and bad) were personal. The author tackled some really sensitive themes through McMurtrie's back story. This made the story both suspenseful and emotional.

I liked the investigation and how it ran concurrently with the trial. There were a lot of tense moments as the case progressed. In addition, I wasn't sure whether McMurtrie's client was guilty or innocent so I kept turning pages seeking the truth while wondering whether he would win the case.

This is a wonderful legal thriller with enough twists and turns to make it a captivating read. I liked everything about it, from the characters to the case. I also enjoyed following the legal proceedings which were well portrayed. Everything was systematic in a way that made it easy to follow the case and hence get invested in the outcome. I can't wait to go back and read the first two books in this series.

Although this can be read as a standalone, I definitely think the series is much more enjoyed if read in order. Definitely recommended for fans of legal thrillers.

Elaine says

[A gun belonging to the suspect with only that su

Ken Bour says

I mostly enjoyed this third legal thriller by Robert Bailey, but it took me an entire month to finish it reading a few chapters every night. Robert Bailey is an excellent writer and the story contains lots of courtroom drama including a nasty judge who rules against McMurtrie at every turn of events. There are a number of

references to predecessor books in the series and crimes/trials that took place; however, my memory had faded on those details, so I found myself lost at times as Bailey tried to connect the dots to the present characters and circumstances. Fortunately, not much was sacrificed in terms of following the plot line.

I am unaccustomed to my "heroes" having aching sacroiliacs and incurable cancer with only six months to live; moreover, the favorable ending to this particular saga had less to do with McMurtrie's legal prowess than an unbelievable arrangement of plot twists including two last minute "witnesses" who popped up during the defense's case. The final outcome may have been unexpected and unanticipated by me, but it was also bizarre, complicated, and incredible. I had to read the final chapter twice in order to follow what happened and I'm still fuzzy on just how many killers were involved. As another reviewer noted, I too did not find the Filipina "hit lady" terribly convincing.

I am a fan of legal thrillers, so notwithstanding the above negatives, they did not detract sufficiently to subtract more than one star. I intend to continue with the series; but, at McMurtrie's age and physical health, it is unclear how much longer it can be sustained unless a miracle occurs or his younger partner moves center stage.

Jean says

I was impressed with Bailey's first book "The Professor". It hooked me and I have become a fan. The books are designed to stand alone, but I think the reader gains more from reading the books in order.

The protagonist of the three books is Professor Thomas Jackson McMurtrie. Tom is ill but his brilliant legal mind and skills are intact as is his moral values. Bailey created an intense and exciting plot that twists and turns. His characters are most interesting and realistic. Bailey moves the story along via his characters and dialog. The author is a good storyteller and his descriptions are so realistic that I felt I was part of the scene. Yummy, green fried tomatoes; you will have to read the story to find out what I am referring to. Some people might not like all the description of the scenes, but I do. It helps me build a picture in my mind. I do hope Bailey will continue to write more exciting stories.

I read this as an audiobook downloaded from Audible. The book is just over eleven hours. Eric G. Dove does a good job narrating the book. Dove is a full-time audiobook narrator and the winner of multiple Earphone Awards.

Martha Martin says

The Last Trial is the third book in the McMurtrie and Drake legal thriller series.

Thomas Jackson McMurtrie is an attorney who spent several decades as a Professor of Evidence at the University of Alabama School of Law and who wrote the definitive textbook on Evidence for the State of Alabama. Then one or two of his former students turned on him and he was dismissed from the faculty of the law school.

Once he was discharged, he returned to the practice of law with a former student, Rick Drake. They have had quite a bit of success as well as some close calls (be sure and read *The Professor* (book 1) and *Between Black and White* (book 2)) in that order. The Professor is in his 70s and about 28 months earlier had been successfully treated for bladder cancer.

Because of his health issues and his age, he is encouraged to leave this case alone, especially since his partner has not worked for several months. After Wilma Newton is arrested, her 14 year-old daughter comes to see McMurtrie to ask him to represent her mother. Contrary to the advice of his family and friends, including the District Attorney and his investigator who are old friends of both McMurtrie and Drake, he cannot deny the child's request.

Shortly after undertaking representation of the "murder suspect," Tom is walking his bulldog, Roy Lee, when the dog lunged for a squirrel, causing pain in Tom's back. Believing he has a "slipped disc," Tom refuses to see a doctor, even though his friend, who is a doctor, and his oncologist, have encouraged him to do so.

Now a man from previous books, Jack Willistone, who was released from prison on May 8, 2012, has turned up dead, on May 9, 2012, on the banks of the Black Warrior River. Willistone is the father of an adult son with such severe autism who resides in a special facility, the son-in-law of the reputed "mob boss" of Alabama, and the insured on a \$3,000,000.00 policy of life insurance. His wife is sole beneficiary.

A gun registered to Ms. Newton, who spent a year in prison on prostitution charges arising from her relationship with the dead man, and which has only her fingerprints on it, is found near the body together with some shell casings. The gun and casings are linked to the gun so the woman is arrested for murder.

The characters who accompany Tom, are Wilma, Wilma's daughter Laurie Ann, Bocephus "Bo" Haynes, Rick Drake, Powell Conrad, the District Attorney, and Wade Richey, a police detective. Bo Haynes, a former student and good friend of Tom's has had his license to practice law suspended so, he agrees to assist Tom as his investigator. Several months before the real work on Wilma Newton's case begins, Rick's father is killed in a hit and run accident, so Rick has been out of the office adjusting to the loss of his beloved father and helping his mother on her farm so he will be no assistance to Tom unless he can be encouraged to pitch in.

This is a story of murder, a hired assassin, drugs, alcohol, greed, dishonesty, suspense, and twists and turns you won't see coming. Robert Bailey is a master of writing legal thrillers, of helping his readers get to know his characters, and of making them human. I promise you, if you read *The Professor* and *Between Black and White* before you read *The Last Trial* you will need to have a box of tissues handy and if you read the Author's Note at the end of the book you will wonder, as I did, how Robert Bailey could write this book. I guess he was just "minding his dad."

J. F. says

Book Review: *The Last Trial* (McMurtrie and Drake Book 3) by Robert Bailey

Once in a rare blue moon, we come upon a writer whose debut work comes across with such power and emotion, and with such finesse expected only at the level of more established bestselling authors, that accolades are understated. Think "*A Time to Kill* /*Sycamore Row*", only with more sinister, ruthless villains,

and much more of the human element - of brotherhood, loyalty, betrayal, abuse of power and repentance.

"The Professor" (Book 1), was one of the first books featured when Prime Reading debuted in October 2016. For some reason and to my own loss, I deferred reading the book until recently. Nevertheless, the book was such a page-turner, I finished it in a day or so, quickly followed by "Between Black and White" (Book 2), and this novel, "The Last Trial" - a series which I thoroughly enjoyed.

I'd strongly recommend that all three books be read in order. The protagonists and characters led by seventy-something law professor Thomas Jackson McMurtrie "who literally wrote the book on evidence in the state of Alabama" are developed incrementally, with main plots, sub-plots, twists, false accusations, daunting odds and cover-ups referring back to key prior events.

Specially interesting are the background stories and present-day interactions with many of the main players, now themselves powerful judges, district attorneys and law enforcement officers, and hot-shot attorneys (not to forget his head-strong partner and co-counsel, Rick Drake), being former students and proteges of "the professor".

"At the end, hope always wins." A fourth book based on the author's real life experience of very close relatives "beating the odds", is in the works. Without a doubt. After all, it was his own father's parting words for the author to "write books..." And so do we anticipate!

Review based on an ARC (advance reading copy) presented by NetGalley and Thomas & Mercer.

Midwest Geek says

I believe this concludes the McMurtrie and Drake series. I devoured the audiobook over a weekend. It is very good, but somehow the story did not strike me as stellar as the previous two. Although a very good mystery, I found that the telling stalled sometimes and was repetitious at other times. There was a final twist near the very end that, despite my hunches, came as a surprise to me.

It is less of a legal mystery than the previous two, although the law plays a major role behind the events that occur. Although it is possible to read these out of order, I strongly recommend reading the series in sequence as each previous one solves a mystery but leaves other parts unresolved.

I suspect this is the last we'll hear from the professor, but, as things have evolved, I suspect we might hear more about his friend and former law student, Bocephus Haynes. Like McMurtrie, he played for and revered coach Bear Bryant while an undergrad at Alabama. (Bocephus was a primary character in the previous two books as well.) In fact, the series ought to be renamed McMurtrie and Haynes Mysteries.

Shoshana says

Robert Bailey's third McMurtrie and Drake book, "The Last Trial," is a winner. Even if you haven't read the first two, and I haven't, although I am going to rectify that as soon as possible, there is no problem in picking up the stories and the characters.

Tom McMurtrie is a seventy-one-year-old Alabama lawyer, formerly a professor at the University of Alabama Law School, who takes up the case of Wilma Newton who is accused of murdering Jack Willistone. I don't like spoilers, so I am not going to give any, but suffice it to say that the case against her looks very dark indeed. The Professor, as many call him, is assisted by an intriguing cast of characters, including a friend who is also a lawyer, and the defendant's teenage daughter.

The case takes many twists and turns, and we also see something of the private lives of the characters. The personalities of the characters are well-drawn, and the writing is crisp and well-edited. The pace and tension of the book are excellent.

"The Last Trial," is everything a legal thriller should be. Do yourself a favor and pick up this book, I cannot recommend it more highly.

I was given an ARC by the publisher and NetGalley for my honest opinion.

Karen says

For some reason, I love to read legal thrillers during the summer. The Last Trial by Robert Bailey is the third book in the McMurtrie and Drake series. I really like this series, it was perfect for my legal thriller craving. I can only hope that Mr. Bailey will continue to write. I am looking forward to the next one.

Aimee says

A Fascinating Series!

I love this McMurtrie and Drake series. I quickly read the first two books and waited, hoping there would be more.

McMurtrie, Bo, and Drake are The Dream Team. The characters are flawed, but have honor. They were born in the South, their lives touched by The Man, and their bond has given them the strength to get by the ups and downs of life.

The Professor returned to practice law, from teaching law, when Bo stood trial, and again when a trucking company's driver plowed into, and killed, a young family. Tom is back, at the request of a child, to save her mother who had been accused of murder.

This is a fascinating book that draws you in. You get your ups and downs, just like real life. The End really isn't quite The End. But it is a satisfying wrap up.

I enjoyed what Robert Bailey wrote after the conclusion. He gave us a very personal view into his family, his life. My heart hurts and rejoices for his family. I hope he keeps writing books. He has a unique voice.

Jen says

The Last Trial by Robert Bailey proved even better than the first book in the series. I really liked The Professor, the first book, but somehow missed the second in the series. This is a legal thriller, but most of the book is about the crime, the characters, and the attempt to discover evidence of innocence.

The main characters, Professor Tom McMurtrie and Bo Haynes, will have you rooting for them and worrying about them as they involve themselves in a dangerous situation. Rick Drake, McMurtrie's partner, plays a smaller part in this book because of a personal tragedy.

Football fans will find a comforting element as both the fictional McMurtrie and Bo Haynes played for the legendary Bear Bryant. Real players like Jo Namath and Kenny Stabler who also played for Alabama under Bear Bryant get a mention for verisimilitude.

I really liked this one and will have to get a copy of Between Black and White.

From the description: Former law professor Tom McMurtrie has brought killers to justice, and taken on some of the most infamous cases in Alabama's history. Now he's tackling his greatest challenge.

McMurtrie's old nemesis, Jack Willistone, is found dead on the banks of the Black Warrior River. Willistone had his share of enemies, but all evidence points to a forgotten, broken woman as the killer. At the urging of the suspect's desperate fourteen-year-old daughter, McMurtrie agrees to take the case.

NetGalley/Thomas & Mercer

Legal Thriller. May 8, 2018. Print length: 400 pages.

Andrew says

First things first: the *chuckling*. Admittedly I'm fixated on it at this point (see my review of the previous book in the series [here](#).) but there's still too much *chuckling*.

All kidding (and chuckling) aside, though, this series seems to be running out of steam. (but not chuckles) I *really* liked the first book ([The Professor](#)) and thought the second ([Between Black and White](#)) was okay, but hoped the third would be better and more like the first. It wasn't.

This book didn't bring anything new to the party, and just felt like a re-hashing of previous events, previous characters, previous ideas, albeit with some new overly-salacious details thrown in. In addition, the title and plot feel a little (view spoiler)

And while all along with this series I've been saying that it might be a little overly-simplistic, a little too direct, a little too linear, up until this book I've felt like the compelling legal drama of it made up for any perceived lack of nuance. But by now, with volume three, it starts to feel like that lack of nuance is becoming a hindrance. When the characters are not new, and the plot feels forced and limited in its possible outcomes, things like (view spoiler) can only take you so far. Especially when the only new thing among them is the *first* one.

As with the other two books, there is a satisfying (enough) legal drama at the heart of this book. Unfortunately this time, I don't think there's quite enough else to go with it. Except for, you know, the *chuckling*.

Three Stars.

Donna J says

Love this series..but this book wasn't as great as the others

I'm definitely not going to explain what "The Last Trial" story is in detail, because if you haven't read the first 2 books, you'll have no clue who I'm talking about. So the bottom line is, this is not a stand alone novel. There's nothing wrong with that unless you've not remembered who's who in the first book of this series...and I really had to go back into my brain for that...It also had so much going on I was getting more than confused. I feel like I need to read/listen to it again.

It was a good book like the other books written by Robert Bailey, but there could have been things left out also, it was extremely long with detail after detail, that I felt didn't need to be in. One example: "as she was vomiting she was watching it go into the bowl...then as she threw her tissue into the toilet and it went down quicker than probably the rest of her life" I'm sure I messed up a few words but Mr. Bailey definitely could have left out a lot more also. As far as the end...too quick, and I felt there could have been more explanation, but it's only my opinion.

Like I said, it wasn't a bad book at all! I just can't give it the highest remarks as I did with the first two.

Debbie Smith says

#NetGalley #TheLastTrial

Release Date May 8, 2018

The former law school professor Thomas Jefferson McMurtrie finds himself in a dilemma when a 14-year-old begs him to defend her mother, who is accused of killing Jack Willistone. After hearing some of the details, the case appears to be air-tight against her mother, but McMurtrie believes that she may not be guilty, plus, let's face it, it's hard to turn down a desperate 14-year-old.

The Professor isn't feeling well, his law partner Rick Drake is off due to his father's death in an accident, so how can he even consider taking the case? McMurtrie figures he'll need lots of help, but his best friend Bocephus Haynes (Bo) has had his law license revoked for the time so he settles for asking Bo to be his investigator. That's still going to be tough for the Professor without the help of another licensed lawyer.

To make matters worse, the judge over the case is one of the Professor's former students who didn't feel he was treated right in law school. Nothing about this case is leaning in McMurtrie's favor. (Third book of the McMurtrie and Drake Legal Thrillers series)

Cons: None. Though this is a stand-alone book, due to the unique character relationships, I would highly recommend starting at the first of this great series. You won't be sorry.

The Professor

Between Black and White

Pros: This is a book based not only on a good mystery but believable characters and relationships. And any book that starts with a bang and has some courtroom action is a winner for me.

Joey R. says

3.5 Stars— I never had heard of Robert Bailey before I saw this book offered on Net Galley, but the subject matter and the setting of the book intrigued me so I thought I would give it a try. Being an Alabama prosecutor myself, I enjoy reading legal thrillers set in the Deep South as long as they are realistic and the Southern characters are not over the top. This book centers around Tom McMurtrie, a former law professor who now practices criminal defense work. Tom gets involved in a local murder case after a 14 year old girl comes to his office and begs for him to represent her mother, who has been charged with the murder of an old acquaintance, with whom she had a long and complicated relationship. All of the characters in the novel are well developed, and the story keeps you in suspense until the very end. The novel seems to get better the further you get into it, but speaking from experience, no trial would ever end as the one in this book did. However, I didn't enjoy the author's ridiculous habit of describing every street, restaurant, and landmark in Tuscaloosa in excruciating detail throughout the book. Also, the Filipino villain who constantly uses Spanish expressions is distracting and seems at serious odds with the rest of the characters in the book. Finally , I've lived in Alabama for 48 years and I've never spoken to or prosecuted a "Bocephus" or a "Bully"— all that was missing was Boss Hogg. Thanks to NetGalley and Thomas and Mercer for an ARC of this book in return for an honest review
