

To kill a mockingbird and the scottsboro boys

[Literature](#), [American Literature](#)



Imagine sitting in a court room as a black man. You are put on trial for something you never would have even thought about doing. You look around at an all-white jury. You have little hope of getting out of this situation being ruled innocent, but you don't give up. This is exactly what happens with the Scottsboro Boys. The Scottsboro Boys trial of the 1930's parallels many of the events in Harper Lee's Novel To Kill a Mockingbird. The Scottsboro boys were nine young men who jumped on a train that was heading out west. " They jumped on the train in search for government work in Memphis, Tennessee" (" Scottsboro Boys" Crime).

After getting into a fight with a group of white boys, they got thrown off at the nearest train station. Thinking that the little fight was going to be no big deal, that wasn't the only thing they were going to get in trouble for. " The assault charges they faced quickly grew much more serious when two female rail-riders, Ruby Bates and Victoria Price, accused the black youths of raping them" (" Scottsboro Boys" Encyclopedia). When the girls were questioned by the police, they claimed that the boys had raped them, which was the most serious offense imaginable during the time of the Jim Crow Laws.

The International Labor Defense called Leibowitz to defend the boys in their second trial. A lot of people questioned Leibowitz's decision to take the case and he quickly received many death threats. " He was assigned five uniformed members of the national guard to protect him" (" Scottsboro Boys" Crime). The boys were put in jail for two years until their second trials. Ruby bates came back and completely changed her story. " She testified

that she and Victoria Price had made up the rape story to avoid arrest themselves" ("Scottsboro Boys" Crime).

Eventually, all the boys escaped from jail or had been set free. One of the events in the novel that parallels the Scottsboro Boys trial is that each client had really good lawyers. The Scottsboro boys had Samuel Leibowitz as a lawyer. The Communist Party had paid for Leibowitz and he was known to be pretty good. "In fifteen years as a practicing criminal attorney, Leibowitz had not yet had a client convicted" ("Scottsboro Boys" Encyclopedia). Tom Robinson, in the novel, had Atticus Finch as a lawyer. He was a good lawyer because he stays to the truth in all he does and is a justful man.

He tries everything to help Tom Robinson even when no one else will and there's little hope. Also, both Atticus and Leibowitz provided a lot of evidence that their clients weren't guilty. Tom Robinson has a useless right arm, but Mayella claims Tom hit her right eye. "It was her right eye, I said" (Lee 225). If Tom's right arm was messed up, he wouldn't have been able to black Mayella's right eye. Another event in the novel that parallels the Scottsboro Boys trial is that both of the girls went back and forth on their stories.

When questioned in court, Mayella can never remember anything she is testifying. Mayella exclaims "I just don't remember, I just don't remember..." (Lee 248). Victoria and Ruby went back and forth on their stories a lot as well. "The trial took a dramatic turn when Ruby Bates appeared for the defense to reverse her testimony from the first trial" ("Scottsboro Boys" Crime). Ruby completely changed her story about the boys and went back on her word. Tom Robinson in the novel is a lot like the

Scottsboro boys. They were both put on trial for a crime they didn't commit, raping white women.

Mayella testified " That negro yonder took advantage of me..." (Lee 251). They were both facing an all-white jury, mostly meaning the odds were against them. " Each of the Scottsboro Boys was quickly convicted by all-white juries and sentenced to death.. " (" Scottsboro Boys" Encyclopedia). Both the novel and the Scottsboro Boys had good lawyers, both the girls went back and forth on their stories and the two clients were a lot alike. There are many ways that the Scottsboro Boys trial of the 1930's parallels the events in Harper Lee's novel To Kill A Mockingbird.