

TUROW'S COURTROOM DRAMAS LEAP OFF PAGE AND TV SCREEN

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Here's big news for fans of legal thriller author Scott Turow: His "Presumed Innocent" is being adapted by David E. Kelley, the producer with the golden touch, for an eight-part series to air on Apple TV+.

Turow, who'll be speaking in Naples later this month, became a publishing star overnight when "Presumed Innocent" came out in 1987 and then was made into a hit movie starring Harrison Ford and Raul Julia. The upcoming TV series promises a "reimagining" of the intense story.



Turow

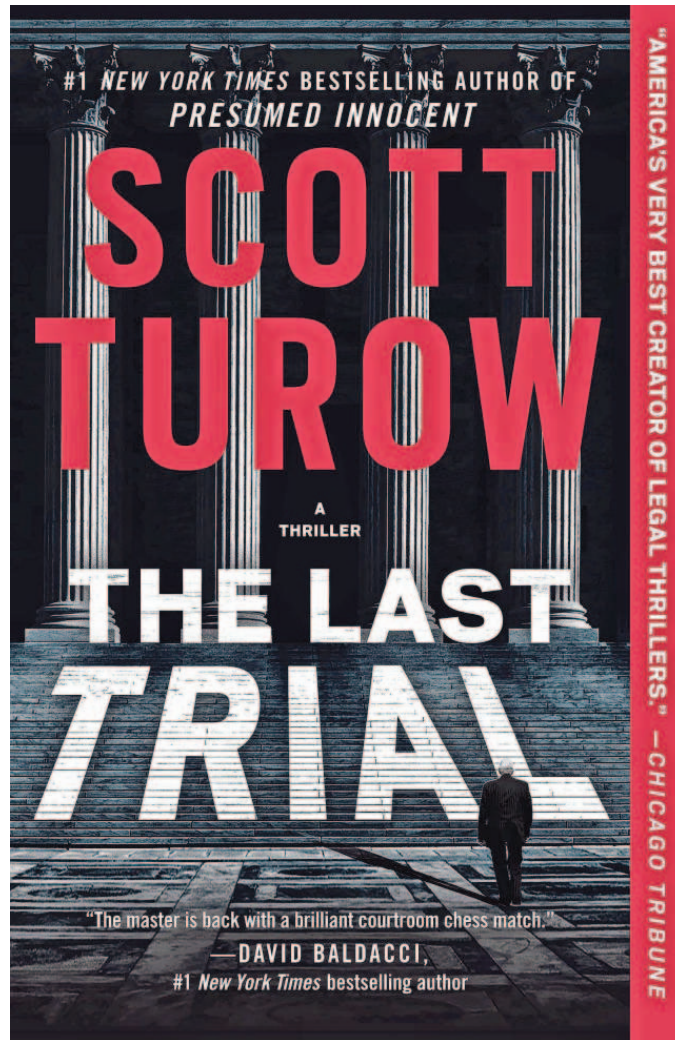
In the years since, the attorney from Chicago has published more than a dozen best-selling novels and non-fiction books, the latest of which is "The Last Trial."

On Monday, March 21, Turow closes out the Friends of the Library of Collier County's 2022 Nick Linn Lecture Series. Previous speakers were Kristin Harmel, Susan Wiggs and Brad Taylor.

The in-person luncheon-and-lecture events at The Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort in North Naples are sold out, but online virtual access is available again this year for those who want to watch from home.

The Nick Linn Lecture Series is a major fundraiser for the nonprofit Friends group, which supports programs that are not covered by the budget of the Collier County Public Library system's 10 branches. For example, responding to the increased demand for e-books during the pandemic, the Friends last year gave the library system \$100,000.

Turow, who spends his winters in Naples, shared some thoughts ahead of his Nick Linn Series appearance.



"The Last Trial" is the latest novel by author Scott Turow. COURTESY

Naples Daily News: The double or even triple meaning of the title "The Last Trial" seems less about a final courtroom trial than about the trial of aging and letting go of a profession that has defined a person's life. You're much younger than your character, Alejandro "Sandy" Stern; what led you to take up this examination?

Scott Turow: Well, I'm not that much younger. Any person who passes 70 and doesn't feel the beating of the wings of time is fooling themselves. So for me, it was a contemplation of what lies ahead — if I'm lucky enough to get that far.

NDN: Stern is an immigrant from Argentina, and this book ends in Buenos Aires. Do you have a personal connection to that country?

ST: No direct connection. I had never been there, when I said in "Presumed Innocent" that Stern had been born in Argentina. I was once in Israel and met a man from Argentina and so it stuck in my head that there was a good-sized Jewish community there, some of whom might have been moved to emigrate by Argentina's constant political upheavals. Since first writing about Stern, I have been to Argentina four times — once as a guest of the U.S. State Department — and have loved every minute, truly. I returned again for a few days in 2019 to double-check some of the details I had included in "The Last Trial."

NDN: "The Last Trial" carries a strong message that "illegal immigrants" such as Sandy Stern are essential contributors to American life. You do a lot of pro bono work to help the powerless. What are your thoughts on this country's attitudes on immigration?

ST: First of all, as long as we have nations, we will have borders and governments who rightfully claim the power to decide who enters. But the demonization

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Turow

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of immigrants that has gone on in recent years is troubling to me. The idea that someone who has walked 2,000 miles with their child in their arms hoping to gain entry to this country — the idea that that's someone to be afraid of is inexplicable to me. I can only hope I would have the same fortitude and dedication to do something comparable, if my place in life was what that parent's is. Also, we cannot have a growing economy without a growing population, and our birth rate is not close to fulfilling that need. We must have immigration, not for everyone who wants to come, of course, but we can't admit only PhDs. Right now we have a desperate shortage of labor in this country. How many employers today would like to see a significant increase in immigration?

NDN: It was such a surprise to see the phrase “monoclonal antibodies” in this book, which you wrote in 2019! That's not a term most of us had ever heard pre-2020. Plus, you delve into FDA approvals and fast-tracking. How prescient do you feel?

ST: Well, I've patted myself on the back privately now and then, as we've all breathlessly followed the development of vaccines and other treatments for COVID-19. Certainly if anybody wants to learn more about the drug approval process, while being, I'd hope, well entertained — this is the novel for them.

NDN: You poke fun at Florida and Naples in particular — but you live here part time now, and you do play golf! Do you get razzed for writing passages like this: “With swamps and alligators inland, and the gated communities and shopping malls in the traffic-clotted towns along the coasts, the state seems to Stern like a giant penal colony for America's elderly, where the residents, like characters in a famous play, have been blinded by the sun and do not realize they are actually in hell.”

ST: Writing those passages tickled the hell out of me, especially since we have been Florida residents for some time now. People always assume you are your characters, but Stern and I just don't see this one the same way.

NDN: I saw you speak in Fort Myers a few years ago when you were promoting “Testimony,” a thrilling novel set at the International Criminal Court at The Hague. It was a change for you — any plans to return to that setting?

ST: No plans right now. But learning about the ICC and its difficult work was very rewarding for me. And The Hague is a truly delightful city. I loved doing research there.

Nick Linn Lecture Series

What: Scott Turow lecture and luncheon sponsored by the Friends of the Library of Collier County

Where: In-person tickets for the Ritz-Carlton Golf Resort are sold out. Virtual tickets are available, allowing for online viewing in the comfort of your home.

Tickets: Virtual tickets are \$300 for the series of four lectures and will allow online viewing either live or on delay, up to one month after each presentation. A Friends membership is required; memberships begin at \$30/year and also provide access and discounts to other programs. To purchase, go to collier-friends.org/events/nick-linn-series/. Contact Marlene Haywood at mhaywood@collier-friends.org or 239-262-8135 for information.

NDN: In 2019 you were working on a TV adaptation of your law school novel “One L.” More recently Publishers Weekly reported you were involved in a new TV series version of your debut novel, “Presumed Innocent,” which was a movie with Harrison Ford and Raul Julia in 1990. Are those both still happening? Any others on the TV/movie front?

ST: Our script for “One L” did not get picked up by the network. Happens all the time — in fact, it's happened to “One L” three times before that. Maybe I'll eventually crack the code. As for “Presumed Innocent,” that one is going to happen. Apple TV+ has bought an eight-episode limited series written and “show run” by the amazing David Kelley — who has been writing huge TV hits for 30 years now, everything from “Ally McBeal” to “Big Little Lies” — and produced by J.J. Abrams and Dustin Thomason. Beyond that, I have hopes right now for one other film project, but at the moment it's just a glimmer in the author's eye.

NDN: Your next book, “Suspect,” is due out in September, and it focuses on Pinky, Sandy Stern's granddaughter. Tell us about it.

ST: Pinky, as readers of “The Last Trial” know, is a highly idiosyncratic young woman, who, for example, wears jewelry that makes it look like she has a one-inch framing nail through her nose. She is now a licensed private investigator, attached to a one-person law firm. She has twin obsessions — one, helping with the defense of a local police chief who has been accused of extracting sexual favors in exchange for promotions (the chief is a woman, btw) and two, trying to figure out her very weird next door neighbor, who she suspects of being a fugitive or a hit man.