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## THE JESUS THIEF SEEKS TO FORGE NEW GENRE—HUMANITY FICTION

HOUSTON—In a challenge to prevailing wisdom about new books from new authors at new publishing houses, *The Jesus Thief* by J R Lankford seems poised to create the sensation its publishers announced it would.

Just out last month, Lankford's compassionate novel on the subject of cloning Jesus Christ has managed, among other things, to garner praise in scientific circles, a starred (for outstanding) review from the American Library Association, an excursion onto Amazon's Mystery-Thriller bestseller list, and sent the publisher, Great Reads Books LLC, back to press for a second print run. Foreign interest also gained the novel a top subsidiary rights agent this week and the sale of translation rights is underway.

"*The Jesus Thief* is the culmination of a yearning I've had all my life," says Lankford, former international engineer turned novelist, "to demonstrate in fiction that empathy with other human beings has no nationality or language, no special race, religion or culture."

According to rave reviews steadily appearing as her novel is discovered, Lankford, a black author, writes with equal passion and authority about the Jews of Fascist Italy, wealthy New York, British aristocracy, and black farmers in the American South. Her subjects include the hot bed issues of human cloning, the Middle East, war and AIDS in Africa. She depicts religious belief, political corruption, and the varied sexual nature of human beings.

*The Jesus Thief* is the story of Harvard MD-PhD Dr. Felix Rossi, devout only-son of a Catholic family-or so he has always believed. Rossi, a passionate aficionado of the Shroud of Turin, is convinced that the face on the ancient linen is Jesus Christ and that the linen's Type AB blood contains the DNA of God. The novel opens as his dream of conducting research on the Shroud comes true. Yet Felix is in turmoil, having just learned that his family had been Jews who escaped World War II Italy.

Instead of studying the Shroud, Felix finds himself stealing two of its threads. If a Jew clones Jesus Christ, he thinks, the persecution of the Jews will finally end.

Felix's cloning progress is impeded by Lankford's cast of diverse characters: an atheist British aristocrat reporter, his ethereal fiancée, his prying black maid from Harlem, their Irish-American doorman.

"Lankford's theme is that all religions teach love and it's a timely and needed message in this day and age," says British native Davina Morgan-Witts, founder of BookBrowse.com.

"If I learned one thing as I traveled the world in my former career," says the author, "it's how similar we all are. Culture and nationality are acquired and therefore plastic. Our bedrock and our salvation is our humanity, itself, and the yearnings we share to belong, to prosper, and be safe."

In a forthcoming review, *Books Monthly* says of Lankford's humanity fiction, "Not since Michael Crichton has a novelist offered such a believable glimpse into the [experimental] world of cloning ... Flawlessly crafted and expertly written, Lankford's novel comprises a symphony of controversy that delves into religious subject matter in an unusually realistic manner. Keep your eye on this author."

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Excerpt, Bio, Press Kit, and more online at: <http://www.thejesusthief.com>