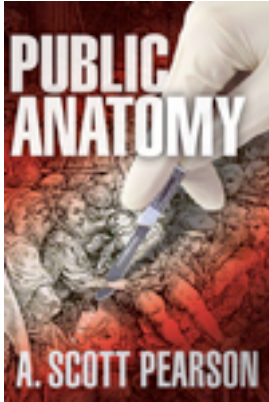


## AN INTERVIEW WITH

---

**A. Scott Pearson,**  
Author of **Public Anatomy**



**Tell us a little about yourself. How and when did you start writing?**

I started writing eleven years ago, soon after I finished surgical fellowship.

**What inspired you to write *Public Anatomy*?**

I began to write as a way to confront the challenges of today's medicine. It was not so much a conscious effort to write a novel. But then the character Eli Branch came along and I could give these problems to him. And my first novel, *Rupture*, took off.

**How did you use your life experience or professional background to enrich your story?**

A life in medicine is filled with rich experience. Sometimes the stories and the people in them are crazy and out-of-control—great stuff for writing fiction.

There are certain themes that appear in my writing. It is not my intention to include these themes but they appear nonetheless, so they must be important to me in some way. One theme in *Public Anatomy* stems from my concern that today's medicine is becoming hands-off and impersonal. I still believe that patients want and need the touch of another human being.

**Is there anything autobiographical in *Public Anatomy*?**

My series character is a surgeon, like myself. All authors, to some extent, write from experience, so some of myself sneaks in there, I guess. Other than that, there is nothing autobiographical.

**Are any characters based on people you know?**

I use characters and interesting traits from people I've known, both within and outside of medicine, but no character is based on an individual.

**Would you say that your novel is more plot driven or character driven?**

I'd say more plot driven; most mysteries and thrillers are. However, it is the character of Eli Branch and Meg Daily and others that I hope continue to bring readers back to the series.

**Who is your favorite or most sympathetic character? Why?**

I really enjoy writing the character of Nate Lipsky, the Memphis police detective. He's had a hard life, estranged from his wife and son, but he still maintains a sense of humor, even in the face of some serious human pathology.

**Who is your least sympathetic character? Why?**

I can't reveal that character without spoiling the mystery of *Public Anatomy*.

**What part of writing your book did you find the most challenging?**

*Public Anatomy* has a significant historical context to the plot that involves the quest for knowledge of human anatomy during the Renaissance. Weaving the historical detail into the present day was challenging—but most rewarding.

**What do you hope that readers will take away from *Public Anatomy*?**

First, I hope that readers will be entertained. That should be the goal for any novel and there's a lot of competition out there these days for entertainment. I also hope that readers appreciate the history of our current understanding of anatomy and medicine—and that maybe we could be benefitted by holding on to the ideals of earlier times.

**How do you dial up the tension to keep your readers on the edge of their seats?**

I like to create the sense that something bad is going to happen, then delay it a bit, while the anticipation builds.

**What writers have inspired you?**

My two favorite reads of late have been the big, thick novels of David Wroblewski and Abraham Verghese.

**What is the writing process like for you?**

Coffee. Pen. Paper.  
Scratch. Claw. Edit.  
Repeat.

**What is the best piece of advice about writing that you've ever received?**

Put butt in chair and write.

**What's next for you? Any new books in the pipeline?**

I'm always working on the next Eli Branch novel—and I've got a more literary novel that is ripening before I stick a knife in and bust it open.