

THE MAN BEHIND THE THRILLS: MEET BEST-SELLING AUTHOR BRAD THOR

BY DOMINIQUE PAUL

ALTER
EGO

They say that everyone has at least one book in them - and almost nobody has two. But best-selling author, Brad Thor, is about to release his twenty-fourth novel on August 6th, entitled *Shadow of Doubt*. It's the latest installment in his wildly popular Scot Harvath series, which follows an ex-Navy Seal and intelligence operative who protects the United States and the world through any means necessary. Often called "The Master of Thrillers" and "America's Favorite Author," Brad Thor's work resonates with his audience because he walks the talk. Thor spent time in Afghanistan shadowing Black Ops while researching his book *The Apostle*, and was also a member of the Department of Homeland Security's Analytic Red Cell unit - a think tank comprised of academics and creatives who helped the U.S. government envision possible terrorist scenarios and how to stop them in the wake of 9/11.

We caught up with Brad recently to discuss his new book and more. Signed copies of *Shadow of Doubt* are now available for pre-sale on Landmark Booksellers' website at landmarkbooksellers.com

What do you love about living in Williamson County? How long have you lived here and what brought you to town?

BT: When I was fifteen, we were on vacation in the Bahamas and met a wonderful family from Nashville. Their daughter went to Harpeth Hall and invited me down for her spring formal. If you had told me that thirty years later, I'd be back with my own family, I never would have believed it.

But with the crime and taxes soaring in Chicago, we decided to take another look and it was amazing how much Nashville had grown. Great schools, great medical facilities, great restaurants... We have now been here ten years and are so glad we made the move.

Growing up, what (or who) influenced your desire and motivation to create?

BT: My parents were big thriller readers. The moment they finished a book and put it down, I'd snatch it up. Clancy, Ludlum, Forsyth, Le Carré... I read and loved them all.





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When and how did you first know that you were a writer? Was there an “A-ha” moment?

BT: Ever since I was a little boy, I wanted to be an author. On my honeymoon, back when I was a TV producer/host, my wife asked me what I would regret on my deathbed never having done. I said, “Writing a book and getting it published.” She then encouraged me to commit to two hours, every day, of protected time to make that dream come true. That’s how it all started.

Your twenty-fourth book is being released on August 6th. What do we need to know about *Shadow of Doubt*?

BT: It’s a fast-paced tale of international intrigue with short, crisp, cinematic chapters. There’s lots of action and this fictional thriller is actually based on some real-life events. In it, a shadowy Russian defector, a beautiful Norwegian operative, and America’s top spy must all work together to unravel a global plot so deep, even the CIA can’t see the bottom of it.

I recently read a review that said, “Scot Harvath’s moral compass is always pointing due north despite his deadly persona.” How are you and Scot similar? And how are you different from one another?

BT: Just the way James Bond was for Ian Fleming and Jack Ryan was for Tom Clancy, Scot Harvath is my alter ego. He gets to do all of those things I can’t do (or, as I like to joke, my wife won’t let me do).

Harvath is an amalgamation of people I know in the espionage and special operations worlds. There is no American Dream without those willing to protect it. Harvath is the epitome of those protectors. I like to take readers right up to the edges of those worlds and provide them a look over the hedges; an opportunity to see what it’s really like on the other side.

I always love to hear other writers talk about their process. Incredibly, you manage to write a book a year, what’s your writing routine like?

BT: It’s all about discipline - seat of pants to seat of chair. As Jack London once said, you can’t wait for inspiration, you have to go after it with a club.

What has been the most challenging book for you to write and why?

BT: *Shadow of Doubt* has been the most challenging to date. In it, I tried to do things I have never done before; to stretch myself as a writer.

I liken what I do to running an amusement park. Every year, I create a new ride. My number one task is to make it super exciting and completely different than anything else in the park. That’s not an easy feat, but it keeps my job challenging. I am always striving to improve my craft and to top myself.

You’re obviously prolific, do you experience writer’s block? How do you overcome it?

BT: As a perfectionist, I absolutely do. The best medicine I ever found is to give yourself permission to write a “lousy” first draft. Just giving yourself that kind of space normally takes away any self-doubt that might be preventing you from doing your best work.

Often, I bring up Tiger Woods. He’s undoubtedly a fantastic golfer. When he struggles, it isn’t because God reached down and temporarily snatched his talent away. He’s just too much in his own head. When you realize that you, yourself, are the source of the problem, it usually helps get you back on track.

Tell us about your other creative outlets. What do you like to do for fun and/or relaxation?

BT: I love international travel. That’s my ultimate outlet.

What book is currently on your bedside table?

BT: *Blackout* by Simon Scarrow. It’s a fabulous WWII thriller.

It was recently announced that the Scot Harvath series is being developed for TV. How did this come about?

BT: A big Hollywood producing team, Shaun and Yvette Redick, came to us and wanted to do it. They’re terrific people. They told me that whoever I wanted to direct, they’d make it happen. That’s how Chad Stahelski came on board. I love the John Wick movies and love even more that Chad is a huge reader of my genre. I’m also a massive Howard Gordon fan (24, *Homeland*), so being able to pick Howard and have the Redicks also bring him in was another thrill for me.

What are you currently working on and what can we look forward to from you in the future?

BT: I just finished an original screenplay with Creighton Rothenberger (*Olympus Has Fallen* franchise, *Expendables III*), am working on the summer 2025 Scot Harvath novel, and have a top-secret project we’ll be announcing sometime next year.

What advice would you give aspiring writers?

BT: Write what you love to read. That’s where your passion is. Also, over years of reading, you have developed a mini-PhD in that genre. You know why certain books work and certain books don’t. As Tony Robbins says, success leaves clues.

Finally – never give up. The only difference between a published author and a non published author is that the published author never quit.