

# Introducing PAUL ATTAWAY

## Exploring Family, Redemption, and the Charms of Charleston in Eli's Redemption

*Paul Attaway discusses transitioning from business to writing, crafting characters, themes of justice, and family dynamics in his latest novel.*

Paul Attaway's journey from the bustling streets of Phoenix, Arizona, to the historic charm of Charleston, South Carolina, reads like a narrative straight from one of his own novels. Born and bred in the Atlanta, Georgia area, Paul's path meandered through various ventures before settling into a vibrant retirement filled with writing, guiding history tours, and cherishing family moments. His transition from the corporate world to the literary realm and the cobblestone streets of Charleston sparks curiosity—what inspired this shift, and how did it shape his storytelling?

In a conversation with Reader's House Magazine, Paul shares insights into his creative evolution. From the bustling metropolis of Phoenix to the picturesque backdrop of Charleston, the journey was not merely geographical but also a voyage of self-discovery. "I wanted more control over my time," Paul reflects, "and the transition was gradual."

With each word, Paul unveils the intricate threads that weave through his novels, particularly his latest work, "Eli's Redemption." Set against the backdrop of Charleston and the Bahamas, this tale unfolds a captivating narrative that intertwines history, culture, and

personal redemption. Paul sheds light on the influences behind his storytelling choices, from the historical connections between Charleston and the Caribbean to the thematic exploration of justice and forgiveness.

Central to Paul's narrative tapestry are the characters, especially Eli, whose journey towards redemption serves as the beating heart of the story. Paul delves into the meticulous process of character development, highlighting Eli's transformation against the backdrop of a gripping plot filled with unexpected twists and turns. As readers navigate through the complexities of Eli's world, they are confronted with profound themes of family, trust, and the pursuit of identity.

For Paul, family dynamics are not just plot devices but a central theme that resonates deeply within his storytelling. He articulates the role of family in "Eli's Redemption" and the broader Atkins Family Low Country Saga, emphasizing the universal quest for connection and belonging.

As the interview unfolds, it be-

comes evident that Paul Attaway is not just a storyteller but a historian of the human experience, weaving tales that resonate with readers on a profound level. His narrative prowess, coupled with his passion for history and culture, creates a literary landscape where the past intertwines with the present, and redemption awaits at every turn. Paul's journey—from corporate boardrooms to the cobbled streets of Charleston—embodies the spirit of adventure and reinvention, inviting readers to embark on a journey of their own through the pages of his novels.

**What inspired you to transition from your career in Phoenix to writing novels and guiding history tours in Charleston?**

I wanted more control over my time. The transition was gradual. In Phoenix, I started a few businesses, and while I enjoyed what I did, when you own and operate your own business, you are always on call and you are accountable to shareholders, employees, vendors, customers, bankers, etc... I sold my half of the business I was involved with to my business partner

and my wife, Lyn, and I started spending more time in Charleston where one of our children had attended college. I was too young to retire and still enjoyed a challenge. I had been talking about writing a book and at Lyn's encouragement, I gave it a shot. It took a while to fully commit myself to the project but once I did, I loved it.

As for guiding tours in Charleston, I came to it gradually as well. The city of Charleston is a living museum with history from the Age of Exploration, the Revolutionary War, and the Civil War and living here reignited my love for our country's history. A good friend is a tour guide and he encouraged me to give it a shot. The first tour I gave was to family and friends who were in town for one of our daughters' weddings. I loved it; I was hooked.

**How did the setting of Charleston and the Bahamas influence the story and characters in Eli's Redemption?**

There are strong historical and cultural connections between Charleston and the Bahamas. In my first book, Blood in the Low Country, one of the characters, Eli, has to flee Charleston. As I was writing the book, I grew increasingly aware of the connections



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*Embark on a journey of redemption and discovery with 'Eli's Redemption,' as Paul Attaway's latest novel unfolds intricate narratives*



between Charleston and the Caribbean and the Bahamas more specifically. I needed a place for the character to run to, someplace accessible Charleston but far enough away to serve as a hideaway. By this point in writing my first book, I had begun to think about my next book and where it might take place. The Bahamas seemed like a logical place.

Furthermore, the climate and culture in Charleston and the Bahamas in the 1970s were similar enough to ease the transition for our protagonist.

**Can you share a bit about your process of crafting the character development, particularly focusing on Eli's journey towards redemption?**

Critical to the development of any character is anticipating how the character will change, what we call the character-arc. Eli changes and his changes can be marked alongside the unfolding of the plot but also alongside the journey from Charleston to the Bahamas and back. He is betrayed by someone he should be able to trust, and he flees Charleston for the Bahamas to avoid murder charges of which he is innocent and assumes an identity while there to avoid detection. He falls in love but also into the grasp of a professional criminal. To get what he wants, a life with the girl whom he loves, he must first recover his identity which not even his girlfriend knows of. He must prove his innocence and clear his name. He must move from a state of guilt to one of innocence. Along the way he learns to trust again and how forgiving those who have hurt us is a critical step in learning to live at peace.

**The novel explores themes of justice, forgiveness, and redemption. How did you approach weaving these themes into the narrative, and what message do you hope readers**

**take away from Eli's story?**

I tried to show how all of lives are interconnected in ways we can't always see. There is a grand plan and all we can do is play what is in front of us. Furthermore, help often arrives in ways we would never anticipate or plan which makes life interesting and surprising. As for forgiveness, I wanted to show that forgiving someone is as much for one's own benefit as it is for the one who has been forgiven.

The plot of "Eli's Redemption" is described as filled with twists and turns. How do you balance keeping readers engaged with surprises while also ensuring the story remains cohesive?

By always moving forward towards one grand resolution. There are plots and subplots and I view them like concentric circles that begin to spiral like water in a sink moving towards the drain which is to say the circles get tighter and tighter until there is one final surprise that wraps everything up.

**The Atkins Family Low Country Saga seems to delve into complex family dynamics. Can you discuss how family plays a role in "Eli's Redemption," and why it's a central theme in your novels?**

I don't believe we are a function of nature or nurture but of both. We are born as unique individuals with our own personality, but we are also impacted by the family in which we grow up or by the absence of family if we grow up without one. A desire for family and the connectedness that comes from being in a line of generations I believe is universal. Our main character has been cut off from his family, and he is not able to either rejoin his or start his own until he can recover his identity and prove his innocence. This is what drives him.

*PHOTO: Paul Attaway's masterful storytelling intertwines history, redemption, and familial bonds, captivating readers with each turn of the page.*