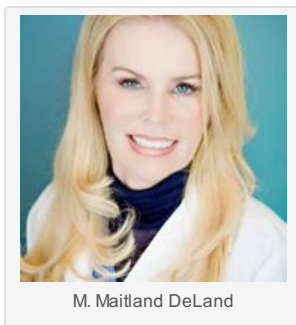


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ALLEN MENDENHALL INTERVIEWS M. MAITLAND DELAND, AUTHOR OF "NASHVILLE MERCY"

JUNE 3, 2015 BY ALLEN MENDENHALL [LEAVE A COMMENT](#)



AM: Dr. DeLand, thanks for the interview. I'm thankful for the opportunity to talk with you about your debut mystery novel, *Nashville Mercy*. How did you draw on your Southern roots and medical background to develop the plot of this book?

MMD: My entire extended family is in the medical field. Since I was a young child, even at holiday dinner there would be medical discussions. In addition to working as a physician in my own practice I also was a medical facility owner, national accreditor, and member of state and national medical boards. Each of these hats has given me unique insight into the new onsets, extricates and diversity of medical practices, hospitals and physicians. Actually, I have Northern and Southern roots: born at the Mayo Clinic, living in Baltimore, North Carolina, Florida and Louisiana. All enriching experiences.

AM: *Nashville Mercy* is just the first in a series, right? The Kate Katelinson Series?

MMD: Yes, it's the first installment in the series. Right now I'm writing the sequel, *Nashville Rap*, which follows Kate as she is called to investigate the mysterious death of a well-known music producer after law enforcement abandons the case.

AM: This isn't your first book. You've also written children's books.

MMD: Yes, I actually have a series of children's books called *The Great Katie Kate*, which educates children and parents on serious diseases and illnesses in a lighthearted and playful manner.

It's the first educational book series of its kind. I wanted to create a non-intimidating, easy dialogue between parents and children about specific diseases and syndromes affecting their lives. Need to add the Baby Santa series. In each book, Baby Santa helps his father solve a dilemma to save Christmas.

AM: Kate Katelinson's story isn't all thriller. Tell us about the elements of romance in her life.

MMD: Kate may be a natural at cracking daunting murder mysteries, but romance is a foreign frontier for her. Like many women, she longs for a true loyal love. Her problem isn't necessarily in attracting this love, as she's an intelligent beautiful woman, but in trusting love once it arrives. It's hard for her to drop the guard and suspicion that serves her so well as a reporter and to open her heart.

In *Nashville Mercy*, Kate must decide whether the man she loves has her best interests at heart or is ultimately out to destroy her and the work she holds dear.



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AM: Why the Nashville setting, besides the country music connection?

MMD: Nashville is a vibrant, beautiful city that is near to my heart. Both of my children received wonderful educations and personal growth at Vanderbilt. My children each have serious medical conditions such as Type I diabetes, epilepsy and asthma and have received the highest medical care at The Vanderbilt Medical Center. Setting the Kate Katelinson series in Nashville is a way for me to pay homage to the city's colorful culture and residents that forever engage and inspire my imaginative musings.



AM: I'm curious how you came up with Kate Katelinson. Did she spontaneously arise as a fully formed character, or did you have to develop her personality in fits and starts?

Kate's power, intelligence, and determined spirit came with the initial emergence of her character. Her more vulnerable qualities on the other hand, like her fear of failure or of hurting those she loves, arose through a more subtle process aligned with her reactions to major and minor events in the plot.

AM: How do you balance your life as a writer with your life as an oncologist?

MMD: I carve out separate spaces and times during my week for both vocations—separating them is key. I find that if I designate a specific time and space for my writing, where I can tune out my other responsibilities, juggling both life passions becomes a playful, sometimes challenging, dance—it may not be easy, but it's rewarding and fun.

AM: My wife and I have friends whose three-year-old daughter is struggling with childhood leukemia, and I'm a cancer survivor myself, so I'm fascinated by your background. Would you mind talking about that aspect of your life? How did you come to do what you do as a doctor?

MMD: My dear grandmother, who was very close to me, was diagnosed with breast cancer. I then had firsthand knowledge about the scary diagnosis, the ravage of treatments, the joy of achieving goals of therapy and most of all the helplessness and firm prayers for someone so dear. This mantra of holding each and every person's life as precious has served me well. It is an honor and privilege to help all patients. The challenge of treating children with cancer is particularly painful and difficult. Families wonder why did this happen to their innocent child. Children many times don't understand and want to be a kid like everyone else. The goal is to unite all in the effort and gentle support to the family and child while delivering the best possible care. Gaining the confidence of the young patient is paramount. I have always tried to make the experience as good as it could possibly be.

AM: I often hear people say they want to be writers but are just too busy. As someone who could have resorted to this excuse but didn't, what advice do you have for these people? You seem to have made time to cultivate your literary facility.

MMD: The bottom line is that when you love something enough, you make time for it, no matter how busy you may be. I love writing, so I make the time for it, even if that means getting up earlier or going to bed later on certain days. This discipline is a way to honor my craft, passion, and overall happiness.

AM: Thank you very much for taking the time to speak with me. I hope our readers will visit your website and check out your book. All the best with the next installment.

MMD: Thank you very much! It was such a pleasure delving into the Kate Katelinson series and the vibrancy of Nashville with you.

If readers would like to know more about my writing, they can find additional information at <http://www.delandbooks.com>.

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About Allen Mendenhall

Allen Mendenhall is a writer, attorney, and educator. His book *Literature and Liberty* (Rowman & Littlefield / Lexington Books) was released in 2014. He blogs at The Literary Lawyer. Visit his website at [AllenMendenhall.com](#).

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