



## *The Scandal Clause* ©2020

by Sydney Stern

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**Logline:** A globally prominent neurosurgeon designs a unique plan to avoid profound sexual scandal in his career, however, the nurse he hires stumbles onto the one flaw that can destroy his life and career.

# Author Biographies

## Bio Box

*26 words 13 seconds*

With a 35-year background in psychology, family therapy, special education, and sexual abuse treatment, Sydney Stern has turned her professional writing skills and experiences to fiction.

## Short Bio

*74 words 36 seconds*

Sydney Stern, psychologist and educator for over 35 years, has doctoral level expertise in family and multicultural therapies, assessment, sexual abuse treatment, and special education. Working in Spanish and English, in homes, clinics, schools, and colleges, she peels away the layers of what creates, or destroys, human relationships. Known for her analysis and treatment of behavioral and psychological difficulties, Sydney weaves professional training and life experiences into a story full of unprecedented possibilities.

## Longer Bio

*426 words 3 minutes 28 seconds*

Sydney Stern, psychologist and educator for over 35 years, has worked and taught people ages 5 to 85. Family and multicultural therapies, assessment, sexual abuse treatment, and special education are her expertise. She remembers wide ranges of work environments—from inner city clinics, homes, rural and urban school systems to college campuses and lecture halls. Her professional writing skills and experiences live on in the stories she tells.

Sydney grew up near Washington DC with one sister, one dog, two parents, and three parakeets. Hooked on writing by an 8<sup>th</sup> grade English teacher with a flair for the written word, she still retains stashes of stories from that time in a purple box.

She grew into young adulthood in the Boston area during the tumultuous decade of the 1970's. These years encompassed a time of expanded sexual freedoms—accessible birth control, AIDS still an unknown disease, and the Roe-vs-Wade Supreme Court decision easing abortion restrictions. Economic necessity created a flood of women entering the workforce at rates never seen before or since. The two-income family had come to stay.

Not until much later did Sydney realize these boundary-breaking years laid the groundwork for the questions she raises in *The Scandal Clause*. With doctoral level training, experience, and exceptional diagnostic and interviewing skills, she is able to analyze, discuss, and engage with situations many others are reluctant to address.

“How autobiographical is this story?” some readers ask.

Sydney's answer?

“I've written scenes in *The Scandal Clause* that took root from more than imagination—my experiences shaped actions, feeling tones, locations. But the book is not an autobiography. Either overt or covert, many times sexual harassment or aggression is just part of a woman's landscape. Just take a look at the news today. However, there is one truly autobiographic part of the book. It's the burning, unanswered question that Laura faces at the end of the book:

*“What allows career breaking, devastating, sexual scandals to keep growing worse and worse in our workplaces and how do we resolve this?”*

“I wrote *The Scandal Clause* in order to bring that question to the table. In the sequel, I plan to explore answers to this question. However, my current project is a novelette ‘prequel’ introducing John Russell as a young man. It describes his rise from shy, awkward child to driven neurosurgeon with a need to create the *scandal clause* contract.”

Sydney received her Master’s Degree from Boston College and her Doctorate from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Retired from winters in Western Massachusetts in 2015, she now resides in Winter Park, Florida. She has had the privilege of being teacher, therapist, mother, wife, grandmother, traveler, cancer survivor, gardener, hiker, author, woman, and always a human being. Of course, she is still writing to this day.

