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years, Doug has reaped further inspiration for his writing from the likes of John Sandford, Michael Connelly, and Lee Child and from local authors including Tom Keever (Park Ridge), Barbara D'Amato (Chicago), and Sam Reaves (Evanston).

"I like knowing what happens at the end of a case," says Doug. "That's a luxury you often don't get while working in law enforcement or in the news business."

For Doug, central to every story is the victim. He works hard to tell their side of things because he feels that—in real life—they always get the short end of the stick, not only from "perps," but often from law enforcement and the media, too.

"Doug focuses on crime because he's compassionate and really cares about bad guys being caught," says longtime friend and colleague Cisco Cotto, now morning radio host on AM 560 WIND. "I'll never forget meeting him for barbeque at Merle's in Evanston when I was a struggling young radio reporter. He walked in carrying two cell phones, two pagers, and three police scanners. I knew right away this guy was hard core!"

In his 2003 debut novel, *Deader by the Lake* (a play on the often-heard Chicago truism "cooler by the lake"), Doug plays to his strengths with gritty realism that reflects his life experiences.

Set in the City and along the North Shore, readers meet Doug's main character, television reporter Reno McCarthy, who agrees to do a favor for his ex-boss and finds himself entangled in a murder that City Hall and federal agents are working to cover up in true Chicago-style. But Reno is after justice, even if it means a showdown with a brutal crime boss intent on turning the Windy City into a branch office of the Russian mob. This storyline has Chicago on the verge of a drug turf war between the Red Mafia and the street gangs: A 21st century battle that would make the Roaring Twenties seem like a cap gun fight.

It's quintessential Chicago with action that takes the reader to Navy Pier, inside Lake Point Tower, and on a wild chase under the Merchandise Mart.

"Doug is the real McCoy," says now-retired Chicago news legend John Drummond, author of *Thirty Years in the Trenches: Covering Crooks, Characters and Capers*. "What he writes is not a figment of his imagination. He has street smarts because of his background and good sources who will talk to him in confidence. He respects that, and so they respect him. So, when Doug gets an idea, he's able to pick up the phone and ask a homicide detective—could it happen this way? Because of this, there's a real ring of authenticity to his books that many others don't have."

Doug's second installment, due out in June from publisher Five Star, is already receiving high praise. Also set in Chicagoland, *Every Secret Crime* finds Reno chasing another breaking news story, but this one may be his last. When the son of a celebrity attorney is murdered in an upscale western suburb, police make an arrest within hours. But Reno thinks they've closed the case too soon.

As the bloody body count rises, Reno discovers a community steeped in corruption and greed, a startling link to secrets of the past, and a lurking psychopath watching every move Reno and his colleagues make.

While preparing for the launch of *Every Secret Crime*, Doug is already at work on his third book. In addition to career-related speaking engagements, Doug is also active at the Village Church of Lincolnshire, where he uses what he calls his "author and radio guy talents" acting in skits and performing dramatic readings that illustrate different parts of the Bible. Talk about great mysteries!

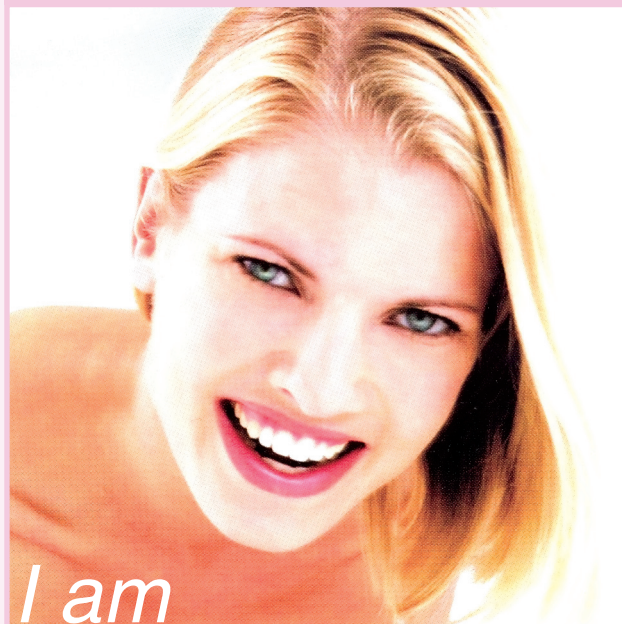
For more information about Doug Cummings and his books, visit www.dougmccummings.com. **SR**

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