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## **A basement, a bribe, a botched investigation** *Formula for suburban scandal supplied in veteran crime reporter's new book*

**CHICAGO** - Whether it's the manicured lawns, the well-attended PTA meetings, or the Starbucks on every corner, the American suburb typically seems like a safe place to be. Crime isn't a big problem, here, right? Wrong: In a March 2008 story, *The Atlantic Monthly* revealed that more Americans are moving back to the city, and as a result, many abandoned suburbs are morphing into slums characterized by crime and decay. Why? The suburban dream is crumbling - and as popular programs like *Weeds* and *Desperate Housewives* demonstrate, some cracks have already begun to show.

In his new novel *Every Secret Crime* (Five Star, June 2008, 978-1-59414-665-7, \$25.95), former cop and crime reporter Doug M. Cummings digs deep into the world of suburban corruption. This journalist-turned-mystery writer has witnessed plenty of suburban criminal activity, and weaves some of his professional experiences into his book.

"Covering suburban crime was intriguing because people think nothing bad ever happens in the 'burbs, especially in the upscale neighborhoods," says Cummings, who covered Chicago crime for 17 years, and most recently for WGN. "Part of the reason is political. Mayors and city councils don't want their citizens to think their tax dollars aren't working to protect them. Residents don't want their friends thinking they live in 'bad' neighborhoods. In some towns, the problem is lack of familiarity with the media. Cops and politicians figure the less they say, the better."

Set in the wealthy Chicago suburb of Falcon Ridge, *Every Secret Crime* introduces readers to 17-year-old Trey Hayden, son of celebrity attorneys. Alone in his house, Trey comes face-to-face with a shadowy intruder, just outside his bedroom door. What follows is a bloody homicide that attracts the attention of national media, as well as local TV reporter Reno McCarthy. McCarthy notices something not quite right about the police investigation - but the more he presses, the more dangerous his pursuit becomes.

*Every Secret Crime* is the second installment in Cummings' acclaimed Reno McCarthy series. The modern gumshoe/TV reporter made his debut in Cummings' *Deader by the Lake*. *Booklist* described McCarthy as "a sexy, emotionally vulnerable reporter with an active conscience as well as a nose for news, half-truths, and lies."

In an interview, Cummings is available to discuss:

- Slum versus suburbs: Why picket fence communities aren't necessarily the safest
- From cop to crime reporter: Why Cummings' books look at both sides of the crime scene tape
- What do cops really think of the media?
- Corrupt cops: Just how compromised are today's police departments?
- Anatomy of a police investigation: What really happens at a crime scene?
- The modern "whodunit:" What are the hallmarks of today's mystery genre?

DOUG M. CUMMINGS became a TV news photographer at the age of 18, was a Kansas deputy sheriff by 21, and five years later stepped back into the media world. He worked as an anchor, reporter, and talk show host in Kansas, Missouri, and downstate Illinois before finally settling in Chicago. There, he spent the next 17 years working as a crime reporter, first at WMAQ radio and then at WGN radio. During that time, he received numerous awards for his coverage of murders, school shootings, fires and more. His reports have been heard on every major network, and today, Cummings is a full-time writer. He lives in Chicago with his cat Socks-Monster.

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To request a review copy of *Every Secret Crime* or to set up an interview with Doug M. Cummings, please contact Tolly Moseley at (512) 478-2028 ext. 213 or [tmoseley@phenixpublicity.com](mailto:tmoseley@phenixpublicity.com).