

{ Q&A }

Dive Novelist Eric Douglas

» Around 9 p.m. on a typical weeknight, after putting in a full day's work as Training Director for the Divers Alert Network (DAN), walking the dogs and putting the kids to bed, Eric Douglas retires to his study and enters a world of diving intrigue. Douglas, 39, is the author of two novels—*Cayman Cowboys* and his latest, *Flooding Hollywood*—that follow the exploits of recreational diver and photojournalist Mike Scott. The goal, says Douglas, is to have fun telling entertaining stories, but, as he explains in this interview, he also wouldn't mind convincing more people to take up the sport.

Q Have you always been a writer?

A My degree is in journalism and I actually worked as a newspaper reporter for about four years after college. *Cayman Cowboys* was my first attempt at writing fiction. I've always had stories bouncing around in my head and I just decided to give it a shot.

Q Why write dive-adventure fiction? It's a pretty unusual genre.

A So many people in diving can trace their first exposure to the ocean to Mike Nelson in *Sea Hunt* or Jacques Cousteau and his documentaries. I wanted to write a new diving hero that might get nondivers excited about diving. I've had people who don't dive read my books and tell me that they could see themselves down there with the characters. I take that as extremely high praise. The dive-adventure genre is pretty unusual, but like they say, you have to write about what you know.

Q Speaking of heroes, tell us about Mike Scott. Is he based on any specific person?

A Mike Scott is loosely based on several people I've met over the years, but not specifically on anyone. I tried to make him more of an everyman

than a lot of the heroes in adventure fiction. He isn't James Bond and doesn't have special gadgets. He is a news photographer, and that gives him the chance to get involved in a lot of different things. I plan to write an entire series of books with him as a legacy character, just like Tom Clancy's Jack Ryan or Clive Cussler's Dirk Pitt. The great thing about writing that way is your readers get to know your characters and almost think of them as friends.

Q Your latest book is set in Hollywood—has anyone called for movie rights yet?

A No, *Hollywood* hasn't come calling yet, but *Flooding Hollywood* was originally written as a screenplay. Realizing that the odds getting it produced were pretty small, I went back and turned it into a book. I would love to have my books turned into movies. That is the greatest way to expose non-



divers to the adventure and excitement of diving.

Q Where are you diving these days and will those experiences end up in a future book?

A I have already written the first draft of my third book. It is set on the northern coast of Italy in the Adriatic. The basic story? Someone is trying to stop an underwater archeological excavation. The good guys have to find out why. I recently took a pretty amazing trip to Zanzibar. You can bet a future story will be set there as well.



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