

# Magic City Crime and History Dramas

## *Novelist uses the city as an intimate backdrop for stories of crime and intrigue*

Birmingham, Alabama is entrenched in many people's minds as images of black and white grainy films showing African American citizens being tormented with fire hoses and police dogs, but author R. Earl Muir shows his readers a much different city in his novels. "While the civil rights struggle is definitely a large part of our past and certainly plays a key role in who we are as a city today, I want the reader to see my city as I do," Muir explains. Muir grew up on the city's western edge and spent more than fifteen years as a police officer and detective and draws from that experience to create suspenseful stories set in his hometown.

In Muir's first novel, ***Magic City Déjà Vu***, we are introduced to the Special Crime Unit (SCU) of the Birmingham Police Department, a small and diverse group of detectives assigned the departments most serious crimes. The team is led by veteran Lieutenant Fay Findlay who is confronted with a heinous crime that is eerily similar to a crime she is familiar with from more than a century ago. The novel is fiction but contains a true crime drama from the history of Birmingham that dominated national headlines in 1888. Muir parallels the two stories and intertwines them into an intriguing and thrilling tale.

In his second novel, ***BOMBINGHAM A Day of Reckoning***, Muir takes the reader on a wild ride with the SCU team over a few short days as the entire city comes under attack not imagined since the civil rights era when frequent bombings throughout the city earned the city the dubious moniker of Bombingham in the national media. Fay Findlay heads a multiagency task force set on solving the crime and stopping the assault that turns out to be more ominous than anyone could imagine.

In his latest novel, ***TIMELESS Magic City***, Muir continues with his hometown as the backdrop but departs from the crime drama somewhat as a recently retired U.S. Marshal finds himself transported from 2022 to 1901 as Birmingham begins to emerge from a booming mining and steel making town into a city of perpetual promise. We follow the journey of Marshal Sam Robbins as he assimilates into the harsh reality of life in 1901, as he encounters people and experiences events that create more questions than answers as to how he got here and how to get back home, all while watching his city literally rise before his eyes. The compelling tale will cause the reader to question the timelessness of their very existence and the relationships made throughout time.

Muir's novels are filled with scenes of the city, featuring some iconic locations and some hidden gems that only the locals may know about. Muir, who lives in a downtown loft with his wife, likes the familiar backdrop. "With most of my stories set in my neighborhood, I feel that I can bring the reader in and let them get a sense of what the city is really like. I use a lot of real locations, like bars and restaurants, but there are also some fictional places too. Downtown has been transitioning over the last decade as more people move in and a lot of the older buildings are repurposed. If I feel the story needs a place that doesn't exist, I will make one up, but it is usually in an historic building that does actually exist, but maybe not in that way. At least not yet."

Muir says that he hopes his books first and foremost, entertain the reader but if they also learn something along the way he loves that too.

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CONTACT: R. Earl Muir, Author & Storyteller

[www.EarlMuir-Author.com](http://www.EarlMuir-Author.com)

[R.Earl.Muir@gmail.com](mailto:R.Earl.Muir@gmail.com)