

men, I admire firemen. Everyday they try to combat things that hurt people.

**CWM** What led you, after such a long time in investigative reporting, to leave and start Karl Productions?

**PK** I was burned out – it was just one day after working all those hours, and I went through a divorce... My partner, Dave, worked at Channel 5 and I had started doing some independent production stuff and he produced a couple of things for me and that's how I really got to know Dave. And people came into this new world of mine, and Dave had a great idea and I had this other idea and we just hit it off. I could not be in business with anybody else but Dave Beedy. What's scary is when he starts acting like me and I start acting like him. And I don't know what the chemistry is between us, but I know in my heart and my mind that I could not have lasted as long as doing what we do without Dave. He's probably one of the finest producers in television that I've known in over thirty years in this business. Heck, he's probably one of the top five producers in the entire world, in my mind. He's that good. And we've been through a lot together. He puts up with me and I don't have a lot to put up with him. He's a good man.

**CWM** And to your credit, Karl Productions has received many awards too – you have awards following you no matter what you've done.

**PK** That's because I have been the most fortunate person in the world to be surrounded by people who make me look good. I was inducted into this television Silver Circle earlier this year. Whether it was at Channel 7 or Channel 5 or at Karl Productions, I've been fortunate that the people around me make me look so good. And I've worked hard with them and they have always helped me, be me. That's one of the things that I always tell students or anybody else, that if you're going into something surround yourself with good people, not idiots. And I have, and we all look good then. I don't claim any award on that wall by myself.

I've won 11 Emmys, a Peabody, DuPont Columbias, Best Reporter of the Year from different national organizations, the Robert F. Kennedy award...I don't say that precociously, I say that all those awards aren't mine, they're everybody's, because everybody worked hard to achieve all those things. I'm fortunate enough that I'm the front man for a lot of this stuff, but it's just not my work, it's everybody's work. Every time I've collected an Emmy, I've never said, 'this is my work' because it's not. People who don't understand that it takes the team to make stuff happen, are fools. I've just been very lucky.

**CWM** When you started Karl Productions, what was your goal? What kind of work did you really want to start doing?

**PK** Well, we're news guys, always have been. Interestingly enough, when we first started, one of the first big clients we had was True Value hardware stores. And that started out with kind of a news angle with "Around the Home" – it was Dave's concept. We had this kind of Bob Villa type guy for a minute and half segment to fix things around the house. We took it to True Value and in a short amount of time we were doing all their commercials. It's amazing how stuff evolved, and we went off in all different directions. But, we're news guys, so with our abilities to make deadlines and take a whole bunch of facts and be able to condense them and make people understand them has helped us. We have 90 clients – Sears, Campbell Soups, Abbott Labs – clients that run the gamut from Levy restaurants to hospitals. And now, for some kind of reason we've fallen in this genre

of public safety; we're pretty good at it and we understand it.

**CWM** How did Crime Watch come about?

**PK** Mayor Daley called me into his office one day and said, "I want you to develop a show on crime and I want you to tell people about crime in the City of Chicago." I walked out of there and thought, 'this guy is crazy'.

**CWM** So the show was the Mayor's idea?

**PK** Yes. And then he said, "I want you to come back and tell me what concepts you have – but I want you to keep in mind that I want you tell about crime and talk about when the Chicago police department solves a crime." This was when community policing had just started and it was an incredible way – it was ingenious really, to use that media, television, to educate the citizens of

**PK** I happen to live in a high rise in Chicago and I don't have drug dealers in front of my house. When people get tired of the drug dealers or what it does to a neighborhood, they call the police and the police try to set up operations to close things down. When you stop and think about it, Chicago has 2,500-3,500 cameras all around the city trying to spot criminals doing criminal activities. I mean, that's part of what the new strategy is, you learn how to deploy forces and stuff. Everybody's looking for the answer to that question, I'm no guru.

All I know is that the streets of Chicago have got so many damn drugs it's amazing. If you go to where the gang and narcotic precincts are, you'll see policeman after policeman after policeman coming to work 24 hours a day fighting gangs and drugs on the

tions that breed crime that affect that area and it analyzes them and puts a plan of action in to work to try and combat whatever that situation is. What's interesting about the community policing model is that you can plug all these things in and you can come up with strategies and try to work out a plan. That's why some police districts may have more bike officers or why some districts may have more beat officers walking the street. That's the wonder of community policing is that they can move in those directions.

**CWM** Let's talk about how your "Cold Case" segments came about on Channel 5.

**PK** They called me and asked me if I was interested, I said, 'yes'. I think because the Crime Watch show is successful and that I used to work at 5 as an investigative reporter...ya know, one time I used to have a reputation for being an investigative reporter in town...and Channel 5 is basically doing what the Mayor did. The Mayor called me because of the reputation I had in working with the Police Department and Channel 5 is doing the same thing he did, only 15 years later. It's a great concept and the police welcome anyone who is doing these kinds of stories because when a case goes cold, and there have been hundreds of them, they are always looking for help to solve the case, to be able to flush somebody out or have people step forward if they know something.

**CWM** Are there any percentages on how these public calls for help have solved cases gone cold?

**PK** Oh, I don't know if there are any percentages, but when people are tweaked, hopefully they'll remember something they can give to the police. We've just started, and so far they've been successful; the ratings have gone up and the police got a number of tips, so that's all good, but whether it leads to solving a crime, we hope that it does.

**CWM** How do you choose what Cold Case you're going to report on?

**PK** They lay some out and you're always looking for a good yarn – a good story that would be able to hold the interest of people. When you catch people's imagination and it makes them think, that's a good story.

**CWM** So when you say, 'they lay some out', are you saying you physically go to the police station and look at files?

**PK** We talk to different detectives and see if they have any cases that are good stories. Not that murder is a good story but you look for something that has appeal. Like one that we did about road rage, where this young man killed this elderly gentleman over a traffic violation. Can that happen to any one of us? Probably. And another one was that an innocent man who was hungry for love and had money in the bank ended up with four bullet holes in his head. They're real life stories.

One thing I've always found as a reporter is that the truth is always greater than fiction. The truth is unbelievable. When you have good stories, they basically write themselves and like in the biblical sense, 'the truth will set you free'; it does. I mean the whole fact of the matter is that when you tell the truth in anything you do, you don't have to think back and say to yourself, 'what did I say – I have to make sure my story is right'. The truth is what it is. Real life things are so much more intriguing – I love to read fiction, but books like, *In Cold Blood*, is the truth of what really happened.

**CWM** During your investigative reporting days, did you ever receive threats on your life?

**PK** A couple of times...

**CWM** How do you deal with that?

**PK** A couple of times I had police protection for a while. When I lived in



**Partners in Crime**

*Dave and Peter share a few laughs together.*

Chicago about C.A.P.S., the community policing strategy that they were implementing at the time. And all the studies that were done at Northwestern, amazingly showed that the citizens at the time learned about C.A.P.S. and community policing by watching Crime Watch – 91%. Truly amazing! It was the Mayor's idea and I shake my head sometimes, the insight and the forethought that he had. That's how it developed. Now we've done 294 shows and it's been on NBC5, the Municipal Channel and on PAX. It's amazing how many people watch Crime Watch.

**CWM** Anybody can take away from Crime Watch too, not just Chicagoans, right?

**PK** That's right. NBC has approached us to do a national Crime Watch. We did do it in D.C. for a while too. But, Chicago is the only city in the history of earth that has a police show like this that gives people hope that if they work together they can improve their standards in life. The number one message is that the police department can't do it alone. The community knows where the bad guys are hiding, and the police find it out through the community. It used to be a, 'them vs. us mentality', but it shouldn't be that way. And when those barriers come down, good work is being done.

**CWM** Are we doing the best we can with regards to fighting crime and making our homes and lives more secure?

streets. They take tens of thousands of guns off the street every year – not every decade, every year. And they keep coming back into the city and they keep taking them away. We have urban terrorists in the City all the time – drug dealers and gang bangers. They drive up and down the street and they think nothing of shooting somebody and if they hit a little kid, so what, they got their revenge. And the police are trying to stop that. If you got rid of gangs, you'd get rid of drugs – but you're never going to get rid of the drugs, it's in the culture and that's what breeds crime. People steal to feed the drug habit and they commit robberies or kill somebody or fight for turf.

It's the sociological thing, people need jobs. They need things to keep them busy, they need training. That's why prison return is so high they come back on the street, back into the gutter a short time and commit a crime. It's not a single answer. You see it all the time people need to work, to have a purpose in their life, they need to set goals and if they don't know that, they can't do it.

**CWM** In doing all these shows does any one community stand out as doing the best job?

**PK** All the communities are doing well. What happens is, things that happen in the first district are totally different than things that happen in the eighteenth district. So that's what community policing does, it takes these condi-

*“I've heard it said when it comes to marriage and business – pick your partner carefully. They also say opposites attract. Both principles apply to our partnership. I tend to be conservative and cautious; Peter is impulsive and action-oriented. I like to move slowly; Peter exceeds the speed limit – always. But over the past 15 years, we've learned from each other. Each of us has grown, taking on the other's qualities at times. I've enjoyed the thrill of the ride, but I still wear a seat belt.”*

**- Dave Beedy**