

## Local Vocals



Faster than a New York cabbie, twangier than a drunken cowboy and more cockneyed than Eliza Doolittle, voiceover talent **Doug Hamilton's** vocal versatility makes him a superhero of sorts. He began his vocal career at age twelve while working at an educational radio station in Flint. He started doing voiceover work part-time in 1980 while he was still working in radio as an operations manager. In 1982 he took off flying as a talent and has been working full-time ever since. His resume of radio, television and industrial assignments reads like a Who's Who of local and national corporations, including Lincoln-

Mercury, GMC Truck, First Finance and The Detroit Zoo (where he played the infamous seal). Doug can slickly maneuver himself through any studio. Still, this vocal giant hopes to conquer an even busier schedule and more successes in the future. But maybe his heroic qualities could best be represented in a long-lasting reprisal of his role as Kowalski Meat's "Super K Dog." He's got the bark without the bite.

**Wednesday**  
**10:45 a.m.**

My day with Doug started off mid-morning due to occurrences quite typical to the voiceover world. The previous week I had arranged to follow Doug on the next Thursday because, even though he did

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not have any assignments yet, Thursdays generally equal guaranteed jobs. But, when I called him at nine o'clock on Wednesday to set up our plans for the next day, everything had changed. Thursday was still empty while Wednesday now included two voiceover commercials and an industrial film audition. Could I come today instead? Without batting an eyelash at the unpredictable schedule, Doug ran some errands for Signet Creative (the management company he owns with his wife) before we took off for his 11 a.m. job.

**10:57 a.m.**  
We arrive at GTN and make our way to the studio. Doug finds out he will be working with Heath Krumlauf, a producer from J. Walter Thompson on T.V. and radio spots for Kohls. As we

wait for scripts to come in Doug chit chats with Jim, an assistant audio mixer, who details how he ruined every ligament in his knee while skiing at Beaver Creek. He is mighty chipper about it.

**11:05 a.m.**

Heath returns with scripts for Doug. As Doug underlines the words that he should stress, Heath instructs him that they really want to push the retail thing with a high energy feel. Audio mixer extraordinaire Jay Scott, who has been working with Doug since 1980, sits down at the board and is making cracks about Archer and Engler to Doug. Doug recently did some on-camera work in a frequently aired commercial with Governor Engler and

too much," Heath says.

**11:39 a.m.**

Take Nine. Doug rocks with his hands in his pockets, smiling through the words, but is running out of air. Heath is mouthing the words along with Doug.

**11:41 a.m.**

Take 10. Doug is still rocking, but he is smiling less and is more focused. Heath is pounding the beat lightly on the marble table and whistling the irritatingly addictive Kohl's tune. Doug discusses his breathing problems in the spot, so Jay suggests, "Stop breathing."

**11:49 a.m.**

End of Take 19. Jay asks Doug to stand by while he plays different cuts. Heath softly whistles the tune. Jay plays the product from the top. "We got it," Heath says. "So tell me Niles," Doug kids in a dead-on Frasier accent as he waits to start the T.V. spot.

**11:56 a.m.**

They fly through the T.V. spot in seven takes so Doug can get to his noon job down the hall. Doug signs some papers and wonders if the radio spot was a little high-pitched. Heath breaks out some Altoids and asks Doug to stop by after his session to make sure Carole (Heath's boss/executive producer) has okayed the spots. Jay whips out a massive container of Altoids and invites Heath to reload from the mother ship. Everybody digs in for the curiously strong flavor.

**12:10 p.m.**

We head next door for a Young & Rubicam Lincoln-Mercury T.V. spot. Doug paces as he studies his script while the producer, Jason Robertson, tries to figure out some timing with the audio engineers.

Mayor Archer for Northwest Airlines.

**11:15 a.m.**

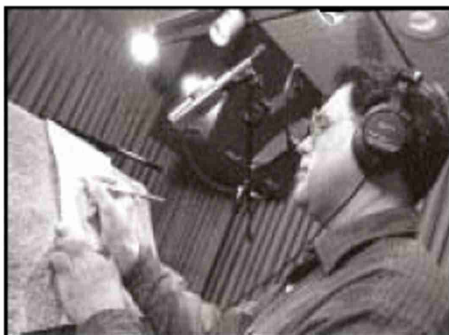
Doug heads into the Miss America soundproof booth and waits patiently with his hands in his pockets as Jay tries to locate the cause of some whiny feedback.

**11:24 a.m.**

Heath and Jay decide to do the radio spot first and Doug does a quick run-through with the music. They move to the first take. "Give it that retail excitement," Heath instructs at the last second.

**11:26 a.m.**

Take Two. Doug is playing speed reader to fit in all the essential details about Kohls. He whistles in astonishment. "That second paragraph is a pesky varmint," he says in a twangy accent. "You're pushing a little



**12:20 p.m.**

"What did you say the time was for me?" Doug asks about the number of seconds he is allowed for his take.

"7.1.," answers audio mixer Paul Stelly. "Assume the position."

**12:25 p.m.**

The Jack Nicklaus spot flashes on the screen as Doug does several quick takes. "I like it," Jason says, but he wants to fix a gap. As Paul fiddles with the cuts, Doug asks him if his baby Daniel slept through the night last night. After a little more fiddling, Jason is satisfied and we head back to the first studio.

**12:46 p.m.**

Heath puts in a call to Carole to play the spots. As Doug predicted, she thinks the radio spot sounds a little too high pitched. He is anxious to do it again, but first Heath and Jay want to cut some text to make it more "doable." "Let's just lose every place they say Kohls," Jay jokes.

**1:09 p.m.**

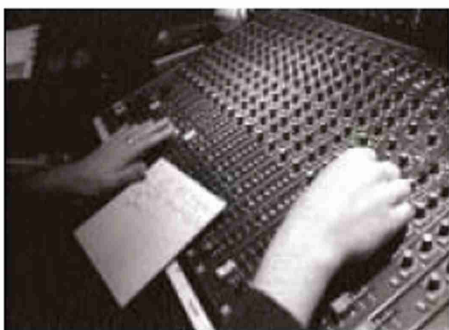
The changes are okayed. Doug heads back to the booth. Heath offers more Altoids. Six quick takes later Doug listens and waits patiently in the chamber of silence. "I thought that was pretty swinging," Jay finally pronounces. Doug asks for a copy of the spot to be recorded on his personal dat tape which he carries with him.

**2:25 p.m.**

After a brief stop at Doug's house for lunch we are on the road again. This time we are joined by Signet voice talent Dick Shafran for the drive to an industrial audition at Affiliated.

**2:45 p.m.**

Five men silently study the two-page script in the waiting room. Doug leans against the wall and studies his script. More men walk in one by one, all conversing with each other. One of



them again kids Doug about the Northwest spot, asking, "Did you know that you were taller than the governor?"

**3:01 p.m.**

Kathy Ellis leads Doug into the audition room and instructs him to read half-way through the second page. "You want this deadly serious and straight?" Doug kids. "No I want you to stand on one foot," Kathy answers. The read is quick and painless in a straight, yet comforting voice.

**3:15 p.m.**

As a favor to some friends, Doug stops at Peanut Butter and Jelly's Child Care Center to pick up their son, Dylan. Five-year-old Dylan is sporting a red plaid cap and some wicked Star Wars sneakers with velcro and laughs at everything Doug says. Dylan recently did some on-camera work where he had to pretend he had a bad dream, but he is very shy about talking about it. Doug and Dick make fun of gawkers slowing the traffic on I-75.

**3:40 p.m.**

Back at the home office in Lathrup Village, Doug and Dylan head toward the VCR to kick back with Star Wars for the rest of the afternoon. In a fit of jealousy, I head out to find some velcro sneakers like Dylan's pair.

*Kristin Bartus enjoys doing celebrity impersonations on her voice mail message and resents the suggestions that she try Marcel Marceau.*