ULIE COMPTON, AB ’85, JD ’88, has successfully mixed her legal background with her love of writing to become a published author of two psychological thrillers—with a third one on the way.

Compton’s second novel, Rescuing Olivia, was released in February to enthusiastic reviews. Set in her current state of residence, Florida, the book centers on Anders Erickson, a man who is told that the love of his life, Olivia, has died in a motorcycle accident. He then discovers that he was deceived and that she had been stolen away from him. The story encompasses his quest to find her by sifting through the life she left behind. What Anders finds is a tapestry of lies, conspiracies, and hidden violence as he strives to save her life, and, consequently, his own.

Compton’s first book, a psychological/legal thriller titled Tell No Lies, was published in 2008. The novel takes place in St. Louis, where Compton was born and raised and where she spent the early part of her legal career practicing with private law firms. She wrote her first novel during the six years that she left the law practice to spend with her children. Later, she returned to the legal field as a trial attorney with the U.S. Trustee’s Office in Wilmington, Delaware, until 2003. She and her family now live in central Florida, and she has returned to writing full time.

Compton says the idea for her second novel was born from several sources. The character of Anders was developed from a prompt given by the leader of her writer’s workshop. “She asked us to write something about a character being in possession of a box that he or she wasn’t supposed to have,” Compton says. “I wrote a scene that later became a small, but important part of the larger story, though at the time, I didn’t know it. I didn’t even know the character’s name, but he eventually became Anders.”

Another source of inspiration Compton cites is the time she spends volunteering as a guardian ad litem for abused and neglected children. The effects of domestic violence became a prominent thread in Rescuing Olivia. “It’s an issue I’ve wanted to write about for a while, and this novel only skims the surface,” Compton says. “I think it will reappear in future work, though in much different ways.”

Much like her first book, Rescuing Olivia is a tale filled with drama, suspense, and many twists and turns as Anders journeys to find his lover, but there are also differences. “Rescuing Olivia is a very different type of novel than Tell No Lies,” Compton says. “It’s still suspense, but it doesn’t necessarily have the same kind of ‘cautionary tale’ that reviewers liked about Tell No Lies. It’s more of a love story inside a thriller, I guess you could say.”

However, for those loyal readers who are looking for her next legal thriller, they will be pleased to know that Compton already has one in the works. Her third novel will be the sequel to Tell No Lies, with several scenes taking place at Washington University. An excerpt from the unfinished work will be published in an upcoming anthology this May.

“I hadn’t originally planned to write a sequel; in fact, I thought I wouldn’t,” Compton recalls. “But those who’ve read my first book know it ends a bit ambiguously, and because so many readers have asked about a sequel, I finally decided I would consider it if I could come up with an idea. Ironically, the first line came to me before the actual idea did, but that was all I needed. It got me started and I’ve been writing it ever since.”

For more information, visit Compton’s Web site: www.julie-compton.com.