



SHORT BIO

Peter May is the multi award-winning author of:

- the internationally best-selling *Lewis Trilogy* set in the Outer Hebrides of Scotland;
- the *China Thrillers*, featuring Beijing detective Li Yan and American forensic pathologist Margaret Campbell;
- the critically-acclaimed *Enzo Files*, featuring Scottish forensic scientist Enzo MacLeod, which is set in France;
- and several standalone books, the latest of which is *Entry Island* (January 2014, Quercus UK).

He has also had a successful career as a television writer, creator, and producer.

One of Scotland's most prolific and successful television dramatists, he garnered more than 1000 credits in 15 years as scriptwriter and script editor on prime-time British television drama.

He is the creator of three major television drama series and presided over two of the highest-rated drama serials in his homeland before quitting television to concentrate on his first love, writing novels.

Born and raised in Scotland he lives in France.

The Lewis Trilogy

After being turned down by all the major UK publishers, the first of the The Lewis Trilogy - *The Blackhouse* - was published in France as *L'Île des Chasseurs d'Oiseaux*.

It was hailed as "a masterpiece" by the French national newspaper L'Humanité, and subsequently was published around Europe to critical acclaim and went on to become an international best seller.

Peter May's novels have a large following in adopted home of France. The trilogy has won several French literature awards, including one of the world's largest adjudicated readers awards, the **Prix Cezam**.

The Blackhouse was published in English by the award-winning Quercus (a relatively young publishing house which did not exist when the book was first presented to British publishers), it was chosen for the Richard and Judy Book Club and was voted "Best Read" by readers. In the USA, it won the **Barry Award** for Mystery Novel of the Year.

The Lewis trilogy has sold more than a million copies in the UK alone.

Reviews of *The Lewis Trilogy*:

"A masterpiece" L'Humanité, France

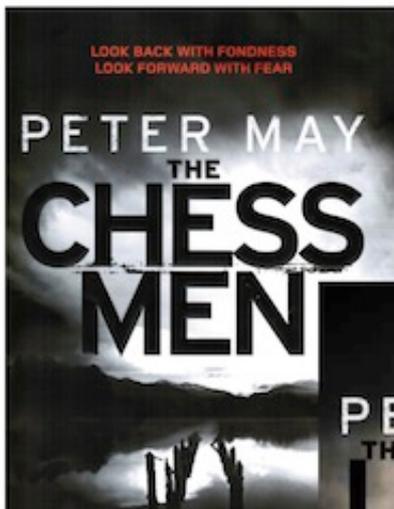
"a perfectly-formed trilogy"

"one of the best regarded crime series of recent years"

The Independent, UK

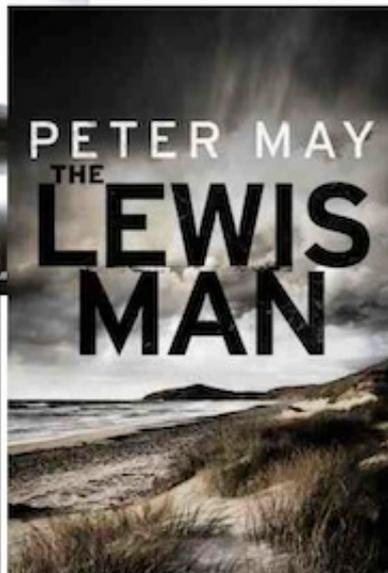
"a true pleasure to read" **The Guardian, UK**

"Peter May is a writer I'd follow to the ends of the earth" **New York Times, USA**



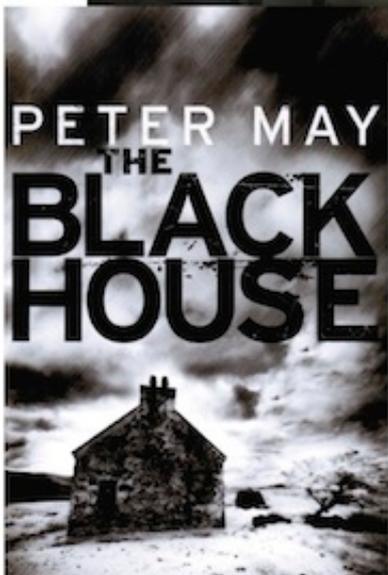
"Peter May is a writer I'd follow to the ends of the earth"
The New York Times (USA)

"the second novel ... is as good as its superb predecessor"
The Guardian (UK)



"A masterpiece"
L'Humanité (France)

"A chilling setting for a gripping novel... impressive writing"
The Times (UK)



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PETER MAY - BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

From the beginning...

May's childhood dream was to be a novelist and he spent his childhood and teen years writing.

Scottish Young Journalist of the Year

Journalism seemed like a reasonable career choice for a writer, and no sooner was he in his first post than he won the **Scottish Young Journalist of the Year Award** at the age of 21. But the pull of fiction continued, and every spare moment was spent on creative writing. His dedication was rewarded with the publication of his first novel, *The Reporter* at the age of 26. The novel became a major BBC television drama series, *The Standard*, and changed the direction of May's writing career.

One of Scotland's Most Prolific and Popular TV Dramatists

May left journalism and began writing television drama. By the age of 30 he had created two major TV series, *The Standard* and *Squadron*, for the British television network, the BBC.

He went on to garner more than 1000 TV credits in fifteen years and became one of Scotland's most successful television writers, creating and writing prime-time drama serials for both BBC and ITV in the UK.

In his homeland, as a young writer and script editor he guided the top-rated *Take the High Road* through its most successful era, when the show regularly topped the viewing charts in Scotland and achieved an audience of 6 million viewers across the UK.

While working on *Take the High Road*, he met scriptwriter Janice Hally, whom he married in 1990.

In the 1990s, he co-created the ground-breaking *Machair* with Janice Hally. *Machair* was the first ever major drama serial to be produced in the Gaelic language, and May moved on from writing to become the show's producer.

Machair was described by Kenneth Roy, the television critic of the broadsheet Scotland on Sunday as "quite simply the best thing to have happened to television in Scotland for a long time."

In spite of the fact that fewer than 2% of the Scottish population can speak Gaelic, the show - subtitled into English - achieved a 30% audience share and made it into the Top Ten of programmes viewed in Scotland.

Award-Winning China Thrillers

With the approach of the new millennium, May quit television to return to his first love, novels, and embarked on a series of thrillers which took him half-way across the world.

Peter May made annual trips to China, spending months at a time there, building an extraordinary network of contacts.

He gained unprecedented access to the homicide and forensic science sections of Beijing and Shanghai police forces and made a painstaking study of the methodology of Chinese detectives and pathologists.

His outstanding *China Thrillers* series of books, featuring Beijing detective Li Yan and Forensic pathologist from Chicago, Margaret Campbell are now published worldwide.

The first of the books *The Firemaker* was short-listed in France for Elle Magazine's **Best Crime Novel** in 2005 and Chinese Whispers was shortlisted for the **Prix Polar International** at Cognac's Polar&Co in 2008.

In 2007 *Snakehead* won the **Prix Intramuros** - literary prize in France which is judged by prisoners in French penitentiaries.

Member of Chinese Crime Writers Association

As a mark of their respect for his work, Chinese Crime Writers in the Beijing Chapter, made May an **Honorary Member of The Chinese Crime Writers' Association**.

He is the only Westerner to receive such an honour.



Critical Acclaim for "cerebral" Enzo Files

His latest series of books, the *Enzo Files*, is set in France. Hailed by author Steve Berry as "intelligent... and ingenious", several reviewers have praised the cerebral nature of the cold case investigations tackled by the Scottish forensic scientist Enzo Macleod. Realism and humour also feature in the books, and the endearingly flawed hero has been described as "a cross between James Bond and Inspector Clouseau".

Research and Factual Accuracy

May insists on visiting personally every setting and location that he writes about. Just as research for the *China Thrillers* meant trips to places such as the Shanghai police morgue and the American Ambassador's residence in Beijing, research for the *Enzo Files* has taken him from the Paris sewers to Michelin 3-star restaurants (he recently gained access to the kitchen of France's top chef, Michel Bras, to spend three days shadowing him in his work).

Chevalier de l'Ordre de la Dive Bouteille

The second in the *Enzo Files* series, *The Critic*, tells a story set in the world of French wine production. The research involved May picking grapes by hand, studying the process of wine-making from vine to marketing, and taking a formal wine tasting course. As a reward for his efforts, he was inducted as a **Chevalier de l'Ordre de la Dive Bouteille de Gaillac** in December 2007 in recognition of his knowledge and support of the wines of Gaillac.

Professional Private Eye

In search of a new setting for his 2010 thriller, *Virtually Dead*, May entered the virtual world of Second Life in 2007, creating his own avatar, Flick Faulds, to explore the metaverse. Faulds set up a detective agency to help May in his research, handling dozens of Second Life investigations for real (paying) clients. The cases ranged from stalking and "griefing", to fraud and infidelity, and enabled May to gather invaluable background and insights for his book.

The Lewis Trilogy

"a perfectly-formed trilogy."
"one of the best regarded crime series of recent years"

The Independent

The *Lewis Trilogy* marks a return to the Outer Hebrides for May, who uses the atmospheric and dramatic setting to full effect.

May's link to the Outer Hebrides is a personal one. For five years in the 1990s, May spent five months each year on the Isle of Lewis during the making of the 99 episodes of the TV drama *Machair*. As producer and creator of the serial, he was in charge of a 70-strong cast and crew living and working on the island.

The landscape and the life there had a profound effect on May and have provided the inspiration for his *Lewis Trilogy*, and his connections were renewed when he returned to re-search the new books.

The Blackhouse

"Peter May is a writer I would follow to the ends of the earth"

The New York Times

The Blackhouse was first published in France as *L'Île des Chasseurs d'Oiseaux* after it was initially turned down by all the major British publishers. Hailed as "a masterpiece" by the French daily newspaper L'Humanité, it went on to be published all over Europe and was finally bought by British publishers Quercus who published it in February 2011 (Quercus is a young award-winning publishing house that wasn't around when *The Blackhouse* was first presented to British publishers). *The Blackhouse* has been published all over the world.

The Blackhouse was chosen by Richard & Judy for their Book Club's autumn 2011 list and became a best-seller in UK hardback, paperback and e-book versions. It won **Les Ancres Noires Prix des Lecteurs** at Le Havre in 2010, and in October 2010, it won one of the world's biggest adjudicated readers' prizes, the **Prix Cezam**.



The Lewis Man

"the second novel in May's Isle of Lewis trilogy is as good as its superb predecessor"
The Guardian

May followed the success of *The Blackhouse* with the second book in his *Lewis Trilogy*, *The Lewis Man*. The book was praised on both sides of the channel. In 2012, May won the French daily newspaper, **Le Télégramme's Grand Prix de Lecteurs**, which came with a 10,000 Euro prize, and made history by being the only author in the history of Le Havre's Les Ancres Noires, to win their **Prix des Lecteurs** twice. *The Lewis Man* also won the **Prix Polar International** at the Cognac festival of Crime Writing. It was shortlisted in the UK for the Crime Writing Association's, **Dagger in the Library Award**, and Bloody Scotland's **Scottish Crime Book of the Year 2012**. The hardback spent 18 weeks in the UK hardback bestsellers list, peaking at #4.

The Chessmen

"an outstanding novel that more than fully lives up to the hopes we had for it."
Undiscovered Scotland

The final book in the trilogy, *The Chessmen* was published in France in October 2012 and UK in January 2013. The hardback entered the UK charts at #4 and went on to spend 23 weeks in the UK hardback bestsellers list. It was shortlisted in the **Theakston's Old Peculier Crime Novel of the Year Award 2013**.

Latest Works

Hebrides (September 2013 Quercus UK) is the photo companion book to the *Lewis Trilogy*, comprising more than 200 beautiful photographs of the locations on the islands, along with Peter May's own stories of what the locations mean to him and how the islands inspired him to write the *Lewis Trilogy*.

Entry Island (January 2014 Quercus UK) is Peter's latest book, it takes place in part on the Isle of Lewis and in part on the Magdalen Islands, Quebec, Canada.

Personal Life

Born in Scotland, May now lives in France with his wife, writer, Janice Hally.

"a shining and outstanding example of Scotland's rich literary talent"
Nicola Sturgeon, Deputy First Minister of Scotland

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AWARDS

Full List of Peter May's Awards and Nominations

BARRY AWARD
BEST MYSTERY NOVEL OF THE YEAR(USA)
2013
WINNER: THE BLACKHOUSE

MACAVITY AWARD
BEST MYSTERY NOVEL (USA)
2013
Shortlisted: **THE BLACKHOUSE**

THEAKSTON'S OLD PECULIER
CRIME NOVEL OF THE YEAR (UK)
2013
Shortlisted: **THE LEWIS MAN**

PRIX POLAR INTERNATIONAL
COGNAC 2012
Salon Polar & co
WINNER: THE LEWIS MAN (L'Homme de Lewis)

SCOTTISH CRIME BOOK OF THE YEAR
2012
Bloody Scotland Crime Writing Festival
Shortlisted: **THE LEWIS MAN**

PRIX DES LECTEURS
LE HAVRE 2012
Les Ancres Noires
WINNER: THE LEWIS MAN (L'Homme de Lewis)

PRIX DES LECTEURS DU TELEGRAMME
(French Daily Newspaper readers' prize)
Brest, France 2012
WINNER: THE LEWIS MAN (L'Homme de Lewis)

"DAGGER IN THE LIBRARY" 2012
UK Crime Writers' Association Prize
UK 2012
SHORTLISTED: THE BLACKHOUSE (L'Île des Chasseurs d'Oiseaux)



PRIX LITTERAIRE CEZAM INTER CE 2011

French national literature prize

Strasbourg, France 2011

WINNER: *THE BLACKHOUSE (L'Île des Chasseurs d'Oiseaux)*

PILP (PRIX INTER LYCEES PROFESSIONELS)

Nantes, France 2011

WINNER: *THE BLACKHOUSE (L'Île de Chasseurs d'Oiseaux)*

LES ANGRES NOIRES, PRIX DES LECTEURS

Le Havre, France 2010

WINNER: *THE BLACKHOUSE (L'Île de Chasseurs d'Oiseaux)*

PRIX INTRAMUROS

Salon Polar & Co, Cognac, France 2007

WINNER: *SNAKEHEAD (Cadavres Chinois a Houston)*

This unusual award is decided by juries of detainees in French Penitentiaries.

ELLE MAGAZINE, FRANCE

GRAND PRIX 2006

Category: Best Crime Novel

Shortlisted: *THE FIREMAKER (Meurtres à Pékin)*

17th International Celtic Film and Television Festival 1996

Category: BEST DRAMA SERIAL

Shortlisted: *MACHAIR*

(Peter May - Producer and Co-creator)

The FRASER Award

Scotland 1973

SCOTTISH YOUNG JOURNALIST OF THE YEAR

WINNER

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BIBLIOGRAPHY AND TELEVISION CREDITS

TV Drama

More than 1,000 credits in 15 years as creator, writer, script editor, and producer of top-rated, prime-time drama for British Television

- Machair (1991 - 1996) 99 episodes - co-creator and producer.
- Take The High Road (1980 - 1992) 200+ episodes - writer. 700+ episodes - storyliner and script editor.
- The Ardlamont Mystery (1985) teleplay - writer.
- Squadron (1982) 10 episodes - co-creator and writer.
- The Standard (1978) 13 episodes - co-creator and writer.

Standalone Novels

- Entry Island (France, UK 2014)
- Virtually Dead (USA 2010)
- The Noble Path (UK 1992, USA, 1993)
- Hidden Faces (UK 1981, USA 1982)
- Fallen Hero (1979)
- The Reporter (1978)

The China Thrillers

An award-winning series of six books with Beijing detective, Li Yan and forensic scientist from Chicago Margaret Campbell.

- The Firemaker (UK 1999, USA 2005)
- The Fourth Sacrifice (UK 2000, USA 2007)
- The Killing Room (UK 2001, USA 2008)
- Snakehead (UK 2002, USA 2009)
- The Runner (UK 2003, USA 2010)
- Chinese Whispers (UK 2004, USA 2009)

The Enzo Files

A critically-acclaimed series of books involving biology professor and ex-forensic scientist, Enzo MacLeod as he re-opens a set of seven unsolved cold cases in France.

- Dry Bones first published as Extraordinary People (2006)
- A Vintage Corpse first published as The Critic (2007)
- Blacklight Blue (2008)
- Freeze Frame (2010)

The Lewis Trilogy:

A trilogy of books set on the Isle of Lewis, part of the Outer Hebrides archipelago off the extreme North West coast of Scotland.

- The Blackhouse (France 2009. UK and Europe 2011, USA 2012)
- The Lewis Man (France 2011, UK 2012)
- The Chessmen (France 2012, UK 2013)

Non-Fiction:

- Hebrides (France 2013. UK 2013) photo companion to The Lewis Trilogy.



REVIEWS OF PETER MAY'S WORK:

The Lewis Trilogy

THE BLACKHOUSE – the 1st of the Lewis Trilogy

"A thriller with an intensity that never slackens, chilling and igneous at the same time, like the great country that serves as its setting. A masterpiece indeed."

L'Humanité (review of French edition: *L'Île des Chasseurs d'Oiseaux*)

"Peter May is a writer I'd follow to the ends of the earth" **The New York Times**

"subtle ... tragic melancholy ... brilliant" **The Literary Review**

"[May's] finest work... an impeccably written murder thriller" **Daily Express**

"A chilling setting for a gripping novel... impressive writing" **The Times** (London)

"a mesmerizing new trilogy opener. May brings the story to a breathtaking conclusion with an astonishing twist at the end." **The Library Journal** (starred review, and Book of the Year)

"brilliant first in a trilogy" **Publishers Weekly** (starred review)

"A gripping plot, pitch-perfect characterization, and an appropriately bleak setting drive this outstanding series debut." **Booklist**, American Library Association (starred review)

"bleak, wild, atmospheric novel... 400 pages of pitch-perfect dialogue and creepy, spine-tingling storytelling." **The Scotsman**

"perfectly judged and paced... utterly compelling...shows how the dramatic should be done." **Cornflower Books**

"This is a novel of subtlety and horror... gets into the heart of human darkness while presenting an intriguing thriller you won't be able to put down." **CityAM, London**

"magnificent and gripping ... much, much more than a murder mystery" **Crime Squad**

"What a truly fantastic book this is! ... [a] feast for the soul... The nature of the story gets into your mind and won't leave you alone. It haunts you... beautifully rich vocabulary... excellent." **Eurocrime**

"The Blackhouse... poses as a crime novel but, like the best of its genre, is much more ... haunts you past the final page." **The Skinny** magazine (Scotland)

"an outstanding thriller that is as dark and chilling as the stormy Scottish seas on a winter's night" **The Daily Record**

"Easily May's best work to date... his greatest success thus far as a novelist. ...a highly pleasurable mix of mystery and literary fiction" **The Dayton Examiner**

"genuinely exciting and unexpected climax... an outstanding and unusual piece of crime fiction" **Undiscovered Scotland Magazine**

"a dark, evocative tale (...) beautifully-observed " **The Scots Magazine** (Book of the Month June 2011)

*"A beautifully written, haunting and powerful examination of the darkness of men's souls and how hard it can be to bury the past, **The Blackhouse** is also an outstanding page-turning murder mystery"* **The Independent** (Ireland)

"All the accolades are deserved... the best book I've read all year... an intense, psychological drama that's all about atmosphere and character... a book that clings to you long after you've put it down. a study of tragedy, resentment and even redemption... a powerful, beautifully paced story that drips with malice."

The Chronicle (Australia)



The Lewis Trilogy

THE LEWIS MAN – the 2nd of the Lewis Trilogy

"The strength and beauty of this book lies in the exploration of the relationships between people. The characters are beautifully drawn and so true to life."

"The plot is intricate and cleverly fitted together."

"I absolutely loved this (...) May is currently unveiling a cracking series." **CrimeSquad**

"deeply tragic... heart-rending"

"Peter May is the [crime] genre's fine wine; his writing is refined and complex, offering pleasure on many levels."

"The Blackhouse was an extremely good book; The Lewis Man is a superb book."

Bookgeeks

"another fantastic book and every bit as excellent as The Blackhouse"

"Peter May weaves his wonderful magic and the story unfolds before you in vivid detail"

"...so well written that it absorbs you completely"

"Very highly recommended" **Eurocrime**

"if anything, an even more compelling read than its predecessor" (...) "an outstanding example of the storyteller's art" **Undiscovered Scotland**

"as good as its superb predecessor" **The Guardian**

"The depiction of the island atmosphere is as impressive as the action." **The Sunday Telegraph**

"The plot throbs with past and present passions, jealousies, suspicions and regrets; the emotional secrets of the bleak island are even deeper than its peat bog." **The Times**

"well worth reading" **The Sunday Times**

"as gripping as its predecessor ... well written, rendering almost visible the Hebridean landscapes, seascapes and customs" **Literary Review**

"The Lewis Man, Peter May's sequel to last year's bestseller The Blackhouse is even more impressive than its predecessor" **Big Issue Scotland**

THE CHESSMEN – the 3rd of the Lewis Trilogy

"an outstanding novel that more than fully lives up to the hopes we had for it."

Undiscovered Scotland

"...completes one of the best regarded crime series of recent years"

"the rich texture ... elevating them above most contemporary crime fiction."

"The Chessmen offers an almost visceral experience: we, too, are walking these windy cliffs and peat bogs with Fin."

"a perfectly-formed trilogy." **The Independent**

"The Chessmen is well up to the high standard of its two predecessors: tightly plotted, with no skimping on either the nuances of character or the wonderfully evocative descriptions of rugged island landscapes that have made these books a true pleasure to read." **The Guardian**

"May is a phenomenally good thriller writer with an innate skill in plotting, characterisation and sense of place" **Raven Crime Reads**

"a breathtaking climax." **Daily Record**

"cannot be recommended highly enough. You are sure not to be disappointed. Exceptional." **The Audio Books Review**

"a remarkable trilogy from Peter May and one that will stay with me and one I am likely to re-read again and again. Sublime." **CrimeSquad**



The China Thrillers

THE FIREMAKER – the 1st of the China Thrillers

"The Firemaker is stunningly original, highly topical and extremely well-written... (May's) dialogue is witty and apposite, sometimes extremely funny." **Scotland on Sunday**

"An intense and fascinating journey through the city streets and vagaries of the Chinese police system." **The Good Book Guide**

THE FOURTH SACRIFICE – the 2nd of the China Thrillers

"pulse-pounding prose... a masterwork of sheer momentum" **The Herald**

"an electrifying mixture of mystery, romance and history." **Kirkus**

THE KILLING ROOM – the 3rd of the China Thrillers

"May is described as 'Cruz Smith meets Cornwell' and it won't take many pages of his latest - The Killing Room - to find out why ... Raw, like sushi, and recommended." **The Publishing News**

"chilling and ingenious" **Scotland on Sunday**

SNAKEHEAD – the 4th of the China Thrillers

(winner of the French PRIX INTRAMUROS 2007)

"An excellent thriller." **Kirkus Reviews**

"Well-researched ... touches on real fears" **The Guardian**

THE RUNNER – the 5th of the China Thrillers

"The characters here are vivid and contrasting, and they grow and develop in a way usually only found in literary novels, and the plotting and evocation of atmosphere as professional as they come. An excellent series." **Kirkus Reviews**

"... a tense and atmospheric thriller with a heart-stopping ending" **Tangled Web**

CHINESE WHISPERS – the 6th of the China Thrillers

"beautifully written and very evocative" (**Tangled Web**)

"an accomplished pulse-racer of a novel... This book is much more than just a run of the mill whodunit, think Silence Of The Lambs crossed with Quincy, with a bit of the Lonely Planet's Guide to Beijing thrown in." (**Daily Record**)

"entertaining reading, with a fascinating setting and an appealing sleuth" (**The Daily Telegraph**)

"Truly the best of May's series so far, this is not to be missed." (**The Good Book Guide**)

"The tough, outspoken Li Yan and his fiery American lover Margaret Campbell, a pathologist, are in snorting form in what ranks as the best of May's thriller series so far." **Kirkus Reviews**

The Enzo Files

EXTRAORDINARY PEOPLE – the 1st in the Enzo Files series

"A sharp edged tale woven with the intricacy of a spider's web. Intelligent, involved, and ingenious" **Steve Berry**

"A dynamite novel and a fine beginning to what promises to be an outstanding crime fiction series." **Carl Brookins**

THE CRITIC – the 2nd in the Enzo Files series

"a finely crafted and surprising mystery." **Kirkus Reviews**

"The characters are richly drawn, and Enzo in particular is a wonderful protagonist." **Mystery Books Review**

BLACKLIGHT BLUE – the 3rd in the Enzo Files series

"A cerebral, chilling tale bound to burnish May's reputation." **Kirkus Reviews**

"May's dark, intense third mystery to feature Scottish forensic scientist Enzo Macleod... an unusually compelling ongoing saga" **Publishers Weekly**



"This complicated tale weaves threads of the past into the present... An engrossing mystery"
Library Journal

"Another excellent story in May's series... a lot more of substance in this emotional tale. It will entertain, mystify and perplex, right up to the very end." **Carl Brookins**

FREEZE FRAME – the 4th in the Enzo Files series

"The author of the much acclaimed "China Thrillers" surpasses himself here in misdirection, placing clues in plain sight and leaving the reader anticipating the fifth entry in this outstanding series." **Library Journal (starred review)**

"The formula is a neat one, going back to the golden age of detective fiction... Although May obviously (and justifiably) prides himself on his grasp of the plot mechanics, something must be said for his vivid settings, which remove the story from the library and send it out into the wide, wide world." **New York Times**

"excellent... With its intricate plot, compelling characters, and bombshell denouement, this unsettling Enzo Files instalment is a must-read." **Publishers Weekly (starred review)**

Television

MACHAIR

"I wrote warmly of Machair when it first started. Now I must revise my opinion. It is even better than it looked at first glance - quite simply the best thing to have happened to television in Scotland for a long time."

Kenneth Roy, TV Critic, Scotland on Sunday

"character-driven ... with strong and involving storylines"

Tom Lappin, Sunday Times

"Glayva this show certainly is, and I'll watch it again!"

Ian Black, TV Critic, The Herald (Glayva is Gaelic for 'very good')

"Already the characters are in place, the battle lines drawn and the enigmas hinted at - the story is being built up, as ever, layer upon layer"

Anthony Troon, TV Critic, The Scotsman

Visit Peter May's Websites:

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