

DAMNATION - A thrilling opener to a compelling series

DAMNATION, written by Swiss author Peter Beck and published by Oneworld’s crime imprint Point Blank, is a gripping international thriller with breath-taking action and a fascinating new hero.

Mark Gimenez, author of THE COLOUR OF LAW, dubbed it “A terrific thriller! Smart and savvy.” Read what Peter Beck says about his debut in English and how he came up with his hero Tom Winter.

It’s often said that the Swiss are a bit boring. How come you wrote such an action-packed, fast-paced thriller?

Still waters run deep. Personally, I’ve been reading thrillers for years and so I write what I like reading myself. For me good entertainment needs a cool hero, speed and cliffhangers. By the end, the readers should have bloody fingernails.

So how did you create the character of Tom Winter?

It was an evolutionary process. Ten years ago the character came to life like a clay-mation figure. I’d sculpted and squashed him again and again. I wanted a new kind of hero, not just another police inspector or private eye.

Winter is head of security at a Swiss private bank. To my knowledge, this role is unique in the world of crime writing.

In this role, Winter has a lot of freedom, so as an author I can send him all over the world. That’s fun to write. Winter is both Swiss and cosmopolitan.

And as we know, there are great villains in the banking world. Behind the picture-perfect scenes, they’re brutal.

Is Winter based on a real person?

No, Winter’s pure fiction. But it’s been amazing to see how the readers have identified with him. Maybe that’s because he’s not a glorified hero. Winter is just a regular guy with a bit of a past. Like all of us, he has his faults and makes mistakes.

He doesn’t say much, cracks dry jokes and longs for intimacy and peace. He’s a man of considered action: he observes carefully, weighs up his options and then acts decisively.

I picked the name “Winter” deliberately. It goes with the Swiss mountains and works well in both German and English.

Is there anything of yourself in Winter?

Tricky question. Two things come to mind. My judo experience is quite helpful for writing the close combat scenes.

And working in the corporate world - I was an executive board member of a big company and sat on non-executive boards - I experienced first-hand the power struggles Winter has to contend with at work.

I’ve certainly come across managers who, well, let’s just say that their behaviour and ethics were sometimes in the grey zone.

You’re also a psychologist. How is that reflected in your thrillers?

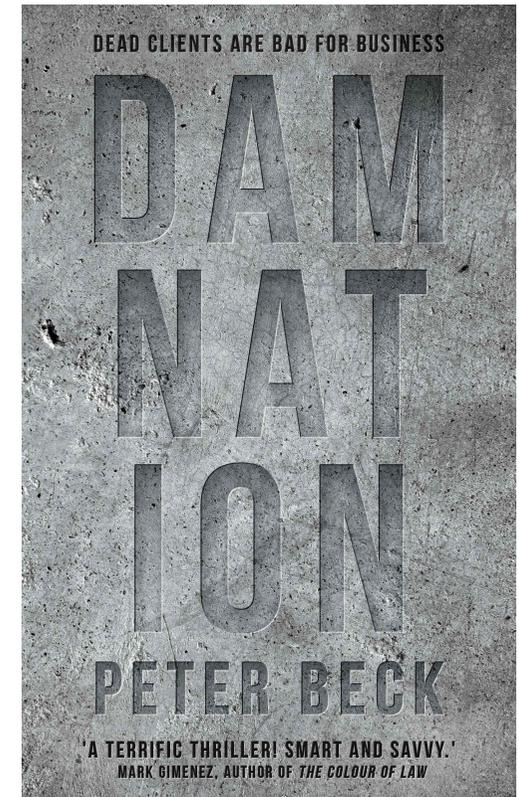
I guess it helps me describe what’s going on within my characters and shape their personalities, their motives.

For example, it’s really important for me that Winter has strong values. He always tries to do the right thing, despite the bank’s boss, who’s only interested in making the biggest profit possible.

A hero grows with his dilemmas when he’s caught between a rock and a hard place. We all face these quandaries at one time or another, albeit usually on a smaller scale.

DAMNATION is an international thriller, set in Egypt, Norway, Switzerland and the USA. How did you pick these locations?

Money moves fast and doesn’t respect national borders. DAMNATION is a hunt through the jungle of globalisation.



I’ve been to all the places, which is important for the atmosphere.

Winter meets Fatima in Cairo and there’s immediately a chemistry between him and the successful businesswoman. Norway’s fjords are dramatic and Boston is just a great city. And being Swiss, I had to have some action in our beautiful mountains.

What do you hope readers will get from DAMNATION?

For me it’s all about good entertainment. I write for readers looking to switch off and immerse themselves in a gripping story.

I’ll be happy if your next flight goes by faster because of DAMNATION. When I read in the bath, the water sometimes goes cold because I just *have* to finish an exciting book.

What books do you read then yourself? Which authors have influenced your career as a writer, and why?

The short answer is: many. I devour a book a week. If I had to choose only one, it would have to be John le Carré. I admire him for very cleverly connecting the world’s turmoil with Smiley’s destiny.

But you’d find all the usual suspects on my bookshelves, from John Grisham to Mark Gimenez to Stig Larsson. There’s a lot of Tartan Noir, be it Ian Rankin or Denise Mina. I love Tana French from Ireland and Jo Nesbø with his Harry Hole.

I’ve also read all the Lee Child books. Not unlike Winter, Jack Reacher roams freely, but always finds himself in situations where he has to intervene.

And I’m addicted to series. I’ve read all the Bernie Gunther novels by Philip Kerr. His outrageous metaphors make me smile.

Why did you go with Oneworld?

It was more the other way around. They picked me, and I immediately felt comfortable with Oneworld and the team from their imprint Point Blank.



Peter Beck studied Psychology, Philosophy and Economics in Bern, where he also gained a doctorate in Psychology.

He did his military service as a cyclist in the Swiss Army and has a black belt in judo. Having done an MBA in Manchester, UK, he went on to become an executive board member of a large company and sat on several non-executive boards.

Today he is his own boss and divides his time between writing the Tom Winter thrillers and supporting businesses in shaping their culture. He is a member of the International Thriller Writers and fluent in English.

DAMNATION - The first thriller of the series with Tom Winter

Dead clients are bad for business, something Tom Winter, head of security for a discrete Swiss private bank, knows all too well. After a helicopter explodes, leaving behind the charred bodies of a rich client and a close colleague, he teams up with Fatima, a mysterious Egyptian businesswoman.

Together they follow the money trail around the world and back into the Swiss mountains, the NSA watching their every move. When taciturn Winter, a former special forces commander, closes in on the truth, they turn from being the hunters to the hunted and realise they are in a deadly, high-stakes race against the clock.

And as you probably know, they’ve won the Man Booker prize, twice! So it’s a great honour to be in such company.

Was there anything new you discovered when your thriller was translated from German into English?

At first, I was worried that my characters wouldn’t be true after the translation. But now, for me, DAMNATION reads better in English.

Thanks to Jamie Bulloch, who translated the complicated German sentences into a really elegant read, my baby has kind of grown up,

Will there be a sequel? A second thriller with Tom Winter?

I really hope so. Oneworld has an option for the second thriller.

KORROSION came out 2017 in German. This time Winter finds himself entangled in a horrifying net of abuse, exploitation and revenge.

And at the moment, I’m polishing the third manuscript with Winter. So, one way or another the next winter is approaching.

DAMNATION (March 2018)

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