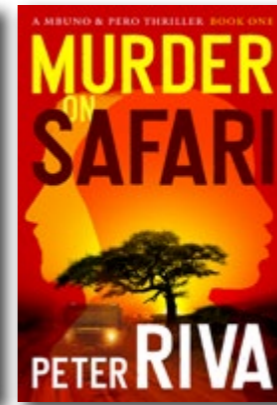


PHOTO: Riva, producing atop a car in TV commercial, 1988. Photograph by Mark Greenberg.



Embark on a thrilling journey through the pages of Peter Riva's novels, where East African landscapes and futuristic worlds collide."

An Interview with PETER RIVA

From East Africa to Outer Space, Unveiling the Adventures and Insights of a Renowned Author and Adventurer

Embark on a journey through the heart of adventure, as we delve into the fascinating world of Peter Riva, a man whose life reads like an epic novel of exploration and storytelling. Riva, a seasoned traveller, has traversed continents, from the sprawling landscapes of Africa to the vibrant tapestries of Asia and Europe. With over three decades spent in the company of legendary guides

Peter Riva's multifaceted career and profound storytelling captivate readers, offering vivid adventures that resonate long after the final page turns.

in East Africa, his experiences have become the very fabric of

Peter Riva discusses inspirations from African journeys, wildlife filmmaking, and global experiences shaping his thrilling novels.

his thrilling novels, transporting readers to the untamed wilderness and pulse-pounding escapades of Mbuno & Pero.

His remarkable career spans a multitude of realms, from crafting wildlife documentaries that capture the raw beauty of nature to navigating the intricate web of the aviation and space community. Yet, it is his boundless passion for storytelling that truly sets him apart. Through his gripping tales, Riva sheds light on pressing global issues, from the scourge of terrorism to the devastating impact of poaching and deforestation.

In this exclusive interview with Reader's House Magazine,

Riva unveils the secrets behind his immersive narratives and the profound insights gleaned from a lifetime of exploration. From the rugged terrains of East Africa to the uncharted frontiers of science fiction, he seamlessly blends action-packed plots with richly developed characters, drawing inspiration from his encounters with real-life heroes and villains.

Discover the untold stories lurking amidst the pages of Riva's novels, where every word is infused with the essence of adventure and the spirit of discovery. Join us as we unravel the mysteries of his craft, exploring the depths of his imagination and the vast landscapes that serve as the backdrop for his cinematic tales.

Through his eyes, we witness the majesty of the Serengeti, the tranquility of the Mathews Range, and the boundless possibilities of the cosmos. As he shares his most cherished memories and impactful experiences, we are transported to a world where every moment is a chance for revelation and every story a testament to the human spirit.

As readers delve into Riva's works, they are not merely transported to distant lands or futuristic realms; they are invited to ponder the intricacies of existence, the fragility of our planet, and the boundless possibilities that lie beyond the horizon. In a world hungry for stories that inspire, entertain, and provoke thought, Peter Riva's novels stand as beacons of adventure, reminding us of the wonders that await those brave enough to seek them.

So, dear readers, get ready and

prepare for a literary odyssey unlike any other, guided by the incomparable Peter Riva.

What inspired you to set your thriller novels in East Africa?

I first visited the African continent in 1966, aged 16. In the early '80s through the late '90s, I produced magazine features, TV commercials, primetime TV specials – all in East Africa – and then 78x 1-hour animal documentaries in 60+ countries. In '82, at Hog Ranch, in Kenya, I met and spent time with Mbuno, a Waliangulu scout. His father had been a guide to Teddy Roosevelt and Mbuno, then aged 80 or so, had been Bill Holden's and Hemingway's scout. On foot safaris, just the two of us, Mbuno shared the real East Africa with me, and his tribal story. His connection to the land reminded me of the American Indians' nature-centric culture and oneness. His capabilities in the bush were unique and extraordinary.

My personal passion for the news and boarding school experience with 60+ nationalities allows me to have insight into international perspective, events, and possibilities that, cobbled together, can be woven into a gripping tale. I am not a talented writer, but I do tell a good story.

How did your experience producing wildlife documentaries inform the settings and details in your books?

Wildlife documentaries – 78+ hours of them – as producer in the field you have to out-think, out-anticipate, and certainly out-manage events and people to keep on track. Producing in the field requires direction, chess-like strategy, and, above all, an eye to safely guard

your crew. You have to notice everything, every insect, seeds of grass, as well as the larger animals' threats and dangers. When we filmed with Mbuno, the vigilance of danger could be turned over to him and we never, ever, had an issue when he was around.

Your books tackle some major issues like terrorism, poaching, and deforestation. Why did you want to address these topics in your writing?

I have witnessed terrorism – helping pull Hutu bodies out of Lake Victoria – seen the poached, wasted, lives of elephants firsthand, and I live as a staunch environmentalist lamenting deforestation around the globe. All too often people underestimate the evil-doers in the world and their capability of taking advantage with resultant violence – often without regard for consequences. Recognizing their end goal – when Pero and Mbuno figure out what the real end goal is – you have to act or get others to act swiftly. It is like a snowball rolling downhill, better to foresee the avalanche than to try and clean up the mess later. To anticipate the consequences requires a certain mindset, which Pero and Mbuno share.

How do you balance writing action-packed plots with fully developed characters?

A simple story-teller will allow the characters to be who they are – a better writer would construct developing characters rather than let them fly as I do. Put a hint of an obstacle before them and my characters will direct their own actions, which leads to more action, always allowing them to be true to themselves. Was there any cha-

acter development in my stories? Hardly any, these are mature, seasoned, self-aware individuals who only show emotion over the risk they may place others in. Right is right, wrong is wrong. Deliberate heroes are often that way.

What kind of research did you have to do for the technology depicted in your science fiction novels?

I am a radio junkie. I sleep with an earplug listening to reports, news, podcasts from around the world. In university I was initially a math major, later a film/TV major. I learned computer code when I was 18 and have a basic understanding of that world and the science, and later space exploration, that follows. As an environmentalist, the concept of Gaia and a "whole Earth" consciousness made a good platform onto which I could spoon AI and a somewhat bumbling, doesn't-know-he's-a-patsy, but hyper smart, hero. In the sequel to *The Path*, he finds himself shouldered with responsibility he still doesn't feel capable of but, because he's fairly selfless, he bumbles along – and as we know from all science history, greatest advances are often accidental.

What was the most memorable or impactful experience you had while living and working in Africa?

In the Mathews Range, on foot with Mbuno, he made me smear forest rhino dung all over my shorts and shirt, paying special attention to my skin and hair. Then, staying downwind, we crept along until we could watch a cow and calf forest rhino from 20' away... no camera, no noise, just nature. The smell took a week to scrub

off, keeping the memory vivid all the while.

You've worked in so many interesting fields - from the film industry to the UN. How have those varied experiences shaped you as a writer?

I say I'm a news junkie and that's perhaps not totally accurate. I'm more of an information junkie, fascinated by everyone's experience and discoveries. Like any explorer, I file facts, places, people away, locked into the brain somewhere. Typing out memories is like having a favorite piece of candy to suck on, releases them, somehow, from later clearer recollection... now rereading passages refreshes, somewhat surprisingly, events I had experienced first-hand. Amazing thing, the brain.

If your books were adapted for film or TV, what locations would you want used for filming and why?

For the African adventures in East Africa; Kimana, Amboseli, Serengeti, Mathews Range, as well as the coastal regions in Tanzania and anything around or north of Loiyangalani. Like Cornel Wilde's African film, *The Naked Prey*, and Houston's *The African Queen*, nothing can mimic being there, seeing there, smelling there, reveling in being there.

For the Sci-Fi Tag Series books? I wish my brother Michael was still alive. He was a top Production Designer in Hollywood (Iron Man, Spider Man, Color Purple, Django Unchained, and 50+ films) and he could have free reign as he did on *Buckaroo Banzai*... it would be fun to see what he could conjure up!