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# Aad van den Heuvel

## *Dirty bomb*

Original title: *De vuile bom*

THRILLER

**‘Van den Heuvel is familiar with the world of journalism and shows that he knows what he’s writing about.’ – *Algemeen Dagblad***

Van den Heuvel’s earlier thrillers, *Het Sahararaadsel* (The Sahara conundrum) and *De oorlogsverslaggever* (The war reporter) were nominated for the *Diamanten Kogel* (Diamond Bullet), an annual award for the best Flemish crime novel.

## About the author

Aad van den Heuvel (Rotterdam, 1935) is a journalist, television producer, and author. Prior crime novels have been published by De Arbeiderspers: *The Vanishing* (1987), *The Stone Age* (1991), *A Distant Killer* (1998), *The Monet Mystery* (2002) and *The Sahara Riddle* (2004), which was nominated for the Diamond Bullet Award 2005. His crime novels are distinguished by the consummate involvement of politics and social evils. As a television journalist, Van den Heuvel reported from Africa, Latin America and Asia. For Dutch television he made programs that gained him a great deal of fame, such as *Brandpunt*, *Van Spijk Show*, *Alles is anders show* and *Ook dat nog!*. He penned *Dit was Brandpunt, goedenavond* (Aspekt, 2005) about his years with the current affairs programme, *Brandpunt*. He also writes travel stories and columns. Van den Heuvel's thriller *Een zonnig eiland* (A sunny island) (2009) is a literary novel which is both satirical and politically aware.



## About the book

It is 2008. Lieutenant Leo Fox, on a military mission in the Afghan province of Uruzgan, still has a few weeks to go before he returns to the Netherlands and leaves the army. But things do not go as planned. While on patrol, he and his men are lured into an ambush. Things might have turned out much worse if it had not been for his cool-headedness. On top of this, Fox saves the life of an Afghan boy, who turns out to be the son of an influential Afghan member of parliament. As a token of gratitude, he passes on information to lieutenant Fox about an intended attack on a target in the Netherlands. A dirty bomb (an explosive device containing radioactive material) is on its way. Fox takes the story seriously; his superiors check its credibility and come to the conclusion that the information is correct. The situation calls for rapid action as well as the utmost secrecy. Only one man can do this job. Leo Fox. He duly sets out on an exhausting and unrelenting quest to find the bomb.

*A veritable page-turner and a relentless thriller. Terrifyingly realistic.*

Aad van den Heuvel, *De vuile bom*  
ISBN 978 90 445 18375  
Paperback, 416 pages

## **Bibliography**

*De oorlogsverslaggever (The War Correspondent)* – 2008 (Thriller)

*Een zonnig eiland (A sunny Island)* – 2009 (Novel)

*De vuile bom (Dirty bomb)* – 2011 (Thriller)

### **The press about *The War Correspondent***

‘Aad van den Heuvel’s writing has documentary style, is evocative, and involved.’

– *Crimezone*

‘With *The War Correspondent* Van den Heuvel has again written a very readable book. It is well put together, has a credible plot and well-rounded characters. He knows the world of journalism and demonstrates that he knows what he is writing about.’ – *Algemeen Dagblad*

‘This is a particularly exciting book.’ – *Paul Witteman*

‘Van den Heuvel can tell a story.’ – *Crimezone.nl*

‘A more than entertaining book of many talents. (...) Well-structured story that reads smoothly.’ – *vn Detective & Thrillergids*

‘Plot, personages en verhaal overtuigen, en de auteur is erin geslaagd aardig wat informatie in het verhaal te verwerken, zonder dat het de vaart of spanning uit het verhaal haalt.’ – *NBD Biblion*

### **The press about *A Sunny Island***

‘A parabel on good and bad, such as Brecht’s *The good Man from Sechuan*.’ – *De Telegraaf*

‘Een remarkable book that makes you think, just as good satire always does.’ – *EO Visie*

‘Penned in a seasoned style, as tragic as it is hilarious.’ – *Voorster Nieuws*

## **Excerpt from the book**

Suddenly, someone fired at lieutenant Leo Fox from a nearby rock. Fragments spat in all directions and, next to his Kevlar helm, lead smashed into the rock. Abruptly, he turned around and saw a small, battered Land Rover on the hilltop. A dark shadow near the bonnet was aiming a Kalashnikov at him. Before Fox could spring into action, more shots were fired from the road and the enemy up above him took a hit. The Taliban had inadvertently brought down one of its own men. Leo started to run towards the summit where several massive boulders lay around the Land Rover. One opponent had been eliminated but how many others were still there? Fox took no chances and hurled a flash bang stun grenade in their direction. The explosive would generate a powerful shock wave, guaranteed to totally blind anyone nearby for a few minutes. He heard shouting as he stealthily traversed the final 30 metres to the top. There he stumbled upon two very young men, probably no older than 16 or 17. One was lying on the ground with a gaping wound in his leg. He was howling with pain. The other boy had been blinded and whimpered softly as he leant against the Land Rover, his face buried in his hands. The Kalashnikov was lying on the ground between them. Two very youthful hangers-on of the Taliban. They seemed panic-stricken. Trying to keep one eye on the path, Fox went over to the Land Rover. The boot contained some food, a couple of spare tyres, and two ammo chests. It seemed that the Taliban had been lying in wait for the Dutch at the top of this hill and had waited until dark before going down to get a better view of the road. Fox took a close look at the two boys, but they were no longer capable of causing him any problem. He could not see his wounded sergeant from this position either. And he should leave here quickly. Once dawn broke and the first red rays of the rising sun set the barren Afghan lunarscape on fire, he would not stand a snowball's chance in hell. Below him, the shooting continued. The enemy had gathered around the vehicles on the road; they did not want to risk venturing out between the bushes or walking along the rocky path. The Dutch soldiers could not go anywhere. The wolf only had to wait in order to slaughter the sheep in broad daylight. These two boys on the rocks above were now very quiet. The belief that many virgins awaited them in the hereafter had long since given way to a desperate yearning for a long life in the terrestrial Baluchi Valley. Leo crept around the Land Rover. He had to think hard. How on earth could he save his skin? After a few minutes, he came up with something that might do the trick. He got out his small transmitter and despite its limited range tried to contact the members of his platoon. After a lot of hissing and crackling, he finally managed to get through. Through their in-ear receivers, they heard what he wanted them to do. They pulled back deeper into the bushes, as far away from the road as possible. Fox's plan was a gamble well worth taking. He grabbed the uninjured boy by the scruff of his neck. Terrified, the kid begged the Dutch soldier in good English to please spare his life. He was still unable to see much, but that did not matter. All Leo needed was extra muscle power. Gruffly, he told the lad what to do. As Leo kept his night vision goggles trained on the path, they pushed the ancient Land Rover to the edge of the cliff. Leo used the transmitter to issue a final warning, before throwing the Kalashnikov into the boot. Together, he and the boy gave the car one last shove. The vehicle rattled into motion, slowly and fitfully at first, until it gradually gained momentum. Once it was halfway down the rock, the car fell rather than rolled. After it left the path, it plunged through the wide rocky gully alongside it. A violent hail of stones and boulders landed on the vehicles and the road below. The Taliban fighters looked up, shocked, as the large object hurled towards them in the dark. They were not in any great danger; they

only had to run down the road a couple of metres to dodge the pieces of rock and the metal hulk. But the sting was in the boot of the Land Rover. Leo Fox aimed his Diemaco and used the Underslung, the small grenade launcher on the underside of the rifle, as he pointed the weapon at the back of the vehicle that was thundering downwards. He opened fire just as the car hit the road. From this distance, Leo had two chances but he only needed one; the war gods were smiling on him. The grenade hit the ammo chests in the boot, triggering a huge explosion. Shell splinters, steel and rocks swept every single living creature from the narrow through road. Death and destruction surged out of the exploding mass of iron. Wounded men groaning with pain and still, maimed corpses were scattered in and around the enormous crater created by the blast. Precisely at that moment, the Dutch soldiers rushed forward from the bushes, firing at anyone still standing amidst the blazing flames. There were not many.