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Publishing House De Geus
Contact: Esther Bruls
P.O. Box 1878,
4801 BW Breda
The Netherlands
Phone: (31) 76 522 8151
Fax: (31) 76 522 2599
Email: e.bruls @degeus.nl

DE GEUS www.degeus.nl

Charles den Tex

The Power of Mr Miller

Original title: *De macht van meneer Miller*

CRIME NOVEL

The Power of Mr Miller is a contemporary novel about the influence and power of consultancy technocrats who operate on a global scale. The impact of computer technology on our society leads to a new and sinister climax. Who decides what is to happen? To us? To our part of the world? Is it Mr Miller? Possibly. But if so, who is he?

This is beyond internet. This is about a new order, an order no one wants. It is about a network with unbelievable reach. And whoever runs the network has all the information of governments and large corporations at his command, giving him unparalleled international control.

Three-times winner of the Dutch crime fiction award, the prestigious Golden Noose

**Author of the gift crime novella for June -
Month of the Crime Novel 2010 (Juni –
Maand van het spannende boek)
Print run approx. 800,000**

Charles den Tex
The Power of Mr Miller

About the author

Charles den Tex was born in Camberwell (Australia) in 1952 and moved to the Netherlands in 1958. He studied photography and film in London. In 1980, he established himself in Amsterdam as a copywriter and later as communication and management consultant. He has published eight thrillers and he is a six time nominee for the annual Crime Fiction Award in the Netherlands, the *Gouden Strop* (The Golden Noose). He won the award three times, in 2002 with his novel *Chance in Hell*, again in 2006 with his novel *The Power of Mr Miller* and again in 2008 with his latest *Cell*.

Charles den Tex pioneered his own brand of ‘corporate thrillers’, combining inside knowledge of how large and small companies operate, with a natural story telling ease and clever, realistic plots. The thrill is derived from the way people fight for their businesses or for their position within the company. They are not only in it for the money – although sums involved are sometimes quite staggering – it is their interest in their work and their loved ones that makes people fight and confront each other. In the process, they cross the thin line between honesty and self-interest.



About the novel

Michael Bellicher works for one of the largest consultancy firms in the world. Everything he dreams of seems to be within reach. When his younger brother returns home unexpectedly after five years in the United States, Michael doesn't recognize him. The confrontation is highly emotional and Michael collapses in the arrival hall. When he regains consciousness Michael seems to have lost it, he can no longer function, he neglects his work and his clients and loses himself in a drinking binge until he is about to be fired. In order to avoid being locked out of his own office the next day, he hides in the company restaurant, where he stays all night.

And that is the wrong choice, because that night he is in the wrong place, at the wrong time. He is witness to a murder and before he can find out what has happened, he turns

out to be the prime suspect – the fully automated registration system declares emphatically that he was the only other person in the building at the time of the murder. Michael has no choice, he runs, but there seems to be no escape. With each step he takes – while trying to prove his innocence – Mr Miller follows close behind. The illusive Mr Miller is everywhere, and he appears to know everything about him. Almost everything.

Charles den Tex, *De macht van meneer Miller*
ISBN 9789044513387
Hardcover, 352 p.

Bibliography

Dump ('The Waste Game') (1995)
Claim ('Claim') (1996) motion picture in 2001
Code 39 ('Code 39') (1998)
Deal ('Deal') (1999)
Schijn van kans ('Chance in Hell') (2002)
Stegger ('Stegger') (2003)
Angstval ('Anxiety Trap') (2004)
De macht van meneer Miller ('The Power of Mr Miller') (2006)
CEL ('Cell') (2008)

Awards

2002 Golden Noose for *Chance in Hell*
2006 Golden Noose for *The Power of Mr Miller*
2006 Nominated for *Diamant Bullet*
2008 Golden Noose for *Cell*
Longlisted for the 2009 Libris Literature Prize for *Cell*

Rights

CEL has been sold to:

- Germany (Grafit Verlag)
- France (Presses de la Cité)
- Italy (Edizioni E/O)

The Power of Mr Miller has been sold to

- Germany (Grafit Verlag)
- Italy (Edizioni E/O)
- Turkey (Okuyan)

A four-part television series and movie picture of the first two Bellicher books is planned for 2010/2011.

Charles den Tex
The Power of Mr Miller

The press about *The Power of Mr Miller*

'A top class conspiracy novel. Lucid and compelling prose. A must-read.' – *Vrij Nederland Detective & Thrillergids* *****

'Story and style have a contemporary rhythm, in which the words clamp down on terrifying, futuristic developments. Breakneck excitement in a tightly written story.' – *de Volkskrant*

'An action thriller with brains.' – *Het Parool*

'An incomparably clever and thrilling novel.' – *Brabants Dagblad*

'His language scintillates and electrifies non-stop.' – *NRC Handelsblad*

'An unruly mix of action, interaction, opinion, and fantasy.' – *Crimezone*

'A convincing horror scenario. Another stunning thriller by Den Tex.' – *Nederlandse Bibliotheek Dienst*

about *The Waste Game*

'Full of lively dialogue that keeps haunting the reader.' – *de Volkskrant*

'Den Tex manages to wrap a contemporary social issue in a suspense story in such a way that technical details never once become boring.' – *NRC Handelsblad*

'Seductively written, with a chillingly convincing depiction of the chemical waste trade.' – *De Telegraaf*

about *Claim*

'His slice of life dialogues and cleverly composed plot demonstrate Den Tex's qualities as a thriller writer.' – *Jury Golden Noose*

'The adventure's suspense, the author's quality.' – *NRC Handelsblad*

'A very good book indeed.' – *De Telegraaf*

'Full of tension until its very ending, surprising, skillfully done.' – *Vrij Nederland*

'Gripping and an easy read.' – *Trouw*

'Compelling (...) a brilliant story, realistic characters, and suspense up to its very last page.' – *Brabants Dagblad*

Charles den Tex
The Power of Mr Miller

Fragment of the novel

Two days after meeting his brother, Kees, in the arrival hall at Schiphol Airport – a meeting that left him in shock – Michael Bellicher goes back to work at HC&P, a global consultancy firm. Bellicher has been down and out for two days, failing to show up for appointments with clients, and avoiding all contact. He has sinned against the corporate laws of HC&P. In the elevator he runs into his boss.

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The closing door of the elevator was stopped by a strong, well-tanned hand. Dries Van Waayen stepped into the shiny, well polished elevator car.

‘Wait for me’, he said, partner/director, fifty-six years old, his watch alone was worth more than everything I was wearing. His face looked tense, but contented. Everything he did was important, serious. He relished his job, satisfaction radiated from his face. Always, under all circumstances.

‘Bellicher’, he said. He knew how to sound amicable in an icy way. ‘Are we alone?’ he asked.

‘Seems that way.’

While the door closed for the second time, Van Waayen put his hand on my shoulder and gave me an indecipherable look, showing unashamed self-satisfaction.

‘Perfect time to discuss the future’, he said. ‘Don’t you agree?’ He pushed the button for the fifth floor. For a moment it seemed that the upward motion of the elevator only influenced his eyebrows, they rose to unprecedented heights. The smile disappeared from his face. ‘Of course, you understand, a few months ago things seemed quite different.’ He expected no answer. Suffering economy, declining stock exchange, utter silence in mergers and acquisitions, crash in the telecom industry, depletion of the IT business, and the two day hole I had just dug in my professional life were all very good reasons to discuss the future. My future.

I nodded, pursed my lips, and attempted a vague smile. Not that it mattered.

‘My office’, Van Waayen said. ‘Lunchtime suits you?’ It wasn’t a question. We both knew what this was about.

‘Twelve-thirty’, I managed.

Van Waayen nodded. ‘Fine’, he said. End of conversation.

With a quiet sigh the elevator came to a stop. The soft sound of an electronic imitation gong and a flashing number indicated that we had arrived at the fifth floor.

‘My floor’, Van Waayen said. ‘Last in, first out, goes for me too, wouldn’t you know!’ He flashed a smile and disappeared into the hall. His hall, his floor. The executive floor. Some people are more equal than others, and some things never change. As the elevator restarted its way up it hit me that I was going to be fired. Even the alcohol residue in my blood couldn’t sweeten that message. In fact, I was already out. Or, I would be in a few hours, and what was a few hours compared to the mess I was in?

The elevator shot upwards and pushed my throat down towards my heart. Each time I swallowed, I increased the pressure on my heartbeat. My body stiffened in a dry cramp. This was more than I could stand. Being fired was unthinkable. Impossible. My whole body reacted to the idea. To be fired meant that I would be excluded from

everything I had, from the people, the technology, the profession, the system. I would be cut off from clients and projects that took me to the heart of all major developments. For each client, for each job a different team. Mega-projects that I could work on for twenty hours a day. Driven by the need to find solutions where there did not seem to be any. Solutions that only existed after we had found them. If we found them at all. Racing across the country. *Connected*. To everything. If I lost this, then all I would have left was content, and content is for losers. Breathing slowly, carefully, shallowly, I stepped out of the elevator on the ninth floor. My lips were dry and cracked. With my briefcase in one hand and a Chapstick in the other, I hurried to my desk, a flexible workspace. While looking out over Amsterdam I rubbed the greasy substance onto the broken skin of my lips. It relieved the sting, it did, but no matter what I did, the morning grew shorter and shorter. Unstoppably so. Twelve-thirty approached in a way it never had before. Inevitable. Twenty-five minutes to go. Twenty. A quarter of an hour. Whatever is about to happen, I thought, not this.

Translation: Charles den Tex
Last updated 29-Dec-09