



© Chris van Houts



World Rights  
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](http://www.degeus.nl)

---

# Charles den Tex

## *Beyond Control*

Original title: *Onmacht*

CRIME NOVELLA

**The gift crime novella for June – Month of the Crime Novel 2010 (Juni – Maand van het Spannende Boek)**

**Print run 865,000**

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

---

Charles den Tex  
*Beyond Control*

### **About the author**

Charles den Tex (Australia, 1952) studied photography and film in London, taught English in Paris, and returned to the Netherlands in 1980, where he established himself as a copywriter and later as a communications and management consultant. Almost all of his thrillers have been nominated for the Golden Noose, an award he has now won three times: in 2002 with his fifth thriller *Chance in Hell*, in 2006 with *The Power of Mr Miller*, his eighth thriller, and again in 2008 with its successor *Cell*. A four-part television series and film version of the last two books are planned for 2010-2011. *Cell* was also longlisted for the 2009 Libris Literature Prize.



### **About the book**

Ellen and Victor's relationship has long since passed the stage of minor irritations. The one's desire to please the other becomes a habit, the habit becomes a rut, the rut becomes helplessness. One of them tries to ignore the inevitable, hoping things will improve with time. The other has already taken steps to make the situation bearable. When the bomb finally goes off, a divorce seems just as inevitable as it is desirable. But then the story takes a surprisingly gruesome turn.

*Beyond Control* is a haunting story about human shortcomings. Each of us could have played a part in it.

Charles den Tex, *Onmacht*  
ISBN 978 90 445 1683 8  
Hardcover, ca. 96 pages  
Date of publication: June 2011

## **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)  
*Spijt* ('Regret') (literary novella, 2009)  
*Wachtwoord* ('Password') (2010)  
*Onmacht* ('Beyond Control') (2010)

## **Prizes and awards**

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

## **Rights**

*The Power of Mr Miller* has been sold to:

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

*Cell* has been sold to:

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

*The Power of Mr Miller* will be broadcasted on November 7<sup>th</sup> 2010.  
A cinema version of *Cell* is planned for 2011.

## **The press about *The Power of Mr Miller***

'Despite its boy's book title, *The Power of Mr Miller* is a very mature crime novel. (...) Den Tex writes with a clarity and precision rarely seen in the Dutch language area. (...) A truly consummate thriller.' - *Jury report, Golden Noose 2006*

'Unpredictable Charles den Tex unfolds an action thriller unparalleled in the Dutch language area. (...) *The Power of Mr Miller* is a conspiracy novel of the purest kind. (...) Lucid, compelling prose. A must read.' - *VN Detective & Thriller Gids 2006 - 5 stars\*\*\*\*\**

‘Charles den Tex demonstrates that suspense can be strangulating in a entirely different way in *The Power of Mr Miller*. (...) A powerfully thrilling, tightly written story, with considerable physical and technical violence, and remarkable characters.’  
– *de Volkskrant*

‘Den Tex does not pen a single sentence rashly. His language sparkles and awes ceaselessly, and that is why in his books there is no loss of intensity of events. It is in fact the language that makes it tangible.’ – *NRC Handelsblad*

### **The press about *Cell***

‘A full-blooded thriller, enthralling and topical, funny, intrusive and, above all, very exciting.’ – *Jury Report, The Golden Noose 2008*

‘In *Cell*, people are stripped to the bone, erased or transformed as individuals into people who are said to have committed cold-blooded crimes. (...) A convincing, intriguing story about the individual who loses out to the criminals.’ – *de Volkskrant*

‘*Cell* is a mad book, a spectacular adventure and a spectacularly well-written one at that. Den Tex is the poet among Dutch crime writers. (...) Den Tex succeeds in making a bizarre situation feel all too real.’ – *NRC Handelsblad*

‘A sequel is rarely better. That’s the rule. *Cell* is the exception. (...) Another powerful and provocative gem has arrived in the world. What a book! What a writer! (...) *Cell* is simply right, in every sense. (...) Den Tex is indisputably a hero in the world of the thriller.’ – *Crimezone*

‘Den Tex proves again to be a master of originality and suspense.’ – *Trouw*

‘While reading it, you imagine you are on a roller coaster. The pace doesn’t let up, apart from a short breathing space. But be warned: after that it only goes faster. *Cell* is by far and away the best Dutch thriller of recent years!’ – *www.ezzulia.nl*

### **Excerpt from the book**

She lays out his shirt and socks. Neatly, side by side, on the edge of the bed. Why she does it, she doesn’t know. She started one day when he had overslept and called to her from the bathroom to grab his things for him.

His things.

Shirts and socks. She has done it every morning ever since. At first they laughed about it, it being so old-fashioned. She was subservient all of a sudden, a woman from another age. She did it as a sort of joke, for fun, which forged an additional bond between them. She did it precisely *because* it was so silly, because in that way she showed she was above all that. They didn’t have to take care of each other; he had his job, she had her money. She could do whatever she wanted, in all freedom, without any risk of ever ending up stuck in some little box. Eight years have passed since then and she is still doing it. They stopped laughing about it long ago.

The act has settled in her, like the limescale in a washing machine. She doesn't see it, but she feels the hindrance it causes. She slides open the wardrobe door and takes out a clean pair of pants, white boxers, in soft stretch cotton. She smells the detergent, fresh and artificial, a 'cheerful' smell.

She does it because it is no trouble, because she loves him. Although, sometimes she does wonder whether he feels the same. She makes this tiny gesture every morning and he never thanks her. He only thanked her the first time, and then again a few weeks later, exaggeratedly, to emphasise the joke, to show that he had understood what she was doing.

Afterwards never again.

She takes out a new pair of socks, really new, straight from the shop, still factory flat and smooth, the cloth untainted by sweaty feet, washing or tumble-drying. She lays them on the bed next to the boxers and removes the older socks. His suits are chosen by himself, just like his ties. Shirts are invariably white. Only white; no stripes, no colours. Socks are always grey, dark grey. He doesn't like variation; he thinks it's a waste of time.

His predictability is comfortable, his movements echo through her own body and for a moment, just a couple of seconds, she imitates the way he dresses. Imitates his supple body, unthinkingly. She smiles.

'I must be mad', she says.

The shower rains down on his head, his neck and his back. He leans with his hands flat against the wall, feels the joints between the tiles. Ten to seven in the morning and he is already tired, as if his body is heavier than he is.

His wife lays out his clothes on the bed for him. He wishes she wouldn't, but he hasn't got the heart to tell her that. She does it for him. He wishes he could feel grateful, but he can't. Not with the best will in the world. The ritual depresses him, so he stays in the shower until he is certain she has gone, downstairs to the kitchen, where she gets their breakfast ready.

The second ritual.

The passageway out to his car seems to get a bit longer every day. Sometimes, he barely dares to look at her, afraid his face will betray his thoughts. So he avoids her eyes each morning, pretends he already has lots on his mind. Business. He turns off the tap and listens to the water dripping from his body. Breathes slowly, one hand still against the wall. In the bedroom, it is quiet. He shuts his eyes and listens to the sounds of the house. A plate on the kitchen counter, a cup on a saucer. When did that start? Five years ago? Six? Suddenly, he no longer drank his coffee – she her tea – from a mug; they drank them from a cup and saucer. She had looked so intensely happy about it that he had also smiled, automatically, because in those days her happiness had always made him happy.