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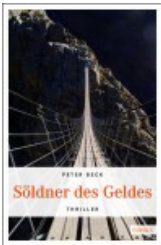
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[Söldner des Geldes by Peter Beck](#)

By [ITW](#) on August 31, 2013



A charred Arab: As a client of a Swiss private bank, he invested globally in critical infrastructures. His shocking death causes the blood pressure to rise, not only in oh-so pretty Switzerland but also in the NSA.

Tom Winter, the bank's head of security, and the attractive Egyptian businesswoman Fatima follow the money through Switzerland, to Egypt, Norway and USA and back into the Swiss Alps. They uncover explosive speculation, and they suddenly go from being hunters to hunted.

Laid-back and taciturn, Tom Winter fights his way through the jungle of intrigue with dry humor. A gripping financial thriller.

An interview with the Swiss first-time author Peter Beck about his astonishingly fast-paced financial thriller featuring a new kind of hero, Tom Winter.

The Swiss are often perceived as being boring. How did you as a born-and-bred Swiss manage to write such a fast-paced thriller?

I write what I like reading myself. I've been reading thrillers in English for years – mainly in the bath. Good entertainment just needs speed and a cliffhanger at the end of each chapter. The readers should get bloody fingernails.

Good entertainment also needs a cool hero. Tom Winter is head of security at a Swiss private bank. So there's lots of material! And there are great villains in the banking world. Behind the picture-perfect scenes, they do business brutally.

Why does the thriller also take place in Egypt, Norway and the USA?

I've been to these places, which is good for getting the ambiance right. Why Egypt? I wanted there to be sparks flying. Winter meets the mysterious Fatima in Cairo and there's a chemistry between them. And Boston is a great city. Wall Street would have been too crude. SÖLDNER DES GELDES is a breathtaking hunt through the global finance jungle. The money moves fast and doesn't respect national borders or laws.

A fair bit of SÖLDNER DES GELDES takes place in Switzerland: the cities of Berne and Zurich, the Lavaux vineyards above Lake Geneva and the Jura mountains. Being Bernese, I set the finale in the beautiful and spectacular Alpine landscape of the Bernese Oberland.

How did you create the character of Tom Winter?

It was a long evolution. The character came to life almost like a claymation figure. I wanted a new kind of hero, not just another police inspector or private detective. He had to be both Swiss and cosmopolitan. And I think the name Winter suits a Swiss character and works well in both German and English. I also wanted Tom Winter to have a lot of freedom in his job, so I could send him all over the world. That's fun. He's almost as free as Jack Reacher.

What was also really important was that Winter has strong values. He does the right thing and is a man of considered action. Before he acts, he observes carefully and listens well. It says a lot about a person, in real life too, if they listen well.

Tom Winter was born only after I'd sculpted the figure again and again: he's strong, doesn't say much, has a dry sense of humor and secretly longs for intimacy and peace. My test readers have really identified with Tom Winter.

Is Tom Winter based on a real person?

No, he's a creation. But Tom Winter isn't a glorified hero, he's a regular guy with a past. And sometimes even he doesn't know what to do.

Is there anything of yourself in Tom Winter?

Not really. Well, there are two things. The sportiness, for sure. I used to do judo and got the first black belt. And then there are the power struggles he has to contend with in the bank. I've been working in the corporate world for a long time, was an executive board member of a big Swiss company and sat on several non-executive boards. I've come across managers wholet's just say that their ethical standards would be judged to be below average by the general population.

As for the rest, I'm not sure. You'd have to ask my girlfriend. I guess my sub-conscious has contributed somehow. I've got a PhD in Psychology but I've never worked in clinical psychology.

You're a businessman and a social psychologist, so what made you write a thriller?

I've been reading detective stories since childhood, graduating on to thrillers. After a long day or when I'm on holiday, I just want to switch off. And every now and then, I thought 'I could do that!'

In the early days of being self-employed, before I had as many mandates as I do now, it seemed like the right time. I just had to do it. And now it's a great feeling to hold a copy of SÖLDNER DES GELDES in my hands.

What research did you do for the book?

I'd visited most of the locations, which helped with the atmospheric descriptions. I used the internet to research some details, like Tom Winter's weapon.

My judo experience of close combat came in handy. And I'm still dealing with office in-fighting in my work as a corporate-culture consultant.

Which authors do you read yourself?

My all-time favorite author is John le Carré. He lived here in Berne for a year, by the way, and there are even scenes set in parts of the city in some of his books. Of course, I've read the usual suspects, starting with our co-president Lee Child.

What do you do when you're not writing?

Well, about a third of my time I'm asleep. To pay my mortgage, I help companies improve their corporate culture. If the culture's right, people will work happily, well and productively. A good boss needs to manage both costs and atmosphere. I'm fortunate enough to be my own boss.

When I have time, I do sport or I read. And every year I try to go on a trip somewhere new. Last year we went to the Azores – you sleep on volcanoes there.

The book begins with a charred Arab. Isn't that a bit racist?

No, I try to write in all shades, without prejudice. All extremism is horrific.

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

Maybe. I'm playing around with some ideas. Tom Winter has been well received. You'll find more on the English version of my [website](#): where you'll find the booktrailer (below), excerpts and more.



Peter Beck was born in Berne, Switzerland, in 1966. He studied Psychology, Economics and Philosophy, where he also gained a doctorate in Action Psychology. He went on to do an MBA at Manchester Business School.

He has a black belt in judo, was an executive board member of a large Swiss company and sat on several non-executive boards.

Peter Beck lives in Berne with his English girlfriend. Today he is his own boss and supports businesses in shaping their corporate culture.



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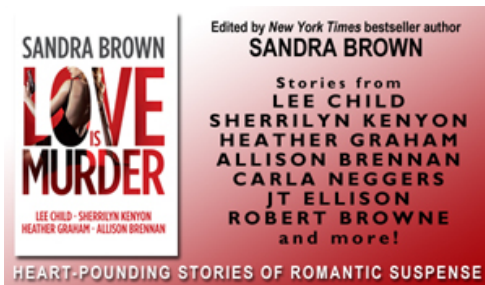
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