

The reflections of a layperson
required to pass judgment

Notes on a Murder

PETER VERMEERSCH

Peter Vermeersch is called up for jury service in a case of robbery with murder. The jury, composed of ordinary citizens, needs to determine whether or not the suspect is guilty and decide on a sentence. All this takes place in the imposing Palace of Justice in Brussels, a building imbued with the rituals of criminal trials.

During the court case, Peter Vermeersch feels bombarded by questions of all kinds – not just matters of guilt or innocence, but questions that transcend this specific case. What do you do to someone when you punish them? Does it help? How does it feel to be the relative of a murder victim? Does a criminal trial help families to process the pain and anger? Can you pick up normal life again after the courts have finished dealing with a case like this one, and if so how?

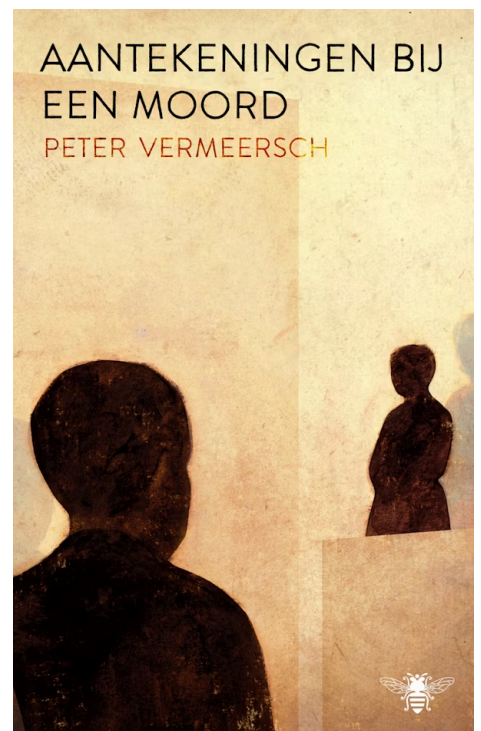
An enormously gripping call to think very deeply about how we handle criminals and victims. Vermeersch surpasses himself.

HUMO

In looking at this one court case, Peter Vermeersch offers a unique insight into the world of criminal justice. Although it does not answer all the questions, this personal and moving reportage is the fascinating result of a search for forms of justice and redress in the present day.

A unique insight into a murder case, in beautiful, meandering sentences.

BRUZZ



AUTHOR



Peter Vermeersch (b. 1972) is a professor of social science and politics, a poet and a writer of literary non-fiction. Vermeersch' writing and research revolves mostly around Central and Eastern Europe and covers topics such as minority politics, the Roma, nationalism, everyday citizenship, and democratization. He also writes literary essays for different magazines, and he published the poetry collection 'For Instance, take granite' together with David Van Reybrouck. *Photo © Veronique Philip*

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