

Quentin Krog talks new film *Ander Mens* and its bloody Tarantino influences

 By [Daniel Dercksen](#)

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For director Quentin Krog, *Ander Mens* is the type of film he wants people to "get lost in, laugh at and get thrilled by all at the same time".

Ander Mens is a wild and wacky experience that clearly makes Krog the 'Tarantino' of SA filmmakers. Offering an abundance of action and dark humour with the thrilling story of an ordinary, rather boring bookkeeper, Daniël Niemand (Bennie Fourie), whose life is irrevocably changed after a series of misunderstandings turn his world upside down.

Born in Springs, bred in Benoni and graduated in Stellenbosch, Krog made his directorial debut with the first season of Kyknet's youth drama series *Sterlopers* and directed the first season of *Die Boekklub* and *Highrollers* for television, as well as the films *Ballade vir 'n Enkeling*, *Vir die Voëls* and *Thys & Trix*.

Daniel Dercksen chats to Krog about *Ander Mens*.

■ What inspired you to bring Zirk van den Berg novel to the big screen?

"I've got the rights to this novel called *'n Ander Mens*. "It's about an innocent, down-and-out guy who goes into witness protection with a serial killer as his agent or something to that tune" was the way Herman Binge pitched the story of *'n Ander Mens* to me.

It was at the 2016 Silwerskermfees and, based on the premise alone, I was immediately intrigued by the concept. My longtime friend and writing partner, Sean Daniels, was also there and we both saw the potential for a very thrilling film.



■ ***You described it as *The Coen Brothers* meets *The Godfather* in Afrikaans! Wouldn't you add Quentin Tarantino as well?***

Absolutely! I've always been a big fan of Tarantino's work. And all those blood effects were actually computer-generated so the level of violence was something that only really became a reality for us in post-production.

We went through a few versions with varying degrees of blood and eventually settled on where we are now, it was great to have that level of control. Technically we could release a PG version with zero blood effects if we wanted to!

■ ***Tell me about the collaborative process of adapting the novel with Sean Robert Daniels and Frannie van der Walt? And was it a difficult process from page to screen?***

It was quite tough at first, yes. We spent over a year with the story before we really found the winning recipe. The difficult part was coming to terms with accepting the fact that we needed to let go of some of the novel's characters and original plotlines.

That, and the fact that my first impressions of the *Ander Mens* novel didn't quite spark the potential of a comedy at all, it's a very serious and dramatic story but after many brainstorming and story sessions between Sean, Herman and myself, it started to become very clear that what we were developing was something that could potentially be darkly funny and serious at the same time.



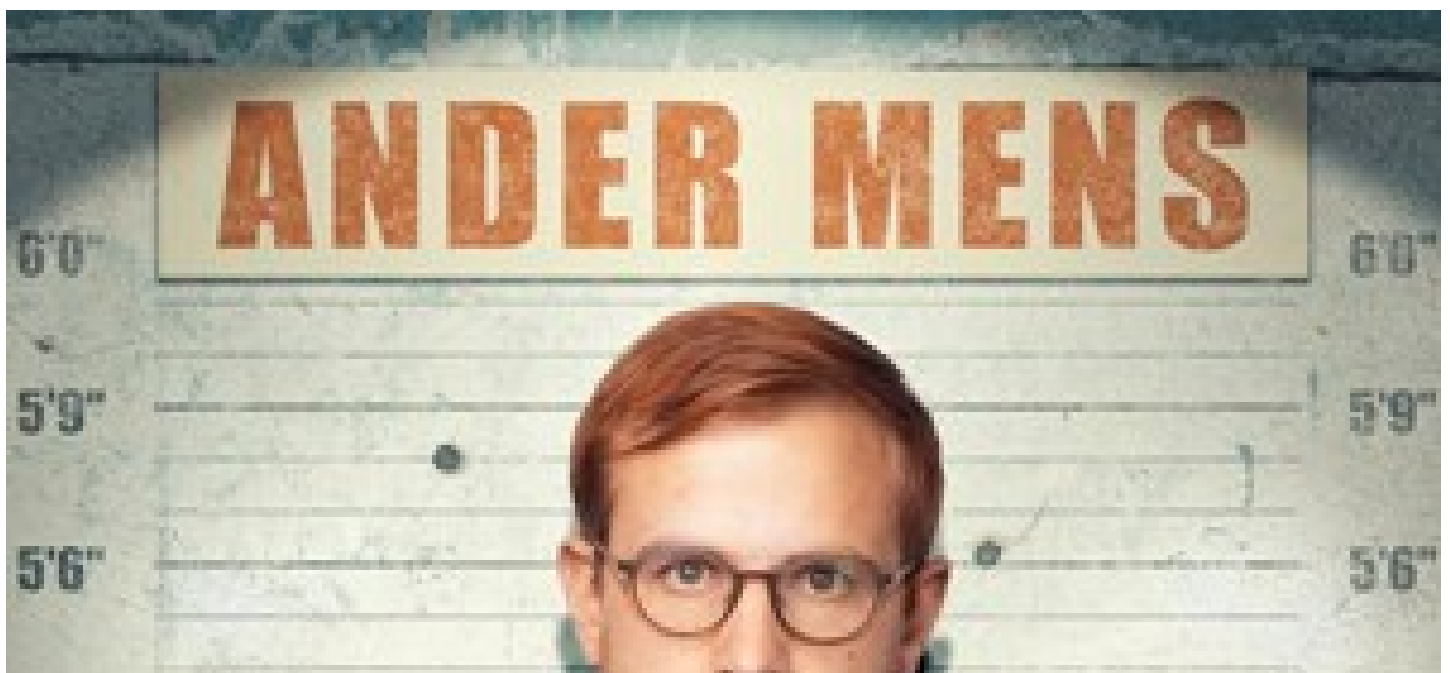
The *Ander Mens* screenplay is vastly different from the novel. Essentially the idea of the lead characters – Daniel, Erica, Frank and Acker – and the basic story premise remain the same, but most of the events and plot surrounding the characters were rewritten to better fit into the format of an entertaining one-and-a-half-hour screenplay.

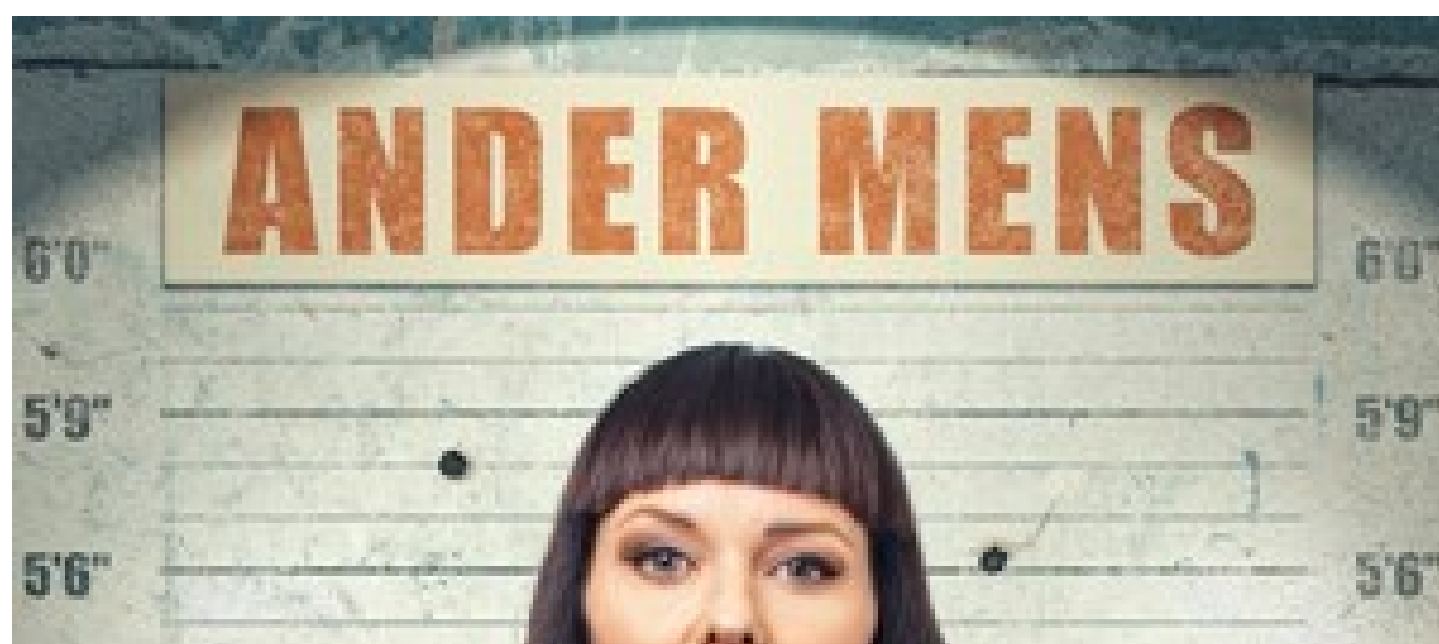
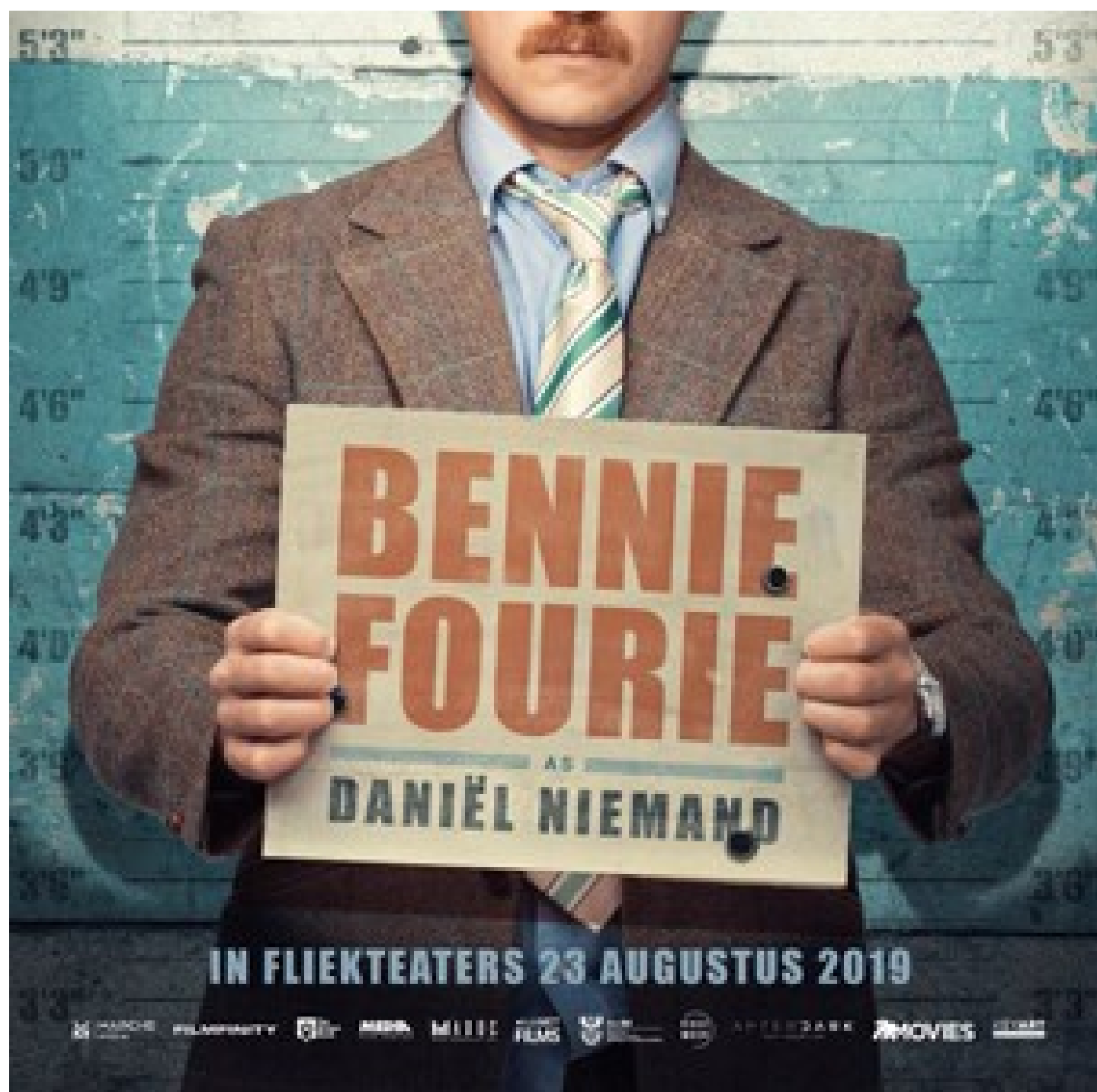
Once we found the acceptable level of “darkness” we tinkered back and forth with structure and plot for a couple of drafts, trying to wrestle the story into a tight feature-length format but we never really found a winning recipe with the ingredients we were using.

Eventually, after we reached draft four, we realised we weren’t really making any headway. Then Sean had one of his awesome brainwaves and we agreed that we had to let go of some of the novel’s baggage that was weighing us down. Once we got the producers on-board with this idea it was all downhill from there and we ended up with the story we have now.

■ ***The actors were chosen for the movie long before the script was completed. How did this influence the writing process?***

It was great to write and rewrite scenes with the clear image, speech patterns and mannerisms of the actors in mind. Sometimes it inspired moments and dialogue that I’m not sure would’ve made the page had we not had that clear picture of the actor.







■ *How much freedom did you give the actors to bring their characters to life?*

Coming from an acting background, I've always had great respect for actors and what they can bring to the table. And so I've always been very open to ideas and suggestions that they can bring. I love it when they think up moments or lines that are better than anything myself or the writers could've imagined.

■ ***Although the film is wild and wacky, laced with a deadly sense of dark humour, it is story anyone can easily relate to?***

I really believe so yes. Even though the circumstances are sometimes quite absurd and crazy, the characters are really quite normal and it's how they handle themselves in those situations that make for such great authentic and enjoyable comedy. And, based on the reactions I've seen so far at our preview screenings, our hunch was spot on.

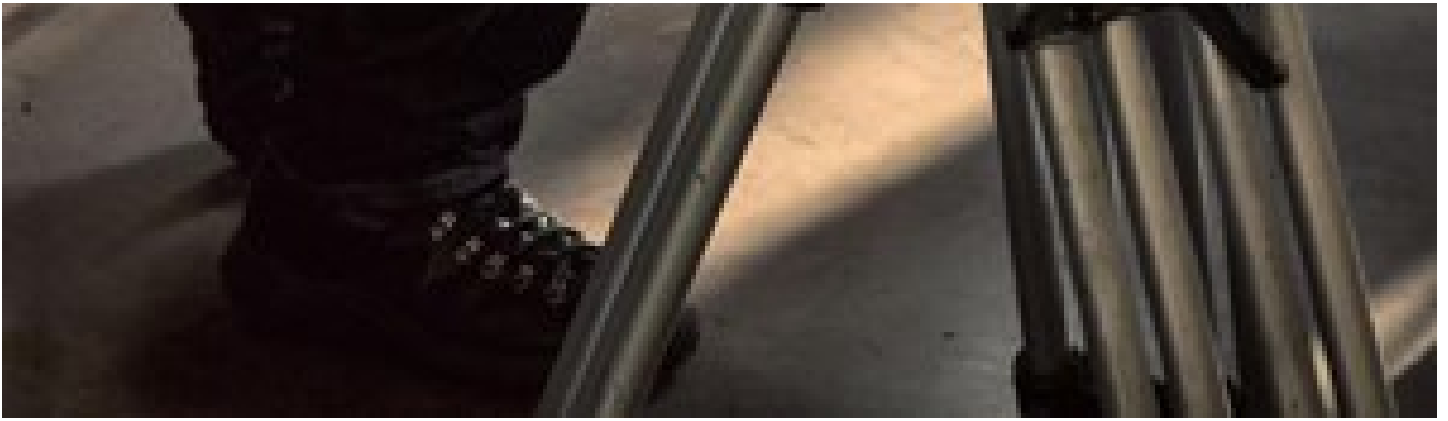
■ *You mentioned that the film has the important message that the world crushes those who don't embrace the opportunity to adapt and that you should not wait for your life to fall apart before you do something to better it.*

Can you elaborate on this?

Daniel is a character who had to go through some really unnecessary trials and scorching fires to pull him out of the funk that was his exceptionally average, uninspiring and boring life. If only he had just decided to pull up his socks and grow a pair earlier when he had the control, then he wouldn't have to go through so much hell to become the best version of himself.







▀ What do you hope audience will get from watching the film?

As with all my other films I really just want people to walk away feeling entertained and happy. I want them to feel like the film added something positive to their life and was worthy of their invaluable time. And I truly believe *Ander Mens* will do just that to whoever watches it.

It's the type of film that people can get lost in, laugh at and get thrilled by all at the same time. But it also contains the important message that the world crushes those who don't embrace the opportunity to adapt and that you should not wait for your life to fall apart before you do something to better it.

Ander Mens opens at SA cinemas on the 23 August 2019

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ABOUT DANIEL DERCKSEN

Daniel Dercksen has been a contributor for Lifestyle since 2012. As the driving force behind the successful independent training initiative The Writing Studio and a published film and theatre journalist of 40 years, teaching workshops in creative writing, playwriting and screenwriting throughout South Africa and internationally the past 22 years. Visit www.writingstudio.co.za

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