

In short - Fiction  
Author: Reviews by Kerryn Goldsworthy  
Date: 28/11/2009  
Words: 911  
Source: SMH  
Publication: Sydney Morning Herald  
Section: Spectrum  
Page: 30

## DARK VIDEO

By Peter Church

New Holland, 224pp, \$29.95

Readers appalled by recent revelations about university life will understand what South African novelist Peter Church means when he says of his novel *Dark Video* that its events could just as easily take place at the University of Sydney or UCLA: "I wanted to write an international story but with a South African setting."

It's a tale of greed and amorality, whose theme is privilege and the damage that the privileged can do not only to other people but also to themselves. A gang of four "bad boy" students from a university college in Cape Town set up a scenario in which a fellow student is terrified; they record the scene and send the footage to a man who runs a thriving international business in online hardcore porn and snuff movies, in which the "money shot" is the victim's expression of terror. Things progress, or regress, from there. Church is particularly good at group dynamics and the moral hazards of lifelong privilege. It's a horribly unpleasant but gripping thriller with a brilliant twist at the end.

