

Madam Stella's House of Leisure

by [E. G. Moorcraft](#) (August 2021)



The City, Jakob Steinhardt, 1913

I found it! Turns out there is much more stuff going around dead Viktor Pelevin. Right now the entire state is in a political crisis over that uncovered evidence of corruption, bribery, financing of paramilitaries that many of his weirder reports were jumped over. The Parliament is now a riot with half of the *Rebirth* party calling Pelevin a national traitor, Western agent, Papal spy, while all those “good” liberals of ours have not been spared of muddy waters!

The European Union will have to intervene as there is talk of civil war while our former countrymen too are discovering new, incredible evidence daily, of their own elite’s corrupt behavior. Crazy times!

Nobody knows who the informer is: Pelevin’s son was found dead, his *Punto* blasted with automatic weapons and his apartment ransacked. I would say half of the Inner Security officers on payroll and undercover are now searching around the country.

But I found it! Don’t ask me how I got some of the strange articles, and for my connections, it is all being monitored. Delete the files after you receive them! I will try to send you pictures at a later time. Don’t contact me; I will call you first–later–when the dust is settled.

Ha-ha! The old tales are *true*! Our old communist masters . . ! Read!

Some of those on Naked Isle were not what they appeared to be! Viktor Pelevin–you genius of discovery! Remember the closed casket funeral?

Seek me after Orthodox Easter, where the Sparrow’s nest meets the Drunken boatman!

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VIKTOR PELEVIN—On the raid on “Madam Stella”s brothel” —things suppressed by censors of OZNA and other forces, 24.11.1996. Novi Sad, Former Yugoslavia.

Whoever you are, you probably found this in my archives which I hid after many strange occurrences and uncomfortable interrogations, which I thankfully managed to endure physically sound but mentally weakened.

You probably have heard of me, and even read my articles in *The Partizan*, *Timely*, *Politika*, and others. I have proof and evidence of many corrupt practices, like what occurred after the death of Josip Broz Tito, and those backstage room-deals. That was then, this is now. Decades ago, I tried, as much as I could even under the shadow of our secret agents, to uncover the truths of our society and show them to our citizens in hope of changing society for the better. Now, everyone knows of the torture inflicted on prisoners on *Naked Isle*, that Adriatic rock, but nobody cares as the horrors of communist governing were replaced by nationalist ethno-tribal massacres, which are now all around us.

What will come out will hopefully put many people in jail, but these documents, and many others of my personal life, will be ignored, or forgotten as some sign of mental breakdown under communist torture, or perhaps mocked as sensational, dramatic writing of a once great, proud journalist. But I swear on my name: If I did not lie about those documents, and what I found, I don't lie in my personal recollections as well.

It was always hard to be a journalist in these parts, and our profession was fundamentally considered alien to our culture and kin, and perhaps for good reason, as we are not used to others violating our privacy, which became the most sacred, last shred of our dignity we wanted to keep away from the prying eyes of interrogators. But I believed I contributed

much, to our society, before the yellow press became common and vulgar. I interviewed many of our most glorious stars, like Danilo Kis, Miroslav Krleža, Ivo Andrić, even meeting Charles Bukowski in his European tour and sharing some short words which were published even after the grumbling and threats of our party for publishing *capitalist letters*. The fact I was a military man first, for a decade, helped shield me from many circumstances, and those words Tito said about "that bearded writer, Pelevin" saved me from pressure for years and I was allowed to do as I wish, relatively free after.

The changing times, and my lack of finances led me back to my old military channels, and I became a man who often followed police officers on certain raids, making my reports on the spot, using my old military credentials as I saw fit to wriggle my way into this or that operation, promising good publicity and patriotic fervor to our party and influential apparatchiks, as it actually happened many times since humanity likes nothing more than to see harsh justice enacted on those who everyone is encouraged to hate, like criminals.

I promised myself a certain friendly neutrality: I would discuss those night raids I was a part of, giving people a glimpse of the inner workings of security organs that were so enigmatic and conspiratorial before, allowing certain illumination on some of the hidden practices of our society, entertaining the public with that eternal, primordial battle of masculine, dry tyranny of laws against the feminine, damp unfettering of chaos.

The public loved it. To read about destroyed lairs of smugglers, military-style protocols observed by our officers, the closeness of stench to the clean, orderly streets above and of men fighting this eternal battle. It eclipsed for a time that dark knowledge of disappearances, silencing, we all knew but never spoke about. It lasted for a few years, but as the time passed the operations proved more and more dangerous,

the men getting shot grew, and the armaments of the criminals increased. Above that, it became clear that there were moles until we moved away from pistols to submachine guns, then machine guns and first bulletproof vests.

I spent years an armed journalist, a newspaper soldier, and our society was nearing its end. It became clear: something was rotten in Yugoslavia. Tito was dead for at least a decade already, and my old connections were retiring or disappearing. I needed a big one, one last catch before I settle down into an early retirement.

I received notice, from one of the OZNA agents, of a very enigmatic and curious place way down south, on the borders of Macedonia and Albania, right where the new state of Kosovo's borders would be. Now remember, this was when the wars were starting, so the entire southern region was in freefall, with YNA moving south, and KLA moving north, both sides going at it ferociously. However, society had to keep going and this was only the beginning, which many hoped would end with a quick suppression, like of the Hungarians, and we would move on.

It was at that point we moved south, for a certain, well-known brothel where we were to catch, "in the act," a lot of communist apparatchiks that fell out of favor. We were to catch them, plaster their images, turn away the attention from the southern rebellion, and become heroes of our Yugoslav "self-steering socialism."

We were not ready for what we encountered.

First, it was near the small town of Led, with a mixed population of Serbs, Macedonians and Albanians, hidden in one of the local outskirts, two hours from the main M1 highway. Led itself was strange, with certain joy I can't explain. While most of the society was scared of the growing ethnic wars, collapsed economy, lack of fuel, the people of Led

always found everything funny, amusing, hilarious... even when the KLA attacked and began slaughtering Serbs. Even when YNA moved in and started "arresting" Albanians—people would form mobs on the streets whistling and cheering until even guerillas and the Army started to avoid Led. Entire companies started disappearing, soldiers would come out of the woods gray-haired and mute, local villagers would sell their food farther, near Peliniv. And it all tied down, in interrogations, whispers, tank tracks, to *Madam Stella's House of Leisure*.

Called simply, "The Inn."

That was where we went. Undercover. Customers. Well, I went the others were to move in after, at night, search warrant and rifles ready. But, it was the strangest place I ever saw.

The whole place reeked of joy. It was a huge, at least five floors tall mansion, one of those communist villas, and it was a mess, with music heard at all hours, of loud, deep rhythmical drumming or something, with sounds of screaming and partying. Madam Stella herself was Romanian, and most of the girls were local and Ukrainian, Moldovan, Russian girls. You know how it was back then. But, I am telling you: they were all in some state of permanent bliss.

The place was always packed. Gunshots would be heard, and we knew KLA for some reason targeted the brothel-houses, often killing everyone inside for some reason. The bullets would echo silently, and the place would be rebuilt. Even YNA was often guilty of this, but for us, we had a simple mission, and we planned to carry it out. I went around the first floor, dining and looking around. I could not shake a certain feeling the food there was the best I ever ate, while the music was comforting and soothing, even if it was blaring so much my ears were buzzing. Madam Stella herself appeared an incredibly good-natured woman, and the girls content, happy, *proud*.

As I would go there and come back, I would notice my changes, and the farther I was, the better I felt mentally, but worse off emotionally. I felt content there. The men grew worried—I was prolonging the operation, avoiding exploring the place, hustling one of the girls with money for information, until Commander Milos Dragojevic decided it is time to strike. I was told to keep my mouth shut and follow, which i did.

It was that evening, at around 9, just when night was beginning. We stormed in our squad cars, one APC, armed and ready, yelling out: „Inner Security Police! Open the doors and do not resist!“

Nobody answered, the music was so loud. Commander looked around, and simply pointed the way, until all men were going in a line towards the doors. One strong kick, boom, yelling, shouting, grabbing people. We captured the first floor.

Yet *everyone* was laughing hysterically. The people we captured, the girls, the bouncers. Some of the men were hit in the face, others had parts of their equipment stolen by who knows who, as the entire place was pulsating by strobing, multi-colored party lights. Dragojevic frowned, looking at the staircase leading to the higher floors, quickly gave out the signals, and we were now moving up.

The things we saw! We did catch a lot of people, “on the pile,” with a bunch of naked girls and geezers we knew from our daily life. The doors would randomly open to some hellish orgy inside, or a woman caked in blood walking out, smiling hysterically. Even some of the officers started giggling, seeing the hammers laying on the floor, blood-drenched walls, old men’s cadavers rotting in piles under joking or strange messages on the walls. The second and third floors were like this, loud, bloody, and brutal.

The fourth floor was when the attacks started. Some

random door would open and one of our men would be dragged in as the door would be barricaded. We could hear signs of struggle, gurgling, wheezing. . . and a sinister little giggle. Chasing from the other end of the corridor would be people simply running into our bullets, clawing at us. And the music, God, it was giving us a strange sense of ecstasy, pleasure, and that raid just felt . . . *incredible*. It felt wonderful, even if my brain was seeing absolutely barbaric and primitive things. But in some of the rooms of the fourth floor, glimpsing as we moved to the top, I swear, things inside . . . did not appear fully earth-like. Something about the composition of folded corpses talked of an intellect, almost mathematical, certain fluids on the floors and the walls gave off a near three-dimensional depth, plasticity.

On the fifth floor, we saw them. I don't know what they are, as I saw them last . . .

It was almost impossible to concentrate due to the noise, which gave us such a devout, divine pleasure, that most of the men were breathing heavily, hitting themselves to remain sane, or slapping, pinching, stabbing their leg with the tip of the knife.

The entire upper floor pulsed and throbbed, the rooms were hellishly loud with such inhuman, orgiastic sounds and shouting we all went ice-cold. Those were not the sounds a human could ever make, no matter the pleasure, certainly no pleasure of this reality.

Commander was charging around, opening doors—I saw him in the back, protected on all sides, armed myself. The more doors he opened, more frequent and urgent his shouts became, until one door, near the last few rooms, he shrieked, and started firing.

You should have heard the roaring! Do you know what three seconds of automatic fire does to flesh? It became a massacre, but after we passed it, in the midst of shredded

human flesh, there was other, unknown matter, deep blue, and translucent, almost like jellyfish or something. Commander was now running, one room, second room, third room. Even as he was firing we could hear laughter—they were *pleased* to get shot! I know this—I know those sounds I heard. Even if Commander is now in prison, and talked about as a monster, I am telling you, what he did was right.

Because in the very last room is when reality fled. My memories of this place are fuzzy, due to the extreme sense of *horrifying* pleasure I have felt. Pleasure so deep most of the men went into some kind of shock and their skin started separating from their muscle as we clearly saw, wriggling on their bodies as they screamed from pleasure and terror.

I think she was there. Stella. I think I saw her, between the stroking of lights, flashing of gunfire, together with those things, things that were not light-strobes. How can light-strobes float in nothing? Pulsate? Have translucent tentacle things that are attached to people's heads? We could see, as the lights flashed, corporeal forms of people separating from bodies. The *skins!* Wriggling, entrapping skins containing bleeding horrified bodies within! I am only glad Commander Dragojevic never stopped firing and ordering, even as the pulses began flashing menacingly, even as the far corner of the room throbbed, producing more lights. We threw all the bombs we had—all of them. The grenades killed most of the men in front, crippling Commander permanently as he dragged himself out. The pulsing was ending, and we looked, at such sights... most officers were given mercy.

This is what I recall. We left outside, two of us. Me and Commander. And out of the woods came KLA guerillas, pointing their rifles at us, shouting in Albanian. We dropped our now empty rifles, blood-drenched and sticky, when one of their leaders looked at us, careful, coming closer, whispering on Serbo-Croatian. "Is it done? Those things—are they gone?" Commander was already gone, glass-eyed, so I said, "Yes. We

killed everyone. *Everything.*"

We burned down that manor, looking at its tall flames, and up into the sky where we could see translucent, jellyfish-like whips floating into the universe above. That KLA commander went pale and so did I, as there was no explanation for what happened, and was happening. Even YNA soldiers showed up, which were supposed to be fighting KLA and both sides came to some hidden, shadowy agreement underneath the burning fires of our nation. I was simply told, by both sides, "We need to go to Led."

We never massacred Led. Led was devoured. By madness, by orgy, by-by-*transmutation*. Above our heads floated pulsating things while we shelled the maddened town of Led, killing the things that crawled out, producing infernal screeches of pleasure and pain while their bodies emanated a glow which was sucked into the sky...

After that day, i never was the same, fearing even the smallest of pleasures thinking of where they would drag me in those moments when my rationality slumbers...

It frightens me to know that Enver Hoxha's paranoia and constant building of forts was never to battle Stalin, or Yugoslavia, but other, more unknown things making me scared to look in the sky some days, as I seem to perceive an ethereal blue glow, sensing a wave of pleasure shivering my soft, slowly peeling skin.

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E.G. Moorcraft is a scribbler of macabre tales, absurdist

satire, science-fiction vignettes and simple novellas based on the classics of American Romanticists like Edgar Allan Poe, satirical terror similar to Yevgeny Zamyatin and Franc Kafka, and other forms of experimental genre literature. He hopes to introduce a new, Eastern-European style into horror.

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