



Killing Pilgrim

Alen Mattich

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Part historical fiction, part political thriller, *Killing Pilgrim* is the second installment of the Marko della Torre series from Alen Mattich. Set during the onset of the explosive war that divided Yugoslavia in the early '90s, della Torre, nicknamed "Gringo" for his American roots, investigates government-sanctioned assassinations, but when CIA agent Rebecca Vees demands his cooperation, della Torre finds himself in the center of a very deadly international game.

Unexpectedly promoted, della Torre's new duties find him navigating checkpoints and hostile territories, underscoring the mounting tensions between the Croats and the Serbs. Awash with authenticity, fact and fiction unite around a true-life unsolved mystery that, combined with della Torre's commentary and observations, delves into the heart of the conflict, personalizing the local shootings, rampant bribery, and corruption, but also the selfless humanitarian acts that characterized this period in Croatian history.

Filled with dark humor, della Torre and his contacts entertain and lighten even the toughest spots with dry wit and pragmatism reminiscent of the rough and grizzled old-school crime-fighting motifs. The resilience and indomitable spirit shown in the face of war may inspire clinking glasses of *slivovitz* or *rakija* as della Torre moves through dangerous waters, both figurative and literal.

PALLAS GATES MCCORQUODALE (Winter 2016)

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