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PEARL-CHAIN

Characters, schemers, and extras

- Former Mayor Pearl-chain
- Her predecessor Shaver
- Her temporary successor Heavy Weight
- Current mayor Lamb
- The Queen's Commissioner Elbow
- Aldermen Creep, Silly, Cockscomb, Papapipodokoulos, and Christian
- Group leaders Woodworm (D'66), Apparatchik (PVDA) and Opportunist (VVD)
- The grand inquisitor Tall Jake of the research agency You ask, and we spin.
- Municipal secretary Wordy and director Creep Pole
- The Cluster-managers: Pimple, Tollie, and Poet
- Registrar Smoke Curtain
- Local witch and former journalist Sting
- Obsessed former journalist Tick.
- Head of Passé and Superfluous (P&O) Judas
- And many others

Foreword

Former mayor Pearl-chain came, saw, and went down completely in Gin-city, a town on the Schie, also called the Albania on the Schie because the steeled cadre of Holland's most radical socialists ruled that town for decades. Pearl-chain had been selected and parachuted in by King's Commissioner Elbow to start bringing order to this visibly neglected municipality.

She wa driven, outspokenly VVD, (too) direct, a touch arrogant, occasionally blunt, prickly, fancied herself untouchable, was a bit naive and tripped over a runner of banana peels and slander. As the great Chinese sage Lao Tse said, "people do not trip over mountains but over molehills". She was expertly filleted by Thumper, a socialist of the most wrong kind, who always wore his spouse's jumpers knitted out of boredom and his party colleague the failure-anxious and paranoia-ridden councillor Creep and Tick, the obsessed former journalist and communist cum local forum agitator in 2011.

Tick had the eyebrows of Tita Wizard and rarely have I seen such a foul face when he posted himself yet again in the public gallery of yet another court case. Clerk Smokescreen, a rancorous and frustrated apparatchik sidelined during the 2007 reorganisation, provided the necessary hand and glove services, skilfully selected repeat offender Tall Jake, shrewdly kept out other investigation agencies, unauthorized signed the investigation order and set aside the municipal procurement terms and conditions.

Smokescreen had it behind his elbows and was visibly proud of it. Tall Jake was a desk-killer of the purest kind, and he was the one who years before had given Mayor Pieper of Rotterdam a shot in the neck, NKVD-style. Smokescreen, Thumper and Creep knew that better than anyone else. All this was done under the guise of an "independent and objective" investigation into integrity. Integrity is a high good, but it can also be abused in a political snake pit, which the Juniper City Council was.

Prior to Pearl-chain's Waterloo, Tick spewed many hundreds of mostly anonymous libel messages into the ether via the local internet forum, and Goebbels already said that if you repeat lies often enough most people automatically start to believe them. Only then did I experience true power of what slander is capable of, and only then did I understand why our ancestors tongue-tied evil speakers. My ancestors were traditionally based in the Dordrecht, Rotterdam, Den Briel and Scheveningen area.

Some made it to Bailiff or even rector of the Latin school in den Briel in 1609, others had less social success and became burglars or ladies of light morals. It is with mixed feelings and after relentless hesitation that I offer you the account of a special assignment received in February 2011 that has been haunting my mind ever since. My name is Dik Momus, reporter specialising in integrity issues, working at the Maleboge's 5^e gap.

From my mother Dike, I got the talent of being able to judge justly and from my father Momus, I got the ability to put things into perspective and see serious matters through humorous glasses. The power and healing effects of humour are underestimated in today's zeitgeist. Wim Kan is no more and the satirists van Kooten and de Bie have not performed for years, while there really is plenty of satirical stuff to report on current (local) politics.

Although we also have countless different TV channels up here, just like you, the number of humorous programmes can be counted on one hand. I am happy to share the tragicomic story with you now and am elated. It feels like liberation through confession, even though I have never done so because I am not Roman Catholic but religion neutral. All my colleagues above are. Religious disputes do not occur here because unlike mortals, we do not believe but know for sure. Truth sets you free.

My report is about a recent and true queen tragedy in Gin-city, a dreary town on the Schie river where there is nothing to do and where centuries of alcohol abuse and incest have visibly taken their toll on the streets. You would not want to be found dead there. Any associations you as a reader think you can make with real people are the result of your own mind and imagination and I leave that entirely up to you and I cannot and will not accept any liability for them.

It has been my intention to keep this report as short and concise as possible and to lard it here and there with an anecdote to smoothly guide you through this modern Greek drama. Many things presented to us in the zeitgeist as right are in fact just disguises of injustice. Evil, which certainly exists, often nests itself in the shadow of good to deceive you. Not infrequently, people who revel in integrity will turn out not to be it themselves. But my boss is implacable towards them.

They will be judged as they judged others by the yardstick, they themselves used. Hypocrites will have to suffer. Those who denounce others over splinters in their eye will be charged harshly for the beam in their own eye as they sail down the river Styx on the day they are measured. The ferryman charges only two coins so your accumulated wealth will be of no use there.

I am not only religiously neutral, but also apolitical. My biggest problem is that I stupidly cannot choose politically between caricatures of society, any more than I can choose among the many political talents our country has. Having said that Mr Pechtold, you have some explaining to do above because were not you one of those for whom the integrity bar could not be set high enough?

Make no mistake and please do not put me in the camp of one Wilders because anyone who does not understand that all human beings are equal without regard to person and should be treated with respect in principle and deserve to be judged by the nature of their souls, have not understood anything about the greatest expert in the human soul. Treat another as you want to be treated. It is so simple, but so difficult for many.

Anyone who incites hatred, violence even if it is only verbal violence does not get a place in the grandstand up here. Do not get me wrong because Wilders also has some serious points that deserve respectful treatment and I consider his fervent opponents who want to put him in a bad light on improper grounds no better. Never have we in the West succeeded in giving people in Africa adequate perspective in their native land and have always robbed them.

Heartedness, modesty, frugality and not pursuing illusions such as wanting to exercise power over others, guarding against vices, insecurity and evil are important guidelines for obtaining happiness and personal development. Happiness is in the small and certainly not in excessive wealth and power accumulation. Those who have a lot also have a lot to lose, especially their souls and live in continuous fear and in a web of constraints, which feel like shackles.

The ten richest people on earth own as much as 50% of the world's population. We call them piggy banks here above. I have not experienced more unhappy and untruthful people than those driven mad by power, status, and mountains of money. It is strong legs that can carry this opulence. It goes directly against our nature as the animal species that we are. How much is your wealth worth the moment the medical specialist reports you are incurably ill?

There is no greater good than mental and physical health in combination with freedom, justice, meaning and enlightenment. You do not have to swim in money to be free, paddling is enough. My colleague Thomas can tell you much more about this. All our lives we chase illusions and stay still like a dwarf parrot when the door of our little cage is opened. Plato said it roughly 2,500 years back the one who leads us out of the dark cave of our daily existence must seriously fear for his life and that is exactly what happened over 400 years later and it would happen exactly the same way again now because most people do not want to be freed from their shackles at all and will turn against the one who takes it into his head to want to rid them of their misfortune.

Many people are hypocritical and driven by fear and greed. For instance, you will find relatively many people in churches who are not religious at all and, as mentioned above, beware of people who revel in integrity because there is a good chance, they are not themselves. The story I am reporting can best be characterised as a vulgar soap opera or, if you like, a tragicomedy with sometimes very far-reaching consequences (both positive and negative for the main characters).

As Shakespeare said, "There is a lot to do about nothing" and that might have been a better and catchy title for this report, but I too have my instructions and the freedom above is limited. Pearl-chain had made too many enemies and too few friends. In addition, she had chosen the wrong kind of enemies and, it must also be said, she also made unnecessary enemies at times.

Your enemies never sleep and will wait to strike at the right time and settle the account. In this sense, Pearl-chain was not entirely innocent, even if the allegations against her were untrue. Her unbending, headstrong and stubborn nature was a harbinger of disaster to come. Somehow, Pearl-chain imagined himself untouchable and that is often the case with people who cannot tame the horse inside themselves that we call power. Administrative pooches were blown up to insane proportions by the local media.

Before the investigation report was even completed, Pearl-chain resigned and thus forfeited any legal opportunity to seek redress in court because of the many errors in the report because this removed the so-called necessary causal link. The contention by some that this makes no difference is legally questionable. If a director could not act otherwise and had to resign before an investigation into his or her actions was completed, that is a shaky legal basis.

It was explained to her many times afterwards, but the penny never dropped, and she never seemed to have heard of proof from the absurd. Even in our country's politics, political administrators are not selected for brilliance, erudition, or intellectual baggage. There are excellent talented administrators, but also outright bruisers. The Greek sage Socrates could have said such wise things about it if he could have been among the people of Gin-city.

He then started one by asking what requirements a distiller should meet, then asked the same about a teacher before arriving at the core competencies for a mayor. Not without reason, they made him drink the poison cup in Athens because people like to spin themselves a trick and, of course, do not want to hear the truth at all. Plato recorded the wisdom from the mouth of Socrates and added much wisdom, but when he wanted to put this wisdom into practice in Syracuse, he had to flee for his life.

Read Politeia and you can save yourself studying political philosophy. Aristotle complimented the ideas of Socrates and Plato and made them more realistic and delivered a top-notch work in his masterpiece Ethics. I read that work as saying that all people have good and bad traits, and the trick is to be aware of them and further that every good trait turns out to be to your disadvantage if you go overboard. It is a lot like chemistry. It is about balance and right amounts of virtues and vices in their interrelationship.

One combination of molecules leads to the absolute condition for life, and we call water, the other combination of personality traits leads to conflict, hatred and aversion and we call negative energy. And to further complicate matters, behaviour is situationally dependent. There is chemistry between one group of individuals and allergy and aversion in another. Pearl-chain was a talented administrator, courageous, driven, and ambitious, but too much of that trait leads to hubris.

Steering for too much detail and control, which is peculiar to a perfectionist, and overreacting to trivial incidents, which in fact mattered little in the already complex political force field, eventually led to cramping and stagnation within the organisation. In the end, every single file remained on the board wing. Pearl-chain had no classical background and if the selection committee had been chaired by Aristotle, she would not have passed the balloting, but so do the bulk of our country's 400-plus other mayors.

They are mostly ribbon cutters, where any ambition to tackle potentially controversial ones has disappeared. And let us keep quiet about the quality of legions of councillors and lawmakers (forgive my poor English), also so as not to open the door to a dictatorship light wide. It is the cross many top officials must bear. Civil servants often stay and are the constant factor, politicians come and go thank God.

Democracy is by far the best and most secure form of government, which fits well with core Christian values, but we should not be blind to the weak elements of democracy, which the sages already flawlessly named 2,500 years back. Democracy does not produce the most considerable, nor does it promote an ideal environment for great minds and great achievements.

Mediocrity rules. The reader may wonder what the classics have to do with this Greek drama in Gin City. The answer is simple: after these heavyweights, nothing was ever conceived in the political philosophical field that even approached or surpassed that important level of quality. There has hardly been evolution, but regression, and while I admire the philosophers treated by Bertrand Russell, they were but bland copies of these giants.

Aristotle's chief disciple Alexander the Great had an unimaginable impact on what we now call Western civilisation. Without him, we would all be speaking Persian now and, besides, he laid the foundation of the Roman empire that lived on for 1,000 years after the fall of Rome through Byzantium. That urges can play tricks on administrators is proven by Alexander, on the one hand brilliant, extremely clever, brave and social, on the other addicted to war for war's sake and to drink combined with a latent death wish to die like Achilles at Troy, which led - and I am convinced of this - to his closest generals thinking it was time to get rid of him and poisoning him.

Nothing fever and fatal diseases at the age of thirty-three, but pure life preservation against an insane genius. Blame them. Dragging court cases that Pearl-chain pursued after her Waterloo were de facto hopeless and pointless because there is no stopping the demonising negative image-forming in the media and judges did not want to burn their fingers on it. My account highlights consequences of sordid gossip, rumours spread via a local whisper cam campaign, orgasmic slander, wild fantasies, witches and broomsticks and an unquenchable sensationalism of the vox populi as well as dealing with an integrity bureau that lacked integrity.

In fact, that agency was eviller than Rome's Holy Inquisition. That one still held tightly to regulations to protect the person under investigation from injustice. Our current legal system incorporates numerous safeguards from the Holy Inquisition. Not infrequently, an Inquisitor who flouted the rules ended up on the rack or pyre himself. The investigative method of the investigative agency that measured Pearl-chain was more akin to the game of Ball Game, deliberately omitting exculpatory evidence, greatly magnifying potentially incriminating elements, cunningly twisting the contexts of the "investigated" cases to make it appear to an unsuspecting reader to be a well-researched report, and furthermore doing everything forbidden by law and by God when it comes to honest investigations.

On me, the evidence evoked associations with the ancient practice of reading entrails. Rancorous and anonymous "witnesses" who had heard things were upgraded to "crown witnesses", coloured stories were bastardised into findings and disguised as facts and evidence. But people got away with it for a long time because the average reader is lazy easily manipulated, fooled, and sent into the woods. Besides, few really feel like delving into the tough subject matter.

Integrity is not and should never have become a commodity, and in this, our parliament has failed big time by underestimating risks of arbitrariness. Integrity is one of the hypes of our zeitgeist, appealing to the suspicious minds of many. Juicy and rancid stories score well in the revenue- and ratings-driven media. Integrity is also a perfect weapon to take out your opponent in the police arena and that function is often underplayed.

D'66 is enamoured with it for lack of substantive spearheads, and since 50% of the judiciary are now members of that party, Pearl-chain was hopeless in advance, because under no circumstances would these judges drop their pet office. It became the butt-plug of the judiciary. Integrity is surrounded by double standards. While one official gets his resignation because of a book voucher and trips over a banana peel, another gets off scot-free when he accidentally forgets to report a donated flat worth a sloppy €130,000 and takes extremely expensive completely unnecessary plane trips over Ukraine at someone else's expense.

Wilfulness is what we lawyers call it. So, should his head also be taken off? No leniency alongside consistency is far better than the current hysterical treatment of integrity issues and far preferable. Integrity is a serious subject that many talk about, but few really understand what it is about. Honesty and purity best cover the load. Elementary knowledge of what integrity or a careful integrity investigation entails in a political arena is mostly lacking, even among legislators and even some judges.

But these will mostly look wise in court and mask the fact that he or she has no clue either. Machiavelli spoke wise words about administrators and politicians. Draw your lessons from them. Politics is not what it seems, and neither is it. So be extremely careful to jump to conclusions. Integrity goes to the heart of law and justice. The founder of the Holy Inquisition in Rome one Peña, feared by friend and foe alike, would have turned in his grave if he could have witnessed the practices of investigative charlatans.

This agency spoke with double tongue, falsified the context, polished "facts and evidence" and cut them down to size to fit their frame, afterwards invented on-the-spot non-existent, let alone generally accepted norms against which fictitious behaviour was then tested, expanded the scope of the dastardly investigation when Mayor Pearl-chain threatened to escape the dance because the imputations or if you like, the charges turned out to have no meat on their bones.

All Gin-city residents and business owners were asked to report complaints about Pearl-chain (anonymously), and it looked a lot like fishing with a large net in the hope of catching something and believe me when I say few fish can escape that net.

Pearl-chain was hopeless even before the investigation had to begin. Finally, the agency played the role of a sharpshooter so that every conceivable role was mixed up and the report was well-seasoned. The email in question, which the media shielded and in which it allegedly boycotted a local contractor, turned out afterwards never to have existed. The agency itself had nothing, but really nothing to do with integrity and might have been employed by the enemy of my top boss you know that creature whose 666 is his lucky number.

This phenomenon is not entirely unknown as you also see it in abusive situations where the care of vulnerable people is entrusted to incorrupt officials or institutions. Often, power and the temptation to abuse it is the driving force of depraved and sadistic human beings. People who distrust others by default only give an insight into their own character. Sometimes "this file" felt like an evil dream to me and, although I had a foul taste in my mouth, I am forbidden to intervene in this kind of situation.

Fortuna disposes! On the one hand, which makes you feel powerless; on the other, you must recognise your superiority in Fortuna and allow yourself to be carried along with the flow of events we call life. Free will is our best cherished illusion. Life is like a spun thread that can break at any moment, and you can try your best, but God knows and disposes.

The renowned Russian writer Tolstoi once said, "history is beautiful if it were true" and he was right. According to Dostoyevsky, you cannot make a horse out of three hundred rabbits, but the agency, however, turned it into a whole zoo and speculated that people's stupidity knows no bounds and there is something in that. As Plato said, senses are imperfect, at least the interpretation of what the senses perceive and register. In our time, image has become all-determining and you can misuse that in a terrible way, and that is what this agency did. People easily deceive themselves, create their own comfortable reality, and shut themselves off from stimuli that could undermine it.

Most people by nature are lazy, cowardly, hypocritical, love double standards and my ward of the 5^e gorge of the Maleboge is increasingly struggling to find recyclable minds. Never touch people's self-created fictional comfort zone because despite your good intentions, their wrath will be your reward. From a young age, I was fascinated by the dual nature of history and my hunger for this particular knowledge was insatiable. Intuitively, I sensed that many things written in books could be wrong or that only half-truths were being told, but I did not know this for sure until I was schooled a bit in subjects such as sociology, psychology, philosophy, economics, and statistics.

I gained the unenviable ability to fathom people's motives and predict their behaviour. Human knowledge is what they call it. The only history that approaches reality is multidisciplinary history. It is characterised by a broad phenomenological method of beholding facts and (con)texts including everything between the lines. The interaction between people, with often conflicting interests, is never value-free and language certainly not. The nature of language invites lies and semantic tricks.

Read the work of renowned language philosopher Noam Chomsky and you know enough. Tall Jake was already called a purveyor of imputations in the Pieper case and knew how to twist and mould facts and loaded terms in such a way that one misplaced phrase meant your congé. As Napoleon put it through hardship, "history is written by the victors and consists mostly of myths accepted by power elites".

The defeat of Pearl-chain was total and irreparable. This report will bring some nuance to the perception of her, but that is all there is to it. Systematically, in imaging, the victors are angels of God, and the losers are servants of the devil, but unfortunately it is not that simple. I would add that official history should provide easily digestible stories and have the function of contributing to a sense of belonging, such as one people under one nation. Do not underestimate the importance of ritual dances.

In the process, painful or controversial facts and black pages are routinely omitted. What happened to the de Witt brothers, Johan van Oldenbarnevelt and Michiel Adriaanszoon de Ruyter still bothers me and has not increased my sympathy for the royal family, although Alexander and Maxima are cool stewing pears. Although many people profess the truth with their mouths, they prefer to avoid it when faced with its consequences. If there is no way out and conclusions are inevitable, they foolishly ignore these facts.

The bulk of people duck in situations like this. This account of a queen drama, which occurred in Gin-city in 2011 and continues to this day, albeit much less vehemently as interest in it wears off, is by no means world history. It is more like a vulgar out-of-control local soap opera or farce, but it does give a good insight into the sordid practices of local politics anno nowadays and maybe that is why my boss gave me that assignment back then in 2011.

One cannot sink much deeper, I think. Pearl-chain came, saw, and left by the back door, showered with pitch and feathers and, after a titanic struggle, eventually went bankrupt and completely down. As this report will show, wrongly so. Pride comes before a fall and prideful she certainly was from time to time. No one made themselves and therefore leniency in judgement is appropriate and called for.

You must be aware of your pitfalls and shortcomings, and everyone has strengths and weaknesses, as Aristotle so aptly described in his masterpiece Ethics. A personality is made up of a motley collection of traits that are mostly genetically determined. Experiences merely set accents. It is all about the right traits in the right proportions. If one is courageous then that is a virtue, if one is overconfident then it is dangerous and detrimental.

With this knowledge, you can also reason out what a good driver must meet, and that applies to all professions. Plato made an excellent attempt at this in his magisterial work *politeia*, inspired by the ideas of Socrates. The negative image of Pearl-chain is well established and, like that of Lucretia de Borgia, will live on for a long time. Lucretia, incidentally, was an extraordinarily talented woman who was married off at a very young age to a prince from Naples.

When it had to save its life for Ceasare, Lucretia's ruthless criminal brother, the prince successfully spread inky black gossip about her. Every evening, when the residents of that bustling and captivating town of Gin-city had gone under the wool around 9pm, Sting (Pearl-chain's aggrieved assistant and former journalist) would grab her broomstick and skim low over the rooftops of BK Avenue to sniff out more gossip about Pearl-chain and deposit it with her friend and former journalist Tick.

The bulk of the gossip stories promoted to "investigative items" via a said local internet forum came from her quiver and leftist extremist political splinter parties to which the council in that city was rich. Pearl-chain's house on BK avenue was a bit posh and besides, its exorbitant renovation was a slap in the face of the lumpen proletariat that was also richly represented in that city.

On the local internet forum run by Tick, the most improbable vicious stories appeared. Pearl-chain was said to have a dog that spoke French, her children had been converted by a Chinese sect, her husband started playing the violin instead of the saxophone and so on. The vox populi was under the spell of the pearl of BK Avenue. Fantasised stories were subsequently turned into facts by Tall Jake.

On the forum, the wildest Indian stories circulated at a rapid pace and councillors also actively participated in them anonymously and then, wearing their other hats, pleaded for their own scattered gossip to be thoroughly investigated. The question was asked aloud in the city council full of top brass, how long can this go on? The chickens were off the hook, the dogs barked incessantly, and the women complained that because of this stress, their wives were demanding increased sex, as much as once a month instead of once a quarter and the poor ladies were feeling totally wiped out. Pain-relieving vaginal ointment was out of the question at the Broersvest pharmacies.

Which in turn led to irritations back and forth between friends whose main occupation was gossiping. Enough was enough and the unsung members of the council immediately demanded an "independent investigation" and for this, as mentioned, the sneaky Desk-killer Tall Jake was selected. The excellent opportunity for alderman Creep, clerk Smokescreen and PVDA party chairman Apparatchik, who this time did think it was the right time to deal with their political archenemy and hornet Pearl-chain.

Six months earlier, Apparatchik had emailed in confidence (in the context of a so-called alcohol memo) that it was not the right time for a neck shot then. However, the time of pinning voodoo dolls was now over. The thwarting of a royal honour by Pearl-chain for her predecessor mayor of PVDA house Shaver, would be avenged. Axe Day had arrived. Never humiliate your enemies, karma exists!

A private dispute between Pearl-chain and a contractor close to Shaver was the perfect trigger and became her fatality. She was hopeless from the start and, in retrospect, had made it quite easy for her enemies. You should always choose your enemies deliberately and certainly not underestimate them. A driven and obsessive contractor, who set himself on fire years later because of this lingering conflict, angry neighbours combined with a vindictive confused Stingray and a sneaky Thumper is too much of a terrible thing.