

A Saudi Princess In Paris

by Hugh Fitzgerald

In France this September, [a Saudi princess had her bodyguards seize her Parisian decorator](#) simply because he took, as part of his work, a photograph of her flat. She then had him beaten and bound, threatened with death (“Kill the worthless dog!”), and forced to kiss her feet in a sign of craven submission.

Here’s what happened, according to the magazine *Le Point*:

The decorator said his terrifying ordeal started after he had taken a snap of the interior of the flat in a chic apartment block on Avenue Foch, in the affluent 16ème arrondissement, when the princess flew into a rage.

“You must kill him, this dog. He doesn’t deserve to live,” he told police she had screamed at her armed bodyguard because she thought that he had taken the picture to sell it to the press.

Guards of Saudi royals are authorised by the [French](#) interior ministry to bear arms, which is not the case for private security guards of French nationality, bar rare exceptions.

The decorator said he desperately tried to explain that he always took pictures of buildings where he conducted works to be sure to put back objects and furniture in the same place afterwards.

But the princess remained unconvinced and the decorator said her guard then punched him on the side of the head before binding his hands together.

In a fit of zeal, the guard then ordered his prisoner to “kiss the feet” of the princess. He said when he refused, the guard pointed a gun at him.

The decorator's ordeal lasted four hours. He was finally let go, and he now has brought a claim against the princess, for not paying her bill to him, for keeping his equipment, and for holding him prisoner and beating him. Meanwhile, the Saudi princess skipped town, claiming "diplomatic immunity," as so many well-off Saudi princes and princesses have done, since they are, after all, part of the vast ruling family, though their connection to actual diplomacy is non-existent.

What did this incident, that attracted a good deal of Parisian commentary, tell us? For it was not an isolated incident. There have been many cases reported in Europe (and some even in the U.S.) of royal Saudis misbehaving in extraordinary ways. Several of them have decamped from their hotels without paying their bills, though none of them lacks for money. One did so in the dead of night in Paris, along with the 60 members of her retinue, in order to avoid paying a \$7 million dollar hotel bill for 41 rooms that she had rented for six months, and to avoid paying, as well, a \$20 million dollar debt owed to a dozen luxury stores. Other Saudi princesses and princes have left without settling similar bills running into many millions, not only from hotels, but from interior decorators, limousine services, jewelry and furniture stores. And then there are more serious crimes, involving the physical abuse of their servants and employees. One Saudi prince, Saud Abdulaziz bin Nasser al Saud, was sentenced to jail in the U.K. in 2010 for the "sexually motivated killing of his Sudanese manservant," whom he beat to death after a "prolonged campaign of violence and sexual abuse" in a suite in London's Landmark Hotel. But though given a life sentence, after just three years he was released, to serve the rest of his sentence in Saudi Arabia. Just how long do you think it will be before this prince of the Al-Saud family is set free from his Saudi prison? One year? One month? And do you think he's being made to endure real prison conditions, or something more like a hotel? And when he's freed, what can the British government do about it? Nothing.

In the U.S., another Saudi prince [faced allegations](#) of having a sexual relationship with a male aide, taking cocaine and threatening to kill women who refused his advances – as well as sexually assaulting a maid at his Beverly Hills mansion. He managed to have felony charges against him dropped, and appears to have fled the country rather than face misdemeanor charges. Another example of a Saudi getting away with, if not murder, than at least serious charges, of forced sex, with several different people.

There have been other offenses, both serious and minor, involving both Saudi princes and princesses, in Paris, London, and other Western cities. One Saudi prince used his private plane to smuggle two tons of drugs out of Lebanon. Yet they have always been able either to avoid any punishment at all, or to receive surprisingly light sentences.

While travelling in Europe with their Saudi employers, domestic servants have from time to time managed to escape from them and to tell stories of barbarous mistreatment and overwork and often a failure to be paid even the pitiful sums they were promised. One can only imagine how many servants of the Saudis endure their lives as semi-slaves in Saudi Arabia – with little payment, having their passports held so that they cannot escape, subject to 18-hour work days, beaten or sexually molested or even tortured – and who, unless they travel with their Saudi masters to Europe, and manage to escape – remain largely unable to report their intolerable conditions. But even when the reports reach the West, nothing effective is done, either by the countries whose nationals are most affected (Sri Lanka, India, the Philippines, Thailand) or by Western powers, to change Saudi behavior.

What did this latest display of Saudi cruelty and arrogance in Paris signify? It reminds us that “officially” slavery came to an end in Saudi Arabia, one of the last countries to abolish it, in 1962, and only because of outside pressure, but that the mentality remains.

In Saudi Arabia still, many servants must endure treatment close to the “slave” conditions that were supposedly abolished. Slavery is bound up with, and sanctioned by, Islam. Muhammad himself owned slaves, and whatever Muhammad did remains exemplary for all Muslims for all time. For nearly 1400 years, Muslims enslaved Infidels, from the “white slaves” of Western Europe described in Giles Milton’s *White Gold*, to the slaves – that is, the Slavs – of Eastern Europe, taken by the Osmanli and Seljuk Turks, to the black Africans whom Arab slavers seized in east and central Africa. That Arab trade in Africans was the deadliest part of the African slave trade, because 7 out of 10 of those seized were young boys, intended to be used as eunuchs and therefore castrated in the jungle, where 90% of them died from the operation before they could reach, by slave coffle and dhow, the Islamic slave markets of Cairo, Baghdad, Damascus, and Istanbul. That Arab slave trade involved 17 million people, with many more victims than the slave trade that brought black Africans from West Africa to the New World, which involved an estimated 2 to 4 million Africans. Yet the Arab slave trade is hardly discussed in the West, while the Middle Passage is written about endlessly.

King Fahd expressed this mentality in 1993 when in Jeddah he famously said:

I summon my blue-eyed slaves anytime it pleases me. I command the Americans to send me their bravest soldiers to die for me. Anytime I clap my hands a stupid genie called the American ambassador appears to do my bidding. When the Americans die in my service their bodies are frozen in metal boxes by the US Embassy and American airplanes carry them away, as if they never existed. Truly, America is my favorite slave.

And it’s the same mentality that impelled the Saudi princess and her guards this September to treat this Parisian Infidel as if he were their slave, someone they could with impunity

bind and beat for four hours, command to kiss his Saudi employer's feet, and threaten to kill. Had the scene taken place in Saudi Arabia, he might well have been subject to even worse. Fortunately for him, he was in a civilized country, of which he was a citizen, and could escape with his life.

But can France remain a civilized country if it allows its citizens to be so manhandled with impunity? The Saudi Princess was allowed to claim diplomatic immunity and to leave France. She's escaped punishment, like so many other Saudis before her. Western pusillanimity simply reinforces Saudi (and Muslim) contempt for Infidels, whom the Qur'an describes in Sura 98:6 as the "most vile of creatures."

The Saudis have been getting away with murder in Western Europe because Saudi oil, and Saudi cooperation on oil policy, in the past has been deemed so important. But is Saudi oil really as important as it once was? The world has been awash in oil, including shale oil, and the Saudis have been eager to produce more oil in order to lower prices, and thus make production of that shale oil by the Americans and alternative energy sources uneconomic. The results have been dramatic. In 2015, the price of oil was down so much that the Saudis, incapable of curbing their spending, ran a \$98 billion deficit, and are likely to draw down their entire surplus of \$630 billion within a few years as the shift out of oil to renewables continues, a shift that may now be, as U. S. Secretary of Energy Moniz says, "irreversible." There is no plausible Saudi "threat" to produce less oil; that would only drive up the price of oil, ensuring that shale oil is worth producing, and certainly pushing consumers worldwide into even more rapidly embracing renewables. And the \$100-billion per year budget deficit also means the Saudis will not be the customers they have been in the past. And some of the markets where they were most important – e.g., high-end real estate in London and Paris, luxury cars and goods – are seeing Saudis being replaced by Chinese and Russians.

So there is far less reason today, than there would have been twenty years ago, to placate the Saudis by allowing them to flout Western laws.

What if, instead of permitting members of the Al-Saud family to escape from the consequences of their criminal behavior by claiming "diplomatic immunity," the French government were to have summarily denied that status, and arrested and charged the princess and her bodyguards with holding a French citizen against his will, and then binding, beating, and threatening him with death? There would be two justifications for this. One is that even if the princess invoked "diplomatic immunity," the government of France could claim that her actions fell *outside the scope of a diplomat's official functions*, and therefore diplomatic immunity did not apply. Second, when the claim of "diplomatic immunity" is based not on her actually being a diplomat at any level, but only on her being a member of the Saudi royal family, such a claim becomes absurd, especially when one considers that there are now 15,000 princes and princesses of the Al-Saud. "Diplomatic immunity" was never meant to apply to such numbers. For a very large diplomatic presence as, for example, France has in the United States, with an embassy and ten consulates, at most a hundred embassy and consulate employees might be able to legitimately claim "diplomatic immunity."

By standing up to the Saudis, who until now have treated the laws of the Infidels with indifference or contempt, the French would have set an example for the rest of Europe, signaling that the previous policy of craven obeisance was over, that the oil-rich Muslim countries no longer needed to be courted, and neither the Saudis, nor the Qataris (who ignored French laws about preserving the architectural heritage when they installed huge underground garages and elevators in 17th century Parisian houses, such as the Hotel Lambert, destroying their historical integrity), nor the Emiratis, are any longer going to be able to ignore Western laws.

Imagine the effect on Western morale if the French had prevented the Saudi princess from leaving, declared publicly that she had been denied "diplomatic immunity," and held her for investigation and trial, making clear that there was to be no return to the ill-considered policy of submission to Saudi desires and diktats.

And imagine the effect on the Saudis and other Muslim Arabs if it were no longer possible for the rich Arabs to use Western Europe as a combination luxury goods store, fun fair, and brothel, and to behave in Europe just as they liked, without suffering any consequences.

Or suppose, taking a different tack, the French government had unceremoniously booted out the princess and her retinue, and declared that none of them could ever return to France, announcing that its former indulgent policy toward "certain foreigners who have presumed on our forbearance in the past" (no need to specify, everyone will understand the Gulf Arabs are meant) was over, and that those deemed guilty of any infractions of French laws would in the future, after serving whatever prison time might be imposed, and fine paid, then be required to leave France, never to return. That is a threat that has real bite not just for Saudis, but also for others similarly situated (Kuwaitis, Qataris, Emiratis), who have cut a wide swathe in Europe without worrying overmuch about consequences. Access to Western Europe is something the rich Arabs, for all of their o'erweening arrogance, desperately desire. If you have all the money in the world, but are condemned to spend your time and money in monotonous souks and glittering shopping malls of the Gulf, life can be intolerably constrained.

What is needed is for the West to reassert itself, to become more aware of its true position of strength vis-à-vis the world of Islam, and to not allow itself to be inveigled or snookered or pressured by the rich Arabs into letting them ignore our laws. They need the West for many reasons. It is

where they can indulge their private pleasures, far from the stultifying atmosphere in Saudi Arabia and elsewhere in the Gulf. Their yachts are in the Mediterranean, their pleasure palaces in Paris and London, their villas on the French Riviera and the Costa del Sol, their Maseratis and Maybachs garaged in Zurich and Berlin, their jewelry bought at Harry Winston and Cartier in New York and Paris.

And where would the rich Arabs be if they could not count on Western medical care, whether from the doctors of Harley Street in London, or at the hospitals of Boston and New York (the niqabbed waiting rooms at many of these institutions testify to that dependence). They will always need the West. But the West no longer needs them, as we once convinced ourselves we did, because of the vast changes in energy supply and demand. As already mentioned above, more oil can be retrieved, thanks to fracking, than once thought, and there is at the same time a steady drop in oil demand, with greater use of electric cars and solar heating. Better schooled in Islam than we once were, we now realize that treating leniently those who are taught to view us as the "vilest of creatures" wins no favors, but merely confirms Muslims in their contempt and o'erweening arrogance.

Even if this particular princess got away, similar outrageous behavior by another Saudi is bound to come along soon. And this time, the French (or other Western) government should not allow any invoking of "diplomatic immunity" unless the Saudi in question really is a diplomat (and not just a member of the Al-Saud). Rather, bring that offender to trial, and if convicted, make sure he (or she) serves out the sentence in Europe, not in Saudi Arabia. This is needed to re-set relations between the civilized Western states and the uncivilized states of Dar al-Islam. The world's oil-rich Muslim states need to recognize that their former hold over the advanced West is gone.

The French might also signal their new policy by declaring

that that princess, who fled to Saudi Arabia, is forever barred from returning to France, and they might even seize her apartment, holding it for sale to satisfy a judgment likely to be won by the decorator, a judgment which, considering what happened to him, could well be substantial). And if the Saudis don't like that kind of treatment, what can they do? If they sell less oil they will lose even more market share not just to other oil producers (Iraq, Iran, American frackers), but also to the alternative sources of energy that the elon-musks of this world are making constantly cheaper and more efficient, from electric cars to [solar collectors](#).

This progress is inexorable, and there is nothing the Saudis or other Muslim oil states can do to stop it. It is up to the countries of Western Europe to show the Saudis (and other Gulf Arabs) that the days of Western deference and Arab swagger are over, beginning with an end to treating their terminally arrogant "royals" as the real thing. *La Commedia è finita!* Why not bring down this particular curtain, so that we can concentrate on what is now being performed on the main stage, for what looks like a very long run, which is to say, the Muslim invasion of Europe?

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