



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

20 October 1983

I have been asked by the Prime Minister to reply to your letter about the tragic death of your daughter, Helen. Mrs. Thatcher fully understands the anguish you and your family have suffered and has asked me to express her sympathy.

In answer to a Parliamentary Question from Mr. Cryer on 23 December 1982, the Prime Minister said that she would not institute an enquiry under the Tribunals of Enquiry (Evidence) Act 1921 into the circumstances of the death of Helen Smith. This remains the position.

Your legal advisers will no doubt have explained to you that if you have grounds for challenging the findings of the inquest held last December in Leeds, provision is made for this under Section 6 of the Coroners Act 1887. Application, citing any new evidence, may be made to the Attorney General by any person with a standing in the proceedings.

With this legal recourse open to you, Mrs. Thatcher will not, I regret, be able to discuss this matter with you.

Ronald Smith, Esq.

ALL COPIES

285



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

G.H.

19 October 1983

P.L. type letter

Prime Minister

You should know that the letter of
A.J.C. 19/10. Helen Smith is now seeking to involve
you in his case.

Content that I should reply as in
the attached draft.

Dear John,

Helen Smith

A.J.C. 20/10

/ Thank you for your letter of 13 October. I enclose a self-explanatory draft reply which you may wish to send to Mr Ron Smith.

Mr Smith seems to assume that a public enquiry will be held into the circumstances of his daughter's death. While it is open to us to give the assurance he seeks that if a public enquiry were to take place Government Departments and officials would co-operate fully, there is a real risk that Mr Smith would see in this, and put it about, that the Prime Minister had accepted the possibility of a public enquiry. The draft reply therefore makes no mention of this.

Yours ever

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

Saudi Relations Nov 79



DRAFT: ~~minute~~/letter/~~teletype~~/~~despatch~~/~~note~~

TYPE: Draft/Final 1+

FROM:

Reference

Private Secretary/Prime Minister

DEPARTMENT:

TEL. NO:

SECURITY CLASSIFICATION

TO:

Your Reference

- Top Secret
- Secret
- Confidential
- Restricted
- Unclassified

Ronald Smith Esq
 3 Esholt Avenue
 Guiseley
 Leeds
 West Yorks

Copies to:

PRIVACY MARKING

SUBJECT:

.....In Confidence

CAVEAT.....

I have been asked by the Prime Minister to reply to your letter about the tragic death of your daughter, Helen. Mrs Thatcher ^{fully understands} ~~is much aware of~~ the anguish you and your family have suffered and has asked me to express her sympathy.

In answer to a Parliamentary Question from Mr ~~Bolt~~ Cryer on 23 December 1982, the Prime Minister said that she would not institute an enquiry under the Tribunals of Enquiry (Evidence) Act 1921 into the circumstances of the death of Helen Smith. This remains the position.

Your legal advisers will no doubt have explained to you that if you have grounds for challenging the findings of the inquest held last December in Leeds, provision is made for this under Section 6 of the Coroners Act 1887. Application, citing any new evidence, may be made to the Attorney General by any person with a standing in the proceedings.

With this legal recourse open to you, Mrs Thatcher will not, I regret, be able to discuss this matter with you.

Enclosures—flag(s).....

R. Ford

19 JUL 1983



R. SMITH

PO VC 18/10
back-

13 October 1983

Helen Smith

I enclose a copy of a letter which the Prime Minister has received from the father of Helen Smith. I should be grateful for advice and a suitable draft reply by close of play on 18 October.

AK

J.E. Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office.

285

3, Esholt Avenue.,

Guiseley, Leeds.,

West Yorkshire.

Guiseley 74933.

The Prime Minister,
10, Downing Street.,
London. S.W.1.

R13

RPS

Dear Mrs Thatcher.,

I am writing to ask for your personal help in assisting me ~~in~~ in my long and painful fight to discover the full truth surrounding my daughter's death in Saudi Arabia.

Statements made both publicly and privately during the past few years have only served to reinforce my firm belief that Helen's death could in no way be described as 'accidental'.

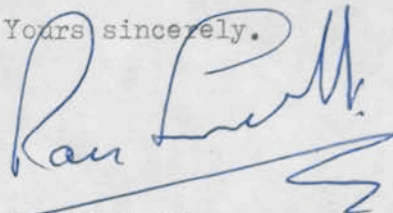
Due to the sensitive nature of Britain's relationship with Saudi Arabia at the time and the acknowledged involvement of British Foreign Office staff following my daughter's death, it has not yet been possible to stage a full public enquiry into the case.

As parents of children of a similar age I am sure we share a common bond of love and devotion towards our son's and daughters's. I will be unable to rest until the full facts of Helen's tragic death are known.

I ask you to give me a personal assurance that all government departments and officials will co-operate fully in due course when a public enquiry is staged.

I appreciate the enormous pressures the burden of office place on your time but I would be immensely grateful if at some date I could meet you to talk about my struggles to get Justice for Helen.

Yours sincerely.



Ronald Smith.

W.K.B.
CF. you have a file
12/2/11

Circular Letter

COPY

Re ; Inquest to be holden Thursday, 18th November by Coroner Philip Gill.

By devious practice, manners foul and a gross manipulation of the Laws of England and Wales, Coroner Philip S. Gill has succeeded in affecting jurisdiction at the above inquest re Helen Linda Smith.

It can be proved absolutely that Gill usurped his public office in December, 1980 and has perpetuated the cover-up re murder of Helen Smith ever since. Gill has been assisted throughout, in his endeavours to curry favour from his Whitehall Masters', by that Master of 'cover-up', The 'Blair Peach Coroner'... John W.K. Burton.

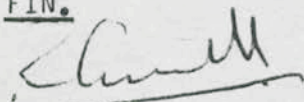
Burton is the Coroner for the West London area.

It is absolutely impossible for Gill to conduct the forthcoming inquest with fairness and impartiality , because, apart from ensuring that his Whitehall masters' are not exposed, Gill has to ensure that his own career and destiny is safeguarded.

It is confidently predicted that the inquest will be a farce, a travesty and a downright mockery of Truth, Honesty and Justice.

All and any information re indictment against Coroner Philip Gill will be supplied by me on request.

FIN.

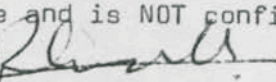


Ronald Smith.

3, Esholt Avenue,
Guiseley, Leeds.,
West Yorkshire.

Telephone..... Guiseley 74933.

PS. This letter is NOT private and is NOT confidential and can be distributed freely , with pleasure.


Ron Smith.



10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

22 November, 1982

e

Helen Smith Inquest

Thank you for your letter of 18 November. The Prime Minister has noted its contents, in particular your statement that there is no truth in the allegations made by Mr. Ron Smith that the FCO is covering up to conceal the involvement of its staff in the death of the late Helen Smith or to protect political and commercial interests in Saudi Arabia.

A. J. COLES

John Holmes, Esq.,
Foreign and Commonwealth Office

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

Prime Minister

To note.

A.J.C. 19/11

(2)



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

18 November 1982

Dear John,

Helen Smith Inquest

As you may know, a Coroner's inquest into the death of the late Helen Smith in Jeddah is to start on Thursday 18 November at Leeds. Mr Pym has asked me to draw this to the Prime Minister's attention since the inquest will undoubtedly attract a great deal of media interest. Further publicity will be given to allegations by Mr Ron Smith (supported by Private Eye and the Daily Mirror) that the FCO is covering up to conceal the involvement of its staff in the death or to protect political and commercial interests in Saudi Arabia.

There is no truth in these allegations. We have made it clear that we can have no view on how Helen Smith died. From an early stage, we have cooperated fully with the Coroner and the West Yorkshire Police. The latter have seen our files and have interviewed several of our staff. Our understanding is that they exonerated us of any involvement, though this cannot be stated publicly since their findings remain Confidential. Four members of the FCO and one MOD officer will give evidence at the inquest, at the request of the Coroner.

There is a danger to Anglo-Saudi relations. Private Eye allege that an important Saudi may have murdered Helen Smith and that Saudis may have been at the fateful party. We have seen no evidence of this, and the media do not appear to have traced the Saudi. However, it is a fact that the Saudis refused to cooperate with two West Yorkshire Policemen who visited Jeddah recently to obtain evidence. The Saudis said that they wished to avoid the precedent of re-opening the case, but there is little doubt that professional pride and fears as to the adequacy of their investigations played a part. The media could well try to make something of it. We shall watch developments closely.

Yours ever

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

A J Coles Esq
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

4 March 1982

*Copy to Mr. Ingham
Then return to me with
earlier pp. pl.*

A.F.C. 5/3

N.B. P.R.

A.F.C. 5/3

Dear John,

Helen Smith

I think that you should be aware of the latest developments in this case since the late Helen Smith's father, Mr R Smith, is likely to attract media attention once he too becomes aware of them. Unfavourable publicity may result and, given Mr Smith's style, the fact that the error was one of omission by the Saudi authorities will probably not be brought out by him.

Briefly, the background is that on 24 November 1980, we sent to Mr Smith copies of the Saudi Forensic Medical Report and Saudi Police Report, as received by our Embassy in Jeddah from the Saudi Ministry of Foreign Affairs. The Forensic Medical Report consisted of two pages.

Mr Smith telephoned Consular Department on 12 July 1981 to say that he wanted a more legible copy of another medical report (the preliminary forensic medical report) sent to him on 2 July, and a complete copy of the "full autopsy report". The Embassy in Jeddah asked the Saudi authorities for both documents on 8 August 1981.

The Saudis' reply of 31 January 1982 enclosed two medical reports in Arabic. One is a three-page version of the Forensic Medical Report. When compared with the two-page version sent to us earlier, it is now clear that a page was missing. Unfortunately the missing page was not spotted by Arabists here or in Jeddah, including an Arab doctor whom the Ambassador consulted, and presumably not by Mr Smith's translators (at either Leeds or Bradford University). The text both in Arabic and the English translation flowed without textual interruption from the bottom of page 1 to the top of page 3 (page 2 as we thought); the sub-paragraph numbers also match up (No 1 being on page 1 and No 2 being on what we now know to be page 3); and the Arabic numerals "2" and "3" differ so slightly as to be virtually indistinguishable on the poor copies transmitted by the Saudis.

/The other



The other document given to us by the Saudis was a one-page medical report, which we (and presumably Mr Smith) had not previously seen. It contains information which is included and referred to in the full Forensic Medical Report. Mr Smith may nonetheless make something of a meal of the fact that his enquiry has produced yet another hitherto unseen document, particularly since the document (and no other) has been classified as "Secret" by the Saudis.

// I enclose copies of the Arabic and English versions of the Forensic Medical Report.

We shall shortly invite Mr Smith to call on Consular Department where he will be given the newly received documents, a covering letter and explanation, and if he requests it an unofficial and informal translation of the new page.

Yours ever

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads 'John E. Holmes'.

(J E Holmes)
Private Secretary

CONFIDENTIAL

Saudi Arabia



Foreign and Commonwealth Office

London SW1A 2AH

20 October 1981

md

*Rennie Rennie
To Mr. Kirby*

(2)

Am

Dear Michael,

Gordon Kirby v. Private Eye

George Walden wrote to you on 29 August last year, setting out in broad outline what we know of the circumstances in which Helen Smith was killed in Jeddah in 1979. Helen Smith's father made various allegations at the time of her death about the FCO's handling of the case, and in particular about the conduct of Gordon Kirby, our Vice Consul in Jeddah at the time. The case now promises to attract renewed public attention as a result of Kirby's decision to sue 'Private Eye' for libel. Though the case is unlikely to reach the courts for between 18 months and two years, you may find it useful to have some further background.

Kirby decided to sue last month after the decision of the West Yorkshire coroner earlier this year not to hold an inquest on Miss Smith's death. He then asked whether the FCO would be prepared to support his action from public funds. After taking advice from the Treasury Solicitors, Lord Carrington decided that, as the circumstances leading to Mr Kirby's suit had arisen from the performance of his official duties, it would be right to refund his out of pocket expenses resulting from the action, and he was so informed on 12 October. The Treasury were also consulted and are content. The Law Officer and the Civil Service Department have been informed.

Neither we nor, at this stage, Kirby's lawyers propose to advertise the fact that the FCO are now underwriting his action. But enquiries are inevitable, and if asked, we shall say that Kirby's decision to sue "Private Eye" was his alone, and no promises of financial help were made to him beforehand. The circumstances leading to his legal action arose, however, from the performance of his official duties, and as his

/employer

M O'D B Alexander Esq
10 Downing Street

CONFIDENTIAL



employer, the FCO would not want him to face unaided the very considerable expenses that might be involved. The FCO has now therefore agreed to underwrite his out of pocket expenses arising from his legal action.

We also understand from the Home Office that the Director of Public Prosecutions has meanwhile, on his own initiative, called for the papers on the enquiry which the West Yorkshire Police conducted for the coroner before his decision not to hold an inquest.

Yours ever,

Francis Richards

(F N Richards)
Private Secretary

PS. Since this letter was dictated, I have heard that the Daily Mail Foreign Correspondent has asked a direct question on FCO financial support for Kirby's action. It has been answered on the lines predicted in the third paragraph of this letter. The news is likely to appear in the Daily Mail on 22 October.

21 OCT 1981
185 130 12
B I I 2 1
S 9 1 0 9
S 9 1 0 9

Saudi Arabia

LVO NR.274/25

HSP916/25

TO OO JEDDA

ØØ BELGRADE

GROUPS 22Ø (A)

FM CENTROFORM LDN 251653Z

UNCLASSIFIED

RETRACT 42725 SEPT

ITEM: FCO LATE SPOKESMAN 25 SEPTEMBER 198Ø

MR SMITH'S CALL

SPOKESMAN MADE THE FOLLOWING STATEMENT HIS AFTERNOON:
"MR SMITH CALLED ON MR HURD AT 3.3Ø PM THIS AFTERNOON.
THE MEETING LASTED ONE HOUR.

MR HURD POINTED OUT TO MR SMITH THAT NEITHER THE FOREIGN OFFICE NOR THE EMBASSY IN JEDDA ARE INVESTIGATING AUTHORITIES. THE CORONER IN LEEDS HAS NOW ASKED THE POLICE TO UNDERTAKE A FULL ENQUIRY INTO MISS SMITH'S DEATH. THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAVE COOPERATED FULLY IN THIS ENQUIRY, TO THE EXTENT OF BRINGING BAC TO LONDON MR KIRBY AND MR BALMER FROM THE EMBASSY IN JEDDA. WE WILL CONTINUE TO COOPERATE IN THE ENQUIRY. IF ANYONE ELSE HAS EVIDENCE WHICH IS RELEVANT TO MISS SMITH'S DEATH, IT IS THEIR CLEAR RESPONSIBILITY TO MAKE THAT EVIDENCE AVAILABLE TO THE POLICE.

AS TO THE ALLEGATIONS AGAINST MR KIRBY HIMSELF, HE HAS DENIED THESE. MR HURD EXPLAINED TO MR SMITH THAT THE FOREIGN OFFICE HAVE NO EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT ANY SUGGESTION OF MISCONDUCT BY MR KIRBY. IF MR SMITH BELIEVED THERE WAS EVIDENCE TO SUPPORT MISCONDUCT BY THE CONSULAR STAFF IN JEDDA, THEN HE COULD APPROACH THE OMBUSMAN THROUGH HIS MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT TO SEEK AN INDEPENDENT INVESTIGATION. MR HURD HAS WRITTEN TO MR SMITH'S MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, MR GILES SHAW, TO THE SAME EFFECT."

ENDS LATE SPOKESMAN

CENTROFORM LDN

NNNN

1753/25

Gnome

After a goodeal (sic) of heart-searching and burning of midnight oil the Gnome Organisation has decided, albeit reluctantly, to withdraw its demands to know the identity of the so-called Gnome "mole" who leaked top-secret information about the running of the organisation to Granada television.

It was as a result of no less than forty-nine cases in the High Court and a final historic hearing before the House of Lords earlier this month that I received full legal backing for my demand to be given the name of the informant.

Lord Denning himself has told Granada, "Whosoever ye mole shall be he is to declare himself."

At the time I stated: "It is not too much to say that unless I know the name of this person I cannot continue to remain as Chairman of the Gnome Organisation for one second longer. It is humanly impossible for me to carry out my job as Chairman or even to sleep at nights without this vital piece of information."

It has now been pointed out to me that I knew the name of the mole all along, but had forgotten it.

The person concerned in fact left the employ of the Gnome Organisation some years ago and has since died in a remote shed on the Isle of Mull where he remained for the final years of his life, a lonely tortured figure living in a state of such seclusion that he was rarely if ever seen by a single soul.

In the light of the above I am prepared to let this matter rest.

E. Strobes,
pp Lovd Gnome,
Gnome House,
London W1.

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COLOUR SECTION

As Lord Carrington flew to King Khalid's summer palace at Taif this week to seal the profitable bonds of a renewed friendship with Saudi Arabia following the *Death of a Princess* furore, the Foreign Secretary's own position at home has become decidedly precarious as evidence hardens of a massive Foreign Office cover-up concerning the death of Helen Smith.

Eye 487 revealed that Gordon Kirby, Vice-Consul at the Jeddah embassy, was a lover of Penny Arnot, wife of Richard Arnot, at whose 6th-floor flat Helen Smith met her death on 20 May 1979. Kirby was active in the cover-up.

Following publication of the *Eye* it was revealed in the *Sunday People* that a Leeds post mortem carried out by Dr Michael Green on 27 June indicated that injuries to Helen's face were consistent with "slaps with the open hand or punches with the fist".

It is now believed that the 23-year-old British nurse was raped several times before she met her death at the Arnots' party.

Surprisingly the pathologist Dr Green never thought to determine whether or not Helen had been raped.

The sequence of events on the fateful night of 19 May 1979 would appear to be that Helen Smith and Dutch sea captain Johannes Otten were caught up in a drunken orgy at the Arnots' flat. Helen, who according to her father was not averse "to a bit of fun - but she knew when to put her foot down" - drew the line at the gang-bang proposed by the drunken German divers who were present. The divers then raped her and beat her up. Later her dead or unconscious body was thrown over the balcony to look like an accident. Otten was killed because he had been a witness.

Meanwhile the official Foreign Office version of events remains that Helen Smith and Johannes Otten somehow accidentally toppled over a 3ft 6in balcony and plunged 70 feet to their deaths.

The *Eye* has now unearthed fresh evidence concerning the secret statements which Richard and Penny Arnot made to Vice-Consul Kirby after the party.

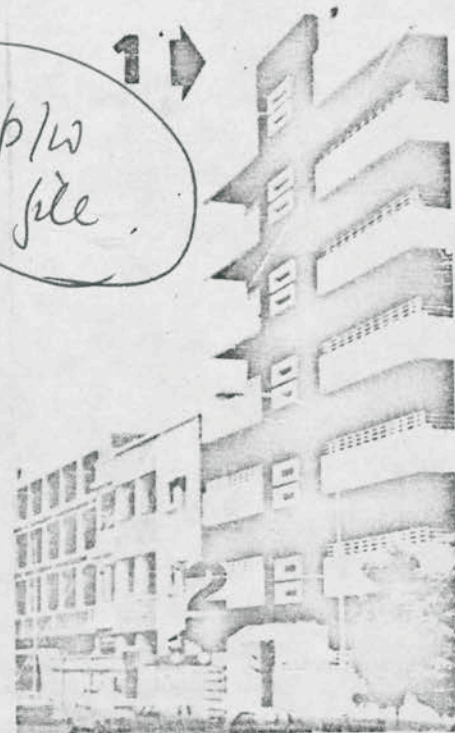
Although the Foreign Office has decreed that these statements should never be released, it emerges that Kirby discussed their contents with three members of the Baksh hospital staff at his Jeddah office a few days after the tragedy. Those present were consultant gynaecologist Frank Vernon, Irish nursing sister Mairagh Keen, and the hospital's Dutch staff catering manager, Fleming Aaen.

In her statement, according to Kirby, Penny Arnot said that by 2am only two drunken men remained in the party room, asleep on the floor. She had decided to sit up and drink coffee.

Kirby confided to the Baksh staff that there were three major discrepancies between the statement given by Richard Arnot and the one given by his wife.

The Vice-Consul added: "There are another two discrepancies and the official who was with me, and myself, are suspicious that there is more to this matter than the police evidence indicates."

In fact, between 2 and 3am on 20 May 1979 Penny Arnot was not sitting up drinking coffee. She was having sexual intercourse with Tim



1. The Arnots' balcony from which the Foreign Office says Helen Smith and Johannes Otten fell.

2. Otten was found horribly impaled on this wall. The ornate steel spikes were cemented over immediately after the tragedy. His broken watch had stopped at 3.10am. His spectacles were never found. His blood-soaked body was removed in five pieces. The remains were returned home to Holland and cremated.

Hayter, a young New Zealander for whom the party was being given. Hayter was First Mate of a deep sea salvage ship owned by Damen Marine Services of Gorinchem, Holland and was due to return home to his wife and two children in New Zealand that same day.

Penny and Hayter confessed that they had been having sex - and had been lovers for several months, with Richard Arnot's knowledge and consent - in separate written statements to the Saudis during their ensuing periods of imprisonment.

On the night of the party Richard Arnot was not drunk, as reported in our last issue. He had gone to bed around midnight, although he was woken later.

During their trial at Jeddah's Court of Serious Crimes before Sheikh Judge Ahmed Al-Amori, Penny and Hayter first denied having sex at the party, but after fierce questioning by the judge admitted it was true. It was this grave offence - lying in a Sharia Court - that earned Penny Arnot and Hayter additional 50-lash sentences. Richard Arnot was sentenced to 20 lashes for supplying alcohol, plus a year's imprisonment for allowing his wife to have inter-

course with another man. The Foreign Office has, however, consistently put it out that the 12-month sentence was for allowing Penny "to talk and dance with other men".

When Helen's father, ex-Leeds policeman Ron Smith, returned to Jeddah in June this year to continue his own investigation, he made contact with the trial judge — despite a determined attempt by the British Embassy in Jeddah to prevent a meeting. Unusually for a Saudi, Sheikh Al-Amori invited Smith to his home and spent long hours going through the evidence the former policeman had gathered.

Al-Amori told him that Richard Arnot was "the devil incarnate" and that had Penny Arnot been a Muslim she would have been stoned to death. He told Smith that as Helen's nearest male relative he must immediately and formally accuse the Arnots of murder.

When, on 17 June, Smith tried to leave Jeddah with his daughter's body — and his vital evidence — he was seized by Saudi officials at the airport, who told him a British Embassy official had telephoned to report he was leaving with photographs he had taken illegally in Jeddah. All his papers were seized.

It would appear the Embassy considered Smith would never allow Helen's body — already on the aircraft — to leave without him, and this would force Smith into departing without his murder and cover-up evidence, which could then get conveniently "lost" in Jeddah.

This plan misfired, however, when Smith refused to leave without his papers. It misfired a second time when, several hours later, Smith was summoned before the Governor of Mecca and the Deputy Minister of the Interior. The minister listened to his story, went through the evidence and — like the trial judge — told Smith he must accuse Penny and Richard Arnot of his daughter's murder. Smith then signed a document making this charge.

After Smith's return to Britain, he received a visit on 28 June at his home near Leeds from Timothy Sisley, who in May wrote a Saudi-bashing series in *The Times*. Sisley had been *The Times*'s correspondent while working in Jeddah for the English-language daily, *Arab News*. Sisley, a 25-year-old former sub-editor on the *Field*, falsely presented himself to Smith as a freelance journalist sympathetic to his cause.

Smith showed him all the evidence he had gathered against the Arnots. After listening to tape recordings and making copious notes — as well as taking a couple of snaps of Smith — Sisley departed.

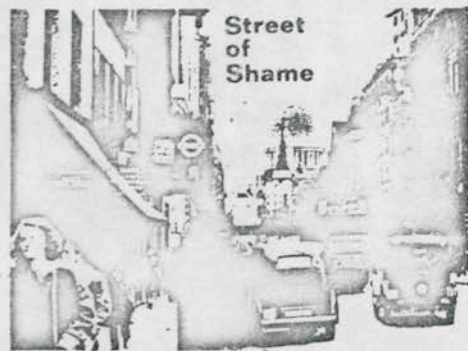
At the time of his visit Sisley was in fact engaged in ghosting a *Midnight Express*-style book for his friends the Arnots, then still in Jeddah awaiting their whackings.

Why the deception? "Because the Arnots were friends of mine," Sisley tells the *Eye* blandly. "In fact, it was more related to their being friends than to my writing a book for them. They were in a tricky situation and for their benefit I was curious to learn and tell them how Mr Smith got on on his trip."

Despite Ron Smith's murder accusation to the Saudis, the Arnots were suddenly pardoned by King Khalid and allowed to return to Britain on 8 August. Their continued presence, it was considered, was holding up the restoration of goodwill between Britain and the desert Kingdom.

Meanwhile, in Yorkshire, a police probe into Helen's mysterious death is still under way, conducted by Det. Chief Superintendent Jim Hobson, CID chief of the West Yorkshire force. Although officially acting as dogsbody for Leeds deputy coroner Milton Coverdale, Hobson will no doubt be bearing in mind the statement by Michael Meacher, Labour MP for Oldham West, that there is a *prima facie* case of foul play.

Hobson will no doubt also be aware of Section 9 of the Offences Against the Person Act of 1861, which states that any murder or manslaughter committed by any British subject outside the UK — whether within the Queen's dominions or without — may be "dealt with, inquired of, tried, determined and punished... in England".



The new official circulation figure for *Talbot!* of 135,459 shows a further disastrous slide in the sales of Sir Jams's hopeless news-magazine.

The 135,459 figure is an average covering the period January-June 1980. The current figure, on trends, therefore, can be estimated at 90-100,000.

Undeterred by this mammoth flop, Sir Jams, who is still suing *Private Eye* over his bogus circulation claims, has announced a Special 1st Anniversary Dinner at the Savoy Hotel to celebrate *Talbot!*'s first year.

For some reason Mrs Thatcher has decided to grace this ill-omened occasion with her presence, as have toadying ministers John Biffen and Michael Heseltine.

Lord Gnome dictates:

"I have heard that some of my readers have formed plans to mount an anti-*Talbot!* demonstration outside the Savoy Hotel on the night of 10 September at 7.30pm.

"Such a demonstration could well embarrass the Prime Minister as well as considerably annoy Sir James Goldsmith.

"I must ask my readers to refrain from any action which could be counterproductive. Though, I should add, I am of course powerless to prevent the type of behaviour that has been suggested."

The June issue of *Late Traveller* carried a lead article by one Robin Mead and on the same page another by him on Greece. He is given the title of 'Chairman, Guild of Travel

Writers'.

This is believed to be the same Robin Mead who wrote a travel article in the *Sunday Times* on 10 August praising the activities of a new company called — *Late Traveller*.

Executives at the *Daily Mirror* are becoming increasingly alarmed at the eccentric behaviour of editor Mike Molloy. Molloy's only interest in life appears to be the weekly poker sessions played every Tuesday night at the *Mirror* offices. These games begin after a heavy session in the *Mirror* pub — the White Hart, but known universally as 'The Stab in the Back'. When sufficiently tired and emotional the staff trek back to the *Mirror* offices to lose portions of their bloated salaries. The chief recipient of these winnings is the legendarily idle Sidney Williams. One reason for this is that Williams drinks only tonics whilst purporting to be drinking gin and tonics in 'The Stab'. Hence he manages to keep a relatively clear head while all around him are deeply emotional.

Despite the frequency of these occurrences Molloy continues to employ Williams although on more than one occasion he has fired the veteran hack on the grounds that he has won too much from him — only to reinstate Williams the next morning. On another occasion, the hapless Deputy Night News Editor, Terry O'Hanlon, was foolish enough to ring up Molloy to tell him that his wife had phoned and wanted him home. Molloy promptly fired him, along with a junior reporter Steve Atkinson who later rang up to repeat the message. Some hours later Molloy got Alan Shillum and Bill Hagerty out of bed at 3am to find out who Atkinson was and whether he could fire him or not. Both men were eventually reinstated.

The latest episode in this saga of madness concerns female reporter Christine Garbutt. Ms Garbutt is a stalwart of the Camden Labour Party and organiser of the cabaret/revue at the annual Labour Party conference. Doing some freelance work for the *Mirror*, she politely asked if she could join one of the famous poker sessions. With great male condescension the hacks allowed Ms Garbutt to join in. Two sessions later she was £1500+ richer, a sum which enabled her to wallpaper her flat and pay for a cruise to the Greek Isles. She was also given a staff job.





Mr Pattison Commissioned this piece for you in view of the intense Press interest in this case at Foreign and Commonwealth Office Present.

London SW1A 2AH

29 August 1980

July clock
29/8

Dear Mike,

Death of Miss Helen Smith in Jedda : 20 May 1979

Helen Smith, a British nurse working in Saudi Arabia, died (with a Dutchman) apparently after falling from the balcony of Dr and Mrs Arnot's flat in Jedda during a party in the early hours of 20 May 1979. Essential Facts are attached.

Mr Ronald Smith, Helen's father, has never accepted that they fell to their deaths accidentally. He claims to have evidence that the couple were murdered. He asserts that his daughter's injuries were not consistent with a fall from the sixth storey, that Embassy staff were frequent visitors to the Arnots' flat, that the Vice Consul, Mr Kirby, attended the party and was Mrs Arnot's lover, and that the FCO therefore has a motive for and in fact has been 'covering up' the truth. He has refused to accept the Saudi Police finding that no crime was involved.

Consular officials have no investigatory powers. All our information about the deaths has come orally from the Saudi authorities except that Mr Kirby, who was sent to the scene following a telephone call to the Embassy, saw the bodies in situ, and recorded the scene and his conversation with Dr and Mrs Arnot in a minute. No British Embassy staff were at the party and Mr Kirby has assured us that he had never met either Dr or Mrs Arnot before that morning.

Since returning from his first visit to Jedda in May-June 1979, where he conducted his own investigations, Mr Smith has tried with varying success to interest the press in his allegations. He refused to accept his daughter's body because (a) he would not believe the Saudi authorities' findings that her death was accidental, and (b) he hoped to encourage them to conduct a full murder enquiry having, he claims, submitted his evidence to the Saudi Embassy in London. We do not know what Mr Smith's evidence consists of; it appears to include tape recordings made in Saudi Arabia.

/Mr Smith

Mike Pattison Esq
10 Downing Street



Mr Smith returned to Jedda on 2 June 1980, ostensibly to arrange for the return of his daughter's body. Prior to his intended departure from Jedda on 18 June his luggage was searched and papers, tapes, cameras etc seized. Helen's body which was also on the flight was, however, allowed to go. Mr Smith refused to leave Saudi Arabia without his papers although he was told he was free to do so. The Saudi authorities subsequently gave him £1,000 for expenses.

There was wide British media coverage of Mr Smith's claim that the events at the airport had been inspired by the British Embassy. We have strongly denied this and the Embassy took up the question of what happened at the airport with the Saudi authorities.

The Embassy were told that the Saudi authorities reserved the right to examine any foreigner's luggage. They did not explain why they had confiscated Smith's papers, etc; they confirmed he was free to leave. His property would be returned in due course via the Saudi Embassy. He had been given money because he had claimed to be without funds. Mr Smith returned to the UK on 22 June.

Helen's body arrived in UK on 18 June. A second autopsy was carried out at Leeds on 27 June. Following receipt of the report, the Coroner (who had been given Smith's evidence) decided there were insufficient grounds to hold an inquest. He has, however, instructed the West Yorkshire police to interview everyone who might have material evidence, including 7 FCO officials. The FCO will cooperate fully in this investigation and arrangements are in hand for those officials still in Saudi Arabia to return to the UK to be interviewed. In the meanwhile the report made by Kirby (paragraph 3 above) was sent in confidence to the Leeds Coroner on 1 August.

Mr Smith had little success at first in interesting the media in his allegations after the Coroner issued his statement. But interest revived when the pathologist's report was leaked to the press and Private Eye carried a number of assertions apparently based on the Smith story.

Following the first Private Eye article, News Department successfully damped down speculation. When a second piece appeared they received a large number of requests for comment and learned that the Observer were planning to follow Private Eye in printing a major article on the subject on Sunday. Other papers have also been carrying out their own investigations (eg today's Daily Mail). The police investigation, in which FCO officials are to be interviewed, is bound to lead to more publicity and speculation.

/The point



The point had been reached where failure to deny would be taken as confirmation that the FCO had something to hide - hence the decision to place the facts and an expression of confidence in the Consular staff in Jedda on the record. (It is not, incidentally, pace today's press, unusual for the FCO to deny allegations made against officials.)

For ever
ggh

G G H Walden
(Private Secretary)

CLOSED UNDER THE
FREEDOM OF INFORMATION
ACT 2000

ESSENTIAL FACTS

DEATH OF MISS HELEN SMITH IN JEDDA: 20 MAY 1979

1. Miss Smith and a Dutchman died following fall from sixth floor balcony of Dr and Mrs Arnot's flat during party in early hours of 20 May 1979. Dr Arnot senior surgeon at Bakhsh Private Hospital, Jedda.
2. Dr and Mrs Arnot and 7 guests (1 New Zealand, 5 German, 1 French) detained during police investigation. The presence of 1 English doctor who left party early and returned to UK shortly afterwards does not seem to have become known to Saudis. Police discovered that all detainees, except Mrs Arnot, had consumed alcohol. Mrs Arnot admitted to them adultery with New Zealand guest Hayter. But later *she* retracted this admission.
3. Helen's parents divorced since daughter's death. Mr Smith

[redacted] took news badly. Visited Jedda from 25 May to 6 June 1979 conducting 'own investigation'. Recorded conversations with hospital staff containing criticisms of Arnots and Embassy. Is convinced party was orgy and death due to foul play. Has exaggerated ideas of social links between Arnots and Embassy staff and is convinced there is a conspiracy, to which Embassy is party, to conceal truth. Has attempted, with varying degrees of success, to interest media.

4. Saudi police investigation completed on 4 June 1979. Police told Embassy that they were satisfied the deaths involved no crime. Mrs Arnot released on bail 8 August, Dr Arnot 24 October. On 24 March 1980, Mrs Arnot (and Hayter) sentenced to 80 strokes of cane, (30 for alcohol offences plus 50 for making contradictory statements to

/court



court - ie about adultery); Dr Arnot to 30 strokes (for drinking) plus 12 months imprisonment - of which 5 already served - (for arranging party which resulted in two deaths, providing alcohol, and allowing his wife to talk and dance with other men). The details of sentences are based on press reports.

5. Following representations by us and New Zealand Government, Saudis indicated in May that Arnots likely soon to be expelled without further punishment.

6. Mr Smith returned to Jedda on 2 June 1980 to arrange for return of daughter's body. This he did. Intended departure on 18 June when luggage was searched and papers, tapes, cameras etc seized. Wide British media coverage of seizure and Mr Smith's claim that it was inspired by British Embassy. This has been strongly denied.

7. Saudi authorities told Embassy that they reserved the right to examine foreigner's luggage. His property would be returned in due course via the Saudi Embassy.

8. Mr Smith returned to UK on 22 June. Told press on arrival he would ask Coroner to order post mortem and hold an inquest. Post mortem held on 27 June. Found that injuries consistent with fall of 60 ft. Blows to head also noted. Coroner declined to hold inquest unless further evidence produced. Pathologists report leaked to press, carried widely, along with Pathologists statement that he could not say why victims fell.

29 August 1980



ds
cc fro

10 DOWNING STREET

From the Private Secretary

5 June 1980

*Correspondence
in Garden Rooms*

Mrs. Thatcher has asked me to thank you for your letter of 22 May about the tragic death of your sister, Helen, in Jedda last year.

The Prime Minister fully understands and sympathises with the grief and concern which Helen's death must have caused your family. The matter has been looked into carefully and the Prime Minister is satisfied that officials in the Foreign and Commonwealth Office in London and in the Embassy in Jedda have done everything they can to help your family.

Your central assertion that Helen was murdered is not shared by the Saudi authorities who told Embassy officials in Jedda in June 1979 that they were satisfied that Helen's death was accidental.

You will understand that when someone dies in a foreign country, it is for the authorities in that country to investigate and establish the cause of death. Our representatives have no standing to intervene in that process. The other points raised in your letter have already been fully answered in earlier correspondence between your family's Member of Parliament, Mr. Giles Shaw, and the Minister of State at the Foreign and Commonwealth Office, Mr. Douglas Hurd. It is difficult to believe that a meeting with the Prime Minister would serve a useful purpose. Mr. Hurd would however be glad to see you if you would like to arrange this through the Foreign Office.

I would like to take up the question of the return of Helen's body to this country. In November last year our Embassy in Jedda was told that the Saudi police were anxious to conclude the necessary arrangements. However, when this information was passed to your father, as the responsible next of kin, he told the Foreign and Commonwealth Office that he did not believe that police investigations had been concluded and was not prepared to give approval for the body to be returned to Britain.

/ He said

He said he would contact the Saudi authorities direct and the Foreign and Commonwealth Office so informed them. Since then no progress appears to have been made although we know that the Saudi police continue to be anxious to release Helen's body. This seems, therefore, to be a matter which can be resolved only by your father.

M. O'D. B. ALEXANDER

Graham Smith, Esq.,

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