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**The Falcon and the Terrorist**By [Lee Kaplan](#)[FrontPageMagazine.com](#) | **May 18, 2006**

To Arab oil sheiks falcon hunting is a passion beyond compare. Birds regularly command prices of \$25,000 and can go for as much as \$1 million. Since his youth, Alan Parrot (yes, that's really his name, pronounced *Pa Ro*) has raised and trained these birds of prey in a part of the world where many aspire to hunt bigger game—Americans and Westerners.

As a young man, Parrot was admitted to the inner circle, or *majelis*, of the late [President Sheik Zayed bin Sultan al-Nahayan](#) of the United Arab Emirates. The Emir of Abu Dhabi, Zayed treated Parrot like a son and Parrot regarded him as a second father. He credits Sheik Zayed with saving his life once after one of the Sheik's sons put out a death warrant on him for interfering with his falcon smuggling in violation of endangered species laws. Parrot's abilities with falcons, honed since he was an adolescent, led the Sheik to have him sit at his right side at inner circle meetings of his council. Over the years, Parrot even witnessed the Sheik's meetings with Yasser Arafat (who Parrot says threatened to assassinate Zayed's children if he did not donate to the PLO) and other major players in the Middle East. Treated almost as a blood member of the royal family, Parrot was given his own chauffeur-driven Mercedes and was rewarded handsomely and honored by other oil sheiks for his expertise with breeding, training and protecting the raptors, which are so highly valued in the Middle East as a sign of success and manhood.



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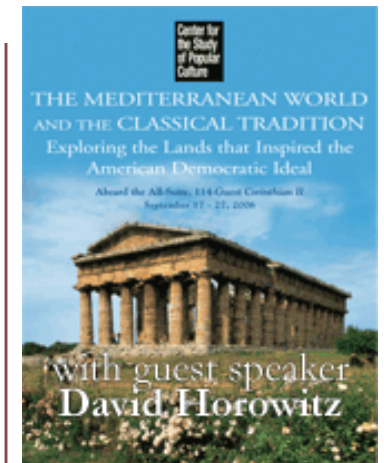
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**A multi-million dollar collection of falcons belonging to a Gulf Sheik (photo courtesy U.C.R.)**

Raising and training falcons for Arab royals is now a thing of the past for Parrot, who formed a non-profit wildlife conservation organization, the Union for the Conservation of Raptors, to stop the selling of falcons for sport. But he has maintained the contacts he established during his years with the Sheiks and believes that falconry, of all things, has become a means of supplying al Qaeda with money, vehicles, equipment, logistical support and just about anything else that it needs, often with the inadvertent complicity of the U.S. State Department.

“The Sheiks fly into falcon hunting camps in Pakistan and Afghanistan on C-130 military cargo planes filled with SUV’s, supplies and even steamer trunks full of cash,” Parrot told me. “They meet with al Qaeda leaders or bin Laden himself while in these camps and discuss their Muslim obligations and unity. When they leave, they leave all the vehicles, supplies and any other useful equipment behind as donations to al Qaeda for its efforts at jihad.”

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**A falcon hunting camp in Afghanistan (photo courtesy U.C.R.)**

Parrot, who once found himself spending nights in the home of an al Qaeda arms dealer during one of these hunting trips, adds, “Everyone remembers about the Cruise missiles fired to get bin Laden in Afghanistan after the suicide attack on the USS Cole. That was a failure, they missed and did not kill bin laden in August 1998. But the mainstream press has almost ignored how there was a botched second opportunity firing the weapon because some Sheiks from the UAE were allegedly hunting in the area.”

“The US State Department has been so busy facilitating the acquisition and distribution of endangered falcons and raptors at the behest and pleasure of Saudi and Emirate potentates that they are jeopardizing national security by not destroying the hunting camps, places that should be renamed ‘al Qaeda’s Boardrooms,’ ” Parrot charges. He told me how Prince Bandar, the former Saudi ambassador to the US, chartered a Royal Saudi Airlines jetliner and populated the first class cabin with falcons and raptors that were illegal to export from the United States. He even has a copy of the Embassy’s check paid to the US Department of Justice as a fine through Riggs Bank.

The UN, with US backing, may have passed the “Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Flora and Fauna” (CITES) Treaty, but the sheiks have consistently managed to circumvent the rules. Using oil money for bribes, they have

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kept open royal falconry camps that should have required clearance for the endangered birds. Instead of being shut down as previous U.N. controls would have done, these camps continue to operate -- harming an endangered species and lengthening the War on Terror.

Without supervision or oversight, these same falconry camps are where Osama bin Laden has made pilgrimages as a V.I.P. guest of U.S. "allies" from the Arabian Gulf. Meanwhile, officials in the US State Department do more to cover these activities up than to expose them and lose the "good will" of the Sheiks, sort of a "don't ask, don't tell" policy regarding rubbing elbows with and financing those out to destroy America.



**A typical *majelis* has falcons in it as prized possessions (Photo courtesy U.C.R.)**

"This has about as much to do with falcons, as pigskin has to do with the Super Bowl," says Parrot. "It is true that falcons are an essential component, without which, the hunting camps cease to exist. But more importantly: today's royal falconry hunting camps which operate without passport or border controls, are month-long venues for clandestine meetings between legitimate Arab leaders, and today's dark purveyors of organized terror."

On his website, Parrot has the transcripts of an interrogation of one of the al-Qaeda terrorists who was captured in Afghanistan and is currently held at Guantanamo by the US military. He points out that that terrorist on more than one occasion with his military interrogator begins to discuss falconry and the hunting camps, then the interrogator forbids him to even mention the information.

It seems the the 20<sup>th</sup> hijacker on 9/11, also known as Detainee 063, Mohammed al-Qahtani, was a falcon smuggler for six prominent UAE nationals. Of note is the fact that Al-Qahtani was also a falcon trainer for Osama bin Laden. While Mohammad

Atta, the ringleader of the 9/11 attacks, waited at Miami airport to pick him up, Al-Qahtani was prevented from entering the US by an alert customs official. He was later captured by US special forces on the battleground in Afghanistan and sent to Guantanamo. Interrogation transcripts reveal any time al-Qahtani mentions falconry or cars supplied by the U.A.E. and Saudi Arabia, he is immediately silenced by military interrogators and forbidden to mention them. "Falconry and cars are two tangible, material components that irrevocably link U.A.E. and Saudi Sheiks to Osama bin Laden," Parrot points out.



**A typical hunting falcon (photo courtesy U.C.R.)**

Parrot and his Union for the Conservation of Raptors is advocating trade sanctions on businesses and enterprises owned and directed by Sheik Mohammed al-Rashid and other U.A.E. Sheiks through Congress' [Pelly Amendment](#) for endangered species--an extraordinarily efficient punitive measure that could keep some of these birds of a feather, terrorists and falconers, from flocking together.

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Lee Kaplan is a contributor to Frontpagemag.com.

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