



**BRITAIN'S FIRST
VIRUS DEATH**
SEE PAGES 12-15



Grinning in the rain - look who's back to say goodbye

SEE PAGE THREE

SCANDAL OF PRINCESS ABDUCTED FROM UK

Dubai ruler kidnapped daughter - and ministers may have blocked police probe

MINISTERS helped a billionaire sheikh get away with the kidnap of his daughter from the streets of Britain, the High Court has heard.

The ruler of Dubai, a friend of the Queen and close UK ally, ordered henchmen to abduct

By **Sam Greenhill**
Chief Reporter

Princess Shamsa from Cambridge in 2000, a judge found.

The teenager said armed bodyguards grabbed her, injected her with sedatives and flew her to Dubai, where she is said to have been tortured. Yet when Cambridgeshire Police launched a criminal probe, it was allegedly

shut down amid 'interference' by the Labour-run Foreign Office - as a diplomatic favour.

In an astonishing ruling, Sheikh Mohammed al-Maktoum, one of the world's richest men, is today also exposed as having waged a campaign of fear against his wife, Princess Haya, who fled to Britain last year fearing that he would kill

Turn to Page 4

ABDUCTED BY THE SHEIKH

Continued from Page One

her. The court found he masterminded behaviour which, on the balance of probabilities, potentially runs 'contrary to the criminal law of England and Wales, international law and internationally accepted human rights norms'.

Now for the first time, the alleged kidnap cover-up under Tony Blair's government of 2000 can be reported. At the time, Labour was supposedly pursuing an 'ethical foreign policy'. But now it is alleged the then foreign secretary Robin Cook, who died in 2005, effectively shut down a serious criminal inquiry into a helpless 19-year-old girl's kidnapping. Shamsa had begged British detectives to save her, but they were forced to drop the case.

In an explosive ruling following a ten-month High Court child custody battle between the sheikh and Princess Haya, it can be revealed: ■ The court found the sheikh responsible for kidnapping Shamsa from Cambridge in 2000. ■ He also sent commandos to abduct another runaway daughter, Princess Latifa, during her escape bid in 2018, the court found. ■ Both princesses were locked in a Dubai palace and remain imprisoned to this day.

■ Oxford-educated Princess Haya fled with their two young children to London after discovering the truth about Shamsa and Latifa. ■ She feared her daughter Princess Jalila was being lined up for a forced marriage aged 11 to the notorious Saudi crown prince accused of killing journalist Jamal Khashoggi. ■ Sheikh Maktoum also discovered his wife was having an affair with her British bodyguard.

Today's bombshell revelations come after Sheikh Maktoum lost a desperate bid to keep the case secret. He hired eight top British QCs at enormous cost but they have not been able to stop his humiliation.

First the High Court, then the Appeal Court and then the Supreme Court all threw out his bid for secrecy, ruling the world should know what Sir Andrew McFarlane, the president of the family division of the High Court, had concluded about his 'criminal' behaviour.

In a victory for open justice, it can be revealed that the Gulf ruler's own ex-wife fought against him for the public's right to know the 'evil' secrets of the Dubai royal family.

A million Britons visit the United Arab Emirates, of which Dubai is part, each year. The 70-year-old sheikh owns Godolphin stables, a favourite of the Queen, in Newmarket, Suffolk.

'Welfare of the children'

He and Princess Haya, 45, his sixth and youngest wife, are regulars at Royal Ascot. Last April, Princess Haya fled in their private Boeing 737 to Britain with their children, Princess Jalila, 12, and Prince Zayed, eight. They are now holed up in an £85million mansion in central London. The sheikh - who is worth £14billion - launched a High Court case to demand the 'summary return' of his son and daughter, but it has backfired spectacularly, with him losing his children and his wife, and his standing as an international statesman.

Oxford-educated Princess Haya mounted her own escape from Dubai after discovering the truth about Shamsa and Latifa. Sir Andrew heard evidence from former Cambridgeshire Detective Chief Inspector David Beck who investigated Shamsa's abduction and had requested official permission to visit Dubai to interview her.

Charles Geekie, a QC for Princess Haya, told the High Court there was 'interference' in the police inquiry and 'a direct interest being expressed by the foreign secretary'. The Foreign Office has since admitted it 'does hold relevant information' on the case, but claimed it 'would be likely to prejudice relations between the UK and other states if it was disclosed'.

In his ruling, Sir Andrew said: 'The allegations that the father ordered and orchestrated the kidnap and rendition to Dubai of his daughters Shamsa and Latifa are of a very high order of seriousness. I have found he continues to maintain a regime whereby both of these young women are deprived of their liberty.'

Sir Andrew said Haya wanted him to conclude Dubai had 'made representations' to the Foreign Office 'to bring an end to the investigation' but it was not possible to prove this.

The sheikh did not appear or call any witnesses during the court case, and has not appealed against the findings. Last night he said: 'This case concerns highly personal and private matters relating to our children. The appeal was made to protect the best interests and welfare of the children. The outcome does not protect my children from media attention in the way that other children in family proceedings in the UK are protected. As a head of government, I was not able to participate in the court's fact-finding process. This has resulted in the release of a "fact-finding" judgment which inevitably only tells one side.'

Comment - Page 16



by Sam Greenhill

CHIEF REPORTER

ON a cloudless evening in April last year a luxury private jet glided in to land at Farnborough airport near London.

Her Royal Highness Haya bint al-Hussein stepped off the opulently-appointed Boeing 737 - and became the third princess to flee one of the world's richest and most powerful families.

And so far Princess Haya, the glamorous 45-year-old Oxford-educated youngest wife of the ruler of Dubai, is the only one to have successfully escaped the Arab kingdom.

Disembarking into the crisp British air after the seven-hour flight, she kept her two young children close.

By car, they were whisked into central London where, shortly before midnight, they swept through the black iron gates of an £85million mansion which she had bought in February 2018 without her husband.

The daughter of Jordan's late King Hussein, Princess Haya was quite unlike any of Sheikh al-Maktoum's five other wives.

Her mother, Queen Alia of Jordan, died in a helicopter crash when she was two, and she was sent to England to board at £30,000-a-year Badminton.

She went up to Oxford to study philosophy, politics and economics at St Hilda's College, where she met 'open-minded people who were prepared to debate anything'.

The princess competed in showjumping at the 2000 Olympics for her country and has been a goodwill ambassador for the UN world food programme.

SHE also had a fun side, confessing to a penchant for 'raunchy' Jilly Cooper novels and mixing a love of Chanel with high street clothes.

Last year the sheikh - unaware his wife was fleeing him in fear of her life - had been waiting for her and their children at his sprawling estate in Newmarket, Suffolk, one of several enormous homes the 70-year-old monarch owns in the UK. They never turned up.

The sheikh and Haya had long been a fixture in British high society and are independently both friends of the Queen.

His Godolphin stables at Newmarket are one of the world's most successful racing organisations, and she is a racehorse owner in her own right.

It only took a few hours before the sheikh twigged that his young wife - once the 'liberal face of the monarchy' in Dubai but who had drifted into an affair with her British bodyguard - had left him. Worse, she had taken their daughter Princess Jalila, then 11, and son Prince Zayed, seven.

Ensnared behind the walls of their bullet-proof mansion, Princess Haya got a cryptic message from one of her husband's associates about a wife being 'slaughtered in anger'.

It was part of a sinister 'cam-

A dramatic escape, an affair with her British bodyguard and a £5.2m battle royal

How Oxford-educated Olympic horsewoman fought all-powerful husband after fleeing to London



Affair: Princess Haya with bodyguard Russell Flowers circled

paign of fear and intimidation' the sheikh had been waging against his young wife.

The couple had 'not enjoyed an intimate relationship with each other for a significant period of time', according to yesterday's judgment, but it

was Haya's discovery of the truth about her husband's 'torture' of his two older daughters, Shamsa and Latifa, that split them apart.

Her husband - who once told her 'nothing happens here if I don't know or command it' - did

not welcome her interest in the princesses, she said. Twice she found a gun on her bed which she took as a death threat.

In early February last year, there was a chilling telephone conversation with the sheikh in which he cruelly suggested Zayed was 'a desert boy - in a few months we will take him from you, you will see'.

Then in March, he told his youngest children: 'We don't need your mum any more, do we?' The children replied: 'Yes we do', the court ruling revealed. Sheikh Maktoum responded: 'No, we don't need her'.

On March 11, a helicopter landed on Haya's lawn, and one of the security guards told Zayed: 'Bubba is angry with Momma. He is going to send her to the jail'. The princess said her young son clung to her leg with terror. It was a 'warning', the court heard.

On April 15, in 'utter terror', Haya took her children and fled to the UK in fear of her life.

Today a team of smartly-



Ascot date: The princess and Sheikh al-Maktoum were long-standing fixtures in British high society

dressed bodyguards wearing earpieces accompany her and the children everywhere, on the infrequent occasions they dare leave the safety of their mansion.

One of the former British police chiefs responsible for her protection was himself threatened by a representative of the ruler of Dubai in London. The High Court ruling

says that, despite his significant experience, the officer was 'seriously troubled and concerned about the threats'.

In public, nothing was said about the seismic rupture between two of the most powerful ruling dynasties in the Middle East and the ramifications for diplomatic relations within the region and

between Britain and the United Arab Emirates.

Less than a month after her midnight flight, the fugitive princess was meeting the Queen at Windsor Castle. A month after that, in June, it was the sheikh's turn to join Her Majesty, at Royal Ascot.

But behind the scenes, a menacing domestic drama was unfolding

Fears her daughter, 11, would be married to ruthless Saudi prince

A PRINCESS aged 11 was being lined up for a forced marriage to the notorious crown prince of Saudi Arabia, Mohammed Bin Salman, the court heard.

Known as MBS in the desert kingdom, Bin Salman allegedly ordered the murder of Washington Post journalist Jamal Khashoggi in 2018. And in January of this year, he was accused of hacking the phone of the world's richest man, Amazon owner Jeff Bezos.

Princess Jallila's father Sheikh Maktoum, the ruler of Dubai, allegedly discussed arrangements to force her into a marriage with Bin Salman in February 2019, according to her mother Princess Haya, who said it was a key reason she fled to the UK with both of her children.

Bin Salman, 34, who already has one wife, was at the centre of international outrage after he was blamed for the horrific killing of regime critic Mr Khashoggi, who was butchered inside the Saudi consulate in Istanbul in 2018.

Sheikh Maktoum strenuously denied the claims. His QC, Alex Verdan, told the court: 'None of his children have forced marriages or were betrothed at this age. There has never been such a plan, a person to whom Jallila is betrothed.'

'There have been no forced marriages. That is not what this father does with his daughters - there are about 13 of them - at this age.'

Out of caution, the High Court initially granted an interim 'forced marriage protection



Princesses: Jallila (with face pixelated) and mother Haya



Notorious: Bin Salman

order' to protect Jallila. But after months of hearings, the judge said the mother's claims were based on 'hearsay' evidence that fell short of the required standard of proof, adding: 'I do not, in the circumstances, find this allegation proved.'

as the sheikh - trained at Sandhurst-precursor Mons Officer Cadet School - sent an army of top-flight British lawyers to the Royal Courts of Justice in London to demand the 'summary return' of his children.

The millionaire princess recruited her own fearsome legal squad.

The lifting of the veil of secrecy shrouding the case means the details of the extraordinary marital feud have burst into the open.

Just as humiliatingly for the sheikh, he also now has to suffer details being made public of his young wife's extramarital affair with her British bodyguard, former infantry soldier Russell Flowers.

THAT relationship began at some stage in 2017/18, with matters coming to a head in early 2019 when Haya claims her husband phoned her and said: 'I have received bad news about you. I have heard that you are sitting in the palace with the British security (a reference to the bodyguard). I am starting to doubt you.'

Sir Andrew said in his ruling: 'The effect of this call on the mother (Haya) was chilling. She says, "I was terrified".'

After she fled to Britain she claimed her husband sent her a message saying: 'You and the children will never be safe in England.'

Haya asked the High Court for, and was granted, a 'non-molestation order' - a law designed to help victims of domestic violence.

The couple's unprecedented London court clash cost £5.2mil-

lion, it is estimated. The sheikh hired Lady Helen Ward, who handled Guy Ritchie's split from Madonna. On Princess Haya's side was Baroness Shackleton of Belgrave, who represented the Prince of Wales in his divorce from Diana, Princess of Wales.

As the case unfolded, Haya attended every hearing and did not flinch when she climbed into the witness box.

In contrast, the sheikh was desperately looking for a way out of the case he had started - and which he was rapidly losing control of.

His children were formally made wards of the court, meaning all significant decisions in their lives were now in the hands of the judge. He was apparently aghast at the prospect of being dragged into court.

As with most family court hearings, the judge wanted the father to give evidence in person. Under no circumstances, the message came back loud and clear, was this Arab statesman going to subject himself to such a spectacle.

It could not be reported at the time, but the sheikh abandoned his demand for the 'summary return' of his children.

Yet still the case went on, with Sir Andrew refusing his permission to withdraw and making clear he still had to make 'findings of fact' in order to inform future decisions about the children's welfare.

During the ensuing 'fact-finding' hearing, Haya's claims went uncontested because the sheikh's entire legal team walked out of court.

Eventually the case would backfire on the sheikh spectacularly, leading him to lose his children, his wife - and his international standing.

KIDNAPPED PRINCESSES

Snatched off a Cambridge street, drugged and flown to Dubai - one of TWO daughters sheikh abducted

By Sam Greenhill
Chief Reporter

PRINCESS Shamsa was snatched from the streets of Cambridge 20 years ago. She has not been seen in public since.

Now High Court judge Sir Andrew McFarlane has sensationally concluded that her autocratic father Sheikh al-Maktoum is keeping her captive.

It means Dubai will come under international pressure to free her and her sister Princess Latifa from their 'torture' chambers in their father's palaces.

Before going on the run herself and being captured in 2018, Latifa recorded a chilling video claiming her elder sister Shamsa was kept on medication to 'control her mind' that had 'made her like a zombie'.

She said Shamsa 'had been kept in the dark continuously for months, perhaps years. She could not open her eyes properly for a long time because she had not seen daylight for so long'. Kept prisoner in a Dubai palace, Shamsa had 'tried to kill herself many times'.

Until now, the extraordinary story of the 'zombie princess' Shamsa and her kidnap could only be pieced together from second-hand reports.

In mid-July 2000 the 'head-

'They gave me two injections'

strong' then 19-year-old princess - reportedly angry her father wouldn't let her go to university and disgusted by Dubai's human rights record - evaded high-security at her father's sprawling Longcross estate in Surrey, where the family spent most summers.

She drove her black Range Rover to the corner of the grounds and escaped through a perimeter fence on to Chobham Common, then ran off.

Staff discovered her abandoned car the next day, sparking chaos. As a search operation swung into action, the sheikh flew in from his horse racing base in Newmarket, Suffolk, to take charge.

All staff were sent out, on horseback or in cars, to search for the runaway. Nothing was found except Shamsa's discarded mobile on the common.

For a few weeks, his teenage daughter evaded capture by staying at a hostel in south London. But on August 19, her father's henchmen caught up with her outside a bar in Cambridge. The sheikh had traced



PRINCESS SHAMSA



Tortured: Princess in 2000 and, above, family's Surrey estate

her after ordering the bugging of Shamsa's friends' phones, the High Court judgment found. He had even offered a Rolex watch bribe to one.

Shamsa later wrote in a letter she apparently managed to smuggle out of captivity that 'I was caught by my father'. She wrote: 'He managed to track me down through someone I kept in touch with. He sent four Arab men to catch me.'

'They were carrying guns and threatening me. They drove me to my father's place in Newmarket - there they gave me two injections and a handful of tablets. The very next morning a helicopter came and flew me to

phone call from a British solicitor with a bizarre tale to tell.

He said he was acting for Princess Shamsa and gave details of the alleged kidnaping and how she was smuggled out of the UK.

The allegation was passed to David Beck, then detective chief inspector of Cambridge CID. 'Kidnap is a major offence,' he said. 'It's not every day that an allegation involving a head of state lands on a police officer's desk.'

Sir Andrew's ruling said Mr Beck - who gave evidence - had interviewed Shamsa's friends and many of the sheikh's staff who corroborated several aspects of the story.

At least one of those closely involved in the abduction, identified as Mohammed Al Shaibani, remains one of the sheikh's assistants to this day.

The sheikh tried to fob off police by saying his daughter

'I told you this would happen'

'felt constricted by the security arrangements that were necessarily in place around her'.

He told detectives she had gone 'missing' and they feared she had been kidnapped, adding: 'She was more vulnerable than other young women of her age because her status made her a kidnap risk. Her mother and I were extremely worried about her safety and wellbeing.'

'I emphasise that her mother and I jointly decided to organise a search for her. When she was found, I remember our feeling of overwhelming relief that she was safe and had not come to any harm.'

Sir Andrew said this statement had actually helped corroborate the allegations, especially as he confirmed the search for her.

He concluded it was true 'the father ordered the unlawful abduction of his daughter, Sheikh Shamsa, from the United Kingdom to Dubai'.

Yesterday Cambridgeshire Constabulary said: 'An investigation into the alleged abduction of Shamsa Mohammed Bin Rashid Al Maktoum in 2000 was carried out in 2001. With the evidence that was available to us this was insufficient to take any further action.'

'A review took place in 2017 and it was again concluded there was insufficient evidence to take any further action. This is no longer an active investigation and we are not in contact with the victim.'

by Richard Kay
and Sam Greenhill

ON a cold starlit night two years ago, the yacht *Nostromo* was nearing the Indian coast after a 1,500 mile journey across the Arabian Sea.

On board were the skipper, a French adventurer and sometime spy, a three-man Filipino crew and two women passengers, one a Finnish national, the other Her Highness Princess Latifa al-Maktoum.

The princess, who had hired the yacht and its captain to flee her despotic father for a new life abroad, was in her cabin below deck as the *Nostromo* slowed to five knots, the speed of a fishing boat, to lessen the risk of being spotted.

Then out of the darkness, two speedboats roared alongside. They carried 15 masked men armed with Israeli-made laser-pointed assault rifles who tossed smoke bombs and stun grenades on board before storming the vessel where they handcuffed and beat the captain, Herve Jaubert, and seized the crew at gunpoint.

They were not pirates but commandos sent to retrieve the princess, whose father was billionaire Sheikh Mohammed al-Maktoum, ruler of oil-rich Dubai and horse race-loving friend of the Royal Family. She had locked herself in her bathroom when the men smashed their way in, saying: 'Come on Latifa, let's go home. Kicking and screaming that she would rather die than go, she was hurled into one of the speedboats.'

It was the last anyone would see of the princess until December 2018 when, in an incendiary intervention, Mary Robinson, Ireland's first woman president, declared the then 33-year old was 'in the loving care' of her family.

Mrs Robinson posed for photos alongside the princess. The pictures were later released in an apparent attempt to prove that she was not

'Your father told us to beat you until we kill you'

being held against her will - although she looked withdrawn and dishevelled. Pointedly, Latifa had predicted any attempt at escape would result in sedation and claims of mental illness.

In the uproar that followed, Mrs Robinson was accused by human rights groups of being a 'willing pawn in the PR battle between the United Arab Emirates ruling family and the world'.

So what really happened to Latifa?

Her story started to be told in February 2018. In a hotel room with the curtains drawn, a young woman speaks to a camera. It is Latifa, one of the 30 children of Sheikh Mohammed by his six wives, who described her father as 'one of the most evil men in the world.' She then calmly and methodically details what life - and in particular hers - is like in money-no-object Dubai.

Her home is a palace with 100 staff and when she goes out she has a driver to take her. Her days are spent scuba diving, messing around on jet-skis and skydiving. But she was followed and watched at all times, not permitted to drive and foreign travel was unthinkable. Her passport was kept from her. Any individual freedom was erased - two of her sisters were even named Latifa, too.

In her video, Latifa labels her outwardly benign father, who often takes tea with the Queen, as a 'major criminal... responsible for a lot of deaths'. She also tells how an elder sister, Shamsa, ran away from the family while staying in Surrey and remained at large in the UK for two months before being grabbed off the street, drugged 'like a zombie' and imprisoned for eight years.

Undeterred, at 16 Latifa too tried to escape from Dubai but was caught at the Oman border. She claims she was imprisoned for more than three years, tortured by beatings and kept in solitary confinement for days on end.

'Basically, one guy was holding me while the



Yacht was stormed by commandos... but she'd left a secret bombshell video

other guy was beating me, and they did that repeatedly,' she told Tiina Jauhiainen, a Finnish woman she had befriended in Dubai, adding: 'They told me: "Your father told us to beat you until we kill you - that's his orders".'

Latifa said in the 2018 video filmed before her second escape bid: 'It was constant torture, constant torture, even when they weren't physically beating me up, they were torturing me. They would switch off all the lights. I was in solitary confinement by myself totally, and there's no windows, there's no light, so when they switched off the light, it was pitch black.'

'They would switch it off for days, so I didn't know when one day ended then the next began and then they would - they would make sounds to harass me and then they would come in the middle of the night to, pull me out of bed to beat me.'

Emirati authorities rubbish all the claims. But now the High Court has found them to be true. Then, aged 19, she was abruptly freed and allowed to hire tutors. Her affluent life resumed but her dream to

escape continued. Latifa's second breakout plot was hatched over seven years. She enlisted ex-naval officer Herve Jaubert, a former French spy who had once escaped the UAE wearing a burqa, and offered him hundreds of thousands of euros to get her out.

On February 24, 2018, Princess Latifa, then 32, and Miss Jauhiainen went to a cafe for breakfast. Latifa removed her full-length abaya robe and they drove to Oman. 'It was Latifa's first time sitting in the front of a car, so we took selfies,' Miss Jauhiainen has

'We're going to shoot your brains out'

recalled. They sailed in a dingy 16 miles off the coast of the capital Muscat, to a rendezvous at sea with the Frenchman, who was waiting with jet-skis.

Then they zoomed over the waves another 15 miles to his 100ft yacht, *Nostromo*, where his Filipino crew were waiting to sail them

over the Arabian Sea to Goa, where the princess hoped to fly to the US and claim asylum. But the sheikh's electronic snoopers were almost certainly tracking their smartphones.

'Latifa and I were in the cabin when we heard what sounded like gunfire,' recalled Miss Jauhiainen. In terror we locked ourselves in the bathroom, but the cabin started filling with smoke.'

Outside they came face to face with Indian commandos, armed with machine guns. 'I was pushed to the floor. They tied my hands behind my back and told me "Don't move or we'll shoot you".' She was marched to the outer deck, pushed over the railings towards the sea and told: 'Take your last breath. We're going to shoot your brain out.'

Miss Jauhiainen said: 'Latifa kept repeating that she was seeking political asylum, but she was taken, kicking and screaming. Her last words were: "Don't take me back - just shoot me here".'

The Finnish woman, Mr Jaubert and his crew were taken to a prison in the United Arab Emirates where they were interro-



PRINCESS LATIFA



Escape bid: The *Nostromo*, the princess (top) and Captain Jaubert

gated for hours before suddenly being released after two weeks.

The act of piracy happened in international waters, against a US-flagged yacht. The princess was flown away in a helicopter. Her Instagram account was deleted soon after. But Latifa had an insurance policy - she had made the chilling video in case she was caught, and entrusted it to a lawyer in America. Days later it was released on YouTube, where so far it has been viewed 4.2million times.

The High Court judge concluded of Latifa: 'She was plainly desperate to extricate herself from her family and prepared to undertake a dangerous mission in order to do so. I feel confident in relying upon all that Latifa has said in the video and elsewhere.'

Sheikh Maktoum told the court in a statement that she had been 'manipulated' by Mr Jaubert whose 'objective was to extort money'. He claimed: 'To this day I consider that Latifa's return to Dubai was a rescue mission.'

His ex-wife Princess Haya's legal team sought to require the sheikh to bring Shamsa and Latifa to England to be interviewed as part of the case. But he claimed they were 'adamant' they did not wish to.

The judge has now ruled: 'I do not accept that Shamsa and Latifa have been given a free choice.'

ABDUCTED BY THE SHEIKH

By Sam Greenhill
Chief Reporter

EVEN as the sheikh tried to hush up the kidnap case, his ex-wife was determined to expose the sham of Dubai's claim to be an oasis of tolerance.

Princess Haya – along with the court-appointed guardian representing their children Princess Jalila, 12, and Prince Zayed, eight – backed the Daily Mail's application to allow the public to know the full story.

In an unprecedented victory for open justice, the president of the normally-private family division of the High Court agreed to publish his damning findings.

Daily Mail media lawyer Sarah Palin, also representing The Times, The Daily Telegraph, the BBC, The Press Association, Reuters, the FT, Sky News, and The Guardian, argued that the public had a right to know as the case raised important issues as to whether the 'tolerant oasis' the UAE promotes itself as is a sham.

She said: 'There have been findings of behaviour, albeit on a civil standard of proof, which are considered



Determined: Princess Haya with her lawyer Fiona Shackleton at the High Court last week

How courts backed Mail in fight to tell ex-wife's story

criminal offences, and which took place here in England. Holding governments to account is an important function of the media.

'Reporting of the case might serve to coerce the UAE into allowing the United Nations to investigate the cases of Princess Shamsa and Latifa.'

Miss Palin said the ruler of Dubai enjoyed 'prominence and status' in Britain, where he owns property and mixes in high society as a friend of the Queen.

The sheikh 'enjoys life in our domain, benefiting from our rule of law, holding assets here, but disregarding our human rights laws,' she said. 'The public should not be misled about his behaviour.'

Charles Geekie QC, for Princess Haya, said she wanted the public to know the truth.

He added it 'is positively in the interests of the children that this material be published' because 'young people Google each other, and it is our concern that Google should lead to the right material and not the wrong material'.

Deirdre Fottrell QC, for the guardian representing the children, confirmed that it was in the young royals' interest for the judgment about their father to be published.

Desmond Browne QC, for the sheikh, opposed publication saying the resulting media storm would 'fatally undermine or sabotage' his chances of re-establishing contact with Jalila and Zayed. It would, he claimed, also 'divert' Sheikh Mohammed from trying to bring peace to the Middle East.

After losing at the High Court, the sheikh asked the Appeal Court and then the Supreme

Court to silence the case, but both turned him down.

Sir Andrew McFarlane, president of the family division of the High Court, ruled that publicising the case was 'urgent and

'I've not been able to defend myself'

pressing'. He said the sheikh had waged a 'media war' against his wife since she left him, causing more than 1,000 articles to be published about her worldwide.

The public were under a false impression about Princess Haya and it needed to be corrected, he added. 'The mother describes

her life with the children over the past nine months as being one of "solitary confinement" in which she and the children have been shunned and deserted by many, if not all, those who had, in happier times, been friends and, for the children, play companions,' Sir Andrew said.

Princess Haya had told him: 'People think that I have wronged the children and wronged Sheikh Mohammed.'

'The public narrative is of me leaving Dubai with the children, taking Sheikh Mohammed's money following an affair.'

'People do not want to be associated with us.'

'I have not been able to protect fully the children or defend

myself against the lurid reporting and character assassination.'

'People have said that they want to help and begin to ask for information about the trial.'

'When I have said the proceedings are closed and I am not able to discuss the matter, I have faced increasing hostility including from members of my own family who have accused me of not trusting them or wondering what I am hiding.'

'There is nothing I can say, and no way to explain our situation to them. My silence, and that of the children, only serves to distance them from us.'

'There is an entire year of our lives we cannot speak of.'

by Richard Pendlebury

SHEIKH Mohammed bin Rashid al-Maktoum, ruler of Dubai and prime minister of the United Arab Emirates, is a man of means. Some even suggest he is the richest man in the world.

Certainly he is in possession of several public personas.

Clad in traditional Arab robes and keffiyeh, he presents himself as the potentate of a tiny desert kingdom. Then there is the Savile Row-suited visionary who has built a 21st century city of skyscrapers not so much on sand as superlatives.

In his tweeds, whether it be on the gallops at Newmarket or his vast Scottish shooting estate, the sheikh is every inch the sophisticated European country gentleman. He is a friend of our Queen, with whom he shares a passion for expensive horse flesh.

He is a prolific, self-published poet. He is a philanthropist without equal. He wants to send an Emirati spaceship to Mars.

But yesterday's sensational evidence from a London courtroom has suggested another and altogether less flattering version of this royal chameleon – the autocratic if not abusive husband of six wives and father of more than 20 children.

For all his estimated fortune of up to £14 billion, Sheikh Mohammed has been reminded – once again – that one thing you cannot buy is a good reputation.

How badly the latest allegations of the sheikh's authoritarian approach to family life will damage his long and mutually beneficial relationship with the United Kingdom remains to be seen.

He has invested hundreds of millions of pounds in property and business interests here. He has also given huge amounts to good causes. Such figures are a measure of how far he has come from when he was a

Shadow grew over splendour and generosity

little boy, racing bareback on horses along the beach next to a Gulf fishing village called Jumeirah.

When he was born in 1949, Dubai was still a British protectorate. He was the third son of Sheikh Rashid bin Saeed al-Maktoum, Dubai's ruler from 1958 until his death in 1990.

During his father's reign the emirate was gradually modernised. This process was accelerated when in 1966 oil was discovered. Dubai began to boom. In 1968 the British withdrew from 'East of Suez' and the United Arab Emirates which included Dubai, emerged three years later.

Like many male children of Gulf rulers Sheikh Mohammed was sent to Britain for part of his education. At the age of 17 he attended the Bell Educational Trust's school in Cambridge.

Newmarket, that mecca of the horse racing world, was only a few miles away. A love affair was kindled which would eventually see the establishment of his Godolphin racing empire in the town.

In his autobiography Sheikh Mohammed recalled a frugal student existence: 'I used to eat chicken only once a week and skip lunches at times to buy coffee for my friends or, most importantly, purchase a train ticket so I could go to watch the horse races that I love.'

He then attended the Mons Officer Cadet School in Aldershot (which was closed in 1972 and its responsibilities transferred to the Royal Military Academy, Sandhurst) and passed out with the sword of honour for the best foreign student.

After pilot training in Italy he returned to the Gulf and was made head of both the police and the local defence force. When the UAE was formed he became its first Minister of Defence. His interest in

Sheikh's '£1m' prizefighter QC

THE sheikh hired 'prizefighter' top QC Lord Pannick for a bumper £1million, the Daily Mail understands.

The astonishing amount for Lord Pannick, one of the best lawyers in Britain, was agreed when he was recruited by the ruler to revive his case.

He is one of eight QCs hired by the billionaire sheikh, along

with five junior barristers and large teams of solicitors from two firms. The legal costs for all sides in the case – which has involved some 17 QCs – is estimated to be £5.2million.

Lord Pannick, described in a profile in The Times as a 'prizefighting legal titan' successfully represented businesswoman Gina Miller in

her Supreme Court challenge last year about the government's prolonged prorogation of parliament.

When asked to comment on claims that he was receiving a £1million fee, Lord Pannick said to the Mail: 'I never comment on my fees – whether what you have said is accurate or inaccurate.'



Legal titan: Lord Pannick

Poet. Country squire. Friend of the Queen. But there was one thing even a mega-rich ruler couldn't buy...

Racing-mad chameleon who's lost his biggest gamble



£385M YACHT



DUBAI PALACE

aviation saw the launch of Emirates Airways in 1985 - now one of the biggest airlines in the world. In 1995 he was made Crown Prince and de facto ruler, succeeding his brother Maktoum to the throne in 2006. By then the economic miracle that is the modern Dubai was well under way. It had taken shape under his own auspices - and tight control. If Dubai was to outlive its reliance on oil and become the business and leisure hub of the Gulf, if not the whole of the Middle East, it would have to be noticed. Sheikh Mohammed achieved this with a number of spectacular projects. There was the sail-shaped hotel Burj Al Arab, off the same Jumeirah beach where he once raced horses, described as the world's most luxurious. In 2010 he opened the Burj Khal-

ifa, the world's tallest building. The sheikh relaxed visa rules for educated Western expats and allowed the consumption of alcohol in the many resorts and hotels. This was no Saudi Arabia. As the majority shareholder of Dubai Holding - the emirate's investment vehicle - much of the income from these ventures flowed into his own coffers. He and his three brothers are said to each make \$1million (£770,000) a day from its oil wealth alone. And a considerable chunk has been invested in his lavish life in the UK. He bought the Longcross estate near Chertsey in Surrey several decades ago. It is now thought to be worth around £75million. He also owns the 63,000-acre, 30-bedroom Inverinate estate in the Scottish Highlands and an £85million townhouse in Kensington, west London. The portfolio

Floating palace: Sheikh's 500ft boat and, right, his sumptuous home in Dubai

includes horse racing operations in Ireland, the US and Australia, a £385million 500ft superyacht, a fleet of private jets, including at least one Boeing, and more than 100 supercars. Not all was conspicuous consumption. In 2007 Sheikh Mohammed announced what was then perhaps the biggest philanthropic donation in history. He would give \$10billion (£7.7billion) to set up an educational foundation named after himself. On a

smaller scale, in 2017 he gave the Cornish village of Godolphin Cross £100,000 to buy a community hall. Yet a shadow had begun to grow over this splendour, generosity and - along the tourist beaches of Dubai - superficial hedonism. A series of human rights scandals have rocked Dubai and the UAE. Homosexuality is still illegal and punished with severity. Free speech is limited and some 250,000 migrant unskilled workers are said to live in conditions which

are less than humane. The UAE has also been a major participant in the brutal war in Yemen which has killed thousands of civilians. Campaign group Human Rights Watch says any attempt to paint the UAE government as tolerant is 'laughable'. Society is patriarchal to the point of oppression. Yesterday's decision by a London court lifted the veil. For the 'world's richest man', such scrutiny is bad business.

Daily Mail

COMMENT

A craven cover-up of an outrageous crime

It sounds like the plot of a lurid crime thriller. Runaway Princess Shamsa is snatched from the streets of Cambridge by goons in the pay of her father – a fabulously wealthy Arab sheikh with links to British royalty.

She is drugged, bundled into a private jet and spirited back to the Gulf, where she is imprisoned in a palace under sedation.

Cambridgeshire police are informed of this violent kidnap but effectively blocked from investigating by our Foreign Secretary, who would rather turn a blind eye than anger the oil-rich sheikh.

By Government command, the law of the land is subsumed to political expediency. But this is not fiction. It's chilling fact.

The sheikh is Mohammed al-Maktoum, billionaire ruler of Dubai, pillar of English racing and friend of the Queen.

The Foreign Secretary was Robin Cook, ironically the architect of Tony Blair's 'ethical foreign policy'.

These shocking details unfolded in the High Court, where Sheikh Maktoum's sixth wife Haya (herself a Jordanian royal) is fighting to stop him taking their two young children back to the Gulf.

The court heard how she learned of Shamsa's captivity while in Dubai. She claims her husband subjected her to a campaign of intimidation after she inquired about it. Also fearing he wanted to marry their 11-year-old daughter to the Saudi prince accused of ordering the murder of journalist Jamal Khashoggi, she fled to Britain with both children.

This grim saga was revealed only because of the persistence of the Daily Mail and other newspapers, and a judge who believes in transparency.

If only the Foreign Office was so enlightened. It flatly refused to disclose any information to the court for fear of prejudicing relations with 'other states'.

How utterly craven. An outrageous crime was committed on British soil and cynically covered up. The public has a right to know exactly why, and by whom.

In this country, the rich and powerful are not above the law. Perhaps the Foreign Office needs reminding of that.

Is Flybe just the first?

THOUSANDS of passengers stranded, 2,400 workers unemployed and the biggest provider of flights between the regions of Britain driven out of business.

This is the fallout from the collapse of Flybe – the first corporate victim of coronavirus.

Yes, it was a weak company and had almost folded before. But plummeting passenger numbers caused by coronavirus fears certainly pushed it over the edge.

And it probably won't be the last. Flybe could yet prove to be the canary in the mine. The travel industry is especially vulnerable. But any firms relying on cash flow, especially if they have debts to service, could soon succumb.

So the Government and banks must be ready to ensure that business is supported in these fraught times, through tax breaks and credit extensions.

The demise of Flybe has dire implications for many parts of the country, particularly those which are difficult or expensive to reach by rail or road.

Boris Johnson has pledged to 'level up' the regions. Improving transport links is central to that strategy. So how can he persuade other airlines to take up these routes, so vital to local economies?

One possibility is to cut air passenger duty on internal flights, making domestic journeys more viable. Another is direct subsidy, perhaps under the existing public service obligation scheme.

Both have their difficulties. Cutting passenger duty would inflame the green lobby, while direct subsidy would be anathema to free-market Tories.

But if Boris is to keep his promise to boost Britain's 'left-behind' towns, doing nothing is not an option.

From the cradle to the grave, I've been ruled by members of the female sex... even ones with four legs

WHEN my bosses suggested I should take a leaf out of the Prime Minister's book by writing about five women who had shaped my life, I confess that my heart sank.

It wasn't that I had anything against this Sunday's International Women's Day, which prompted Boris's musings in *Grazia* magazine. I'm a huge fan of women, on the whole.

It was just that when the idea was first put to me, I couldn't for the life of me think of five women who could in any truthful way be said to have 'shaped my life'. Plenty of men, yes, but very few women.

That said, I had no problem in filling the first two places on my list, which can only go to my late mother and my wife.

After all, there's hardly a man on Earth – apart from those unlucky enough never to have known their mothers – who can deny having been hugely influenced by the love and inner strength of the woman who gave birth to him and brought him up.

As for my wife, after 40 years of marriage it would be very strange if I were to exclude her. Wives shape their husbands' lives in countless ways – rather more than vice versa, I would suggest – and my own story would certainly be very different had I never married.

Eccentric

Though I kid myself that I wear the trousers in the Utley household, the truth is that Mrs U has dictated almost every aspect of my life, from where we live and what I eat to the colour of the walls, the furniture and decoration of Utley Towers and the choice of our four boys' schools. Without her, you'd probably find me drunk under a railway bridge.

Mind you, Boris's list includes neither his mother nor either of his two wives (and counting). Indeed, the only member of his family who gets a mention is his grandmother, Irene Williams – an eccentric who lived on an Exmoor hill farm with no central heating or mains electricity, and who apparently would use a knife and fork even when eating potato crisps. Don't ask me how she managed that.

Perhaps the Prime Minister calculated, as a journalist with a lifelong mission to entertain, that it would be just too boring for readers if he were to mention anyone as obvious as his mum.

Less charitably, it occurs to me that he may have omitted his long-suffering wife of 27 years, Marina – the mother of four of his children – for fear of upsetting his soon-to-be wife Number Three.

Whatever the truth, my former colleague must forgive me if I borrow a famous phrase of his and say his list of the five women who shaped him reads to me like a 'pyramid of piffle'.

He tells us he has chosen only those women who made a personal impact on him and 'stirred my emotions'.

How, then, does the first-century Queen Boudica qualify, but not his own mother? And what on earth is Kate Bush doing on his list? True, she's a brilliantly original



singer, and we had heard nothing quite like her weird squawking before Wuthering Heights came out. But can she take credit (or blame) for making the Prime Minister what he is? I think not.

As for his other choices, I know nothing of his 42-year-old political aide Munira Mirza, or why she is on his list while Margaret Thatcher is not. Which leaves only Malala Yousafzai, the inspirational 22-year-old who won the Nobel Prize for her campaign for female education.

To be fair to Boris, I guess she rather had to be on any politician's list drawn up to celebrate International Women's Day. But what of those three empty spaces on mine?

At school, all the teachers who influenced me most were male. Not a single woman taught me at Westminster School or Cambridge University in the 1960s and 1970s (how times have changed, in these days when women are taking over the profession).

Without exception, my childhood heroes were also men: Spitfire aces such as Johnnie Johnson and Laddie Lucas, the cricketer Colin Cowdrey and (inevitably for a child of my generation) Winston Churchill.

The same is true of the great majority of writers I most admire – novelists such as Tolstoy, Fitzgerald, Wodehouse, Orwell, and Evelyn Waugh; poets such as Shakespeare, Donne, Keats and Betjeman. Notable exceptions are Jane Austen, George Eliot and the Bronte sisters, but could I put my hand on my heart and say that any of them had shaped my life?

Privilege

As for musicians, yes, I've always loved Edith Piaf, Joni Mitchell and Debbie Harry, and more recently my sons have mercilessly mocked me over my weakness for Lily Allen (not her politics, I assure you, but at least a couple of her songs).

Yet it would be absurd to pretend they were a patch on the likes of Mozart, Beethoven or Schubert – and I'd be lying if I claimed that even these classical greats had moulded the man I am.

Nor can I think of any woman who can be said to have shaped my career in journalism. True, I've had many female bosses over the past four-and-a-half

decades, but I mean no offence when I say that none has influenced me half as much as three great editors I've served – Sir John Junor, Charles Moore and Paul Dacre. All men, as you may notice.

But then slowly it dawned on me that in fact my entire life has been shaped by women – and to a far greater extent than I had acknowledged before.

Take the enormous privilege of that private education I enjoyed. Yes, almost all my teachers were male, but it was a woman who set me on the first rung of the ladder that led me to my degree and all the benefits that have flowed from it.

Her name is Pauline Wilkinson, now well into her 90s, and the third place on my list goes to her. A wartime friend of my mother's, she went on to marry the headmaster of my boarding preparatory school in Suffolk. Only long after I left did I learn that she had contributed substantially to my fees, out of her own pocket, as a hugely generous gesture of friendship to my mum.

Instinct

Without her help, my constantly hard-up parents couldn't possibly have afforded to send me to Orwell Park – and it is highly unlikely that I would have won my place at Westminster, never mind Cambridge, without the grounding I received there.

Unlike Boris, I'll risk being obvious and assign the fourth place on my list to Margaret Thatcher. This is not only because she fired my interest in politics, which led me to a job as a Parliamentary lobby correspondent, from which the rest of my career followed. Nor is it just because she saved the British economy, benefiting almost everyone of my generation and those who have come after us.

It is also because she impressed me deeply by her womanly kindness. I'm thinking particularly of the day of my father's funeral (he was one of her speech-writers) when she arrived at the church an hour before anyone else and sat alone in her pew. The priest was horrified, thinking she'd been given the wrong time.

'No,' she told him. 'I wanted to arrive early so that I wouldn't upstage the widow.' Who but a woman would have thought of that?

But then Mrs Thatcher often showed similar consideration for others. Take the famous story of the dinner at Chequers, where a waitress dropped a bowl full of scalding soup into the lap of the then Chancellor, Sir Geoffrey Howe. Mrs Thatcher leapt up from her seat to comfort... not Sir Geoffrey, but the waitress! With her sure woman's instinct, she knew who in that room was suffering most – and it wasn't the Chancellor.

As for the final place on my list, you may think me facetious when I nominate Minnie, our Jack Russell/Dachshund cross. All right, she's not strictly speaking a woman. But it's no exaggeration to say that since my semi-retirement, almost my entire life has revolved around her constant demands for long walks and attention.

From cradle to dotage, I've been ruled by members of the female sex. Boris, watch out! They're brilliant at getting their way.