

by Justin Raimondo

The Sibel Edmonds Story

Sibel Edmonds is a former translator for the FBI—and she's a tease. And I don't just mean the seductive allure of her dark good looks. For years, she's been hinting at the vastness of the story she's been sitting on, letting it out in dribs and drabs, like Chinese water torture. But now, at last, she's come out with it—and she's naming names.

Five days after September 11, Edmonds was hired by the FBI to translate Turkish and Farsi intercepts—recordings of chatter between alleged Turkish agents and their American collaborators. There was just one problem: One of her coworkers turned out to be a member of the very organization whose office was being bugged by the feds. This organization, according to Edmonds, was a veritable conduit of corruption, paying out bribes to government officials (including a highly placed State Department official) and members of Congress in exchange for access to top-secret information, illicit weapons sales, and—horrifically, in this age of terrorism—nuclear technology. This coworker and her husband, a U.S. military officer, attempted to recruit Edmonds into their cabal; Edmonds refused and went straight to her supervisors. Instead of investigating these serious charges, they responded by getting rid of her.

She appealed her termination and gained some congressional allies: Senators Charles Grassley and Patrick Leahy have backed her up, and a Department of Justice inspector general reported that her allegations are not only “serious” but “credible” and “warrant a thorough and careful review by the FBI.” That review was not forthcoming. Instead, then-attorney general John Ashcroft stepped in, and declared the whole matter was a “state secret.” Edmonds was slapped with a gag order. That, however, didn't stop her from talking, albeit rather more obliquely. Now, however, she's told her story, or at least the outlines of it,

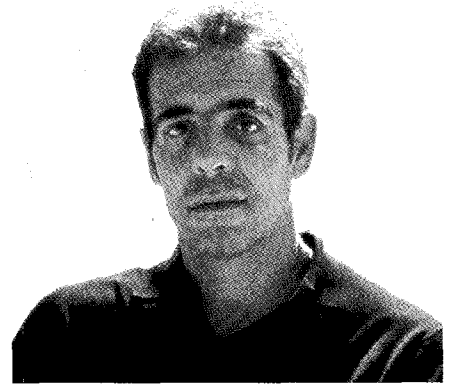
in an interview in *The American Conservative* with Philip Giraldi, a former CIA officer now with Cannistraro Associates.

Among her explosive statements is her allegation that a Turkish-Israeli joint intelligence operation exists, which has agents planted in every major nuclear facility in the United States and operates a black-market auction of nuclear secrets and technology. The bidders are not only government entities, such as the Turkish government and the Israelis, but private individuals: rich Saudi businessmen, the Turkish mafia, and other organizations that may be fronts for foreign intelligence operations.

These agents have penetrated the U.S. Congress through bribery and blackmail. Cash payments and the secret videotaping of an Illinois Democratic congresswoman engaged in a lesbian affair with one of their Turkish operatives was no doubt enough to convince Rep. Jan Schakowsky to go along with whatever plans they had for her.

This cabal was also responsible for outing the now-famous Brewster-Jenning outfit—a CIA front, headed up by then-CIA agent Valerie Plame, that was set up to investigate and put a stop to nuclear proliferation, i.e. precisely the sorts of activities that were (and presumably still are) the lifeblood of the cabal.

Marc Grossman, a former U.S. ambassador to Turkey and later the third-highest-ranking State Department official, appeared on the FBI's radar early on, while he was still resident in Turkey, on account of his apparent connections with the Turkish mafia as well as Turkish and Israeli government operatives. He was recalled from Ankara when his participation in a scandal involving his mafia friends threatened to expose his activities to public view. Returning to Washington, Grossman was rewarded with the



position of director general of the Foreign Service and director of human resources. The top office responsible for hiring and firing in the State Department is an ideal position for a foreign agent to hold.

With the FBI on the other end, and Edmonds translating his conversations, Grossman handed out American secrets to his Turkish and Israeli clients and sold other tidbits to whatever foreign entities were interested. He also actively assisted the efforts of foreign agents to infiltrate U.S. government labs and other defense facilities, including Sandia and Los Alamos, by granting security clearances. The “seeds” were graduate students recruited by a professor at MIT, who provided lists of compliant candidates who met the technical qualifications. They were paid less than \$5,000 for information that would later be auctioned off to the Saudis, or some other interested party, for a hundred times that amount.

Grossman himself was the recipient of large sums of money for his role as the biggest spider in that particular web: Edmonds recalls the time Grossman sent a State Department employee to pick up \$14,000 in a brown paper bag—payment for services rendered.

Edmonds avers that “the top person obtaining classified information was Congressman Tom Lantos.” The late Democratic congressman from California, known as the most vociferously pro-Israel voice in Congress, allegedly worked through his aide, Alan Makovsky, whose other employer was the American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC). Lantos is said to

have passed on “highly classified documents” to his AIPAC associates that somehow made their way to Israel.

All sorts of intelligence was handed out in this manner, including technical nuclear data, conventional-weapons research, and policy-related materials, and Lantos (Edmonds claims) was far from alone. Other alleged members of the congressional fifth column include Dennis Hastert (formerly the Republican speaker of the house, and now a registered lobbyist for the Turkish government), Bob Livingston, and Dan Burton.

Up to this point, the counterintelligence unit of the FBI had been mainly concerned with the corruption of Congress, but the widening net of contacts—whose conversations with the principals were translated and transcribed by Edmonds—led them to Grossman, Richard Perle, and Douglas Feith. That’s when the Department of Justice stepped in and tried to limit the scope of the probe to members of Congress. The FBI, however, pressed onward—and what they uncovered was a wriggling mass of treachery and treason, and on such a scale that it seems as if the entire U.S. government is rotten with it.

The Monica Lewinsky brouhaha put the investigation on the back burner, but the FBI kept track of the principals and, at one point, directly wiretapped the congressmen involved, as well as Grossman. When the Department of Justice found out about this, however, the whole thing was quashed—except in Chicago, where the G-men were conducting a separate investigation. Chicago, it appears, is living up to its reputation as the most corrupt city in the country: It was there that the cabal conducted much of its business.

If you were thinking that there had to be an Al Qaeda terrorism-related aspect to this, you’d be right. According to Edmonds, she translated intercepted conversations that indicated cooperation between “the mujahideen” and various Bin Ladens—plural, not singular—who “were going on private jets to Azerbaijan and Tajikistan. The Turkish ambassador in Azerbaijan worked with them.” These

activities—involving an operation in Central Asia—occurred


under our management. Marc Grossman was leading it, 100 percent, bringing people from East Turkestan into Kyrgyzstan, from Kyrgyzstan to Azerbaijan, from Azerbaijan some of them were being channeled to Chechnya, some of them were being channeled to Bosnia. From Turkey, they were putting all these bin Ladens on NATO planes. People and weapons went one way, drugs came back.

In short, Edmonds claims the cabal ran a drug operation stretching from the wilds of Central Asia to Europe, the United Kingdom, and the United States:

A lot of the drugs were going to Belgium with NATO planes. After that, they went to the UK, and a lot came to the U.S. via military planes to distribution

centers in Chicago and Paterson, New Jersey. Turkish diplomats who would never be searched were coming with suitcases of heroin.

Here is a covert network in the United States vacuuming up nuclear-related intelligence and—who knows?—perhaps even fissile materials, allied in some sense with the perpetrators of the September 11 terrorist attacks. If Sibel Edmonds is telling the truth, it is hardly fantastic to suggest that this coalition of the corrupt could be facilitating the creation of a “dirty bomb” right here in our midst. If that doesn’t send a chill up and down your spine, then nothing will.

If Sibel Edmonds is lying, the victim of her own delusions, then why did the U.S. attorney general twice invoke the “state secrets” privilege and have her gagged? That she is speaking out now, at considerable risk to herself, represents perhaps the one last chance we have to save ourselves. 

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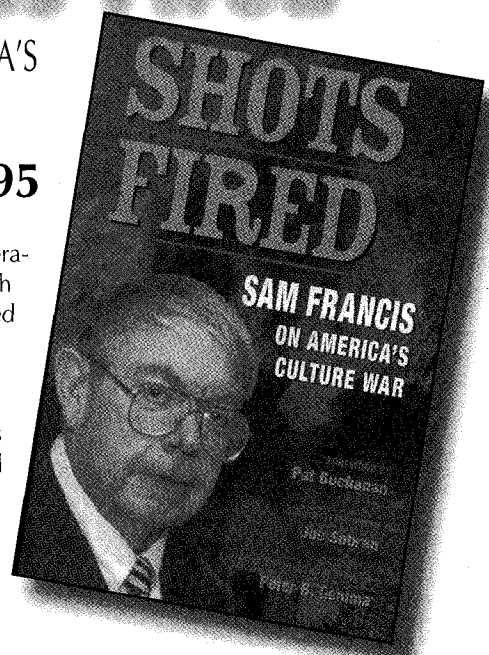
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Crazy Russian No More

A quarter of a century ago, when I started writing for this magazine, I was *the* Russian. Along with the sense of exclusivity it afforded, that simple tag gave its owner a clear run through the 1980's and 90's on both sides of the Atlantic. I was the only Russian in any crowd, whether as taciturn as the Scotch-drenched habitués of a club in St. James's or as boisterous as the desert sheiks losing their camels in a casino in Curzon Street. I had gone to Yale, retched with the best of them in the Rockingham, reviewed books for the *Wall Street Journal*, published English poems in *Encounter*, drunk *ombre* with descendants of Venetian doges, eaten macaroni with Sicilian gangsters, argued about communism with Taki, and eavesdropped on Russian hookers who had been working Chelsea long before the first New Russian businessman dipped his as-yet-unmanicured toe in the Thames.

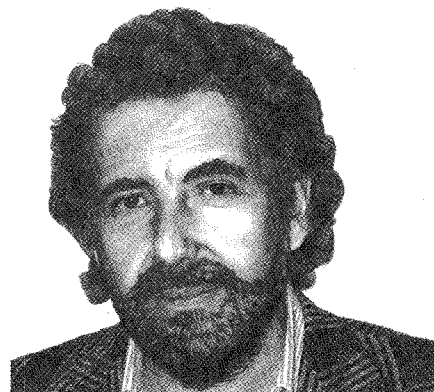
At least as far as social life went, in the new millennium my easy eminence began to totter. Chelsea had become a household Russian word. The fashion model Natalia Vodyanova had become a lady. Evgeny Lebedev had been launched as the Russian face of the British glossy *Tatler*, and reciprocated by launching Geordie Greig as the English face of the London *Evening Standard*, which his dad had bought from Lord Rothermere of the *Mail*. Through circumstances over which she had not had much control—such as acquaintance with Roman Abramovich—a fair maid by the name of Dasha Zhukova became a hotly discussed patroness of the arts. The Criterion restaurant in Piccadilly, where Dr. Watson first came across Sherlock Holmes, was in Russian hands. Olga Kurylenko was on every Englishman's salivating tongue.

A new hybrid was in evidence, and members of this mutant breed could condescend to the New Russians of old as much as I ever did. Miss Zhu-

kova's father, in whose company I often caroused when Aleksandr Zhukov was based in London in the late 1990's, was a classic example of the old species, making up with ursine gregariousness what he lacked in gentility and sophistication. To Western eyes, those old New Russians were uncouth. Their wives or mistresses might tell a Kelly from a Birkin, but the men spoke no European languages and only a mangled English, and when they mentioned Harrods you could have sworn they meant the bloke in Judea who had upset all the parents.

Now at last the new hybrid has been given an official appellation, courtesy of a monumental multimedia juggernaut financed by the richest of the *Forbes* rich in Russia, Mikhail Prokhorov, and managed by *Kommersant* creator Vladimir Yakovlev. At the heart of the multimillion-dollar venture is Snob, a club with an online presence for subscribers at www.snob.ru, whose current membership of 283 men and women expands at an average rate of one or two per month, and a thick literary review, somewhat along the lines of *Vanity Fair*, bearing the same name. By bringing together the most independent-minded and articulate representatives of what used to be called the Russian intelligentsia with the most cultivated and politically benign exponents of new Russian wealth, Snob wants to provide the new species, which it has christened "Global Russians," with both a natural habitat and a luxurious showcase.

Suffice it to say that every member of Snob is assigned one of some twenty staff amanuenses, Boswell-like bloggers who help to keep the club's site alive with his or her worldly doings. The *Evening Standard*'s Lebedev has joined, as has Vasily Sopromadze, owner of Holmes' watering hole in Piccadilly. A few months ago the photographer Gusov and I, both indecently hung over, met the London represen-



tative of Snob in an outdoor Belgravia café famous for the loucheness of its clientele.

"Timon of Athens," the young and handsome Global Russian introduced himself, and it was true. His name really was Timon Afinsky. Gusov and I felt like the Painter and the Poet in Shakespeare's play, desperately angling for advantage until shouted at in plain Russian that we had been asked to join the club. Some days later, a film crew descended on Gusov's bachelor pad in Gerald Road, once the studio of Sir Noel Coward, to record an obligatory interview for the Snob site with two stalwarts of the global diaspora, absent from Russia for a combined total of some 60 years and once again indecently hung over in the best tradition of whatever intelligentsia we eagerly represented.

Whatever social storms the future may hold in store for the nattering nabobs of positivism in the Kremlin, it is pretty clear that the few hundred travelers who, like myself before them, have in their youth detached themselves from the mother ship to seek wisdom and fulfillment in the outer space of London and Madrid, Bombay and Rio, can finally declare themselves a breed apart. They are not going anywhere, because they have been on the move from the moment the Soviet border became permeable, and in the event of a political emergency each of them can at least count on being known as eminently clubbable to newspaper editors from Adelaide to Zimbabwe.

Snob is their charter of self-determination. Like White émigrés in Paris in the 1920's, they are here to tell the West their story. 