

MODO'S CAMELS AND PONIES

Having MoDo vouch for the “sangfroid” of Saudi Ambassador Adel al-Jubeir (who, she notes, once saved her from being punished by Saudi religious police for dressing inappropriately) is about as amusing as having David Ignatius announce the Scary Iran Plot must be true because the CIA is involved.

Jubeir stayed cool even when American officials informed him several months ago about the latest stunning chapter in the Saudi Arabia-versus-Iran Great Game for supremacy in the Middle East: an outlandish plot by an Iranian-American used-car dealer in Texas who said his cousin was a senior member of the Iranian Quds Force.

MoDo's piece seems to do little but foster the illusion that a real plot had developed, as she describes al-Jubeir straining in secret to hide the news that a DEA Narc completely directed by the US government proposed bombing his favorite restaurant.

He had to force himself to live a normal existence for months, not telling family or staff, until a criminal complaint was unveiled and the Texas car dealer was before a judge.

MoDo's piece also allows al-Jubeir to rebut a detail about him that the US Government's own plot has emphasized—that he practically lives at Cafe Milano.

Over lunch at the embassy in his first interview since then, he told me in his whispery voice that he was surprised the plotters had assumed he'd be hanging at modish restaurants. These days, the slender, smartly tailored ambassador is

more of a nester, spending time with the twins and his 9-month-old son.

“I work so much, I enjoy sitting at home doing nothing,” said the diplomat with the rough commute – 12-hour flights to Riyadh several times a month.

No wonder al-Jubeir chose this—rather than an interview with a real journalist—to be his first interview after the revelation of the plot.

Though there is this close for the piece.

As I left, I asked the ambassador about the painting in his office of Arab tribesmen riding horses and camels.

“It’s artistic license,” he noted with amusement. “Camels don’t ride with horses. They ride separately. Horses go faster and camels go longer.”

It’s as if, in addition to countering the common knowledge he lives at Cafe Milano, al-Jubeir also wants people to know that both Arabian ponies and camels can survive by eating aspen leaves that grow connected at the root.