**TEDDY ROOSEVELT, THE PERDICARIS INCIDENT, AND GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY**

*“This government wants Perdicaris alive or Raisuli dead”* Telegram from John Hay to US forces in Morocco and given to the Press June 22 1904

**THE KIDNAPPING**

* May 18, 1904, elderly wealthy American Ion “Jon” Perdicaris (1842-1925) is having dinner at his home *Villa Aidonia* (Place of Nightingales) in the hills above Tangier, Morocco with his wife Ellen, her son by a previous marriage Cromwell Oliver Varley (1857-1934), and his wife
* Armed Moors burst into the villa tying up Perdicaris and Varley leading them to the gate at gunpoint, there they are greeted by a handsome black bearded Moor *“I am the Raisuli*!”( he is a Berber tribal chieftain, Lord of the Rif) – Sherif Mulai Ahmed ibn Muhammed er Raisuli (1871-1925) is in a power struggle with the Sultan of Morocco
* The prisoners are put on horses, Raisuli steals Perdicaris best horse, they escape into the Atlas Mountains, they realize they are now kidnap victims as part of the politics of Morocco
* The term “Moors” are Muslims living in North Africa (including Morocco) – this is not America’s first encounter in North Africa, America’s first war, The Barbary War (1801-1805) is fought over pirate attacks on US merchant ships

**MOROCCO POLITICS**

* Samuel R. Gummere is US Consul General (Perdicaris is a US Citizen) meets with Sir Arthur Nicolson British Minister (Varley is an English Citizen) to determine how to respond to the crime
* Politically they have to contact the French since the April 1904 Anglo-French Entente gives the English influence over Egypt in return the French have influence in Morocco
* Sultan Abdul Aziz (1878-1943) is young and a puppet of the corrupt Grand Vizier Ben Sliman who gives the young Sultan a taste for expensive Western luxuries: numerous bicycles, 600 cameras, 25 grand pianos, and a gold automobile (even though Morocco has no roads to drive on) – to pay for this the Sultan needs loans from the French
* Raisuli wants to increase his prestige and power from the kidnapping because it will involve the Americans and British
* The Bashaw or local governor of Tangier is Raisuli’s foster brother, he once tricked Raisuli and put him in jail for eight years, mutual hatred, is trying to arrest him for the kidnapping
* *“Situation Serious”* US Consul General Gummere telegraphs the State Department *“Request man of war to enforce demands”*

**GUNBOAT DIPLOMACY**

* President Teddy Roosevelt (1858-1919) is only 45 years old and a man of action – The Republican Nominating Convention is in Chicago next month and like most “accidental Presidents” TR wants to be elected on his own merit, not by being VP when President dies
* Accidental Presidents have not done well in elections, no one has won on their own merit: John Tyler 1841-1845 on death of William Henry Harrison, Millard Fillmore 1850-1853 on death of Zachary Taylor, Andrew Johnson 1865-1869 on death of Abraham Lincoln, Chester Arthur 1881-1885 on death of James Garfield – TR was VP when President McKinley was killed in 1901
* TR is fearful the convention will be controlled by professional politicians & “standpatters” who agree with the late Mark Hanna (1837-1904) who thought TR was “that damned cowboy”
* TR sends not one warship but the South Atlantic Squadron of four (USS Brooklyn FLAG, Atlanta Marietta, Castine) under command of Adm French Ensor Chadwick (1844-1919) a true believer in Mahan naval superiority theory
* Adm Alfred Thayer Mahan (1840-1914) is a US Naval officer who writes The Influence of Sea Power upon History, Mahan believed National Greatness was tied to Sea Power, that the primary mission of the Navy is to secure command of the Sea (TR believes this)
* TR Foreign Policy done by Sec of State John Hay (1838-1905) cultured, well read, he was private secretary to Lincoln and like TR is a believer in the creation of a US Empire (Imperialism)
* Gummere and Nicholson want the Sultan to agree to any demands Raisuli makes
* Raisuli:” Men *think I care about money, but I tell you it is only useful in politics*”
* In America headlines of a rich old American held for ransom by a cruel but romantic brigand with the US Navy & Marines to the rescue are popular
* Press starts looking closer at Perdicaris: his father is a naturalized US citizen (born in Greece) who taught Greek at Harvard, married a rich South Carolina woman, lived in Trenton NJ, made fortune in Illuminating Gas, his son Ion was born in Greece, entered Harvard in 1860, studied two years, then went abroad to study (to avoid Civil war? Father pro union, mother pro south), Ion has lived in NJ and abroad as a dilettante involved in arts (writing and painting) living off father’s fortune
* May 22 Raisuli’s demands withdrawal of Sultan troops from Rif, Dismiss Bashaw of Tangier, payment of $70,000, appointment of Raisuli as governor of two Tangier districts, safe conduct for Raisuli & his men, **AND** US/British guarantee of demands being met
* Hay considers demands “*preposterous*” and TR orders the European Squadron (USS Olympia FLAG, Baltimore, Cleveland) under Adm Theodore F Jewell (1844-1932) to Morocco
* State Department asks:” Is Perdicaris an American Citizen?” It turns out he became a Greek Citizen on March19, 1863 – US now had 7 warships in Morocco to protect a Greek not American

**EPILOUGE**

* June 12 France loans Sultan 62.3 million Francs secured by French control of their ports
* US tells Sultan to meet Raisuli demands or Marines will attack
* June 21 Republican Convention opens, TR and Hay decide to keep Perdicaris citizenship problem secret, Attorney General Philander Knox to TR: “*Ah, Mr. Roosevelt, why have such a beautiful action marred by any taint of legality”*
* June 22 Telegram “Perdicaris alive of Raisuli dead” is given to press, in Chicago Uncle Joe Cannon, Speaker of the House, reads it to the convention, delegates cheer and wave flags, Raisuli gets ransom money and releases hostages who praise him as intelligent and kind, Raisuli becomes governor of Tangier, the sultan is humiliated, and a brother dethrones him
* TR is elected in November by the largest popular majority ever received up to that time, his administration proposes new citizenship laws which pass in 1905
* The truth about Perdicaris is hidden until 1933 when it comes out in a biography of Hay

**HOLLYWOOD GETS IT WRONG…AGAIN**

* Director John Milius (famous for directing the first two “Dirty Harry” movies reads the story of “Perdicaris alive or Raisuli dead” by historian Barbara Tuchman and decides to make a movie of it in 1975
* Raisuli is portrayed as the hero not villain – Sean Connery
* Perdicaris is not an elderly man but portrayed as beautiful young woman – Candice Bergen
* Teddy Roosevelt portrayed as Himself – Brian Keith
* John Hay portrayed as worldly-wise statesman – John Huston
* Good guys in film are the US Marines who attack the Sultan’s army and the bad guys
* Bad guys are the German Army (who aren’t even in Morocco)
* The film is called *The Wind and the Lion - the* Lion being Raisuli, the Wind being TR
* The film is a financial success but is competing against *Jaws*

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