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A guest of the Islamic Jihad

■ Former hostage relates his experience from six and one half years of captivity in Lebanon by religious extremist group

By JAY GENTILE

On June 9, 1985, a little brown car carrying four Lebanese men with sub-machine guns sideswiped the Chevrolet Caprice that was taking Tom Sutherland from the Beirut airport to his job site at the American University of Beirut.

The screaming men in the car then cut off the Caprice, forcing it to a halt. Along came another car complete with four more men and their sub-machine guns. One of the men ordered Sutherland to get into their car.

Sutherland, the dean of the American University of Beirut's College of Agriculture, had been kidnapped.

He was thrown in the trunk of the kidnappers' car. When the trunk opened a few harrowing minutes later, Sutherland was greeted by the bright Lebanon sunshine and a crowd of 30 to 40 men chattering in Arabic. "Cover the eyes," one of the men said in English.

"That was the last time I saw the sun for six and a half years," Sutherland

said in an interview in Estes Park Wednesday. "I spent the next six and a half years as a guest of Islamic Jihad."

Sutherland, a Fort Collins resident who had spent 25 years as a professor at Colorado State University, left CSU in 1983 to take the position as dean at the highly-respected university in war-torn Beirut. He spends much of his summers at his cabin in Estes Park's Tahosa Valley.

He knew the risks inherent in the job, but admits being a bit naive. His naiveté was shattered on January 18, 1984, when the university's president was gunned down in his office.

But Sutherland was determined not to leave. In order to recruit more Americans to come to the university, he left Lebanon on May 19, 1985 but quickly returned on June 9 — and was promptly kidnapped.

He was given no reason for his kidnapping, as his captors seldom engaged in discussion with political

prisoners. They locked him in a six-foot by six-foot cell in a Beirut apartment and left him with his thoughts for a month.

The captors placed a large steel sheet over the window, blocking out air and sunlight. A paisley cloth blindfold sat on his forehead at all times, and had to be pulled down over his eyes whenever the guards entered his presence.

The paranoid captors feared the hostages would later identify them to the CIA. They were especially suspicious of Sutherland, whose possession of an article on Islam at the time of his kidnapping convinced the men that he was a member of the CIA.

After a month, he was joined in captivity by a Presbyterian minister and a Catholic priest named Father Martin, to whom Sutherland was chained in his cell.

"I was chained to Father Martin and Father Martin was chained to the wall," said Sutherland. "I'd never been that close to a Catholic priest in my life."

The trio was later joined by David Jacobsen, the director of the American University Hospital in Beirut, and Terry Anderson, the Associated Press' chief correspondent for the Middle East.

Sutherland and the 53 other Western hostages were moved frequently, usually chained to the wall of their new cell by their ankles or occasionally by the wrist.

Sutherland himself "did time" in 16 different locations — nine in Beirut, four in southern Lebanon across the road from Israel and three in the Bekaa Valley of northern Lebanon. Time spent in any one location varied from one week to 18 months.

But many things painfully remained the same over his 77 months of captivity. Besides being woken up at dawn by the prayer call of the Shiite Muslims, Sutherland could count on the same three meals a day every day.

Breakfast and dinner consisted of a piece of pita

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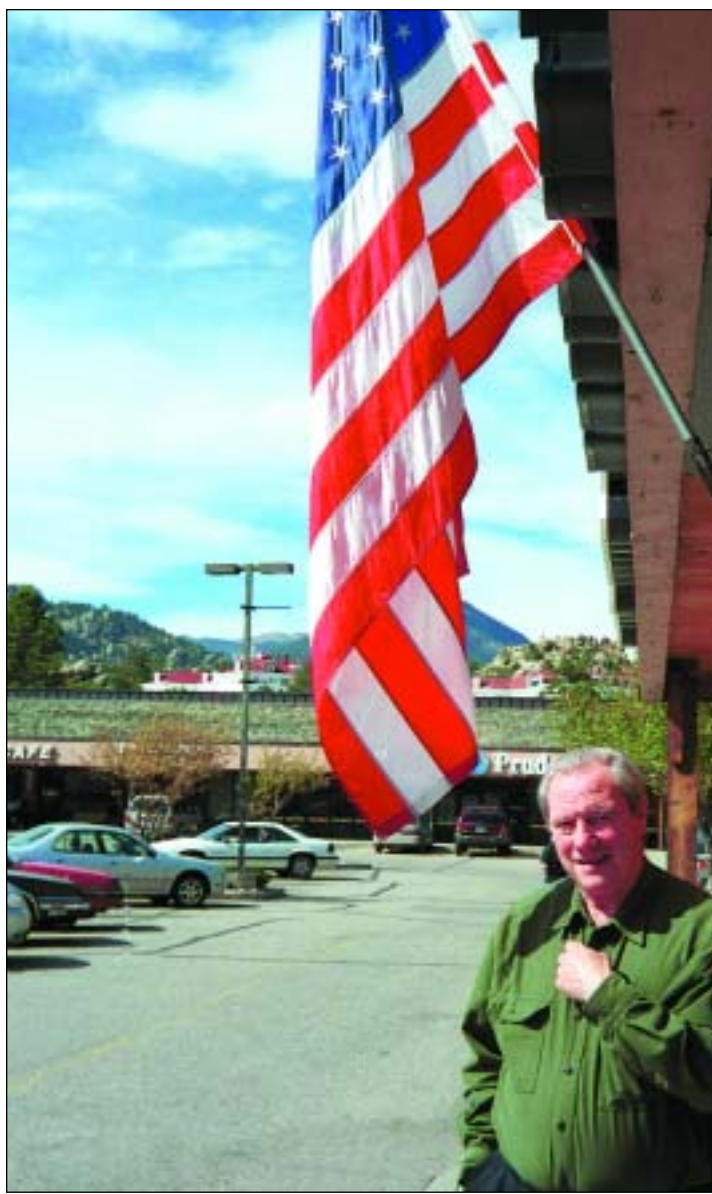


Photo by Jay Gentile

Tom Sutherland recounted his six and one half years of captivity by the Islamic Jihad during an interview Wednesday in Estes Park.



Photos by Walt Hester



The sight and sound of education

Volunteer Ann Dinsmoore (top photo) checks the hearing of 3rd-grader Dustin Hays on this past Wednesday. Pictured on the left is Emily Betts, an Estes Park 5th-grader, as she reads the lines for optometrist Dr. Langley Parker at the Estes Park Intermediate School on Wednesday. Parker was one of many volunteers who offered his time to screen students for possible hearing and sight problems. Colorado requires all of its 3rd and 5th-grade students be given vision and hearing tests.

Impatient hunter pays a hefty price

■ Matheson man convicted of illegally killing a six-point bull elk in RMNP

By JAY GENTILE

It was just hours before the onset of hunting season last year, but Jeffery Belveal just couldn't wait. And now he has to pay the price for illegally killing an elk within the boundaries of Rocky Mountain National Park.

On September 25, 2001, Belveal, a resident of Matheson, was convicted of taking wildlife from a national park under the Lacey Act. Violations of the Lacey Act are the most serious crimes for taking and transporting wildlife in the country for federal areas.

Under the terms of a plea agreement with prosecutors of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Denver, Belveal was fined \$2,000, sentenced to 100 hours of community service and received a lifetime revocation of his hunting privileges within eight Rocky Mountain states.

Half of the fine will go to the court, the other half to the National Park Service in Washington D.C. The community service will be carried out either for the Division of Wildlife or within Rocky Mountain National Park, in which case he would likely perform Park project work like

pulling exotic plants or restoring campgrounds.

"We're very pleased with the fine," said Park ranger Doug Ridley. "Hopefully, this will send a message to potential poachers. We need to make a statement about removing a large bull in its genetic prime from the ecosystem."

According to officials, the story began last year at approximately 2 a.m. October 21, 2000, when Belveal drove through Rocky Mountain National Park's Fall River entrance with a high-powered rifle, on his way to a legal hunt on the western slope which was set to commence at dawn.

Then he spotted a herd of elk in Horseshoe Park. He picked out the largest bull and parked his car, positioning the headlights in the direction of the herd.

Then he pulled the trigger, ending the life of a six-point bull that was grazing about 75 yards from the side of the road.

"He dropped the elk with one shot," said Ridley. "Being Park elk, they are very accustomed to cars and headlights."

Belveal then drove into the meadow, gutted the animal and loaded it into his car. He hid the animal in a ditch on the western slope until enough time passed to make it appear as though he had killed the elk during the legal, post-dawn hunting hours.

Later that day, he took the animal to a processing plant in

See Hunter: Page A 2

Building permits skyrocket

Building permits issued by the Town of Estes Park reached a valuation of \$2,788,934 in September, well exceeding the \$612,309 in valuation issued last September.

This caused year-to-date valuation to pull ahead of last year, when \$15,950,964 in valuation was issued — versus \$16,608,524 in valuation through this September.

Permits for new construction included those issued for Bill Weber, 2845 Kiowa Trail, new single family detached log dwelling, \$341,347; Richard Volkstorf, 2017 Uplands Circle, new single family detached dwelling, \$461,392; Richard H. Willie Trust, 1502 & 1504 Raven Circle, new two-unit condominium, \$263,586; Jay & Carol LLC, 2051 Big Thompson Ave., SK-2, new detached accommodation cabin, \$27,013; Jay & Carol LLC, 2051 Big Thompson Ave., SK-3, new detached accommodation cabin, \$27,013; Jay & Carol LLC, 2051 Big Thompson Ave., SK-4, new detached accommodation cabin, \$27,013; Jay & Carol LLC, 2051 Big Thompson

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Guest: Former CSU professor spent over six year as captive

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bread with processed cheese wrapped inside, along with a cup of "terrible" bitter stewed tea. It was the same meal for 2,354 days — except every six months or so when the cheese was substituted for yogurt. Lunch was rice and beans.

The guards did not torture the men, but did not react with understanding when the men failed to obey their orders.

One day, Sutherland peeked out from beneath his filthy blindfold and was punished with the beating of his life.

"They took me into cell 11 and laid me on my back," he describes in his 1996 book, *At Your Own Risk*, which chronicles the ordeal.

"One of them held up my feet while another began to beat on the insoles with some kind of rubber truncheon," he wrote. "Quitting my insoles, he switched to my calves, thighs, ribs, shoulders, and by the time he was done, I was black and blue from my neck to my feet."

Staying positive

Sutherland lived in Scotland before coming to America at age 23 to study at Iowa State University for one year, where he met his wife Jean, got the job offer at CSU and extended his stay for good.

He credits "sheer Scottish-American cussedness," a wonderful family, and mutual support of fellow prisoners as key to staying sane during his period of incarceration.

The prisoners were also allowed to read books and magazines to keep their minds active and, after four years of pestering the guards, they were given a radio so they could listen to the BBC and Voice of America.

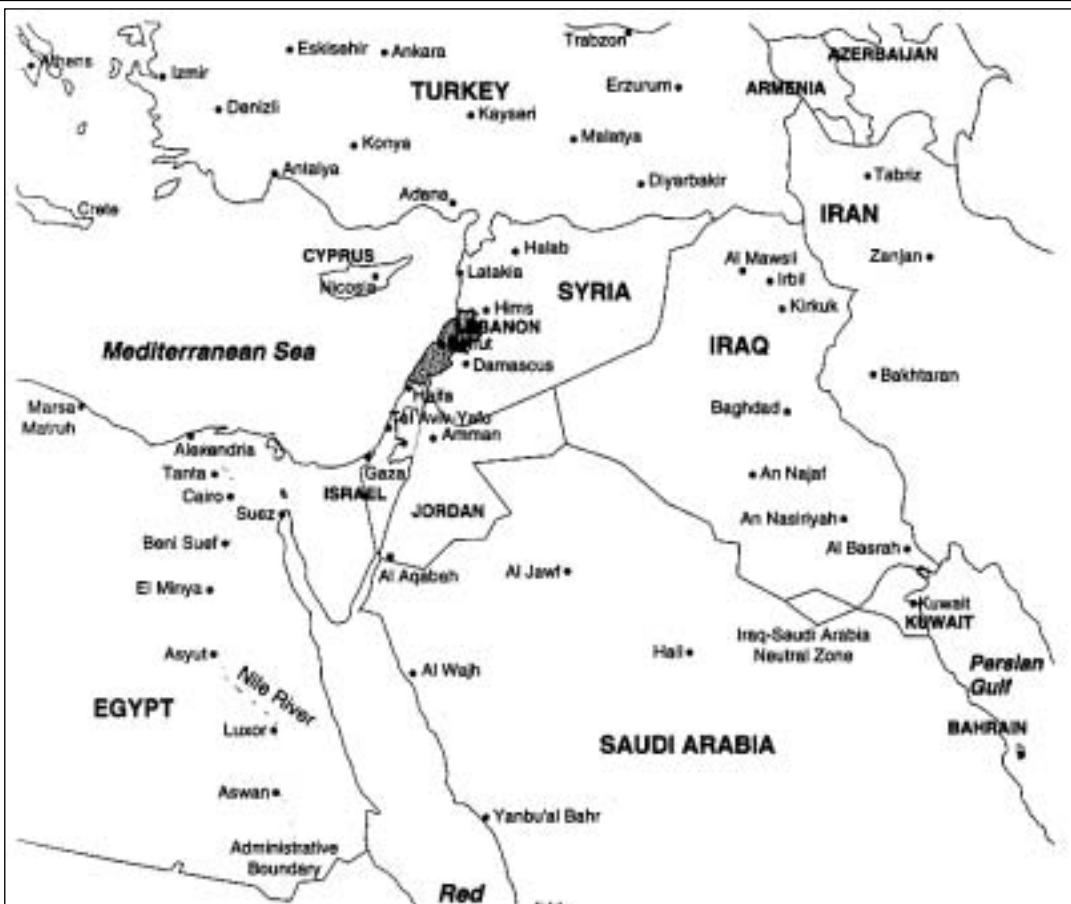
Because of the literature, "we had thus, almost literally, freedom in captivity," he wrote in his book. "If Islamic Jihad could chain our bodies to the wall, they couldn't imprison our minds."

He also spent much of his time talking with Anderson, with whom he spent 70 months in captivity. The two imparted every bit of wisdom they possessed to each other through millions of words spoken day in and day out.

In 1983, terrorists blew up the American embassy in Beirut and blasted apart a U.S. Marine airport barracks, killing hundreds of Americans as part of Iranian leader Ayatollah Khomeini's holy war against the West.

Seventeen Islamic extremists were later caught trying to blow up the American and French embassies in Kuwait and thrown in a Kuwaiti jail.

One of the terrorists was the brother-in-law of Imad Mughnayeh, a Shiite Muslim leader in Lebanon who would finally provide



Lebanon is in the heart of the Middle East. The country struggled through a bitter civil war during the 1980s.

Sutherland with the specific reason for his kidnapping.

Mughnayeh, who would often visit Sutherland and the others in their cells, consistently repeated this mantra to the men who wondered when they'd be released: "When our brothers in Kuwait free, you free next day."

"Welcome to freedom"

Those 17 terrorists were finally freed on August 2, 1990, when Saddam Hussein invaded Kuwait and, as is custom when an outside nation takes over another, opened up all the jails of the fallen nation.

Yet the "next day," which was supposed to mean Sutherland's freedom, did not come for another 18 months. Sutherland turned 60 in his cell.

The tide began to turn when a British man who shared a cell with Sutherland was released in June of 1991. He sent a message to the secretary-general of the United Nations, urging the release of Sutherland, Anderson and another British man.

The task of negotiation was given to Giandomenico "Johnny" Picco, under-secretary of the UN chief, who had negotiated the end of the Iran/Iraq war and convinced the Russians to leave Afghanistan. The star diplomat came through once again.

On November 18, 1991, "they released Terry and me together," Sutherland said. "They drove us down a road from Beirut to Damascus, (Syria). We were pushed out of the car by guards at about 9 p.m. Out of the shadows comes General Baaloul from Syrian intelligence."

The two Americans looked at Baaloul, who spoke two sentences that Sutherland will never forget: "I'm General Baaloul of Syrian intelligence," he said. "Welcome to freedom."

Sutherland has been free for almost ten years

Sutherland's thoughts on the Sept. 11 terror attacks

Sutherland believes that Mughnayeh, the man who kept promising he would be "free next day," was the real mastermind behind the Sept. 11 attacks on America.

He said this has been reported in the respected British "Chains Defense Weekly" and is the belief held by Israel's military intelligence.

Believers of this theory say that Osama bin Laden provided funding for the attack, which was organized in close coordination with Mughnayeh, Saddam Hussein, and Egyptian Ayman Zuwahiri.

"I think that the average American doesn't appreciate what's happening in the Middle East," Sutherland said. "They're very happy with life in America and they should be. This is the greatest country in the history of civilization. That's not to say it's without faults."

"There are a lot of guys in the Middle East who have nothing, and they look at America as being an oppressor, both economically and militarily. Why militarily? Because we arm Israelis, and they oppress the hell out of the Palestinians."

"Why economically? Because we support dictators in Middle East, like the king of Saudi Arabia and the Kuwaiti leader. When we give them money, they spend most of it on an army to keep people under a dictator's thumb. None of that money goes to the poor people. Children in Iraq are still starving."

He added that many Arabs see America as a hypocrite for acting against Iraq when it invaded another Arab country, Kuwait, while at the same time giving billions of dollars to Israel, which is oppressing another Arab population.

"If we bomb anyone, it'll prove we're a military oppressor," Sutherland said. "Under no circumstances should we bomb Afghanistan or Saddam Hussein. I think these (terrorists) should be brought to justice and tried in an international or United Nations court."

now, and at age 70, he appears a man at peace. He doesn't let a little thing like losing 77 months of his life to darkness and captivity get him down.

"Tom Sutherland was a true American hero," said former president George Bush in a quote from Sutherland's book. "He was a hostage, yes; but he never felt sorry for himself nor did he complain of his situation. He inspired us all with his grit and his unfailing faith in his God and his country."

"People have frequently said they don't detect one ounce of bitterness," Sutherland said. "I'm not

bitter. I learned a long time ago that bitterness and anger will ruin your life. If I got up and said, 'I hate these guys, I'd have a terrible day. Instead I say, "Good morning sun and have a great day."'

He said positive thoughts of the past, of being reunited with his wife and three daughters, and of plans for the future helped him survive as well.

"When we were five guys in a cell, it would stink in there," he said. "I'd close my eyes and imagine I was at my cabin in Estes Park and so help me, I could bloody well smell the pines."



Big bull elk such as this one spotted in Estes Park recently, provide a sometimes too enticing shot for impatient hunters.

Hunter: Tips led to conviction

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Kremmling. Four days later, the Colorado Division of Wildlife received a tip that this animal may have been the same one taken from the Park — whose gut pile was left behind.

Park rangers teamed up with several Division of Wildlife officers to investigate the case, which was prosecuted by Assistant U.S. Attorney Robert Anderson.

After receiving the initial tip, a Division of Wildlife officer on the western slope seized the meat from the Kremmling processing plant as evidence. The DOW went to Belveal's house and secured a confession in late October.

In August of 2001, he agreed to the plea agreement and pled guilty to taking wildlife from a national park before U.S. Magistrate Judge Schaffer in Denver's U.S. District Court.

Ridley said a very large bull can fetch between \$4,000 and \$5,000 as a trophy mount. Fines under the Lacey Act can go as high as \$100,000, he said.

Other cases

Poaching violations resulted in the convictions of two other hunters in Rocky Mountain National Park within the last year as well.

On November 4, 2000, Daniel Shomers, of Littleton, was cited for killing a mule deer buck in the Park, along the hunter access trail at McGraw Ranch. He was fined \$250 and forfeited the deer.

On January 4, 2001, Bridger Penttilla, of Boulder, was also cited for killing a six point bull elk in the McGraw Ranch area along the Park boundary. Penttilla was fined \$250, forfeiture of parts and was charged with other violations by the Division of Wildlife.

In these cases, the offenses occurred within season by hunters with valid licenses. They took place in areas that were confused with legal hunting grounds, as the hunting corridor along the North Boundary Trail passes through a half-mile of Park property.

Another hunter access trail is near the Twin Sisters Trailhead, and other access trails are on the Park's west side. Hunters are responsible for carrying current maps and knowing the correct boundaries.

Belveal's case took place miles within the Park boundary. As blatant as it was, Ridley said it is not the most blatant poaching case in Park history.

He said in 1978, a man dropped a six-point elk on the Park tundra in the middle of the day in front of tourists. But the Belveal case was the most blatant in recent Park history.

In fact, the last major poaching case in the Park occurred in 1998, when several hunters were charged under the Lacey Act for taking a large mature bull at McGraw Ranch.

Poaching on the rise

Park spokesperson Kyle Patterson said that as more private land is developed on U.S. Forest Service property surrounding the Park, there are fewer places to hunt and more illegal animal slayings.

Ridley said more people are calling authorities with tips in recent years, which has allowed rangers to catch more offenders. But they still fight an uphill battle.

"We had three (cases) in which we received information and charged people," he said. "My guess is that's the tip of the iceberg. If we hear about or investigate two cases a year, there's probably many more we don't hear about."

In all three of last year's cases, tips from the public led to the arrests.

"There's so much land to cover in the Park," said Patterson. "We try to be everywhere, but we can't be in many instances. We appreciate and rely on the public to help us out and advise us if they know of any poaching activities."

The first rifle season for elk this season begins October 13, followed by the first rifle season for deer on October 20.

During this year's hunting season, Rocky Mountain National Park urges anyone with information related to poaching in the Park to contact the Park's dispatch at 586-1399, the nearest local sheriff's office or the Division of Wildlife's Operation Game Thief hotline at 1-800-332-4155.

Permits: September permits increase dramatically over last year

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Ave., SK-5, new detached accommodation cabin, \$27,013; Jay & Carol LLC, 2051 Big Thompson Ave., SK-6, new detached accommodation cabin, \$27,013; Jay & Carol LLC, 2051 Big Thompson Ave., SK-7, new detached accommodation cabin, \$27,013; Karen & John Ericson, 413 Pawnee Lane, new single family detached dwelling, \$215,770; Michael & Audrey Seybold, 1980

N. Sharon Court, new single family detached dwelling, \$147,982; and Roy & Michele Johnson, 363-365 Virginia Drive, new two unit condominium, \$258,744.

Permits for additions and alterations included those issued for New Stanley Associates, 333 Wonderview Ave., remodel of Stanley Hall, \$500,000; Bill Ruth, 2021 Cherokee Drive,

rough in bath, \$1,500; Bob Gray, 1109 Brook Drive, bath, kitchen remodel and repair deck, \$30,000; E.P. Con. Jehovahs Witness, 1760 Olympian Lane, church addition and remodel, \$57,162; Charlene & Mike LePore, 900 High Acres Drive, basement addition, \$19,585; E.P. Sanitation District, 610 Big Thompson Ave., chemical feed building addition, \$260,000; and

Sprint PCS, 543 Big Thompson Ave., repeater installation, \$6,000.

Permits for miscellaneous construction included those issued for Con & Joan Lund, 1399 Cedar Lane, basement finish, \$5,000; Dennis Brown, 220 Virginia Drive, garage remodel, \$4,719; Jeffrey & Kristin Barker, 710 Fall River Rd., Units 9, 10, 11; demo of building two, \$6,000;

Albert M. Clearman, 1980 Morris Court, re-roof and install skylight, \$2,500; Vernon Cole, 851 Panorama Circle, replace boiler and regulator, \$12,530; Jeff Barker, 710 Fall River Rd., Units 12, 14-B, 15,16; replace copper gas lines, \$800; and Bob Howell, 172 W. Elkhorn Ave., remove underground storage tank, \$21,000.

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