

- Main sections
- News
 - News headlines
 - World news
 - City news
 - Mail comment
 - Peter Hitchens
 - Photos & video
 - Mac cartoons
 - Joe Martin
 - News alerts
 - E-editions
 - Message boards

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- ▶ Cut your bills
- ▶ Diet centre
- ▶ Mail wine club
- ▶ Mail online bingo
- ▶ Dating
- ▶ Money shop
- ▶ DVD rental

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- ▶ 50% off Salter Scales
- ▶ Save 5% on a Fred Olsen cruise
- ▶ [All promotions »](#)

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- ▶ Celebrity lookalikes
- ▶ UK heatwave
- ▶ English Icons 2006
- ▶ Lebanon crisis
- ▶ A Princess's jewellery
- ▶ [All galleries](#)

Advertorials

- ▶ Croatia Reader Offer
- ▶ Cosmos Holidays
- ▶ Richer than Chocolat

Quizzes

- ▶ Are you musical?
- ▶ Oscar trivia
- ▶ Winter Olympics
- ▶ Supermarket food
- ▶ [More quizzes »](#)

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- [RSS](#) [WORLD NEWS](#)
- ▶ What is RSS?
- ▶ All our RSS feeds

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- ▶ Login
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- ▶ Register
- ▶ Text-based site
- ▶ Accessibility
- ▶ Contact us
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- ▶ Site map
- ▶ Make us your homepage

VIRTUAL GLOBAL TASKFORCE



Internet safety

News » World news

Round-the-world British adventurer held as spy in Egypt

By LUKE SALKELD - [More by this author »](#)
Last updated at 18:32pm on 25th June 2007

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A British adventurer has been accused of spying in Egypt after he entered the country's territory without permission during a round-the-world charity tour.

Jason Lewis was in a kayak on Lake Nasser when he was stopped by fishermen who overpowered him and forced him ashore.

Mr Lewis, 38, says he was then taken to a military detention centre where he was interrogated and told he faced charges if espionage.

Suspicious were raised by the high-tech equipment he was carrying which included cameras and navigational systems.

But Mr Lewis says these are just part of the equipment he needs for his 13-year journey around the world.

The former businessman is attempting to cover the glove using only human powered transport.

So far he has walked, cycled and even used roller blades to travel 37,000 miles in the journey that is due to finish in the autumn.

He had been waiting for several weeks in northern Sudan for permission to cross into Egypt to continue the odyssey.

But when his visa for Sudan ran out and he realised he in that country illegally, he was suddenly in an "impossible position" and took to the water.

Lewis, from Askerswell, Dorset, decided to kayak across Lake Nasser to southern Egypt, through a militarised buffer zone and then return to Sudan to get the appropriate stamp.

But his journey suddenly took a harrowing turn. "I was apprehended and overpowered by local fishermen who turned me in," he recalled yesterday.

He was taken to a military detention centre where he was interrogated by Army intelligence and separated from his equipment.

Mr Lewis said he was facing espionage charges "with a potential prison sentence of 40 years in a military prison".

He continued: "During the ensuing interrogations, I was asked to explain all the satellite communications equipment I was carrying.

"They did not buy my story of being on an expedition.

"And then they started going through my photos and video footage, all taken at night, and detailing positions on the GPS as well as the border observations posts on the lake shore."

"Things started looking very bad indeed.

"It was at this point that I had given up all hope of finishing the expedition and I was seriously considering the prospect of spending the rest of my life in an Egyptian prison."

Mr Lewis said he was only saved by the coincidental arrival of the authorisation he had been waiting weeks for.

He explained: "At the 11th hour, as I was about to be taken for further questioning, the unbelievable happened.

"The fax machine in the next-door room began whirring and spat out a two-page letter written in Arabic with the official seal of the Ministry of the Interior splashed across the top.

"It was my permission authorisation finally come through from Cairo."

Lewis was freed to continue his expedition through Egypt - but has been refused permission to mountain-bike the 178 miles to Aswan.

Astonishingly he has decided to risk the wrath of the authorities by making the prohibited journey at night time.

Lewis began his odyssey at the Greenwich Meridian in London in July 1994 and is still using the 15-year-old steel-frame bicycle on which he started the expedition.

After completing the African and Middle East sections to Istanbul in Turkey, Lewis intends to ride across Europe and use his pedal boat Moksha to complete the circumnavigation by pedalling up the River Thames to the Greenwich Meridian Line late this October.

So far he has raised around £31,000 for charities including orphanages and hospices.

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Jason Lewis is a British adventurer who got more than he bargained for when he was arrested on suspicion of spying in Egypt

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Guess how many lovers we've had?

One of these women has had 180 lovers. Another has had none. As a survey reveals the average British woman has had seven sexual partners, they talk with utter candour about their love lives



Comfort comes first for blooming Charlotte the country girl

Comfort is everything when you are seven months pregnant, even if Charlotte Church's generous grey trousers and soft blue top weren't exactly the most cutting-edge outfit in her wardrobe



The moment Britney served a 'restraining order' on her own mother

The pop princess's relationship with her mum, once a Svengali figure in her life, has hit a new low



Fashion guru Trinny shows...what not to bare at Elton's White Tie and Tiara party

She made her name by advising women everywhere on What Not To Wear. But maybe Trinny Woodall should have thought twice before wearing this outfit to Sir Elton John's annual charity party



Posh and Co return but they REALLY, REALLY refuse to sing

They were as loud, proud and opinionated as ever. In fact there was only one moment when the reunited Spice Girls didn't have that much to say - when the Daily Mail suggested they might like to sing