

Muslims in TL

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PART 4: LONELY BUT COPING

Jamal is off today because the place was shut down for a wedding in his boss' family. With his wife and life savings gone, losing income comes at a bad time. "I can't pay the rent," he says. "I'll get a notice." He looks worried. Earlier, in the community room downstairs, he had picked up food from the weekly Food Bank pantry drop, a dozen eggs, two pounds of spaghetti, a big sack of potatoes and a bag of vegetables, and lugged them upstairs to his apartment.

While warring factions vie for the upper hand in his country, Jamal remembers the good times. He's from a family that had more land and money than any of the neighbors. It created a status that as a child made him uncomfortable. His playmates deferred to him. "No, I say, I want everyone equal, everyone," Jamal said. "But I had a very happy childhood."

He had a happy wedding in Yemen, too. Well over 200 relatives came to celebrate. And the food? He ponders. "Ten sheeps, five goats, five baby cows."

Here he even has fine Yemeni cuisine nearby. One restaurant at Sutter and Hyde just changed its name to Arabian Sky, after six years as Yemeni's Restaurant. "People didn't know what it was," says chef/owner Musa Amin. "They'd say, 'What's Yemeni?' And pass it up." Arabian Sky has broader appeal, hinting of Ali Baba, he says. "Once inside, we tell about Yemeni food. Americans want something authentic." A popular choice is saltah, spicy baked

vegetables with a lamb sauce served in a clay volcano pot.

But Amin admits his claim of being the only Yemeni restaurant in California — on a sign posted outside by the door — is now outdated. He says there's one in San Jose and, oops, his former co-owner and good friend, Abdul al Rammah, opened a hole-in-the-wall Yemeni restaurant two months ago at 219 Jones St. It barely has room for three tables and three stools at a tiny counter. Roast lamb is the top choice of his customers, al Rammah says. Jamal drops in whenever he's got mad money in his jeans.

After depositing his take from the pantry, Jamal took the elevator to the roof garden and found a seat at a table in the middle. The garden was all around him, two dozen silver metal tubs exploding with rich green herbs and vegetables, a virtual garden of Eden that excited him. He got up and began weaving his way around them, pausing at each.

"Take some and the next day there is more!" he exclaimed, trumpeting the prolific growth. "Nabihah planted this, see?" he motions to a profusion of mint in one tub, "and this," he points to basil in another. "We do this," he gestures to other tubs growing tomatoes. "Look, organic, and this," he points to vibrant beds of pale green lettuce shimmering in the wind. "Oh, I miss my beautiful wife."

Still, she won't respond to his calls. But he has spoken by phone to Nada and to his brother, Fuad, who lives near Nabihah's father and they're good friends. The brother says things will work out, but Jamal must be patient. But it's painful and Jamal must remember the direction his elders gave him as a child to "never get angry."

"I miss her, but the devil is playing with her mind."

Nine days later, Nabihah is still in Detroit and Bilal is still in Riyadh. ■

Chief meets neighborhood newsies

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laws. If more people followed them, there'd be fewer problems."

Even though the city's homicide numbers are up — 24 at the end of June, a 71% increase over the same period last year — Suhr said the close rate on homicide cases is improving and technical support behind law enforcement is the main reason why.

The gunfire-detection technology ShotSpotter is linked with GPS and speeds officers' response to a crime scene. Suhr said the department deploys task forces to a homicide site within 24 to 36 hours to canvass all available public and private video cameras in the area. Homicide victims' social media postings, if any, are reviewed by a special team as are the often incriminating media boasts posted by suspects.

The smartphone every officer carries is linked to the Crime Data Warehouse, a cloud-based storage of immedi-

ately accessible information. Run afoul of the law and an officer can pull up your crime-related data instantaneously.

Tech can't seem to control some crimes yet. Car break-ins are up an astonishing 47% for the first six months of this year, more than 66 per day on average.

"Unless the officer is lucky enough to be an eyewitness, crimes of opportunity are difficult to stop," Suhr said. "The best protection is to leave nothing visible in your car, not even an empty laptop carrier. Look, I learned the hard way. Both my car and my wife's car have been broken into parked outside our home. We left stuff in them. Now we know," he added.

The air in the meeting room remained cool despite the strong sun pouring through the windows on the blue and gray walls. A tour of the six-floor, 263,000-square-foot, \$243 million headquarters would have to wait. The meeting was over. ■

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