

## Merrill Lynch found twice to discriminate against Iranians



Iran Times: For the second time in a month, Merrill Lynch, the world's largest brokerage firm, stands accused of discriminating against an Iranian employee because of his ethnicity. In the latest case, an arbitration panel from the National Association of Securities Dealers (NASD) has ordered Merrill Lynch to pay Fariborz Todd Ojai \$1.6 million for unfairly firing him and defaming him so he would be unable to find employment in the securities industry.

The arbitration panel said Merrill's internal investigation of Zojaji was "so reckless and wanting in care that it constituted a conscious disregard and indifference to the rights of claimant." The arbitration panel awarded Ojai \$400,000 in compensatory damages and \$1.2 million in punitive damages. Merrill Lynch spokesman Mark Herr said, "We approached this matter in good faith. We regret the panel didn't view the evidence in the same light we did."

The panel said Zojaji had been on a management track at Merrill Lynch's branches in suburban Miami. That changed when regional complex director Brian Sepe became Zojaji's manager. "Sepe, upon learning over lunch that claimant was a representative of an ethnic minority, put the brakes on claimant's desire to become a manager," the panel ruled. "Claimant was reduced from management, and basically sent to a corner to eventually be

terminated."

Zojaji's lawyer, Mike Arias, said the lunch meeting with Sepe came soon after the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. Arias said his client is a Muslim who was born in Iran and moved to the United States with his parents while he was in school.

In November 2004, the panel said, Zojaji was "abruptly terminated" without a chance to respond to Sepe's accusations that he executed unauthorized trades in two customers' accounts and that he violated the firm's privacy policy by allowing his wife to act as interpreter during a phone call with one of the clients, who spoke Spanish.

The panel pointed out that neither client had complained to the firm. Arias said one customer had agreed to let Zojaji's wife listen to and translate the phone call. The panel found there was no violation of the firm's privacy policy. The arbitration panel said Merrill Lynch then reported the action on a public industry document, known as to "destroy claimant's ability to become employed in the securities industry." In the other Merrill Lynch case involving an Iranian employee, the U.S. Equal Employment Opportunity Commission is suing the firm, alleging that Majid Boroumand was denied promotions and ultimately fired because of his ethnicity and his faith. Merrill Lynch spokesman Mark Herr said, "We deny all of Mr. Boroumand's allegations." The EEOC said Boroumand was hired in 2002 under an immigration that allows U.S. firms to hire talented foreigners from abroad and bring them into the United States. Boroumand was attractive to Merrill Lynch because he had a doctorate in theoretical physics and a masters in mathematical finance. The company said he worked as a senior programmer in a global equity technology group.

But the EEOC said Boroumand was subjected to "remarks that reflected animus towards his national origin and religion" after joining the company. On one occasion, the EEOC said, Boroumand was told, "The reason you are not allowed on the trading floor is because you are from a country which has a high risk factor and is a threat."

## Asylum courtesy of Hollywood

Iran Times: Here is an asylum story that has so many rich elements it appears to be work of drama fit for Hollywood.

Back in 1995, an Iranian couple, Majid Yourdkhani and Masomeh Alibegi, fled Iran, reached Toronto and sought asylum in Canada. After 10 years of appeals, they lost their case and were sent back to Iran accompanied by their son Kevin, who had been born in Canada and was thus a Canadian citizen. The boy's father said he was imprisoned for six months and tortured on his return. The mother reportedly spent a month in detention as well.

A few months ago, the family made another attempt to leave Iran. They got to Latin America, then took a flight from Guyana to Canada February 4. On the flight, a passenger had a heart attack and the plane made an emergency landing in Puerto Rico. There, U.S. immigration checked everyone's papers and found the Iranian couple traveling on passports the Greek government had their nine-year-old boy were immediately incarcerated. The family then appealed to Canada, the country that previously had rejected them. The Canadian government had to accept the boy since he is a Canadian citizen by birth. It quickly

came under media and public pressure to accept the parents it earlier rejected. Canadian nationalists added horror stories about the family's terrible conditions in a Texas jail.

Tugging at the heartstrings was a letter the boy wrote in crayon to Prime Minister Stephen Harper that was published across Canada: "I don't like to stay in this jail," he wrote "Please bring me and my family to Canada." Canadian Foreign Minister Peter McKay said the United States told him the parents wouldn't be deported to Iran until "we have an opportunity to assess all the various options." It took five weeks, but Canada finally decided to allow the parents back into Canada on temporary residence permits while the government mulls over what to do permanently. It took yet another 10 days to turn out all the paperwork between the two governments, but the family recently finally arrived in Toronto. The standard rule on asylum is that one cannot pick a country but must file a claim in the first country one reaches on escaping one's native land. In this case, news reports say the family first went to Turkey. But how this story will play itself out remains to be seen.

## Iranican?

Yasi Ansari - Pezhvak of Persia

What does it mean to be American?, What about Iranian? What if we put the two together, how would that work and what would that mean to Persian-American

events and the culture. They are in the process of creating a new and improved website, which will include more live coverage, video clips, and active blogs. Last



youth?

Reaching all around North America, Iranican combines Iranian and American into a youth television program that discusses important Iranian-American issues. You may have seen the Iranican t-shirts worn by various crew members at Persian functions, such as the well-known Sizdeh Bedar celebration at Vasona Park (Los Gatos, California).

The main goal of this television program is to present the Iranian-American identity in a positive light and bring cultural awareness to the younger audiences. Members of Iranican commented on their mission for the program, "We want to be the core-group, bringing many Iranian-Americans together. We want people to think of us as an entity." This program is formatted as a talk-show, focusing on key issues including the Persian culture, parental control, and anything that helps the average Iranian-American think critically about their culture and the world they live in.

Guest stars have included, Maz Jobrani, Ahmed-Ahmed, Supervisor of San Francisco Ross Mirkarimi, and many more. Iranican puts their goal into effect and creates a show that is very appealing by bringing many people together and creating an environment where people are able to express themselves in discussions regarding present-day issues from many different perspectives.

Iranican first aired in October of 2005 on Persian News Network (PNN Satellite). Currently, it is aired off Markazi TV on Sundays at 9:00 PM (PST). Iranican started out with a staff of about seven people and now has brought about more than 20 people onto their crew. The crew hopes to make Iranican into more than just a television show by becoming more active in Persian

year, Iranican was more focused on Iranian-American culture and cultural differences. Currently, Iranican is planning to create a discussion on topics that may be a bit more taboo in the Iranian-American community: drugs, depression, and implications of the 'War on Terrorism' for Iran. Shobeir Shobeiri, a California native of Iranian descent, is one of the five co-founders of this youth-devoted program. He was kind enough to share his thoughts about various issues and what it meant for him to be Iranian-American. For Shobeir, the creation and dedication to this show has given him added confidence, but also love for the Persian culture, especially when it comes to family values and modesty. He considers himself American when it comes to specific modern values of the American culture such as marriage pressures and social integration. A final idea Shobeir brought to my attention, is that Iranian-Americans, especially those in the Bay Area, should take more of an active role when it comes to being Iranian and participating in activities which will help their voice be heard. I believe it is great that Iranican is having a positive influence on the younger generation because the Persian youth will be the group that can carry on important Iranian values and help promote change in our American society for the better. Having a youth movement like that of Iranican, can help strengthen our identities and love for our culture.

Contact Information:

Sundays 9:00 PM (PST)

<http://www.Iranicanlive.com>

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Continued from page 44 >>

### Sultans of...

Cesarean section for relief.

They're very clever, the English. They come into your town, they come up to your king, and they say, 'Hello, would you like to be part of the English commonwealth? You'll be common and we'll have all your wealth'."

The audience consisted mainly of Iranians,

Arabs, Armenians and Israelis as well as a handful of Americans all laughing in unison. The Levantine Cultural Center was founded in the summer of 2001 and its goal is to promote a positive dialogue between the various cultures of the Middle East through artistic expression. In addition to the Sultans of Satire event, they have had concerts, lectures, film screenings and author events. Information is at [www.levantinecenter.org](http://www.levantinecenter.org).

## Regime announces (again) that jet in mass production

Iran Times: Defense Minister Mostafa Mohammad Hajjar announced last week that Iran has begun the mass production of its Azarakhsh fighter jet. This is at least the eighth time in ten years that the mass production of the warplane has been proclaimed.

Iran first unveiled the aircraft in 1997, announcing that design work on the plane had begun in 1986, meaning the aircraft program is now 21 years old.

Azarakhsh means Thunderbolt and is mythical horse in Ferdowsi's Shahnameh. The Azarakhsh was much discussed and widely hailed by the military from 1997 to 2003. After that, mention of the Azarakhsh wanted as the regime unveiled what it said was a more modern aircraft. Sa' eqeh (Lightning). Attention then shifted to that design.

Najjar last week said the Sa' eqeh would be flown soon.

In 2001, Jane's Defense Weekly, a British

magazine, reported that production of the Azarakhsh was delayed to cope with undisclosed structural problems.

The Azarakhsh is believed to be redesigned version of the U.S. F-5 Tiger fighter powered by Russian engines. It is believed to have undergone numerous design changes over the years.

The Azarakhsh was first unveiled in 1997. Air Force officials have announced that mass production of the aircraft had just begun or would soon begin in September 1997, February 1998, May 1998, June 1999, May 2000, April 2002 and September 2003. Reporting on the Azarakhsh faded after that as attention shifted to the Sa' eqeh which looks almost identical to the F-5 except that it has a rakish double-tail.

Jane's sources said the Azarakhsh is 10 to 15 percent bigger than the F-5, is a two-seater and incorporates mainly Russian systems- including engines and "avionics" (aviation electronics).

## Worship "GOD Alone"

The Perfect Path To Peace, Happiness, & Redemption.

'Islam is NOT a name; it is a description of one's total submission and devotion to God ALONE'

Quran: Sura 2, Verse 136

**Say, "We believe in GOD, and in what was sent down to us, and in what was sent down to Abraham, Ismail, Isaac, Jacob, and the Patriarchs; and in what was given to Moses and Jesus, and all the prophets from their Lord. We make no distinction among any of them. To Him alone we are submitters."**

[www.masjiduntucson.org](http://www.masjiduntucson.org)

[www.submission.org](http://www.submission.org)