

Cabbie feels he is marked for death as police informant

Kamran Mashayekhi, 66, an Iranian-American cab driver from California, says he is "marked for death" after he was tortured when he was exposed as a police informant. Mashayekhi immigrated to the United States in 1959 and finally settled in southern California driving taxis in Orange County. Mashayekhi said many of the passengers he picked up were gang-members and drugdealers. Mashayekhi's days as an informant began between 1999 and 2000, when he picked up a fare at a motel in Anaheim. The cab driver began to suspect a woman at the motel was selling crystal meth to young girls in exchange for them prostituting themselves. Mashayekhi said, "This has to stop. So I called the Anaheim police."

Mashayekhi's father was mayor of Tehran in the 1950s. Mashayekhi himself worked for state broadcasting and was head of its Washington, D.C., bureau before the revolution. For the past several years, Mashayekhi's informing led police in several cities to make arrests—including a child pornography case and a father-son cocaine operation. At the same time, however, Mashayekhi's informing has led him to move from motel to motel every few months, out of fear of the possible consequences of his informing. Two years ago, Mashayekhi was staying at a dive motel in Anaheim when he noticed a group of six or seven men carrying what appeared to be a wrapped up body into a neighboring room. Mashayekhi immediately notified the police. The police arrived soon after and arrested the men. When the police were questioning him, however, Mashayekhi said a familiar woman named Angela walked past and noticed Mashayekhi talking with the police. In mid-November,

Mashayekhi picked up a fare that turned out to be Angela. Angela told Mashayekhi she had just been released from prison and was on parole. She then informed him that she knew he was "a snitch." About a week after that conversation, on November 29, 2007, Mashayekhi said he got a phone call around 7 p.m. from a man who claimed his name was Hector. Hector said he was a friend of Angela's and needed a ride to LAX (Los Angeles International Airport). When Mashayekhi pulled up to the client's house, Hector asked him to help him with his luggage that was in the garage. Once in the garage, Mashayekhi said, the man locked the door, turned up the stereo and told Mashayekhi he knew he was an informer. Hector said they were going to kill him that night. At that point, a second younger looking man—who had a large tattoo covering his torso—entered the garage. The second man sprayed Mashayekhi's palms with an orange paint and used a hammer to hit Mashayekhi on the hand, although Mashayekhi said the hammer did not hit him too hard. According to Mashayekhi, over the next hour and a half he was tortured, beaten and robbed of \$120. Mashayekhi said the men continually threatened they were going to kill him that night. Mashayekhi said Hector—who Mashayekhi assessed to be around 26-years-old, said, "We're going to tie you up, and this guy [the second man] is going to put you in a blanket, take you to the desert and kill you." Mashayekhi told the OC Weekly, "All of a sudden, a phone call came into the kid. The kid was supposed to take me to the desert and kill me. The kid said into the phone, 'You want me to leave now? I'm supposed to take this guy to the desert.' I'm sitting

in my chair listening. I'm petrified, and he's just watching me. Then the kid says to Hector, 'I can't take him to the desert, can you?' He [Hector] said, 'No, I have my family here at the house; I can't leave.' Then the kid left." Mashayekhi said Hector told him that he was going to let him go, but that if he talked with the police, they would kill him. As soon as he was set free, Mashayekhi called the police. He said, "I'm not going to let them run me away. They've got to be punished. They thrive by terrorizing, creating fear in you. They think a victim is not going to the police out of fear of being terrorized again." That night, Buena Park police arrested the man who called himself Hector, but whose real name was Gilbert Carrillo Jr. Carrillo was charged with robbery, false imprisonment, threatening a witness and a possible sentence enhancement for threatening with a deadly weapon—the hammer. Carrillo, who has prior convictions for weapons and drugs, posted \$100,000 bail three weeks later. The second man has not been identified. Mashayekhi said he was once an informant for the Buena Park police, but that an incident that occurred in July 2002, ended that relationship and began a legal battle that did not end for nearly four years. According to a Buena Park police report from July 26, 2002, a woman under surveillance was arrested for drug possession while she was riding in Mashayekhi's cab. Mashayekhi, who was not questioned by the police, informed the police of where he was staying in case they needed to question him later. The police said when the woman was questioned, she said she was on her way to Mashayekhi's room to "party," what she meant was she was going to Mashayekhi's hotel room to do speed—a methamphetamine drug. A few hours later, police showed up at Mashayekhi's room. Mashayekhi and the police disagree on how the police entered the room; Mashayekhi said the police forced entry without a warrant while the police said they were invited in. The police re-

port said the bathroom screen had been taken out, and that outside of the window two "speed" pipes and some plastic baggies were found. Police also said they found four-inch plastic straws for "snorting." The police report also said Mashayekhi had "white residue" underneath his fingernails and on his tongue and had a heart rate of 132 beats per minute. Mashayekhi was charged with drug possession and being under the influence. Mashayekhi, on the other hand, said that after they forced themselves into his hotel room, the police hurled racial slurs and insults at him. He said the police found drug paraphernalia outside of his bathroom window, but that none of it belonged to him. Mashayekhi said his heart rate was up because he had been driving all night long and had taken caffeine pills to stay awake. In his deposition in 2004, Mashayekhi said when he checked into the hotel room that night, none of the rooms had been cleaned but that he was so tired he didn't care. Mashayekhi said a previous guest had even left a bag of miscellaneous belongings and that the hotel was so "cheap and sleazy" that he wouldn't have been surprised to find "dirty needles under the mattress." After his arrest, Mashayekhi refused to plead guilty. Eight months later, the charges were dropped. In 2003, Mashayekhi filed a lawsuit for damages of \$25,000, claiming his civil rights had been violated and that he had been falsely arrested. He also claimed he was denied victim/witness-relocation assistance, even though he told the OC Reporter, "I am marked for death." The district attorney, on the other hand, said Mashayekhi had not completed the required forms. Three years after he filed suit, the case was dismissed. When the Los Angeles Times asked him if he is free of fear, Mashayekhi answered, "No, I'm not free of fear. Are you kidding? I'm extremely in fear. I've never been in fear like this. Imagine being beaten up, bleeding, tied up. Imagine the ride in a blanket to the desert. Visualize that, please."

29 convicts executed in Iran



TEHRAN, Iraq (AP) -- Iranian state television's Web site says 29 people convicted of murder, drug trafficking and other criminal charges have been hanged in Tehran's Evin prison. The Web site says the convicts included people found guilty of murder, rape, armed robbery and drug trafficking. The hangings were carried out after the death verdicts were approved by Iran's Supreme Court. Murder, rape, armed robbery, kidnapping and drug trafficking are all punishable by death under Iran's strict Islamic regime. The hangings bring to more than 100 the number of people executed in Iran so far this year.

U.S. association honors Iranian ophthalmologist

An Iranian ophthalmologist has received an academic award from the American Academy of Ophthalmology. Mohsen Azarmina, who is a faculty member at Shahid Beheshti University of Medical Sciences in Tehran, has conducted research on retinal angiomas and on treatment of blindness due to ethyl alcohol intoxication. The American Academy of Ophthalmology is

one of the world's largest associations of eye physicians and surgeons with more than 27,000 members worldwide. Azarmina was among a group of about 100 physicians from around the world who received the Achievement Award from the Academy. The award recognizes individuals for their contributions to the scientific programs of the Academy.

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Iran Basketball Team...

"people-to-people" relations, and approved the idea, McIntyre said. "Everyone said, 'It's not a bad thing to go, let's go along with it. Sports through diplomacy is not a bad thing,'" McIntyre said. The basketball games in the United States are being played while European teams have been canceling matches with Iran's national soccer team. NBA Commissioner David Stern said in a statement, "In an increasingly turbulent world, it is rewarding to bring people together to celebrate teamwork, discipline and respectful competition on the court." Iran's coach Rajko Toroman said, "The only way to improve these players is to go somewhere and play tough games," noting that all of his players compete professionally in the Iranian League, rather than in more competitive leagues in Europe or the United States. Sama Bahrami, the captain of Iran's national team, said his team was excited about playing against American teams for the experience. "We are just looking for sport and basketball," Bahrami said. "For us, it's great, because everybody knows basketball in the United States. It is the most popular sport.... We just come here to take the experience and play with the good players and improve our odds of our game." Reporters interviewing players after practice in Utah were advised to not ask about politics, and were told that a member of the Iranian delegation would be present for all inter-

views. The Utah Jazz did not name Iran as one of the teams in the annual Rocky Mountain Revue until very late, saying instead that the "FIBA Asian Champion" would play two games in Salt Lake. Iran has planned 28 exhibition games in Italy, Serbia, Croatia, Slovenia, Lithuanian, Australia and China, as well as the United States before the August Olympics. Having started to build the team at the junior level several years ago, they weren't even really targeting the Olympics—53-year-old Coach Toroman, a Serb, was hired just four months before the Asian Championships and after winning was asked to extend his contract not just to accommodate the Beijing Games but also the 2010 World Champions in Turkey. Basketball seems to have become more popular in Iran over the past few years and stars are rising out of the country. Arsalan Kazemi, the 18-year-old captain of the Iranian junior national team moved to North Carolina in February to pursue a basketball career, and has already been offered scholarships from Seton Hall in New Jersey and Oklahoma State. The 6'7" Kazemi, who was born in Esfahan, hopes to become the first Iranian to play college basketball in the U.S. Kazemi says, "When I came here, some people from home told me not to say I was from Iran—because maybe [the Americans] would get mad," he said. "But I'm not scared. Everywhere, I say I'm from Iran, and people are happy and want to help me. Everybody wants to know what happened between Iran and America."

Greece may help Israel beat Iran's anti-aircraft

IranTimes: Greece may have assisted the Israeli Air Force in a military exercise to defeat Russian anti-aircraft missiles of a type both Iran and Greece own. The exercise a few weeks ago over the eastern Mediterranean heightened concerns over a possible preemptive strike by Israel against Iran's



nuclear facilities. Both Israel and Greece pooh-poohed such talk. A pivotal concern in any Israeli air raid on Iran's nuclear installations is the recent delivery to Iran of

S-300 Russian anti-aircraft missiles. Greece has the same Russian S-300 system. Last month, Israel staged military exercises over the island of Crete with the participation of the Greek Air Force, which some analysts believed was an effort to send a public message of its ability to attack Iran's nuclear program. Iran's Natanz nuclear enrichment facility is about the same distance from Israel as Greece. By swarming its jets into the S-300's radar electronics, Israel might have gained valuable information about how to defeat, jam and circumvent the Russian system. The Cutting Edge News reported that Iranian officials complained to Athens after the aerial exercise, but were told by Greek officials that the Greek S-300 batteries were "turned off" during the exercise, according to Greek, Russian and Iranian sources. Those sources expressed skepticism that Greece would "turn off" its critical radar installations and air defense during such an exercise. In October 1985, the Israeli Air Force executed a similar attack involving a 4,800-km round-trip mission to Tunis, where it destroyed Yasser Arafat's Palestine Liberation Organization headquarters—which at that time was seemingly beyond the reach of Israel.

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Woman to carry...

have just started the sport in Iran two years ago," she said. "My goal is to be able to make it to the Asian Games in Guangzhou in 2010 and the London 2012 Olympics," Hosseini said looking to the future. Hosseini was asked to whom she would dedicate any medal she won. She said, "I would dedicate it to my two brothers. They both were martyred in the [Iran-Iraq] war" between 1980 and 1988. "I asked for their help for this qualification, and thinking of them gave me hope and calm. I owe my qualification to them." After the Islamic revolution of 1979, it was impossible for women to compete in international sports competitions, where they would inevitably encounter men as judges and spectators. However, from the early 1990s women began to compete again, helped by a cautious relaxation of dress codes and championing of their cause by Faezeh Hashemi, the daughter of then-President Ali-Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani. Ini-

tially, women began to enter more stationary sports where conservative dress codes would not hinder their performance—such as shooting or archery—but now, women are increasingly competing in a range of sports. Iran's Olympic team includes two other women—Najmeh Abtin in archery and Sara Khoshjama Fekri in taekwondo. Hosseini also participated at the U-23 rowing championship in Germany, which ended last month. Mohsen Shadi—one of the male contestants from Iran—earned the silver medal with a time of 7:30:29, just behind the first place recipient from Ireland. According to the Mehr news agency, this is the first time in history that an Iranian rower has won an international medal. Shadi told the Agency, "The competition was tough. I think from now on I have to concentrate on the Olympics and show my best performance there. I hope I can get a medal at the Olympics." The 2008 Summer Olympics will be held in Beijing between August 8 and 24.