

Beverly Hills TV gets an Iranian (well, sort of)



IranTimes: A new television series reviving the hit show "Beverly Hills 90210" will premier in September, but this version will feature an Iranian student—and that student will be played by an actor of Ecuadorian, Norwegian and Austrian descent. The popular show premiered on the Fox network nearly two decades ago, but many locals pointed out the show did not reflect the reality of Beverly Hills High School; that school is both predominantly Jewish and heavily Iranian. While the original show included two Jewish characters, the show remained far from an actual representation of the school and featured no Iranian students at all. Show biz professionals responded that the TV series wasn't meant to be a documentary. The zip code used in the title isn't even the school's real zip code. But the new version of the show, which will premier on the CW network September 2, has tried to more accurately reflect the demography of Beverly Hills High and has included an Iranian student, Navid Shirazi, played by Michael Steger. Popular culture critic Josh Kun, an associate professor at the University of Southern California's Annenberg School for Communication, noted that television is never—nor should it be—a realistic take on life. "Part of the fun of '90210' is watching a show that's obviously about fantasy," he said. "TV is never about realism. It's about playing reality to the choir of fantasy." Shirley Eshaghian, a 21-year-old Iranian Jew who is eagerly anticipating the season premier, said she is particularly interested in seeing how the series portrays Navid Shirazi, who runs the school's student TV station. "I just hope that they don't play on stereotypes," she said. "I hope people can maybe see into the culture." Even with the addition of the Iranian character, "90210" is still far more fiction than reality. In fact, the real Beverly Hills High is in the 90212

zip code. Whether an Ecuadorian-Norwegian Austrian can get inside an Iranian's skin remains to be seen. The producers of "House of Sand and Fog" specifically looked for an Iranian woman to play the lead female role—thereby launching Shohreh Aghdashloo's second career. But casting actors to portray characters of different cultural and/or religious backgrounds is actually the norm. In fact, according to Gabrielle Carteris, a Jewish actress who portrayed a Jewish character on the original "Beverly Hills 90210"—the brainy Andrea Zuckerman—the show's producers had no idea she was Jewish when they hired her to portray the school newspaper editor from the wrong side of the tracks. When Carteris, who is now in her 40s, showed up on the set wearing a Star of David around her neck, the network honchos objected. They called her into their office, she said, and asked her to remove the Jewish symbol. "The executives said that 'Middle America' really doesn't want to see it," Carteris said in an interview with the Forward. "'Middle America' is a phrase that is always used in this industry. I want to know, who is this 'Middle America'?" Carteris, who is a member of Temple Beth Hillel—a Reform synagogue in Valley Village, California—refused to take off the Star of David unless the other cast members were also required to remove their crosses; the executives responded by prohibiting any of the cast members from wearing religious jewelry on the set. But Amy Spies, the executive story editor of the original "Beverly Hills 90210," said that times have changed since she worked on the show in the 1990s. "Because of cable, there have been all kinds of diverse, ethnic shows," said Spies, citing "The Sopranos" as an example. "It's much more the norm now to have more accurate representations of their world."

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Minister...

Tavakkoli, a powerful conservative deputy who has parted ways with Ahmadinejad. The Interior Ministry issued a written statement asserting that Kordan had indeed received an honorary doctorate from Oxford. But Ahmadi-nejad did not argue Kordan was telling the truth. He just dismissed academic credentials as "worthless" pieces of paper of no importance to him. Ahmadi-nejad himself holds a doctorate in civil engineering, likes to be addressed as "doctor," and describes his profession as that of teacher for the many university engineering courses he has taught. The Interior Ministry produced photocopies of the degree in an effort to demonstrate its authenticity. But that did not help matters. The document has misspellings, impossible phrasing and simple typos. The word "entitled" was misspelled "intitled." The document said Kordan was granted the degree "to be benefited from its scientific privileges." Leaving out

spaces after several commas, the mangled English prose asserted that Kordan "has shown a great effort in preparing educational materials and his research in the domain of comparative law, that has opened a new chapter, not only in our university, but, to our knowledge, in this country." Majlis Speaker Ali Larijani has directed Ali Abbaspur, the chairman of the Majlis Education Committee, to lead a probe into the authenticity of Kordan's doctorate. Kordan was Larijani's deputy while Larijani headed state broadcasting. Kordan was believed to be a compromise choice for interior minister, chosen because Ahmadi-nejad could work with him and Larijani would help win his approval by the Majlis. The New York Sun editorialized on the degree issue, saying: "What's illuminating is the way in which even the most implacable enemies of the West seek the validation of a Western university degree. No American political candidate in his right mind would fake a degree from an Iranian theological seminary, yet in Iranian politics an Oxford degree is apparently considered an asset rather than a liability."

Student wins prize for 'Magic Tricycle' design

IranTimes: A Tehran University masters student has received first prize from Car Design News for his "Magic Tricycle" design that transforms a fully functional motorcycle into a tricycle. The Magic Tricycle, designed by Seyyed Javad Ghaffarian, is an unique concept in that it can ride on three wheels—as a tricycle—or upright on two wheels—as a motorcycle. Ghaffarian's design moves on all three wheels for normal highway use, but can rotate around its longitudinal axis running from the front to the rear right wheel with the left wheel elevated and stabilized by blades

which work like a helicopter tail propeller. The Iranian student explained that the seats of the vehicle also rotate to keep passengers in an upright position. Ghaffarian, who won the student category prize for his unique design, described the design process, saying, "One of the biggest challenges in this concept was designing it in such a way to be beautiful, attractive and harmonic in both its two shapes." Car Design News is the leading online magazine for automotive design industry professionals, transportation design students and design enthusiasts worldwide.

Stoning may be outlawed

IranTimes: The Judiciary has decided to ask the Majlis to abolish stoning permanently in the law. According to the daily Etemad, Judiciary spokesman Ali-Reza Jamshidi said the punishment of stoning has been dropped from the latest version of the Islamic penal code bill that is being drafted for submission to the Majlis. The bill has, however, undergone frequent modifications as it has been discussed in the Judiciary for more than a year, so it isn't certain that the stoning provision will not be changed before the final draft is submitted. Jamshidi did not explain on what basis the Judiciary of the Islamic Republic proposes to abolish stoning. Stoning is not common in Iran, but there have been a few instances each year under the Islamic Republic since the revolutionary regime revived the practice. Many senior clergy have argued for years that stoning is not mentioned in the Quran or the hadith of the Prophet Mohammed and therefore is not an appropriate punishment. Stoning originally was used by the ancient Jews as a punishment for an adulteress. In the early centuries of Islam, stoning was one of many Jewish legal traditions that Islamic jurists borrowed, although it is unclear whether it ever became a widespread practice among Muslims. But the mere mention of stoning as a form of punishment used 1,000 years ago gave it an aura of authenticity among 20th Century thinkers seeking to substitute "traditional" Islamic punishments for "un-Islamic" criminal codes imported from Europe. Officials in Iran recognize that stoning subjects the regime to much criticism, not only in the Western world but also from within the Islamic world. In December 2002, Judiciary Chairman Mahmud Hashemi-Shahrudi imposed a moratorium on stonings; the moratorium was initially announced only to EU officials who had come to Iran to protest stoning. The EU had previously said stoning was at the top of its human rights agenda. Some officials said the 2002 Judiciary order halted stonings; others said it sus-



pending stonings "for awhile." The text of the directive has never been announced. But there was no public opposition when the halt/suspension was announced. In fact, some clerics even praised the announcement. Last July, however, Jamshidi, the Judiciary's official spokesman, announced that Jafar Kiani had been stoned to death in a small village in Qazvin province for adultery committed 11 years earlier. Shahrudi's office swiftly announced that Shahrudi had not approved the stoning. It has never been made clear if the local provincial judge acted on his own authority (no announcement that he was disciplined has ever been made) or if Shahrudi was overruled (and only Supreme Leader Ali Khamenehi can overrule him). But a Tehran judge said Shahrudi intervened to prevent the stoning of the woman convicted of adultery with Kiani. Western human rights groups launched a new campaign against stoning last month. They reported that eight women and one man were under sentence of stoning. In what appeared to be a reaction, Jamshidi announced that four of those sentences had been converted to lesser sentences and the other five were under review. Stoning is prescribed only for the crime of adultery. A man is buried up to his neck and a woman up to her chest before the community is brought in to cast stones until the convicted person dies.

Top Obama aide born in Shiraz

IranTimes: One of Barack Obama's closest aides is a Chicago politico who was born in Shiraz and lived there long enough to much prefer winters there to Chicago's. Valerie Jarrett, 51, is that Shiraz transplant. Her father was James Bowman, an African-American physician from Chicago who moved to Iran in the 1950s to help set up Nemazee Hospital in Shiraz. While there, he met and married a Chicago woman, Barbara, who was working as a childhood development specialist at the hospital. Their only child, Valerie, was the second child born at Nemazee Hospital. The family lived in Shiraz until 1961, when Valerie was five years old. She told National Public Radio she remembers the city very fondly. The first thing she recalled was the "beautiful weather—not like Chicago in the winter." Jarrett is commonly considered the closest aide to Obama in his presidential campaign. She is known as "the other side of Barack's brain" for her ability to anticipate where he is going. Recalling her childhood, she told the Chicago Tribune, "Every memory from Iran is a very happy memory." She said she loved the food: "it is where my life-long love of rice and lamb began." She found the people very welcoming. She appreciated that she and her family were received as Americans rather than

as black Americans. In that sense, she is much like Obama himself who went to elementary school in Indonesia where he also was identified more by his nationality than his race. Jarrett first became involved in Chicago politics in 1987 with Mayor Harold Washington, Chicago's first black mayor. She continued to work for succeeding mayors, including the incumbent white mayor, Richard Daley. She has served as chairman of the Chicago Transit Authority, a member of the Federal Reserve Bank of Chicago and chairman of the Chicago Stock Exchange in the last decade. Last year, she became CEO of her own real estate development firm in Chicago, The Habitat Company. While she is the ultimate insider with the Obama campaign, she does not work full time on the campaign. Her title is simply "senior adviser." Her great-uncle is Vernon Jordan. Her links to Obama go back to 1991 when Obama first entered politics in Chicago. Jarrett was a psychology major at Stanford University and then earned a law degree from the University of Michigan. She got married to Dr. William Jarrett, had a daughter and joined a major corporate law firm specializing in commercial real estate. But the marriage fell apart in four years. And that was when Jarrett discovered politics.

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Philadelphia...

general as required and made false statements to federal officials, the prosecutors said. The federal indictment against Amirnazmi says he sent computer software along with other materials to four companies in Iran, agreeing to provide foreign equipment and chemicals in a joint venture with one Iranian firm to build a chemical plant in Iran. TTC's Web site lists Amirnazmi, a chemical engineering graduate of the University of Tehran and Stanford University, as the founder

and president of the company, and Saber Amirnazmi, 61, as a cofounder and board member. Established in 1981, TTC specializes in software for "chemical process industries," the company's website says. According to Dun & Bradstreet, a provider of international and U.S. business credit reports, TTC has 23 employees and annual sales between \$1 million and \$2.5 million. Patty Hartman, a spokesperson for the U.S. Attorney's Office in Philadelphia, said Amirnazmi would remain in custody at least until a detention hearing could be scheduled. If convicted, Amirnazmi faces a maximum sentence of 115 years in prison and a fine of up to \$5.5 million.

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با ۱۷ سال انتشار متوالی

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