



SPECIAL INVESTIGATIONS

Illegal CCTV

As part of our special series, *The Voice* gets eyes on Vancouver's surveillance oversights. **P7**



AT LARGE

Unleashed

North Van pups and their owners are finally getting a taste of urban freedom. **P4**

ONLINE SPECIAL

Arson aftermath

As more details emerge, stay tuned online for our ongoing coverage. langaravoice.ca



the daily Voice

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Syrian refugees struggle to resettle

Investigation reveals ongoing hardships faced by immigrants

■ By **KELSEA FRANZKE, KIRSTEN CLARKE & ADAM LEVI**

Before arriving in Canada, Hasne Omer had never worked.

Omer, 59, arrived in Vancouver from Istanbul in May 2016 as a government-assisted Syrian refugee with her husband and three of her children, as part of the largest refugee resettlement in Canadian history.

As if having her life uprooted due to the ongoing conflicts in Syria wasn't traumatic enough, she then had to face the struggles of integrating into Canadian culture, which in some cases starkly contrasts to life in Syria.

"Traditionally [Syrian women] come from a background where husbands are the income generators for the family, and women stay at home," said Nihal Elwan, who comes from Egypt and runs Tayybeh, a Vancouver-based catering company.

While some refugees have adjusted with few problems, many still struggle with being separated from their families, and to find housing and employment, according to *The Voice's* investigation.

Now Omer works as a cook for Tayybeh, providing income to her family, which flips traditional gender roles. Omer, with Elwan translating from Arabic, said that it's difficult for her sons to find work because they require daily medical treatment.

"Both of my boys have kidney failure, so they have to do dialysis every night. That complicates things in terms of being able to find a job," Omer said.

Three months after her arrival, Omer met Nihal Elwan through the Immigrant Services Society of B.C. In October of that year, Elwan launched the first pop-up dinner of Tayybeh, which has now expanded to catering events and parties around Canada. Elwan only employs Syrian women, who cook and plan the Tayybeh menus.

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EXCLUSIVE

Langara arson attack

Langara student Nasradin Abdusamad Ali appeared in court Tuesday, charged with arson and possession of incendiary devices. *RENA MEDOW ILLUSTRATION*

Fires a 'thank you gift'

Arson suspect's terrifying email reveals attack was targeted

■ By **PATRICK PENNER**

An email written by the man charged with the arson attacks at Langara College seemed to indicate the incendiary devices detonated on campus were directed at a chemistry instructor and the one member of the college's administration. Nasradin Abdusamad Ali is alleged to have carried at least three incendiary devices into Langara's T Building on April 1, and set fires to the second and fifth floors. The building was filled with students in class and writing exams.

The email, obtained by *The Voice*, was sent to the teacher shortly after the fires were set in the T Building. It referred to one college administrator. "I gave [the administrator] some thank you gift today with fires in the

hall in T building, shes lucky i was nice guy not to take severe revenge," the email read. "This is most likely my last day at lanagara!"

The entire campus was evacuated by heavily armed VPD units to conduct a security sweep. No one was injured.

The Voice has decided not to publish the name of Ali's teacher's or the administrator because of safety concerns. The fire set on the fifth floor was a mere five metres behind the teacher's office.

"This was right outside my office. I get the message. I don't want to aggravate or worsen or remind him

of who I am... I don't want him to remember me at all."

The teacher described Ali as a "somewhat neurotic" but friendly student.

But a month prior to the fires, the teacher said he broke up a fight between Ali and another student,

"Shes lucky i was nice guy not to take severe revenge."

— **NASRADIN ABDUSAMAD ALI, LANGARA STUDENT**

allegedly sparked by a comment the other student made during class.

According to the teacher, his class was suddenly

disrupted by two students on the verge of a brawl and were standing "nose to nose."

The instructor said he immediately separated Ali and the other student,

whose face was bleeding. The teacher said he told Ali to go home.

Afterward, the teacher said he reported the incident to the college administration, and was told Ali was prohibited from coming to class and would write his exams in another office.

The administration was not available for comment by the time of publication.

The teacher spoke of another incident he had heard about, involving another of his students. *The Voice* contacted the student, who confirmed he'd also had an altercation with Ali but declined to be interviewed.

In January of 2018, Ali was charged with uttering threats and theft under \$5000. Those charges were stayed.

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