



WOLFMAN
P R O D U C T I O N S



Haider Hamza

Meet an Iraqi

Twenty-four year old Iraqi journalist Haider Hamza lived through the 2003 US-led invasion of his country with his family near Babylon, south of Baghdad.

Being the son of a diplomat, Haider was born in Germany and grew up in East Africa and Europe. When he turned twelve, he moved back with his family to their hometown, Baghdad. Haider finished high school in Iraq and graduated from Baghdad University in 2006. One year later, he won a Fulbright scholarship and moved to the United States to obtain a master's degree in global security and conflict resolution.

When he was a teenager, Haider worked with the Iraqi Ministry of Information, talking to visiting dignitaries and foreign reporters. A few days after the end of major combat operations in 2003, he decided to join the mainstream media covering the world's focus on news of his country. At the age of nineteen he worked as a TV producer and photo editor for some of the world largest news agencies and networks including Reuters, ABC News and others.

While in Iraq, Haider covered all the major events that took place in his country and witnessed their formation. These events include, live coverage of all 40 trial sessions of his former president Saddam Hussein from inside the courtroom, witnessing the killing of Saddam's sons, the bombing of the holy shrines in Samara, the elections and referendum, establishment of his country's new governments and political cabinet, the killing of al Qaeda leader, Abu Mussab al Zarqawi and the daily sectarian violence. For months, Haider was embedded with U.S. military units covering combat operations throughout Iraq. He also covered the perspective of Iraqi armed resistance as a freelance journalist to learn more about their mind set, goals and the reality of who they really are.

As life became more and more dangerous in Iraq, Haider was arrested, shot at, and held captive. He also lost several friends and family. Haider wanted to stay in his home country but he also wanted to live. Haider says, "At some point I realized that it is more important to live for a cause than to die for one."

Soon after he left Iraq, his family received death threats for sending their son to America. They fled overnight to a refugee camp where most of them are still living after losing their jobs, home and many relatives and friends.

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New to America and wanting to understand what the American people felt about their country's involvement in Iraq, Haider decided to travel across the US to talk to people about the war. He drove through 35 states setting up a mobile booth with a sign that says "Talk to an Iraqi."

Haider said, "I always wondered, what do people in American know of what is happening and do they feel responsible...did this war change their lives at all, since it has for sure changed ours dramatically."

Part of Haider's journey was aired on NPR and Showtime's "This American Life".

Haider's powerful and fascinating lecture includes poignant and touching film clips from his road trip in America, a slide of photos he took of post-war Iraq, thoughts on the conflict in his country, the presence of US troops there, his personal struggle to heal the wounds of oppression and commitment today to raise awareness among the young people and send messages of peace and reconciliation.

Haider has been committed to helping Iraqi widows and orphans who were displaced by violence. Through his family and a network of friends, he hands out 50% of his earnings as a speaker to those in urgent and imminent need.