



Not very many people in Egypt missed the events of Friday, Jan. 28, but Sobhi Saleh did. He spent Thursday evening working on a speech that he planned to give the next day. He went to bed at midnight, then woke at 1:30 a.m. to insistent knocking.

When he opened the door, he was face to face with a plainclothes police officer. Two more in uniform, and then four more plainclothes men, followed the leader into the apartment. They insisted on looking through his library, in his bedroom; Saleh woke his wife and asked her to leave the room.

The officers seized his laptop, searched briefcases, took some of his papers and then took him. "I closed the door to my daughter's room," he told me. "I didn't want them to wake her." He had been to jail before.

He had the impression the officers were in a hurry. There were two cars waiting downstairs. After questioning at a police station in Alexandria, he and two colleagues from the Brotherhood were taken on a desert road leading to Cairo.

As a lawyer, Saleh knew that they were not technically under arrest, knew that they had not been charged and that when they arrived they were not in a prison but on some security base. "Then we understood that we were kidnapped," he explained. "We were not protected by anyone. This is a place where you are just kept."

There were 34 members of the Muslim Brotherhood from all over the country there. They slept on the floor. "They just locked the door and left," he says. "We thought maybe someone would come and shoot us and leave us in the desert. No one knew about us. No one knew where we were."

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