



On the charts that the American military provides, those numbers are seen as success, from nearly 4,000 dead in one month in 2006 to the few hundred today. The Interior Ministry offers its own toll of war — 72,124 since 2003, a number too precise to be true. At the morgue, more than 20,000 of the dead, which even sober estimates suggest total 100,000 or more, are still unidentified.

This number had a name, though. No. 5061 was Muhammad Jassem Bouhan al-Izzawi, father, son and brother. At 9 a.m., on that Sunday, Aug. 15, his family left the morgue in a white Nissan and set out to find his body in a city torn between remembering and forgetting, where death haunts a country neither at war nor peace.

There is a notion in Islamic thought called *taqiya*, in which believers can conceal their faith in the face of persecution. Hamid's family, Sunnis in the predominantly Shiite neighborhood of New Baghdad, engaged in their own.

As sectarian killings intensified in 2005 and Shiite militias stepped up attacks, they hung two posters of Shiite saints near the apartment's windows, shattered in car bombings and patched with cardboard. To strangers, they changed their tribal name from Izzawi to Mujahadi, hoping to blend in. They learned not to say, "Salaam aleikum" — peace be upon you — in farewell, as more devout Sunnis will do.

Burly and bearded, Muhammad was the most devout in the family, and perhaps the least discreet. He allowed himself American action films, "Van Damme and Arnold," his brother recalled. But his routine was ordered by the call to prayer, bringing him five times a day to the Arafat Mosque.

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For Iraqis, Victims of War Are So Much More Than Numbers

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