

# No Want Me: Skit #1

## *A skit about working with refugees*

*A Christian (Paul) from a local church has become involved in refugee ministry. The refugee he's befriended (Assaf) was a lawyer in Iraq before coming to America. They are sitting at Starbucks, perhaps for the second time. Paul is smiling, enthusiastic. Assaf's manner is more "matter of fact."*

**Paul:** [with a big smile] **So, Assaf, how are you?**

Assaf: [a bit fearful] Good, good. Yes. Thanks God.

**Paul:** **How has your week been?**

Assaf: It's good. Fine, thank you.

**Paul:** **How is your family? How is your wife, what is her name again?**

Assaf: Family is good. My wife, Fayruz, started last week ... working at day-care center for children ... Helping with the children.

**Paul:** **Man, that's awesome! You guys are starting right in on the American Dream. How's her English coming?**

Assaf: Slowly, slowly ... a little better. My children are helping her.

**Paul:** **Okay, well, I know she'll keep getting better. ... How is your job search going?**

Assaf: Good. ... Yes.

**Paul:** **Really? You have found a job?**

Assaf: [nodding head right to left] Mmmm ... No. ... *But* ... many applications, many places.

**Paul:** **Dude, what are they telling you?**

Assaf: [Puzzled] ... What you mean by *Dude*?

**Paul:** **Oh sorry, when you apply for jobs what are they telling you?**

Assaf: You know, my background—*I was lawyer in Iraq, very good lawyer before the invasion.*

But here? ... Even at Publix food store—they very nice to me. But I am here, they say ... overqualified. Professional person not for cleaning floors. They no want me.

**Paul:** **Oh well. Hey, you know what they say; *when life gives you lemons ...***

Assaf: [staring, puzzled] ... Yes, lemons are good in my country.

**Paul:** **Oh, you didn't understand what I was saying. Sorry about that, bro. ... What I meant to say is that when you have problems, challenges, setbacks, you gotta stay optimistic. When things go bad for me I have learned that you gotta roll with the punches. You know, the Bible says all things work together for good!**

Assaf: [staring, puzzled] ... What you mean "roll the punches"?

**Paul:** **Oh, never mind. Hey, Assaf, it's really great to see you. I gotta go. Glad you and your wife are making progress!**

Assaf: [looking confused] ... Okay, good to see you. Bye bye.

**Paul:** **Hey, before I go, I just thought of a great idea, Assaf. I'm part of the Optimist Club here in Tucson! We have a great time getting together and just being optimistic about life. Want to join me next Monday at noon? You're not working anyway right? Hey, just think about it! Okay, see ya!**

Assaf: [waving, still seated, barely smiling] Good bye.

# **No Want Me: Skit #2**

## *A skit about working with refugees*

*A Christian (Paul) from a local church has become involved in refugee ministry. The refugee he's befriended (Assaf) was a lawyer in Iraq before coming to America. They are sitting at Starbucks, perhaps for the second time. Paul is smiling but less enthusiastic than in Skit #1. Assaf's manner is more "matter of fact" at the beginning, but as the conversation progresses, he becomes more animated.*

**Paul: So, how are you?**

Assaf: Hello, Paul! Good, good. Thanks God.

**Paul: How has your week been?**

Assaf: It's good. Fine, thank you.

**Paul: How is your family? How is your wife, Fayruz?**

Assaf: They are good. My wife started last week ... working at day-care center for children ... Helping with the children.

**Paul: That is certainly a step in the right direction. How's her English coming?**

Assaf: Slowly, slowly ... a little better. My children are helping her.

**Paul: Okay, well, I know she'll keep getting better. But it is difficult to learn another language, especially as an adult. ... Assaf, how is your job search going?**

Assaf: Good. ... Yes.

**Paul: Really? You have found a job?**

Assaf: [nodding head right to left] Mmmm ... No. ... *But* ... many applications, many places.

**Paul: What is going on? When you apply for a job what are they telling you?**

Assaf: You know, my background—*I was lawyer in Iraq, very good lawyer before the invasion.* But here? ... Even at Publix food store—they very nice to me. But I am here, they say ... overqualified. Professional person not for cleaning floors. They no want me.

**Paul: You were a lawyer in Iraq? Wow, how interesting! Tell me about your work there.**

Assaf: You want to know about my work as a lawyer? Yes?

**Paul: Yes, Assaf, for sure I want to know. Where did you go to law school? What kind of law did you practice? Did you have your own firm—or were you part of a large company?**

Assaf: [smiling and excited] ... You know, there are 21 law school in Iraq. And I went to the best—University of Baghdad. Out of 54 students in my class, I graduated number six in 1985. Thanks God. I got specialty in business and commerce law. I loved my work. We had to be careful under Saddam, of course, that everything we did was according to his aims. But still, the work was good, and I lived in one of the best neighborhoods in my city of Baghdad. Life was mostly good. My parents, friends, children all gave me much honor and respect and ...

**Paul: So what happened after the war started?**

Assaf: Let me tell you, we had different people from different faiths in our company—Sunni, Christian—even some Shiite. But this was under Saddam. Believe it our not, we all were polite to one another and we worked together with good respect. Then after invasion by USA, the old religious fighting started again. No one trusted the other man, unless we were from same religion. The business became dry because of the war. It all came falling down,

including the law firm. I went from very honorable job to nothing. It was like you say ... chaos? Still my parents and family knew who I was.

**Paul:** **Assaf, I cannot believe this. So here, you would like to be a lawyer, but you do not know the law and the language and**

Assaf: Please, Paul, it is okay. Over the years, I lost eight people in my big family from the war. Believe me, I am happy to be here in safety with my wife and children. Thanks God. But I miss my profession my colleagues. I miss my city and my people in Baghdad.

**Paul:** **Well you should know that in America, to be a lawyer is to be in a very honorable work, honorable profession. So I appreciate all the work you went through to study and become a lawyer in Iraq.**

Assaf: [smiling] Thank you. You are the first American I have talked to about this. Thank you. It is a good thing for my heart to talk with you.

**Paul:** **Assaf, I have to go now, but I am so glad you talked with me about your life in Iraq as a lawyer. Thank you for speaking with me from your heart.**

Assaf: Thanks God. Can we meet again next week? I have another job interview this Friday.

**Paul:** **Assaf, I will pray that God out of his grace will provide a job for you soon. See you next week. You know, I really enjoyed our time together today.**

Assaf: [waving, still seated, and smiling!] Yes, I need to go also. I thanks God for our time today.

*Together, Paul and Assaf walk out the door. Just outside the door, they have a final exchange, and the friend puts his hand on Assaf's shoulder and prays for him.*

**Paul:** **Assaf, I would like to pray for you right now; could I do that?**

Assaf: Yes ... Please.

**Paul:** **Dear God in heaven, thank you for this talk that Assaf and I have had today. Thank you for his wife Fayruz and their children. Thank you for honoring Assaf in Iraq with the profession of being a lawyer. Please help Assaf in his new life here in America. May you give your wisdom to Assaf as he seeks another job. Please bless Assaf and his family. In Jesus' name, amen.**

Assaf: [With quiet emotion] Ameen! Thank you, Paul ... and thanks God. See you next week? I hope, yes!

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### Principles concerning honor and shame to keep in mind:

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1. There are two sources of honor:
  - **Ascribed honor:** refers to the granting of respect given to a person based upon family, kinship, name, title, government, politics.
  - **Achieved honor:** refers to the granting of respect based on competition, warfare, aggression, envy, athletic competition, or "social games of push-and-shove".
2. When working with refugees, it is important to be sensitive to the loss of both ascribed and achieved honor. Part of culture shock is the lack of being known, and refugees feel this lack. It may be good for your friendship to affirm "who they were" in their previous station in life.
3. At some future meeting, consider reviewing the story of Abraham. Ponder together the honor and identity which Abram left behind when he obeyed God, who told him, "...Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you" (Genesis 12:1 ESV).