



**SPORTS**  
**UH survives scare from Tulsa**  
 The Cougars stop the Golden Hurricane at the goal line on the game's final play to preserve a 38-31 win. **PAGE C1**

# HOUSTON CHRONICLE

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Partly cloudy; High 90. Low 72

## Dems gaining in north Harris

Suburban shift seen as spurred by changing makeup

By Mihir Zaveri and Matt Dempsey

Lauchanne Graham bought a two-story home in the Alascosita area about a year ago, and she learned from her Realtor that she was one of dozens of single black women who'd recently moved there.

Graham, 35, relocated from Hawaii to study at the Veterinary Technology Institute in Houston — her dream is to work with dogs.

Now, she is part of a political transformation in Houston's northern suburbs, where wide swaths are increasingly becoming Democratic Party strongholds.

Weeks ahead of the November 2016 election, the Houston Chronicle analyzed three presidential elections' worth of voter data to look at how the political landscape is changing across the region.

Latino continues on A12

### More coverage

» Trump again claims the election is rigged. **Page A2**  
 » Latino Republicans to gather in Las Vegas. **Page A3**  
 » Energy interests not giving as usual to GOP ticket. **Page B1**

## Past forces Clinton to keep quiet amid furor

By Amy Chozick  
 NEW YORK TIMES

In the past week, as a swirl of sexual assault accusations against Donald Trump has prompted a loud national discussion about male power and women's rights, the first woman to be a major party's presidential nominee was barely heard from.

Though Hillary Clinton has stood at the center of feminist debates for more than two decades, she has at times been an imperfect messenger for the cause. That has never been more apparent than now, as her old missteps and her husband's history have effectively paralyzed her during a moment of widespread outrage.

The most impassioned speeches on the topic have

Clinton continues on A12

A story in three chapters

# 55 minutes

FOR NEARLY AN HOUR IN MAY,  
 AN UNSTABLE MAN FIRED AT WILL



By Lauren Caruba

On a Sunday morning in late May, Denise Slaughter and Diane Zvara left to meet friends for brunch and drove up to the stop sign at West Gaywood and Memorial.

Across the street and to their left, flames licked the gas pumps at the Conoco station. Black smoke billowed into the sky. "Diane, look," Denise said. "The thing's on fire."

Then the driver's side window shattered.

Denise thought the gas station had exploded. But as she turned right onto Memorial Drive, away from the flames, her left leg suddenly felt as if it were on fire, too. It wasn't an explosion, she realized. She'd been shot. Blood soon spurted from her leg, through her white jeans, and Diane reached over, instinctively, to plug the hole with her thumb.

The women had driven right into the gunman's path. He'd been shooting for about a half-hour before he hit their car, and his rampage would continue for 30 minutes more. Armed with a pistol and an AR-15 rifle, he took over an auto body shop and ranted about Wal-Mart, Jews and gay people as he fired off 212 bullets, the first at an unsuspecting customer waiting for a car wash and then indiscriminately at passers-by. When it was over, two people were dead and six others, including two

deputies, had been shot. It appears to have been Houston's first public mass shooting in the modern era. Four months later, a strikingly similar scenario played out only 12 miles away.

On that Memorial Day weekend, Houston Police Department officers and Harris County Precinct 5 deputies converged on the scene, drawing fire as they tried to contain the shooter. Residents in the Memorial area dialed 911 with frantic reports of suspects, shots fired and people injured.

Denise and Diane weren't the only ones to drive into harm's way, as side streets weren't cordoned off, and warnings weren't issued until after the shooter was killed.

Armed residents, the flood of emergency calls and the sounds of different calibers firing in all directions introduced confusion for authori-

ties, who initially suspected a second gunman and possibly a third.

As mass shootings become almost routine across the country, a question arises: How can we ever truly be prepared for this?

□□□

One street over, Brian Cesak was in his kitchen, reading the newspaper, when the first shots rang out at 10:15 a.m.

"Stay here," he told his mother. "That's

55 minutes continues on A16

**TODAY**  
 Shots fired  
**MONDAY**  
 The rampage continues  
**TUESDAY**  
 Survivors and a sequel

For the online presentation, go to [HoustonChronicle.com/55minutes](http://HoustonChronicle.com/55minutes)

Stray bullets hit the pumps at the Conoco station on Memorial Drive (above), which burst into flames. The shooter positioned himself at the tire shop next door.

Photo illustration / Photo by Steve Gonzales / Houston Chronicle

## Terror hitting close to home

Plots hatched here, across nation draw investigators' focus

By Gabrielle Banks

The young father stashed circuitry components, a soldering iron and wireless remotes in his west Houston apartment with plans to detonate homemade bombs in local shopping malls, according to court documents.

He trained with an AK-47 on a farm outside Houston, swore an oath to the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant, and wanted to become a martyr, a federal investigator testified in court.

"I will make a widow of you," he told his wife in a conversation intercepted by federal authorities. "You will get a phone call with news of my death."

The federal investigation of Omar Faraj Saeed Al Hardan — one of two unrelated terrorism cases filed in Houston — is part of a broad new effort by federal law enforcement across the country to root out low-level, home-hatched terror plots before they move "from flash to bang," as one anti-terrorism expert said.

Homegrown continues on A23

## Big-stakes divorce goes public

\$400 billion award overturned amid claims of deceit

By Maggie Gordon

When a Galveston judge ruled in Winnie Alwazzan's favor two years ago, almost no one heard about her divorce case — even though she was awarded more than \$400 million.

Among those who didn't know about the case, lawyers contend, was Winnie's estranged husband, Isa Alwazzan, who for the past several years has been living in the Kingdom of Bahrain.

Now, amid claims that Winnie and her lawyers engaged in shady legal practices, that ruling has been overturned on jurisdictional grounds. And legally, Winnie and Isa are again married.

With interest bringing the stakes to a half-billion dollars, Winnie's lawyers

Husband continues on A21

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FROM THE COVER

# Husband wants wife's legal team sanctioned

Husband from page A1

promise a new round of legal wrangling.

Divorce cases the size of the Alwazzans' are not unheard of in Texas, but usually, cases in the hundreds-of-millions range settle quietly rather than going to court.

"What's incredibly rare to me is the fact that it's become public," said Scott Downing, a Dallas attorney who specializes in big-dollar divorces but isn't connected to this one. When such cases become public, he said, it often means that the parties are motivated by something other than money.

## From rich to poor

Winnie Stacey met Isa Alwazzan when they were both students at Lamar University. She was from Mobile, Ala. He was from Bahrain but had been educated in boarding schools abroad. Isa was rich: His father died when he was a child, and he'd inherited a share of the family company, International Agencies Co. Ltd., or Intercol, based in Bahrain. Originally a shipping company, it has expanded over the years to include a wild array of divisions, including marketing, water treatment and "general medicals." Isa's lawyers declined to say what Intercol is worth, but Winnie's lawyers say it's \$5 billion, and that Isa's 16 percent stake works out to \$800 million.

At any rate, after Isa and Winnie were married in 1985, the couple and their three children lived comfortably. In Magnolia, a town north of Houston in Montgomery County, they owned an 8,500-square-foot house just off a golf course. Their kids attended a tony Christian school.

"We always had a nice home," Winnie said, sitting at a conference table in Tomball next to her lawyer, Jared Woodfill. "We'd always had nice cars. We had money, just to put it bluntly."

But in 2011, after 27 years of marriage, Winnie said that Isa cast her aside for another woman. After Isa packed a tiny duffel bag and left in the middle of the day, Winnie's financial world crashed abruptly, she said. She couldn't af-



Melissa Phillip / Houston Chronicle

**Winnie Alwazzan's standing to file her divorce case in Galveston County is in contention. She says she lives in a condo in Galveston, but her husband's lawyers say she has been "forum shopping" to seek a more favorable outcome.**

Winnie is entitled to half of Isa's share. He asked the court in Montgomery County to "nonsuit," or cancel, that settlement.

"It only dealt with half the case," he said. "When I saw it, it left blank any interest he owned or potentially owned in Intercol."

According to Isa's lawyer, Robert Clements, Woodfill began quietly moving the case from court to court in hopes that a new judge would rule more heavily in Winnie's favor.

"This is textbook forum shopping," said Clements. "People that I've told, who aren't even lawyers, immediately, they're like, 'That's forum shopping!'"

Woodfill and Winnie say that's not the case at all — that they filed each new suit in a different court for a reason.

On Feb. 7, 2012, Woodfill filed Winnie's new petition for divorce in Harris County, where she'd recently moved to the trailer. That suit named Intercol. While the case was working its way through the court, Isa left for Bahrain. Winnie testified she last saw him on April 24, 2012.

That December, the Harris County court awarded her \$3.4 million plus property, including a condo in Galveston, a 10-acre parcel of land in Hockley, and timeshares in Tahoe, Calif., South Padre and Lake Conroe. Intercol never responded, and a judgment against the company was denied. Only Isa



**Isa Alwazzan, who was once a member of the Magnolia Volunteer Fire Department, now lives in Bahrain. He contends he was never notified of the new divorce case. Believing the divorce had been settled, he remarried.**

Janice Smith

was held liable.

"\$3.4 million, that's not a shabby judgment," said Woodfill. "It's a good-sized judgment, if you ask me."

But they'd listed the wrong address for Intercol — accidentally, Woodfill said. So Winnie then had to make a decision. Should they move forward with an appeal, which would take years and could risk the entire case being overturned? Or should they nonsuit and refile?

## Moved to Galveston

Again, in April 2013, Winnie's lawyers nonsuited.

That same day, they filed a new suit in Galveston County, claiming that Winnie had since moved to the couple's condo there.

Woodfill and Winnie

signed another in Harris County vowing to give him notice of the nonsuit.

"Those two statements can't both be true," Clements said. Either she knew how to reach him or she didn't.

## Residence in question

Whether Winnie had standing to file in Galveston is another sticky issue. Clements questioned whether she ever really lived there. Normally, divorce paperwork includes language that a petitioner has lived in the county of filing for 90 days, but the wording here was slightly different. It said the petitioner has been "a resident of this county or will have resided in this county by final trial for the preceding 90-day period."

Woodfill said she lived in Galveston during those crucial 90 days, and still does, though she sometimes spends the night at her parents' home in Houston. Her driver's license lists her address in Galveston, and it's her legal residence, he said. In an affidavit, Winnie's daughter wrote that Winnie spends 75 percent of her time in Galveston.

Winnie told the Chronicle that she commutes daily from Galveston to her job at a car dealership in Tomball, where she earns \$11 an hour. Assuming that her 2007 Chevy Tahoe gets 17 miles per gallon, at Houston's current gas prices, she'd spend roughly \$100 on gas each week — more than a quarter of her pretax paycheck.

A few miles away from the Tomball dealership, at the 10-acre Hockley property with the trailer, a next-door neighbor said he sees Winnie there regularly.

"She moved back into it about six months or a year ago," Roy Teague said by phone on Monday. "She was out there yesterday, burning pine trees."

Asked about that, Woodfill responded that Teague is mistaken: Winnie is not, in fact, living on the Hockley property. She's been leasing it out, the lawyer said, and had just returned to take care of the place. Besides, he noted, "the key legal question is where she lived when she filed in Galveston."

In June 2014, a visiting

judge in Galveston ruled on the Alwazzans' divorce, issuing a default settlement far more favorable to Winnie than either of the previous settlements. In their absence, Isa and Intercol were held joint and severally liable for \$416 million.

Winnie said they tried to skirt payment by hiding out in Bahrain. But Intercol's lawyers say they didn't know about the trial or decision until earlier this year, when roughly \$3.5 million of company money moving through the U.S. was frozen.

The company's lawyers rushed into action then, contending that Winnie and her lawyers "deliberately manipulated this Court through deception."

## 'Bigamy now'

In Galveston, the divorce case was dismissed: Because of the mediated settlement agreement in Montgomery County, the Galveston court said that it did not have jurisdiction to rule. Last week, Intercol's lawyers motioned to sanction Winnie's legal team, asking for repayment of Intercol's attorney fees — more than \$700,000.

Woodfill said he'll appeal. He knows he has a case, he said, and that Winnie is entitled to the half-billion dollars.

Among the issues is whether a Texas court has jurisdiction over Intercol.

"The Galveston judge never ruled on whether Intercol did business in Texas," Woodfill said. "We believe we have substantial evidence to prove it."

"I want what's right," said Winnie. "I want restoration."

"I was a stay-at-home mother, plus a husband builder. ... I did nothing for myself. I self-sacrificed my life — my whole life — for a man who left."

She'll keep fighting, she said.

But in the meantime, she and Isa are legally married again. Which is awkward: During the period when Isa believed himself to be divorced, he married someone new.

"Ironically," said Winnie, "what's happened in my case is we're involved in bigamy now."

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