

The Grove
by
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FADE IN:

EXT. A GROVE - NIGHT

There is movement through the trees and the rustle of branches being pushed aside.

ELI (V.O.)

There were four of us who entered.
Three came out. (pause) I left the
country as soon as I could, but I
wouldn't say I'm the epikorus.

CUT TO:

INT. BEDROOM - NIGHT

ELI, a 47 year old, Sephardi, with short hair and tan skin, is making love to HELEN. She is younger, maybe forty, blond and fair skinned. The bed creaks and the passion unfolds.

Suddenly, the telephone rings. Eli lets it ring several times until it stops. He is involved with Helen. It starts to ring again.

ELI

I should.

HELEN

Fine.

Helen gets out of bed, naked, and walks to the bathroom.

ELI

Hello.

HELEN (V.O.)

Who calls in the middle of the
night?

Helen comes back and sits on the bed.

ELI

(Speaking into the phone
in Hebrew)

I'm coming.

Eli gets out of bed.

HELEN

Who was that? Where are you going?

ELI
Shimon's in trouble again. I have
to go.

CUT TO:

EST. EL AL AIRPLANE FLIES THROUGH THE SKY - DAY

INT. BEN GURION AIRPORT - DAY

Eli exits the plane. He walks with his carry on bag through the terminal. He passes through passport control. He waits for his baggage. Finally, he pushes his cart out into the greeting area and encounters MOOSLEY. Moosley is also 47. He is fairer skinned, but Sepharadi, than Eli with short gray hair. He has a white shirt and slacks. He also wears a knitted kippah [Yarmulke]. They hug each other tightly.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING GARAGE - DAY

The two friends approach a car and Moosley clicks his key chain to open the trunk.

ELI
New car?

They start putting Eli's bags inside.

MOOSLEY
Rental. It's part of the story. Get
in. I'll explain.

CUT TO:

INT. MOOSLEY'S CAR - SAME

Moosley drives them out of the parking garage as they talk. They are headed to Tel Aviv.

Moosley looks at Eli.

MOOSLEY
Good to see you.

ELI
Tell me what happened.

MOOSLEY
Are you buckled in?

ELI
Come on already.

MOOSLEY
It started on our traditional date.
I picked up Shimon from work.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. OFFICE BUILDING TEL AVIV - EARLY EVENING - FLASHBACK

Shimon walks out of the building, takes off his coat and gets in Moosley's car, which is not the same one as in the airport.

CUT TO:

EXT. MIKE'S PUB - ACROSS FROM A TEL AVIV BEACH - EVENING

Shimon and Moosley are sitting at a table. Moosley finishes another beer at a table filled with bottles.

MOOSLEY (V.O.)
I had too much to drink, so I asked
Shimon to drive me home. I told him
I would pay for him to take a cab
from my place.

CUT TO:

EXT. TEL AVIV STREET - NEAR THE BEACH - NIGHT

Shimon opens the passenger door for Moosley and gets in the drivers seat.

They start driving through Tel Aviv.

MOOSLEY(V.O.)
All of a sudden, do you remember
the scene in Marathon Man, in the
beginning when the survivor starts
driving crazy, chasing the Nazi.
That's what happened.

They are stopped at a red light and Shimon sees and recognizes the driver of the car next to him. He is an OLD MAN.

MOOSLEY(V.O.)

He saw Kendler. Remember him? Our
history teacher in the kfar?

The light changes and, with the green, Shimon surges forward
and cuts in front of Kendler's car. He sticks his head out of
the window and gives him the finger.

MOOSLEY(V.O.)

He went ballistic.

Shimon puts the car in reverse and starts speeding backwards.

MOOSLEY(V.O.)

He put the car in reverse and
starts speeding into Kendler's car.

The two cars collide.

MOOSLEY

Are you fucking crazy?

Moosley gets out of the car and runs to see if Kendler is
okay.

MOOSLEY(V.O.)

I ran to see if he was okay.

Moosley sees that Kendler isn't moving.

MOOSLEY

Fuck. What the fuck have you done?
Are you out of your mind?

Moosley reaches into his pocket and starts to make a call. He
stops himself and starts to run.

MOOSLEY(V.O.)

I freaked out and ran away.

CUT TO:

INT. POLICE STATION - NIGHT

Moosley stands at the police desk explaining something.

MOOSLEY(V.O.)

I went to the police and said my
car was stolen. I probably
shouldn't have, but I'm in the
middle of a campaign.

(MORE)

MOOSLEY(V.O.) (cont'd)
 It wouldn't just hurt me. It would
 hurt the party.

The police lead Moosley to a desk. He sits alone for a few seconds. He takes out his phone and stares at it.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. HASHALOM EXIT OF THE AYALON EXPRESSWAY - DAY

The car exits the Ayalon and turns west toward central Tel Aviv.

MOOSLEY
 It's not like I was responsible for
 any of this. I was being
 responsible. I was drunk, and I let
 Shimon drive. How was I too know?

CUT TO:

EXT. - NIGHT - DREAM SEQUENCE - 1981

Young Eli, Moosley and Shimon are all in army uniforms, heavily armed. Eli and Moosley are arguing and Shimon is pointing a gun at an OLDER ARAB MAN who is on his knees. A building in the background blows up and all four of them are thrown to the ground.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Eli wakes up suddenly, covered in sweat. He sits up in bed. Then he walks to the dresser and looks at a picture of him and Helen. Then he walks to his balcony and stares at the sea.

ELI (V.O.)
 There's a joke about Sherlock
 Holmes and Watson who go on a
 camping trip. They set up their
 tent, roll out their sleeping bags
 and make a campfire. After dinner,
 they go back into the tent and go
 to sleep.

(MORE)

ELI (V.O.) (cont'd)

In the middle of the night, Holmes wakes Watson, points to the sky and says, "What do you make of that?" Watson says that from a meteorological perspective, it looks like we will have nice weather tomorrow. He then gives some different answers, but Holmes is upset and elbows him in the side. "You moron," he says, "somebody stole our tent."

DISSOLVE TO:

EST. BEACH - SAME

The beach is lightly cluttered with couples walking hand in hand.

ELI (V.O.)

This is basically my understanding of the world. It depends on the questions you ask.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEACH - SAME

Eli stands on the beach skipping stones on the water.

ELI (V.O.)

I try not to ask too many questions because I'm afraid of the answers I might get.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL ROOM - MORNING

The television is on. A news show is being broadcast. Eli is brushing his teeth and watching.

On the television the reporter speaks.

REPORTER

Today, Menachem Kendler will be laid to rest. The 82 year old former high school teacher was killed in a car accident with a former student.

The television cuts to Shimon.

SHIMON

I felt the car hit me from behind.
I was okay, so I went to see the
damage. Then I saw Kendler leaning
over the steering wheel. I couldn't
believe my eyes. My teacher was
lying there, dead.

The reporter reappears.

REPORTER

It later turned out that the car
that was hit was actually stolen
just hours earlier.

Eli turns off the television.

CUT TO:

EST. KNESSET BUILDING - DAY

Eli walks toward the building.

CUT TO:

EST. MOOSLEY'S OFFICE - SAME

Eli enters abruptly. Moosley's office has pictures of him
with Ariel Sharon, with Rabbi Ovadiah Yosef. There are other
Jewish things around the room. Moosley is obviously modern
orthodox.

MOOSLEY

Good morning.

ELI

Don't good morning me. I saw the
news. You're letting Shimon go to
jail.

MOOSLEY

What do you mean letting? Maybe you
didn't read the whole story. He's
getting off easy. He should go to
jail for murder. Now he's just a
petty criminal. A car thief.

ELI

This is how you leave a friend?

MOOSLEY

Leave a friend. Don't forget . What do you want me to do? Tell the police I lied about my car being stolen? He killed Kendler. Are you blaming me for that?

DISSOLVE TO:

EST. THE KFAR HAYAROK - DAY - FLASHBACK TO 1980

Tractors drive by as students walk into the school building.

CUT TO:

INT. KENDLER'S CLASSROOM - DAY - FLASHBACK TO 1980

Eli, Shimon, Moosley and MONY are sitting in the back of the classroom. Moosley is not wearing a kippa as he does when he is older. Eli is trying to get Mony's attention. He's trying to direct him towards a beautiful girl, RACHEL, looking back at them. Mony is completely involved with the lesson.

Kendler is teaching. There is a portrait of Trumpeldor on the chalk board. He writes in chalk. "Never mind. It's good to die for our country."

KENDLER

Never mind. It's good to die for our country. Such a string of pearls, these words. Here was a man who served in the Russian army, who lost his arm in battle, who immigrated to the land of Israel to build it for me and for you, and then, in the defense of the country, he doesn't yell, "Mama!" He doesn't think of himself. He says, "Never mind. It's good to die for our country. How noble is that?"

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL BATHROOM - MINUTES LATER

Eli, Shimon and Moosley are smoking cigarettes. Mony walks in and the boys put out their smokes. When Mony enters they are angry.

ELI
Don't you know the fucking knock?

MOOSLEY
I'm already out of cigarettes and
its only Tuesday.

MONY
Fuck you guys. I stayed after to
see about the *garin* [*Army unit for
youth movements and high school
classes to be drafted together*].
Kendler said he'll help us deal
with the army. Imagine all of us
serving together?

Eli sticks his hand in his shirt as if it has been cut off.

ELI
It's good to die for your country.

Moosley gets angry and pushes him.

MOOSLEY
Shut the fuck up. If it weren't for
people like Trumpeldor, we wouldn't
be here now. The man was a hero.

ELI
I'd rather be a living coward than
a dead hero.

MONY
We're all going to be living heroes
if we succeed with this *garin*.
Kendler says that the Kfar used to
send a *garin* to the Nachal every
year.

SHIMON
What are we waiting for?

MONY
We're not. He says he'll take care
of everything.

DISSOLVE TO:

EST. BEN GURION AIRPORT - DAY

An El Al Plane lands.

INT. BEN GURION AIRPORT - SAME

Helen exits the customs area pushing her baggage. Eli comes up to greet her with a kiss.

HELEN

I always wanted you to bring me here, but you could have given me more warning.

Eli starts pushing her bags toward the parking garage.

ELI

I think I'm going to be here for a while. I told you it was up to you. I hope you're not sorry you came.

HELEN

Of course, not. I've always wanted to see where you grew up. This is going to be a great adventure.

CUT TO:

EST. EXPRESSWAY TOWARD TEL AVIV

Eli and Helen drive toward Tel Aviv in their rented convertible car.

CUT TO:

EST. THE KFAR HAYAROK [GREEN VILLAGE AGRICULTURAL BOARDING SCHOOL] - DAY - PRESENT

Eli and Helen drive up to the gate of the Kfar.

INT. CAR - SAME

Eli is driving.

ELI

This is it. The Kfar Hayarok. My alma mater.

The gate opens.

HELEN

I don't smell the cow manure
wafting in the air. My dreams are
shattered.

ELI

Don't worry. It's coming.

CUT TO:

EXT. COW BARN - SAME

Eli parks in front of the milking parlor. He opens the car
for Helen and they walk inside.

ELI

I used to come here every morning
at 3 am to milk the cows before
school.

They enter the milking parlor with a milking in progress.

ELI

I could tell you the name and
number of every cow by it's udder.

They walk down a few steps into the middle of the milking
area. It's noisy. On either side of them are cows being
milked by machine. The MILKER undoes the machines of all the
cows on one side and releases them. A new set of cows follow.
Eli picks up a hose and starts spraying the udders.

ELI

Did you ever milk a cow?

Eli sprays a little milk from each teat of the first cow. He
then puts on a milking machine.

ELI

What you do is first check that
there are no diseases.

He sprays milk from the next cow's teats.

ELI

If you're well trained, you can
feel disease as you spray the milk.
Most people have to look.

He puts on the next machine, then he goes to the next cow.

ELI

It's pretty easy. You close your index finger and thumb around the top and squeeze the milk out with your other fingers, like this.

Eli sprays milk in Helen's face as he demonstrates. She doesn't find it funny.

HELEN

Look what you've done.

Eli leads her out of the milking area.

ELI

Let me get you a towel.

He gives her a towel.

HELEN

Is this the way you impressed all the girls when you were young?

ELI

As a matter of fact.

CUT TO:

EXT. MILKING PARLOR - SAME

Eli and Helen stroll past the containment area where a few cows still stand, waiting to be milked. Eli points to a bar hanging behind the cows. It moves slowly.

ELI

You see that bar? When we were younger, Mony wanted to work here with us.

HELEN

Mony's the one who was killed?

ELI

Yes.

Eli looks sad.

DISSOLVE TO:

EXT. MILKING PARLOR - DAY - FLASHBACK TO 1980

Mony is standing in the containment area.

ELI (V.O.)

We told him that he needs to be very strong to work with the cows and that he'd have to be able to pick up that bar.

Mony picks up the bar.

MONY

You guys are crazy. This thing is light.

Eli and Moosley are sticking their heads out of the milking parlor giggling.

Mony starts to jump in pain.

ELI (V.O.)

He didn't know it, but the bar has an electric charge that pushes the cows forward. Moosley and I turned it on just as he lifted it.

CUT TO:

EXT. MILKING PARLOR - PRESENT

Eli is laughing.

ELI

He didn't know where the charge was coming from. He thought it was the ground and he kept jumping.

CUT TO:

EXT. MILKING PARLOR - DAY - FLASHBACK TO 1980

We see Eli and Moosley laughing with their heads sticking out of the milking parlor.

CUT TO:

EXT. MILKING PARLOR - PRESENT

Helen is disgusted by Eli.

HELEN

You guys were so mean. With friends like you.

ELI

Yeah?

HELEN

Forget about it.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARK HAYARKON - DAY

Eli is walking with Helen along the river.

ELI

Remember the movie Diner with Mickey Rourke and Daniel Stern? Steve Guttenberg's character was this nerdy guy who was going to get married but before he would actually take the vow, his fiance had to pass a football knowledge test. The cows at my school was like the football knowledge test for all of us. If a girl wouldn't walk down to the barn with us at night, we'd break up with her.

HELEN

I passed the test.

ELI

You passed.

HELEN

Is there more to this story?

Eli fumbles in his pants.

ELI

Oh yeah.

He stops in his tracks, bends down and takes Helen's hand.

ELI

I've been thinking about doing this for a long time. I wasn't sure if I would do it before or after you met my parents, but since you're going to meet them tonight.

Eli starts to put a ring on Helen. People in the park start to stare.

HELEN

And you want me to answer now, before dinner?

ELI

We could wait.

Helen pulls Eli up to her.

HELEN

Of course, I'll marry you.

She plants a big kiss on his face. The people in the park start to clap.

HELEN

Why wouldn't I?

She kisses him again.

CUT TO:

INT. ELI'S PARENTS APARTMENT - NIGHT

The apartment door opens and Eli's OLD GERMAN FATHER, CHAIM, opens the door.

CHAIM

(In English with a German accent)

This is the shikse you brought from America?

ZAHAVA, Eli's Yeminite mother comes to the door.

ZAHAVA

(In Hebrew)

This is the American gentile?

Both Eli and Helen get kisses on both cheeks from both parents.

CUT TO:

INT. DINNER TABLE - LATER

Dinner is finished. The table is covered. Helen and Zahava start to empty the table.

ELI

(In Hebrew to his Dad.)
So Abba, what's happening?
[In Hebrew this can also be
understood as "what's being read?"]

CHAIM

One who doesn't know how to read,
doesn't know what's happening.

ELI

Abba, can you be serious? What do
you think?

CHAIM

She's beautiful. She's smart. But
she's a shkise. I didn't live
through 3 years at Auschwitz so you
could marry a Greek goddess and
live in America. What kind of name
is that, Helen? She's a fucking
Greek. Do you know what her people
did to our people? Have you never
celebrated Hanukah?

ELI

I'm not asking for your permission.

CHAIM

I know that. What do you think, I
was born yesterday? You're just
like your Uncle Shlomi. He went to
America and now he drives a
Cadillac.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - DANNY'S PARENT'S HOUSE - SAME

Helen is washing dishes. Zahava is preparing tea and dessert.

ZAHAVA

I know it's none of my business,
but do you and Eli plan to have
children?

HELEN

Why isn't it your business? You'll
be the grandmother.

ZAHAVA

That's a yes?

HELEN

We hope to.

ZAHAVA

You know they won't be Jewish. In
Judaism, it goes according to the
mother. I don't know what it's like
for Christians.

HELEN

I'm not Christian.

Zahava gasps.

ZAHAVA

Muslim?

HELEN

I'm not religious. I was born in an
Orthodox family, but my parents
were communists. They hated
religion.

ZAHAVA

I married a communist.

CUT TO:

INT. DINNER TABLE - SAME

Eli and Chaim are still speaking.

CHAIM

You know how hard it will be if you
ever want to move back? Your kids
will be mumzers.

ELI

Who said anything about kids?
Besides, I'm not moving back. I
just received tenure.

CHAIM

I know why you're doing this. It's
like your mother. She married me to
be in. She didn't even know what an
airplane was. She was smart though.
She knew that if she married white,
she would have an easier time here,
and she was right. And I was a
sucker for that dark skin and brown
eyes.

ELI

Are you trying to say something
about me. Why can't you just say
it?

Zahava and Helen return with a tray of tea and cakes.

ZAHAVA

(In Hebrew with a Yeminite
accent)

Are you boys behaving yourselves?

HELEN

Your mom said she'll show me how
she makes that soup you like.

Eli's cell phone rings. He gets up and walks away from the
table.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - ELI'S PARENT'S HOUSE - SAME

Eli has his ear to the phone and finger in his other ear.

ELI

Hello.

It's Shimon on the phone.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL - SAME

Shimon is standing in a small room with others waiting for the phone.

SHIMON

Eli, welcome home. How are you? I need to see you.

CUT TO:

INT. KITCHEN - ELI'S PARENT'S HOUSE - SAME

Eli is standing and speaking.

ELI

How did you get my number?

INT. JAIL - SAME

SHIMON

Moosley was here. He told me you came. I could always count on you, huh Eli? Will you come?

CUT TO:

EST. JAFFO JAIL - DAY

Eli parks his car, gets out and walks toward the building.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL - SAME

Eli enters the building. He approaches a desk.

POLICE CLERK

Identity card.

ELI

I don't have it. I brought my passport.

He hands over his American passport.

POLICE CLERK

This is no good. Where's your Israeli one?

ELI

I left it at the hotel. Look inside. It says I was born in Israel. You want me to pull down my pants so you can see that I'm Jewish.

POLICE CLERK

Go ahead.

The police clerk holds the passport.

POLICE CLERK

You'll get this when you leave.

Eli continues entering the jail and walks down a long hallway toward a sign that says "visitors area."

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. ELI'S PARENTS APARTMENT - DAY - FLASHBACK TO 1980

Eli and Shimon are sitting at the kitchen table. Eli has an envelop in his hand. His parents are standing above them.

ZAHAVA

Where is it?

Eli hands her the envelop. She opens it and begins to read.

ELI (V.O.)

When We were kids, Shimon would always get me out of trouble. Once, when I was failing geometry and my parents threatened to take me out of school, Shimon saved my neck.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL HALLWAY - NIGHT

The building is closed and all the lights are off, except for the flashlight in Shimon's hand. He turns a corner and waves Eli forward. Eli comes following. They go through a box of garbage near a mimeograph machine.

ELI (V.O.)
Back then, nobody would have
thought of me as the professor.

Shimon pulls a test out of the garbage, holds it up to the light and gives Eli the thumbs up. Eli gives him a high five.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL VISITOR'S ROOM - PRESENT

Eli enters and sees Shimon. He approaches unsure how Eli will receive him, then they hug.

SHIMON
Brother, you're always there for
me.

Eli hands Shimon a box of candies.

ELI
I brought those honey candies you
like.

SHIMON
Thanks. You know, last time I
bought these, I ate so many I
vomited them.

ELI
That's beautiful. Thanks for
sharing.

Shimon opens the box while talking.

SHIMON
This is pretty bad. I can't say
anything or Moosley will get in
trouble. It wasn't his fault.

Shimon eats a candy.

ELI
What happened? Why did you?

Shimon puts his finger to his mouth to hush Eli. He looks back bewildered.

SHIMON
Wow. You sure look good. Moosley
said your girl friend is coming.

Shimon eats another candy.

ELI

She's here.

SHIMON

And you didn't bring her. What are you, embarrassed?

Eli chuckles. Shimon eats another candy.

SHIMON

Listen, you were smart to leave. This isn't a good place. All we have are wars and Jews. It's like a prison, this country. I don't know if I'm in prison or free. You know what I mean?

Eli nods.

SHIMON

It's like I'm a prisoner on the outside. Now I'm a prisoner on the inside.

Shimon is getting a little bit excited and Eli is uncomfortable.

SHIMON

You know, sometimes when I'm asleep, I dream that it was me who died. Not Mony. It's crazy, but in the dream, as soon as I die, I feel so free and light. It's like I'm an angel. Do you know that feeling, Eli?

(Shouting)

Do you know what I'm talking about?

He gets up and stands on his chair while still holding the box of candies..

SHIMON

It's like I'm a fucking angel.

Two guards come over and bring him down off the chair. The box of candies spills out all of its contents.

SHIMON

I'm like an angel flying up to heaven.

As they get their hands on him, Shimon gets defensive.

SHIMON

Get your bloody hands off of me.
Can't you see I'm an angel.

The guards get more forceful and carry Shimon away.

SHIMON

Let me go, you ass holes. Don't you
know who I am? I'm the angel
Gabriel.

Eli doesn't know what to do. He gets up from his chair as the guards close the door behind them. Shimon is now out of sight.

CUT TO:

INT. MOOSLEY'S APARTMENT - EVENING

The door opens. Moosley is standing there dressed nicely. Behind him are his two daughters, LEAH and SARA. They are 6 and 7.

MOOSLEY

Shabbat Shalom.

Moosley hugs Eli. He lets go and turns to Helen.

MOOSLEY

You must be Helen. Shabbat Shalom.
Welcome to our home.

RACHEL, Moosley's wife appears. She is Moosley's age and her head is covered with a scarf. She is beautiful and full of vitality.

RACHEL

Shabbat Shalom. Eli, you look so
handsome. And you must be Helen.

She extends her hand to Helen.

RACHEL

Welcome to Jerusalem. Have you been
here before? This is the most
magical time of the week. The
Shabbos bride is coming. The smells
of dinner. Girls, go take Helen out
to the porch to see the sunset.

Sara and Leah each take Helen's hands and lead her outside.

CUT TO:

EXT. BALCONY - SUNSET

Helen looks out at a view of Jerusalem. The setting sun makes everything look golden. Helen is amazed.

HELEN

I've never seen anything so beautiful before.

Sara turns her as Leah says...

LEAH

(In Hebrew)

You're looking the wrong direction.

Helen turns and sees the Old City of Jerusalem with the Dome of the Rock rising from its center. Helen stands in awe.

CUT TO:

INT. MOOSLEY'S APARTMENT - SAME

Rachel is putting final touches on the table. The Shabbat candles are already lit.

RACHEL

Moosley tells me you're going to propose.

ELI

I did.

RACHEL

How will you get married? They don't do that sort of thing here.

ELI

We'll get married in the States.

RACHEL

What about your parents?

ELI

I'll invite them?

RACHEL
You haven't lost your sense of
humor.

Moosley enters the room with a bottle of wine.

MOOSLEY
Do you still only drink beer? I
have a nice bottle of wine.

ELI
I'll stick to beer. Do you get
Frazier here? He has this funny
scene about kosher wine. He takes a
glass of wine and adds sugar, stirs
and says, "Now it's kosher."

MOOSLEY
I don't watch that much anymore.

RACHEL
He's too busy studying. You know
the Talmud says that if you're
unemployed you need to sleep with
your wife every day.

MOOSLEY
She doesn't think politics is a
job.

RACHEL
Not when you do whatever the rabbi
tells you to do. Then you're just a
robot.

Moosley leaves the room.

MOOSLEY (V.O.)
I'll see if we have any beer.

Eli turns to Rachel.

ELI
I see you haven't lost your bite.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. DINNER TABLE - MOMENTS LATER

Everyone is seated around the table. They sing the kiddush. The girls sing vibrantly. Rachel stares at them with pride as she sings. Moosley and Eli stand with kiddish cups raised. Helen doesn't sing, but she is enthralled.

CUT TO:

INT. ELI'S HOTEL ROOM - NIGHT

Eli and Helen are making love. Eli stops and lies beside Helen.

ELI

What's wrong? You're not into it. They told me this happens when the ring goes on. Let me see your finger.

They both lie on their backs. Eli holds Helen's hand.

HELEN

That was really nice tonight. We should do kabbalat Shabbat.

ELI

Great. Another born again. Are you trying to kill me.

HELEN

I'm serious. I never had anything like that when I was a kid. My father used to sing The Internationale in the shower. That was about as close to religion as I ever got.

ELI

That's what I love about you.

HELEN

I'm being serious.

ELI

I know. I'm getting worried. Do you remember when I took you to see the Woody Allen movie Sleeper. There's that scene where Diane Keaton says that if you spell God backwards it spells dog.

(MORE)

ELI (cont'd)

It think that's the scene where he says he only believes in two things, sex and death. Let's make like Woody Allen.

Eli turns and starts to kiss Helen. She's not into it.

HELEN

You're not being serious.

ELI

I'm being very serious.

HELEN

Well why don't you just finish. I have a lot on my mind.

ELI

Now your being Diane Keaton in Annie Hall when they're making love and she needs a joint. Remember that? She leaves her body and takes a sketch pad while Woody Allen is left their with a soulless partner.

HELEN

That's what I'm talking about. I'm like a soulless person. I've never had anything to believe in.

Eli looks up at Helen.

ELI

What are you talking about? Remember I took you to the natural history museum and you told me that creationism was a crock of shit. I loved that. You see, you believed in something.

Helen gets out of bed.

HELEN

I think I want to convert.

ELI

What?

CUT TO:

EXT. - SUNSET - FLASHBACK TO 1981

Eli, Mony, Moosley and Shimon are all geared up and patrolling a street. Suddenly, an OLD ARAB MAN starts approaching with a white flag in his bleeding hand. The man had been brutalized. He has blood on his face. He is still far from them.

MONY

Watch out. Terrorist approaching.

Everyone gets in position with guns pointed at the old man.

SHIMON

(In Arabic)

Stay where you are.

The man keeps walking.

SHIMON

(He continues in Arabic)

Keep your hands in the air and stay where you are.

The man keeps approaching.

Shimon cocks his gun and points right at the man.

SHIMON

I said stop. I don't want to have to shoot you.

Moosley is very tense. Eli has a cigarette in his mouth and seems most calm.

ELI

Let me handle this.

Eli lets his gun hang by its belt. He raises his hands high in the air.

ELI

(In Arabic)

I need you to raise your hands up high so I can see them.

The man stops in his tracks.

ELI

(To Moosley)

Give me the binoculars.

Moosley gives Eli binoculars. He puts them to his eyes. The old man is really beaten up. He is bleeding and breathing heavily. Something is terribly wrong.

Eli gives Moosley back the binoculars. He hands him his rifle.

ELI
Something is wrong. I'm going to
get him.

As he approaches, Eli speaks very loudly.

Moosley uses the binoculars to look around the street. He sees nothing.

ELI
(In Arabic)
I'm Coming to get you, but you
cannot make any sudden moves or my
friends will shoot. Do you
understand me?

The old man nods.

ELI
Are you injured?

The man nods again.

ELI
Okay, we can help. Who did this to
you?

No reply.

Eli is now meters away from the man.

ELI
Give me your arm and I will help
you.

Eli extends his arm toward the man but he jerks away.

ELI
Let me see your arm.

Shimon, Moosley and Mony are all very tense. Moosley continues to look in all directions with the binoculars.

SHIMON

Eli, you don't have to do this. We can just shoot and say he was a threat.

MONY

I'm with him. You don't need to die to save an old man.

ELI

Will you guys shut up. He's in a lot of pain. I'm going to bring him.

Eli starts to pat down the old man.

ELI

(In Hebrew)

I have to make sure you don't have any bombs on you. I promised my mom I'm come back in one piece.

Eli notices a bone coming out of the man's arm.

ELI

He's got a broken arm. I'm going to carry him back.

MONY

Just leave him there. What good is he to us?

Eli takes the man's good arm and has him brace the other arm. He then puts his arm under both arms and lifts the man on his back. He walks quickly to his friends.

ELI

(To his friends)

If you're not comfortable with this, go away. I'm going to take care of his injuries.

He gets to a relatively safe place and puts the man down. He starts cutting his sleeve off the bad arm.

ELI

(In Arabic)

Who did this to you.

He pours water over the bloody arm and wipes it.

ELI
Get me a stick or bar or something.
I'm going to have to make him a
splint.

Shimon goes to get something. Moosley is looking around with the binoculars. Mony is pointing his gun at the old man. The man tries to speak.

MONY
He's trying to say something.

OLD ARAB MAN
(In Arabic)
I want to help. Leave my arm. I am
going to die. Don't waste your
time. I know where their munitions
are. Let me help.

MONY
What did he say?

ELI
I think he wants to help us. He
said something about weapons.

MONY
Why would he help us? This is some
kind of trick.

OLD ARAB MAN
I'm with you.

The Old man points at his chest. He can barely move his arm.

MONY
I think he's trying to show you
something. Look under his shirt.

Eli cuts open the mans shirt. He is wearing a necklace with a cross on it.

ELI
He's trying to show us that we can
trust him because he's Christian.

MOOSLEY
Anyone can buy a cross.

ELI
I know.

MONY

Why would he want to help us?

MOOSLEY

He's probably just a terrorist
trying to distract us.

Shimon comes back with a few splint options.

SHIMON

Does any of this work?

ELI

He said he doesn't want it. He
wants to die.

SHIMON

Why did he come to us?

ELI

He says he has information about
weapons.

SHIMON

That's crazy. You're not going to
trust him.

ELI

What if he's not lying?

MOOSLEY

You can't just trust anyone.

OLD ARAB MAN

There are two places. My olive
grove and the warehouse. The olive
grove is booby trapped.

CUT TO:

EST. BEACH - SUNRISE

Helen is on the beach doing yoga. She is very professional
and graceful. It looks as if her yoga is a form of prayer.

On the beach, there are workers setting up lounge chairs.
Joggers run the length of the shore. Old people are in the
water.

Eli shows up. He is quiet and watches Helen, full of love. He
sits in a lounge chair and watches.

While Helen does the downward dog, she spots Eli. She talks from within position.

HELEN
Have you been there long?

ELI
A couple of minutes.

HELEN
Spying?

ELI
Enjoying.

Helen stands up and takes off her shirt. She is in a bikini and looks amazing.

HELEN
Are you coming?

Eli points to the fact that he is fully clothed.

ELI
Like this.

HELEN
I followed you all the way here.
You're not going to follow me into
the water?

ELI
When you go in will you grow a
tail?

Helen starts entering the water.

HELEN
You'll have to find out for
yourself.

She goes under the water.

Eli is hesitant but takes off his shirt. He stands up and drops his pants. He has no underwear on and runs into the water. He immediately dives under.

HELEN
I thought.

ELI
I know what you thought.

Helen puts her arms around Eli. She kisses him.

HELEN

Have you thought about what I said
last night?

ELI

About converting?

Helen nods her head.

ELI

Truthfully?

Eli looks for a response.

ELI

I think its a bad idea. You don't
know what your getting into. It's
not like Christians, you know. You
don't just dip in the water and its
done. You have to study, and pray,
and you can't drive on Shabbat. You
can't even watch TV. What will you
do without Oprah?

HELEN

I'm serious.

ELI

I'm serious too.

Helen is hurt and pulls back.

HELEN

You don't want me to go through
with this because I'm your shiksa.
Is that it. Eli is a bad boy. He's
marrying a shiksa.

ELI

That's crazy. I love you.

Helen starts to get out of the water.

HELEN

That's not enough.

She drys herself and puts on her t-shirt.

ELI

I brought you here to meet my family. You're going to cook with my mom. What more do you want?

HELEN

I want to be Jewish. I want to convert.

ELI

This is crazy.

Helen starts taking Eli's clothes as she walks away from the beach.

ELI

Where are you going?

Helen keeps walking.

ELI

What about my clothes?

Helen laughs to herself.

ELI

Helen, this isn't funny. Can you be serious for just one moment?

Helen stops in her tracks. She turns toward Eli.

HELEN

Did you just ask me if I could be serious?

Eli nods.

HELEN

I'm very serious. Now it's your turn. I want you to find out what it takes to convert and I want to go check it out.

ELI

Fine.

HELEN

You promise.

ELI

I promise.

CUTO TO

INT. THE TEL AVIV RABBINATE OFFICES - DAY

Inside the offices are lots of orthodox men. There are also groups of Russian speakers.

Eli and Helen sit on a bench waiting to be called in for a meeting. They are silent.

The door of the office beside them opens. A couple exit.

Eli and Helen get up and timidly walk in. Sitting at a desk is a RABBI. He is about 50 years old, dressed in a black suit and white shirt.

RABBI
Come in. Sit down. Hebrew or
Russian?

ELI
(In English)
English.

RABBI
(In English)
English. Nice. I don't get to speak
English that often.

He looks at the file in front of him.

There are piles of folders surrounding his desk.

RABBI
I have your file here, but I
haven't read it. Do you want to
tell me why you came?

Helen looks to Eli to be sure he doesn't want to answer.

HELEN
I'm interested in converting to
Judaism.

She looks to Eli again.

HELEN
We're going to get married.

RABBI
(Sarcastically)
You are? Where do you plan to do
this?

Eli looks agitated. He understands the question. They are forbidden to marry in Israel if she is not Jewish.

Helen is oblivious.

HELEN

We haven't talked about it. It would be nice to do it here, but Eli has a job to return to. He just got tenure at the university.

RABBI

Really. What does he teach?

HELEN

Philosophy and geometry, but he's in the philosophy department.

RABBI

I see.

The rabbi opens the file and looks at the one page inside of it.

RABBI

I don't think there is much I can do to help. Neither of your parents were Jewish. None of your grandparents are Jewish. What makes you think you can just become Jewish.

Helen is hurt.

HELEN

I didn't say that. I know it's a difficult process. I'm ready to pay that price.

RABBI

Is that some kind of bribe you're offering me, because if it is, I am sick. What do you think this is? This is not some pagan religion. There's no three dips and you're done here. I'm sorry, but you'll have to leave.

Eli is furious.

ELI

(To Helen)

Come on. Let's go.

Eli gets up and takes Helen's hand.

ELI

We need to go to the newspapers.
First time in Israel, Rabbi refuses
bribe.

CUT TO:

EXT. KIKAR RABIN - SAME

Eli and Helen walk through the square. Helen is devastated.
Eli is furious but focused on Helen.

ELI

What an jerk?

HELEN

(Crying)

I didn't offer him a bribe. Did it
sound like I was offering him a
bribe.

ELI

You were fine. Bribe is the
favorite word in the religious
community. They bribe the entire
country by making us pay while they
study in their yeshivas. They
benefit from our defense but don't
go to the army. They benefit from
our education ministry but don't
pay taxes.

Helen pulls away from Eli. She dries her tears.

HELEN

Did you hear what you just said?
Our defense. Our taxes. That's the
first time I've ever heard you say
our about Israel.

Eli is dumbfounded.

ELI

You're right. How did you...

CUT TO:

EXT. KIKAR ZION - JERUSALEM - NIGHT - FLASHBACK TO 1983

The streets are packed with protesters against the government. The ring wing - pro-government - are also present and violent. There are wars of words and even pushing.

Helen and Eli are the same age as in the present. They are observers of the rally.

HELEN

What is this?

ELI

I told you I served during the Lebanon War.

HELEN

Yeah, but you never talk about it.

ELI

A lot of terrible things happened in that war.

HELEN

I know.

ELI

I was part of it, but I had a conscience. Even after we lost Mony, I still did my job. I just protested on my breaks.

We see the protesters and Young Eli, Young Rachel and Young Moosley in the crowd. They hold signs and chant with all of the others.

Eli points at himself.

ELI

Look, that's me.

HELEN

You were so handsome.

ELI

I was an idealist. I thought my country could be a light onto the nations.

There is a loud noise and smoke. People scatter. There is screaming and widespread panic.

Eli grabs Rachel's hand and pulls her away. We lose sight of Moosley.

ELI

That was the grenade. Some right-winger threw a grenade at us and someone was killed. Emil Greensweig. Moosley was hit by shrapnel. I didn't even find out until I got home.

CUT TO:

EXT. KIKAR RABIN - PRESENT - SAME

Eli and Helen are holding hands in the center of the square.

ELI

We were there doing everything right. Taking responsibility for our country and this was our reward.

A tear rolls down Eli's face.

Helen hugs him.

HELEN

I'm so proud of you.

ELI

Don't be. I left. At least Moosley stayed. Him and Rachel may have become religious, but at least they stayed. I'm the epikorus. I left my people.

Eli starts crying and Helen hugs him tightly.

CUT TO:

INT. CONFERENCE AREA OF A HOTEL - DAY - THREE YEARS EARLIER

Helen is sitting behind the registration table registering participants. Eli comes to the table. He's wearing a suit and tie. He is out of his element.

ELI

(To Helen)

Is this the invitee registration?

(MORE)

ELI (cont'd)
I'm a little late. I'm supposed to
give a keynote this morning.

HELEN
Dr. Margolin?

Eli nods.

HELEN
You're late. You were supposed to
be on right now.

Helen gets up.

ELI
I know. My plane.

HELEN
Come with me.

She leads Eli.

HELEN
We shuffled the introductions
around.

ELI
My plane was late.

They get to the side of the stage, backstage where the
conference is in session.

HELEN
Stay here.

Helen walks onto the stage and whispers to the speaker. Then
she walks off-stage back to Eli.

HELEN
You'll go on in a couple of
minutes.

ELI
Are you serious?

HELEN
Do I not look serious? There are
two thousand people in that
auditorium waiting to hear you.

Eli seems captivated by Helen's beauty.

HELEN
What are you looking at?

ELI

Nothing. I'm just reminded of a scene in a movie. Do you like movies?

HELEN

Yeah, sure.

ELI

Do you remember in Annie Hall when Woody Allen is about to go on stage at a McCarthy rally and he meets his first wife Alison Porchnik?

HELEN

With the communist father and the Ben Shawn paintings. I remember. I have a communist father. I'd even show you my red diapers, but I'm not wearing them today.

On stage they introduce Eli. There is applause.

HELEN

That's your call.

ELI

Can I see you again?

HELEN

Go on.

Eli walks on stage. He stands at the podium.

ELI

I know that I'm supposed to speak about Habermas, whew, but I'm feeling like the comedian who comes on stage and says I just flew in from Chicago and boy are my arms tired.

The audience laughs. Helen is charmed.

CUT TO:

INT. CAFETERIA - HOURS LATER

Eli spots Helen in line. He makes his way in behind her offending the people behind him.

ELI
What did you think?

HELEN
About what?

ELI
The keynote. Was I okay? This is my first time doing this. I don't even have tenure.

HELEN
You were fine.

ELI
What does that mean, fine? That's a very vanilla answer.

HELEN
I'm not Alison Porchnik. My parents were Greek Orthodox.

ELI
And you?

HELEN
I'm a school teacher. I don't believe in religion. I told you. I'm a red diaper baby.

ELI
Can I sit with you?

HELEN
I don't think it's a good idea.

ELI
Is it because I'm Jewish?

HELEN
Actually.

ELI
An anti-Semitic communist. An I thought you were unique.

HELEN
Listen, I'm sure you're a very nice guy, but I'm not interested.

CUT TO:

INT. SCHOOL CLASSROOM - DAY - ALSO 3 YEARS EARLIER

Helen is in front of her class teaching. She's at the board writing something.

HELEN

Who can explain to me, in your own words, what you know about Christopher Columbus?

She looks back at her students. They are all staring out the window. She turns and sees Eli on a horse waving to the kids.

The kids wave back.

HELEN

You'll have to excuse me for a second.

Helen exits the classroom.

CUT TO:

EXT. SCHOOL - SAME

Helen approaches Eli and his horse.

HELEN

What are you doing here? How did you find me?

ELI

You said you would show me your red diapers.

The horse is slowly walking forward. Helen follows.

HELEN

What?

ELI

The red diapers. I came to see the red diapers.

HELEN

Are you crazy?

ELI

What about my being Jewish bothers you?

HELEN
It's a long story.

They are getting farther from the school.

ELI
I have time.

HELEN
I don't. I'm in the middle of
class.

ELI
I'll wait for you.

HELEN
I don't know.

ELI
I can come inside and help. I'm a
teacher.

CUT TO:

INT. CLASSROOM - DAY - SAME

The horse is tied to a tree outside of the classroom. Eli sits in the front of the class at a desk way too small for him. Helen continues teaching.

HELEN
So Christopher Columbus was an
explorer who discovered America.
What else?

Eli raises his hand timidly. So does another kid, JESSICA.

HELEN
Jessica.

JESSICA
If it wasn't for him, we wouldn't
have Columbus Day.

HELEN
That's right. Anything else?

Eli raises his hand. No body else has a raised hand.

HELEN
Eli, do you want to add something?

Eli stands up.

ELI

I know your teacher is really wonderful and everything, but the truth about Columbus is that he was a fink. Do you ever wonder why we call native Americans Indians. It's because Columbus thought he arrived in India. He wasn't even a good sailor. And he brought disease to the Indians. Can you imagine how painful it is for a native American to celebrate Columbus Day.

HELEN

Thank you Eli.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - JUST MINUTES LATER

We see Helen's talking head.

HELEN

That was the rudest thing ever. What if I came into your classroom and started to teach that kind of stuff?

Eli looks back at her. We discover that they are on the horses back.

ELI

As long as it's the truth, you are welcome to say whatever you please.

CUT TO:

INT. MOOSLEY'S APARTMENT - BEDROOM - NIGHT

Moosley and Rachel are in bed. The phone rings. Moosley gets up to answer it.

MOOSLEY

Hello.

We hear the voice on the other end. It is Moosley's rabbi and political mentor, RAV BENJAMIN.

RAV BENJAMIN
Moshe, I need to speak to you,
immediately.

MOOSLEY
Right now.

RAV BENJAMIN
Immediately.

Rav Benjamin hangs up. Moosley puts his phone down.

RACHEL
Who was that?

MOOSLEY
The Rabbi.

RACHEL
What does he want?

Moosley gets out of bed.

MOOSLEY
He needs to see me.

Moosley gets dressed.

RACHEL
In the middle of the night? Don't
you think this is too much?

MOOSLEY
If Rav Benjamin thinks it so
important that he has to wake me in
the middle of the night, it must be
that important.

RACHEL
I don't understand you.

MOOSLEY
I'm not asking you to.

CUT TO:

INT. RAV BENJAMIN'S STUDY - NIGHT

The study is large with walls full of sacred texts. Rav Benjamin is sitting behind his desk.

Moosley enters.

RAV BENJAMIN

Moshe, there was a distressing voice message this evening. I want you to explain it to me.

He plays the message.

VOICE MESSAGE

I know about Chaver Knesset Ben Yosef. I saw the whole thing from my porch window. I'm going to bring you down, you parasites.

RAV BENJAMIN

Do you have any idea what this is about.

Moosley is very nervous.

MOOSLEY

I know. It's a misunderstanding. I promise to take care of it. Was there a caller ID?

RAV BENJAMIN

What do you mean take care of it? What it are you talking about?

MOOSLEY

Can you trust me to take care of it?

RAV BENJAMIN

No, I can't trust you. What happened? What misunderstanding?

MOOSLEY

I was a witness to a crime. I was scared and I ran away. Please let me take care of it.

RAV BENJAMIN

That's not how we handle these things. You have obligations.

MOOSLEY

I know, but a friend was involved. I thought I took care of it, but I guess there are some loose ends.

RAV BENJAMIN

Loose ends. We have an election coming up.

(MORE)

RAV BENJAMIN (cont'd)

I don't want to lose our advantage because you have a friend you want to protect.

I'm giving you two days. If I hear anything before then, your time is shortened. Do you understand me?

MOOSLEY

Yes sir.

RAV BENJAMIN

Two days.

CUT TO:

INT. HOTEL HALLWAY - MORNING

Moosley stands outside of Eli's room knocking. He stops and then knocks some more.

Eli opens the door while he is knocking.

ELI

What the fuck?

MOOSLEY

I need your help.

CUT TO:

EXT. TEL AVIV STREET - WHERE THE CRASH OCCURRED - MORNING

Moosley leads Eli to the street.

MOOSLEY

This is where it happened. My car was here. Kendler's car was behind us. The caller said that he saw everything from his porch window.

They both look up at the buildings surrounding them.

ELI

That could be anyone. Wasn't there a caller ID?

MOOSLEY

If there was, I wouldn't need you.

CUT TO

INT. REFORM RABBI'S OFFICE - MORNING

Helen enters. This office is more sparse in books and more cluttered in pictures and Zionist imagery.

Behind the desk is RABBI URI GEVA. He is 55 years old and wears a knitted kipah.

RABBI GEVA

I have to tell you, in all fairness to the chief rabbinate, the rabbi you saw was just doing his job. There's a tradition among the orthodox that a convert has to come three times after being rudely rejected each visit. It's their way of being sure you are serious.

HELEN

I'm very serious.

RABBI GEVA

I'm not questioning your motives. I'm just telling you that they are very strict about the conversion process. This is one area I tend to agree with them. You need to live within the Jewish myth if you want to be Jewish. It's not like American baseball where you just change teams. Any self respecting religion is going to be cautious about who it lets in. We define ourselves, to a large degree by the beliefs and actions of our members.

HELEN

But I want to be Jewish. I want to marry a Jewish man.

RABBI GEVA

I understand. I just wanted to explain what happened to you before. Being a Reform Jew is not that easy either. You won't be able to marry legally in this country. A lot of people go to Cyprus and get married. Then they come back here to have a Jewish ceremony.

HELEN

Why is that?

RABBI GEVA

That's the way it works in this country. There's a chief rabbinate, and if you don't follow their ways, you might as well be an epikorus. There's no justice to it. It excludes 85% of world Jewry. But the political system is such that we haven't been able to change it, and believe me, I have spent my whole adult life trying.

HELEN

So we'll have to get married abroad, but you can do the service for us here?

RABBI GEVA

Sure. There's nothing legal about it. Some Reform rabbis will even marry you without the conversion.

HELEN

No. I want to be Jewish.

RABBI GEVA

Great.

HELEN

And if we decide to live here, all we have to do is get married outside of the country?

RABBI GEVA

Exactly.

HELEN

Before or after the wedding?

RABBI GEVA

It doesn't really matter. That's a legal issue. I happen to be a lawyer as well and can explain that some other time, but for now, we need to put together a study plan for your conversion process.

CUT TO:

INT. APARTMENT BUILDING - HALLWAY

Moosley and Shimon are knocking on doors. An OLD MAN opens a door that Eli has knocked on.

ELI
My friend is looking for someone.

He pulls Moosley to the door. Moosley and the old man look at each other. The old man closes the door on him.

ELI
I think we've been to every apartment on the block.

MOOSLEY
Yeah, but there were a lot that weren't home. We'll have to come back later.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOGRASHOV BEACH - DAY

Eli and Moosley are walking on the beach. Eli has his shoes off and pants rolled up. Moosley is in black as usual.

MOOSLEY
How did it go at the Rabbanut?

ELI
Let's not talk about it.

MOOSLEY
I could talk to someone. We have connections.

ELI
She's going to see a Reform rabbi.

MOOSLEY
Reform. That's not even Judaism.

ELI
Would you prefer I marry a goy?

MOOSLEY
Than legitimize Reform. Definitely.

ELI
You would rather me celebrate
Christmas than celebrate Hanukah
with my Reform wife?

MOOSLEY
Definitely.

ELI
You have a sick mind.

MOOSLEY
Yeah, but it's good for the Jews.

ELI
Don't be so sure.

CUT TO:

INT. BEIRUT - OLIVE GROVE - EVENING - FLASHBACK TO 1981

Young Eli, Moosley, Mony and Shimon are at the edge of olive grove of their prisoner, the old Arab man. Shimon is walking behind the man with his gun pointed to him. Moosley is looking around with the binoculars. Eli looks to the Old Man.

The old man nods upward at a tree. There are wires in the tree.

Eli motions for everyone to follow him behind a building. He takes a grenade out of his belt.

MONY
What are you going to do blow up
the whole Grove?

ELI
If it's a trap than it's enough to
just hit this one tree. It will
start the chain reaction.

SHIMON
You're willing to destroy this
guy's orchard?

ELI
He brought us here. If he told the
truth about the orchard, we'll be
able to trust him about the
warehouse.

MOOSLEY

What if it's a trap. What if this is the way he signals to his terrorist buddies?

Eli looks at the Old Arab Man.

ELI

(In Arabic)

Why should I trust you?

OLD ARAB MAN

I have more to gain than you.

ELI

What does that mean?

OLD ARAB MAN

Revenge.

ELI

For what?

OLD ARAB MAN

They murdered my wife, broke my arms and raped my daughter in front of my eyes. You are only fighting for your country. My reward is revenge.

Eli turns to his friends.

ELI

I trust him.

Eli pulls the pin from his grenade and throws it at the tree. Everyone gets down on the ground behind the building.

The grenade blows up followed by a series of other explosions.

CUT TO:

EXT. BOGRASHOV BEACH - DAY

Eli and Moosley sit on the rocks of a jetty facing the water.

ELI

Remember that game we used to play when we were kids with the historical decisions?

MOOSLEY

Yeah, if you were Truman, would you have bombed the tracks to Auschwitz?

ELI

That was your favorite question.

MOOSLEY

What was yours?

ELI

I liked the one about Moses. If you were Moses and you were impatient about getting water for the people, would you hit the rock or just talk to it?

MOOSLEY

That's easy. You do what the kadosh baruchu tells you to do.

ELI

Even if you are certain that you can satisfy the needs by doing it your way?

MOOSLEY

Without a doubt.

Suddenly Young Mony appears next to them in his army gear. They continue the conversation as if nothing has changed.

MONY

What about the Altalena?

He points to the water and we see the Altalena in the water.

MONY

Would you blow up the Altalena to stop the Etzel from getting arms?

ELI

I hate this question.

MOOSLEY

If it means keeping the country united, I'd do it.

MONY

Even though you know there are Jews on the boat who will die?

MOOSLEY

That's a sacrifice we have to make sometimes. It's for the greater good.

ELI

You're a sick person.

MONY

Why don't you like the question? Are you afraid of making tough choices?

ELI

I don't think these are choices human beings should have to make.

MONY

What if it's necessary for the defense of the country?

ELI

Fuck countries.

MOOSLEY

That's easy to say in America. What if you lived in Nazi Germany?

ELI

You're proving my point. Countries are the problem.

MONY

What about anti-Semitism?

ELI

We should give up religion too.

MOOSLEY

Then we'd have no ethics at all.

ELI

Look who's taking ethics. What do you plan to do when you find the person who is blackmailing you?

Suddenly, shots are fired at the Altalena.

CUT TO:

INT. ELI'S PARENTS APARTMENT - KITCHEN - DAY

There is a pot of soup on the stove. Zahava and Helen sit at the small kitchen table.

HELEN

The soup smells so good.

ZAHAVA

You need to stay focused if you're going to learn Hebrew.

Helen continues reading aloud.

HELEN

Ah, Ee, Eh, Oh, ih. Bo, bee, bay, bah, bih.

ZAHAVA

Very good. Now we'll learn the letter gimmel. It's like your G.

HELEN

Go, gah, gih, geh, gay.

ZAHAVA

Very good.

Chaim enters.

CHAIM

Give the girl a break. She's been working all day. When is the soup going to be ready?

ZAHAVA

I think it's done.

CHAIM

Here, Helen, come with me. Let's go down to the market and get some bread for lunch.

Helen turns to Zahava for approval.

ZAHAVA

Go ahead. This old man is so senile. I don't want him crossing the road on his own.

CUT TO:

EXT. CITY STREET - SAME

Chaim and Helen walk to the market.

CHAIM

My wife is a great teacher. She taught for thirty five years.

HELEN

She told me.

CHAIM

But there are some things they don't talk about in school.

HELEN

Such as.

CHAIM

Such as God. They tell you what he expects of you and what will happen if you don't follow his rules, but nobody ever asks you the fundamental question.

HELEN

Which is?

CHAIM

You don't need me to answer that.

HELEN

Are you saying that we should ask whether God exists?

CHAIM

Why not?

HELEN

I never grew up with God, so this has never been a question for me.

CHAIM

I grew up with him, but humanity taught me that I was wrong. Either that or he is impotent or doesn't care.

HELEN

Auschwitz?

CHAIM

You can't live through what I lived through and come out with the same beliefs.

HELEN

Eli said that about Lebanon.

CHAIM

That was his Auschwitz.

CUT TO:

INT. RAV BENJAMIN'S STUDY - DAY

Moosley is sitting across from Rav Benjamin at his desk.

RAV BENJAMIN

There was another call. They want money.

MOOSLEY

Are you going to pay?

RAV BENJAMIN

You think that will shut them up? These are sick people who want to keep Judaism out of the Jewish state.

MOOSLEY

What do you plan to do?

RAV BENJAMIN

First tell me what happened.

MOOSLEY

Nothing. I mean, I didn't do anything. I was in the car. My friend was driving. He snapped and started speeding into the car behind us.

RAV BENJAMIN

Why that car? Did the driver do something?

Moosley dazes.

DISSOLVE TO:

INT. THE KFAR HAYAROK - KENDLER'S CLASSROOM - DAY - DAYDREAM
TO 1980

Young Moosley, Mony, Eli and Shimon are in class. Kendler is at the board. He draws a map of Israel with arrows showing the armies that attacked in 1948.

The scene is dreamlike.

CUT TO:

INT. RAV BENJAMIN'S STUDY - DAY

Moosley is still sitting across from Rav Benjamin at his desk.

RAV BENJAMIN
Moshe, did the driver of the other car do anything to provoke you?

MOOSLEY
No.

RAV BENJAMIN
And you had nothing to do with this?

MOOSLEY
It was my car and I ran away. I reported it to the police as stolen.

RAV BENJAMIN
(Angry)
Why would you do something like that?

He slams his hand on the desk.

RAV BENJAMIN
Why?

CUT TO:

EXT. BEIRUT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK TO 1981

Mony, Moosley, Eli and Shimon follow the Old Arab Man. Shimon has his gun pointed at the man.

The Old Arab Man stops when he can see a building in front of them. He looks to Eli and directs his attention to the building.

ELI
(In Arabic)
Is that the warehouse?

The Old Arab Man nods.

ELI
Is it booby trapped?

The Old Arab Man shakes his head, no.

SHIMON
I don't trust him.

MONY
We don't need to trust him if we're just blowing it up.

ELI
We're not blowing it up.

MOOSLEY
What?

ELI
If he's right about this, then they'll be back to get their weapons.

MOOSLEY
I got you.

SHIMON
And we'll be ready for them when they come.

MONY
If they're coming anyway, let's empty the warehouse?

ELI
It's too risky

MOOSLEY
Why not?

ELI
The benefits don't outweigh the risks.

MOOSLEY

I thought you trusted this guy.
What are wishy-washy?

Eli snaps. He puts down his gun and jumps on Moosley.

ELI

I'd rather be wishy-washy than take
stupid risks.

He grabs Moosley by the collar and chokes him.

ELI

I'm not fucking Trumpeldor. I don't
want to die for my country.

SHIMON

Get off of him.

Shimon grabs Eli and starts pulling him off Moosley.

SHIMON

You're choking him.

While they're fighting Mony starts to walk toward the
warehouse.

Shimon pulls Eli off of Moosley.

SHIMON

What the fuck is wrong with you?

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL VISITOR'S ROOM - DAY

Moosley is sitting with Shimon. There is a box of honey
candies on the table between them. Shimon eats one.

SHIMON

Thanks for coming. I was beginning
to worry that you guys forgot about
me.

MOOSLEY

That will never happen.

SHIMON

I'm sorry I snapped like that.
Seeing Kendler was like pressing a
button in me. Something very deep.
I didn't even know it was there.

MOOSLEY

I think we all have that.

SHIMON

I know, but my zealousness got the best of me.

MOOSLEY

Kendler was an old man. He lived a long life.

SHIMON

I was talking about Beirut.

EXT. BEIRUT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK TO 1981

Shimon looks at the Old Arab Man.

ELI

Where's Mony?

Moosley gets up.

MOOSLEY

Great. Now you lost Mony.

ELI

I lost Mony.

The Old Arab Man directs their attention to Mony.

SHIMON

(To the Old Arab Man)

This better not be a set up.

He points his rifle at the old man.

SHIMON

Do you hear me? If anything happens to my friend, I'm going to shoot you so hard it's going to erase your family history.

ELI

(To Moosley)

Get the fuck away from me.

MOOSLEY

(To Eli)

Go fuck yourself. You're not in charge here.

ELI

You should wish I was. I'm the only one thinking clearly here.

Mony reaches the warehouse and opens the door.

SHIMON

(To the Old Arab Man)

You better pray he comes out of there alive. In fact, why don't you get on your knees, you piece of shit.

(To Eli)

Eli, tell him to get on his knees.

ELI

Leave him alone.

SHIMON

Tell him to get on his knees or I'll shoot him right now.

ELI

(To the Old Arab Man)

Get on your knees.

The Old Arab Man gets on his knees.

SHIMON

(To the Old Arab Man)

Now if I were you, I'd start to pray.

Boom!

There is a big explosion from the warehouse. Moosley, Eli, Shimon and the Old Arab Man fall to the ground.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL VISITOR'S ROOM - DAY

Moosley puts his hand on Shimon's.

MOOSLEY

I think there is a way you can redeem yourself.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY FROM TEL AVIV TO JERUSALEM - DAY

Eli is speeding with the top down in his convertible. He is on the phone.

CUT TO:

INT. MOOSLEY'S APARTMENT - SAME

Rachel is on the other end of the line.

CUT TO:

EXT. HIGHWAY FROM TEL AVIV TO JERUSALEM - SAME

ELI

Rachel, I need to talk to you. I'm on my way to Jerusalem. Get a baby sitter. I'll call you from downstairs when I'm there.

CUT TO:

EXT. OLD CITY - JERUSALEM - DAY

Eli and Rachel are walking through the Arab Market. They walk quickly.

RACHEL

Tell me what this is all about.

ELI

I was afraid my car might be bugged. I really can't trust Moosley anymore. He's gone to far.

RACHEL

What do you mean?

ELI

I think he's about to kill someone.

RACHEL

What?

ELI

His rabbi. They're being blackmailed. Eli was in the car when Shimon killed Kendler.

RACHEL

Killed?

ELI

He snapped. He sped Moosley's car in reverse. Moosley wasn't responsible. I believe him about that. He must have thought that Shimon would run too. He told the police the car was stolen.

RACHEL

But Shimon said he was in the car.

ELI

Exactly. That's why he's in jail for stealing the car. Otherwise, Moosley couldn't explain why he ran away.

RACHEL

So Shimon is covering up for Moosley, and Moosley is covering for Shimon about killing Kendler.

ELI

And now Moosley's going to need you to cover up for him. Either that, or he's going to eliminate the witness.

RACHEL

Why can't he just admit that he was there, that he freaked out?

ELI

That would hurt his rabbi. There's an election soon.

They arrive at the security checkpoint across from the Western Wall. They both go through silently.

We see the Western Wall.

RACHEL

Why are we here.

ELI

I have to pick up Helen. This is part of her conversion craziness.

They walk down the stairs into the large square across from the Wall. Helen sees them. She has been waiting. She waves.

Helen hugs Eli

HELEN

This is amazing. I can feel the shicheenah [God's spirit] in this place.

Rachel kisses Helen on the cheek.

RACHEL

You had a good lesson?

HELEN

Amazing!

ELI

Did you leave a note for God?

HELEN

I did.

RACHEL

I think I'm going to do the same. I'll get home on my own.

HELEN

Are you sure? We can wait.

RACHEL

No, no. You two go ahead. I need to have a talk with my creator.

Helen gives Rachel a kiss. Eli gives her a smile.

Rachel walks toward the Wall.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL VISITOR'S ROOM - SAME

Shimon is sitting with Eli writing a note.

CUT TO:

EXT. WESTERN WALL - SAME

Rachel sits near the wall and writes something.

EXT. ARAB CAFE - OLD CITY - JERUSALEM - SAME

Eli and Helen are sitting, drinking coffee.

Helen is very excited.

HELEN

I love this. I've never felt so much meaning in my life.

ELI

I'm happy for you.

HELEN

Are you? I'm not sure if you understand what I'm going through.

CUT TO:

EXT. WESTERN WALL - SAME

Rachel is praying at the Wall. She closes her prayer book, kisses it, kisses the note and places it in the crevasse of the Wall.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL VISITOR'S ROOM - SAME

Shimon hands Moosley his letter and he puts it in an envelop and seals it.

CUT TO:

EXT. ARAB CAFE - OLD CITY - JERUSALEM - SAME

Helen reaches across the table and gives Eli a big kiss.

HELEN

I love you.

ELI

I love you too.

CUT TO:

INT. RAV BENJAMIN'S STUDY - A SHORT TIME LATE

The door opens abruptly. It's Rachel. She storms toward Rav Benjamin. TWO MEN follow her.

RACHEL

I know about your plan.

The men look to the rabbi. He puts up his hand to indicate that everything is okay. They leave and shut the door behind themselves.

RAV BENJAMIN

You do.

RACHEL

You're going to kill the witness so Moosley and Shimon don't have to take responsibility. Your willing to give up your values to win an election.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL CELL - SAME

Shimon is in his cell praying.

CUT TO:

INT. RAV BENJAMIN'S STUDY - SAME

Rachel stands in front of the rabbi.

RACHEL

You know, you're going to have to kill me too. I'm not lying for Moosley.

RAV BENJAMIN

Who said anything about lying?

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL CELL

Shimon finishes praying. He closes his prayer book and kisses it. He lies it on a table and goes to wash his hands.

CUT TO:

INT. RAV BENJAMIN'S STUDY - SAME

Rachel is furious.

RACHEL

You're not going to win this one.
Not if I have anything to do about
it.

CUT TO:

INT. JAIL CELL - SAME

Shimon stands on his table. He takes a sheet which is tied like a noose around the bars of his cell near the ceiling. He puts his head in the noose part and jumps from the table. His body flies back against the bars.

Guards hear this and rush to the cell. They open it, but Shimon is already dead.

CUT TO:

EXT. PARKING LOT - OLD CITY - SAME

Helen and Eli walk to their car.

HELEN

I think we should fly back to the
States, get married and come back
here and have a big fat Jewish
wedding.

ELI

Is that what you want.

HELEN

Yes.

ELI

Then we'll do it. I'll tell my
parents. I just have to straighten
out a few things before we leave.

CUT TO:

EXT. BEIRUT - NIGHT - FLASHBACK TO 1981

Boom!

There is a big explosion from the warehouse. Moosley, Eli,
Shimon and the Old Arab Man fall to the ground.

Eli gets up and starts running toward the explosion.

ELI

Mony!

MOOSLEY

Get back here. You're going to get
killed.

Shimon gets up. He stands over the Old Arab Man.

SHIMON

You fucking bastard. Go to hell.

Shimon kills the Old Arab Man with a shot to the head.

Eli gets shot and falls.

MOOSLEY

You stupid son of a bitch.

He starts running toward Eli.

MOOSLEY

(To Shimon)

Eli's down. Cover me.

Moosley runs toward Eli. Shimon shoots at anything that
moves. He is completely mad.

Moosley gets to Eli.

MOOSLEY

I got you. You'll be fine.

Moosley lifts Eli and drags him toward Shimon.

An Israeli helicopter lands in front of them.

Moosley lifts Eli onto the helicopter as Shimon continues shooting.

MOOSLEY
 (To Shimon)
 We're out of here. Come on.

Shimon turns and runs as Moosley covers for him. As soon as he arrives at the helicopter, it leaves the ground. They are all safely inside.

CUT TO:

INT. ELI'S PARENTS APARTMENT - DAY

Zahava and Chaim are in their living room watching the news on television.

We see the television.

A News Person is reading the news.

NEWS PERSON
 And now the latest in the sad story of the teacher who was killed when his car crashed into a former student. Let's go live to Abukaber Prison.

A REPORTER stands outside of the prison.

REPORTER
 We are standing outside of Abukaber Prison where the crash victim, Shimon ben Azzulai, was discovered dead after an apparent suicide. Police were unclear of the motive until a call was made from Rav Ohad Benjamin, spiritual leader of the Temple Faithful Party.

In the news broadcast, they cut to Rav Benjamin sitting at his desk in his study.

RAV BENJAMIN
 In the letter Ben Azzulai said that he kidnapped Member of Knesset Ben Yosef. He wanted revenge for something that happened during their army service. This man was full of hatred and disdain for Elohim.

(MORE)

RAV BENJAMIN (cont'd)

The letter says that he stole
Moshe's car and made him a witness
to the terrible murder of their
high school teacher, may his memory
be a blessing.

CUT TO:

INT. CHAPEL - EVENING

Her comes the bride is playing. Eli is standing under the
chuppah. Helen approaches with her back to the camera. She
arrives at the chuppah. Eli lifts the veil from her face.

From behind them, a Elvis impersonator clears his throat
before starting the service.

CUT TO:

EXT. CHAPEL - EVENING

We see that they are in the Graceland Chapel.

The song Viva Las Vegas starts playing as the camera pulls
back and reveals more of the city.

FINAL FADE OUT: