

MESSIAH

Written by

Michael Petroni

One-hour pilot
"He that hath an ear"

POLISH VERSION 1
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EXT. YARMOUK REFUGEE ENCLOSURE. DAMASCUS. SYRIA - PRESENT DAY

A blockaded compound within a city.

ARMED MILITIA guard every street entrance.

Concrete apartment blocks pitted and crumbling from five years of shell-fire and civil war offer no shelter to the sea of starving Palestinian refugees trapped within.

SUPER: Yarmouk Refugee Enclosure. Damascus. Syria

There are so many people it is impossible to see the road or pavement they stand or lie on. Conditions are squalid. A man steals the shoes from a sleeping woman's feet - or perhaps she's dead.

Thousands of hungry eyes stare vacantly, awaiting food relief that will not reach them.

The distant, persistent CLATTER OF GUNFIRE fills the air.

We move over the desperate faces to find JIBRIL (16) - hungry and helpless like every other soul around him. On his lap, his MOTHER lays her head... her eyes closed.

Looking down at her, concern clouds his expression...

JIBRIL
(in Arabic: subtitled)
<Mother?...>

He gently nudges her shoulder...

JIBRIL (CONT'D)
<Mother... >

He touches her cheek... she does not move.

He opens one of her eyes carefully with his fingers - it stares lifelessly back at him.

From the pain in Jibril's eyes -

CUT TO:

DARKNESS.

We hear the soft padding of footsteps...

A small bedside LIGHT SWITCHES ON illuminating the face of Jibril's mother - she is younger, and sleeping.

She opens her eyes, woken by the light and looks kindly at her son Jibril (WHO IS 7 YEARS OLD IN THIS MEMORY), standing by her bed, his eyes full of fear.

JIBRIL
(in Arabic. Subtitles)
<I had a nightmare.>

Without a word she lifts her blankets and lets him crawl into her bed - snuggling... hoping she is enough to comfort him.

JIBRIL (CONT'D)
<I saw them shoot him, in the dream.>

JIBRIL'S MOTHER
Sshh...

She strokes his hair... soothing him...

JIBRIL
<Mama... Why did he die?>

JIBRIL'S MOTHER
<Because it was written in God's book.
"Nothing shall befall us, except what
Allah has ordained.">

The boy's eyes shimmer with a frightening thought...

JIBRIL
<Did God not love him?>

JIBRIL'S MOTHER
<God loved him so much he took him sooner
than we wanted.>

JIBRIL
(worried)
<Does God love me so much?>

JIBRIL'S MOTHER
<Yes... but God has a different plan for
you.>

JIBRIL
<What is it?>

JIBRIL'S MOTHER
<He will reveal it to you when He is
ready.>

JIBRIL
<How will I know?>

JIBRIL'S MOTHER
 <You will know. Now off to sleep.>

She kisses his head and turns out the light, returning the room to DARKNESS.

CUT TO:

INT. BASEMENT CARPARK. YARMOUK REFUGEE CAMP - DAY
 (PRESENT DAY)

SIXTEEN-YEAR-OLD JIBRIL struggles to drag the body of his mother into the lightless corner of a crumbling basement carpark. GUN CLATTER still echoes outside.

CUT TO:

SAME - LATER

CLOSE ON: THE LIFELESS FACE OF JIBRIL'S MOTHER lodged between rubble.

Jibril has covered her body under a pile of rocks and concrete - a makeshift grave.

He looks at her heart-broken, touches her cheek. Covering her face with one final stone, he kneels and begins to pray as tears fill his eyes ...

JIBRIL
 Allaahum-maghfir lihayyinaa, wa
 mayyitinaa, wa shaahidinaa, wa
 ghaa'ibinaa, wa sagheerinaa wa
 kabeerinaa, wa thakarinaa wa
 'unthaanaa...

CUT TO:

JIBRIL crawling through a narrow hole in a wall clearly made by an artillery strike...

Struggling through the tight space, he falls onto the pavement on the other side. Quickly getting to his feet, he looks around to see TWO MILITIA with guns at the end of the blockaded street - their backs to him.

Turning in the opposite direction, he runs.

EXT. HILLS OUTSIDE DAMASCUS - SAME TIME

CLOSE ON: Tank tracks lurching to a stop.

WIDE ON: a row of ISIS tank gun turrets rotating as they line up the ancient city in their sights.

A sharp wind WHISTLES up the mountain side as calls of "ALLAHU AKBAR!" rise from the masked soldiers in a shrill chorus.

CUT TO:

A MOB YELLING IN ARABIC.

EXT. BAB TOUMA (GATE OF ST. THOMAS). DAMASCUS - SAME TIME

His head spinning with grief and hunger, Jibril wanders through the war torn city - barely comprehending his escape from the compound... but escape into what exactly? More mayhem.

The streets are crumbling... burnt out cars lay abandoned on the pavement. WIND blows rubbish in all directions.

Stumbling over rubble he cups his hands under an exposed tap in a blown out building and thirstily drinks from the meager trickle of water. People hurry through the dilapidated streets.

He comes upon the mob swarming at an intersection, blocking traffic. Jibril tries to skirt around the throng but it's near impossible.

And now he sees the focus of the crowd's attention...

A MALE FIGURE dressed in bright yellow traditional kandura robes stands on top of the ancient arch of ST. THOMAS'S GATE, emphatically yelling at the crowd below him.

THE MAN

(in Arabic: subtitled)

<I tell you, my brothers and sisters,
they are a blight on God's earth.>

Some try to listen above the din of detractors and the general chaos... OTHERS RECORD WHAT HE IS SAYING ON THEIR IPHONES.

THE MAN, swarthy with a rough beard, fervently preaches his message - eyes burning with passion. From his vantage he looks out over the city walls toward the TANKS ON THE HILLS...

THE MAN (CONT'D)
 (in Arabic: subtitled)
 <"They shall be held up to shame in this world. They have incurred God's most inexorable wrath. An ignominious defeat awaits them!">

A man in the crowd objects -

DETRACTOR
 (in Arabic: subtitled)
 <It is forbidden to misquote the scriptures!>

He throws a rock at the preacher, yelling more abuse -

DETRACTOR (CONT'D)
 <May the devil swallow you up!>

Jibril listens to the man... curious.

THE MAN
 (to his detractors)
 <Lay your faith in my words brothers... salvation is at hand. It is written in God's book.>

Looking across the crowd, he meets Jibril's gaze - the man's words echo in the youth's memory -

THE MAN (CONT'D)
 <"Nothing shall befall us, except what God has ordained." Your destiny lies with Him. Only you who have suffered know the hand of God. Only you who grieve understand His mercy. And only He knows your pain. "He is with you, wherever you are." He is with you now. >

Jibril weaves his way through the crowd... drawn to the stranger.

Just then some SYRIAN SOLDIERS run towards the mob, yelling - trying to break up the gathering.

SYRIAN SOLDIERS
 <Go home!/Get inside!/It's curfew!>

CUT TO:

CLOSE ON THE MASKED MILITIAS. Their cries of "ALLAHU AKBAR!" rise in intensity above the HOWLING WIND.

THE ISIS TANKS'S TURRETS settling into their final position...

BACK TO:

THE MAN ON THE GATE OF ST. THOMAS.

THE MAN

(in Arabic: subtitled)

<Mark my words! On this day, mark my words! God will turn them away! Salvation is at hand!>

A sudden gust whips sand into his face.

Below, Jibril struggles in the crowd, trying to get closer to the preacher.

Just then a deep BOOM rumbles across the city - something tears the air - eyes look up to the heavens...

An artillery shell STREAKS through the sky and strikes a nearby building - BOOM!

The MOB SCREAMS and YELLS as chaos breaks out... another artillery shell STRIKES! BOOM!

Jibril is jostled in the crowd.

Through the shell-fire and mayhem The Man continues ranting, undeterred and unheard.

THE MAN (CONT'D)

<"He shall let them live awhile, but Evil shall be their fate!">

BOOM BOOM - more shells STRIKE! The wind gales now as sand thickens the air. The crowd runs in all directions taking shelter from the bombs and the SAND STORM -

Taking cover, Jibril looks back up at the preacher... he looks certifiably insane as he continues preaching unheard over the screams and explosions - the sandstorm literally erasing him and the whole scene from view.

FADE TO BLACK.

FADE IN:

A TUMBLE WEED...

Drifts and bounces on the wind, down a road, past a typical American white weatherboard church with a steeple...

We follow the tumble weed skittering across the main street of this little, sleepy town

SUPER: DILLEY, TEXAS.

The tumble weed finally comes to rest at the steps of what looks to be a COMMUNITY HALL...

INT. COMMUNITY HALL - DAY

A TEENAGE GIRL (CORALINE) sits in a small circle of youths ranging from 15 to 18 years of age. Leading the group is FELIX (40's) a slightly doughy Hispanic man with gentle eyes and the patience of Job.

CORALINE

It just feels like things are endin'.

FELIX

What do you mean by that?

CORALINE

Everythin'. The world's just fucked.

FELIX

Sometimes when we're overwhelmed by our own feelings we project them onto the world... know what I mean? So maybe you're feeling hopeless right now and so the whole world feels hopeless to you...

Coraline shrugs.

OTHER TEENAGE GIRL

Yeah, Coraline, brighten the fuck up.

The others smirk and titter... but Felix's keen eye notices ONE GIRL not smirking or tittering... she's just staring down at the floor. He continues -

FELIX

My point is, we all feel hopeless at some time or other... and the world can feel pretty dark... and that's what this group's about... knowing we're not alone in these feelings.

Felix's gaze returns to the silent girl with her head down...

FELIX (CONT'D)
Rebecca?... What do you think?

REBECCA (15) slowly lifts her gaze from the floor, leveling a stare at Felix... and shrugs.

Felix weighs the situation carefully - this girl seems to be a loaded gun...

FELIX (CONT'D)
We can leave it there for today... Now let's all join hands.

The circle join hands... Rebecca reluctantly obliges.

FELIX (CONT'D)
God, we thank you for your constant love and forgiveness and we ask that you guide us all through our challenges, and by letting you into our hearts may we feel your strength and constancy so to resist the temptations of this world. Amen.

And with that Rebecca breaks free from the group and heads right out the door into...

EXT. TOWN OF DILLEY. TEXAS - DAY

The main street of Dilley, Texas - population 1,200. To the south sits the Mexican border, to the north miles of fallow farmland extend into saltbush plains.

Rebecca looks up at the clouds boiling in the sky. Lighting a cigarette, she walks off towards the farmlands.

ANGLE ON FELIX standing in the hall's double doors, looking after Rebecca... concern brewing behind his eyes.

EXT. OLD DAM. ABANDONED FARM - DAY

Rebecca sits on the wall of an empty dam, smoking, leaning back into the arms of ERIC - 17, stoned, unemployed.

ERIC
We're goin' to the swim hole tonight. You comin'?

REBECCA
I'm grounded, remember?

ERIC
Hasn't stopped you before.

REBECCA
My parents are on me like flies on shit.

He offers Rebecca a joint.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
I can't. I get tested next week.

ERIC
(tempting her)
It makes you horny.

He slides his hand down to her leg where we see a row of thin cut marks on the inside of her thigh (clearly from self harming). She pushes his hand away, pulling her skirt down.

REBECCA
Don't.

ERIC
Come on... dope doesn't even show up on those tests, anyways.

REBECCA
Says who?

He shrugs - it was worth a try.

Rebecca knows she's smarter than Eric, he's just older and therefore cooler. But his appeal has been wearing thin lately.

REBECCA (CONT'D)
We should just run away.

ERIC
And go where?

REBECCA
Anywhere's gotta be better than this shit hole.

ERIC
(taking the joint)
Better the shit hole you know.

She sits up and stares out at the town in the near distance...

REBECCA

I had a dream last night that someone
blew this place up... nothin' left
standin'. Everyone died, even me. It felt
real.

She slides on her butt, down the side of the empty dam.

ERIC

Where are you goin'?

She doesn't bother answering.

He watches her walk off towards the town.

ANGLE ON REBECCA, walking. She looks up as the sun momentarily breaks through the clouds - her eyes suddenly blinded by the light. Her expression becomes strangely blank... her fingers twitch, her gait wavers... and she is falling to the ground, her hands outstretched as her eyes roll back in her head...

ANGLE ON ERIC seeing her twitching on the ground. He slides down the dam's embankment.

Reaching her, he sees she is having a seizure. He calmly rolls her into recovery position (he's clearly done this before) and waits for the seizure to stop.

CUT TO:

A CNN NEWSCASTER delivers the headlines -

CNN NEWSCASTER

Islamic State militia have withdrawn
troops from their long held position
outside the city of Damascus after a
month long sand storm literally buried
their ground forces.

The report cuts to footage showing entire city blocks of Damascus covered in mountains of sand.

MUTE FOOTAGE OF U.S. DEFENSE SECRETARY LAUTON talking to press.

CNN NEWSCASTER (V.O.)

US Defense Secretary, Andrew Lauton, said the turning point in the siege was the break in the chain of supply caused by the severe weather.

As the report continues we PULL OUT from the monitor playing the news, into -

A small PRIVATE SURGERY room.

EVA GELLER -(39) beautiful, intelligent, obstinate - lays on a day bed in a hospital gown. She simultaneously texts on her phone as she half-watches the report on the TV mounted above the bed.

A NURSE enters.

NURSE

You can sit up and get dressed now, Ms. Geller.

Eva sits up.

NURSE (CONT'D)

Has the doctor gone through everything with you?

EVA

Yes.

NURSE

You'll probably feel funny for the first few days.

EVA

(prickly)

This isn't my first time.

The nurse smiles contritely.

EVA (CONT'D)

(catching herself)

I'm sorry... I'm just a little tense.

NURSE

That's OK, Honey.

She leaves Eva to get dressed.

INT. PRIVATE SURGERY RECEPTION - DAY

Dressed in a smart skirt and blazer with her hair pulled back, Eva looks transformed. She settles her account with the RECEPTIONIST at the front desk as the news continues on a TV in reception. The sound is down but a photo of a handsome Pakistani man appears behind the anchorman with a slug "UNDER SECRETARY DANNY KIRMANI" -

EVA
 (to receptionist)
 Can you turn that up please?

RECEPTIONIST
 Of course, just a moment...

The receptionist continues doing what she is doing. Impatient to hear the report, Eva grabs the TV remote and turns the sound up for herself, causing the receptionist to give a small frown.

CNN REPORTER (ON T.V.)
 ...this comes as the House Select Committee for the Saudi bombing of Yemen began the latest phase of its probe today calling on Under Secretary for the Near East Danny Kirmani to give testimony this morning in the closed hearings.

Just then Eva's physician - DR. AGNEW - pokes his head out of his office, distracting Eva from the news report -

DR. AGNEW
 Can I get a promise from you that you'll take it easy?

EVA
 Of course. I will...
 (off his look)
 I promise.

Just then her phone BUZZES with a text.

DR. AGNEW
 I mean it, Eva. Rest.

As Eva takes her leave, Dr. Agnew watches her step into the elevator with her head in her phone, busily texting.

Off Dr. Agnew's dubious expression -

CUT TO:

I/E. EVA'S CAR/WASHINGTON BELTWAY - DAY

As Eva drives, her phone CHIRPS -

She answers on the hands free -

EVA
 Dad? What's up?

CUT TO:

INTERCUT WITH ZELMAN GELLER (80's) in his FLORIDA CONDO - everything you'd expect in a widower's retirement nest except perhaps the walls have more books.

ZELMAN

How'd it go?

EVA

(dismissive)

Oh... fine... Just like the last time.

ZELMAN

What did the doctor say?

EVA

He said to make sure my father didn't stress me out about it.

ZELMAN

You tell him your father's just concerned.

EVA

Your timing's impeccable Dad, I'm just about to pull up to work.

ZELMAN

You're going to work?

EVA

I'm fine.

ZELMAN

Eva.

EVA

I've gotta go.

ZELMAN

Call me later, will you?

EVA

Bye.

She hangs up and changes lanes to head off the freeway when -

HONK! SCREEECH!

She jams the brakes before even seeing the car she almost hit. The WOMAN inside the other car is yelling at Eva. Eva BLASTS her horn! As the car pulls away a TODDLER stares at her impassively from the back passenger window. Her eyes and Eva's meet...

It's only now Eva notices her hands shaking and the tears welling in her eyes. Quickly wiping her tears -

EVA (CONT'D)
(under her breath)
Fuck.

EXT. PARKING LOT. CIA HQ - DAY

Her hand still shaking, Eva holds up her ID to a SECURITY OFFICER at a heavily guarded gate, then drives through.

Pulling into her car space, she gathers herself - takes a deep breath, checks her makeup and steps out of her car.

INT. EVA'S OFFICE - DAY

Through a glass door with her name and title - EVA GELLER, OPERATIONS MANAGER - we see Eva interviewing a young RECRUIT using a questionnaire.

She masks the residue of her panic attack with an inscrutable demeanor.

EVA
You're a philosophy major.

RECRUIT
Yes, ma'am.

EVA
So why do you want to work for the CIA?

RECRUIT
I think it's one of the most important jobs a person can have. Keeping our country safe. Upholding its values.

Eva notices her phone VIBRATING in her bag on the floor beside her. She ignores it and continues the interview.

EVA
What's a misconception that people may have about you?

RECRUIT
(thinks)
That I'm judgemental.

EVA
So you're not?

RECRUIT

Not really. I think I accept all different kinds of people.

Looking up from her questionnaire - scrutinizing -

EVA

Would you accept a criminal?

RECRUIT

If he'd served his time and was remorseful.

EVA

Would you trust him?

RECRUIT

(thinks again)
No. Not with everything.

EVA

What wouldn't you trust him with?

RECRUIT

My family... a secret.

EVA

The truth?

(repeating)

Would you trust him to tell you the truth?

RECRUIT

The truth has many different versions. So probably not.

His answer makes Eva think a moment.

EVA

(repeating)

The truth has many different versions.

RECRUIT

The truth is pretty grey.

She looks back down at her questionnaire about to move on, when something stops her.

EVA

Look... I'm going to stop the interview there. I know I'm not supposed to tell you this, but I won't be recommending you.

The recruit looks devastated.

RECRUIT
 (barely getting the word out)
 Why not?

EVA
 The CIA is like a Holy order. We don't
 have room for multiple truths. People's
 lives depend on one way of thinking. It's
 a doctrine you have to live by. There's
 no room for grey. Sorry.

Her phone VIBRATES again. This time she picks it up -

EVA (CONT'D)
 Excuse me.

She steps out of the room.

INT. HALLWAY - CONTINUOUS

Eva steps into a corridor heavy with foot traffic -
 MILITARY OFFICERS, BUREAUCRATS and AGENTS.

Pulling into an alcove she checks her text from "Q"-

Q: "Watch this."

There's a file attached...

She downloads ...

It's footage of A CROWD rejoicing in the sand covered
 streets of Damascus.

Ducking out of the busy corridor into a vacant CONFERENCE
 ROOM, Eva watches the footage... intrigued.

ON THE VIDEO: The mob is crowding around something as
 they dance and cheer. The footage jostles getting closer
 to the focus of the crowd's attention.... it's THE MAN we
 saw earlier preaching in Arabic on the gate of St.
 Thomas.

Eva texts back: "Damascus?"

Q: "yes"

EVA: "Who is he?"

Q: Turn your sound up.

She plays it again with the sound up to hear the crowd chanting "Al-Massih! Al-Massih!"

CUT TO:

EXT. DAMASCUS - DAY

The very same MOB rejoicing and chanting -

CROWD

Al-Massih! Al-Massih! Al-Massih!

They jostle and crowd around the preacher - it is he they are calling AL-MASSIH - men and women touching him, kissing his hands and clothes, whatever they can manage to grab...

He makes slow progress walking through the sand-covered streets, heading out of the gates of the walled city. Behind him THOUSANDS OF FOLLOWERS... before him the desert wilderness.

CLOSE ON AL-MASSIH walking towards the horizon - seemingly held aloft on the cheers of adoration.

Jibril (the 16 year-old-boy from the beginning of our story) walks alongside Al-Massih.

JIBRIL

(Arabic: subtitled)

<Where do you lead us, Imam?>

AL-MASSIH

<To our destiny.>

CUT TO:

EXT. ABANDONED DAM. TEXAS - DAY

CLOSE ON REBECCA waking from her seizure.

She looks up at the clouds passing...

Sitting up, she discovers she is alone.

Spitting the foul taste out of her mouth, she gets to her feet and heads back towards town...

INT. RECTORY HOUSE - DAY

A neat, modest house with cheap furnishings. On a mantle, amongst a display of religious trinkets we see framed photos of a family - we recognise Felix standing next to his wife ANNA and their daughter Rebecca. Rebecca is Felix's daughter. In the photo Rebecca is a tween with her arms around her mom and dad - clearly happier times.

Reflected in the mirror above the mantel is ANNA - 40, intelligent, well bred and once beautiful, but the years have not been so kind to her. She works at her computer.

CLOSE ON THE COMPUTER - a spreadsheet with numbers. Anna adds to the expenses column... the program automatically recalculates sending the total into deficit highlighted in red at the bottom.

Sighing, she looks out the window ... a gust of wind blows dust across her view of the street. She instinctively draws the lace curtains across the window shutting out the view and heads upstairs.

CUT TO:

UPSTAIRS - MOMENTS LATER

Anna enters her bedroom. Standing at the tallboy, she looks at her reflection - saddened by what she sees. Removing a hip-flask from her underwear drawer, she takes a good swig, then lays down on the bed and closes her eyes...

Just then she hears THE FRONT DOOR OPENING DOWNSTAIRS.

Eyes snapping open -

ANNA
(soto)
Shit!

- she puts the flask back and quickly heads ACROSS THE UPSTAIRS LANDING into the -

BATHROOM. She swigs some mouthwash.

FELIX (O.S.)
Sweetheart?...

Flushing the toilet -

ANNA
(calling out)
Thought you were doing the rounds?

FELIX (O.S.)
 Forgot somethin'.

Checking herself in the mirror, she heads downstairs to find Felix looking at the computer -

FELIX (CONT'D)
 (re. the spreadsheet)
 That doesn't look pretty.

ANNA
 It's not.

He closes the computer.

She looks at him with pity and frustration.

ANNA (CONT'D)
 Can't keep ignoring it.

[N.B. Anna has a refined Kentucky accent].

Felix pulls open the lace curtain that Anna just closed and looks out on the town...

FELIX
 I'll make an announcement at prayer group.

ANNA
 That'll be the fourth time this year.

FELIX
 What choice do we have?

ANNA
 We can't keep expecting them to reach into their pockets -

FELIX
 It's what people do -

ANNA (CONT'D)
 - to pay for us!

Felix closes the curtains again, flustered.

FELIX
 What I do... what we do, is important.

ANNA
 I know it is, honey. It's God's work.

Felix sinks into his seat. Anna watches him... worried.

FELIX

I don't know if I'm cut out for this.

ANNA

That's ridiculous. Felix, this community needs you. You were born to do this. We just need to be practical. People have lost their jobs. They don't have money.

FELIX

I know where you're goin' with this.

ANNA

It would just be a loan. We would pay him back.

FELIX

I can't... I just can't do that.

ANNA

Why not?

FELIX

Because your father is just waiting for that call.

ANNA

That's not true.

FELIX

Isn't it?

Just then the front door opens ...

Anna and Felix halt their arguing as -

Rebecca enters.

Barely acknowledging her parents, she heads upstairs. Felix calls to her -

FELIX (CONT'D)

Rebecca.

She stops at the foot of the stairs...

ANNA

Where have you been?

REBECCA

Nowhere... just walkin'.

FELIX
 (noticing)
 You've got grass on your shirt...

He goes to brush it off...

REBECCA
 (pulling away from Felix)
 I fell down...

ANNA
 Did you have a turn?

REBECCA
 I'm OK. I'm gonna lie down.

As she continues upstairs -

FELIX
 Wait a minute.

She stops again - irritated now.

FELIX (CONT'D)
 Turn out your pockets... please.

Rebecca sighs, rolls her eyes, then does as she is told -
 tissues, phone, Tampax.

REBECCA
 Happy?

Hiding his embarrassment, Felix lets her continue
 upstairs. He and Anna share a helpless expression...

Then, unable to resist, Felix calls out -

FELIX
 We have prayer meeting tonight.

Rebecca SLAMS her bedroom door.

CUT TO:

iPhone footage of the Syrian crowd chanting "Al-Massih"
 plays on Eva's phone.

WIDE ON:

INT. CIA OPERATIONS DIRECTOR OFFICE - DAY

Eva sits before her boss ED BAILEY - 50's, unflappable.

EVA

"Massih" in Arabic means Messiah.

BAILEY

So this is a cult?

EVA

Probably. ISIS have been using this type of apocalyptic propaganda for years now - to good effect. This guy's just taken it to the next level.

BAILEY

So this is some push-back, some rival faction?

EVA

Possibly.

BAILEY

What do we know about him?

EVA

Nothing. He's come out of nowhere. The concerning thing is he's leading them into the desert.

BAILEY

Why?

EVA

If it's a cult, he could be leading them to their death... or he could be creating an army.

BAILEY

An army of sick and starving refugees?

EVA

He's creating a cause in the hope that other people will join him.

BAILEY

That's a lot of speculation.

EVA

My job is to speculate. I'd like to keep an eye on him.

Bailey considers this...

BAILEY

Minimal resources.

EVA
Thank you, sir.

INT. EVA'S APARTMENT - NIGHT

Eva enters, switches on the light - the apartment is, unlike her professional appearance, a mess. Books and files stacked on the floor amongst old takeout cartons.

Without apparently lifting her gaze, she steps deftly around the disorder as she sorts through her mail.

CLOSE ON her mail flipping through her fingers... she stops on a piece of forwarded mail addressed to -

"Mr. and Mrs. Benjamin Geller."

She sighs, seemingly disturbed or annoyed by the letter... then sets it aside.

BLING -

A text from Q: "You around?"

Eva's reply: "yup. news?"

Q: "he's not Syrian"

Another text interrupts from DAD-

DAD: "you never called back."

Eva (to Dad): "still working."

Eva (to Q): "call me"

Q: "finding a secure line"

DAD: "I'm calling"

Eva: "I'm working!"

Her phone RINGS. Exasperated, she answers -

EVA
What part of "I'm working" didn't you understand?

INTERCUT WITH ZELMAN in his FLORIDA CONDO.

ZELMAN
What are you doing still working? You need to rest.

EVA
Please, Dad.

ZELMAN
You're not taking this seriously.

EVA
Of course I am.

Her phone BLINGS - another call waiting.

EVA (CONT'D)
I've gotta go.

ZELMAN
You know what tomorrow is, right?

EVA
(forgetting)
What?

ZELMAN
Eva!

Remembering with a jolt of shame...

EVA
Oh God, Dad! Of course I remember. I'm
sorry.

ZELMAN
Lay a stone for me.

EVA
Of course.

ZELMAN
Get some sleep.

EVA
Good night.

ZELMAN
I love you.

She switches over to a Facetime call.

To see FIELD AGENT QAMAR MALOOF (A.K.A. "Q")- swarthy,
30's, American - sitting on his bed in some MIDDLE
EASTERN HOTEL.

EVA
What've you got?

Q
Nothing solid. Rumor is he's from Egypt.

[Q speaks with an American accent.]

EVA
I listened to those other tapes... I'm hearing some other accent... Iranian maybe.

Q
Exactly.

EVA
So he's likely Shiite. Who's he associated with?

Q
No-one... at least no-one obvious. A month ago people thought he was a loon... now that clip I showed you just played on al-Jazeera.

EVA
Let's hope it's his fifteen minutes of fame.

Q
Hopefully one of his disciples will pop him in the head and we can all get some sleep.

EVA
I'll call you in six hours.

She hangs up... then looks over the mess in her apartment. Her life didn't always look like this.

Just then the alarm on her phone CHIMES.

EVA (CONT'D)
Shit...

CUT TO:

EVA'S BATHROOM - MOMENTS LATER

Eva has her dress off and is injecting herself with a hypodermic in her stomach.

Just then she notices a few long strands of hair on the floor...

She runs her fingers through her hair ... and several more strands fall out.

EXT. SOUTHERN SYRIAN DESERT MOUNTAINS - NIGHT

Campfires dot the hillside of the rocky ravine as the horde of followers bed down for the evening, exhausted by their trek.

WE FOLLOW JIBRIL up a rocky slope to a clearing where al-Massih sits amongst a CIRCLE OF MEN - they all sit on rocks or stumps of wood, sipping tea listening to their teacher.

AL-MASSIH

(Arabic: subtitled)

<"If you look for truth you may find comfort in the end. If you look for comfort you will find neither truth nor comfort.">

One of the listeners speaks up (it is clear by his black robes and white turban, he is a MULLAH - Islamic cleric)

MULLAH

<Why do you quote an infidel? >

AL-MASSIH

<Who are you to judge who is an infidel?>

The mullah, frowns, confused.

Jibril interrupts -

JIBRIL

<People are hungry, Imam.>

MULLAH

(to Jibril)

<Do not interrupt us, boy.>

Overriding the mullah's reprimand, al-Massih turns to Jibril -

AL-MASSIH

<Why do you call me Imam?>

Jibril is suddenly self conscious before the circle of elders.

JIBRIL

<Because you are great.>

AL-MASSIH

<No greater than you. "There is no deity but God.">

JIBRIL

<But you turned away evil as you said you would.>

AL-MASSIH

<He turned away evil.>

JIBRIL

<But He works through you.>

AL-MASSIH

<"Did He create you in jest? Without purpose?">

The young man is unsure how to answer.

MULLAH

<You expect a shepherd boy to know the scriptures?>

Ignoring the comment, al-Massih persists with Jibril.

AL-MASSIH

(to Jibril)

<Do you serve God?>

JIBRIL

<Yes.>

AL-MASSIH

<Then He works through you.
(turning to the others)
He works through everyone.>

MULLAH

<You mean He works through all who righteously follow Islam.>

Al-Massih turns to the Mullah -

AL-MASSIH

<Do not tell me what I mean.>

This clearly irritates the man, who spits.

Al Massih stands... the Mullah remains seated. Tension suddenly fills the air.

AL-MASSIH (CONT'D)

<Why are there no women here?>

The mullah laughs - but his smile quickly disappears when he sees al-Massih just staring.

MULLAH
<Surely you're not serious.>

With a sudden move Al-Massih kicks out the stump from under the mullah.

AL-MASSIH
(to sheikh)
<Go find a woman and give her your seat.>

The Mullah gets to his feet and pridefully dusts himself off. The others look shocked.

MULLAH
(to the others)
<This man is the Devil. He has led us into the desert with no food.>

AL-MASSIH
<And to leave me now is to perish.>

The circle of men shift uncomfortably.

AL-MASSIH (CONT'D)
<I am here to tell you to throw away your assumptions about God. Stop clinging to what you think you know. In this hour Mankind is a rudderless boat. I am your salvation. Cling to me.>

He walks off up the embankment alone. The followers share worried looks.

INT. EVA'S BEDROOM - LATER

Eva lays in bed with her computer playing WORDS WITH FRIENDS (an on-line community Scrabble game). The clock reads 1:30 a.m.

She scrambles her letters, thinking, unconsciously twisting the wedding band on her finger round and round.

Giving in, she shuts the computer... switches off the light to sleep.

REMAIN IN DARKNESS...

She switches the light back on. Sighs.

Giving in to her insomnia, she gets up.

EXT. EVA'S CAR - NIGHT

Eva drives through the deserted streets. The clock on her dash reads 1:30 a.m.

EXT. FOGGY BOTTOM'S - NIGHT

Eva's car pulls up out the front of a streetcar diner called FOGGY BOTTOM'S.

INT. FOGGY BOTTOM'S - NIGHT

The place is empty except for the solitary AFRICAN AMERICAN WAITER (20) - reading a tome. [We will come to know him as KEON.]

The only customer is Eva sitting at a booth, alone, writing up a report on her computer.

Keon sidles over with a coffee pot and fills her mug.

KEON

We're closing in twenty.

EVA

Already?

KEON

It's 3 a.m.

EVA

I'm sorry. Am I stopping you from getting home?

KEON

It's my job... I gotta be here anyway.

He goes back to his book...

Eva looks around the diner, then outside at the empty street... then back at the waiter and the book he's reading.

EVA

"The Clash of Civilizations". Samuel P. Huntington.

The waiter looks up, a little surprised.

EVA (CONT'D)

How are you finding it?

KEON

Dry.

EVA

Political Science?

KEON

Yeah.

EVA

Let me guess... sophomore.

KEON

That's right.

He goes back to his book, trying to concentrate.

EVA

When's your paper due?

KEON

(reluctant)

Tomorrow.

He goes back to his reading...

She watches him a moment... then her loneliness speaks again -

EVA

The only thing you have to remember is that he was right... Huntington predicted that the primary axis of world conflict after the Cold War would be along cultural and religious lines... which is exactly what's happening in world politics today. Just center your paper around that argument.

KEON

(more intrigued)

You teach?

EVA

No... no. I'm just a nerd.

He looks at her now... a woman alone in the cafe trying to strike up a conversation...

KEON

My boss calls you Miss Night Owl.

EVA
(embarrassed)
I've got a nickname?

KEON
I think he likes you.

She smiles... remotely flattered.

EVA
I'm Eva.

KEON
Keon.

EVA
Nice to meet you, Keon.

Now what?...

EVA (CONT'D)
So, what do you want to do when you graduate?

KEON
I don't know... maybe journalism.

EVA
Take your time deciding... that's my advice. And do something you love.

KEON
So what do you do... if you don't teach?

EVA
(hedging)
I work in international relations.

He looks at her assessingly...

KEON
That's what my uncle used to say... he worked for the CIA.

Surprised by his intuition, she suddenly regrets inviting this conversation.

KEON (CONT'D)
He used to say he had the most interesting and difficult job in the world.

EVA
I'm sure he's right.

She closes her computer now, uncomfortable.

KEON
You in the field?

EVA
I didn't say I was with the CIA.

Keon nods... gets the hint...

KEON
He died last year... my uncle. In Yemen.
That bombing.

Eva tries to cover her surprise.

EVA
That's ... terrible. I'm sorry to hear
that.

Slipping her computer into her bag, she leaves her tip on
the table...

KEON
He was doing what he loved... like you
say.

They regard each other with some affinity.

EVA
I should let you lock up.

She stands ...

EVA (CONT'D)
Good luck with the paper.

KEON
Thanks.

EVA
Remember what I said.

KEON
I will.

Keon watches her leave.

INT. ZELMAN'S CONDO - NIGHT

Zelman sits at his desk with his latest project -

A hand gun laying in pieces. Picking up the extractor
spring, he dips it in cleaning solution.

Just then the clock on his mantle CHIMES. Looking up from his work, he checks the time...

Crossing the room, he takes a bottle of schnapps from the mantel and pours himself a shot.

He raises the glass to a framed photo of himself with his arms around his wife ELSA.

ZELMAN

L'Chaim.

He drinks to her memory.

EXT. ELESAVETGRAD CEMETERY. WASHINGTON DC - NIGHT

Eva stands before a grave... pale in the moonlight.

Picking up a pebble, she places it on top of the headstone.

She looks over the rows of graves...

Walking the narrow path between the plots, she comes to ANOTHER HEADSTONE. She places a pebble on it.

She stares for a long moment...

Pulling her eyes from the grave, she looks up at the full moon...

EXT. SYRIAN DESERT - NIGHT

WIDE ON: Al Massih standing in the moonlight, a lone figure looking up at the same moon.

We cannot hear him but he seems to be talking to himself and gesticulating.

PULL BACK TO REVEAL:

Jibril and another follower HADAD looking on.

HADAD

<What is he doing?>

JIBRIL

<Talking with God.>

HADAD

<He looks mad.>

JIBRIL

<He stood for 30 days on St. Thomas's Arch without food or water and preached... during a sandstorm. He is the incarnation.>

Al Massih suddenly turns toward the youths -

AL MASSIH

Jibril!

Hadad skulks away as Jibril humbly walks over to his leader... and stands by his side. Al-Massih stares up at the stars, silent... Eventually -

AL MASSIH (CONT'D)

<There is a star for every soul.>

Jibril gazes up at the firmament...

AL MASSIH (CONT'D)

<Do you believe me?>

JIBRIL

<Yes.>

Al Massih smiles.

AL MASSIH

<You please me.>

They stand in silence some more.

AL MASSIH (CONT'D)

<You have light in you, Jibril... but God may ask some hard things of you.>

JIBRIL

<I will be ready.>

AL MASSIH

<Pack up the camp. We are moving.>

EXT. PARKING LOT. CIA HQ - NIGHT

Eva's car sits in the virtually empty parking lot.

INT. CIA OPERATIONS CENTER. LANGLEY, VA. - DAY

A large room with dimmed lighting surrounded by walls of monitors displaying muted TV news links, satellite images, maps and live UAV (drone)feeds.

In one corner Eva sits at a computer watching a program automatically comparing the gamut of terrorists' facial features against al-Massih's photo. No matches so far.

She wanders over to another station where a lone TECHNICIAN works on surveillance satellite feeds.

EVA

What do we have over Syria?

EXT. SOUTHERN SYRIAN DESERT/GOLAN HEIGHTS - DAWN

A faint mist rises off the desert mountains to reveal al-Massih and his horde of weary followers. From the looks of things they have been trekking all night.

Coming to a precipice, he looks out at the high desert's plain below. On the near horizon a tall barbed wire fence extends as far as the eye can see.

Al-Massih smiles...

But Jibril and his friend Hadad only seem terrified by the sight.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM. CIA HQ - NIGHT

Eva stands by the TECHNICIAN.

They are looking at a surveillance feed over a rocky desert.

TECHNICIAN

We lose range in about 4 minutes. What are we looking for exactly?

Pointing to a grainy image on the feed -

EVA

Can you zoom in on that?

The technician taps away at some keys.... The image ZOOMS IN on one of the fissures in the landscape to reveal A SWARM OF DOTS... people.

EVA (CONT'D)

There we are.

She puzzles a moment...

EVA (CONT'D)
 They're nowhere near Damascus...
 (to Technician)
 Where are we?

The Technician ZOOMS OUT and points to a serpentine city grid in one corner of the screen -

TECHNICIAN
 There's Damascus...

Scrolling the image down and to the right the technician points to a much larger grid of roads and buildings -

TECHNICIAN (CONT'D)
 And that's -

EVA
 (realizing)
 Israel.

EXT. SOUTHERN SYRIAN DESERT/GOLAN HEIGHTS - DAWN

Israel's border stretches before the 2000 refugees.

Hadad whispers to Jibril, panicked -

HADAD
 (whispering)
 <He's led us to our death.>

The FOLLOWER next to him pulls out a pistol -

FOLLOWER#1
 <He's led us into battle.>

Al-Massih calmly looks over his followers.

AL-MASSIH
 (to Jibril)
 <Collect all the weapons.>

INT. BAILEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

CIA Operations Director Ed Bailey is woken by his phone - he automatically reaches for it.

BAILEY
 Speak.

EVA (V.O.)
 We need to get an urgent message to a
 security post in Israel.

As he sits up out of bed -

CUT TO:

A PILE OF WEAPONS: AK47s, M16s, grenades and handguns.

Al-Massih stands over the arsenal as more weapons are
 piled on...

INT. BAILEY'S BEDROOM - NIGHT

BAILEY
 (into phone)
 Are they armed?

INTERCUT WITH EVA.

EVA
 We don't know but armed or unarmed, I
 don't have to tell you two thousand
 Syrians turning up on Israel's doorstep
 isn't going to end well.

EXT. SOUTHERN SYRIAN DESERT/GOLAN HEIGHTS - DAWN

Al-Massih walks away from the arsenal of weapons...

JIBRIL
 (Arabic: subtitles)
 <Imam... what do you want us to do?>

AL-MASSIH
 <Dig a hole and bury them.>

FOLLOWER#1
 <Then how do we fight?>

Without answering al-Massih strides off across the high
 desert plane towards the fenced border.

In the near distance an Israeli patrol tower can be seen
 perched high on stilts.

The followers look on from the foothill... unsure what to
 do...

One by one, they begin to follow al-Massih...

I.E. ISRAELI BORDER POST - DAWN

TWO YOUNG ISRAELI SOLDIERS slouch in their patrol box smoking and listening to ISRAELI POP MUSIC on the radio as they look out at the stretch of arid borderland.

Looking at his watch, one of the soldiers swivels his seat and casually peers through the large pair of field binoculars mounted on a tripod. He scans left to right.

HIS POV PANS: desert scrub... rock formations... abandoned battlements... A FIGURE.

ISRAELI SOLDIER #1
(Hebrew: subtitled)
<Shit...>

ISRAELI SOLDIER #2
<What?">

ISRAELI SOLDIER #1
<We've got a crazy fucker.>

The Second Soldier switches off the radio, pushes his partner out of the way and takes a look himself.

HIS POV finds al-Massih striding across no-man's land.

ISRAELI SOLDIER #2 (O.S.)
<Hello there, crazy fucker.>

Just then a shimmer of movement flickers behind the intruder ... The POV REFOCUSES bringing into sharp contrast THE HORDE OF THOUSANDS walking behind al-Massih.

ISRAELI SOLDIER #2
(CONT'D)
Oh shit.

He grabs for the land line.

EXT. GOLAN HEIGHTS. ISRAELI BORDER - DAWN

NO MAN'S LAND. Al-Massih walks directly towards the check point - closer now...

His followers hasten their pace now, emboldened with every step.

I.E. ISRAELI BORDER POST - DAWN

One of the Israeli soldiers talks urgently into the land-line phone.

ISRAELI SOLDIER #1
<Patrol house 283i7p. Repeat 283i7p.
Request immediate reinforcement.>

Meanwhile his partner packs ammunition into his flack jacket and straps his helmet tight.

He hangs up the phone. Then the two soldiers hustle out of the patrol hut, down the steps and into an armored jeep.

They tear off towards the intrusion. We observe all this from the patrol box window... the jeep leaving behind a trail of dust... RACK FOCUS TO the patrol box's PHONE RECEIVER dangling from its cord.

EXT. GOLAN HEIGHTS. ISRAELI BORDER - DAWN

NO MAN'S LAND.

Al-Massih approaches the check point. In the near distance a trail of dust rises from the approaching jeep...

Al-Massih continues walking through the check point...
ONTO ISRAELI SOIL...

Behind him, his followers can't believe how simple this seems, when -

PAH-PAH-PAH-PAH-PAH - automatic rounds ring out.

Everyone except al-Massih drops to the ground. Suddenly there are CRIES and SCREAMS from the women and children in the crowd. Some run.

Amidst the mayhem, al-Massih turns to his followers and holds out his palms. He sees the terror in Jibril's eyes and tries to calm him -

AL-MASSIH
<Be strong. God is with you.>

The armored jeep surges over a rise and slides to a stop just feet from al-Massih. The two soldiers pile out, shouting orders.

SOLDIERS 1&2
(randomly in Arabic:
subtitled)

<Hands up! - Get the fuck on the ground! -
Hands away from your clothes! - Now!
Hands up! Now!>

Al-Massih calmly raises his hands...

The bug-eyed soldiers look down the sights of their automatic rifles at al-Massih while casting wary glances at the horde behind him.

SOLDIER 1
(Arabic)
<On the ground!>

Al-Massih slowly kneels. Soldier #1 points his gun at Al-Massih's head -

SOLDIER 1 (CONT'D)
(Arabic)
<Why are you here?>

AL-MASSIH
(in Hebrew: subtitled)
<We are here to see the Holyland.>

The soldier's TWO-WAY SQUAWKS an inaudible message. Ignoring it -

SOLDIER 1
(in Arabic)
<What is your name?>

AL-MASSIH
(Hebrew)
<Why are you speaking Arabic, brother?>

The two way SQUAWKS again.

SOLDIER 1
(in Arabic)
<Answer me! Who are you?>

AL-MASSIH
(in Hebrew)
<I am a traveller.>

SOLDIER 1
<What is your name?>

AL-MASSIH
 (in Hebrew)
 <I have many names.>

SQUAWK.

The second soldier takes over -

SOLDIER 2
 <Stop this bullshit or I'll shoot
 you in the eye!>

TWO-WAY (V.O.)
 (in Hebrew: subtitled)
 <Cease fire! Cease fire!>

SOLDIER 2
 (Hebrew. Into two-way)
 <We have!>
 (to al-Massih)
 <Where is your passport?>

AL-MASSIH
 <I don't have one. We are refugees.>

SOLDIER 2
 <Then go ask fucking Lebanon to take
 you!>

AL-MASSIH
 <These people need food.>

SOLDIER 2
 <That's not our problem.>

AL-MASSIH
 <There are children.>

SOLDIER 2
 <Not my children.>

SOLDIER 1
 (fed up)
 <Lay down! Lay down on the ground!>

Al-Massih looks into the young soldier's eyes. The soldier raises the butt of his rifle to strike al-Massih when -

FOUR MORE ARMORED JEEPS barrel over the rise. A DOZEN ISRAELI SOLDIERS pile out. A SERGEANT leaps out of the lead vehicle and barks a command -

SERGEANT
 (Hebrew)
 <Stand down!>

The two original soldiers step back. The sergeant looks over the mass of people laying on the ground just across the border. His gaze settles on al-Massih.

SERGEANT (CONT'D)
 <Arrest him.>

CUT TO:

AERIAL VIEW OF ISRAEL/SYRIA BORDER REVEALS -

The two thousand refugees sit, stranded at the border.

Helicopters swoop overhead.

Hours have passed.

On the Israeli side of the border a blockade of SOLDIERS and MILITARY VEHICLES line the fence. And behind them, TV cameras have descended on the scene and set up camp.

CUT TO:

MIRIAM KENEALLY (40) reporting for CNN - tough with looks to prove it (you couldn't call her beautiful), she's whip smart and at the top of her game. She stands on the Israel side of the border dressed in a flack jacket.

KENEALLY (TO CAMERA)
 Over two thousand Syrian-Palestinian asylum seekers have landed on the border of Israel this morning, demanding entry into the Holy Land. Israeli authorities as of yet are not allowing the refugees passage, drawing criticism from Muslim communities and their leaders world wide. As Palestinians they are entitled entry into the West Bank as rightful citizens.

THE IMAGE OF KENEALLY FREEZES.

WE PULL OUT on Miriam watching her frozen image on a tiny monitor under a black tarp in the EXACT SAME LOCATION. Her CAMERA CREW wait patiently as she scrutinizes the screen.

KENEALLY (CONT'D)
 OK. We'll go again.

She heads back out to the same position at the border -

KENEALLY (CONT'D)

And someone fix my hair, I look like Phil Spector.

INT. GARAGE - DAY

In a dingy garage space AVRIM DAHAN (30's) ferociously pounds away at a punching bag - his powerful blows packed with anger, like small explosions - BOOM - BOOM - BOOM.

Close by, a cellphone BEEPS on the floor, but Avrim won't stop punching. As he works the bag, sweat trickles down his shirtless back where we notice the round, raised keloid scars that mar his skin - burn marks? Electrocutation?

The urgent BEEPING of his cell phone finally wins out over his desire to destroy the bag.

Pulling off a glove, he goes to answer his phone when it stops BEEPING.

AVRIM

(under breath)

Shit...

Just then the garage's door rolls open.

Avrim looks up at MIIKA his ex-wife - late 20's, gorgeous and fiesty - stepping out of her car.

MIIKA

(Hebrew: subtitled)

<What are you doing?>

AVRIM

<What's it look like?>

MIIKA

<You can't just let yourself in.>

AVRIM

<I pay for this place.>

ELLIE (O.S.)

Papa!

Four-year-old ELLIE has climbed out of Miika's car. She runs and gives Avrim a big hug.

AVRIM

<There's my princess.>

Miika watches her ex-husband and daughter - the bitter taste of jealousy and resentment rising in her...

MIIKA

<You're supposed to call and let me know when you're coming... they're the rules.>

AVRIM

(English)

Fuck the rules.

MIIKA

That's a great way to talk in front of your daughter.

AVRIM

Like she hasn't heard that from you? Besides, she doesn't speak English.

ELLIE

Yes I can.

Avrim seems a little shocked and ashamed that he doesn't know his daughter better.

AVRIM

That's my clever princess.

He heads inside the apartment.

MIIKA

Where are you going?

AVRIM

I need to shower.

MIIKA

<This isn't a hotel.>

Riled, Miika follows him into the APARTMENT. It's small and cluttered -

AVRIM

Do you ever clean up?

MIIKA

Did you just come here to judge me?

On the TV Miriam Keneally's CNN report catches Avrim's attention momentarily -

KENEALLY (ON TV)

Prime Minister Nizani so far has made no comment. Sources say the asylum seekers' leader was arrested this morning when attempting to cross the border. He is being held in Israeli custody.

Al-Massih's image flashes up on the screen before Miika MUTES the sound.

AVRIM

Hey!

MIIKA

What are you doing here?

AVRIM

I came to see Ellie.

His phone starts BEEPING again.

MIIKA

(Hebrew: subtitled)

<Oh, so you bothered this month?>

AVRIM

<Have you got a job yet?>

MIIKA

My job is to look after our daughter. You should try it some time.

PHONE STILL BEEPING...

AVRIM

(to Ellie)

<Go get your coat, princess.>

Ellie runs off, excited.

He answers his phone -

AVRIM (CONT'D)

(into phone)

<Yeah?... It's my day off.>

Avrim listens to whomever has called him...

AVRIM (CONT'D)

(into phone)

<When?... OK.>

He looks back to the TV at the CNN report...

AVRIM (CONT'D)
(into phone)

OK.

He hangs up.

Miika looks at Avrim... she's seen this a hundred times.

MIIKA
Are you going to break her heart
again?

Off Avrim's guilty look -

CUT TO:

INT. DEPT. OF STATE. (D.C.) - DAY

Eva and Ed Bailey sit before UNDER SECRETARY DANNY KIRMANI (we remember him from the news report in Eva's clinic earlier). He reads the flimsy report on al-Massih...

BAILEY
We'll eventually pull something on
him but it's going to take time... and
resources.

EVA
The fastest way to get to know this
guy is to meet him.

Closing the report -

DANNY KIRMANI
He's not our detainee. So, for the
moment, he's not our concern. Look, we
averted a situation, but for now Israel's
handling it.

Eva tries to quell her frustration.

EVA
I wouldn't underestimate this guy. This
wasn't just aimed at Israel. He knows
America has to defend Israel's position,
and the longer those starving people sit
on their border, the more indefensible
that position becomes. We're going to get
dragged into something we don't want to.

DANNY KIRMANI

Why don't you let the politicians
worry about that?

Off Eva's frustration -

CUT TO:

A CCTV IMAGE OF -

Al-Massih in his yellow robes sitting cuffed to a metal table in an interrogation room with a black jute hood pulled over his head.

CUT TO:

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM - CONTINUOUS

Al-Massih sits motionless, breathing under the hood. The only other sound is the fluorescent HUM of the light above.

AL-MASSIH'S POV FROM UNDER THE HOOD - a hatched view of the room. THE SOUND OF THE CELL DOOR OPENING... a shadowy figure approaches.

The hood is pulled off to reveal - AVRIM now dressed for his job as an Israeli Shin Bet security agent. His menacing energy is palpable as he sits opposite his detainee.

Al-Massih squints at Avrim - eyes adjusting to the light.

AVRIM

(in English)

This is my day off. I don't want you to waste my time, so it will be best if you just answer my questions. Why are you here?

AL-MASSIH

To see the Holyland.

AVRIM

(wryly)

Welcome to the Holyland.

AL-MASSIH

So I'm free to leave?

AVRIM

I ask the questions here. Who are you?

AL-MASSIH

Mee-lah.

AVRIM

(laughs.)

Mee-lah?... Do you even know what that means?

AL-MASSIH

Yes.

AVRIM

You are "the word"? ... OK, Mr. "The Word"... look it doesn't bother me if you sit here and rot, I just don't want you to waste my fucking time.

Al-Massih stares impassively.

AVRIM (CONT'D)

(sarcastically)

So where did you learn all your Hebrew?

AL-MASSIH

Here.

AVRIM

So you're from here?

AL-MASSIH

Originally.

AVRIM

From where... Ramat Alan?

AL-MASSIH

Why do you assume I'm Palestinian?

AVRIM

(humoring him)

So you're Jewish?

AL-MASSIH

Originally.

AVRIM

Originally? So now what are you?

AL-MASSIH

I am with God.

AVRIM

God?

Avrim tauntingly looks around the room...

AVRIM (CONT'D)

I don't see him?

AL-MASSIH

You will.

AVRIM

Will I?

(dangerously)

Why don't you take God and stick him up
your fucking ass.

Al-Massih just stares.

Beat.

AVRIM (CONT'D)

What were you doing in Syria?

AL-MASSIH

Giving the people of Damascus a
message.

AVRIM

A message... from who?

AL-MASSIH

My father.

AVRIM

And who is your father?

AL-MASSIH

That will be revealed in time.

AVRIM

Why not save me the fucking
suspense and just reveal it now?

AL-MASSIH

Because, Avrim, the time is not yet
right.

AVRIM

Who told you my name?

AL-MASSIH

(in perfect Hebrew:
subtitled)

<No one needed to tell me your
name. You are in my father's book.>

Avrim leans in dangerously -

AVRIM
Don't fuck with me.

AL-MASSIH
Your anger is misplaced.

AVRIM
You don't want to know about my
anger.

AL-MASSIH
You hold onto hatred like it's a
prize when it's the weight around your
neck.

Avrim's hand unconsciously curls into a fist.

AL-MASSIH (CONT'D)
You want to hurt me...

AVRIM
Oh... yes.

AL-MASSIH
... like they hurt you.

Avrim tries to hide his surprise at this comment.

AVRIM
You talk a lot of shit.

AL-MASSIH
You hurt a lot of people.

AVRIM
It's my job.

AL-MASSIH
You enjoy it.

AVRIM
I take pride in my work.

AL-MASSIH
Except for that boy.

AVRIM
What are you talking about?

AL-MASSIH
The boy in Meggido.

Avrim does everything he can not to react but he is clearly flummoxed - the vein in his temple starts to pound. He squeezes the jute sack he still holds in his hands...

AL-MASSIH (CONT'D)

Is that when you stopped believing?

AVRIM

I ask the questions.

AL-MASSIH

<He is waiting for you, Avrim, whenever you're ready -

Avrim violently pulls the sack back over al-Massih's head.

AL-MASSIH'S POV from inside the jute sack as we hear the CELL DOOR OPEN AND SLAM SHUT.

INT. CORRIDOR HADARIM DETENTION CENTER - DAY

Avrim storms out of the interrogation room...

And into the adjoining OBSERVATION ROOM where al-Massih can be seen through a 2-way mirror.

Leaning over a CORRECTIONS OFFICER recording the interrogation on his laptop, Avrim highlights the file of the recording and hits DELETE.

CORRECTIONS OFFICER

Hey!

Shutting the computer, Avrim leaves.

EXT. PARKING LOT - CONTINUOUS

Striding across the parking lot, Avrim pulls a pack of cigarettes from his shirt pocket and lights one.

Stepping into his beat up Mercedes, he sits there and smokes his cigarette with the windows up.

He stares straight ahead - thoughts churning...

EXT. GOLAN HEIGHTS BORDER - DAY

The disgruntled Mullah (we remember from the camp fire scene) yells to the horde of refugees laying tired and hungry in the dirt along the fenced border.

MULLAH

(Arabic: subtitled)

<If one child dies here, let it be on this man's head! We have been tricked!>

In the crowd Hadad turns to Jibril.

HADAD

<He has left us.>

JIBRIL

<He was arrested.>

HADAD

<What do we do?>

JIBRIL

<Trust in him.>

HADAD

<Why?>

JIBRIL

<Why did you follow him through a desert?>

HADAD

<Because it was better than being shot at.>

MULLAH

(to the crowd)

<He has led us here to die! He has used us like pawns.>

Jibril looks over the border at the ARMED SOLDIERS. Behind the soldiers a flank of TV cameras video them.

EXT. CHURCH. DILLEY, TEXAS - NIGHT

Felix bids farewell to his congregation passing out the double doors of the white steepled church.

As his followers leave, they slip five and ten dollar bills in his hand...

FELIX

Thank you. What ever you can afford. It's all appreciated.

He catches a rueful glare from his wife Anna who walks off up the street without him. Felix swallows his pride and continues glad handing...

The last out the door is his daughter Rebecca -

REBECCA

Congratulations Dad, you're really great at turning out people's pockets.

She stalks down the steps. Smarting from the comment, he turns out the church lights and locks the doors.

INT. FELIX AND ANNA'S HOUSE, LOUNGE ROOM - NIGHT

The house is quiet. Anna and Rebecca have gone to bed. By the light of the TV, Felix kneels at the coffee table counting out the money.

In the b.g. on the TV, Miriam Keneally's CNN report falls on Felix's deaf ears.

KENEALLY (ON T.V.)

Demonstrations have begun around the Muslim world today in protest of Israel, as the presence of the Syrian-Palestinian asylum seekers puts pressure on Prime Minister Nizani to play a more active role in the on-going crisis in Syria which has been shouldered mostly by Europe.

INT. FELIX AND ANNA'S HOUSE, REBECCA'S ROOM - SAME TIME

Rebecca sits in the glow of her computer, watching people chat on-line.

TILT DOWN to see her carefully making fine lesions on her thigh with a box-cutter as the droplets of blood trickle onto the tissue she holds.

INT. CIA OPERATIONS CENTER. LANGLEY, VA. - NIGHT

Eva sits vigil at the facial recognition program still trying to find a match for al-Massih. The program finally stops. A banner appears - NO AVAILABLE MATCHES.

Switching off the computer, Eva checks the time... 1 a.m.

EXT. PARKING LOT. HADARIM DETENTION CENTER, TEL AVIV -
DAY

Avrim still sits in his car smoking.

A HAND taps on his window.

He looks out at his boss, Shin Bet Director ZEV BAERMAN.
Avrim winds down his window...

DIRECTOR BAERMAN
What the fuck are you doing?

AVRIM
(defensive)
I'm doing what I do!

DIRECTOR BAERMAN
What you do is scare the shit out
of people till they talk. Why aren't you
in there?

Avrim can't answer...

DIRECTOR BAERMAN (CONT'D)
Just get in there.

Baerman walks off.

INT. OBSERVATION ROOM. HADARIM DETENTION CENTER, TEL AVIV
- DAY

Al-Massih still sits in the chair - his head covered in
the jute hood.

Avrim looks at him through the two way mirror... Turning
to the Corrections Officer sitting at his desk -

He leaves.

AVRIM
(Hebrew: subtitled)
<Put him in the hole.>

INT. BAR. TEL AVIV - NIGHT

A dingy bar hums with LOW CHATTER and JAZZ MUSIC
providing a first floor view of Tel Aviv.

Avrim sits in a booth by the window drinking with his friend and colleague KALEB (30's).

ANGLE ON Avrim looking out at the city, caught on some angry thought.

KALEB
You look like shit.

Avrim sips his drink, ignoring the comment.

KALEB (CONT'D)
Have you seen Alon?

AVRIM
Why would I do that?

KALEB
Because he's your brother.

AVRIM
He did something stupid, I'm not going to take pity on him.

KALEB
I love your compassion.

AVRIM
This country is crumbling and he decides to rob a fucking store. He deserves what he gets.

KALEB
What's up? You're angrier than usual.

A WAITRESS comes by with a fresh round of drinks.

Avrim waits for her to leave, then looks Kaleb in the eye...

AVRIM
(soto)
You... you've never mentioned Meggido to anyone, have you?

KALEB
Why would I do that? Why are you even talking about it?

He stares Kaleb in the eye for a long moment... then -

AVRIM
Nothing... Nothing.

E.I. BAR/AVRIM'S CAR - NIGHT

Avrim climbs drunkenly into his car... he waves good night to his friend Kaleb.

His car is a dump. Take out boxes and dirty clothes piled on seats. A toothbrush in the cup holder completes the picture. He has clearly been living in his car.

He pulls on his seat belt when he notices a pair of his daughter's dress-up fairy wings in the back seat...

He reaches over and holds them on his lap...

CLOSE ON AVRIM as a memory intrudes...

FLASHBACK TO:

AVRIM DRIVING IN HIS CAR THROUGH THE DESERT AT NIGHT... next to him sits Kaleb.

Avrim looks in the rearview mirror at a YOUNG TEENAGE BOY handcuffed and terrified.

BACK TO SCENE:

Avrim throws the fairy wings aside.

INT. INTERROGATION ROOM. HADARIM DETENTION CENTER - DAY

Avrim sits at the metal table opposite al-Massih who has the jute hood back over his head.

AVRIM

Do you know how many times I have sat opposite that hood?

Al-Massih speaks from under the sack.

AL-MASSIH

Two hundred and twenty-seven.

Avrim almost smiles at the bizarre answer.

AL-MASSIH (CONT'D)

And every time it was me.

Avrim's smile disappears.

CLOSE ON: the sack breathing in and out with al-Massih's words.

AL-MASSIH (CONT'D)

We could go on doing this forever,
you know? It's up to you. This is no
solution.

AVRIM

Who are you?

AL-MASSIH

The better question is who are you,
Avrim Dahan?

AVRIM

I'm the one asking the questions.

AL-MASSIH

Are you?

Just then Avrim notices that his hands are cuffed and
chained to the table. He GASPS and tries to get away only
to fall off his chair as we -

CUT TO:

AVRIM WAKING RUDELY FROM HIS DREAM.

WIDE ON:

INT. AVRIM'S CAR - MORNING

Avrim looks around, dazed...

He's slept all night in the car. His seat belt is still
fastened. The car is still parked out the front of the
bar.

EXT. HADARIM DETENTION CENTER, TEL AVIV - DAY

Avrim bangs on the caged window of the cellblock gate
where a CORRECTIONS OFFICER sits guard. The Officer
shrugs at him - "what do you want?"

AVRIM

(Hebrew: subtitled)

<Let me in.>

CORRECTIONS OFFICER

<Where's your pass?>

Holding up his Shin Bet badge he reiterates -

AVRIM
<Let - me - in.>

CORRECTIONS OFFICER
<You need to be accompanied by a facility officer to visit a prisoner.>

AVRIM
<Then accompany me.>

CORRECTIONS OFFICER
<I'm on guard.>

AVRIM
<Then get someone else.>

CORRECTIONS OFFICER
<There is no-one else. It's 5 a.m.>

AVRIM
<So you're gonna send me home?>

Avrim stares the man down until he eventually presses a button and unlocks the gate.

INT. CORRIDOR. HADARIM DETENTION CENTER. JERUSALEM - DAY

Avrim walks down a long passageway leading to a solitary cell door. Ambling down the passage he flips a large key on its hoop, whistling as he walks...

ANGLE ON HIS FEET as he makes his way along the flagstone floor...

Coming to the cast iron cell door, Avrim stops and takes a moment to draw up his anger. He's going to enjoy this...

ANGLE ON the key turning in it's lock... CLUNK CLUNK...

He slowly pushes the door open...

ANGLE ON AVRIM his cruel expression dissolving into confusion...

REVEAL the cell is empty... al-Massih is nowhere in sight.

Back on Avrim as he is left to comprehend the incomprehensible.

GO TO BLACK.

END EPISODE 1